

This handbook is for organisations and individuals who organise a
Global Embrace walk event within their community

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WHO'S CAMPAIGN FOR ACTIVE AGEING

The Global Embrace

The Global Embrace is a worldwide intergenerational walk event that takes place annually around the International Day of Older Persons, 1 October.

As an initiative of the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, the Global Embrace consists of a chain of locally organised walks and events encircling the globe over a 24-hour period.

When older people remain active, negative stereotypes associated with old age begin to fade. This is essential to create a harmonious, intergenerational community in which older persons can make a full contribution to society.

How it started

The WHO launched the Global Embrace on 2 October 1999 during the United Nations International Year of Older Persons, with its slogan "Towards a society for all ages". Participants walked on every continent, in cities and villages, along beaches and country roads, in parks and shopping centres.

The Global Embrace

- promotes the health benefits of physical activity
- inspires and informs the community
- counteracts negative stereotypes
- engages all generations

Active Ageing is key

By active ageing, WHO refers to the process of seizing and optimising opportunities for physical, social and mental well-being throughout the entire life span. The aim is to extend healthy life expectancy and quality of life at older ages.

In addition to remaining physically active, it is important to remain socially and mentally active by participating in:

- Recreational activities
- Voluntary or paid activities
- Cultural and social activities
- Educational activities
- Everyday life of family and community

The Global Movement for Active Ageing

The Global Movement for Active Ageing is a network of organisations and people from various disciplines which aims to influence policies and practice towards active and healthy ageing.

The Global Movement for Active Ageing aims to:

- Raise awareness about the contributions of older people to society
- Promote healthy behaviour across the life span
- Maximise quality of life for older persons with disabilities
- Advocate for Active Ageing policies at local, regional, national and international levels

Active Ageing is good for everybody, regardless of mental or physical ability, socio-economic status or geographic location.

BACKGROUND

An ageing population

In the world today, there are an estimated 605 million people aged 60 years and over. The proportion of older people in the world population will continue to increase during the next few decades. By 2025, there will be an estimated 1.2 billion older persons, with two out of three living in developing countries.

Only half a century ago, most people died before the age of 50. Since then, better nutrition, sanitation, and living conditions, together with advancements in medical science have increased life expectancy. The challenge in the 21st century is to delay the onset of disability and ensure optimal quality of life for older people.

Older people are invaluable to society

Traditionally, old age has been associated with illness, dependence and a lack of productivity. However, current reality does not reflect this outdated view. Most people adapt to change with age and remain potential resources for the community. They contribute through both paid and unpaid activities.

Integration into the family and community, independence and participation benefit personal health and improve self-esteem regardless of age.

Age is no barrier to physical activity

Regular exercise, i.e. thirty minutes of being physically active each day, can significantly improve a person's health and well-being.

The multiple and immediate health benefits of physical activity include enhanced balance, coordination, muscle

strength, flexibility, aerobic/ cardiovascular endurance and body metabolism.

Physical activity also plays an important role in the prevention and treatment of diseases, including cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, Type II diabetes, and even some types of cancer.

It is never too late to start exercising.

Go for a walk

Walking is an ideal exercise for older persons. It can be enjoyed all year round, alone, with a pet or with friends and it requires no special equipment. Walking can be a social activity that helps to integrate people into society.

By walking regularly, an older person will enhance his/her physical fitness and maintain independence and quality of life. For many people, the incentive for exercising is not necessarily health gain, but sheer enjoyment. **Physical activity is fun!**

ORGANISING THE GLOBAL EMBRACE

Everyone counts - The Global Embrace is a unique means of promoting health at older ages and intergenerational solidarity. It encourages all members of the community to participate – people of all ages, backgrounds, skills and abilities. Your own Global Embrace event will produce local results. On the global scale, it is an essential link in the chain!

Everybody is a winner - While planning the Global Embrace, remember that the walk is not a competitive event.

Do some research

Being informed about the geographic and demographic context helps organisers to tailor the event. You may, for example, find it useful to know the following: the population size, the number of older persons in the locality, the proportion of males and females by age, the number of disabled older people living in institutions.

You could start by researching statistics, such as those mentioned above and other geographic characteristics of your locality. Examples are: the busiest streets, the most accessible streets, the most visited/popular streets, parks and other open spaces. It is worth noting landmarks and events of historical importance.

- How about conducting research with the help of others, such as school children and youth groups, or the Global Embrace Committee?

Basic research is beneficial not only for this year's Global Embrace but also for those to come. With time, you will be able to organise the Global Embrace with a greater knowledge and understanding of the various elements that influence its success.

Added benefits

- Demonstrating knowledge of your locality and its residents will appeal to the media. If you are able to provide facts and statistics when seeking media attention, your "cause" will seem more important. See "Promoting the Global Embrace" (page 9) for more information.
- A local event, such as the Global Embrace, may provide an incentive for local government to improve public areas such as parks and walking paths.

To find out more about your locality:

- Research in the local library
- Contact health care service providers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Contact the local government offices for statistical data
- Listen to local radio
- Read a variety of newspapers and newsletters that target different population groups
- Conduct a general knowledge or opinion survey (e.g. about ageing or walking events)

Form the Global Embrace Committee

The role of the Committee is to set the goals, plan and implement the Global Embrace in your community. Invite people of various backgrounds to join the Committee, as their different experiences, contacts and competencies will combine to create a successful event.

