



Newsletter 3: January 2009 Social Protection and Ageing

Welcome to the Social Protection in Asia (SPA) newsletter. Social Protection in Asia is a research, networking and advocacy programme that aims to create a regional voice and develop a research base for advocating innovative and informed policy on Social Protection issues. Under the SPA, ten research projects are being carried out in seven countries in the Asian region. Further information on SPA is available at <http://www.socialprotectionasia.org>

We are delighted to announce that Isabel Ortiz has agreed to join the SPA advisory board. Isabel is Senior Interregional Adviser at the United Nations' Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA). She has over 15 years experience working in 30 countries, and was a founding member of the Poverty Reduction Unit at the Asian Development Bank, where she also directed ADB's Social Protection and Labour Strategy. Her areas of specialization include specifically national development strategies, pro-poor policies/budgets and social assessments across sectors and financing for development.

SPA Research on Ageing:



One of the SPA research teams, the **Tsinghua University Gerontology Center** is carrying out a research project on "[Social Support for the Aged in Rural China – The Role of Local Communities](#)". The project is seeking to understand the role of local community, culture and tradition in existing institutional arrangements for elderly care in rural China and identify more effective and affordable mechanisms for meeting their needs. The background of the project and their preliminary observations based on their field experiences in the villages are presented here.

Other Research on Ageing:

Irudaya Rajan, a Professor at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, India has been working in this sector and is currently working on 2 projects: 'Care of the Aged: Gender, Institutional Provisions and Social Security in India, Netherlands and Sri Lanka' and 'Promoting Healthy Ageing Through Community Development in India'. An extract of his paper gives an [overview of existing social protection measures](#) for the aged in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Moneer Alam, a Professor at the Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi, is Member, International Union for Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) and a member of its Scientific Panel on Ageing in Developing Countries, 2004-06 as well as a Member of the State Council for Senior Citizens, Government of Delhi. He has worked on demographic ageing and consequences, particularly in relation to health policy, and health financing; long-term care issues; and altruism in inter-generational relationship. His working paper entitled '[Ageing, Socio-economic Disparities and Health Outcomes: Some Evidence from Rural India](#)' concludes that sustained corrective measures directed at improving the rural economy through appropriate investment efforts as well as the creation of elderly care infrastructure are required to correct the current inefficient or misdirected state provided health care infrastructure.

Resources on Ageing:

[Social cash transfers for Asia - Ensuring social protection/social pensions in old age in the context of rapid ageing: Intergovernmental regional seminar report](#) United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand, 29-30 January 2007

The report summarises the main issues debated in a seminar organized by HelpAge International, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and International Labour Organization, supported by the Japan Foundation and Department for International Development (UK).

Two key questions debated at this seminar focused on issues of morality and economics respectively. The first was whether it is right to provide universal non-contributory pensions to older people, rather than contributory pensions in the informal sector or subsidized insurance schemes? The second was whether it was a moral choice, and ensuring security in old age within the realm of fair societies is based on the moral imperative of reciprocity between generations. The Asia regional seminar brought together representatives of 13 Asian countries, including senior government officials and other stakeholders in the social protection realm to discuss the merits of expanding social protection to older people in the context of rapid ageing in Asia.

[ELDIS resources on Ageing](#) including a report on '[Social Protection and Ageing in Malawi](#)'

[China National Working Commission on Ageing \(CNWCA\):](#)

Established in October 1999 as an advisory and coordinating organization of the State

Council, the Commission is mandated to supervise the work on nationwide. The CNWCA has 26 members including various departments and Committees of the CPC, Ministries, trade unions, and the China National Committee on Ageing.

Its main responsibilities include:

1. Research on and formulation of the development strategies and major policies on ageing; coordinating and facilitating the relevant departments to implement the development plans on ageing;
2. Coordinating and facilitating relevant departments to protect the rights and interests of the elderly;
3. Coordinating and facilitating relevant departments to strengthen macro-level guidance and comprehensive management of the work on ageing; promoting various kinds of activities for the physical and psychological wellbeing of the elderly;
4. Guiding monitoring and supervising the work on ageing of the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities;
5. Organizing and coordinating important activities on ageing in China initiated and sponsored by U.N. and the other international organizations.

The commission also provides links to provincial websites on ageing; policies and regulations, news, international exchange/ interaction, etc.

[Helpage International's Social Protection pages provide a number of resources on ageing and pensions in Asia.](#)

News and Events:



[Asian Pension systems at risk, says OECD](#): By Chris Giles in London

Financial Times, January 7 2009 17:34: It will soon be too late to save Asian state pension systems from running short of cash, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warned in a [report](#) on Wednesday.

New policy initiatives have been launched in China in [Social Protection for the Rural Aged](#), and the Ministry

of Human Resource and Social Security has announced the aim of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee to establish a universal social security system by 2020, leaving only 12 years for the Chinese to establish a relatively mature rural social security system for the aged.

[Golden Jubilee Conference of the Indian Society for Labour Economics, 12- 15 December 2008, Lucknow.](#) Over 200 papers were presented at the 50th Annual

conference of the ISLE, including several on social protection and related issues such as migration, decent work, social security, ageing. The papers were mostly related to experience in South Asia, including one paper on migration and social protection in South Africa. Details of the conference and the papers presented can be had from [ijle.ijle@gmail.com](mailto:ijle@gmail.com)

In the context of the global financial crisis and down-turn in most developed and developing countries, sustainability of welfare and social policies to protect the poor assumes importance. This is especially so in developing countries which have not been able to universalize social protection. Two recent papers ([Bailing out the world's poorest WPS4763](#) and [Lessons from WB research on crises WPS4779](#) from the World Bank argue for continued relevance of well designed safety net programmes and also emphasise the need for understanding long term implications of financial crises for economic development and vulnerability of the poor.

Forthcoming Events:

[Third Annual Poverty and Social Protection Conference, 11-13 March 2009, Bangkok, Thailand](#)

[Call for applications](#)

The Tomorrow People Organization is organizing their Third Annual Poverty and Social Protection Conference in Bangkok on 11-13 March 2009. The conference will focus on issues of poverty and its eradication, social inequality, race relations and policy management and mismanagement with an international perspective.

[http://www.tomorrowpeople.org/index.php?](http://www.tomorrowpeople.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=30&Itemid=74)

[option=com_content&task=view&id=30&Itemid=74](http://www.tomorrowpeople.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=30&Itemid=74) for details, or

[http://www.tomorrowpeople.org/index.php?](http://www.tomorrowpeople.org/index.php?option=com_performs&formid=4&Itemid=150)

[option=com_performs&formid=4&Itemid=150](http://www.tomorrowpeople.org/index.php?option=com_performs&formid=4&Itemid=150) for applying online.

Contact:

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Useful Links:

<http://www.helpage.org> HelpAge International has been working since 1983 to improve the lives of disadvantaged older people through a global network that today spans more than 70 affiliate organizations in 50 countries.

<http://www.aarpinternational.org> Reinventing Retirement Asia: Employment and Active Engagement Beyond 50

<http://www.globalaging.org> Global Action on Aging (GAA), based in New York at the United Nations, reports on older people's needs and potential within the global economy. It is an advocacy group by, with and for older persons worldwide.

<http://www.un.org/ageing> The UN Program on Ageing is part of the United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development ([UNDSPD](#)), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs ([UNDESA](#)). It is the focal point within the United Nations system on matters related to ageing.

<http://www.who.int/topics/ageing/en> World Health Organization's website about active ageing, i.e., to maximize the health and functional capacity of older people as well as their social participation and security.

<http://www.laoling.com/Index.html> Website about social support for the aged information in China

<http://www.chinagsc.org.cn/gsc> Website of the Geriatric Society of China

<http://www.capscc.com.cn> Website of China Ageing Development Foundation, which aims the construction of a harmonious society by advocacy and popularization of traditional Chinese filial piety virtue.

We welcome your contributions

The SPA Network aims to keep people informed of required and requested information and to facilitate collaboration on social protection. To do this, the network needs you! If you would like to share your experiences, express your views or share information or publicise an event or publication please contact

info@socialprotectionasia.org

Unsubscribe:

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please reply to this mail with UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line and we will take your name off our mailing list.

The SPA programme is managed by the **Institute for Human Development** (www.ihdindia.org), New Delhi, India and the **Institute of Development Studies (IDS)** (www.ids.ac.uk/go/centreforsocialprotection) at the University of Sussex, UK.

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