

Results of the pilot study of Active Ageing Index in Georgia

I. Objective

The pilot study was conducted within the framework of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) project developed by European Centre Vienna in collaboration with the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the UNECE. As of December 2012, the AAI has been tested in 27 European Union (EU) member states. The purpose of the current study was to examine the possibilities and impediments in applying AAI in a country outside the EU area where different social statistical surveys are conducted.

II. Background

Georgia, like many other countries in the UNECE region, is experiencing rapid change in the population structure. In 2011 there were 4.5 million people living in Georgia, of which 14 percent (617 thousand) were of age 65 and older. According to estimates from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the total population in Georgia is expected to decrease over the next 20 years while the proportion of people aged 65 years and older is projected to increase to 22 percent in 2030 (UNDESA, 2010). These significant changes in age structure will also lead to an increase in the median age of population from 37.3 years in 2010 to 44.2 years in 2030 (UNECE, 2012).

Georgian population is ageing, mainly, due to the increase in life expectancy and, to a lesser degree, because of the low fertility rates. According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the total life expectancy in 2011 was 74.5 years. It has increased by approximately 3.2 years in the last decade. With regards to the total fertility rate in Georgia there is no clear trend over the last decade – the rates have been fluctuating from 1.39 in 2005 to 1.86 in 2009. The total fertility rate in 2011 was 1.69 which is still below the replacement level of 2.1 children that would be needed to ensure the replacement of generations.

In total, there are more women than men in Georgia, especially, in the older age groups. Women also live longer and healthier lives than men. The total life expectancy for women in 2011 were 78.6 years, while for men 70.2 years. The gap between men and women in life expectancy at age of 65 was increasing from 2000 (12.9 years for men, 15.7 years for women) and as from 2009 it is slightly narrowing down (13.6 years for men and 18 years for women).

III. Gathering data for the Active Ageing Index in Georgia

In order to collect data for the Active Ageing Index indicators, a field trip was carried out from the 22nd till 25th of October 2012 in Tbilisi. During the four day period, meetings were held with local authorities such as the National Statistics Office in Georgia and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs. Various NGOs and research institutions were also consulted, including the Union of Pensioners of Georgia, the Georgian Society of Gerontologists and the Georgian Center for

Population researches¹. Consultations with these organizations helped to identify the different data sources that could be used to collect data for the AAI, to understand the broader social and economic situation in Georgia and the specific data collection needs.

Most social statistical information in Georgia is gathered from the quarterly Integrated Household Survey conducted by the National Statistics Office of Georgia. The survey gathers labour market statistics, data on poverty, household income and expenditures.

Another survey that was widely used to obtain data for the AAI indicators was the Generations and Gender Survey in Georgia. Data were used from the 2nd wave of the survey that was conducted by the Georgian Center for Population researches in 2009. This survey examines the relationships between partners, different generations (parents, grandparents and children) and gender (men and women). It also collects data on income, health and well-being.

Important additional insights were obtained from the 2nd wave of the Georgian Welfare Monitoring Survey that was conducted by the University of York in partnership with the UNICEF Georgia office. The survey collects data on different dimensions of the well-being and welfare. The following surveys (conducted in 2010) were also examined: Georgian health utilization and expenditure survey, the Reproductive Health Survey Georgia and the Georgian Crime Survey.

In total, out of 22 individual indicators that form the Active Ageing Index², data were obtained for 18 indicators. Data are not available or could not be estimated for the following indicators:

- *Share of healthy life expectancy at age 55* – World Health Organization (WHO) produces data on disability-adjusted life expectancy that could potentially be used to calculate the share of healthy life expectancy at age 55. Unfortunately, the latest data are available only for the year 1999, published in the World Health Report 2000. Taking into account that these data are outdated, they were not considered for the purpose of this exercise.
- *Adult learning* – until 2012, the Integrated Household Survey did not compile data on adult learning. However, the new questionnaire will include questions on adult learning and first data will be available by mid-2013.
- Data are not collected in Georgia for the indicators on *voluntary work* and the use of *information and communications technologies (ICT)* by older adults.

IV. Results

The overall index³ accounts for 39.8 points which means that there is approximately 60 percent of untapped potential for active and healthy ageing of the older population in Georgia. When looking at the contribution of each domain to the overall AAI, results indicate that the domains of paid employment and independent and autonomous living have the biggest impact on the overall AAI. The domain-specific numerical values also indicate that gender differences are more pronounced in the domains of paid employment and social activity and participation of older people. More specific findings from the data obtained are listed below.

