



Call for Input 17 June 2026

by UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by old persons

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Reviewed and endorsed by Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC, Marpole Family Place, Seniors First BC, South Vancouver Seniors Hub Council, and S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

1. Introduction

Age Knowble welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Independent Expert's call for input on **Autonomy, Dignity and Human Rights in Situations of Dependency in Older Age**.

The call presents an important opportunity to deepen understanding of how existing human rights should be interpreted and realised as older persons experience increasing dependency through frailty, disability, cognitive change, illness, or growing reliance on support and care. It recognises that dependency raises important human rights questions about relational autonomy, community inclusion, health and care, and safeguards that enable older persons to continue enjoying their rights throughout later life.

Too often, dependency is viewed through a deficit lens, associated with declining capacity, increasing vulnerability, and growing need, leading responses to focus predominantly on protection, care, or risk management. While each remains important, this perspective can unintentionally obscure a more fundamental human rights question:

How should existing human rights be interpreted and realised so that older persons continue enjoying them throughout situations of dependency?

This submission adopts a human rights approach. It does not propose new rights. Rather, it demonstrates how existing human rights can be interpreted and implemented in ways that remain responsive to the lived realities of older age. Our central proposition is that **dependency does not diminish human rights; it changes how they are realised**. Human rights are most effectively realised when relationships, communities, health and care systems, legal safeguards, and public institutions intentionally enable older persons to continue living the lives they value while exercising their rights on an equal basis with others.

Applying this perspective, the submission identifies cross-cutting human rights insights and practical recommendations that responds to the Call's thematic areas.

2. Age Knowble Human Rights Analytical Approach

Age Knowble developed a structured human rights analytical approach in response to the Call for Input (see [Annex 1](#)).

The analysis began by identifying three existing human rights that are foundational to the Independent Expert's thematic areas. These rights were then interpreted through the Age Knowble Human Rights Principles Framework for Older Persons to strengthen their interpretation and application in the context of older age.

This process reinterpreted three existing human rights for situations of dependency in older age. These reinterpreted rights became the analytical framework for examining each of the Independent Expert's thematic areas and a curated selection of illustrative rights-realising examples.

The examples were analysed against the reinterpreted rights using three complementary dimensions: rights realisation in everyday life; Convention and State application, which considers the implications for human rights standards and State implementation; and rights-enabling ecosystem transformation. This analysis identified cross-cutting human rights insights and opportunities for strengthening the interpretation and implementation of existing human rights in older age. The illustrative examples and underpinning findings are presented in Annex 4.

3. Reinterpreting Existing Human Rights in Situations of Dependency in Older Age

The analysis demonstrates that dependency does not diminish existing human rights. Rather, it changes how they are interpreted and realised in the context of older age. Applying the Age Knowble Human Rights Principles Framework for Older Persons ([Annex 2](#)) resulted in strengthened reinterpretations of three existing human rights that are foundational to the Independent Expert's thematic areas ([Annex 3](#)).

First, the **right to dignity** extends beyond recognising inherent worth to enabling older persons to continue living with dignity through personhood, self-determination, meaningful relationships, and equal recognition, regardless of changing support needs.

Second, the **right to live independently and be included in the community** extends beyond where a person lives to how they continue living the life they value. Living independently is realised through interdependence, meaningful choice, participation, and belonging that enable older persons to remain active members of their families and communities.

Third, the **right to the highest attainable standard of health** extends beyond access to healthcare services to encompass an integrated continuum of prevention, healthcare, rehabilitation, long-term care, home and community support, caregiver support, and palliative care. The right is realised when health and care systems enable older persons to continue living with dignity, autonomy, participation, and purpose throughout situations of dependency.

Together, these reinterpretations provide a coherent human rights foundation for responding to the Independent Expert's four thematic areas. They provide the analytical framework for analysing illustrative practices, enabling the cross-cutting human rights insights presented in the following sections.

4. Human Rights Findings Across the Four Themes

The analysis is organised around four cross-cutting human rights themes. The three reinterpreted human rights were applied to a curated selection of illustrative rights-realising examples from different countries and settings. The analysis examined how each example contributes to the continuing realisation of the reinterpreted rights in everyday life, through Convention and State application, and through rights-enabling ecosystem transformation, throughout situations of dependency.

The following sections synthesise the evidence across the illustrative examples to identify human rights findings and cross-cutting insights. Together, these findings identify opportunities to strengthen the implementation of existing human rights and inform the continued development of international human rights standards relating to older persons. The detailed supporting analysis is presented in [Annex 4](#).

4.1 Relational Autonomy and Decision-Making

Core Question: How can older persons continue to exercise relational autonomy, express their will and preferences, and participate in decisions affecting their lives while living in situations of dependency, and how do care practices, professional relationships and social interactions either enable or undermine this?

The analysis demonstrates that relational autonomy continues to be realised when older persons remain recognised as rights-holders whose will, preferences and personhood guide decisions affecting their lives. Across the

illustrative examples, care practices, professional relationships and living environments strengthen the continuing realisation of dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and the highest attainable standard of health when they enable partnership, supported decision-making, meaningful participation and trusted relationships. Conversely, approaches that assume incapacity, prioritise professional control or rely on substitute decision-making undermine the continuing exercise of autonomy throughout situations of dependency.

These findings are illustrated by the Gothenburg Person-Centred Care model (Sweden) and the Green House Project (United States). Together, they demonstrate complementary approaches to embedding relational autonomy within professional partnerships, care environments and everyday living. Rather than focusing on care alone, both examples show how relationships, organisational culture and everyday practice can enable older persons to continue directing their lives despite increasing dependency.

The analysis demonstrates that rights-based partnerships, supported decision-making and relationship-based care provide practical pathways for strengthening relational autonomy across diverse settings. At the same time, it identifies opportunities to further embed these approaches through legislation, policy, professional education, organisational leadership and accountability so that they become consistent expectations across health, care and support systems rather than examples of good practice.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that relational autonomy is realised not by preserving independence from others, but by enabling older persons to continue directing their lives through trusted relationships. Dependency changes how autonomy is exercised, not whether it exists. Human rights are strengthened when care, support and living environments enable the continuing realisation of dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and the highest attainable standard of health.

4.2 Community Inclusion and Participation

Core Question: How can older persons continue to live as active, connected and valued members of their families and communities while experiencing situations of dependency, and how do communities, services and public policies either enable or undermine inclusion and participation?

The analysis demonstrates that situations of dependency need not result in withdrawal from family or community life. Older persons continue to live as active, connected and valued members of their families and communities when community structures, services and public policies intentionally support ongoing participation, contribution and shared decision-making despite changing support needs. Community inclusion is strengthened when dependency is met with coordinated supports that enable older persons to continue exercising dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and the highest attainable standard of health, rather than being treated as a reason for exclusion or reduced participation.

These findings are illustrated by the South Vancouver Seniors Hub Council (Canada), the South Vancouver Seniors Network (Canada) and the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British Columbia (COSCO BC). Together, they demonstrate complementary approaches to sustaining community inclusion through shared governance, peer leadership, mutual support and civic participation. Collectively, they show that older persons continue contributing to family and community life when participation is intentionally supported despite increasing dependency.

The analysis demonstrates that sustaining community inclusion throughout situations of dependency requires more than access to community services. It requires communities, public policies and representative organisations to adapt how participation is supported so that older persons continue contributing, influencing decisions and belonging within community life despite changing support needs. The analysis also identifies opportunities to strengthen shared governance, invest in older person-led organisations, and embed meaningful participation within community planning, service delivery and public decision-making.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that community inclusion is realised not simply through access to services or activities, but by enabling older persons to continue belonging, contributing and participating as active,

connected and valued members of their families and communities. Dependency changes the support required for participation, not the continuing right to remain included in community life.

4.3 Health, Care and Caregiver Support

Core Question: *How can health, care and caregiver support be organised to enable older persons to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health while respecting their dignity, autonomy and human rights throughout situations of dependency?*

The analysis demonstrates that situations of dependency require health, care and caregiver support to be organised around the continuing realisation of human rights rather than around service fragmentation or increasing care needs alone. Older persons continue enjoying the highest attainable standard of health when health care, long-term care, rehabilitation, caregiver support and community services are intentionally coordinated to respect dignity, support self-determination and enable continued participation despite changing circumstances. Health is strengthened when systems recognise the whole person rather than treating dependency as the defining feature of later life.

These findings are illustrated by Buurtzorg (Netherlands), Japan's Community General Support Centres, Singapore's Integrated Frailty and Intrinsic Capacity initiatives, and the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multi-Level Care Society (Canada). Together, they demonstrate complementary approaches to organising integrated, person-centred and culturally responsive systems that enable older persons to continue living with dignity, remain connected to their communities and experience coordinated health and care throughout situations of dependency.

The analysis demonstrates that rights-realising health and care systems depend upon integration across sectors, continuous implementation and learning, support for caregivers, and responsiveness to the cultural, personal and social realities of older persons. It also identifies opportunities to strengthen sustainable investment, workforce capability, implementation, quality improvement and culturally responsive care so that rights-based health and care become the expected standard rather than examples of good practice.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that dependency changes how health, care and caregiver support should be organised, not the continuing right of older persons to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. Human rights are strengthened when integrated systems intentionally enable dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and health throughout situations of dependency.

4.4 Rights Protection and Safeguards

Core Question: *How can legal, institutional and community safeguards protect the dignity, autonomy and human rights of older persons when situations of dependency increase the risks of neglect, coercion, abuse, exclusion, institutionalisation or substitute decision-making?*

The analysis demonstrates that increasing dependency requires stronger safeguards to protect the continuing exercise of human rights, not greater restrictions on autonomy. Older persons remain rights-holders whose dignity, will, preferences and legal agency must continue to guide decisions affecting their lives. Effective safeguards therefore move beyond protection from harm to enabling the continuing exercise of rights through supported decision-making, independent advocacy, access to justice and accountability. Rights are strengthened when legal, institutional and community safeguards recognise dependency as a context requiring greater support for autonomy rather than greater control over the person.

These findings are illustrated by the Representation Agreement Act (British Columbia, Canada), Australia's National Decision-Making Principles, and Seniors First BC (Canada). Together, they demonstrate complementary approaches to strengthening legal agency through supported decision-making, embedding rights-based decision-making across legal and service systems, and ensuring access to independent advocacy and rights protection. Collectively, they show that effective safeguards both protect older persons from harm and enable the continuing exercise of their rights.

The analysis demonstrates that effective safeguarding requires coordinated legal frameworks, institutional accountability and accessible community-based supports that uphold dignity, autonomy and participation throughout situations of dependency. It also identifies opportunities to strengthen legislative alignment, professional capability, independent advocacy, rights education and accessible safeguarding pathways so that protection and empowerment operate together rather than as competing objectives.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that dependency changes the safeguards required to realise human rights, not the continuing entitlement of older persons to equal recognition, protection and participation. Human rights are strengthened when safeguarding systems enable older persons to continue exercising their rights while protecting them from neglect, coercion, abuse and exclusion.

5. Recommendations

Drawing on the analysis presented above, Age Knowble respectfully recommends the following actions to strengthen a human rights-based approach to dependency in older age.

- 1. Strengthen the interpretation of existing human rights through the realities of older age.** Existing human rights should be interpreted in ways that recognise dependency as a context in which rights continue to be realised throughout older age. Interpretation should be informed by dignity, self-determination, equality, participation, inclusion, accessibility, accountability, and the lived realities of older persons.
- 2. Recognise relational autonomy as central to the continuing exercise of human rights.** Laws, policies and professional practice should embed supported decision-making, respect for the older person's will and preferences, and trusted relationships as the foundation for enabling older persons to continue exercising their human rights despite increasing dependency.
- 3. Organise health, care and community systems around the continuing realisation of human rights.** Integrated health, rehabilitation, long-term care, caregiver support and community services should be intentionally organised to enable the continuing realisation of dignity, the right to live independently and be included in the community, and the highest attainable standard of health throughout changing support needs.
- 4. Strengthen legal, institutional and community safeguards that both protect and enable rights.** Safeguards should prevent neglect, coercion, abuse, exclusion and inappropriate substitute decision-making while strengthening legal agency, supported decision-making, independent advocacy, access to justice, and meaningful participation throughout situations of dependency. Where support is required, the least restrictive and least invasive means should always be used, having regard to the older person's past and present wishes.
- 5. Embed the continuing realisation of human rights in older age throughout future international standards, national implementation and monitoring.** Future international standards should recognise dependency as a cross-cutting human rights context requiring coordinated legal, policy and institutional responses that enable older persons to continue enjoying the full range of existing human rights throughout later life.

Dependency is not the point at which human rights diminish. It is the point at which their interpretation matters most. When existing human rights are interpreted through the realities of older age, law, policy and practice are better equipped to protect dignity, enable self-determination, strengthen belonging, and realise the highest attainable standard of health throughout situations of dependency.

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Annex 1. Age Knowble approach in interpreting human rights in the context of older age

Purpose

This submission responds to the Independent Expert's Call for Input through an Age Knowble human rights analytical approach that strengthens the interpretation and implementation of existing human rights in situations of dependency in older age.

Rather than proposing new human rights, the approach asks a different question:

How can existing human rights be reinterpreted and applied so that older persons continue enjoying their rights throughout situations of dependency?

The approach recognises that dependency is often examined through health, care or social policy perspectives. This submission instead begins with human rights. It connects human rights principles, the interpretation of existing rights, evidence from examples, and implementation recommendations into one coherent analytical pathway.

Analytical Pathway

Step 1. Identify existing human rights that are central to situations of dependency in older age. We identified the right to dignity; the right to live independently and be included in the community; and the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

Step 2. Apply the human rights principles that matter to older persons and further interpret these rights so that they become meaningful in upholding dignity and autonomy in situations of dependency in older age. Apply all principles and all dimensions of each principle:

- Meaning and Definition of the Principle;
- Rights Realisation in Everyday Life;
- Convention and State Application; and
- Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation.

These dimensions, applied together, ensure that interpretation considers the lived experience of older persons, the responsibilities of governments and institutions, and the broader systems changes required to realise human rights throughout situations of dependency.

Refer to Annex 2 for an overview on the eight principles applied.

Refer to Annex 3 for the interpretative outcomes on the three rights.

Step 4. Identify Illustrative Examples and Assess Their Impact in Realising the Three Interpreted Rights

Examples included in this submission have been curated on the basis that they contribute distinct human rights insights relevant to one of the Independent Expert's thematic areas and substantively realise the three interpreted rights.

In addition to validating the examples against the definitions of the three interpreted rights, we asks the following questions:

- What does this example demonstrate about how older persons experience the continuing enjoyment of dignity, independent living and community inclusion, and health throughout situations of dependency?
- What does this example demonstrate for governments, institutions and a future international human rights instrument in interpreting and implementing these rights?
- What broader transformation does this example demonstrate for relationships, communities, institutions and public systems if these three rights become the organising principle for responding to dependency?

Analysis output on the examples is in Annex 4

Step 6. Identify Human Rights Strengths and Opportunities

Furthermore, the analysis on these examples identifies strengths that demonstrate how the three reinterpreted rights are effectively realised; and opportunities that strengthen the future interpretation and implementation of those rights across different contexts. Analysis output on the strengths and opportunities is in Annex 4

Step 7. Develop Cross-Cutting Human Rights Insights and Recommendations

Finally, insights emerging across all four thematic areas are synthesised into recommendations for strengthening reinterpretation of existing rights; law and governance; policy; programmes and professional practice; monitoring and accountability; and future international human rights standards.

Contribution of the Analytical Approach

This analytical approach demonstrates that dependency in older age should not be understood as an exception to human rights. Rather, it provides a structured method for interpreting existing rights, analysing how they are realised in practice, identifying implementation strengths and opportunities, and informing future human rights standards. By connecting human rights principles, reinterpreted rights, evidence from examples and recommendations into one coherent pathway, the approach seeks to support both the work of the Independent Expert and the continuing development of international human rights standards for older persons.

Annex 2. Age Knowble's Human Rights Principles Framework for Older Persons

Following framework is version 2.0 of the framework [submitted by Age Knowble to IGWG April 22 Call for Input](#). It builds on a review of submissions made concurrently to the Call.

General Principles guide the development of law, policy, practice, institutions, services, and future human rights standards. They provide a consistent interpretive framework for governments, courts, independent human rights institutions, civil society, service providers, communities, and older persons themselves. Together, they help ensure that human rights are understood and applied consistently across diverse contexts while remaining grounded in the lived realities of older persons.

The Age Knowble framework has eight principles. Together, they provide enduring guidance for the interpretation, application, implementation, and advancement of human rights throughout older age across changing contexts, emerging realities, and future generations:

- Dignity and Equal Worth
- Personhood and Self-Determination
- Equality and Non-Discrimination
- Participation and Relational Belonging
- Protection and Security
- Possibilities and Choice
- Accountability and Rights-Realising Systems
- Future Readiness and Enduring Relevance

Principle 1 Dignity and Equal Worth: Every older person possesses inherent dignity and equal worth throughout older age.

Older persons are entitled to equal dignity, respect, and recognition throughout older age. Their dignity and worth do not depend on age, productivity, health status, disability, dependency, cognitive change, income, or social role. The need for support or care must never diminish their equal status, rights, respect, or recognition as valued members of society. Older age should be recognised not as diminished human status, but as a continuing stage of equal human dignity and worth within our shared human future.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- respect in everyday interactions
- being seen, heard, and taken seriously
- privacy across homes, hospitals, care, and services
- support without shame, pity, or loss of standing
- freedom from burden narratives or devaluing treatment
- recognition of identity, culture, faith, language, and life history
- confidence that their lives continue to matter

B. Convention and State Application

- affirm inherent dignity and equal worth in all settings
- prohibit degrading, humiliating, dehumanising, or age-based disrespectful treatment
- require dignity-centred standards in healthcare, care, housing, detention, emergency response, and other public services
- provide accessible remedies where dignity is violated
- challenge ageist and devaluing narratives in laws, institutions, services, and society

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- valuing people by productivity → valuing people by humanity
- burden narratives → equal social worth
- invisibility → recognition
- dependency stigma → dignity across interdependence
- institutional convenience → person-centred respect
- older age as decline → older age as continuing human value

Principle 2 Personhood and Self-Determination: Every older person remains a full person and rights-holder throughout older age, with the right to direct their own life according to their will, preferences, and values.

Older persons remain full persons and rights-holders throughout older age, including where disability, dependency, or cognitive change is present. They are entitled to self-determination: to direct their own lives, express their will and preferences, make personal decisions, and to continue pursuing meaning, relationships, contribution, work, service, creativity, learning, and personal development. Self-determination includes the exercise of legal agency, with appropriate support where needed, while remaining guided by the older person's own will, preferences, and values. Equal legal agency and decision-making rights, including legal capacity on an equal basis with others, should be recognised and protected.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- control over daily lives, routines, and priorities
- respect for will and preferences
- support to make personal decisions where needed
- being listened to in healthcare, housing, financial, care, and family matters
- choices about where and with whom to live, where possible
- opportunities for meaning, purpose, growth, and contribution
- recognition that their lives remain their own

B. Convention and State Application

- affirm continuing personhood and equal rights-holder status
- recognise equal legal agency and decision-making rights, including legal capacity on an equal basis with others
- require supported decision-making guided by will and preferences
- prohibit age- or diagnosis-based exclusion from decisions
- protect free and informed consent
- ensure communication and decision supports where needed

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- substituted control → supported self-determination
- independence-only ideals → supported decision-making
- decline narratives → continuing personhood and development
- speaking for older persons → listening to older persons
- care as compliance → care as partnership
- passive dependency → continued agency, purpose, and contribution

Principle 3 Equality and Non-Discrimination: Every older person is entitled to equality before and under the law, and to the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination.

Equality requires more than identical treatment. It requires substantive equality through fair, responsive, and inclusive measures that remove barriers and address disadvantage across the diverse circumstances of older age. Equality requires not only equal recognition before and under the law, but also the equal enjoyment of rights in law, policy, institutions, work, services, and everyday life.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- fair treatment in healthcare, employment, housing, banking, insurance, transport, and services
- opportunities to work, volunteer, learn, and participate without arbitrary age barriers
- decisions based on individual circumstances rather than stereotypes
- equal access to information, technology, justice, and participation
- barriers removed where systems create or reinforce disadvantage
- being believed and taken seriously when asserting concerns or rights

B. Convention and State Application

- prohibit direct, indirect, multiple, and intersectional age discrimination
- guarantee equality before and under the law, and equal enjoyment of rights in practice
- require accessibility, accommodation, and barrier removal where needed
- review unjustified age limits and discriminatory exclusions
- ensure equal access to justice, remedies, and complaints mechanisms
- address ageism in institutions, markets, and services

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- formal equality → substantive equality
- neutral rules with unequal effects → fair and responsive systems
- tolerated ageism → equality cultures
- exclusion by design → inclusion by design
- discounted older voices → authoritative participation
- hidden discrimination → visible accountability

Principle 4: Participation and Relational Belonging: Every older person has the right to remain connected, included, and an active participant in the relationships and communities that give life meaning.

Older persons have the right to participate meaningfully in family, community, civic, cultural, economic, and public life, and to remain connected, recognised, and included in the relationships and communities through which dignity, identity, wellbeing, citizenship, and contribution are sustained. Meaningful participation includes opportunities to contribute, influence decisions, maintain valued relationships, and continue belonging throughout older age.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- meaningful contact with family, friends, peers, and trusted networks
- opportunities to work, volunteer, mentor, care, learn, worship, create, and contribute where desired
- support to participate despite disability, language, mobility, sensory, or digital barriers
- continuity of valued relationships during illness, relocation, bereavement, or care transitions
- being welcomed and included rather than isolated or socially erased
- opportunities to share knowledge, skills, leadership, culture, and lived experience

B. Convention and State Application

- ensure meaningful participation of older persons in decision-making, design, implementation, and review
- establish consultation mechanisms through which views genuinely influence outcomes
- protect family life, visitation, communication, and continuity of relationships
- support community living and prevent unnecessary segregation or isolation
- promote age-friendly communities, housing, transport, and digital environments
- recognise the civic, cultural, caregiving, economic, and social contributions of older persons

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- consultation without influence → shared decision-making
- isolation cultures → belonging ecosystems

- segregation → community connection
- ageing at the margins → active social citizenship
- older persons as recipients → workers, carers, mentors, creators, and community builders
- loneliness as a private issue → shared public responsibility

Principle 5 Protection and Security: Every older person has the right to live safely and securely, free from abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, coercion, abandonment, degrading treatment, and arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

Older persons are entitled to the protection, safeguards, and supports necessary to live safely and securely throughout older age. This includes timely, appropriate, accessible, affordable, and rights-respecting supports that uphold dignity, self-determination, participation, wellbeing, and security across all aspects of life, including social, economic, housing, care, and relational security. Protection should never diminish rights, voice, autonomy, or community connection.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- freedom from abuse, neglect, violence, coercion, abandonment, and degrading treatment
- support that preserves dignity, choice, privacy, and relationships
- timely assistance with care, housing, mobility, communication, finances, or daily living
- confidence that needed income, housing, care, and support will not suddenly disappear
- safety without loss of voice, autonomy, or community connection
- access to trusted help, advocacy, and remedies when harm occurs

B. Convention and State Application

- prevent, investigate, punish, and remedy abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, coercion, and abandonment
- regulate institutions and care settings to prevent confinement, restraint, and rights violations
- ensure accessible community-based supports that reduce abandonment, homelessness, and unnecessary institutionalisation
- support social protection, income security, affordable housing, and essential care supports
- require least restrictive, lawful, necessary, and proportionate measures where intervention is needed
- establish accessible complaints, advocacy, oversight, and remedies mechanisms

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- protection as control → rights-enabling support
- insecurity and crisis dependence → dependable security across later life
- risk elimination → dignity of risk
- abuse-only responses → preventing abuse and structural neglect
- care as compliance → care as partnership
- passive recipients of protection → rights-holders entitled to safe, secure, and supported lives

Principle 6 Possibilities and Choice: Every older person has the right to continue pursuing a life of possibilities and choice throughout older age.

Human rights should keep possibilities open throughout older age. Older age should never be treated as a barrier to continued learning, relationships, creativity, contribution, enjoyment, exploration, spirituality, or personal fulfilment. Every older person should remain free to shape their own path according to their aspirations, circumstances, values, and preferences. Human rights should expand—not limit—the possibilities available throughout older age so that every person can continue pursuing the life they value.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- opportunities to pursue new interests, aspirations, and experiences throughout older age
- opportunities to continue learning, growing, creating, and discovering

- opportunities to contribute according to one's interests, abilities, and aspirations
- opportunities for social, cultural, recreational, and community participation
- opportunities to enjoy recreation, leisure, travel, culture, and spirituality
- confidence that new possibilities remain open regardless of age or changing circumstances
- freedom to imagine and pursue new goals and aspirations throughout older age

B. Convention and State Application

- remove unnecessary age-based barriers that limit possibilities and life choices
- promote lifelong opportunities for learning, work, volunteering, creativity, recreation, and civic participation
- ensure equitable access to opportunities regardless of age, disability, income, geography, culture, language, gender, or support needs
- invest in accessible environments, information, transport, technology, and services that expand possibilities throughout older age
- recognise that aspirations, goals, and interests continue to evolve throughout later life
- support diverse pathways for living well, recognising there is no single model of successful ageing

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- age-based limitation → lifelong possibilities
- assumptions of decline → continuing possibilities
- prescribed pathways → expanded opportunities and choices
- fixed life expectations → evolving aspirations
- preparing for retirement → investing in later-life possibilities
- one model of ageing well → many ways of living a valued later life

Principle 7 Accountability and Rights-Realising Systems: Every older person is entitled to laws, institutions, services, systems, and remedies that make human rights real in everyday life.