You may consider holding a local meeting to recruit members for the Committee. You could invite a large number of local residents and officials to attend the meeting, where the event would be discussed, and committee members nominated. You could provide examples of previous Global Embrace events. Once members have been nominated, schedule the first committee meeting soon after.

Committee members could represent the following	Examples
Groups, clubs and organisations concerned with the health of older persons	Exercise clubs, gymnastic clubs, local seniors' clubs
Local government	Dept. of Social Affairs, Health, Culture, Sports, Education, etc.
Academic institutions	Third age universities, institutes of gerontology, nursing schools
Health service providers	Local hospitals and homes for older people
School children and youth groups	Scouts, youth music groups
Community centres and sports clubs	Gymnastics for seniors, adult day care centres
Religious groups	Temples, churches, mosques, synagogues
Civil society organisations	Rotary International, Lions Club, local industry, cooperatives

Hold regular meetings

Distribution of roles

Based on individuals' abilities, interests and professions, the various tasks and roles need to be shared among the committee members.

- Someone must be appointed to oversee the project (this does not have to be you).
- In addition to the chairperson, the roles might include: secretary, fund raiser, treasurer, media contact person, research team, someone to handle arrangements for the walk route, venues, etc.

Brainstorm

Engage the Committee in creative thinking. Consider all the possibilities and potential obstacles that lie ahead, and ensure that conclusions are reached. **Keep detailed notes of all decisions made.**

Decide the following first:

- Location**, e.g. city streets, beach, forest, shopping centre, stadium, public gardens
- Attractions**, e.g. music, food, celebrity guests, special decorations
- Itinerary**, duration of walk and other planned activities such as a health fair.

Decide about finances

The Global Embrace does not have to be costly. However, a budget consistent with the planned scope and activities of the event is indispensable. Depending on your budget, you might plan to include live entertainment or provide refreshments and/or souvenirs to participants.

Local communications

A central communications point is vital for facilitating communications between all partners planning and participating in the event. People should be able to access the appropriate information through telephone, fax or electronic and postal addresses or a web site.

Consult and inform relevant authorities

Seek the support of local authorities such as police, fire and ambulance on the day. Your event may require a permit and certain safety precautions. Organisers should confer early with local government and the police to make essential administrative and traffic arrangements.

The Global Embrace is an opportunity to enhance local tradition. Older people are glad to share their life experiences, memories and culture with the young. Add your own ideas to give Global Embrace a special touch from your locality. (Read on page 21 about how other countries have celebrated Global Embrace in the past).

- What sort of decorations will you have and where?
 - At assembly points?
 - Banners?
 - Costumes?

Some ideas to make your Global Embrace exciting

- **Exercise** sessions prior to, during and/or after the walk
- **Special guests or local celebrities** to open and/or close the event
- **Souvenirs** for participants such as certificates of participation, hats, stickers, balloons
- **Interactive stands and information** by health or aged care service providers, aged persons' associations, schools, etc.
- **Demonstrations and/or exhibitions** by various local clubs
- **Performances** by individuals or groups
- **Entertainment** with song and dance
- **On-the-spot** interactive games or brief entertainment along the way
- **Games and contests** (writing or drawing competition for children or tournaments and games in intergenerational teams)
- **Link up** with other events taking place at the time of the Global Embrace (e.g. World Heart Day, 24 September; World Mental Health Day, 10 October; national days)
- **Print the Global Embrace logo** and/or slogan for the year onto T-shirts that participants could bring from home
- **Music**
- **Food, drink**

Additional Walk ideas

- Conduct a guided tour of a historical site in the town/city centre
- Create the options of biking the event, or even rowing or swimming alongside participants as they walk along river banks or beaches
- Follow a simple orienteering course (in a park, for example) marking out some checkpoints
- Arrange a scavenger hunt (small groups are responsible for locating

different items, plants, objects, etc. that can be found in the area)

- The Committee could design walks of varying distance and degree of difficulty

Event practicalities

Accessibility & route

The impact of the Global Embrace on the community depends largely on the location selected for the walk. Select a route that will cover popular gathering areas or the main streets in the town or city. A distance of **2 – 4 kilometres** is recommended.

With participants representing a large range of abilities, centrality and accessibility to the start and finish points are essential. The walk should be easy for **all** to get to: inform participants of the availability and options of public transportation and parking.

- Will assistance (e.g. volunteers) and places of rest (e.g. benches) be available?

Rehearse the walk

It is *imperative* to walk through the proposed route, noting the time taken and whether the paths are in good condition. Check the surfaces of tracks, paths, steps and surrounding areas of the proposed route and ensure the path is relatively flat.

- Is there access for wheelchairs and (grand)parents with strollers? Test the route yourself.

Possible assembly points

- **One start and finish point**, in this case a large field or park, market place or stadium would be appropriate.
- **Different start and finish points** (e.g. from one end of a parade or long strip to the other). Make sure that

participants will have access to transport to return home.

- **A number of starting points** culminating in a massive assembly (e.g. individual groups could start at local centres and walk to a venue that is central to all groups).

Permits

It may be necessary to obtain permission to use the facilities or area such as a public park, square, school or assembly hall.

Inquire at your municipality.

Tip: try to deal with one contact person so that you can develop a relationship, making the permits easier in following years.

Safety Measures

In addition to obtaining a permit from the police, organisers need to ensure the safety of all participants throughout the course of the Global Embrace.

- Check that the facilities to be used are safe and suitable for your needs.
- Check that the route is clear of health and safety hazards.
- Enquire about the legal regulations concerning crowd and traffic control, first aid, fire brigade and ambulance presence.
- Ask the local First Aid association if they would provide volunteers.

Weather

The Global Embrace goes ahead rain or shine. It is best to be prepared for extremes, especially if your country experiences heavy rain or heat around September-October. Possible precautions: erect shelters or marquees along the route, hire an assembly hall or plan to walk under cover. Tell participants to come prepared.

Inform participants

- **Notify the public** about the Global Embrace, letting them know whether

there are alternative plans (e.g. in case of inclement weather) and give transport suggestions.

- **Provide a source of information**, such as a local radio frequency or a telephone hotline that will provide updated information.
 - **Supply a map of the route**. It could highlight the various attractions along the way.
 - **Define the route(s) with markers** such as Global Embrace flags, ropes or signposts.
- How will you communicate the Global Embrace news to the participants: via newspapers, posters, flyers, radio?
- How will you encourage the public and participants of the event to provide feedback to the organisers?

Refreshments

Exercise and hot weather may cause dehydration and hypoglycaemia. It is therefore necessary to consider the needs of older participants and young children, who are more easily affected by these health conditions.

- Will drinks be available along the route, before or after the event?
- Have you considered approaching a drink manufacturer for donations?
- Have you considered asking for volunteers to distribute and/or serve drinks?
- Have you planned to provide resting places, shelters and toilet facilities?

Think of the environment

- How will you ensure the venues visited are left in a clean and tidy state?
- Have you thought of installing rubbish bins along the way?
- Have you thought of assigning a group of volunteers to certify that the assembly points are in a respectable state following the event?

Financing the Global Embrace

A well organised Global Embrace event is the product of collaborative involvement. Partner or sponsoring organisations may assist financially as well as in planning the event.

When preparing the budget, you may consider:

- Administrative costs: mailing, telephone service, Internet facilities, printing, etc.
- Promotion and decoration materials: letters, flyers, banners, posters, billboards, T-shirts, stickers, balloons, streamers, etc.
- Technical equipment: sound, light, marquee, stage, chairs, etc.
- Venue hire and permit fees
- Amenities: portable toilets, rubbish bins, roadside stands, etc.
- Advertisements: in magazines, local newspapers and bulletins, etc.
- Transportation
- Food and drink supplies
- Photographers, video camera-persons
- Artists' fees
- Miscellaneous

Fundraising for the Global Embrace

Regrettably, WHO cannot provide financial assistance to individual events.

Suggestions:

- Seek donations of specific items such as food, drinks, T-shirts, balloons and banners.
- Hold a raffle.
- Produce and sell walkers' items such as T-shirts, stickers, badges, etc.
- Explore the feasibility of responsible corporate sponsorship.

Tip: Prepare a 1-2 page proposal for potential sponsors, describing the event, its history, and who will attend. Be clear about what you are offering and what you are requesting, and request a meeting to discuss it.

Important Information

We encourage you to use the Global Movement for Active Ageing logo for your walk event.

The official WHO emblem is protected and should not be used without WHO's written consent.

Promoting your Global Embrace

There are many avenues for promoting the Global Embrace and spreading the word throughout your town.

Suggestions:

- Advertise the Global Embrace in public areas such as schools, libraries, places of worship, community and seniors' centres, community bulletin boards, retail stores and municipal offices.
- Work with the media: print, radio and television.

- Organise a forum to discuss, for example, the relationship between young and older persons, or the benefits of physical activity.
- Advertise through women's and young people's sports, environmental and religious programmes. (Note that each of these reaches a separate target group).
- Ask well-known figures in the community, such as honorary citizens, performers, artists, religious leaders, writers, sports persons and local business people to help in promoting the event. Their involvement will encourage people to participate.
- Refer back to the sources you found useful while researching the locality. For example, older persons' associations are likely to welcome an advertisement in their newsletter.

Working with the media

Media coverage (television, radio, newspapers, magazines) can raise awareness and increase understanding of ageing issues among a wide audience. It is a powerful tool for influencing public opinion. If something is not reported in the media then it did not happen, as far as many people are concerned.

Every Global Embrace event has the potential to be newsworthy, and financial limitations are no reason to discount promoting the event through the media. Yet, it is important to be "media smart" when working with the media.

Four preliminary steps:

1. Designate a media contact person and a spokesperson (either one person or two). The media contact person will stimulate media interest and will also be available to respond to inquiries. The spokesperson will be a competent

- public speaker, interesting, well informed and available for interviews.
2. Identify which messages and strategies will help you reach the different target groups.
 3. Identify which media outlet(s) you will approach. It is necessary to become familiar with the local media as they can vary within and between countries. Generally, the options range from mainstream local papers to the trade and professional press, to public and independent radio and television stations, to cable and community channels.
 4. Prepare the materials to be used when approaching the media. These might include photos, research results, promotional material, or a lively older person with a story to tell.

Appealing to the media

Media advisories, announcements or alerts notify journalists of a forthcoming media event or press conference. An advisory for the Global Embrace would give a brief description of the event, including its purpose, date, time, location, speakers, performers, etc.

A Press (or News) release is a text (between 500 and 750 words) that provides news and information about an event or issue of public interest. The release is submitted to a specific journalist or editor, who might use it without changes in his/her article or may decide to contact you for further information. The headline and first paragraph must catch attention, as journalists receive many press releases each day.

