



Lebanese Republic
Ministry of Social Affairs

The National Strategy for Older Persons in Lebanon 2020 -2030

Executive Summary



Background

The National Strategy for Older Persons in Lebanon (2020-2030) is the primary response to recommendations of international conferences calling for ensuring the health-related, social and economic rights of older people, and for working to reduce social disparities and achieve justice and equal opportunities for all. It also reflects calls for developing societies to ensure a decent and dignified life that preserves the rights and human dignity of older people.

This goal has prompted the Ministry of Social Affairs to mobilize efforts and to seek – in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and in cooperation with the Center for Studies on Aging in Lebanon (CSA) – to develop a national document that represents a guiding framework for action on this cross-sectoral issue.

The strategy was developed over a two-year period using a participatory approach. It benefited from a series of meetings and workshops involving representatives from the public and private sectors, civil society and older people themselves, making it inclusive and responsive to the needs and priorities of older people in various sectors. The Ministry of Social Affairs will continue to strive for the implementation of this strategy by devising operational action plans that will constitute an umbrella for all relevant interventions, programmes and activities, thus ensuring the required financing, rational spending, good investment of resources and integration of efforts at the national level to uphold the rights and issues of older people in Lebanon.

Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

a. Vision

Lebanon is a society for all ages, in which older people enjoy a safe and dignified life that fulfills the conditions of well-being and healthy life, while ensuring their active participation in an inclusive environment.

b. Mission

To lay the foundation for a sustainable social protection system for older people, one that values their skills and appreciates their life and professional experiences, while providing opportunities for their participation in their surroundings in a way that is consistent with our culture and community values, respects human rights, and promotes international frameworks and recommendations that Lebanon has committed to implementing.

c. Guiding principles

The strategy is based on four guiding principles:

- The Human Rights Charter: This strategy is not only related to welfare but is also formulated through the human rights lens, with a gender equality perspective, taking into account the State's obligations to international conventions and to its citizens;
- A life-cycle approach: Addressing older people's issues and working towards safe ageing is a lifelong process that does not begin at a specific age or after retirement;
- Shared responsibility: The issue of ageing is a shared individual and collective responsibility that rests with several sectors and must be prioritized in all national policies, strategies and action plans;
- Changing stereotypes about ageing: The strategy seeks to bring about radical change, both at the individual and collective levels, in how we understand and deal with the concept of ageing. It also seeks to promote a positive image of the potential and contributions of older persons to their communities and families.

Axes and Mechanisms

The National Strategy relied on a comprehensive framework inspired by the Arab Strategy for Older People and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which focused on three priority areas (older persons and development, the provision of health services and well-being in old age, and an enabling and supportive environment). The framework adopted by this National Strategy includes six main interrelated axes and four mechanisms of intervention. This framework aims to ensure a healthy, safe and participatory life in an age-friendly environment (figure 1).

The six axes are:

1. Promoting the physical and psychological health of older people.
2. Ensuring economic and social safety.
3. Enhancing the active participation and engagement of older people in society.
4. Providing family support and promoting intergenerational solidarity.
5. Creating a safe, supportive, and age-friendly physical environment.
6. Preventing violence and supporting older people victims of violence and those in crisis and conflict situations.

The four mechanisms that can be used individually and collectively to influence and induce change in any of the six axes are:

1. Policies and legislation.
2. Institutional arrangements and governance.
3. Capacity-building and awareness-raising.
4. Research, data and documentation.

The framework focuses on the close and interactive linkages between axes on the one hand, and between axes and mechanisms on the other. It also allows stakeholders to identify their own axes and to formulate relevant

policies and interventions using the four mechanisms, individually and/or jointly, that intersect with the six axes. The National Strategy calls for a plan of action on two parallel levels, the first is to design and implement sectoral policies and programmes specifically targeting older people, while the second is to mainstream the issues of older people in all sectors through a networking policy.

Figure 1. Axes and mechanisms of the National Strategy for Older Persons



Axes

Axis

National Goal

First axis

Promoting the physical and psychological health of older people

Promoting and providing preventive and therapeutic physical and psychological health for older people in accordance with a life-cycle approach and from a holistic perspective.

