



GLOBAL ALLIANCE
INTERNATIONAL LONGEVITY CENTRE
Designing the Future of Ageing

ILC Global Alliance Policy Briefing: Linking Ageing and Climate Change Agendas

Executive Summary

This policy briefing synthesizes key findings from a literature review on the intersection of climate change and ageing populations. It highlights the urgent need to integrate these two global agendas to enhance resilience, sustainability, and health outcomes.

Older adults are disproportionately affected by climate change, yet their potential contributions to climate mitigation and adaptation are underutilized.

This briefing outlines policy implications and actionable recommendations to foster synergistic strategies that benefit both ageing populations and environmental sustainability.

Key Findings

- Climate change exacerbates health risks for older adults, including heat stress, air pollution, and disruption of healthcare services.
- Ageing populations influence sustainability through increased resource demands and carbon footprints.
- Synergistic interventions—such as sustainable housing, inclusive transport, and healthy diets—can benefit both ageing and climate agendas.
- Older adults demonstrate strong engagement in environmental volunteering and sustainable consumption when barriers are addressed.
- Health and social care systems are significant contributors to carbon emissions and require transformation to become environmentally sustainable.
- Pension funds represent a powerful lever for financing green growth, yet awareness and accessibility remain limited.

Policy Implications

- Age-friendly policies must incorporate climate adaptation strategies to protect vulnerable older populations.
- Sustainable development initiatives should explicitly include ageing considerations to maximize social return on investment.
- Governments should incentivize sustainable innovations that support healthy ageing and environmental goals.
- Health systems must align environmental sustainability with service delivery models, emphasizing prevention and efficiency.
- Pension regulation should promote transparency and enable individuals to invest in climate-resilient portfolios.

Recommendations

1. Integrate ageing and climate change agendas in national and international policy frameworks.
2. Expand environmental volunteering programs tailored to older adults, such as scaling the RISE model (Retirees in Service to the Environment) internationally.
3. Promote sustainable consumption among older consumers through clear labeling, education, and inclusive product design.
4. Encourage pension providers to offer accessible green investment options and improve climate-related disclosures.
5. Support research and innovation in sustainable housing and healthcare technologies for older populations.
6. Develop cross-sector partnerships to co-design age-friendly and climate-resilient urban environments.

Conclusion

The convergence of climate change and population ageing presents both challenges and opportunities. By aligning these agendas, policymakers can unlock efficiencies, enhance resilience, and foster inclusive sustainability. This briefing calls for coordinated action to ensure that older adults are not only protected from climate risks but also empowered to contribute to climate solutions.

Contact

David Sinclair, International Longevity Centre – UK DavidSinclair@ilcuk.org.uk