

# Ageing Populations as a Mega Trend in the Region and the MENARAH's Network Efforts in Mobilising Policy and Practice Responses

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# Structure of the presentation

1- Why is it essential to research ageing in the MENA region?

2- Introducing the MENARAH Network

3- Understanding how ageing perceptions are formulated in the MENA region

4- Policy direction & implications



1- Why is it essential to research ageing in the MENA region?



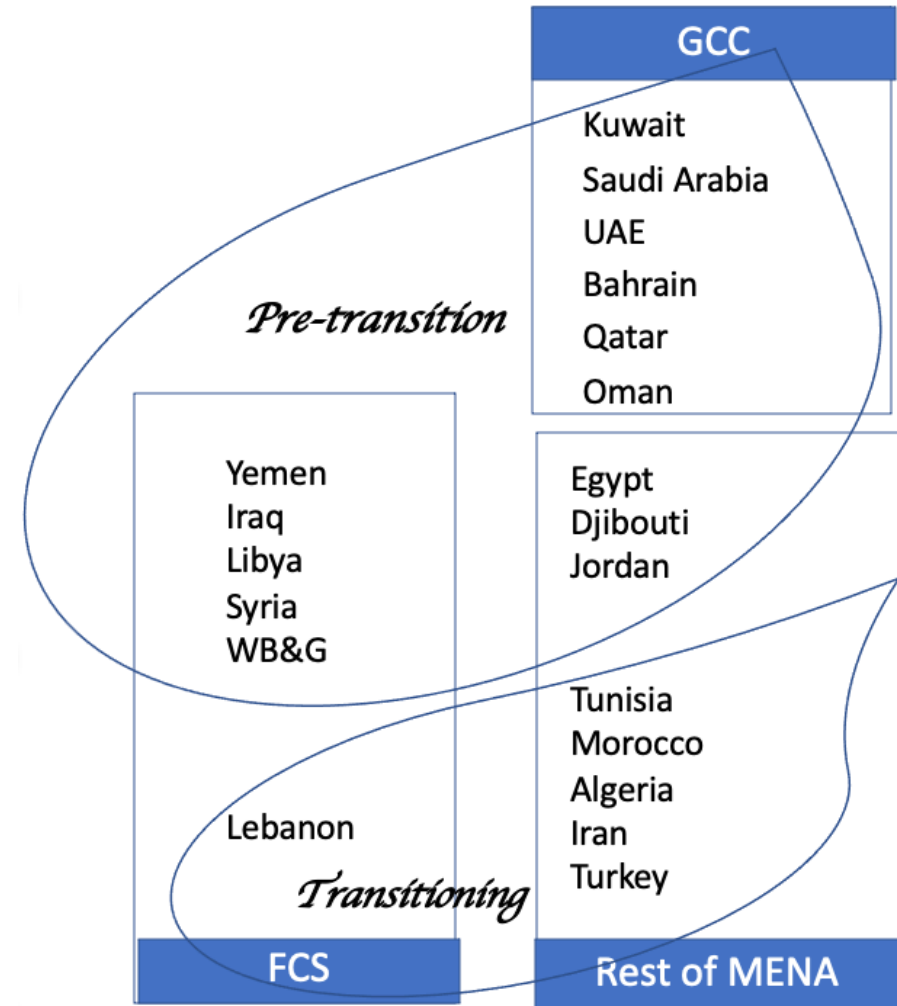
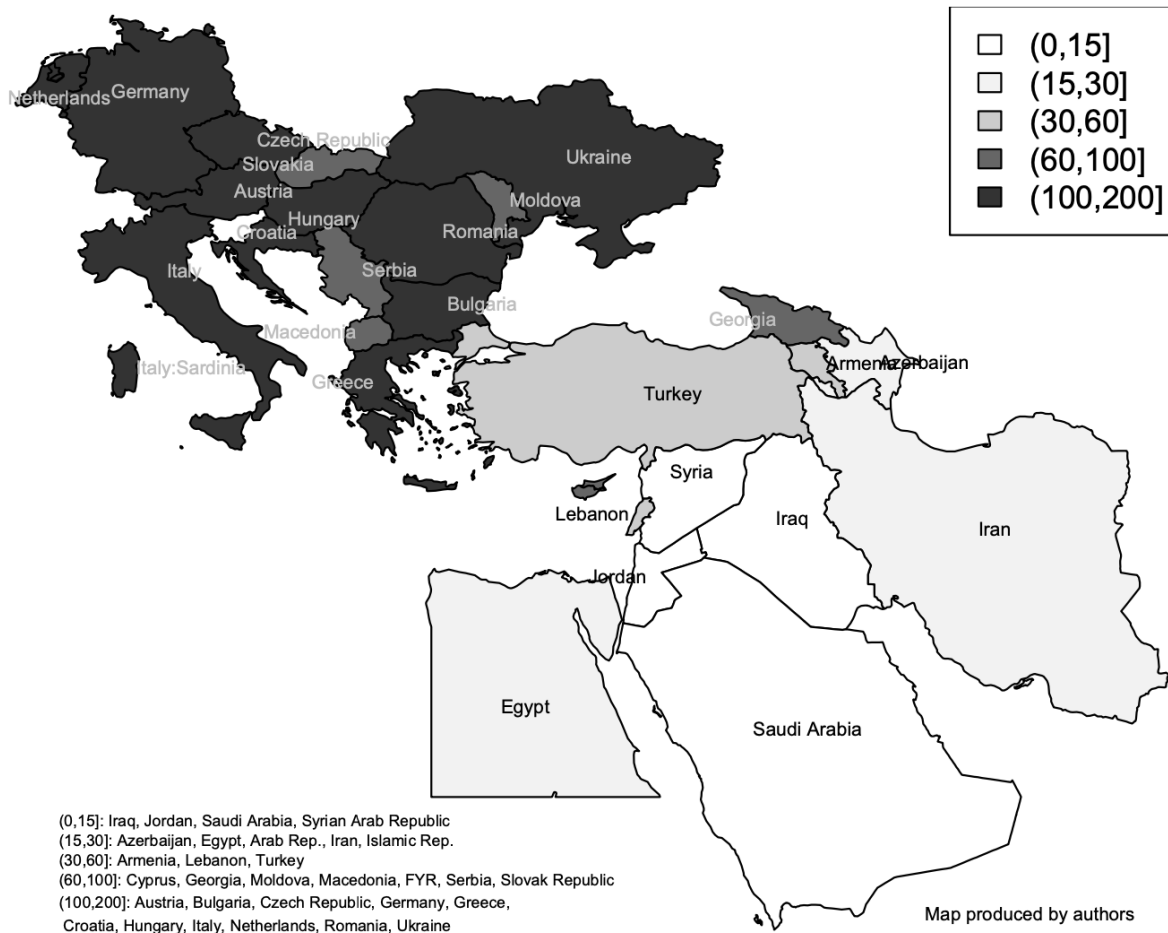
# The unique features of ageing in the MENA region

