

Life Course Approach and Intergenerational Health: Discussing a WHO Framework on Operationalizing a Life Course Approach

United Nations Summit of the Future Action Days - Virtual Side Event

Date: 21st September 2024

Time: 10:00-11:30 am ET (New York) | 4:00-5:30 pm CEST (Geneva)

Location: Zoom

Organized by: Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health and Ageing, WHO

Partners: UNDESA, UNFPA, WHO AFRO, WHO PAHO, WHO SEARO, WHO WPRO,
Member states – Japan, Dominican Republic, Sierra Leone, HelpAge International

Moderators: Dr Chandni Maria Jacob and Dr Vanessa De Rubeis, Research Consultants, WHO

Time	Item	Speaker
10:00-10:15	Opening and Welcome Remarks	Dr Anshu Banerjee, Director, Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing, WHO Dr. Eladio Pérez, Vice Minister of Collective Health, Dominican Republic Ms. Caitlin Littleton, Portfolio Lead for Healthy Ageing at HelpAge International
10:15-10:25	Keynote: Strengthening Intergenerational health through a life course approach	Dr Ritu Sadana, Head Ageing and Health and Lead on Life Course
10:25-10:30	Monitoring across generations	Mr. Jeremiah Sixtus Dery, Senior Statistician and Demographer, Ghana Statistical Service
10:30-10:45	Moderated Round Table 1 <i>Effective Intergenerational Interventions</i>	Dr Tamar Khomasuridze, SRH Regional Adviser for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UNFPA Dr Hajime Inoue, Assistant Minister for Global Health and Welfare, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Government of Japan Dr Prakash Tyagi, GRAVIS NGO, India
10:45-11:05	Moderated Round Table 2 <i>A foundational approach for future generations - a virtuous cycle of better health and well-being trajectories</i>	Dr Tom Sesay, Director of Reproductive and Child Health at the Ministry of Health Sierra Leone, Member state Sierra Leone Mr. Titus Abworo, Ageing Concern Foundation, Kenya Dr Amrita Kansal, Technical Officer, WHO - SEARO
11:05-11:15	Questions from participants	
11:15-11:20	Reflection	Ms. Anjali Singla, Youth Representative, Delhi India
11:20-11:25	Reflection	Dr Heidrun Mollenkopf, President of AGE Platform Europe
11:25-11:30	Closing remarks	Ms. Shatho Nfila, Associate, Social Affairs Officer, Programme on Ageing Unit, UNDESA

Event information

In most countries, life expectancy has increased, with future generations likely to live longer lives, yet often with disease. As people develop and age, their health needs can become more chronic and complex. At the population level, these patterns and distribution of health and illness become more diverse, often reflecting unequal opportunities. The life course approach recognizes that health outcomes at different life stages are interconnected and influenced by a range of social, economic, and environmental factors. Intergenerational health, explained by the principle of linked lives in the life course approach, considers how these outcomes affect not just individuals but also subsequent generations. This underscores the importance of early interventions (in all life stages) and continuous support across the lifespan, with the aim to improve the life course trajectories of current and future generations.

What is a life course approach? A life course approach is a comprehensive understanding of how health outcomes at different life stages are interconnected and influenced by social, economic, and environmental factors. It emphasizes early and timely interventions throughout life to build health and well-being, recognizing that experiences during one stage can impact subsequent health outcomes. A life course approach links a good start to life, optimal development, and healthy ageing, improving the health and well-being of future generations through the implementation of interventions. For example, addressing the health of adults, including future parents, to enable a good start to life for newborns and children, and a prospective view of health to enable healthy ageing.

The approach also considers **intergenerational health effects**, underscoring the need for continuous support of policies and interventions that address health needs across all ages to improve life trajectories for current and future generations. Supporting intergenerational practice – which brings people of different ages or generations together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities can foster physical and mental health in different age groups. For instance, mentorship and guidance by older persons can promote independence and confidence for younger generations, and also younger generations can mentor older adults, for example in technology management, improving their view on ageing.

What is the usefulness of an operational framework? Clarifying intent, and evidence-based actions, can support countries to integrate services focusing on the whole person, across the life course in turn improving the health of the entire population. A key component is to set up the conditions for health and well-being for the next generation. The target audience is policymakers, service providers, civil society, and a range of stakeholders. Based on scientific evidence and technical consultations with life course research centers from around the world, this framework provides principles on what it means to use a life course approach, along with practical, evidence-based examples of what is being done to develop better health trajectories for all in countries across all regions. The framework also highlights the importance of intergenerational programmes aimed at bringing together parents, grandparents, and children.

Considering the growing evidence on the importance of adopting a life course and intergenerational approach to health, **this event aims to:**

- Underline the importance of the Declaration on Future Generations, an important response to the poly-crises the world is currently facing

- Present the WHO framework on the operationalization of a life course approach and raise awareness of the role of using the intergenerational approach for implementation
- Provide a forum for Member States and NGOs to share best practices and case studies
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and integrated action, including added value in promoting the health and well-being of future populations
- Discuss the role of different stakeholders, including UN organizations, ministries, and regional offices, in promoting this approach