



Contribution of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing to the discussion on how to ensure effective participation and contribution of CSOs to the process of Voluntary National Reviews at the national level

1. Introduction

Stakeholder Group on Ageing

The Stakeholder Group on Ageing (SGA) is a member of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders mechanism involved in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SGA Members are non-governmental organizations working in the field of ageing, at the global, regional and national levels. The SGA enables the voice of older persons to be heard at the global level with respect to the 2030 Agenda and its implementation process.

Ageing, SDGs and Leave No One Behind

The commitment to 'leave no one behind' in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is essential to ensuring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is truly inclusive and fit for purpose in a rapidly ageing world. This means ensuring that every individual achieves all the rights and opportunities contained within the SDGs. However, the rights of older people have often been overlooked in mainstream development policy and practice. Demographic changes, particularly the increasing number of older people in all countries and regions, requires greater attention in development and humanitarian agendas. The number of people aged 60 and above is expected to reach 1.4 billion in 2030 and 2 billion in 2050, representing 22% of the global population. Women over 50 are already a quarter of the world's women. The SDGs offer a key opportunity to ensure issues of ageing and older people are adequately included and responded to in the sustainable development agenda.

In 2016 the SGA conducted a survey among national members of SGA networks. The survey had responses from 70 national organizations within 40 countries, representing each world region. 70% of respondents confirmed their engagement in SDGs related activities, with three quarters of those wanting more information, capacity-building, support in monitoring and evaluation and opportunities for participation. Their specific recommendations were more collaboration between CSOs and government authorities; greater recognition of older persons in government policy, particularly in the areas of social protection, health, food, shelter, water, human rights, elder abuse, ageism, palliative care; participation of older persons in democratic processes; dissemination of information; and disaggregated evidence and data by age and sex.

2. Case Studies

2a: The SGA experience in interacting with New York Reporting Mechanism

All people count and must be counted.

The SGA was formed in 2013 to bring evidence on ageing and the voice and presence of older women and men to the negotiations of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, in direct response to the lack of attention to older people in the Millennium Development Goals and the lack of a constituency group to represent older people at the global level.

The SGA brought to the negotiations direct evidence on issues of ageing from the grassroots and older people themselves, and made alliances and common cause on the way forward with the existing Major Groups and others, such as persons with disabilities, and with UNDESA and the UN system agencies. Furthermore the SGA prioritized and supported participation of older persons in the consultations of the intergovernmental process, authored papers, organized dialogues and events with member states and civil society, served on steering committees and nominating committees, and always worked collaboratively with non-ageing specific constituencies.

The strategy has been successful. All age inclusive language has been included in 15 of the 17 goals, with specific mention of older people in four targets. The SGA was one of the 5 civil society organizations selected to speak at the 2015 General Assembly on the day the SDGs were adopted by Member States. The formal recognition of the SGA as the voice of older persons at the global level with respect to the 2030 Agenda has enabled older people's organizations and older people to participate and influence directly global processes they have been left out of previously. It has been a great step forward.

The experience of the SGA at global level has demonstrated the importance of protected space for civil society and, in particular, the need to give space to those constituencies which were not part and parcel of the MDGs so that they can have an equal voice.

2b: Asia: SGA engagement at Regional level

The SGA welcomes the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM) for creating an engagement mechanism that includes a broad range of stakeholders to support engagement in the HLPF and SDGs process. In the mechanism they have established Regional Coordination Committee of 17 constituency focal points (women, small and medium enterprise, science and technology, people with disabilities, people affected by conflict and disasters, older groups, migrants, local authorities, indigenous peoples, fisher folks, farmers NGO, Youth, Children and Adolescent, LGBTIQ, Urban Poor, People living and affected by HIV, Local Authorities and Workers and Trade Unions). The mechanism has further established five regional focal points.

The SGA believes this is kind of structure that should be promoted at both the regional and national levels. It will allow the harnessing of technical capacity, the leadership and best practices of constituencies who have over the year's accumulated experience, knowledge and experts which can be utilized to accelerate the success of SDGs and make the SDGs "Leave No One Behind" commitment a reality. Further, it helps constituencies that do not have strong movements or

number of organizations supporting such constituencies like older people to secure the space to engage SDGs and other development and humanitarian debates.

2c: Kenya: Ageing network experience in profiling ageing issues in SDGs processes including reporting

Setting up support and systems to make SDGs work for older people

In Kenya, just like in the majority of African countries, ageing and older people's rights and needs often remain neglected in development efforts with many governments and development partners investing minimally in terms resource allocation, technical capacity development and institutional frameworks that promote their integration.

