



Second World Summit for Social Development

Solutions Session: From Potential to Progress: Empowering Every Generation for Social Development in Asia and Africa

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Organized by: Age Knowble Consulting Inc.

Co-Sponsored by: Alliance on Longevity in Asia-Pacific • ASEM Global Ageing Center PR • Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People • HelpAge International • International Longevity Centre Canada • International Longevity Center Global Alliance • International Federation on Ageing • NGO Ageing Committee Geneva • NGO Committee on Ageing New York • Pass It On Network • Stakeholder Group on Ageing • Tsao Foundation

Background on the event:

Asia and Africa are experiencing rapid population ageing alongside vibrant youth populations – a dual demographic shift that intensifies both the urgency and the opportunities for intergenerational, community-driven social development. Across both regions, communities continue to face persistent poverty, unequal access to services, climate vulnerabilities, and limited recognition of older persons' contributions and youth development needs. Local solutions show that when older and younger generations work together, they strengthen resilience, widen access to health and care, and advance inclusive social protection and climate-responsive development. The Social Summit 2025 offers a timely platform to elevate these rights-based innovations, amplify lived experience, and surface priority issues requiring action; our Asia–Africa Solutions Session contributes by spotlighting these challenges and offering recommendations that can inform stronger regional and cross-regional South–South action. Our session includes the voices of regional experts from UN ESCAP and HelpAge International, as well as four solutions presenting organisations and their beneficiaries – Ageing Nepal, Association of Ghana's Elders, Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS), and YouthBuild South Africa.

Key issues discussed:

- 1. Fragmented approaches across ageing and youth development constrain inclusive progress and rights.** Across Asia and Africa, ageing, social integration, climate action, poverty eradication, and health are still addressed in silos. Gaps in intergenerational equity, coordination, and integrated delivery weaken social development outcomes. When systems are fragmented, rights protections slip, and communities lose the chance to advance dignity, inclusion, and shared progress across generations.
- 2. Older persons' experience and leadership remain undervalued, undermining their rights and contributions.** Older persons carry lived knowledge, community trust, and leadership that can accelerate social development – yet these strengths are often overlooked or insufficiently supported. Few structured pathways exist for participation, co-creation, training, or resourcing. This limits their ability to shape decisions that affect their lives, reduces the reach of community-driven solutions, and weakens the realization of their rights to autonomy, contribution, intergenerational equity, and meaningful participation.

3. **Young people continue to face barriers that shape lifelong opportunities and rights outcomes.** Persistent unemployment, limited skills pathways, and restricted space for decision-making undermine young people's wellbeing, economic security, and participation. Early constraints compound across the life course, influencing their health, livelihoods, and realization of their rights to work, inclusion, and a secure older age.
4. **Gaps in cross-sector collaboration limit scale, resilience, and rights-based progress.** Civil society, philanthropy, governments, and the private sector are not yet engaging at the level needed to scale effective solutions. Proven community models show what is possible – yet uneven collaboration restricts adoption and slows progress on rights-based social development and regional commitments.
5. **Short-term funding cycles weaken continuity, community trust, and long-term rights outcomes.** Community initiatives across both regions repeatedly reapply for short-term funding to sustain work that is already delivering impact. Frequent disruptions erode trust, interrupt long-term transitions, and delay pathways to government adoption. Without financing models that value sustained, community-led impact, social development, and rights outcomes remain fragile.

Key recommendations:

1. **Champion Recognition and Empowerment:** Create structured pathways for meaningful participation by older persons and youth and recognise their lived expertise and lived experience as essential drivers of resilient, community-rooted social development.
2. **Advance Collaboration Within and Across Sectors:** Advance stronger collaboration across all sectors to scale community solutions and accelerate rights-based progress. Governments, UN agencies, NHRIs, civil society, academia, philanthropy, and the private sector must align efforts and co-invest their time, expertise, and resources to ensure older persons and youth are equal partners—not afterthoughts—in shaping and driving solutions.
3. **Strengthen Systems and Rights:** Strengthen social-economic, health, care, and climate-resilience systems so they respond to rapid ageing and evolving youth demographics. Governments and partners should integrate ageing and youth priorities into core policies and co-design community-rooted models with older persons and young people—grounded in dignity, autonomy, equity, and accountability. This requires investing in age- and gender-disaggregated data systems, ensuring meaningful participation of older people and youth in decision-making, increasing financing for inclusive and long-term system reforms, and building the capacity of institutions and communities to deliver rights-based, inclusive services across the life course.
4. **Unite for a Shared Future:** Deepen regional and South-South cross-regional collaboration to sustain momentum and accelerate shared progress. Governments, regional bodies, civil society, and community organisations should strengthen Asia–Africa cooperation by creating ongoing intergenerational dialogues, shared learning platforms, and joint advocacy efforts, ensuring that older persons and youth shape solutions together across regions.
5. **Share** our ShowReel to amplify our community-based organisation solutions and broaden engagement in regional and cross-regional collaboration: <https://youtu.be/fbg3CNPnyLc>.
6. **Watch** the full session recording for the engaging exchange and to hear from solutions beneficiaries: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6X4OEDTQM1s>.