- Commonalities and heterogeneity
- Pace of ageing
  - Within a dynamic political, socio-economic & epidemiological changing landscape
- Levels of unpreparedness
  - Policy and Practice
- Burden of disease
- Perceptions of and expectations from ageing
- Competing priorities and limited resources
- Population dividends





# Common yet nuanced experiences



Ismail, M., & Hussein, S. (2021). An Evidence Review of Ageing, Long-Term Care Provision and Funding Mechanisms in Turkey: Using Existing Evidence to Estimate Long-Term Care Cost. *Sustainability*, 13(11).

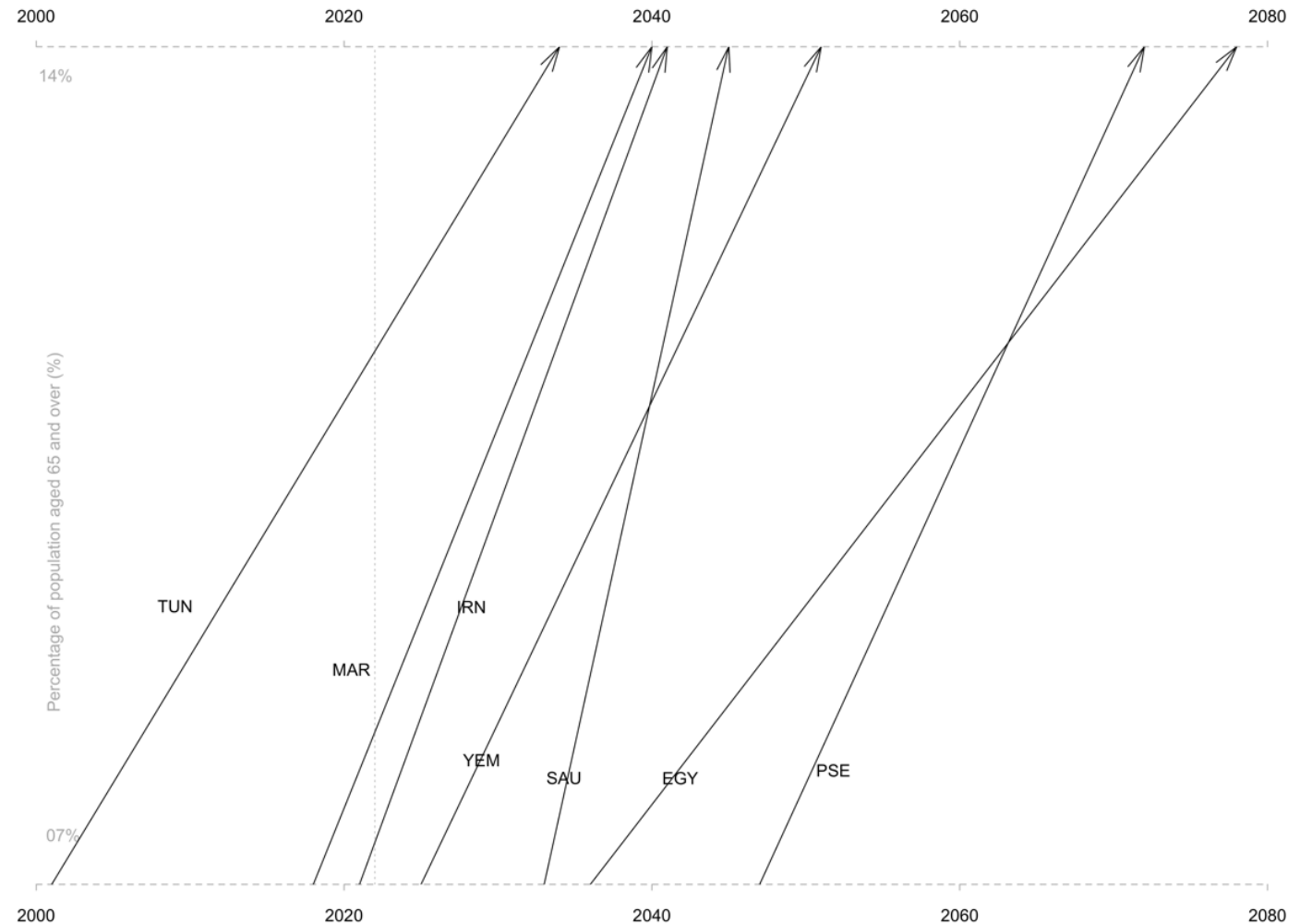
Source: Hussein, S. & Ismail, M. (2023). *Ageing Demographics in the Middle East and North Africa: Policy Opportunities and Challenges*. A report to the World Bank, Head Quarters: Washington D.C. Published by MENARAH Network.

