

ToR for research of data necessary for advocating activities of the Albanian Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology

The Albanian Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology (AAGG) is looking to hire an external consultant to design research, perform data collection, process the data and present the findings in a written report in the framework of *Taking Action on Social Inclusion of Older People (TASIOP)* project. The TASIOP project is a three-year regional effort involving civil society networks of five countries, coordinated by the Red Cross of Serbia and supported by European Union, Austrian Development Agency and Austrian Red Cross.

Background information about the Albanian Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology (AAGG)

The Albanian Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology (AAGG) was established in October 1991. Since 1994, AAGG is a full member of the European Association of Geriatrics (EAG) and the International Association of Geriatrics (IAG).

AAGG is registered in the European Union database and has its own PADOR number.

Since its establishment in 1991, the AAGG includes over 60 members with a wide range of professional backgrounds who share the same interest related to aging issues.

In the past two decades, AAGG has implemented several projects and activities aiming at improving the socioeconomic conditions, health status and social participation of older people in transitional Albania.

Mission of AAGG

The main mission of AAGG consists of improvement of health status, quality of life and living conditions of older people in Albania through a strong advocacy and support, stimulation and enhancement of adequate social and health services, as well as promotion of full participation of older people for tackling their problems.

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

Albania is one of the last countries in Europe to experience effects of population ageing. The proportion of the population over 65 years of age in Albania rose from 5% 1990 to 11% during the last census (INSTAT-2011) and keeps growing. There are more than 370 000 people over 65 years old in the country compared to just above 230 000, in 2001. The rapid falling of birth rates, coupled with increasing life expectancy has been in the bases of this significant transformation of Albanian population demographics. Life expectancy for the period 2010-2014 is 17.2 years at 65 years of age and 7 at 80 years of age, a small improvement compared to the period 2005-2009.

Emigration is another substantial factor, which is not affecting only in boosting the ageing of the population but weakening the traditional support nets provided by families as well.

Emigration of younger members of the family is particularly high in Albania: one in two households has at least one member who has migrated within or outside the country (Albanian Demographic and Health Survey). About three million Albanians live in Albania while approximately 1.5 million live abroad.

IMIAS (International Mobility in Ageing Study) study in Tirana indicate that, around 10% of older persons live totally alone, while 45% live only with their spouse. Nonetheless, younger generations, leaving earlier their home and working abroad remain a potential source of support for their older parents left alone, by sending remittances and at the moment of serious health problems, by covering expensive medical interventions.

According to LSMS 2012 data, an estimated 10 percent of elderly population was poor and cannot meet the basic standards of living. The 'depth of poverty' of the elderly poor was on average not very large and it implies that with limited means many poor elderly can be raised to a non-poor status. Mobile phone has expanded massively during recent years with an overwhelming majority of older people owning one, but computers and internet connection are not available to a large number of elderly, which constrains adequate access to information. Similarly, although private cars ownership is on increase, only one in five elderly possesses one, which can

be a constraint in terms of physical mobility in areas where public transport is scarce. Around 30% of Albanian older people live in apartment blocks, where a major mobility constraint for 80% of them is lack of elevator. The large majority or 93 percent of older people has access to an improved type of sanitation, but only 76 percent had this toilet inside the own dwelling. This is typical in rural areas

The pension system in Albania although covers virtually all older people faces challenges related to demography and economy. There were only 1.1 contributors for 1 pension receiver in 2013. The old-age dependency ratio almost doubled from 8.6 percent in 1989 to 16.7 in 2011. In 2030, this ratio will have again doubled to 32.9 percent. In addition, only 58.4% of people at working age were contributors in 2012. The very recent law on pensions, which has introduced for the first time the social pensions, addresses some of those challenges as well (increased percentage of salary contribution to pension schemes, incentives for motivating contributions etc). Economic growth of Albania came to almost a halt at 2012, but afterwards economy has shown signs of recovery with a projected growth over 3% for 2017. Unemployment of young people and informal economy remain a concern which can threaten the pension system and other social care schemes, although during the last three years, formal employment is on increase.

Some recent research (IMIAs) shows comparatively high levels of chronic illness, depression and avoidable disability in older people. LSMS, IMIAS confirm that disability, chronic diseases and depression are constantly higher among Albanian older women compared to men. Access to primary health care services is relatively good, while health insurance covers all basic drugs as well as all medical procedures except dental and optical care for older persons. Albania spends approximately US \$100 on health costs on every older person per year.

However, the information about socioeconomic situation, health status and social inclusion of older people in Albania is still scarce and inadequate. The lack of sufficient and suitable evidence hinders the activities of the Albanian Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology (AAGG) and other institutions and organizations which provide advocacy and services for older people.

For this purpose, in order to enhance the scientific evidence, the AAGG will hire an external consultant to design research, perform data collection, process the data and present the findings in a written report. The research will be themed on social inclusion of older people, focusing on the topic of *“Assessment of socioeconomic conditions and health status of elderly people in Albania”*.

Main objective: Designing and performing a research activity based on the topic and parameters provided by the AAGG focusing on different aspects of social inclusion of older people in relation to the *“Assessment of socioeconomic conditions and health status of elderly people in Albania”*.

Deliverables/ expected results:

The research consultant will work with the AAGG representatives on:

- organising research activities,
- collecting the data,
- processing the data and
- providing the research report.

The research will establish a baseline and will involve

- focus groups with older people
- questionnaires with older people

The report will provide critical data as well as recommendations for addressing the issues identified through project activities related to the chosen research topic. This means that, depending on the context, new data will be produced to support the advocacy target and the recommendations will be concrete and actionable.

The consultant will be expected to:

- Select, adapt and suggest the methodology for the research
- Organise data collection activities with the AAGG representatives assistance
- Process the data following the agreed methods and priorities
- Produce a report with data presentation and actionable recommendations for advocacy activities

Duration and dynamics

Three months

Mode of payment:

Contract