

Who is missing from local development?

The contribution older women and men make to society is invaluable. Yet, in Moldova older people remain some of the poorest and most neglected, lacking equal access to healthcare, social services and economic and physical security. Older people are rarely included into local development planning, their voice is unheard and their needs and perspectives remain unaddressed.

Poverty

About 40% of older people in Moldova have an income that places them below the poverty line. Women make up 61% of people above 65 years. The poverty rate in elderly households stood at 37.2% in 2008 and 2009, which is over 10% higher than the national average. Pension allowances amount to less than 59% of the minimum consumption basket.

Older women

Older women make an enormous contribution to their families and communities. Despite this, they are disproportionately discriminated against, marginalized and excluded because of the combined impact of age and gender-based discrimination and other factors, such as ethnic origin and poverty. Single elderly women are more vulnerable than single elderly men, since they own less property, receive smaller pensions (as they have often not engaged in a remunerated activity and enter retirement at a significantly lower age, meaning their old-age pension entitlement is smaller).

Stereotypes and discrimination

Widely spread discriminative stereotypes contribute to social exclusion of older women and men. According to a recent survey¹, 58% of people in Moldova share the view that older women and men are helpless, not recognizing and not supporting the vital contribution that they make to their families and communities.

The same survey showed that about 65% of respondents think that older people have an old fashioned mentality (57%) and that the older persons have reduced mental abilities (34%).

For several months the local authorities rejected Ms. Galina's petition, a pensioner, for cleaning the garbage dump near her house. The more garbage amassed, the bigger the threat it posed as street dogs in the area were attacking children and older people – groups less able to defend themselves. Galina mobilized the community pensioners on this issue. Shortly after receiving a collective petition the local authorities placed trash containers and cleared up the place.

Straseni, Moldova

Older People



Access to health services

The older women and men in rural areas are extremely vulnerable since their limited resources are insufficient to ensure normal living standards. Mortality among the older people in rural areas is higher than that of the elderly in urban areas (64 deaths per 1000 in rural areas compared to 48 deaths per 1000 in urban areas). The health needs of many older people (provision of geriatric medicine) are met improperly. Access to geriatric doctors is 2.16 per 10,000 elderly, which is significantly lower than in other countries where it can reach 3.9 to 4 per 10,000.

Access to social services

Access of older people to the social services remains limited in scope and quality. According to a Study² in 2008 only about 20,1% of the pensioners were visited by a social worker. In most of the cases (78, 4%) the social worker helped to buy groceries, prepare food (40,7%) and help with the cleaning (32 %). About a third of the pensioners received at least once social payments with an average value of 318 lei, most of which (62,5%) were spent to buy medication.

Older women and men in local development

Older women and men cannot benefit from local development if their constraints and needs are ignored, leading to their further exclusion, discrimination and marginalization. Older women and men are a resource for community: they work, care for relatives, and offer support through experience. They can and should be equal partners for local development.



Empowering older women and men in a gender and culturally sensitive way will help redress the gender inequalities that have existed throughout their lives and that are exacerbated in old age.

Making the specific needs and perspectives of older women and men an integral and important part of the community development priorities improves the level of accountability of local administrations, reduces age discrimination and makes local development more effective and sustainable.



The Joint Integrated Local Development Programme (JILDP) of the Government of Moldova, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), with a financial support of the Government of Sweden works to ensure that the vulnerable women and men benefit equally from decentralization and local development.

¹ Perceptions of population in Moldova on discrimination phenomenon, Sociological Study, Soros-Moldova Foundation, 2011.

² Social Economic Conditions of Elderly in Republic of Moldova, Study by Help Age International, 2008
Foto: Igor Schimbator, Dorin Goian