

**MAGYAR NŐI
KARRIERFEJLESZTÉSI
SZÖVETSÉG**

SPECIÁLIS „CONSULTATIVE NGO” STÁTUSZAL RENDELKEZŐ CIVILSZERVEZET
AZ ENSZ GAZDASÁGI ÉS SZOCIÁLIS TANÁCSA KERETÉBEN



**ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
IN HUNGARY**

ORGANIZATION IN SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS
WITH THE UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OLDER WOMEN FOR OLDER WOMEN

A Hungarian Perspective
Presentation by
Andrea Ferenczi
President of the AWCDH

at the
“AGEISM AND WIDOWHOOD: A FOCUS ON THE FORGOTTEN”
CSW60 JOINT SIDE EVENT IN NEW YORK
on March 18, 2016
at The Salvation Army



OLDER PEOPLE IN HUNGARY

The demographic challenge in the EU and in Hungary

Situation in Hungary also serious
Number of older people is growing in our society
Women above 50 have multiple disadvantages
Older, lonely widowed women's situation is the most difficult.

Health of older people

Life expectancy (growing): Women: 78.91, Men: 72.13
Healthy life expectancy (growing): Women: 60.5, Men: 59.2
People who graduate or with higher incomes are likely to be healthier.
Huge differences in different places in the country.



OLDER WOMEN

Due to longer lives of women, they often live alone and are subject to loneliness and widowhood.

Number of single households is growing similarly in EU and Hungary

(Today: 1, 261, 000 within the 9.9 M population)

Number of women living in single households is growing, especially in cases of 60+ women.

7 out of 10 older people are women.

Half of them are widows.

Risk of poverty is growing in single households.

Women 65+ are much more likely to live in poverty than men due to their shorter working span, lower income, and longer life expectancy.

Single widowed women are most at risk.



SOCIAL – ECONOMIC SITUATION

Social Attitude

Most older people consider themselves losers as a result of the democratic change of the regime in 1989-90.

Their self-esteem has diminished.

In Hungary (and also in the other ex-socialist countries) the democratic change was a huge milestone in society.

Most people, even after the perspective of more than 25 years, do not value living in a democracy.

Older people especially feel the disadvantages of the new system – the older the stronger are their negative feelings.

False nostalgia also plays a big role: when they were young everything was much better... very often now they are disappointed, pessimistic, without life goals and life strategies.



A Tool to Tackle Demographic Challenge

There is, however, a rather important, if small, sophisticated group – men and women, professionals and highly educated skilled workers – whose knowledge and experience is very often lost because of sudden retirement from one day to the next. However, these people still feel active and ready to work. It would be desirable if they could continue their work, perhaps part time, thus enabling them to experience a happier, contented, active ageing. At the same time, needless to say, the next generations and society as a whole would also benefit.

We in the AWCDH are devoted to lobbying on behalf of this group, striving to make sure that this issue be taken into consideration by stakeholders as an important tool to tackle demographic challenge.



SOCIAL – ECONOMIC SITUATION

Economic Situation

The social network of the “caring state” the people got used to in the previous system is still maintained; however, the economy of Hungary is continuously looking for new tools to afford it. Now profit-oriented solutions also exist for people who need them and are ready to pay for them.

Earlier one-third of the population received some kind of pension, including benefits, with early retirement or disability. In recent years the government introduced a big reduction in the number of benefitted people with the goal of returning them to the labor market while at the same time supporting the companies employing them.



PENSIONS

Pension eligibility before the change of the regime:
55 for women and 60 for men.
Now: 65 both for women and men.

Pensions (and also wages) are much lower in the ex-socialist countries than in the western countries, but still can be considered as the most stable / guaranteed income by the state.

The differences are big.

University graduated people or those with good income in their active years can enjoy a reasonable living.

People who are little educated, who had a low income, and especially those who now live alone do not enjoy a normal existence in older days.



WOMEN'S PENSION

is lower than men's.

As “compensation” might be considered the widow's pension – used in much bigger part by women than men.

***Women can retire after 40 working years in Hungary
(under certain conditions)***

Women are more likely interested in retiring as early as possible

Some reasons coming from a survey:

- they would like to spend more time with their family
 - they feel tired and in bad physical condition
 - do not want any more obligations
- they “escape” from the threat of redundancy.



CARE AND SUPPORT OF ACTIVE AGEING

Care

Older people's care is supported by nursing homes and also by providing care in their homes.

Responsible are the local governments.

Big differences in quality due to different financial capacities.

In Hungary and ex-socialist countries it is still characteristic that families themselves try their best to care for older family members.

In parallel a wide choice of business models also exist.

Hungary has especially good capabilities for developing health tourism, senior tourism and care services for elder people that could be attractive also for clients coming from abroad for the long run.

Support of Active Ageing

Both national and local governments do a lot for older people to help them live an active and healthy life by supporting life-long learning, IT trainings, cultural and sport activities, talents competitions, etc.



AGEISM AND COMBATTING AGEISM

Ageism

Arrived in Hungary later due to still strong family relations and cooperation of generations in the family.

But ageism is existing already: in the workplace, in the media and in social attitudes, might be growing in the long run.

Sensitive areas in the EU and in Hungary:

Should the state support workplaces for young graduates or protect the jobs of older people?

“Young people do not have an income but older people have a safe pension...”

Older women are more likely to be the object of ageism due to their longer life and stronger vulnerability.

Older women are the biggest group living alone and living lonely therefore they are more likely to have mental diseases, depression, tendency for suicide and they are exposed to victimization.



SOME PROPOSALS TO COMBAT AGEISM

Legal framework established in Hungary
but more consciousness is required by the older people.

Good EU practices can be adopted.

Important: role of the schools and the media.

*Older women need special advocacy
because they have the least lobbying ability.*

Sensitivities of younger generations should be targeted.

For the time being those young people who accept and like older people,
received proper education and saw good cooperation
between generations in the family.

The 50+ 60+ women, the “sandwich generation,” is very important
not only because they must care for their children and grandchildren,
sometimes their parents and grandparents

*They are also the most sensitive group
feeling the problems of older women since they come next...*



Development of Volunteering

Older women are more likely to do volunteer work,
a good tool to stay active and to feel “wanted.”

***Every older woman could support another
who is more in need than herself.***

Participation in volunteer work would enhance the social usefulness
for themselves and for the younger generation, too.

Good examples exist in Hungary in the Christian organizations.

***Legal framework for volunteering exists in Hungary
but publicizing, organizing, implementing,
raising awareness, and changing attitudes is needed.***

Possible tools: education, training, awareness campaigns.
The institutions need help to integrate the work of volunteers
like hospitals, schools, nursing homes, orphanages, etc.

Learn best practices, exchange experiences!



Mission of the AWCDH:

Through our work in the domestic as well as the international arena, we have gained assurance that we must do everything in our power to enhance the lives of women above 50, not only with respect to employment, but other fields as well such as life long learning, knowledge transfer, health, life in rural environments, art, culture, business and social services, the role of the media in promoting women's lives, IT, victimization, and poverty.

In order to achieve these goals we are working in close cooperation with the Older Women Network Europe, Age Platform Europe and International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA).