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علم وفضيلة

UNHRC

Research Report

Definitions

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging: "a global plan of action" to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population aging in the twenty-first century and to promote the development of a society for all ages.

Population-aging: Population-aging refers to changes in the age composition of a population such that there is an increase in the proportion of older persons.

Pension: an amount of money paid regularly by the government or a private company to a person who does not work anymore because they are too old or have become ill.

Background

In the previous decades, the elderly population has begun to make up an ever-greater proportion of the total population worldwide. By 2030, 1 in 6 persons in the world will be above 60, with said population doubling by 2050. This increase in proportions that leads to an increase in the burden needed to support the elderly, who by now are retired and do not pay taxes, is to be shared by the rest of the population who pay taxes that then contribute to the pensions and government support schemes that are afforded to the elderly. This has societal, economic, and political consequences, as this breeds resentment between the different generations and increases the financial burden on the ever-decreasing working population who must work more to support an ever-increasing retired population. The elderly, meanwhile, are discriminated against due to their lack of work abilities and skills, especially when it comes to employment that deals with modern technology and is generally ignored in society.

This issue was investigated and addressed in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging 2002. They stressed the importance of giving the elderly the chance to become actively engaged in contributing to society, given their experiences, knowledge, skills, and wisdom. Moreover, the need for integrating and empowering older citizens and removing the barriers and obstacles that discriminate against them is one way of allowing them to help with the burdens of supporting the rest of the aging population. The UN has also addressed this issue, by passing the UN United Nations Principles for Older Persons in 1991 which highlighted the importance of protecting the rights and dignity of the elderly. The UN also passed the Sustainable Development Goals which include Goal 3 "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages." Naturally, this includes the elderly.

 The proper treatment of the elderly, as recommended by the Madrid plan and the UN, is not adopted by many countries where the older citizens tend to be taken for granted with many of them being excluded, simultaneously stigmatized as burdens on society and also prevented from assisting in the elevation of said burdens. This leads to severe discriminatory practices against the elderly, jeopardizing their socio-economic position and bringing serious harm to their rights

and dignity. As such it is imperative of the international community to address the issue by protecting the dignity and rights of the elderly and to provide means of elevating the burdens taken up by the tax-paying segments of the population.

Treaties and Organizations

United Nations Programme on Ageing (UNPA), A UN organization, established in 1991, that aims to promote the well-being and rights of older persons globally.

Help Age International, International NGO that works with local partners to provide emergency relief, health care, and other support to older people affected by natural disasters and other humanitarian crises.

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund, whose job is to ensure all human beings are entitled to equal rights and protections.

Current Situation

It is undeniable that there are many legislations worldwide that aim to prevent age discrimination and bias against the elderly. However, this phenomenon is still present, especially in our societies today. We can see this in many fields, that include employment, social belonging and political participation.

The elderly face severe employment issues. Statistics reveal that older applicants receive significantly fewer interview calls than their younger counterparts. Moreover, gender exacerbates the challenges faced by older individuals, since women are disproportionately more likely to be unemployed due to caregiving responsibilities and age-related stereotypes. This is also true within the work environment where discrimination against older employees is common; younger and older employees are more likely to experience prejudice than middle-aged employees. This discrimination along with racism and sexism has an impact on retirement plans and mental health. Adding to that is the disruption of retirement plans in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Turning the attention to the issue's sociocultural side, the elderly are seriously threatened by poverty, and the next generation is expected to see greater economic disparity. Due to health issues, family responsibilities, or retirement, older individuals are more dependent on public income support, family aid, affordable healthcare, and personal savings when they leave work. Elderly people's general well-being depends on social interactions, although they frequently report having fewer social connections and receiving less support in times of need. Older people in OECD countries are almost three times more likely than younger people to have no relatives or close companions to turn to in an emergency. The COVID-19 pandemic made older persons' social isolation worse, underscoring the need for digital tools to preserve social ties.