¹ See Annex I for the full list of persons consulted.

² For the AAI methodology please see Zaidi et al (2013) “Active Ageing Index 2012: Concept, Methodology and Final Results”, available at:

<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>.

³ Please see Annex II for the full list of AAI indicators, definitions and data obtained for Georgia.

1. Employment of older workers

According to the data received from the National Statistics Office, Georgia has high employment rates in all age categories included under this domain. This leads to the fact that the AAI value is mostly driven by the achievements in employment domain.

There are, however, large differences between men and women in paid employment where the employment rate for men is on average 12.8 percentage points higher than for women. These differences might be partly attributed to the fact that older women are more involved in unpaid activities, such as taking care of their own or other households, taking care of their children and grandchildren or other elderly. Unfortunately, a Time Use Surveys that would help in understanding the specific organisation of activities for men and women has never been conducted in Georgia.

2. Social activity and participation of older people

Political participation in Georgia is measured by the share of older people in the parliament. It is a proxy indicator that captures one aspect of political participation. Data received from the Parliament of Georgia on the structure of parliament as of 2012⁴, shows that the proportion of people aged 55 years and older in the parliament constitutes 27.3 percent. In total there are 150 members in the parliament among which 18 are women and 132 are men. Of age 55 and older - 39 are men and only 2 are women.

Evidence related to the social activity indicators of care provision by older people to their children and grand-children and to other older adults show that, in total, 10.1 percent of older people provide regular care to their children and grandchildren and 5.0 percent provide regular personal care to other older adults. Women, however, contribute more than men to the aforementioned care activities. Findings from the Generations and Gender Survey also show that men contribute less to the various household tasks, such as preparing daily meals or shopping for the food (Badurashvili et al., 2011).

3. Independent and autonomous living of older persons

The different aspects of how one can pursuit an independent and autonomous life based on good health, education, financial and physical security are considered under this domain. With regards to health, proxy indicator was used to estimate access to health care - the percentage of consultations where a lab test was prescribed and was affordable to be carried out by people aged 55 years and older. The results showed that most of older people in Georgia (94.5%) are able to afford lab tests. However, a better approximation of the access to health care is needed in the future.

Another health measurement is the physical exercise of older people. Results from the WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository showed that older men (76.7 %) are physically more active than older women (60.1%). Physical activity is measured as attaining more than 5 times 30 minutes of moderate activity per week, or more than 3 times 20 minutes of vigorous activity per week, or equivalent.

Autonomous living of older people is measured by the proportion of people living alone or with their partner. Interestingly, in Georgia, 8.3 percentage points more men (than women) live alone or with a partner in their own household. There are a lot less people living alone in Georgia as compared to the EU countries. This might be explained by the fact that multigenerational households are still very common in Georgia: "...cohabitation of distinctive generational couples in the same household is the

⁴ Data represents the latest results from the Georgian parliamentary election that was held on 1 October 2012

usual structure of family residential arrangements in Georgia: each second household includes at least one family member aged 60 years or older.” (Badurashvili et al.,2011, p. 60)

Results from the Georgian Crime Survey 2010 on physical safety show that 70.9 percent of all inhabitants and 65.7 percent of older people in Georgia are not worried at all of being physically attacked. According to other findings from this survey, Georgians in general feel safe in their country and do not avoid any person, or street, or area when walking (Glonti, 2010).

The results on financial security indicators (relative median income, poverty and material deprivation) are somewhat ambiguous. According to data received from the National Statistics Office, most of the people aged 65 and older are living in households which are not poor⁵ (89.6 %) with regards to the national relative poverty line. Also, older people are not economically worse off than their younger counterparts. The median disposable equivalised income for people aged 65 are almost the same as for people below 65 years.

Nevertheless, evidence from Generations and Gender Survey on material deprivation in Georgia shows a different picture of financial security in Georgia. According to data retrieved from the survey database, only 3.8 percent of people aged 65 and older can afford at least three out of the following nine items: to pay their rent, mortgage or utility bills; to keep their home adequately warm; to face unexpected expenses; to eat meat or proteins regularly; to go on holiday; and would like but cannot afford a television set, a washing machine, a car or a telephone. The Georgian Welfare Monitoring Survey measures material deprivation as lack of material goods⁶ and not as one’s ability to be able to afford certain items. According to the findings from this survey 20.5% pensioners in Georgia were materially deprived in 2011 (UNICEF, 2012).

