

# How can adequacy of state policy towards the needs of the elderly people during the pandemic be strengthened?

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# About the project

**Name:** “Ways of strengthening policies adequate to the needs of citizens over age 65 during the Coronavirus pandemic”

**Target:** Situation analysis and preparation of recommendations

**Sponsor:** Board of CSF, EaP

**Performance date:** 15.12.2020 – 28.02.2021

# An important note on the adequacy of state policy

Adequacy of state policy stands for the adequacy related to the Pandemic period analyzed within the project.

In other words, how did decisions made during the Pandemic period measure up to the life style and life quality of people above age 65 without letting them worsen?

# Statistics

Year 2020:

Number of people aged 65-69 = 229.3 thousand,  
or 3% of the whole population;

≥ age 70 = 420.6 thousand,  
or 4.2% of the whole population

The latest gender statistics of this age period  
date back to year 2009.

# Needs of people over age 65 that can be seriously affected during the pandemic

- Financial situation;
- Nutrition;
- Health care;
- Utilities' provision;
- Opportunities of communication with relatives and friends;
- Freedom of activities;
- Freedom of hobbies, sports, close / far distance travelling and entertainment;
- other

UN Principles for Older Persons adopted by  
General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16  
December 1991

1. Independence (not to depend on anyone);
2. Participation;
3. Care;
4. Self-fulfilment;
5. Dignity

# UN Principles for Older Persons adopted by General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991

## **Independence**

1. Older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health-care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help;
2. Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income-generating opportunities;
3. Older people should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labor force takes place;
4. Older persons should have access to appropriate educational and training programs;
5. Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities;
6. Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible;

# UN Principles for Older Persons adopted by General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991

## **Participation**

7. Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations;
8. Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities;
9. Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons;



# UN Principles for Older Persons adopted by General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991

## Care

10. Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values;
11. Older persons should have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness;
12. Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care;
13. Older persons should be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment;
14. Older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and quality of their lives;

# UN Principles for Older Persons adopted by General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991

## **Self-fulfilment**

15. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential;

16. Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society;

## **Dignity**

17. Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse;

18. Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

# Legal acts, programs and projects related to the life of people over age 65 during the pandemic

## 1. Acts adopted before the pandemic:

- Pension Law;
- Law on Social Services;
- State Program on strengthening Social Protection of elderly citizens;
- other

## 2. Acts adopted during the pandemic:

- Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers dated March 23, 2020;
- Actions Plan approved by the Act of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 04.04.2020;
- Building a society for all ages: Promotion of the Active aging project in Azerbaijan;
- other

# Law of AR on Social Services (2011)

Important norms:

## **Article 1. Basic concepts**

1.0.1. **social services** - complex actions directed to liquidation of social problems of a person (or a family) living a difficult life and establishment of opportunities to participate in public life with other people on equal basis;

1.0.2. **difficult life situation** - a situation that creates a basis for acceptance of a person (or a family) into social services and objectively disrupts life activities, leaving no possibilities of being solved independently;

## **Article 6. State duties in the sphere of social services**

6.0.2. Support of participation of municipalities, NGOs and legal entities and individuals in providing social services to the people in need of it;

# Law of AR on Social Services.

## **Article 8. Rights of a person (or a family) in hard living conditions**

8.0.1. to be able to benefit from social services provided by social service providers in accordance with this Law in case of reasons based in article 7 of this Law;

8.0.2. to be able to apply for social services;

8.0.3. to be informed about the possibility, rules and terms of being provided with social services, forms and types of social services as well as personal rights and responsibilities;

8.0.4. to be able to participate in definition and evaluation of the necessity of social services;

8.0.5. to be able to choose the facility providing social services, taking into account the nature of demand for social services;

8.0.6. to be able to accept or refuse provision of social services;

8.0.7. to be able to demand respect towards honor and dignity and humane attitude from social services' providers as well as complain about their actions (or lack of actions) administratively and (or) judicially;

8.0.8. to be provided with conditions meeting sanitary-hygienic requirements in social service institutions;

8.0.9. to be provided with a separate area in order to perform religious rituals as long as they don't violate internal rules and regulations;

8.0.10. to be provided with mass media;

8.0.11. to be able to demand confidentiality of personal data;

8.0.12. *to be provided with free psychological assistance in accordance with the Law of Azerbaijan Republic on "Psychological Assistance"*

# "State Program on strengthening social security of elderly citizens"

## 2. MAIN GOALS AND TASKS OF THE STATE PROGRAM

The main goal of the State Program is to achieve strengthening social protection of elderly citizens. Here are the main tasks of the State Program:

- increase and implementation of rights of elderly citizens in the sphere of social security;
- ensuring participation of elderly citizens in social, economic and political life of society;
- taking actions in order to meet social and cultural requirements of elderly citizens;
- protecting elderly citizens' health;
- ensuring close cooperation between state, civil society and private sector towards the solution of aging problem;
- strengthening the scientific basis of ensuring social security of elderly citizens.

The State Program identifies steps necessary to strengthen social security of elderly citizens, taking into account the development specifications of present economic, political and demographic processes in the country.

# "State Program on strengthening social security of elderly citizens"

3. Measures to be implemented within the framework of the State Program:
  - 3.1. Ensuring rights of elderly citizens in the sphere of social security (11 measures)
  - 3.2. Protection of elderly citizens' health (8 measures)
  - 3.3. Measures to develop integration of elderly citizens into society (6 measures)
  - 3.4. Strengthening the scientific basis of elderly citizens' social security (6 measures)

# Acts related to people above age 65 issued during the Pandemic

**1. 23 Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers issued on March 23, 2020.** According to this decree, a special quarantine regime was set from 00:00, 24.03.2020 until 00:00 of April 20. People over age 65 were not allowed to leave their homes during this period. It was also stated in this decree that people from this category who lived alone should be provided with social services.



# Acts related to people above age 65 issued during the Pandemic

**2. An Action Plan was approved by the Order of Cabinet of Minister dated 04.04.2020.** One of the actions was to “provide home based social services to **lonely people** above age 65 and look after those who are in need of a special care in social service institutions”. Implementation of this action was entrusted to MLSP and its date was set to April - May 2020. According to the document, this activity would cover 14 thousand people.

# Establishing a society for all ages: Promotion of Active Aging Program in Azerbaijan (September 22, 2020)

An international project has been launched in Azerbaijan, to improve the welfare of the elderly citizens. Implementation of the project will be funded by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan (MLSPP), DOST Agency and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

People above age 65 are the main target group of this project. Detailed information about people from this category and their needs and opportunities will be prepared within the framework of this project. A number of other actions will be carried out to increase public awareness on aging cases.

At the moment, selection process of trainers in various fields is going on within the framework of the project. Trainings are planned to start on October 1 – International Day of Older Persons. The project is expected to cover more than 20 thousand people.

# Project related analysis directions on meeting the needs

- 1) Pension and other incomes (entrepreneurship, profit / guarantee from economic activity, support of relatives, friends and philanthropists);
- 2) Nutrition situation;
- 3) Health services;
- 4) Effectiveness of communication with central and local state institutions;
- 5) Effectiveness of volunteers' support;
- 6) Role of gender factor;
- 7) Other indicators of life quality;
- 8) Adequacy of decrees related to people above age 65 issued during the pandemic.

# SURVEY conducted amongst 1000 respondents above age 65 on their conditions during Pandemic

**Task:** to understand the situation directly from people, rather than reports of state agencies.

Main questions determined in the survey:

1. Whether the incomes of people above age 65 changed during the pandemic;
2. Usage of call center services - 142;
3. Provision of social services by state;
4. Being under patronage or not;
5. Usage of services provided by health institutions;
6. Sufficiency of nutrition;
7. Appeal to government agencies;
8. Support by volunteers;
9. Support by businesses;
10. Whether the support was different depending on gender;
11. Awareness of issued acts;
12. Main difficulties encountered during the pandemic.

# Interpretation of survey results

1. No problems in pension payments;
2. Half of those engaged in entrepreneurship activity lost their income;
3. More than 70% of respondents rely on the support by family members. At the same time, 3 out of 5 help somebody else;
4. Elderly citizens rarely apply to government agencies for help. Main reason here is not having enough information. Turns out, 3 out of 4 didn't even know how to do it;
5. Half of the respondents are not even registered in health institutions. This is something to be worried about. Because on one hand chronic deceases are commonly seen in elderly citizens and on the other, they don't have enough funds to apply for paid medical care.

# Interpretation of survey results

6. Majority of those who were registered and did receive a medical care (3 out of 4) were satisfied with it. Besides, respondents didn't confirm that medical care institutions were completely corrupt;
7. Nutrition level of 20% of the respondents was not satisfying;
8. Volunteer culture development is far from desirable. Besides, people in need of volunteer support are not aware of these opportunities;
9. There are no gender related problems in obtaining support;
10. Vast majority of the respondents are unaware of laws and other acts that are important to them;
11. Stress was the main problem they've gone through during the pandemic.

# Union of Volunteer Organizations of Azerbaijan, <http://konullu.gov.az>

Union of Volunteer Organizations of Azerbaijan was established in response to the call of the president of Republic of Azerbaijan, in order to contribute to all measures taken by the state to prevent the spread of Coronavirus infection (COVID-19) and its consequences.

# Union of Volunteer Organizations of Azerbaijan

## Members:

- 1) "ASAN Volunteers" Organization,
- 2) "One Volunteer" Student Cooperation PU,
- 3) "DOST Volunteer" Program,
- 4) "Agricultural Development Volunteers" PU,
- 5) "Transportation Volunteers" Program,
- 6) "Migration Volunteer" PU,
- 7) "Formula 1" Volunteers Program,
- 8) "Customs Volunteer" Team,
- 9) "Tourism Volunteers" Organization,
- 10) "Eco-Volunteers" Group,
- 11) "AFFA and Euro-2020" Vol.Prog,
- 12) "Diplomacy Volunteers" Group,
- 13) "Young Volunteers" Movement,
- 14) "Azerbaijani Diaspora Volunteers" Program,
- 15) "SƏLİS Volunteers" Public Union,
- 16) "Justice Volunteers" PU,
- 17) "Volunteer Food Supervisor" Program.



# Union of Volunteer Organizations of Azerbaijan

**“Let’s protect our elders”** campaign  
held between 2020-04-01 and 2020-06-30

As a result of physical activity of 375  
volunteers, 11.377 elderly people and  
families were supported during the  
campaign.

# Recommendations

1. Serious steps should be taken in order to raise public awareness of adopted normative documents and acts;
2. Work activities of government agencies (central or local) with elderly people must be strengthened;
3. Serious steps must be taken in direction of increasing status and capacities of municipalities as well as their establishment through democratic elections;
4. Civil Society Institutions' activity environment must be seriously improved;
5. Health care registration must fully cover elderly citizens;
6. Adequate nutrition must be ensured for the elderly citizens;
7. Necessary steps must be taken to develop Volunteer culture;
8. Legislation must be reviewed and brought to the level of UN principles on elderly citizens.

THANK YOU