We can see issues in the political sphere. There is a serious lack of engagement of old people in political discussions, especially when it comes to the creation and execution of policies, highlighting the importance of keeping the elderly integrated in this domain, as it encourages them to speak up and share their point of views when decisions are being made whether it's about laws or programs that directly impact them.
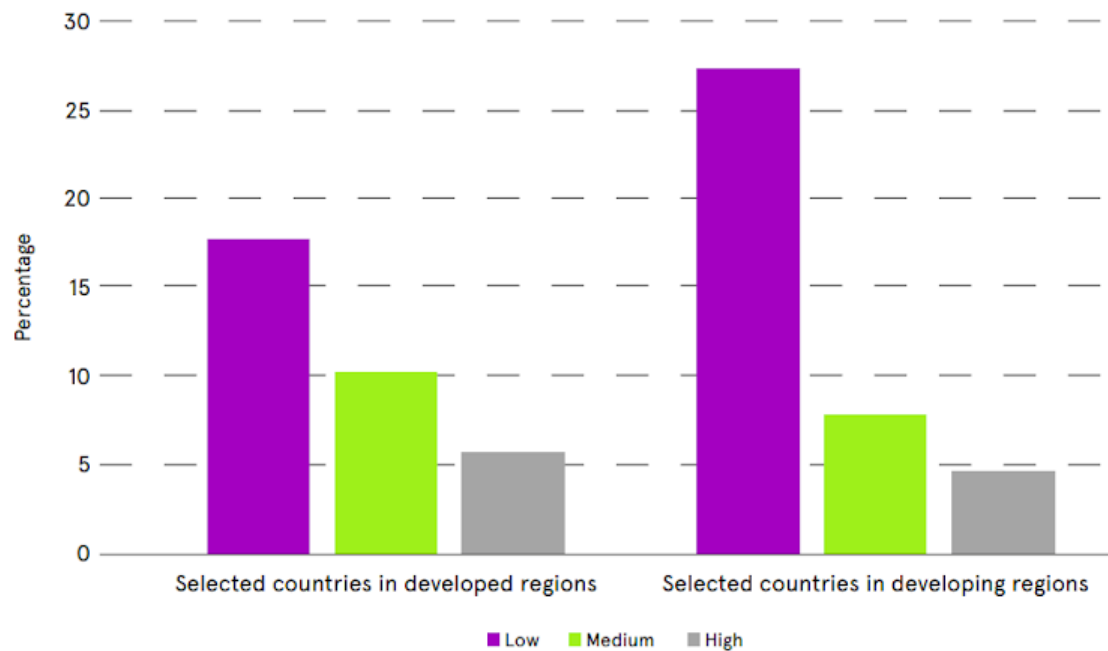
Questions to consider:

- What measures has your country implemented to promote the integration of elderly individuals into the workforce and society?

- How can workplace environments be made more inclusive and open to the requirements of elderly workers, especially concerning their physical and mental health?

- Does your country have programs and services that address financial insecurity and social isolation among elderly citizens?

- What strategies is your country employing to create age-friendly environments that support the well-being and inclusion of elderly citizens in all aspects of society including public spaces, transportation, and housing that meet their needs?

- How can we bridge the digital and technological divide for elderly workers who may lack familiarity with technology, ensuring they have the necessary skills to cope with an increasingly digitized workforce?

- What is the appropriate age for retirement in your country?

