

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP “ADDRESSING DATA GAPS FOR ACTIVE AGEING INDICATORS”

I. Organisation and attendance

The Workshop took place on 18 November 2015 in Geneva. It was attended by 30 participants including 22 representatives of 17 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States, namely Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan; three invited experts from research institutes of Poland, the Republic of Moldova, and the Russian Federation; two representatives of non-governmental organisations; a representative of the European Commission and two representatives of the UNECE Secretariat.¹

II. Objective

The meeting aimed at providing, with the help of the invited experts, consultations on how to identify possible sources for missing data and alternative variables (proxies) for the 22 suggested indicators of active ageing. These indicators are included in the statistical annex to the national reports on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) to be prepared by UNECE member States by 31 October 2016.² The indicators can be derived from a number of harmonised European surveys, such as the Labour Force Survey (LFS), European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), European Social Survey (ESS) etc. While for the countries of the European Union (EU) the data for these indicators are easily accessible, the other UNECE countries might face difficulties with data collection. Therefore the workshop targeted the UNECE national focal points on ageing and specialists from the national statistical offices of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, and Western Balkans.

III. Brief summary

The workshop consisted of two main parts: plenary presentations and the group work.³

Prior to the workshop the Secretariat requested from the participant countries information on data availability for the 22 suggested indicators in order to identify those for which collecting and producing data can be challenging, as well as possible proxies. The overview of the countries' replies including a number of suggestions for the proxies that some countries identified was made by the Secretariat at the beginning of the workshop. While the indicator 4.1 Life expectancy at age 55, and the employment indicators 1.1–1.4 are regularly produced by the overwhelming majority of the countries, such indicators as 4.3 Mental well-being; 4.2 Healthy life expectancy at age 55; 4.5 Social connectedness of older people; 2.4 Political participation of older population; 3.7 Physical safety; 2.1 Voluntary work by older adults; 2.3 Care to older adults by older population; 3.6 No severe material deprivation present a challenge for most of the countries.

The overview was followed by the presentations of the invited experts on their experience in dealing with the indicators in question at national and subnational levels. The experts suggested a number of alternative variables that they identified during their work.⁴

In the afternoon session, the group work took place. Countries' representatives were divided into three groups.⁵ The participants were asked to discuss four–five most problematic indicators throughout the

¹ See Annex 1 for the list of participants.

² For the list of indicators please see [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Guidelines -
List of suggested indicators 2015.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Guidelines_-_List_of_suggested_indicators_2015.pdf)

³ See Annex 2 for the Workshop programme.

⁴ For the presentations and other documents please visit <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=40393#/>

group and, with the help of the assigned expert, to come up with possible proxies and data sources; and to assess the relevance and possibility of calculating these indicators at a subnational level in their countries.

After the discussion each group made an overview of the outcomes to the plenary:

Group I identified the following four most problematic indicators: 2.4 Political participation; 3.7 Physical safety; 4.2 Healthy life expectancy at age 55; 4.3 Mental well-being. Regarding the indicator 2.4, it was suggested to address the political parties, trade unions etc. as they might have information about a number of active members by age; moreover special social polls can be run to identify the number of older people actively involved in political activities.

For the indicator 3.7 a following question from the Gallup WorldPoll was suggested: “Percentage of people aged 50+ who feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live”; alternatively it was suggested to use statistics of the Ministry of internal affairs concerning the crimes against older people. The Secretariat noted however, that while violence/crimes against older people are related to this indicator, they may omit important elements since this indicator is meant to measure the self-perception of safety, i.e. how secure older people *feel* while walking in their neighbourhood alone after dark. This might also include safety in terms of having enough lights, quality of the pavement and other factors that ensure a friendly (secure) environment.

For the indicator 4.2 data on morbidity rate plus information on people living with disability were suggested for usage; alternatively it might be useful to include in household surveys a question on the health state (well-being); or have a special questionnaire on the health state to establish the level of population health.

For the indicator 4.3 suggestions were made to use the level of mental diseases or/rate of suicide based on the data of the ministry of interior affairs. It was, however, noted by the Secretariat that these data do not answer the question of the indicator, which aims at assessing subjective well-being, i.e. feeling good about everyday life, rather than specific mental health issues.

Group II focused on five indicators: 2.1 Voluntary activities; 2.4 Political participation; 3.7 Physical safety; 4.2 Healthy life expectancy at age 55; 4.3 Mental well-being.

It was suggested that the indicator 2.4 can be included in the future in an already existing survey. Similarly, the indicator 2.1 may be included in LFS or another survey in the future in at least four countries of this group.

Countries face various challenges, for example different frequency in survey implementation (five years in Kyrgyzstan). The small sample size of surveys is problematic for some countries, e.g. in Azerbaijan there is 6 per cent of the population at the age of 65 and above.