Human rights become meaningful only when they can be exercised in practice. Older persons are entitled to laws, institutions, services, age-friendly environments, communities, and remedies that are accessible, coordinated, responsive, and accountable. Rights should not depend on where a person lives, what services they can navigate, or whether they are able to overcome unnecessary barriers. Systems should uphold rights consistently, fairly, and effectively throughout older age.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- understandable, reachable, and easy-to-navigate services
- timely and respectful responses when help is needed
- continuity of income, housing, care, transport, and community supports
- real options to challenge unfair decisions and seek remedies
- systems that work equally for people who are offline, isolated, poor, disabled, rural, migrant, or living with cognitive change
- confidence that public institutions act fairly and consistently

B. Convention and State Application

- align laws, budgets, institutions, and services with Convention rights
- establish accountability, complaints, remedies, and independent oversight
- coordinate health, housing, income, care, transport, justice, and community systems
- ensure systems are accessible, multilingual, navigable, and not digital-only
- involve older persons in design, delivery, monitoring, and review
- ensure adequately resourced, skilled, and rights-based workforces across services

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- fragmented services → coordinated systems built around people's lives

- bureaucratic gatekeeping → rights-guided access
- complaint-only accountability → accountability by design
- expert-only governance → co-governance with older persons
- digital exclusion → inclusive service ecosystems
- hidden system failures → visible and clear accountability

Principle 8 Future Readiness and Enduring Relevance: The interpretation and application of human rights should remain responsive to changing contexts, proactive in anticipating emerging realities, and grounded in enduring human rights principles.

As societies, technologies, institutions, and experiences of ageing continue to evolve, the interpretation and application of human rights should remain informed by continuous learning from lived experience, emerging knowledge, evolving evidence, and the clarification, progressive development, and emergence of international human rights standards. This enables the Framework to respond thoughtfully to changing realities while preserving its enduring human rights foundation. In this way, the Framework remains an enduring guide for understanding, interpreting, implementing, and advancing the human rights of current and future generations of older persons.

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

- confidence that human rights remain relevant and effective as circumstances change
- protection from new and emerging forms of exclusion, discrimination, and inequality
- continued enjoyment of human rights across changing technologies, services, environments, and social conditions
- confidence that innovation promotes inclusion rather than creating new barriers
- recognition that human rights continue to respond to longer, more diverse, and evolving later lives
- trust that current and future generations of older persons will enjoy equal protection and effective enjoyment of their human rights

B. Convention and State Application

- interpret and apply Convention rights in ways that remain responsive to changing contexts and emerging realities
- periodically review laws, policies, guidance, and implementation to ensure their continuing relevance and effectiveness
- anticipate and respond to emerging forms of exclusion, discrimination, and inequality arising from technological, environmental, demographic, humanitarian, and societal change
- strengthen interpretation and implementation through continuous learning from lived experience, emerging knowledge, evolving evidence, and the clarification, progressive development, and emergence of international human rights standards
- use foresight, evidence, and the meaningful participation of older persons to inform future interpretation, implementation, and review

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

- static interpretation → living interpretation grounded in enduring principles
- reactive implementation → proactive and anticipatory implementation
- responding to yesterday's realities → preparing for tomorrow's realities
- fixed assumptions about ageing → evolving understanding informed by lived experience
- isolated learning → continuous learning and improvement
- fixed understanding of human rights → evolving interpretation informed by developing international human rights standards

Annex 3. Reinterpreting Existing Human Rights in Situations of Dependency in Older Age

The Independent Expert's Call for Input examines a broad range of issues relating to autonomy, dignity and human rights in situations of dependency. Rather than considering each theme separately, this submission first reinterprets three existing human rights that together provide a coherent human rights foundation for analysing four thematic areas.

The three rights were selected because they encompass the principal human rights dimensions raised throughout the Call:

- the right to dignity affirms continuing personhood, equal worth and self-determination;
- the right to live independently and be included in the community addresses autonomy, relationships of interdependence, participation and belonging; and
- the right to the highest attainable standard of health recognises that health, care and support should enable older persons to continue living with dignity, autonomy and purpose throughout situations of dependency.

Applying the Age Knowble approach demonstrates that dependency does not diminish these rights. Rather, it changes how they are interpreted, realised and supported. Together, the reinterpretations provide the human rights foundation for analysing the illustrative rights-realising examples presented in Annex 3 and for developing the recommendations contained in the main submission.

Right to Dignity

Current definition: The right to dignity recognises that every person possesses inherent dignity and equal worth. Dependency, disability, cognitive change or the need for support or care must never diminish an older person's equal status, rights, respect or recognition as a valued member of society.

Reinterpreting the Right Through the Realities of Older Age

Interpreted in the context of older age, the right to dignity extends beyond protecting the inherent worth of every older person to affirm their continuing humanity throughout situations of dependency. Dignity is not only an inherent status that must be respected, but also a lived expression of personhood, self-determination and the freedom to continue pursuing a life of meaning and purpose. The right therefore requires that support, care and relationships enable older persons not merely to retain their dignity, but to continue living with dignity as equal members of society, regardless of changing circumstances or support needs.

Realising the Right in Everyday Life

Realising the right to dignity requires creating the everyday conditions in which dignity is experienced through inclusion, protection and equal recognition. Older persons should continue to be heard, respected and involved in decisions affecting their lives, while receiving the safeguards and support necessary to protect their rights without diminishing their autonomy or personhood. Dignity therefore becomes a lived reality when relationships, everyday practices and social attitudes consistently affirm the equal humanity, belonging and value of older persons throughout situations of dependency.

Sustaining the Right Through Rights-Realising Systems

Sustaining the right to dignity requires more than recognising dignity as a fundamental human value. It requires rights-realising systems that intentionally embed dignity as the foundation for laws, policies, institutions and professional practice affecting older persons living in situations of dependency. By strengthening accountability, guiding decision-making and remaining responsive to emerging realities, such systems ensure that dignity is consistently upheld, protected and enabled—not only in individual interactions, but throughout the structures and practices that shape everyday life and future generations.

Interpretive Conclusion

Interpreted in this way, the right to dignity not only protects older persons from treatment that undermines their humanity but also enables them to continue living with dignity through personhood, self-determination, meaningful relationships, equal recognition and rights-realising systems that uphold their equal worth throughout situations of dependency.

Right to Live Independently and Be Included in the Community

Current definition: The right to live independently and be included in the community recognises the equal right of every person to live in the community, with choices equal to others. It requires access to the supports, services and enabling environments necessary to make this possible, while ensuring full inclusion and participation in community life.

Reinterpreting the Right Through the Realities of Older Age

Interpreted in the context of older age, the right to live independently and be included in the community extends beyond where an older person lives to how they continue living the life they value while in situations of dependency. Living independently is not defined by self-sufficiency or the absence of support, but by the continuing ability to exercise self-determination, make meaningful choices and remain connected to family, friends and community through relationships of interdependence. Rather than diminishing independence, dependency calls for the support, relationships and enabling environments that allow older persons to continue directing their own lives, participating as equal members of their communities, and pursuing the lives they value.