Second axis

Ensuring economic and social safety

Creating an enabling environment that guarantees economic and social security for all members of society and for older people in particular, based on the principles of equality, equity, solidarity and human rights.

Third axis

Enhancing the active participation and engagement of older people in society

Promoting a positive image of ageing and enhancing the active participation of older people and their engagement in all aspects of life, including political, economic, social, cultural and recreational life, depending on their needs, priorities and abilities.

Fourth axis

Providing family support and promoting intergenerational solidarity

Re-strengthening the values of intergenerational family and community solidarity, and developing initiatives to support home care and ageing in the place of residence.

Fifth axis

Creating a safe, supportive, and age-friendly physical environment

Promoting and developing urban environments (public buildings, outdoor spaces, transportation and housing) that take into account the needs of older people in urban and rural areas.

Sixth axis

Preventing violence and supporting older people victims of violence and those in crisis and conflict situations

Preventing violence and protecting, supporting and empowering older people victims of violence and those in crisis and conflict situations in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals embodied by the principle of "leaving no one behind".

Strategic Objectives

1. Working towards universal health coverage
2. Establishing and promoting the concept of health
3. Developing a comprehensive health care model that includes the provision of primary, therapeutic, physical and long-term care
4. Strengthening human resources to care for older people

1. Strengthening programmes to combat poverty and protect the most vulnerable groups
2. Ensuring comprehensive and fair coverage based on the principles of rights, equality, transparency and solidarity
3. Promoting employment and retirement policies that are favourable to old age

1. Establishing a positive outlook on ageing
2. Promoting opportunities for older people to participate in society
3. Lobbying and advocating for older people

1. Supporting caregivers at home
2. Disseminating and strengthening the culture and values of intergenerational solidarity

1. At the public sector level

- Encouraging municipalities and educating them about the characteristics of cities that are friendly and safe for older people
- Promulgating decrees to oblige relevant ministries, municipalities, designers and architects to adopt international standards for public buildings and safe outdoor spaces that take into account the specificities and needs of older people
- Improving age-friendly public transportation to ensure that older people can use it and afford its costs
- Integrating the needs of older people in the various strategies and programmes related to the built environment and transportation, and involving older people in the development of programmes

2. At the private sector level

- Raising awareness among architects to build safe housing and residential complexes suitable for the needs of older people
- Fostering cooperation between the unions of engineers and occupational therapists as well as older people themselves to secure the designs most suited to the needs of older people

1. Preventing violence and protecting older people from violence and neglect
2. Protecting older people in situations of crisis and conflict

Mechanisms

Mechanism	Recommendations
First mechanism Policies and legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessing the legislation, policies and financial legislation related to pension policies and current treaties that govern or pertain to the well-being of older people with a view to identifying gaps and integrating aspects relevant to the rights of older people• Developing and approving the necessary policies and legislation under the umbrella of the Permanent National Commission for Older Persons• Mapping and increasing funding for older people's issues in all sectors, both in terms of health, social and economic care (including employment) and in terms of protection
Second mechanism Institutional arrangements and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restructuring the Permanent National Commission for Older Persons in Lebanon, reviewing its structure, role and governance, and empowering it with financial resources so that it becomes an executive body• Creating a coordination mechanism with municipalities
Third mechanism Capacity-building and awareness-raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing a ten-year road map for human resources and labor force readiness in the field of ageing in Lebanon• Strengthening the capacities of workers/service providers in public and private entities concerned with older people, and activating the role of these entities to develop special programmes targeting older people• Coordinating with the Center for Educational Research and Development, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Information and other entities to raise public awareness and promote a positive image of older people
Fourth mechanism Research, data and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing a road map for ageing research in Lebanon. The roadmap identifies the shortage of researchers, as well as gaps in data and indicators• Establishing a national observatory on ageing issues• Mapping and securing funding to carry out research, collect data and indicators, and finance the National Observatory