In a number of countries governments only rely on statistics produced by the national statistical offices and do not cooperate with the research institutes (or NGOs) which might be able to do some specific research. Also methodology using the absolute poverty line is used in a number of countries, e.g. Montenegro, unlike the relative poverty line used in EU.

Group III identified five highly problematic indicators: 2.1 Voluntary activities; 2.4 Political participation; 3.7 Physical safety; 3.8 Lifelong learning; and 4.3 Mental well-being.

For the indicator 2.1, the suggestion was made to use the data from organisations that might have information on their members’ age and sex, and their level of activity (how many hours per month). There is a number of questions related to the voluntary activities in the Gender and Generation Survey (GGS), and a compilation of relevant questions would be helpful.

⁵ See Annex 3 for the group division

In regard to the indicator 2.4 it was suggested to use the data on participation in the elections (voting) to reflect the level of political activity of older persons. These data however can be distorting as in some countries voting is mandatory. Time Use Survey could be a good source of data for this indicator.

For the indicator 3.7 a possibility to include this question into a special module about security of a living place of Survey on Income and Living Conditions was discussed.

The indicator 3.8 is not calculated in Israel. The question is often included in LFS, but in Israel there is no education survey for this age group. It was also stressed that based on existing data it might be possible to calculate this indicator for a 12-month period, but for 4 weeks it is difficult.

Regarding the indicator 4.3, suggestions were made to use relevant questions from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) and/or GGS.

Regarding the matter of **subnational calculation** of the active ageing indicators, the participants of the workshop, who considered this exercise relevant for their countries, stated that the indicators that are calculated at national level can also be calculated at a subnational level.

Following the presented outcomes of the discussion, some suggestions were made as to the data collection possibilities, such as carrying out poll surveys based on most problematic indicators; including some of the problematic indicators to the additional modules of Labour Force Survey or/and Household Budget Survey.

The importance of the breakdown of the data by sex was stressed by the Secretariat, recognising though that collecting data might be difficult due to limited sample size.

IV. Conclusion

Participants appreciated the workshop in terms of the content as well as organisation. The workshop was recognised as important first step towards filling data gaps for active ageing indicators. It was also considered useful for strengthening cooperation between the national focal points and the national statistical offices in view of preparing national reports on MIPAA implementation.⁶ However, one day was not sufficient to discuss and identify possible solutions for all the problematic indicators. The Secretariat mentioned a possibility to organise another workshop on the active ageing indicators in May or June 2016, provided funds are available. The Secretariat will make a list of suggested proxies for the 22 indicators with comments on their proximity to the original variables available online (at the workshop's web-page) in January 2016.

⁶ See Annex 4 for the overview of the received feedback.

ANNEX 1. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



Workshop "Addressing data gaps for active ageing indicators"

Start Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2015

End Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2015

Participants: 30

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ANNEX 2. PROGRAMME OF THE WORKSHOP

18 NOVEMBER 2015

GENEVA, PALAIS DES NATIONS, SALLE XI

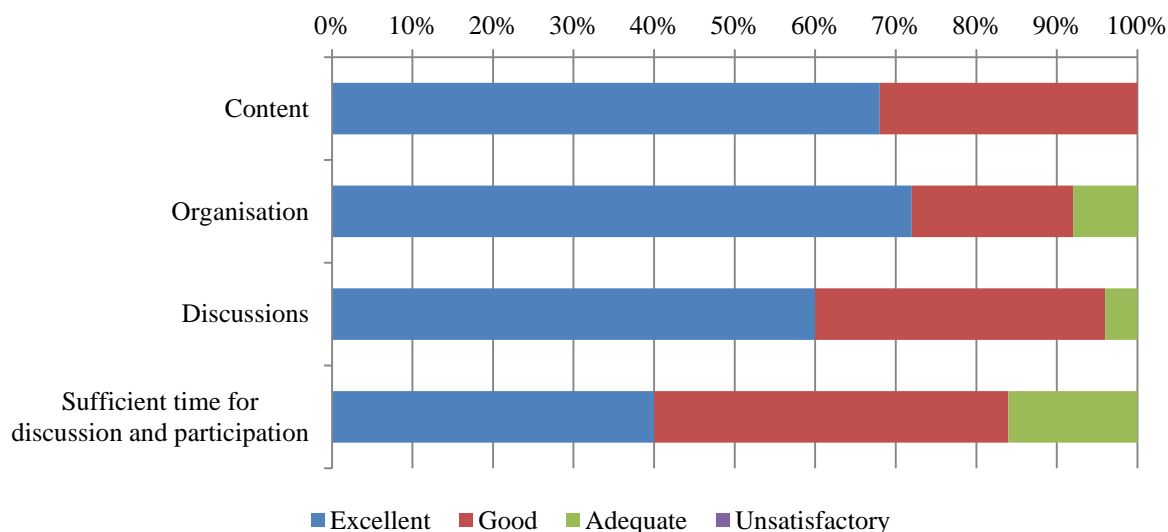
- 09:30–09:45** **Opening and welcoming address**
Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE
- 09:45–10:00** **Introduction into the workshop: objectives and procedure**
Olga Kharitonova, UNECE
- 10:00–10:15** **Overview of the countries' feedback on data availability**
Olga Kharitonova, UNECE
- 10:15–12:30** **Interventions by experts on their experience with the active ageing indicators**
- 10:15–10:35 **Active ageing indicators in the Republic of Moldova**
Mariana Buciuceanu-Vrabie, National Institute for Economic Research, Academy of Sciences of Moldova
- 10:35–10:45 Q&A
- 10:45–11:05 **Active ageing indicators in the Russian Federation**
Maria Varlamova, Higher School of Economics, Moscow
- 11:05–11:15 Q&A
- 11:15–11:35 Coffee break*
- 11:35–12:05 **Active ageing indicators at subnational level in Poland**
Jolanta Perek-Bialas, Warsaw School of Economics, Jagiellonian University, Cracow
- 12:05–12:15 Q&A
- 12:15–12:30** **Discussion**
- 12:30–14:30 Lunch*
- 14:30–16:00** **Work in groups on problematic indicators**
1. Select four to five indicators for which data are not currently available
 2. Identify alternative variables (proxies) that can be used for these indicators
 3. Identify the possible sources of data for these proxies
 4. Assess the possibility of calculation of the active ageing indicators at subnational level for each country in the group
- 16:00–16:20 Coffee break*
- 16:20–17:00** **Each group's report on the outcomes of the group discussion**
- 17:00–17:30** **Concluding remarks and closing**
Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, UNECE
- 18:00–19:30** **Cocktail reception**