A backgrounder is a text of up to two pages long that contains information, striking facts and statistics. A backgrounder on the Global Embrace would include information on ageing, such

as the growing numbers of older people in the world and in your country, as well as an explanation of Active Ageing and the implications of population ageing for society. It can be sent with the news release or media alert. Have it prepared to provide further information if needed.

Call the journalist. The telephone is your most direct route to reaching the journalist. Once the media alert, press release and/or backgrounder have been sent, it is imperative to confirm their arrival into the journalist's hands. It may be necessary to resubmit a release.

The telephone call

Often journalists have very little time to talk. Prepare what you will say to attract their interest. Be specific and keep it brief, without overwhelming them with information. Get straight to the point.

1. Once you have gained their attention and interest, ask about their deadlines (when do they go to press, when would they like to be contacted, etc.).
2. Ask how they would like to receive information (fax, e-mail, phone, etc.).
3. Make sure you have their direct phone line, fax number, e-mail address, etc.
4. Ask what kind of stories they are interested in, and listen to their response.
5. Note the journalist's response, and write it down each time you call.

After sending an item, call again. Remind the journalist of your previous discussion.

Never trust answering machines –make sure you actually speak to someone when you call.

A **press (or news) conference** is effective for alerting journalists to a major news item such as a new strategy or initiative, or the launch of a new report. If you intend to hold a conference, invite journalists from every media in and around your community to attend the conference. If you have quoted a local personality in your press release, invite the person to speak to reporters.

Tips on news conferences:

- Keep speeches to approximately 5 minutes to allow journalists to ask questions.
- Avoid having more than three people on the conference platform
- Hold the press conference late morning and avoid Fridays
- Recommended length: about 30 minutes

The news (or wire) service distributes news to newspapers, magazines, radio stations and television networks throughout the country. If you hold an event that is of national (or international) interest, it is highly recommended to contact the national news agency. If a *dispatch* is put on your event before or on the day of Global Embrace, it may receive nation-wide coverage.

Print Media

1. Read the local newspapers, as this is the most common media for promotion of local events.
2. Note which journalists write about health, population issues, society, sports and events.
3. Make a list of the journalists and editors you think may find your story interesting.
4. Check submission deadlines and plan accordingly. The deadline for the Sunday newspaper could be on

Tuesday, but days or weeks earlier for weekly or monthly magazines.

News Release Checklist

The headline and first paragraph are powerful.

Consider a pyramid – put the most important information first, and more general or background information later.

A direct quote is used in the first three paragraphs of the news release.

The 5 Ws are covered:

What is the Global Embrace?

When is the Global Embrace?

Where is the Global Embrace to be held?

Who will be at the Global Embrace?

Why is the Global Embrace important?

Sentences are no longer than 30 words

Paragraphs contain only 2 – 3 sentences

The release is no longer than 750 words

Simple language is used, no jargon.

The press release has been carefully proof read (facts, figures and spelling are correct)

Contact details

- Have you invited the papers to cover the Global Embrace on the day? You could propose they just send a photographer. A professional photo accompanying your release would make a good item.

Opinion-editorial pieces (op-ed)

generally *run* opposite the editorial page, as a ‘guest’ column. Call the newspaper and ask about their guidelines for submitting an op-ed piece. Try to convince the editor of the issue’s importance. A brief and concise article has more chances of being published, so keep it between 700 - 1000 words, focusing on one or two main points without trying to include everything.

Letters to the editor – Large audiences often read the letters page. It allows readers to express their views or respond to previous publications. Should you choose to write a letter to the editor, keep it short and concise because those that exceed 500 words are less likely to be published.

Event guides – Most newspapers have a free service for announcements or an events guide. Check the deadlines and send a copy of your programme. Make sure to include all the important information (date, location, time) and provide a contact number for further information.

Be persistent: If your story is refused, it is not necessarily because your story is not newsworthy. Agendas change continuously and editors are constantly juggling a range of stories and events. So if your story does not succeed at first, (i) contact another journalist, or (ii) contact the newspaper or broadcaster again with a new approach.

Broadcast Media – Radio and Television

While radio is more receptive to this kind of public service message before the event, television is excellent for live coverage. Radio and television talk show hosts are always looking for people to interview.

- Call your local radio and television stations and ask to speak to the producer of the show or segment that targets the audience you are interested

in. Offer to participate in an interview or discussion, or to send some active older persons as interviewees.

- Send a list of proposed topics for discussion to radio stations. If a station is interested in arranging a show on one of the topics, ask them to promote the Global Embrace during the show or at the end.
- Television news show images with a journalist voice-over. If you can locate a good quality video featuring older people engaging in physical or other interesting activities, provide a copy to the local television station along with your news release.

At an interview, your time to answer a question is likely to be restricted to approximately 45 seconds. Hence, you need to prepare phrases that the audience will retain easily. These are called *sound bites* because they are striking statements that reach the heart of the problem without lengthy explanations. Try to repeat the sound bite(s) throughout the interview.

Examples of Sound Bites

- Older persons are a resource to their families and communities
- We need to add life to the years that have been added to life
- It is never too late to start exercising
- Physical activity is vital for the prevention of falls, bone fractures, obesity and depression
- Thirty minutes of daily physical activity can improve general well-being significantly

Tips:

- Invite people whose opinions count in your community to attend the Global Embrace. While they are there, ask them how they feel about ageing-related issues and quote their responses.