Realising the Right in Everyday Life

Realising the right to live independently and be included in the community requires creating the everyday conditions in which older persons can continue living as equal members of their communities while receiving the support and safeguards necessary to remain connected, exercise choice and participate in everyday life. Community living should be experienced not simply as remaining in one's home or neighbourhood, but as continuing to belong, contribute and participate through relationships of interdependence. Protection and support should therefore work together to enable continued belonging, participation and self-direction rather than isolation, segregation or unnecessary dependence.

Sustaining the Right Through Rights-Realising Systems

Sustaining the right to live independently and be included in the community requires more than recognising the right in law or providing individual programmes and services. It requires intentionally designed rights-realising systems that organise policies, infrastructure, services and community supports around enabling older persons to continue exercising this right throughout situations of dependency. Such systems should remove structural barriers, coordinate supports across sectors and create equitable opportunities for older persons to choose where and with whom they live, remain connected to their communities, and access the supports necessary to continue directing their own lives. By remaining accountable, inclusive and responsive to changing patterns of ageing, dependency and community life, rights-realising systems ensure that community inclusion becomes a consistently realised human right rather than a matter of circumstance, service availability or individual goodwill.

Interpretive Conclusion

Interpreted in this way, the right to live independently and be included in the community not only protects an older person's opportunity to remain in the community, but also enables them to continue living the life they value through self-determination, relationships of interdependence, and rights-realising systems that support belonging, participation and choice throughout situations of dependency.

Right to Health

Current definition: The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health recognises the right of every person to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination. It extends beyond

healthcare to include the underlying determinants of health and access to timely, acceptable, affordable and quality health services, rehabilitation, long-term care and the conditions necessary to support health, well-being and quality of life.

Reinterpreting the Right Through the Realities of Older Age

Interpreted in the context of older age, the right to health extends beyond access to healthcare services to encompass an integrated continuum of prevention, healthcare, rehabilitation, long-term care, home and community support, palliative care and informal caregiving. In situations of dependency, this continuum should not merely respond to illness or provide care; it should protect older persons from harm, enable meaningful choice, support participation in decisions, and sustain the relationships and environments that contribute to health and well-being. The right to health is therefore realised when health, care and support are organised not only around clinical need but around enabling older persons to continue living with dignity, autonomy, connection and purpose.

Realising the Right in Everyday Life

Realising the right to health requires more than access to health and care services. It requires older persons to experience coordinated, person-centred care and support that responds to their changing needs while respecting their goals, preferences and relationships. Throughout situations of dependency, older persons should remain active participants in decisions affecting their health and care, supported by trusted relationships with families, caregivers, communities and professionals. Health is therefore experienced not simply through treatment, but through continuity of care, meaningful participation, supportive relationships and opportunities to maintain function, well-being and quality of life.

Sustaining the Right Through Rights-Realising Systems

Sustaining the right to health requires more than high-quality healthcare services. It requires rights-realising systems that intentionally integrate health, rehabilitation, long-term care, home and community care, caregiver support, social protection and other enabling services into a coordinated continuum that responds to the realities of dependency in older age. Such systems should remove barriers to equitable access, strengthen accountability across sectors, support caregivers, and remain responsive to changing patterns of ageing, technology, knowledge and models of care. By embedding coordination, equity and accountability throughout the continuum, rights-realising systems enable older persons to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health throughout situations of dependency, both now and into the future.

Interpretive Conclusion

Interpreted in this way, the right to health not only protects access to healthcare and treatment but also enables older persons to achieve the highest attainable standard of health through an integrated continuum of health, care and support that protects well-being, respects autonomy, supports meaningful participation, and responds to changing needs throughout situations of dependency.

Annex 4: Illustrative Rights-Realising Examples

This Annex presents the human rights analysis underpinning the findings and recommendations contained in the main submission. The illustrative rights-realising examples were deliberately curated because each contributes a distinct human rights insight relevant to one of the four thematic areas identified in the Independent Expert's Call for Input. They are not presented as comprehensive models or endorsed programmes. Rather, together they provide evidence for examining how existing human rights can continue to be realised throughout situations of dependency in older age.

Applying the Age Knowable human rights analytical approach, each example was first assessed against the three reinterpreted rights to confirm that it substantively realises: the right to dignity; the right to live independently and be included in the community; and the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

The three reinterpreted rights then become the analytical framework for examining the examples. Each example is analysed through the three dimensions of the reinterpreted rights:

A. Rights Realisation in Everyday Life

How does the example demonstrate the continuing realisation of dignity, independent living and health in the everyday lives of older persons throughout situations of dependency?

B. Convention and State Application

What does the example demonstrate for governments, institutions and a future international human rights instrument in interpreting and implementing these three rights?

C. Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation

What broader transformation does the example demonstrate if dignity, independent living and health become the organising principles for responding to dependency across relationships, communities, services, institutions and public systems?

The resulting strengths and opportunities are therefore **not evaluations of programmes themselves**. Rather, they are findings about how each practice contributes to the continuing realisation of the three reinterpreted rights and what broader lessons it offers for strengthening the interpretation and implementation of existing human rights in situations of dependency.

Taken together, the examples provide complementary evidence that informs the four cross-cutting human rights insights presented in Annex 4 and the recommendations contained in the main submission.

Theme A. Relational Autonomy and Decision-Making

Core Question: *How can older persons continue to exercise relational autonomy, express their will and preferences, and participate in decisions affecting their lives while living in situations of dependency, and how do care practices, professional relationships and social interactions either enable or undermine this?*

Gothenburg and Green House Project were selected because each contributes a distinct human rights insight relevant to this Core Question. Each example was first assessed against the three reinterpreted rights to confirm that it substantively realises dignity, the right to live independently and be included in the community, and the right to health. The examples were then analysed through the three dimensions of those rights to identify broader strengths and opportunities for strengthening human rights realisation.

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
Gothenburg Person-Centred Care (Sweden)	Demonstrates how person-centred partnerships between older persons and professionals enable the continuing realisation of dignity, independent living, and health by supporting relational autonomy, the expression of will and preferences, and shared decision-making throughout situations of dependency.	Older persons continue to live with dignity through recognition of their personhood, exercise relational autonomy by expressing their will and preferences in partnership with professionals and strengthen their health and well-being through care organised around their own goals, values, and lived experience rather than clinical needs alone.	Health and care systems should embed person-centred partnerships, supported decision-making, and shared care planning as core mechanisms for realising dignity, independent living, and health throughout situations of dependency.	Illustrates the shift from professionally directed care towards rights-based partnerships that recognise older persons as continuing rights-holders and experts in their own lives.	Demonstrates that relational autonomy can be embedded in everyday professional practice through trusting partnerships that strengthen the simultaneous realisation of dignity, independent living, and health.	Wider implementation requires workforce education, organisational leadership, accountability frameworks, and care systems that consistently support partnership-based practice and the expression of older persons' will and preferences.