ANNEX 3. GROUP DIVISION

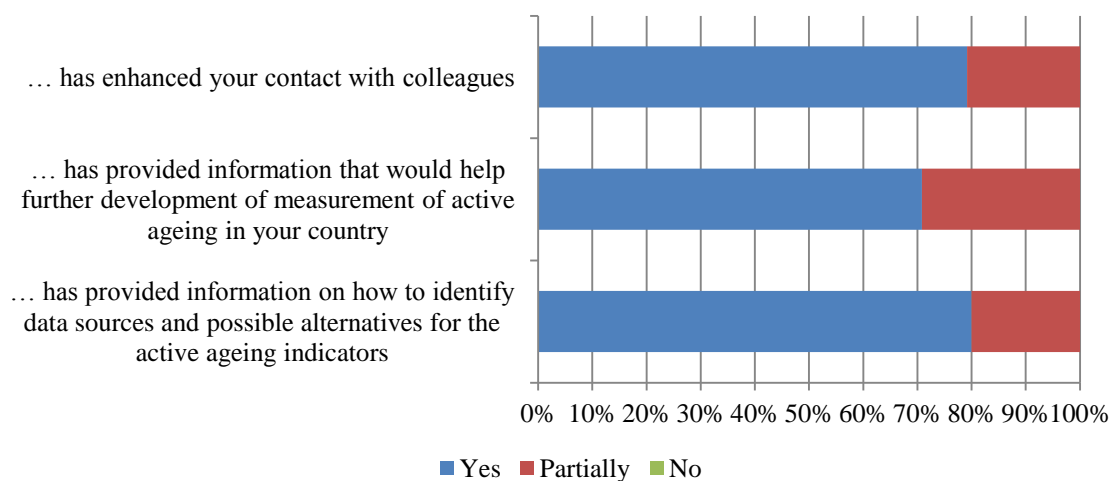
Group	I		II		III	
Facilitator	Ms. Maria Varlamova		Ms. Mariana Buciuceanu-Vrabie		Ms. Jolanta Perek-Bialas	
	Country	Name	Country	Name	Country	Name
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	Belarus	Ms. Hanna Zakreuskaya	Azerbaijan	Ms. Nailya Verdiyeva	Georgia	Ms. Ketevan Goginashvili
		Ms. Darya Bartashevich	Kyrgyzstan	Mr. Tilebaldy Kutushev		Ms. Shorena Tsiklauri
	Kazakhstan	Ms. Ayaulym Sagynbayeva	Montenegro	Mr. Vuk Cadjenovic	Israel	Ms. Galit Mevorach
	Russian Federation	Ms. Elena Vorontsova	Republic of Moldova	Ms. Aliona Cretu	Serbia	Ms. Gordana Bjelobrk
	Tajikistan	Mr. Qudratullo Kurbanov		Ms. Ana Calfa	Turkey	Ms. Tuğçe Demir
		Mr. Khokimbeg Nakatov	Ukraine			
	Uzbekistan	Mr. Zafarjon Hujaev				
		Mr. Behzod Shodiev				

ANNEX 4. OVERVIEW OF THE FEEDBACK

1. How do you evaluate the quality of the Workshop in general?



2. The Workshop...



3. Please provide feedback about specific sessions

