

**PROMOTING MUTUAL SUPPORT
THROUGH OLDER PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATIONS
IN INDONESIA**

**Presented at the
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ON AGEING
10th GLOBAL CONFERENCE
MELBOURNE, 3-6 MAY 2010
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INDONESIA

33 Provinces
460 Regencies
4.952 District
67.697 sub-
districts



Indonesia, an archipelago consisting of 17.508 islands, +/- 6.000 inhabited

Population 220 million. Older persons Population: 19.5 million

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia

- Is the fourth most populous country in the world
- The tenth largest ageing population
- In absence of universal pension and health provision

Despite the increase in the number of the older population, ageing has not yet been identified as an important policy issue .

Existing policies and programs do not cover the needs of the majority of the aged population, as they intend to treat older persons as if their needs and concerns are the same

The needs and capacities of older persons warrant special attention since they are a vulnerable group with varied needs and abilities.

Recognizing its limitations and acknowledging the important role of the community in social development, Government encouraged the civil society through NGOs and social organizations in activities for the older persons.

Background

Population Ageing is often seen as “a burden:” placed on families, communities and governments

This wrong perception is countered by community-based older person’s associations, as knowledge, experience and wisdom of older persons has repeatedly proven to be valuable contributions to the country.

WHAT ARE OLDER PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATIONS (OPA) ?

Older People's Associations are innovative community-based organizations of older people, aimed at improving the living conditions for its members and development of the community they live in

OPAs utilize the unique resources and skills of older people to provide effective social support, facilitate activities and deliver services for its members and community at large

Older people tend to remain in their communities, providing continuity to the association and its activities, thus contributing to the sustainability of the organization

Their contribution – as carers, advisers, mediators, mentors and breadwinners is invaluable, but frequently unrecognized.

Harnessing and nurturing such capacities through OPAs has proven to be a decisive contribution to development, theory and practice.

OPAs in Indonesia

OPAs are a mechanism for older persons to participate in society, provide mutual support to each other, contribute to the community and improve their quality of life

All their activities are managed and funded by themselves in responding to the needs and concerns of their members, on the basis of community solidarity and voluntary participation

These organizations are independent and self-reliant, and many continue to flourish despite the economic crisis.

Thus, community-based care for the elderly has demonstrated its viability as a sustainable alternative to institutional care, even in the context of social and economic instability.

OPAs in Indonesia ... continued

Data from the Ministry of Social Affairs shows that there are 1.896 registered older persons associations, its members varied from 40 to 400 members.

Their missions are varied:

Some target the poor and frail older persons, some target the better-off, others are professional organizations, others cover the retired civil servant or army retirees etc.

The traditional stereotype of older persons supported by the family is increasingly irrelevant due to demographic changes, although the family remains the primarily source of care for the elderly for cultural, religious as well as economic reasons.

With an increasingly older age structure, the biggest challenge lies in providing support to the elderly, especially as their needs and abilities are varied.

PROMOTING MUTUAL SUPPORT THROUGH COMMUNITY BASED OPAs

OPAs work closely with a wide range of community members besides the local authority, enabling them to make positive contributions in the following areas:

- Building livelihood security, access to micro credit, revolving loans, start-up grants, income generating activities to alleviate poverty**
- Improving healthy life style, healthy environment, health-care, home care and community-based care, linkage with local health centers**
- Promoting participatory governance, raising right and entitlements of older persons and articulation in expressing their needs to policy makers based on justice for all.**
- Act as senior citizen watch to ensure their rights and entitlements.**

CHALLENGES

The contributions of older persons associations in reducing poverty are constrained by their inability to manage the risks and vulnerabilities of engaging in markets.

Reducing the risks faced by poor older persons through reliable social protection instruments can help to increase productivity and stimulate growth by encouraging OPAs to engage in higher yield activities.

Reducing risk also means poor people do not have to fall back on coping strategies that can lead to long-term poverty traps, such as selling their assets or depriving their family members of food, schooling and health services.

CONCLUSIONS

Policies need to create the conditions and remove the obstacles to the participation of older persons in the development process through older persons associations by increasing access to credit, labour and by investing in basic social services, social protection, and infrastructure.

The entrepreneurial efforts and mutual support of the older persons need to be acknowledged and encouraged.

Policies need to make legal protection and economic opportunities not the privilege of the few, but the right for all, including older persons associations.



THANK YOU