

# Towards Longevity-Ready Societies: Insights from Older Persons and Global Stakeholders

Findings from IFA Global Surveys and Multi-Sectoral Townhall  
at the Midpoint of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing

## The Global Reality



Population ageing is no longer a future challenge, but a defining feature of today's global landscape. Longer lives reflect major advances in health and development, but they are also exposing gaps in how our systems are designed, financed, and governed. Across regions, ageing is intersecting with labour markets, health systems, urban environments, and economies. The question is no longer whether societies will age, but whether they are prepared to respond in a coordinated and inclusive way.



## About the Surveys and Multi-Sectoral Townhall

Between August 2025 and January 2026, the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) launched two global surveys alongside a multisectoral townhall to capture both lived experiences and system-level perspectives. The older person's survey gathered experiences from 911 respondents aged 60–94 across 58 countries and all six World Health Organization (WHO) regions. In parallel, the multi-sectoral engagement survey captured insights from 158 stakeholders across 45 countries, including civil society, practitioners, academia, government, and industry. A global townhall in January 2026 brought these voices together to identify shared challenges, emerging opportunities, and priorities for collective action at the midpoint of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing and beyond.

# Understanding the Lived Experiences of Older Persons<sup>1</sup>

## Older persons believe their contributions are valuable

There is a profound disparity between the self-perception of older persons and the value assigned to them by society. Older persons think that they have something valuable to contribute but are less confident that others recognise this value.



**92%**

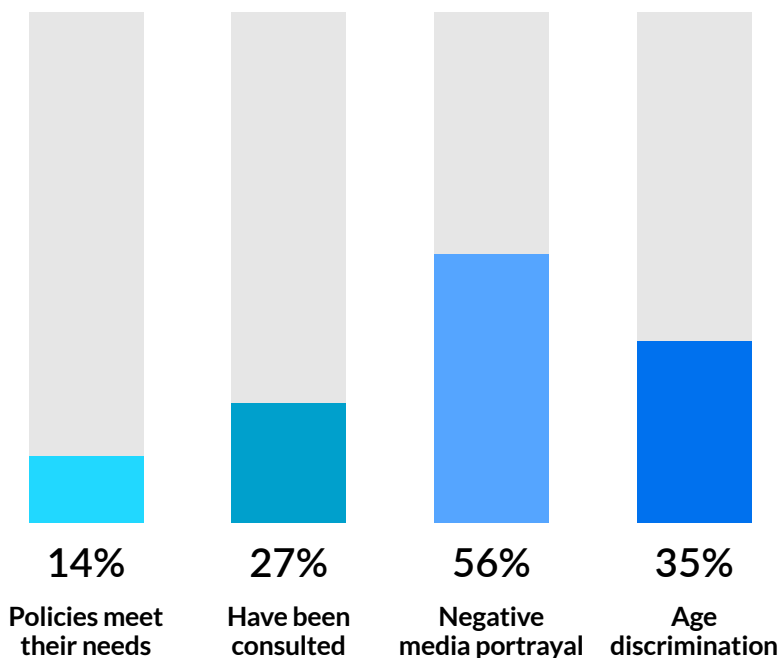
Believe they have something valuable to contribute because of their age