# The pace of ageing transition

Only Tunisia, Iran, Lebanon and Morocco have started the transition.

Most other countries will follow in the next decade or so.

The pace of change in GCC is astonishing (as little as 12 years).



Source: Hussein, S. & Ismail, M. (2023). *Ageing Demographics in the Middle East and North Africa: Policy Opportunities and Challenges*. A report to the World Bank, Head Quarters: Washington D.C. Published by MENARAH Network.

# Not all years gained are healthy years

- Both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are increasing
  - Nature longevity limit?
  - HLE not growing as fast as LE
- High number of years lived with LTC needs
- Significant gender, ethnic & socio-economic differentials
- Differentials within and across countries

Country	Life Expectancy at birth		Healthy life expectancy at birth		Difference between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Malta	79.9	83.8	70.9	71.9	9.0	11.9
Kuwait	79.3	84.0	69.5	71.1	9.8	12.9
Tunisia	74.9	79.2	66.1	67.7	8.8	11.5
Jordan	77.0	78.8	68.1	67.2	8.9	11.6
Iran	75.7	79.1	66.0	66.5	9.7	12.6
Lebanon	74.0	79.2	65.1	67.1	8.9	12.1
Libya	74.2	77.3	64.9	65.5	9.3	11.8
Algeria	76.2	78.1	66.7	66.1	9.5	12.0
UAE	75.1	78.4	65.8	66.2	9.3	12.2
Oman	73.0	75.3	64.5	64.5	8.5	10.8
Qatar	78.0	76.6	68.1	65.1	9.9	11.5
Bahrain	75.0	77.0	66.0	65.5	9.0	11.5
Egypt	69.6	74.1	62.3	63.7	7.3	10.4
Morocco	71.7	74.3	63.7	63.7	8.0	10.6
Iraq	69.9	75.0	61.6	63.7	8.3	11.3
Saudi Arabia	73.1	76.2	63.8	64.4	9.3	11.8
Syria	71.2	74.3	62.5	63.3	8.7	11.0
Djibouti	64.1	67.8	57.2	58.9	6.9	8.9
Yemen	64.4	68.9	57.0	58.0	7.4	10.9

Source: Hussein, S. & Ismail, M. (2023). *Ageing Demographics in the Middle East and North Africa: Policy Opportunities and Challenges*. A report to the World Bank, Head Quarters: Washington D.C. Published by MENARAH Network.

# Supply of Long-Term Care Services in the MENA region

- Main source of care is the immediate family
  - A framework of responsibilities and filial obligations
  - Gender and care tasks (financial, co-ordination and hands on)
  - Bi-directional flow of responsibilities
- Charitable (religious) and community organisations
- Challenges to the familial care model
  - Sustainability & suitability issues

Reliance on the family  
The 'invisible' welfare scheme

(un)sustainability of family care

- Socio-economic and demographic changes
- Emotional burden
- Competing opportunities

Suitability/adequacy of care

# *Economic opportunities in the emerging LTC markets*

- Care economies are one of the fastest-growing employment sectors, globally
- LTC jobs are reliant on human interactions and relationships (difficult/impossible to automate)
- Women make the majority of the LTC workforce
- Care economies are emerging in the region
  - Unregulated and fragmented
- Potential opportunities
  - Training and skills
  - Public trust: regulations, standards and inspections



## **Population and Development Report Issue No. 9**

Building Forward Better for Older Persons  
in the Arab Region



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life





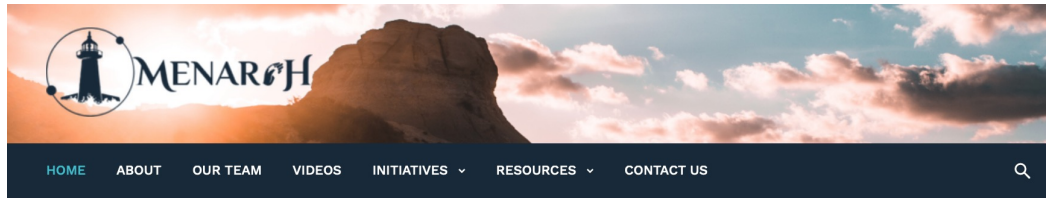
## 2- Introducing the MENARAH Network: Mobilising Collaborations & Engagement

