

Foreword

The health status and income levels of older people have substantially improved over the last decades in OECD and emerging countries. This *Preventing Ageing Unequally* report shows, however, that risks of increasing inequality among future retirees have been building up. Demographic changes combined with rising inequality trends and tight public finance constraints in many countries are modifying life prospects at older ages. With longer life expectancy, declining family size, higher inequality over the working lives and reforms that have reduced future retirement income and tightened the links between pension contributions and benefits, the experience of old age is going to change dramatically for today's younger generations. Financing of pensions and caring for elderly people in particular might become more difficult, aggravating the burden for the most disadvantaged. The sustained and fairly generalised improvement in the living standards of older people is unlikely to be prolonged in the forthcoming decades.

Inequalities have risen to the top of the international policy agenda. Earnings and household income inequalities have increased over the past three decades in most countries, fuelled by the rising share of non-standard work, difficulties encountered by many young people in securing a foothold in the labour market and high unemployment in some countries (*Divided We Stand*, 2011; *In It Together*, 2015). The *Preventing Ageing Unequally* project is part of a broader policy agenda of the OECD to address inequalities of opportunities and outcomes. In 2011, the introduction of the *OECD Better Life* initiative has led to a better understanding of what drives well-being of people and nations. With the *All on Board for Inclusive Growth* initiative launched in 2012, the OECD has developed a comprehensive framework to help countries design and implement comprehensive, multi-sectoral policies that can deliver stronger growth and greater inclusiveness.

Preventing Ageing Unequally clearly shows that socio-economic outcomes of individuals build up from childhood to adulthood, and inequality of a given cohort later in life largely results from differences in individual experiences accumulated over the life course. Better health early in life tends to be correlated with better educational attainment and they both contribute to better labour market outcomes. In turn, people with stable and well-paid jobs also tend to enjoy good access to health and other services, and are likely to retire with adequate income. These people are also more likely to have insurance or financial assets to cover them in case they need long-term care. By contrast, people who had low-quality jobs, low incomes and unstable careers are likely to be in worse health and face higher risks of poverty and if they need long-term care, what they get is likely to be rather dismal.

Preventing ageing unequally requires a comprehensive policy approach to help individuals overcome disadvantages that could cumulate over their life course and result in bad health, low income and poverty at old age. These policies will need to take account of the new realities people are facing today in their families, in their workplace, in their careers and in their health and disability risks. As OECD analysis shows, education,

health and employment experiences interact and compound inequality. This also means that inequality-reducing policies in one area will spill over into other areas generating additional welfare effects. The report identifies policies that can contain if not fully address the risks of unequal ageing. It suggests a policy agenda to prevent, mitigate and cope with these inequalities, drawing on good practices in OECD countries and emerging economies, which led to the OECD Action Plan on Preventing Ageing Unequally endorsed by the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting in June 2017.*

*. <https://www.oecd.org/social/C-MIN-2017-6-EN.pdf>.

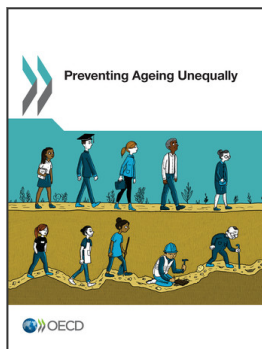
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The report is the outcome of a collective effort with contributions from a team of economists from different directorates across the OECD: the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS, lead directorate), the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate (GOV), the Statistics Directorate (STD) and the Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). The overview Chapter 1 was written by Hervé Boulhol (ELS, Social Policy Division), drawing on the analyses carried out in the other chapters, who benefited from in-depth comments by Monika Queisser (Head of the Social Policy Division). Chapter 2 was co-ordinated by Manuel Flores (Social Policy Division) based on written contributions by Barbara Blaylock (ELS, Health Division, currently University of Southern California), Gaetan Lafortune (Health Division), Karolin Killmeier (Social Policy Division) and himself. Chapter 3 was written by Hervé Boulhol. Chapter 4 was co-ordinated by Christian Geppert (Social Policy Division) based on written contributions by Manuel Flores (Social Policy Division), Maciej Lis (Social Policy Division), Fabrice Murtin (STD), Jillian Oderkirk (Health Division) and himself; Section 4 building on the pilot Global Future Elderly Model was developed with Barbara Blaylock (Health Division); Vincenzo Atella, Federico Belotti and Andrea Piano Mortari (University of Rome Tor Vergata); and Dana Goldman and Bryan Tysinger (University of Southern California). Chapter 5 was co-ordinated by Marius Lüske (Social Policy Division) based on written contributions by Boele Bonthuis (Social Policy Division), Christian Geppert, Andrew Reilly (Social Policy Division), Michele Rimini (STI), Anne Saint-Martin (ELS, Skills and Employability Division), Anne Sonnet (Skills and Employability Division) and himself. Chapter 6 was co-ordinated by Boele Bonthuis based on written contributions by Tim Muir (Health Division), Olivier Thévenon (Social Policy Division) and Johannes Weber (GOV). Maxime Ladaique (Social Policy Division) provided extensive support for all the charts in the report. Other contributors to this work include: Carlotta Balestra (STD), Thomas Blanchet (Social Policy Division, currently Paris School of Economics), Romina Boarini (STD), Francesca Colombo (Head of the Health Division), Anna Cristina d’Addio (Social Policy Division, currently Unesco), Marion Devaux (Health Division), Sara Durrleman (Social Policy Division), Marco Fongoni (Social Policy Division, currently University of Strathclyde), Aleksandra Kolndrekaj (Social Policy Division, currently European Foundation), Christine Le Thi (STD), Marco Mira d’Ercole (STD), Eileen Rocard (Health Division) and Elettra Ronchi (STI).

Hervé Boulhol led the team and co-ordinated the project and the publication. Monika Queisser supervised the preparation of this report and provided useful comments on various drafts. Chapters 2 to 6 were edited by Ken Kincaid. Marlène Mohier prepared the manuscript for publication and Kate Lancaster (Public Affairs and Communications Directorate) contributed to the editing of the report. Christelle Cordova and Natalie Lagorce, both from the Social Policy Division, provided useful technical assistance.

We are very grateful to Stefano Scarpetta and Mark Pearson, Director and Deputy Director of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at the OECD, and Mark Keese (Head

of the Skills and Employability Division) for their useful comments on various versions of the report. We thankfully acknowledge the many suggestions provided or channelled by members of different OECD committees and networks, the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee, the Health Committee, and the Working Party on Social Policy, as well as by experts of the European Commission and of AARP, Inc. We are also grateful to colleagues from the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, the Economics Department, the Directorate for Education and Skills, the Office of the Secretary-General and the Statistics Directorate of the OECD for their helpful comments and suggestions. The report also benefited from the work carried out for the project “Identifying ways of raising effective retirement ages” and related work on pension indicators financed by the European Commission (EC) and from discussions with various EC officials, which have helped shape our thinking about old-age inequalities.



From:
Preventing Ageing Unequally

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264279087-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2017), "Foreword and acknowledgements", in *Preventing Ageing Unequally*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264279087-1-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.