- Keep copies of good print materials, cut out good photos from local papers, list examples of successful promotions by other organisations. Add these to your “Global Embrace resource box”.

Build a longer-term relationship with the media

Establish yourself with local media as their first port of call. When journalists are in need of a contact point for ageing-related issues, perhaps you can offer your knowledge and experience. Be ready to offer a quote, photos, or research results, or to attend an interview immediately.

Contact with the media essentials

- **Read** journalists’ articles to gain an appreciation of their style
- **Write** a compelling headline and first paragraph in your releases
- **Give** your contact details always
- **Call** the journalist. Initiating and responding to press calls are among the most critical tasks
- **Call** on the eve of the Global Embrace. Confirm that your items will be published and place a reminder call to the television stations, journalists and others who said they would attend

Finally, document it all

Collect notes and records at each stage of the Global Embrace (from preparation to wrap-up). These form a reference collection, a “resource box” for future planning of the Global Embrace or other community event.

A good reference collection might contain a logbook, research findings, promotional materials and communications with sponsors and affiliates. Although the task might seem demanding, it only takes a short time to jot down some notes and gather appropriate materials.

The rewards are many:

- You can compare actual costs, time taken and efforts made, with initial estimates.
- You can assess the achievements relative to the efforts made.
- A lot of time and energy can be saved in planning future events.
- Finding resourceful information and documentation becomes easier as the collection grows.

Contents for the “resource box”

- Research findings and contact details of valuable information sources
- Evidence of presence in the media: articles from newspapers, magazines or bulletins; video-cassette of the event on television; an audio-cassette of a mention made on radio
- Your own personal evidence: photos or video, not only of the final event but also of different stages during the preparatory process

In the logbook, you would record details such as:

- Decisions made over the course of the planning process (i.e. *how* and *why* decisions were made)
- Steps taken to achieve each task including purpose and time taken
- Challenges faced, obstacles en route
- Solutions to difficulties
- New thoughts and ideas for the future

THE GLOBAL EMBRACE CHECKLIST

Don't forget to document the entire process

	Task	See page #
	Conduct investigative research about the community	4
	Generate interest across the community and organise an introductory meeting	5
	Establish a Global Embrace organising committee	5
	Select a location and enquire about the necessary permits	5-7
	Decide on a theme, slogan or visual image to be used in promotions and decide on all event practicalities	6
	Prepare budget	8
	Seek sponsorship and donations	9
	Recruit volunteer staff, discuss possible tasks	
	Contact potential guests and performers	
	Develop promotional materials for media relations	
	Confirm guests and equipment hire	
	Prepare decorations, handouts, etc.	
	Promote the Global Embrace in your community and contact media	9
	Call journalists, editors and producers with story ideas	10
	Write and send media alerts/ press releases to the media	11
	Prepare spokespeople for interviews (practise delivering sound bites and answering questions)	12
	Make follow up calls	
	Document it all	13
	During the Global Embrace: keep in touch with WHO	



Media Advisory Sample
[Date]

**OLDER PERSONS LEAD THE WALK AROUND THE WORLD ON
1 OCTOBER 2000**

"The Global Embrace" is the World Health Organization's worldwide walk event. It consists of a chain of walk events during a 24-hour period on 1 October.

The Global Embrace 2000 will take place in over 1000 cities in 70 countries. Each celebration will be organised locally with partnerships especially created for the event. Older people and their families will lead the walks.

Here are some examples of the planned events:

The walks will start in the Pacific in Fiji, followed by New Zealand, where "Age Concern" is organising events nation-wide. All walk events include displays, debates, music, dancing, entertainment and food in a variety of settings. Fifteen major events will take place. (Further information: Age Concern New Zealand, Tel: +64 4 4712709)

In Nepal, an intergenerational walk event is being organised by the National Federation of Medical Students. The Nepalese Prime Minister (age 78) is expected to join in.

Yokohama, Japan, will host the 14th National Conference on Ageing with the Global Embrace walk as part of the programme. An estimated ten thousand people will participate. (Further information: Japan NGO network of Ageing, e-mail: tm_m@health-co-op.dion.ne.jp)

Walk in London, England will be coordinated by the NGO "Help the Aged" who will lead participants through four London parks: St. James', Green Park, Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. (Further information: Help the Aged, tel: +44 20 7253 0253)

Some of the largest celebrations will take place in Mexico, where over 500 walk events are scheduled to take place. In Chihuahua, the walk is being organised by a multi-sectoral coalition of organisations. The State Governor will lead the walk that ends in the local baseball stadium where youngsters embrace older persons and ask to dance with them. (Further information: Ministry of Health, tel.+52 5 511 7001)

A special feature of this upcoming event will be a 24-hour interactive web site where everyone can send messages and descriptions of their activities (http://www.who.int/ageing/global_movement).

For further information, please contact [name of contact person] The World Health Organization. Tel Number, Fax number; E-mail: activeageing@who.int, web site: http://www.who.int/ageing/global_movement All WHO Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Features as well as other information on this subject can be obtained on Internet on the WHO web site: <http://www.who.int>



Media Advisory Sample
[Date]

10th International Day of Older Persons

Getting old is a triumph of society, let's celebrate!

Who: the Geneva International Network on Ageing (GINA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are organising a celebration to mark the 10th International Day of Older Persons

When: Tuesday, 3 October, 2000 from 12:40 to 15:00

Where: at WHO, 20 Avenue Appia, Geneva.