**65%**

Feel others recognise their value

## Pervasive ageism and exclusion



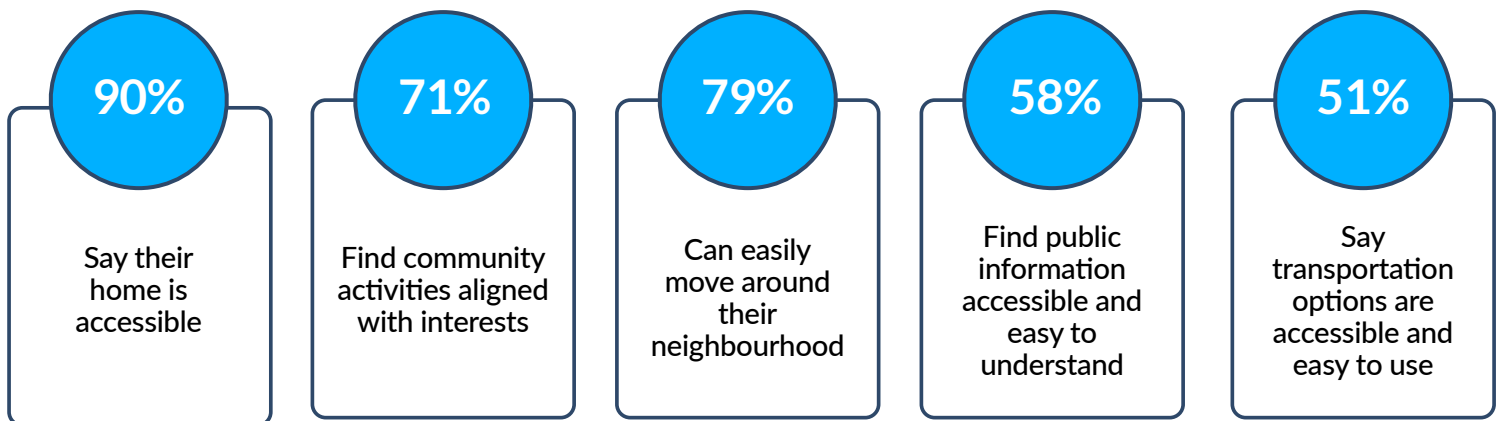
Ageism and exclusion are significant concerns, especially in decision-making.

- Only **14%** say government policies meet the needs of people their age
- Only **27%** have been consulted on issues affecting older adults
- **56%** feel older people are not portrayed positively in media
- **35%** have experienced age-based discrimination

<sup>1</sup> The results presented in this report are based on responses from the English-language survey. However, the overall trends and themes identified are consistent with findings across all language versions of the survey.

## Physical environments and communities present a mixed reality

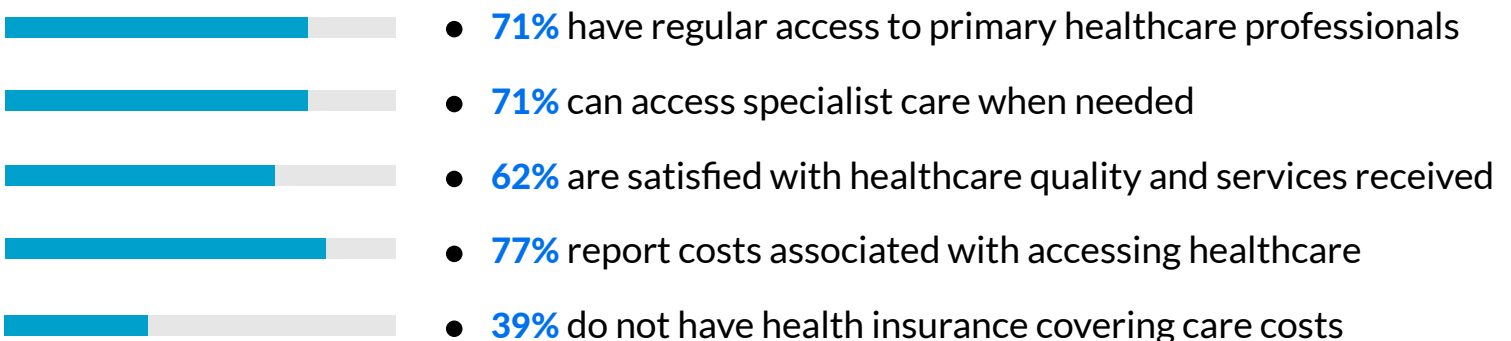
Respondents report high accessibility in their homes and the ability to connect socially yet community infrastructure, such as public transportation, is insufficient.



Written responses highlight the heterogeneous needs of older persons, underscoring discrepancies in services (such as for those living in rural communities, or those living with limited mobility) and the need for targeted interventions.

## Unequal access to health services

While access to healthcare services is generally reported as available, quality and affordability remain a critical barrier to equitable care.





Preventative and functional assessments, such as assessment of mobility, nutrition, cognition, vision and hearing are varied, indicated limited attention to proactive or preventative health. Outcomes of these assessments are mixed, indicating unequal follow-up or care pathways.