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
Green House Project (United States)	Demonstrates how relationship-based care and home-like living environments enable older persons, including those experiencing situations of dependency, to continue expressing their will, preferences, identity, and everyday choices.	Older persons continue to live with dignity through relationships that recognise their individuality, express their will and preferences through everyday choices and routines, and strengthen their health and well-being through meaningful relationships, familiarity, and a sense of home. Dependency does not diminish identity or the capacity to make decisions about everyday life.	Governments and care providers should promote relationship-based care, home-like environments, and flexible care practices that enable older persons to continue expressing their will, preferences, and everyday choices throughout situations of dependency.	Illustrates the shift from institutional models of care towards relationship-based living environments that recognise autonomy as something sustained through everyday relationships and routines.	Demonstrates that small-scale, relationship-centred care environments enable dignity, relational autonomy, and health by supporting continuity, trust, and everyday choice.	Broader implementation requires funding, workforce models, regulatory frameworks, and care standards that prioritise relationship-based care, continuity, and meaningful everyday decision-making.

Cross-cutting Human Rights Insight

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that **relational autonomy** recognises that dependency changes how autonomy is exercised, not whether it exists. Through trusted relationships, care practices, and social interactions, older persons continue expressing their will and preferences, participating in decisions affecting their lives, and realising their rights to dignity, to live in the community through interdependence, and to health. Human rights are strengthened when older persons remain recognised as rights-holders whose agency continues to guide decisions throughout situations of dependency.

Theme B. Community Inclusion and Participation

Core Question: *How can older persons continue to live as active, connected and valued members of their families and communities while experiencing situations of dependency, and how do communities, services and public policies either enable or undermine inclusion and participation?*

South Vancouver Seniors Hub Council, South Vancouver Seniors Network, and Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British Columbia were selected because each contributes a distinct human rights insight relevant to this Core Question. Each examples was first assessed against the three reinterpreted rights to confirm that it substantively realises dignity, the right to live independently and be included in the community, and the right to health. The examples were then analysed through the three dimensions of those rights to identify broader strengths and opportunities for strengthening human rights implementation.

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
<u>South Vancouver Seniors Hub Council (Canada)</u>	Demonstrates how co-design and shared governance enable older persons, including those experiencing situations of dependency, to continue shaping decisions affecting their communities.	Older persons continue to live as active, connected, and valued members of their communities through equal recognition, shared decision-making, participation, and social connection. Dependency does not diminish personhood, agency, or community contribution.	Governments and community organisations should embed the meaningful participation of older persons, including those experiencing situations of dependency, in planning, governance, implementation, and evaluation. Participation should be recognised as a mechanism for realising dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and health.	An enabling ecosystem embeds meaningful participation by older persons within community governance, planning, and service delivery, recognising them as partners rather than recipients.	Co-design and shared governance create trusted opportunities for older persons to influence decisions, strengthen belonging, and remain active contributors to community life.	Expand accessible and inclusive participation across community, health, and social care systems so that all older persons can continue shaping decisions affecting their lives and communities.
<u>South Vancouver Seniors Network (Canada)</u>	Demonstrates how an older person-led network enables older persons, including those experiencing situations of dependency, to	Older persons continue to live as connected and valued members of their communities through mutual support, trusted relationships, social	Governments should recognise and invest in older person-led networks as essential partners in enabling dignity, living in the community through interdependence, health,	An enabling ecosystem recognises older person-led networks as essential community infrastructure that strengthens	Builds on the experience, relationships, and leadership of older persons to strengthen trusted peer support, community	Greater recognition, sustainable investment, and integration into ageing strategies would strengthen the capacity of older person-led

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
	remain connected, contribute to community life, and access mutual support and information.	connection, and meaningful opportunities to contribute. Dependency does not diminish belonging, reciprocity, or community participation.	participation, and social inclusion.	connection, participation, mutual support, and inclusion.	connection, and rights realisation.	networks to enable continuing participation and inclusion for diverse older persons.
Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British Columbia – COSCO BC (Canada)	Demonstrates how representative organisations enable older persons, including those experiencing situations of dependency, to continue influencing public policy through collective advocacy and civic participation.	Older persons continue influencing decisions affecting their lives through representative organisations and collective advocacy. Dependency does not diminish citizenship, civic participation, or the right to be heard.	Governments should establish and strengthen mechanisms through which representative organisations of older persons participate meaningfully in the development, implementation, and review of laws, policies, and programmes.	An enabling ecosystem recognises representative organisations of older persons as essential democratic partners in public decision-making and accountability.	Representative organisations amplify the collective voice and lived experience of older persons, strengthening democratic participation, accountability, and human rights.	More systematic and accessible participation mechanisms at local, national, and international levels would strengthen the continuing contribution of representative organisations to advancing the human rights of older persons.

Cross-cutting Human Rights Insight

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that dependency does not prevent older persons from remaining active, connected, and valued members of their communities. Communities, services, and public policies strengthen human rights when they enable meaningful participation, trusted relationships, representative voice, and opportunities to contribute. Inclusion is realised through interdependence, not independence alone.

Theme C. Health, Care and Caregiver Support

Core Question: *How can health, care and caregiver support be organised to enable older persons to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health while respecting their dignity, autonomy and human rights throughout situations of dependency?*

Buurtzorg (Netherlands), Japan Community General Support Centres, Singapore Integrated Frailty and Intrinsic Capacity Initiatives, and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multi-Level Care Society (Canada) were selected because each contributes a distinct human rights insight relevant to this Core Question. Each example was first assessed against the three reinterpreted rights to confirm that it substantively realises right to dignity, the right to live independently and be included in the community, and the right to health. The examples were then analysed through the three dimensions of those rights to identify broader strengths and opportunities for strengthening human rights implementation.