What: a lively thought- and action-provoking programme about physical activity and health.

Health Through Physical Activity Across the Life Course

By Prof. Jerry Morris who has celebrated his 90th birthday. Recipient of the Olympic Gold Medal for excellence in sport and exercise sciences in 1996.

Footprints- Children's Rhymes

Performance by the internationally acclaimed dance-theatre company "Third Spring" (Tanztheater Dritter Frühling) from Zurich, comprising actors aged 60 to 85.

Tango

The dance that brings generations together. Two dancers, one younger, one older. The audience is invited to participate.

Awards

WHO will recognise the work of two persons: Ambassador Julia Alvarez, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the UN in New York will be honoured for her outstanding efforts to raise global awareness on ageing. Professor Jerry Morris will be honoured for his outstanding contributions to public health worldwide.

Why are we celebrating?

The fact that people are living longer everywhere is one of the main achievements of the 20th century. Improved income security, better nutrition, and the provision of basic public health services have all contributed to the increase in life expectancy. Ageing is a normal process throughout the entire life course. It is not a disease. The real challenge is how to add quality of life to the extended years that have been added to life.

For further information, please contact [name of contact person] The World Health Organization. Tel Number, Fax number; E-mail: activeageing@who.int, web site: http://www.who.int/ageing/global_movement All WHO Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Features as well as other information on this subject can be obtained on Internet on the WHO web site: <http://www.who.int>

**Press release sample**

Press Release WHO/19
6 April 1999

SIR PETER USTINOV'S ADVICE TO OLDER PERSONS ON WORLD HEALTH DAY: "SPEAK LOUDER, LISTEN MORE AND SAY WHAT YOU THINK"

"I am not a person who retires very easily", said Sir Peter Ustinov. The 77-years old English actor and writer was commenting from his home near Geneva on "Active Ageing Makes The Difference" - the theme of this year's World Health Day observed on 7 April, the day the World Health Organization was created in 1948.

He continues to write books, work in the theatre and travel the world for the United Nations. John H. Glenn was also 77 years old when he went into space for a second time as part of a scientific experiment to explore the secrets of ageing. But these remarkable individuals are not alone in leading meaningful and productive lives. Throughout the world, the vast majority of 580 million older persons – however diverse they may be – continue to be active. And the healthier they are, the more likely will they be participating in all aspects of life in their societies....

Speaking in Geneva on the occasion of World Health Day, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO Director-General called for the need "to learn how to better motivate people to change their behaviour and lifestyles to achieve active ageing".

Stressing the fact that the international community is confronted with unprecedented and far-reaching demographic changes that can have profound effect on humanity as a whole, she highlighted the challenge to developing countries: "... we must be fully aware that while developed countries became rich before they became old, developing countries may become old before they become rich. We must therefore be determined in eliminating the greatest enemy of good health, i.e. poverty, particularly in its most extreme forms".

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Backgrounder sample

Several facts – the phenomenon of global population ageing

- ◆ Today, there are an estimated 605 million older people (60 years and above) worldwide.
- ◆ By the year 2025, there will be about 1.2 billion older people with almost three-quarters living in developing countries.
- ◆ Life expectancy has risen sharply, especially in developing countries. From an average life expectancy of around 41 in the developing world in the early 1950s, life expectancy rose to 62 years of age in 1990 and by 2020 it is projected to reach 70. In 20 developing countries, it has already exceeded the age of 70.
- ◆ There are major inequities reflected in life expectancy, morbidity, premature mortality, disability and quality of life. For example, there is currently a 40 year difference between Japan (with the highest life expectancy in the world at 80 years) and Sierra Leone (with a life expectancy of only 41 years).
- ◆ The proportion of old people in the total population has also risen. This can be attributed to both the rise in life expectancy and the sharp fall in birth rates in recent years, particularly in developing countries.
- ◆ The population over age 80 is the fastest growing segment of the older population and life expectancy for women now exceeds 80 years in at least 35 countries
- ◆ Women can generally expect to spend more years of their lives with functional limitations.
- ◆ Over the next 25 years, Europe is projected to retain its rank as "oldest" region of the world; older people account for around 20% of the total population in Europe now and this will grow to 28% by 2020.
- ◆ Disability rates among the older population are decreasing in some developed countries.

Active Ageing

Active Ageing refers to the process of seizing and optimising opportunities for physical, social and mental wellbeing throughout the entire life course in order to extend healthy life expectancy.

Action for active ageing should be taken by the individual who can make choices with regard to healthy life-styles as well as by policy-makers who can make well-informed decisions that will keep people productive and healthy at older ages.

Living longer is both an achievement and a perpetual challenge. The challenge for the quality of life calls for older people to be able to enjoy independence, entertain social relations, get involved in community life, and have access to affordable health care. Communities need to perceive ageing not as a catastrophe but as a natural process.

More....

Exploding common myths about ageing

One common myth is that older persons mostly live in industrialised societies. In fact, 60% are found today in developing countries and in 25 years this proportion will have risen to 75%. This has prompted the remark, 'the developed world became rich before it became old, while developing countries are becoming old before they become rich.'

The rapid escalation of older people in both developed and developing countries means that increasing numbers of people will reach an age where the risk of developing certain chronic diseases is higher. One projection for developing countries is that by 2020, three in four deaths could be ageing-related (cancer, diabetes and circulatory diseases).