This is in spite of efforts by the Ministry of East Africa Community (EAC), Labour and Social Protection, which is responsible for ageing and older people, to make progress in developing policy and legal frameworks to secure the rights and wellbeing of older people. Further, the Ministry EAC or ministries that have supported the issues of older people over the years have had limited interaction with national planning, budgeting and sectorial ministries processes and activities. It is against this background that HelpAge International and its network - in collaboration with Ministry of EAC, Labour and Social Protection - co-hosted a high level meeting with leadership and technical teams from the national planning, finance and sectorial ministries including important government bodies such as the Kenya Bureau of Statistics and the Kenya Commission for Human Rights, the aim of which was to further understanding of ageing issues, mobilizing political support and making SDGs work for older people.

In the period leading to the meeting, a technical group was formed to steer the planning and content of the workshop. The technical group members was composed of technical people from the National Planning and Devolution (where SDGs is coordinated), finance and key sectors such as health, education, agriculture including statistical institutions. The meeting was able to raise awareness on issues of ageing and older people and mobilized political support to include older people in SDGs domestication, implementation and reporting. The technical working group was transformed to a multi-sectorial platform that will be steering ageing development in the country with the leadership of the Ministry of EAC. It was also proposed that HelpAge support in expanding and strengthening ageing network at national and subnational level which has resulted to creating a federation for older people and their organization and currently efforts being made to expand the network to sub-national levels.

Reporting experience

Both during negotiations and since the adoption of the SDGs, HelpAge has been very active in the Kenya SDGs Forum, a consortium of CSOs that engaged the government of post 2015 discussions and later during the SDGs domestication, implementation and reporting. The leadership of the forum that HelpAge is also represented has had some level of coordinated and collaborative engagement with the Government SDGs coordinating unit. Given HelpAge's active role in the SGA it has been possible to encourage collaboration with organisations active on the Major Groups and other Stakeholders mechanism at the national level, thus replicating a very good experience at the global level.

The Platform has already secured space as a key stakeholder in the reporting process and has participated in the validation of the workshop. The platform is currently consolidating the CSOs reporting input from various CSOs organizations focusing on the goals countries will be reporting on. HelpAge will provide input to the CSOs report but will also support the drafting of a stand along report by federation of older people and organization.

The SDGs Unit has made some substantial progress on the reporting. It has established a working group, has received over reports from 44 state ministries and held a validation workshop and currently consolidating the report. However the state department responsible for older people seems to have been left out and HelpAge is working with Ministry EAC to intervene so that the state can make its contribution to the Kenya Report.

Challenges and recommendations

The SDG process, including reporting, continues to struggle to adequately accommodate technical and structural spaces for constituencies and issues that have always been left behind in sustainable development. Lack of adequate technical capacity and understanding, policy and legal frameworks, and amplified voices for such constituencies - particularly older people and indigenous people - can easily be left out since the ministry or department responsible for older people is also constrained by lack of funding and personnel.

It is recommended that both government and CSO led processes to incorporate spaces for such groups, so that they can share learning and experiences that support and improve the inclusion of such groups. Donor development partners need to make deliberate efforts to increase funding to support weak movements to consolidate their structures and capacity, including supporting governments strengthen evidence, technical and institutional frameworks to support marginalized groups. More investments in building the capacity of the local authority and citizen structures at local level where the action takes place are vital.

3. Key recommendations of the SGA to improve the coordination and reporting of SDGs:

- Governments in collaboration and partnership with CSOs, the private sector and other important stakeholders should establish one institutional engagement mechanism for effective implementation, monitoring and reporting of SDGs - not just their participation in government lead meetings and workshops. This mechanism should include all the constituencies referred to in Goal 17 target 17.18 and include financial support for participation. This way, capacities and best practices can be harnessed to promote the success of SDGs at all levels.
- The CSO platforms at regional and national levels should establish effective structures that accommodates and appreciates all constituencies, reflects the Major Groups and other stakeholders mechanism that operates at the global level and has ability to create an irresistible relationship with the government structures.
- There is an urgent need for the organizations supporting constituencies such as older people to collaborate at all levels for their voices to be heard in SDG implementation and reporting.
- Ministries responsible for constituencies that have been left behind in development must seek ways of engaging in the SDGs process and provide guidance on the integration of such constituencies.

- Adequate lead time to establish the mechanisms for reporting and preparing reports should allow involvement of all stakeholders within the government and development partner agencies (CSOs, Private Sector etc.) to enrich the content and quality of the report.
- Need to map up the technical capacity and systems available in both government and CSOs structures while identifying gaps. Capacity to be harnessed to speed up implementation and gaps prioritized with deliberate and concerted efforts to reduce the gaps and weaknesses.
- More efforts and investment to go into empowering citizens of all ages and abilities and their structures including those of local government, as the impact of the implementation of SDGs should be felt at this level – on the citizens and community and local authority structures. Minimal efforts are currently being made at this level.
- International, regional and national participation to focus more on working with organizations that have local structures, where the action needs to take place for SDG implementation to be realized.
- Donor development partners and governments to increase funding to support research to build evidence and capacity of the groups left behind particularly the technical capacity of government and CSOs; systems, policies and program frameworks.

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