Poverty as a major concern in Georgia is confirmed by the latest Millennium Development Goals report in Europe and Central Asia where it is stated that the population living in extreme poverty⁷ in Georgia is above 10 percent, which is higher than in most other emerging economies in the same region. (UNECE, 2012, p.42).

4. Capacity and enabling environment for active ageing

With regards to the overall capability to actively age, data provided by the National Statistics Office show that at age of 55 Georgians can expect to live another 23.8 years, while the EU-27 countries can expect to live on average 26.5 years. Evidence from EU countries also shows that there is a persistent gender imbalance between men and women with regards to life expectancy. Women at age of 55 live on average 4.9 years longer than men in EU-27 countries while older women in Georgia are expected to live 5.4 years longer than men.

To estimate the mental well-being of older people in Georgia a proxy indicator was used from the Generations and Gender Survey. Answers were counted together for different statements⁸ measuring one’s level of loneliness and depression. Majority of Georgians (54.2 %) ‘seldom or never’ feel sad or depressed and 29.1 percent ‘sometimes’ feel depressed. Interestingly, men feel on average less depressed than women, for example, 84 percent of men answered that they ‘seldom or never’ had crying spells, while only 50.4 percent of women answered the same.

⁵ Poverty in Georgia was measured using the national relative poverty line, which is set at 50% of the national equivalised disposable income.

⁶ Refers to a household lacking any were lacking at least five or more of the following items: a car, a cell phone, a washing machine, a television, a refrigerator, a vacuum cleaner and an iron.

⁷ Living on less than \$1.25 a day.

⁸ See Annex II, indicator 4.3 for more details on the exact questions asked.

Generations and Gender Survey metadata were also utilized to measure social connectedness of older people. One of the questions in the survey asks whether one can agree, partly agree or disagree with the following statement: ‘there are plenty of people that I can lean on in case of trouble’. According to the results, 24.5 percent agree and 47.5 percent partly agree with the aforementioned statement. Positive social connectedness of older people is more pronounced in the results from other questions of the same sort. For example, 45.4 percent older people affirmed that there are enough people that they can feel close to and 53.6 percent of Georgians say that they do not miss having people around. Although these questions do not measure the incidence of social contacts it, nevertheless, shows the quality of these contacts.

Georgia scores high in educational attainment of older people. Data coming from the National Statistics Office shows that 67.9 percent of all Georgians have upper secondary or higher education. Older women have achieved this education level by 5 percentage points more than men.

V. Impediments

During the data collection process several barriers were identified that impedes the successful estimation of the AAI in Georgia.

1. Limited social statistical information

The main data source for social statistical information in Georgia is the Integrated Household Survey. Although, the survey provides comprehensive information on various important aspects concerning the social environment in Georgia it does not meet the data needs of the AAI. To obtain data for the AAI indicators, data for EU-27 countries were gathered from ten different surveys and databases whereas for Georgia only five different data sources were possible to be used. In addition, the scarcity of data and limited selection of data sources could have had an impact on the quality of data (not necessarily the ‘best’, but the available data source was used to estimate some of the indicators).

2. Comparability of the results across countries

EU member states use a lot of standardized surveys, such as the European Social Survey or the European Quality of Life Survey that improves data comparability across the EU countries. Because of the differences in data sources used, the results of the overall AAI for Georgia are not directly comparable with the EU-27 countries. In many instances proxy indicators were used instead of the actual AAI indicators to compensate for the lack of data. For example, for the political participation indicator the proxy used was the share of people aged 55 years and older in the parliament. This indicator might not be the best approximation of the political participation; nonetheless, it does measure one aspect of political participation in Georgia.

3. Availability of gender and age disaggregated data

In some instances data were not suitable because of the lack of age-specific data. For AAI data are collected mostly for those aged 55 years and older. For example, healthy life expectancy in 2007 calculated by WHO is available for at birth only. Lack of age disaggregated data also prevented to use other proxies for the political participation indicator, such as, for example, the share of older voters. Gender disaggregated data were less of a concern, although, data used for physical security coming from the Georgian Crime Survey are available only for total men and women.

4. Replicability of the findings

The only social statistics survey carried out periodically is the Integrated Household Survey. The Generations and Gender Survey was carried out twice (in 2006 and 2009) as well as the Georgian Welfare Monitoring Survey (in 2009 and 2011). Other surveys, such as the Georgian health utilization and expenditure survey (2010) and Georgian Crime Survey (2010) are conducted on an ad hoc basis. It is, therefore, difficult to assume that similar surveys will be carried in the future. Better data collection is needed with regards to social statistics.