Some common myths are that all old people are frail, that they really have nothing to contribute to society, and that we cannot afford their medical care. The rate of decline in their physical and mental capacities depends on external factors - such as their adult life-style, smoking, alcohol consumption, diet, and social class - rather than on ageing as such.

Because there are fewer older persons in paid positions, another myth has emerged that older persons are unable to work. It is actually the 'ageism', or age discrimination, and disadvantages in education and training that exclude older persons from involvement in the paid workforce. Yet older people make substantial contributions in unpaid work and many economies in the world depend on these contributions. The economic input by older citizens often passes unnoticed, undervalued, and unappreciated.

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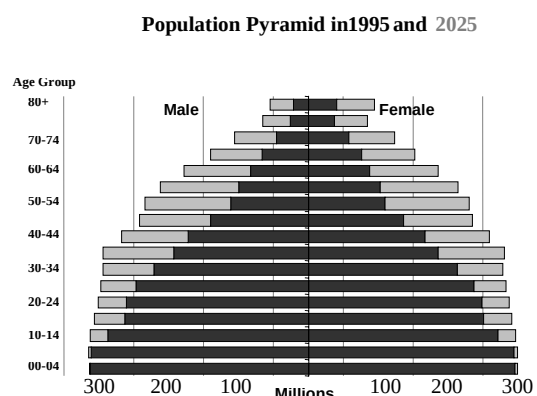


Backgrounder sample

Health and Ageing

Facts

- People aged 60 and over: about 600 millions in 2000; 1.2 billion in 2025 and 2 billion in 2050
- About two-thirds of all older persons are living in the developing world, by 2025: 75%
- in the developed world, the very old (age 80+) is the fastest growing population group
- women outlive men in virtually all societies; consequently in very old age the ratio of women/men is 2:1.



Ageing is a privilege and a societal achievement. It is also a challenge, which will impact on all aspects of 21st century society. It is a challenge that cannot be addressed by the public or private sectors in isolation: it requires joint approaches and strategies.

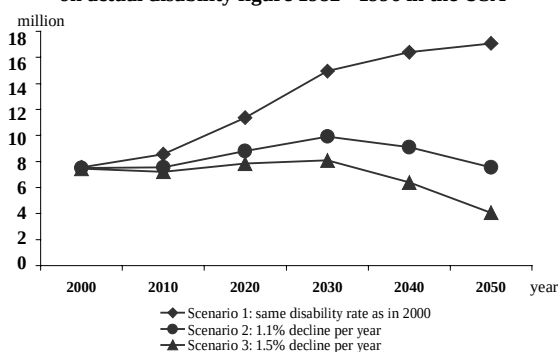
The challenge for health care systems

Rapid population ageing will lead to changing demands to health care systems in developing countries. Health care systems will be expected to accommodate care for older adults together with care for other groups. In already aged societies health care systems will have to adapt to increasing proportions of the oldest old. While ageing is not in itself a disease and old age should not be seen as equal to frailty and sickness, increasing demands on the health sector are inevitable.

Some good news

In developed countries e.g. the USA, disability rates in older age have declined in recent years. But the most likely future scenario will depend on policies to be implemented now. Healthier lifestyles will lead to future cohorts of older people ageing in better health – the “healthy-ageing” scenario. Advances in bio-technology are increasingly benefiting individuals that in the past would have become disabled. The challenge for the developing world is two-fold: investing in “healthy ageing” from a public health perspective and making medical interventions more cost-effective and more widely available.

Projections of Disabled Population aged 65+ years based on actual disability figure 1982 - 1996 in the USA



Source: HPS/ALC

PREVIOUS EVENTS – 1999, 2000

THE GLOBAL EMBRACE BEGINS ITS JOURNEY AS THE SUN RISES OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN ON THE ISLANDS OF FIJI, NEW CALEDONIA, NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND OTHERS. AS TOWNS AND CITIES AWAKE PROGRESSIVELY, THE WALK EVENTS EMBRACE THE GLOBE!

Australia –1999– Urban and rural settings throughout the country hosted Global Embrace walks. Aboriginal traditions were incorporated into many events and other highlights included sing-a-longs, barbecues, guest appearances, medieval dancing, bagpipe music, beach games, performances on water fronts (e.g. human puppets decorated with silken wings dancing to bird-song played by flutes), and much more.

Philippines – At 6am, the park in front of Caloocan city hall began to overflow with over 2000 participants gathering to walk, jog and march the Global Embrace 1999. The crowds caused heavy vehicular as well as human traffic around town but attracted positive interest. Sixty helium balloons lifted a giant Global Embrace banner into the air to open the event.

Japan –1999– In the city of Nagano, over ten thousand participants made a pilgrimage to a Buddhist temple to pray for the health of the world's older people. In Hiroshima, the city of peace, a Global Embrace took place across one of the famous bridges connecting Japan's main island, Honshu, with Shikoku Island.

India – In 1999, the City Mayor inaugurated a huge event in Trivandrum, by placing garlands on a 5 year old child and the District Collector placed garlands on an 80-year old citizen. More than 3000 people and more than 30 associations joined the walk. Leading newspapers, the country-wide television and local TV network covered the event. Cards on which 10 guidelines of how we can be healthy

and active during old age were printed and distributed. In 2000 in Panjim (Goa), hand-holding participants gathered at the historical Freedom Fighter's venue. The walk took place along the banks of the river Mandovi. Physically disabled older persons participated along with school children and people of all communities.