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# The Middle East and North Africa Research on Ageing Healthy (MENARAH) Network



## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA RESEARCH ON AGEING HEALTHY

MENARAH (*meaning lighthouse in Arabic*) brings together those interested in healthy ageing research and policy across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. We aim to raise awareness of ageing within the MENA region's specific economic and socio-cultural structures. The MENARAH network seeks to conduct research and knowledge mobilisation activities to inform the formulation of policies and practices specific to healthy ageing and the well-being of older people and their informal carers in the region.

Read MENARAH Director's [Welcome Note](#)



## BLOGS & COMMENTARIES

[Unlocking the Demographic Puzzle: MENARAH Report Unveils the Ageing Transformation in the Middle East](#)

[Calling All Age-Friendly Leaders: Join the AFE ECHO Program and Shape the Future of Age-Friendly Cities!](#)

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS



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Dr. Mohamed Salama  
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Prof. Marvin Formosa  
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Prof. Sherif El-Khamisy  
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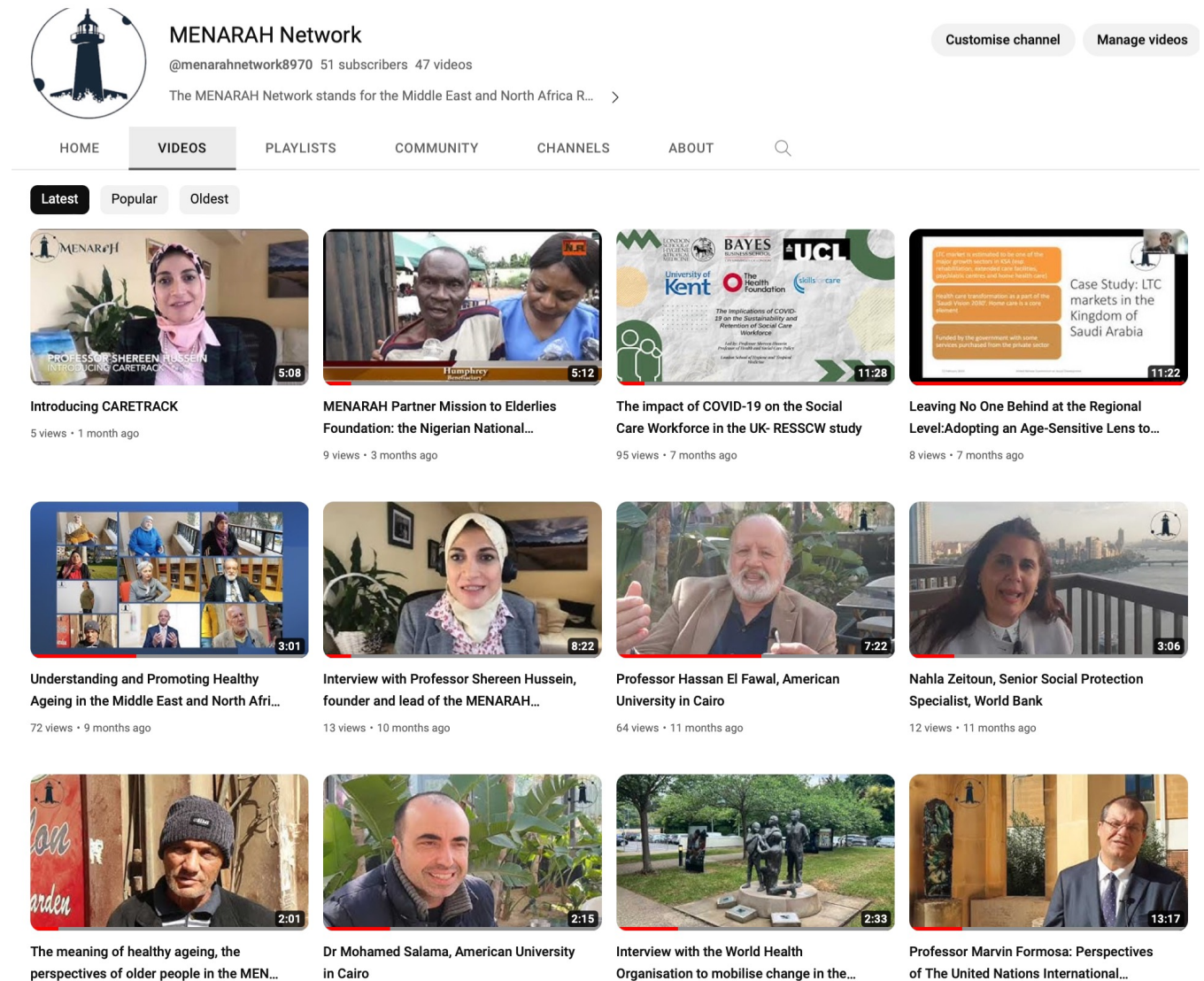
[Unlocking the Demographic Puzzle: MENARAH Report Unveils the Ageing Transformation in the Middle East](#)

