Age of Climate Change

Opportunities and Risks of Climate Change for an Ageing Population

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Growing Old in a Changing Climate
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Structure

- Challenges
- Age
- Contributor
- Casualty
- Champion
- Co-benefits
- Conclusion
The Challenges

At the global level, the number of older persons is expected to exceed the number of children for the first time in 2045

(UNDESA, 2009)
Population over 60 by region

- **Oceania**: 6 million in 2010, < 12 million in 2050
- **North America**: 65 million in 2010, 125 million in 2050
- **Latin America & the Caribbean**: 59 million in 2010, 186 million in 2050
- **Africa**: 55 million in 2010, 213 million in 2050
- **Europe**: 161 million in 2010, 236 million in 2050
- **Asia**: 414 million in 2010, 1,236 million in 2050
### Rise of a Consuming Global Middle Class

Share of the global middle class and spending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and South America</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Middle class – households with daily expenditures between USD10 and USD100 per person in purchasing power parity terms

Globally, the size of the middle class could increase from 1.8 billion people to 3.2 million by 2020 and to 4.9 billion by 2030.

Almost all growth (85%) will occur Asia

Source: OECD (2010)
IPCC fourth assessment (2007)

• A probable increase in temperatures of 1.8 - 4°C (3.2 – 7.2°F) by the end of the century

• Sea levels are most likely to rise by 28-43 cm

• More intense and longer droughts have been observed

• Arctic ice cover is shrinking

• Increase frequency of extreme weather events

• 90% certain that climate change is due to human activity
Age is Just A Number
Changing face of old age

Diverse  Active  Living longer
Redefining Age

• **Chronological Age** in longer an accurate indicator of how an individual will behave or cope in old age

• We need an objective measure that defines **individual** in terms of their **actual ability** rather than being based on how long they have been alive
Functional age

- Social
- Psychological
- Chronological
- Biological
Contributor
The baby boomers (50-64)

• First generation to grow up in the consumer society
• Many are in the highest earning years
• Different attitudes to ageing than their forefathers
• High number want to work beyond state pension age
The seniors (65-74)

- Grew up in years of austerity
- Majority have a low income
- Tend to be debt averse and prompt bill payers
- Dislike waste
- Experienced bereavement and retirement
The elders (75+)

- Share same characteristics as the Seniors
- Lived through great hardship
- Coping with increase care needs and declining health
- High demand for warmth
- Reduction in physical mobility
The carbon footprint is the total amount of carbon emissions which result directly and indirectly from the lifestyle choices of an individual.

Energy

Travel

Waste

Consumables
Direct and indirect emissions

This is what the emissions from Consumption actually measures:
Age related carbon footprint

Source: Haq et al., 2007, 2010
Percentage difference in carbon emissions by age

**Travel**

**Home & energy**

**Food & drink**

**Consumables**
Over 50s warm to the jet-set lifestyle ‘in dark’ on climate changes issues

The double standards of the would-be green greys

Lewis Smith
Environment Institute at the University of York concludes.
Researchers calculated the

Well-travelled over-50s

THE over-50s are responsible for more carbon emissions than any other age group, according to research.

Yet they are most worried about climate change, and want stronger Government leadership to combat the problem.

Researchers at the University of York found that those aged 50-63 have a ‘carbon footprint’ of 13.52 tons each per year compared with the UK average of 11.81 tons.

Key factors are high car use, holidays abroad and eating out. At the same time, members of the age group fear climate change and most believe they are already experiencing its effects.

They want to take action, but are frustrated by barriers that prevent them from engaging in a low-carbon lifestyle.

Dr Gary Haq, lead author of the report, said: ‘To close the gap between concern for climate change and the impact of current lifestyles, government needs to make a low-carbon lifestyle an easier option not just for the over-50s but for all.’
Casualty
Vulnerability to Climate Change

Threat

Sensitivity

Climate Change

Interaction

Exposure

Interaction

Coping capacity

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SEI
STOCKHOLM ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE
Exposure

- Heat Waves
- Floods
- Storms
- Drought
Climate Change

Direct
- Temperature changes
- Extreme weather events
- Rainfall

Indirect
- Homelessness
- Disruption of essential services
- Disruption of health/assistive technologies
- Financial loss
- Anxiety stress
- Health effects

Directly:
- Heat Waves
- Flooding
- Storms
- Rise in UV skin cancer
- Air pollution events
- Increase in: Food/water/vector borne disease

Cumulative
Compounding pre-existing health and social conditions
What Determines Individual Sensitivity?

Access to information
State of health

Quality of public services

Social support system
Geographic location

Income
Threats

• Disruption to an individual’s way of life and routine

• Anything that affects what individual for a good quality of life:
  - quality of neighbourhood
  - social networks and community
  - material conditions
  - health and wellbeing
Threats in Later Life

Climate change

 Decline in physical strength

 Loss of social network

 Loss of income

 Deterioration of environmental conditions

 health
Coping Capacity

How adaptable an individual is to climate change is dependent on:

**Individual capacities** (e.g. wealth, health and education)

**Social networks** (e.g. family, friends, community institutions, voluntary groups)

**Social protection** (e.g. welfare, information)
Champion
Agents of Change for Mitigation and Adaptation

- Peer to peer awareness raising
- Mentoring individuals and teams
- Championing specific issues
- Intergenerational knowledge exchange
- Monitors of local environmental change
Champions

Green Sages

Suzuki Elders
Co-Benefits Approach to Older People and Climate Change
Better Life in Later Life

- Access to information
- State of health
- Quality of public services
- Social support system
- Geographic location
- Income
Different Labels but same idea

Community

Sustainable

Liveable

Low carbon

Resilient

Green

Healthy

Age Friendly
Holistic Approach

Quality of Life
Resilient, Low Carbon, Socially Cohesive Communities?

Transport - efficient, safe, reliable

Housing – energy efficient and age proof

Land use – compact design and age friendly

Community – inclusive, cohesive

Accessibility – local services
Conclusions
Older People and Climate Change Issue
Raising the Profile of the Issue

- Demonstrate the social, economic and environmental co-benefits that produce age-friendly solutions
- Understanding the unique geographical and socio-economic contexts
- Undertake action-oriented interdisciplinary research to engage older people and wider community on the issues at different levels
- Raise the awareness of the issue at the local, regional, national and international level
- Develop the evidence base to demonstrate the issues to policy makers
- Develop an international Older People and Climate Change/Environment Network
Finally …

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Mahatma Gandhi
Older people and climate change

www.sei-international.org