Oman –2000– 6000 participants were attracted to a Global Embrace event in Muscat city. In the smaller cities of Nizwa and Sohar, there was also a remarkable turnout, with as many as 4000 participants in each. Following the event's success, it was proposed within the Sultanate that the Global Embrace be held as a permanent annual health-awareness event in addition to monthly walks initiated by clubs and sports associations.

Tanzania –1999– In Kibaha on the Tanzanian coast, a slogan in Ki Swahili read "Uzee Ni Dhahabu" (Old is Gold) and the many valuable roles played by older persons were highlighted through the event. This particular walk was preceded with health promotion action such as eye examinations, dental clinics, hypertension and diabetes checks.

Togo –2000– The animated Global Embrace was preceded by multiple radio shows and local debates concerning the value of older persons and assistance young Togolians could provide to the older population. Older persons coordinated all activities themselves, with the assistance of younger generations and women's groups.

Estonia –2000– The Global Embrace followed a path through Tartu University Botanic Garden to a health fair. Medical students screened participants’ blood pressure, glucose and body fat percentage. Meanwhile, warm soup and tea was provided.

Finland –1999– The city of Turku demonstrated all the ways a person can walk, from indoor, outdoor and power walking to walking on hands, stilts and tightrope! Finnish walk events also incorporated physical examinations, functional capacity tests, exhibitions, music and recreational competitions for children, youth, adults and older persons.

Germany –1999– Adult and young people from Berlin-Kreuzberg investigated the quality of life in their neighbourhood together. For 6 days they walked in small groups and showed each other the places they like - or dislike - and why. They visited a school, the Regional Museum, leisure centres for older and younger people, a park, football places, and more. They discovered good places and generated ideas for improving certain areas.

Switzerland – 2000 – Swiss organisers collected *health kilometres*. Participants aimed to accrue enough kilometres collectively to embrace the world (40,000km).

United Kingdom –1999– London’s Tower Bridge and various exhibition halls were starting points for walks, where performances and various artists animated pre/post events. The Prince of Wales encouraged British participants via a videotaped message.

Spain – In Girona, Catalonia, the Global Embrace 1999 brought together people

from 41 towns and villages. The walkers also took part in physical cultural activities around Girona. At 2 PM the walkers reached the Palau de Fires de Girona where a paella feast was waiting for them. In 2000, over 3000 people participated in Ferrol, Galicia, where they announced the opening of an active ageing classroom for the older population of the region.

Argentina –2000– In Mar del Plata, a day long event consisted of: grandparents-to-children storytelling, theatre and choir performances, workshops, exhibitions and ethnic dances including a special homage to old immigrants. A special ceremony closed the event, with the presence of national, regional and local authorities. In the province of Cordoba, the Ministry of Solidarity organised walk events that attracted 60,000 participants.

Colombia –1999– People from 20 different localities of Bogotá embraced around a lake in Metropolitan Park Simon Bolivar and proceeded to walk 2.5 km in the park. The walk ended at the Plaza Central, where young and old alike danced the “aerobic rumba” for an hour. Sports and social games were also organised for children.

Panama –1999– The Global Embrace took place in Panama City with people from all over the country. At the closing ceremony, church bells and fire brigade sirens joined in after singing the “Third Age Hymn”.

United States of America –1999– The city of New York was proud to “Age out Loud” in a walk through Central Park and down Fifth Avenue. With promotional T-shirts and various celebrity appearances, the Global Embrace messages were loud and clear! In West Virginia, the University Centre on Ageing in Morgantown sponsored a walk that led participants to

the football stadium to watch a game between a university team and the Naval Academy.

Guatemala –2000– With a torch in hand, a famous marathon champion led the intergenerational walk. It incorporated government representatives from different ministries, NGOs, pensioners and street children. “Marimba” tunes welcomed the walkers to the finish point along with magicians, clowns and other performers.

Mexico – 480 localities participated in the Global Embrace 1999. This number almost doubled in 2000, with 890 events recorded. Coordinated efforts between national, regional and local governments, health, sports and cultural institutions ensured a unique success for the Global Embrace. Folklore and intergenerational dances encouraged literal “embraces”, and there were health fairs offering screenings and health advice.

- Large white balloons, pins, and multicoloured elastic exercise bands were distributed at the departure point

In **Rio de Janeiro** the organising committee included a broad range of academic, non-governmental and private sector institutions. The walk took place on the famous Copacabana beach with groups departing from both ends of the beach to converge at a designated middle-point. Rio de Janeiro, counted more than 30,000 participants.

- A samba band accompanied each group, with musicians in one being younger than 18 years and in the other musicians were over 50 years.
- Once united, the two bands played the same tune, symbolising harmony between the generations.

THE PILOT WALKS IN 1997

In **Geneva**, the Geneva International Network on Ageing (GINA) set up the organising committee. It included collaboration from international organisations, non-governmental organisations, various Swiss organisations, the Youth Parliament in Geneva, local government, and private sector corporations. The Canton of Geneva offered logistic and financial support for the walk event.

- The walk was held along the lake
- A Brazilian band, a local jazz band and a well-known African singer performed
- A sports club for older persons led participants in a physical exercise session
- Commemorative items were prepared with logos and slogans.

CONTACT US:

Send your questions, queries and comments to the following address:

**The Global Embrace
Ageing and Life Course
World Health Organization
20, Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland**

Fax: + 41 22 791 48 39

E-mail: activeageing@who.ch

Web: http://www.who.int/ageing/global_movement/

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