

Forum: ECOSOC

Issue: Promotion of Social Engagement of Elderly People

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Introduction

In many countries elderly people are unable to take part in different social activities. It happens because in the majority of countries there are no laws that provide elderly people with opportunity to be engaged in social activities. In another case, when the country has some specific laws regarding this problem, these laws cannot ensure the old people will be brought to the place where some social or cultural events are planned. Therefore, this problem is indeed an important one. Elderly people should take part in social activities, because their knowledge is required to some designs, and we have to listen to them before making vital decisions which would affect all citizens in a certain country. And all of this is included into the phrase 'attracting elderly people to some social activities', since if they have an active civil position, they will help their native country to develop in a peaceful way.

Definition of key terms

Generational Conflict

Conflict when the interests or ideals of one generation collide openly with those of another. A generation is defined here as a "cohort group" that is born over a span of years—typically about twenty—and that shares characteristics, including some shared childhood and coming-of-age experiences, a set of common behavioral and attitudinal traits, and a sense of common identity.

Social activity

Activity considered appropriate on social occasions

Pensioners

A person who receives or lives on a pension.

Ageing society

All ageing people in the world.

Background information

The world is ageing rapidly. People aged 60 and older make up over 11 per cent of the global population, and by 2050 that number will rise to about 22 per cent. In many countries elderly people are less involved or are not involved into the social life at all. This causes many problems. Looking back to our history, we can say, that this problem of social engagement of elderly people is not an old problem. Ageing is a triumph of development: people are living longer because of better nutrition, sanitation, health care, education, and economic well-being. Nowadays elderly people constitute a significant part of our society, and this fact must be recognized. Involving their knowledge in the process of solving different global issues plays an enormous role in making certain decisions on numerous problems.

Major countries and organizations involved

Practically all countries are involved in this problem. Some countries are involved more, than others, and some less. But there is no country that has solved this issue completely. The best 3 countries for ageing people are considered to be Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden and the 3 of the worst countries are Mozambique, Malawi and Afghanistan. But these countries are probably not the worst, because there is no data from the majority of African countries, Oceania, and the Arabian Peninsula.

The organization 'United Nations Population Fund' (UNFPA) is involved in the problem of people's ageing. UNFPA works to raise awareness about population ageing and the need to harness its opportunities and address its challenges. UNFPA also supports research and data collection to provide a solid base for policies and planning, and makes sure ageing issues are integrated into national development programs and poverty reduction strategies.

Relevant treaties and UN resolutions

There is a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the 41st session in October 1992. Practically the same topic was discussed during the session of the 2nd World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in 2002.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

There were no global attempts to solve this issue until 1992, when the 41st General Assembly session was held. But some countries coped with this problem on a state level. For instance, Norway, Germany, Iceland, Switzerland. These countries have

rather big pensions and social protection of elderly people, privileges for the ageing people and good medicine level available for most of the citizens.

Possible solutions

There are some countries that have already achieved some goals in promotion of social engagement of elderly people. For instance Switzerland, Norway, Sweden. Germany, Canada, Netherlands, Iceland, New Zealand, the USA, Australia, Argentina, Chili, Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica, Japan, Georgia, Cyprus, Poland, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Denmark, and practically all western European countries. All these countries are recognized as the best countries for elderly people and represent their positive attitude to elderly people. Governments of other states may draw their attention to the example of these countries and adopt new laws, taking into account their positive experience in this matter.