Policy Brief on
Mainstreaming Ageing

Viviane Brunne

Why policy briefs?

- The challenge: Break down abstract policy frameworks of MIPAA/RIS to concrete action
- Outline rationale for choosing a particular policy alternative
- Concise, easily understandable for broad audience
- Summarize state of the art policy debate on an issue
- Good practice examples represent geographic variety
- Graphic illustration
- Check list for implementation
- Provide suggestions for further reading
Policy brief: mainstreaming ageing

The context and challenge

The world population is passing through the demographic transition – the transformation of a population characterized by large families and short life expectancy into a population of small families and long life expectancy – the distinctive trait of this century is going to be ageing, a process where the share of older individuals in the population is increasing.

The demographic transition is universal across the world, however, its timing varies greatly between and within world regions, and so does the onset and pace of ageing. Populations in Europe and North America are ageing, but most find themselves still in the stage of the so-called demographic bonus, a situation when working-age adults make up the largest share of population and the share of dependent children and older adults is relatively small. This situation will end as the large generations born during the baby boom are retiring and the life expectancy is increasing further. In Europe, there are now 4.4 persons in the working age per one person 65 or older. By 2035 there will be 3.1 and by 2050 only 2.1.
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The suggested strategy and underlying concept

Mainstreaming ageing

OLS: Older persons make important contributions to society, to their communities and families. To ensure that older persons can remain active and independent for as long as possible, policies supporting their social and economic integration in all spheres of society are necessary. To achieve this complex goal, a holistic approach whereby ageing is integrated in all policy fields is most promising.

Mainstreaming ageing is a strategy; a process and a multidimensional effort of integrating ageing issues into all policy fields and all policy levels. Ultimately, the objective is to achieve a more equitable development within a society for the benefit of all social groups. Successful mainstreaming includes all relevant stakeholders into decision-making to ensure older persons’ needs are met in all policy fields. Mainstreaming can be seen as an important tool for achieving a society for all ages.

Tools and techniques to implement the strategy

Laws, policies and programmes

OLS: Laws, policies and programmes are important tools to achieve a holistic approach in mainstreaming ageing. Existing policies and programmes as well as laws and regulations should reflect adequately the concerns of persons of all ages and a general framework of non-discrimination should be provided. This means, that the concerns of older persons should not be seen in isolation or in competition with other social groups.

The implications for older persons of any planned legislation, policy or programme, should be systematically assessed by way of an impact analysis. Guidelines may help to screen new laws policies or programmes for their relevance on ageing as well as on how they implement identified national priorities on ageing and indicators of success. New laws, policies and programmes should be streamlined internationally agreed standards, based on the MIPAA/RIS framework.
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Good practice examples

"Bien vieillir": avenues towards good ageing in France

An important step of mainstreaming is development of national plans and policy frameworks. The French Plan Bien-Vieillir (Good Ageing) for 2007-2009 is one such case. Adopted jointly by several ministries, the Plan pursues a holistic approach on good ageing while at the same time focusing on certain priority areas. It promotes healthy living and advocates prevention, seeks to improve the environment and quality of life for older persons (incl. infrastructure, technical aids, city development), advocates older persons’ participation in social and cultural life and promotes intergenerational solidarity.

In the field of health, the Plan suggests activities for preventing accidents in daily life, dealing with hearing and visual disability, cancer or dental problems. Furthermore, it foresees a comprehensive campaign to communicate incentives for older persons to adopt habits that consciously take into account a healthy diet, physical activity, healthy sleeping, good use of medicine and the general frame of mind.

To promote older persons’ integration in social life, the event Semaine Blanche (blue week) sensitizes the public to the contribution of older persons to economic, social and cultural life. The Plan suggests intergenerational living arrangements to improve older persons’ quality of life and promote intergenerational solidarity. Research and innovation are encouraged by offering research grants for innovative ideas of how to achieve good ageing. The Plan also foresees experimental activities in providing special living arrangements for ageing homeless people and older migrants. Finally, the Plan makes special provisions regarding the role of the local level and takes into account the international dimension through participation in EU level projects on ageing.

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Mainstreaming ageing: Checklist

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Consulted and recommended sources


The listed materials of the United Nations are available through the website of the Programme on Ageing: [http://www.un.org/ageing](http://www.un.org/ageing)
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- Which topics are most interesting for you?
- Suggest your good practice examples
- Translate briefs into local language

Thank you!