[Calling All Age-Friendly Leaders: Join the AFE ECHO Program and Shape the Future of Age-Friendly Cities!](#)

- Launched Sep. 2020
  - Initial UKRI GCRF grants
  - Followed by various funding
  - Builds on activities since 2015
- Focuses on healthy ageing in its broadest meaning
- A network of researchers, NGOs, policymakers and many more
- Aims to
  - Raise awareness and connect different actors
  - Conduct research and knowledge mobilisation activities
  - Inform policy and practice formulation & development

# International, Regional and National collaborators

- London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
- Global Health Equity Foundation
- London School of Economics (STRiDE)
- Healthy Life Span Institute
- United Nations International Institute on Ageing
- Oxford Institute of Population Ageing
- Social Research Centre, American University in Cairo (AUC)
- Italy's National Institute of Health and Science on Ageing
- HelpAge International
- Institute of Global Health and Human Ecology, AUC, Egypt
- Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi, Turkey
- Global Brain Health Institute



The screenshot shows the YouTube channel page for the MENARAH Network. The channel name is "MENARAH Network" with the handle "@menarahnetwork8970", 51 subscribers, and 47 videos. The bio states: "The MENARAH Network stands for the Middle East and North Africa...". The page is set to the "VIDEOS" tab, showing a grid of 12 video thumbnails. Each thumbnail includes a title, view count, and upload date.

Video Title	Views	Upload Date
Introducing CARETRACK	5 views	1 month ago
MENARAH Partner Mission to Elderlies Foundation: the Nigerian National...	9 views	3 months ago
The impact of COVID-19 on the Social Care Workforce in the UK- RESSCW study	95 views	7 months ago
Leaving No One Behind at the Regional Level: Adopting an Age-Sensitive Lens to...	8 views	7 months ago
Understanding and Promoting Healthy Ageing in the Middle East and North Afri...	72 views	9 months ago
Interview with Professor Shereen Hussein, founder and lead of the MENARAH...	13 views	10 months ago
Professor Hassan El Fawal, American University in Cairo	64 views	11 months ago
Nahla Zeitoun, Senior Social Protection Specialist, World Bank	12 views	11 months ago
The meaning of healthy ageing, the perspectives of older people in the MEN...		
Dr Mohamed Salama, American University in Cairo		
Interview with the World Health Organisation to mobilise change in the...		
Professor Marvin Formosa: Perspectives of The United Nations International...		