- Does your country include the principle of post-retirement benefits for the elderly? If yes, do these benefits align with the economic and social circumstances?
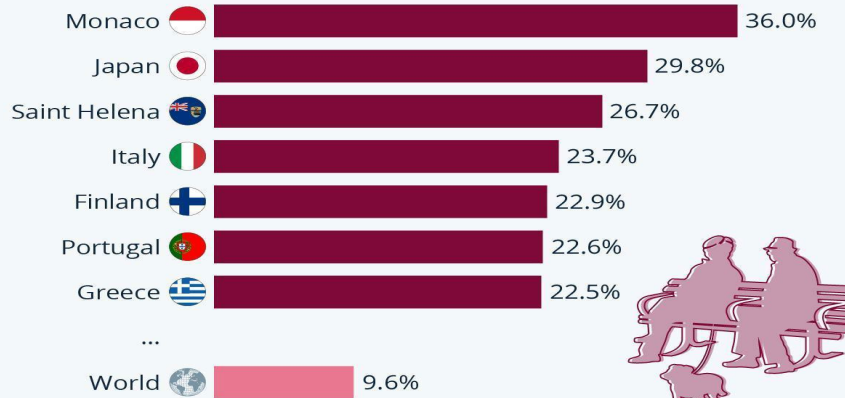
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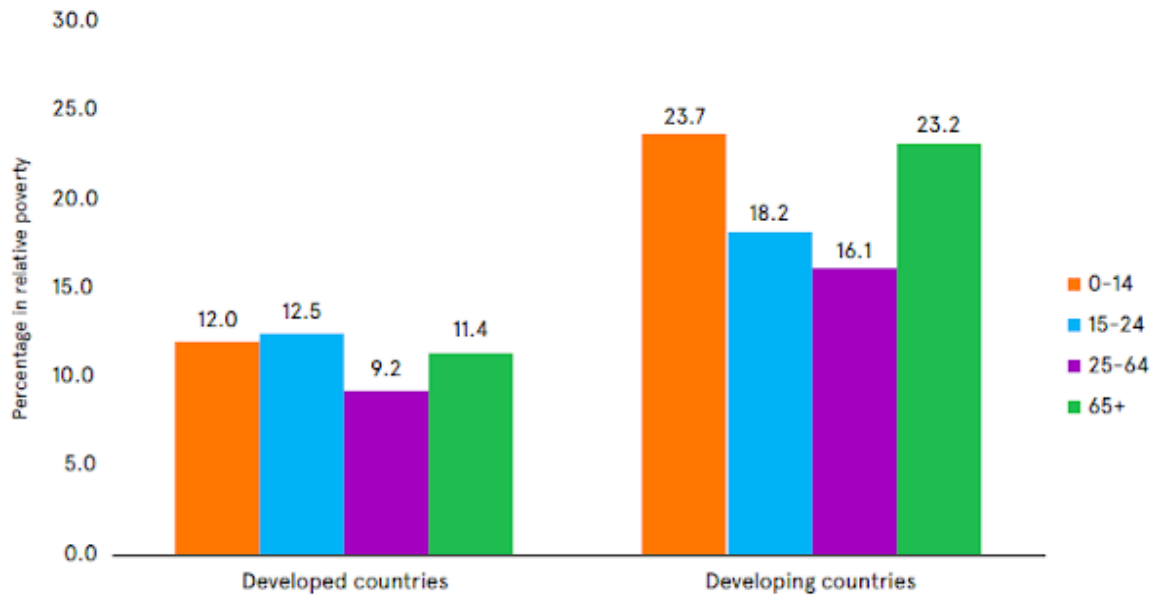
Share of older persons living in relative poverty by level of education, 2019 (or latest year with data)
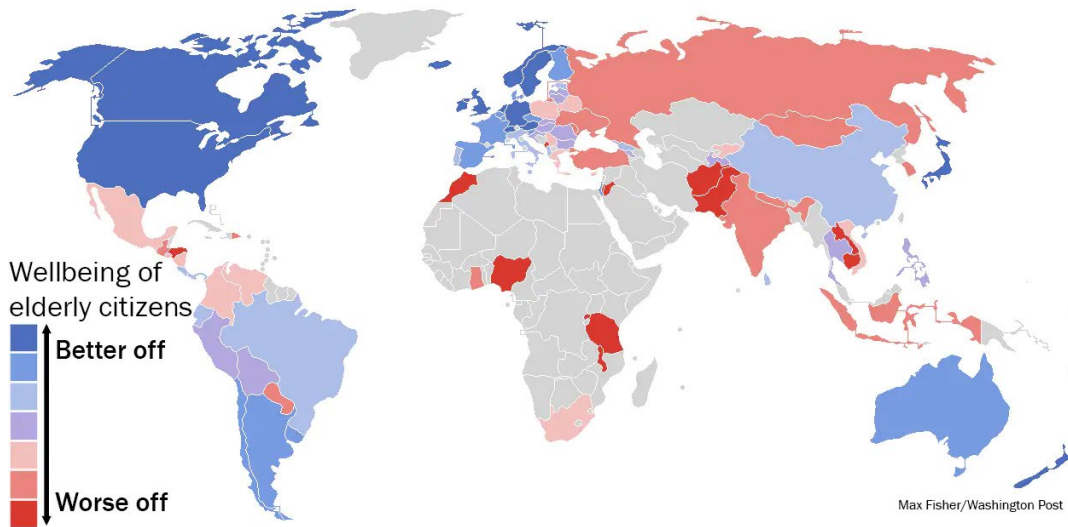
The World's Aging Societies
Estimated share of population aged 65+ in 2021
by country/area

Country/area	Share
Monaco	36.0%
Japan	29.8%
Saint Helena	26.7%
Italy	23.7%
Finland	22.9%
Portugal	22.6%
Greece	22.5%
...	
World	9.6%

Source: United Nations Population Division

statista

Wellbeing of elderly citizens
Better off
Worse off

Max Fisher/Washington Post

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