## Long-term care - a growing concern

Despite some reported availability of long-term care, significant gaps remain, with growing reliance on services alongside concerns around cost, quality, access, and the mounting burden on family carers.

Written responses highlight concerns about:



Cost



Access



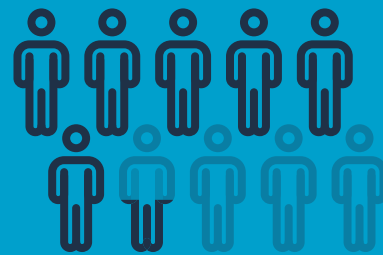
Quality of care



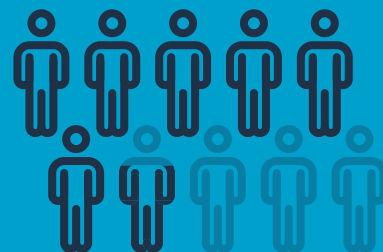
Treatment of older adults



Caregiver burden



**64%** say long-term care services are available in their community



**67%** expect to rely on formal care services in the future

Family carers, including older persons, are relied upon to provide care

Family caregiving is both widespread and reciprocal, with many older persons simultaneously providing and expecting care, underscoring the reliance on family-based support systems.



45%

Currently provide care to family or loved ones

50%

Expect to provide care in the future

46%

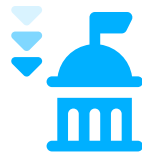
Expect to receive care from loved ones themselves

## Hearing the Perspectives of Ageing and Cross-cutting Sectors

### Key barriers limit progress in healthy ageing agenda



Low public awareness



Limited action from government



Inadequate funding



Insufficient coordination among stakeholders

Other key barriers noted include ageism, geopolitical and economic instability, the digital divide, and critical gaps in age-disaggregated data.

### Key enablers to drive change

Resource mobilisation, public engagement and awareness, support in advocating to local governments, better data and research related to healthy ageing, and knowledge and best practices sharing.

## Gap between global frameworks and local action

Responses underscore a disconnect between global frameworks and local uptake, with awareness of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing outpacing practical uptake and policy progress.



- **80%** are aware of the Decade and its aim
- **40%** believe the Decade has been successful in advancing policy actions
- While tools like the WHO Age friendly Cities Guide are rated as useful by many, ~**one-third** of all respondents have not used it

## Trends to watch for

The findings highlight emerging trends with strong potential to accelerate healthy ageing and longevity:



Integrated care pathways



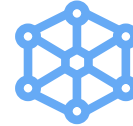
Public-private partnerships



Workforce development



Prevention and lifestyle science



Technological transformation



Intergenerational programmes

## Signs of progress

Townhall discussions identified sources of hope and confidence that progress on healthy ageing is possible:



- Amplified voices of older persons
- Intergenerational collaboration and engagement
- Growing global awareness on population ageing
- Increasing collaboration and commitment across sectors
- Evidence driven scaling and strategic investment in healthy ageing

# Turning Insight into Action

Survey findings and townhall discussions point to clear priorities for collective action:

## **Reframing Ageing, Tackling Ageism, and Inclusion of Older Persons' Voices**

Position ageing as a positive, lifelong process and ensure older persons' voices shape policy and decision-making.

## **Integration & Cross-Sector Collaboration**

Align health, social care, and cross-sector efforts to better connect policy with local realities, building practical coalitions across the state, civil society, private sector, and other partners.

## **Making the Economic Case for Investment**

Addressing funding gaps in the care workforce and position ageing as a driver of innovation and sustainable economic growth.

## **Advancing Rights-Based Approaches**

Advance legal frameworks, including a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, to strengthen accountability and enable effective policy implementation.

## **Strengthening Community & Intergenerational Approaches**

Invest in community-based support and intergenerational initiatives that support independence, social cohesion, and resilience, moving from “age-friendly” to “age-ready” societies.

## **JOIN US**

These insights reflect a collective opportunity to act. The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) invites partners across sectors to connect and shape the next phase of action on healthy ageing and longevity together.

Learn more at [ifa.ngo](https://ifa.ngo)