# MENARAH's Network Aims and Objectives

1

Promoting the ageing agenda and dialogue

- Dialogue & Mapping
- Awareness raising
- Cultural & context specific

2

Linking stakeholders

- NGOs, international agencies, governments, individuals
- Building capacity

3

Providing technical assistance

- Directly to governments or through international agencies and NGOs
- Consultancies

4

Knowledge translations and exchange

- Publications' hub
- Regular commentaries
- Lay summaries of research



# Examples: Research



HOME > INITIATIVES > THE MEANING OF HEALTHY AGEING IN THE MENA REGION

## THE MEANING OF HEALTHY AGEING IN THE MENA REGION

The meaning of ageing and healthy longevity is socially and culturally sensitive. To enable design aimed at promoting healthy ageing, it is crucial to understand what it means to be healthy in old behaviours that are likely to be adopted by individuals, families and the wider communities in the region, engages with older people, their families and informal carers, national and international relevant groups, and explore the meaning of healthy ageing in the Middle East and North Africa region. The activities and meaningful engagement with different groups and individuals. Some of these activities were reported in the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (2021-2022).



Understanding Ageing Perceptions in the MENA Region: The Role of the...

August 14, 2023



Towards Healthy Ageing in the Middle East and North Africa

January 23, 2023



Mobilising Ageing Research in the Middle East and North Africa Region

December 26, 2022



Treating Older People with Dignity and Respect: Communications with People Living...

December 19, 2022

## RESOURCES

This section contains our resources across blogs, publications, presentations and useful links.

### Blogs

Read our latest blogs and news:



### Publications

MENARAH members' publications:



### Presentations

Presentations and events:



### Useful Links

# mation



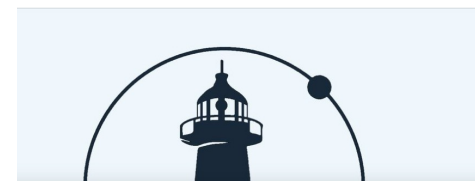
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Our Elder's Health **صحة أهاليها** 16 June 2020

أهلاً ومرحباً بكم جميعاً في صفحتنا "صحة أهاليها" 😊  
 رعاية أهاليها والإهتمام بهم ويصحتهم من أهم وأعظم المهام والتي تعتبر جزءاً من مسؤولياتنا وبنيتي مهتمين إزاي نحافظ ونعتني بصحتهم وسعادتهم وراحتهم النفسية على أمد ما نقدر بس أحياناً بنواجه صعوبات وبنبقى مش قادرين نحدد إ الأفضل لهم. يعني عايزين نخلي حياتهم مريحة وسهلة وهما بيكبروا في السن ب في نفس الوقت بيكون مهم جداً لهم النشاط والحركة وإتنا نهياهم الفرص إنهم يقضوا وقت مع العائلة وتكون لهم أنشطة وحياة إجتماعية لطيفة ...

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 www.menarah.org  
 Not a business

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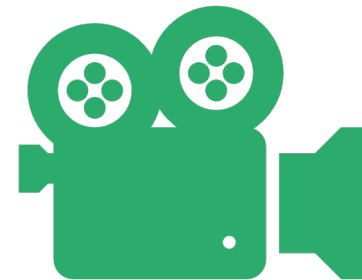
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# Creating practical and accessible tools during COVID



**Movement is a Blessing**  
Culturally tailored physical  
training videos: 10 episodes



# Supporting Regional Policy Development: Collaborating with International partners



E/ESCWA/0

## BUILDING FORWARD BETTER

Ageing trends and socioeconomic status



### In this brief

- Demographic trends
- Socioeconomic status
- Health
- Education
- Poverty
- Evidence base

This brief is based on PDR 9, available at: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/population-development-report-9>



Resources | Blogs | Initiatives | Developing Ageing Policies in the MENA region

## Calling All Age-Friendly Leaders: Join the AFE ECHO Program and Shape the Future of Age-Friendly Cities!



### The Middle East and North Africa Research on Healthy Ageing (MENARAH) Network and the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics Regional Symposium in Collaboration with the American University in Cairo (April 2024)

#### EMPOWERING FUTURES

### Shaping a Dignified Long-Term Care Ecosystem for Healthy Ageing and Well-being of Carers and Older Persons in the Middle East and North Africa



ground-breaking initiative that's all about learning, sharing, and driving change.