VI. Conclusion

The AAI pilot exercise helped to identify several data gaps with regards to measuring active ageing. Data are not collected in Georgia on voluntary work by older adults and the use of ICT and no estimates were available for healthy life expectancy at age of 55. Moreover, more precise estimates are needed for some of the proxy indicators used, such as the political participation, access to health care and material deprivation.

Looking at the numerical outcomes of this exercise, Georgia is performing particularly well in the domains of employment of older workers and independent and autonomous living of older people. According to the official statistical data, Georgia has high employment rates in all age categories covered under the AAI.

The overall value of AAI in Georgia is not comparable with EU-27 countries based on the fact that different data sources and proxy indicators are used. For the purpose of using AAI as a comparative tool, comparisons with the neighbouring countries of Azerbaijan or Armenia or other countries in the Caucasus region would be more appropriate.

With regards to active ageing, the results of the pilot study points to important policy challenges for achieving the full potential of older people in Georgia. For example, poverty measures such as the relative poverty indicator or median income of older people do not indicate a reason for concern, while material deprivation, on the other hand, is extremely high in Georgia.

Another concern is the gender difference in paid employment, care activities and life expectancy. Women are disadvantaged in the employment area and care activities. On the other hand, women live considerably longer than men as shown by the indicator of remaining life expectancy. Gender differences as well as material deprivation require special attention from national policy makers.

Although, the overall capacity to produce statistical surveys is low due to the budget constraints, there is a necessity to improve social statistical information in Georgia. Moreover, the lack of data can prevent national authorities of having evidence-based interventions and policies. Periodical social surveys should be carried out to complement the information currently collected by the Integrated Household Survey.

VII. References

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Annex I

List of experts consulted in the field mission to Tbilisi 22 – 25 October 2012

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Ms Neli Arglviani

Deputy Head of Union of Pensioners of Georgia

Ms Miza Jashi

Director of Prophylactics Center at Union of Pensioners

Ms Tatyana Zubiashvili

Vice-president of Georgian Society of Gerontologists,
Deputy Chief Editor of the scientific magazine “Gerontology and Geriatrics”

Ms Deli Jorbenadze

Professor, Scientific secretary
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Mr Vladimer Malvichko

Head of Olympic association for Aged people

Mr George Tsuladze

Institute of Demography

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Deputy Executive Director
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Annex II

List of AAI indicators, definitions and data obtained for Georgia

1) Contribution through paid activities/employment

Indicator	1.1 Employment rate for the age group 55-59		
Definition	Employment rate is the share of employed persons aged 55 to 59 in the population of the corresponding sex and age group		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 77.1	Women: 68.3	Total: 72.3

Indicator	1.2 Employment rate for the age group 60-64		
Definition	Employment rate is the share of employed persons aged 60 to 64 in the population of the corresponding sex and age group		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 74.9	Women: 58.8	Total: 65.8

Indicator	1.3 Employment rate for the age group 65-69		
Definition	Employment rate is the share of employed persons aged 65 to 69 in the population of the corresponding sex and age group		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 64.7	Women: 49.2	Total: 55.5

Indicator	1.4 Employment rate for the age group 70-74		
Definition	Employment rate is the share of employed persons aged 70 to 74 in the population of the corresponding sex and age group		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 50.7	Women: 39.8	Total: 44.1

2) Contribution through unpaid activities /non-marketed productive activities

Indicator	2.1. Voluntary work		
Data not available			

Indicator	2.2. Providing care to children and grandchildren		
Definition	Percentage of people aged 55 and older who provide care to children and grandchildren inside or outside the household. Answers 'yes' were counted from the following question: Over the last 12 month, have you given regular help with childcare to other people, including household members? (question 206 in the survey)		
Source	Gender and Generations Survey		
Year	2009		
Data	Men: 10.1	Women: 19.4	Total: 15.7

Indicator	2.3. Providing care to older adults		
Definition	Percentage of people aged 55 and older, who provide personal care to older adults inside or outside the household. Answers 'yes' were counted from the following question: Over the last 12 months, have you given people regular help with personal care such as eating, getting up, dressing, bathing, or using toilets? (question 710 in the survey)		
Source	Gender and Generations Survey		
Year	2009		
Data	Men: 5.0	Women: 9.0	Total: 7.4