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
Buurtzorg (Netherlands)	Demonstrates how relationship-based home care enables the continuing realisation of dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and health through an integrated community care model.	Older persons continue living with dignity through respectful, trusting relationships, living in the community through coordinated support, and enjoying health outcomes through integrated care that promotes well-being and participation.	States should organise health, rehabilitation, home care, and community support as an integrated continuum that enables the continuing realisation of dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and health.	Illustrates the shift from fragmented services towards integrated, rights-realising systems organised around personhood, coordinated care, and community living.	Demonstrates that relationship-based home care can simultaneously realise the three interpreted rights while enabling older persons to continue living the lives they value within their communities.	Wider implementation requires financing, workforce development, and governance that intentionally organise health and care systems around the continuing realisation of the three interpreted rights.
Japan Community General Support Centres	Demonstrates how integrated community care systems can organise services around the continuing	Older persons continue living with dignity, living in the community through	Governments should integrate health, long-term care, prevention, housing, and caregiver support into	Illustrates the shift from fragmented programmes towards coordinated community systems	Demonstrates how coordinated community systems can simultaneously realise dignity, living	Ongoing demographic change requires sustained policy leadership,

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
	realisation of the three reinterpreted rights.	coordinated support, and maintaining health through integrated health, long-term care, prevention, housing, and caregiver support.	coordinated community systems that enable the continuing realisation of the three interpreted rights.	organised around the continuing realisation of the three interpreted rights.	in the community through interdependence, and health across the continuum of care.	workforce planning, and investment to strengthen integrated community care over time.
Singapore Integrated Frailty and Intrinsic Capacity Initiatives	Demonstrates how continuously learning health and care systems strengthen the continuing realisation of the three interpreted rights.	Older persons continue living with dignity, living in the community through care that maintains function and participation, and enjoying health through services organised around their goals, preferences, and changing needs.	Governments should organise health and care systems that continuously strengthen implementation through leadership, workforce capability, multidisciplinary collaboration, evaluation, and learning.	Illustrates the shift from static health and care systems towards continuously learning systems that improve rights realisation in response to evidence, changing needs, and the lived experiences of older persons.	Demonstrates that continuously learning systems strengthen the consistent realisation of the three interpreted rights as circumstances, evidence, and population needs evolve.	Sustain investment in leadership, workforce capability, evaluation, and continuous learning so health and care systems remain responsive to the changing needs and priorities of older persons.

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multi-Level Care Society (Canada)	Demonstrates how culturally responsive health and care services enable the continuing realisation of the three interpreted rights across the continuum of community, assisted living, and long-term care.	Older persons continue living with dignity through care that respects their language, culture, and identity; living in the community through culturally responsive services that adapt to changing support needs; and enjoying health through coordinated care that responds to both clinical and cultural needs.	Governments should embed culturally responsive care within policy, funding, workforce development, and quality standards to ensure equitable implementation of the three interpreted rights.	Illustrates the shift from culturally neutral services towards rights-realising systems that respond to the diverse languages, cultures, and identities of older persons and their communities.	Demonstrates that culturally responsive care strengthens the equitable realisation of the three interpreted rights across diverse communities and care settings.	Governments and service providers should embed cultural responsiveness as a core expectation of integrated health and care systems rather than an optional enhancement

Cross-cutting Human Rights Insight

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that the continuing realisation of dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and health depends not only on the availability of services, but on how health, care, and caregiver support are organised. Human rights are strengthened when systems are intentionally organised around relationships, community coordination, continuous learning, equity, and the goals and preferences of older persons throughout situations o

Theme D. Rights Protection and Safeguards

Core Question: *How can legal, institutional and community safeguards protect the dignity, autonomy and human rights of older persons when situations of dependency increase the risks of neglect, coercion, abuse, exclusion, institutionalisation or substitute decision-making?*

British Columbia Representation Agreement, Australia's National Decision-Making Principles, and Seniors' First BC were selected because each contributes a distinct human rights insight relevant to this Core Question. Each example was first assessed against the three reinterpreted rights to confirm that it substantively realises dignity, the right to live independently and be included in the community, and the right to health. The examples were

then analysed through the three dimensions of those rights to identify broader strengths and opportunities for strengthening human rights implementation.

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
<u>British Columbia Representation Agreement (Canada)</u>	Demonstrates how supported decision-making protects and enables the continuing realisation of dignity, living in the community through interdependence, and health through trusted relationships.	Older persons continue exercising self-determination through trusted supporters while retaining choice over where and how they live and participating in decisions affecting their health, care, and everyday lives. Dependency does not require relinquishing legal agency.	Legal frameworks should recognise supported decision-making as a means of enabling rights rather than defaulting to substitute decision-making. Laws, policies, and professional guidance should strengthen respect for will, preferences, and trusted relationships.	Illustrates the shift from substitute decision-making towards rights-realising legal frameworks that support the continuing exercise of rights throughout situations of dependency. Strengths	Demonstrates that supported decision-making enables the continuing realisation of the three interpreted rights by protecting legal agency through trusted relationships.	Wider implementation requires public awareness, professional education, and accessible supported decision-making mechanisms so that legal rights are consistently realised in practice.
<u>Australia's National Decision-Making Principles</u>	Demonstrates how rights-based legal and policy guidance embeds supported decision-making and respect for will and preferences across laws, policies, and services.	Older persons continue exercising self-determination when decisions are guided by their will, preferences, and rights, even where significant support is required.	Governments should embed supported decision-making across legislation, policy, professional standards, and service delivery to strengthen rights-based implementation.	Illustrates the shift from substitute decision-making towards rights-based governance that supports autonomy and equal recognition before the law.	Demonstrates how national decision-making principles protect legal agency and enable the continuing exercise of rights throughout situations of dependency.	Continued implementation requires legislative alignment, professional capability, and monitoring to ensure the principles are consistently translated into everyday practice.
<u>Seniors First BC (Canada)</u>	Demonstrates how independent advocacy protects	Older persons are better able to maintain dignity,	Governments should embed independent advocacy, accessible	Illustrates the shift from reactive protection towards	Demonstrates that independent advocacy enables	Broader implementation requires sustainable

Illustrative Rights-Realising Example	Why Curated	Rights Realisation in Everyday Life	Convention and State Application	Rights-Enabling Ecosystem Transformation	Strengths	Opportunities
	the rights of older persons by preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse, neglect, coercion, and exclusion.	exercise choice, remain connected to their communities, and protect their rights when independent advocacy, accessible information, and timely support are available	complaints mechanisms, and rights information within safeguarding systems to prevent, identify, and respond to abuse, neglect, coercion, and exclusion.	safeguarding systems that strengthen prevention, early intervention, accountability, and access to justice throughout situations of dependency.	older persons to understand, exercise, and defend their rights while reducing the risks of abuse, neglect, coercion, and exclusion.	investment in independent advocacy, coordinated safeguarding pathways, and accessible rights information regardless of where an older person lives or receives support.

Cross-cutting Human Rights Insight

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that safeguards are most effective when they protect the continuing exercise of rights, not simply respond to harm. Legal, institutional, and community safeguards strengthen dignity, autonomy, and human rights by protecting legal agency, embedding rights-based decision-making, and ensuring access to independent advocacy throughout situations of dependency