Indicator	2.4. Political participation		
Definition	PROXY - Share of people aged 55 and older who are members of the parliament.		
Source	Parliament of Georgia		
Year	2012		
Data	Men: 29.5	Women: 11.1	Total: 27.3

3) Independent and autonomous living

Indicator	3.1 Physical exercise		
Definition	Share of people aged 55 and older who are attaining more than 5 times 30 minutes of moderate activity per week, or more than 3 times 20 minutes of vigorous activity per week, or equivalent		
Source	WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository		
Year	2008		
Data	Men: 76.7	Women: 60.1	Total: 67.0

Indicator	3.2 Access to health services		
Definition	PROXY - Percentage of consultations where a lab test was prescribed and was affordable to be carried out by people aged 55 years and older (base: all consultations)		
Source	Georgia Health Utilization and Expenditure Survey		
Year	2010		
Data	Men: 94.5	Women: 97.1	Total: 95.8

Indicator	3.3 Living independently		
Definition	Share of people aged 75 and older who live alone or with their partner in their own household to the total population of the same age. For men/women – to the total number of men/women of the same age.		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 40.4	Women: 32.1	Total: 35.1

Indicator	3.4 Financial security (1): relative median equivalised income		
Definition	Median equivalised disposable income for people aged 65 and above is divided to the median equivalised disposable income of those aged below 65.		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 0.97	Women: 1.04	Total: 0.99

Indicator	3.5 Financial security (2): older population not in poverty		
Definition	Share of population aged 65 years and older living in the households which are not in the extreme poverty is divided with the total number of population of the same age. The extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate is the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 50% of the median equivalised disposable income after social transfers.		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 88.5	Women: 91.4	Total: 89.6

Indicator	3.6 Financial security (3): older population not materially deprived		
Definition	Share of population aged 65 years and older who are able to afford at least three out of the following nine items: to pay their rent, mortgage or utility bills; to keep their home adequately warm; to face unexpected expenses; to eat meat or proteins regularly; a television set, a washing machine, a car or a telephone. (Answers to questions 1101, 1103 and 1104 combined)		
Source	Gender and Generations Survey		
Year	2009		
Data	Men: 3.9	Women: 3.7	Total: 3.8

Indicator	3.7 Physical safety		
Definition	Share of people aged 65 years and older who are not worried at all about being physically attacked. Question in the survey: to the statement 'worried about being physically attacked' respondents had to choose between one of the following answers – not worried at all, not very worried, not worried, fairly worried, very worried or worried.		
Source	Georgian Crime Survey		
Year	2010		
Data	Men: -	Women: -	Total: 65.7

Indicator	3.8 Adult learning		
Data	Data not available		

4) Capacity for active and healthy ageing / enabling environment

Indicator	4.1 Remaining life expectancy at age 55		
Definition	Remaining life expectancy at age 55		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 20.9	Women: 26.3	Total: 23.8

Indicator	4.2 Share of healthy life expectancy at age 55		
Data	Data not available		

Indicator	4.3 Mental well-being		
Definition	PROXY - Share of people aged 55 and older who experienced ‘seldom or never’ the following feelings during the previous week: (1) felt that could not shake off the blues even with help from family or friends, (2) felt depressed, (3) thought that life had been a failure, (4) felt fearful, (5) felt lonely, (6) had crying spells, (7) felt sad (question 720 in the questionnaire).		
Source	Gender and Generations Survey		
Year	2009		
Data	Men: 63.7	Women: 48.1	Total: 54.2

Indicator	4.4 Use of ICT by older adults		
Data	Data not available		

Indicator	4.5 Social connectedness		
Definition	PROXY - Share of people aged 55 and older who answered ‘yes’ to the following statement ‘There are plenty of people that I can lean on in case of trouble’. (question 719 in the questionnaire)		
Source	Gender and Generations Survey		
Year	2009		
Data	Men: 24.5	Women: 24.6	Total: 24.5

Indicator	4.6 Educational attainment		
Definition	Percentage of people aged 55-74 with upper or tertiary education level to the total number of the same age. For men/women – to the total number of men/women of the same age. Includes people who have completed the following: full general education (secondary school), certificate of handicraft education (primary education diploma), Bachelor degree or the diploma of any education program with the equivalent level, Master/residence graduated or the diploma of any education program with the equivalent level, Doctor or the diploma of any education program with the equivalent level.		
Source	National Statistics Office of Georgia		
Year	2011		
Data	Men: 65.8	Women: 70.8	Total: 67.9