#### What's the Buzz About?

The MENARAH Network is thrilled to continue supporting the WHO UN Decade of Healthy Ageing and the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. This time, we're extending a warm invitation to emerging leaders from around the globe, particularly from the Middle East and North Africa, to be part of something truly innovative and thrilling—the AFE ECHO Program!

103 views

#### OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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#### RECENT POSTS

Unlocking the Demographic Puzzle: MENARAH Report Unveils the Ageing Transformation in the Middle East

# 3- Understanding how ageing perceptions are formulated in the MENA region

## Findings from a MENARAH Study





# Ageing perceptions facilitate/hinder outcomes

- Views on ageing formulate early in life
- Increased life expectancy did not match the life expectations as one age
- Gender differences when preserving individuals as 'older persons'

## Reflections on the Intersectionality of Gender and Ageing in the Middle East

*Shereen Hussein*

*Abstract:* The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been traditionally characterised by young population demographics but is currently experiencing fast transitions into ageing societies. The region has strong narratives of respect and high regard towards the elderly that are embedded in cultural norms. However, such narratives appear to have limited practical applications as they contradict the experiences of older people. The experiences of older women and men are likely to be impacted by existing gender differentials across the life course including marriage patterns, societal expectations and access to opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated infection control restrictions have impacted the lives of older people globally, including in the Middle East. In this article, I reflect on the intersectionality of gender and ageing perception in the MENA region, drawing on qualitative data collected as part of the Middle East and North Africa Research on Ageing Healthy (MENARAH) Network between 2020 and 2022.

*Keywords:* COVID-19; intergenerational care; older people; social isolation; ageing perception

*Note on the author:* Shereen Hussein is a Health and Social Care Policy Professor at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. She is an established multi-disciplinary research leader in ageing and long-term care. Her background is in medical demography, statistics and computer science. Shereen is a Co-Director of a Department of Health and Social Care-funded Policy Research Unit focusing on health and social care systems and commissioning. She is an expert advisor to various OECD and Low–Middle Income countries to develop social care and ageing policies and reforms. In 2020, she founded the Middle East and North Africa Research on Ageing Healthy (MENARAH) Network, a unique regional and international collaborative network promoting healthy ageing in the region ([www.MENARAH.org](http://www.MENARAH.org)). Publications include 'Migration Gender and Social Inclusion' (2020) in S. Westwood (ed.), *Ageing, Diversity and Inequality: Social Justice Perspectives* (London, Routledge) and 'Ageing and Elderly Care in the Arab Region: Policy Challenges and Opportunities' (2017) (with M. Ismail), *Ageing International*, 42 (3): 274–89.  
[shereen.hussein@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:shereen.hussein@lshtm.ac.uk)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7946-0717>

# Three main concepts that might explain societal ageing Perception

## Cultural

Collective societies have higher respect and values for older people

Positive ageing views

## Modernisation

Attitudes to ageing are aligned to the level of modernisation & industrialisation levels

Diverse ageing views

## Speed of Ageing

The rapid and abrupt ageing process may lead to resentment toward older people [competition over resources]

Resentment & negative ageing views

These theories are not independent.

None of them can fully explain how ageing perceptions are formulated.

Each has been criticised for ignoring certain aspects or making generalisable assumptions.



# Concepts explaining the ageing experience in the MENA region

Cultural  
Positive Narrative  
Complex  
Intergenerational  
model

Interactions & tensions

Speed of Ageing  
Abrupt changes to  
assumptions  
Duties & responsibilities

Lack of opportunities or  
mechanisms for  
meaningful  
participation

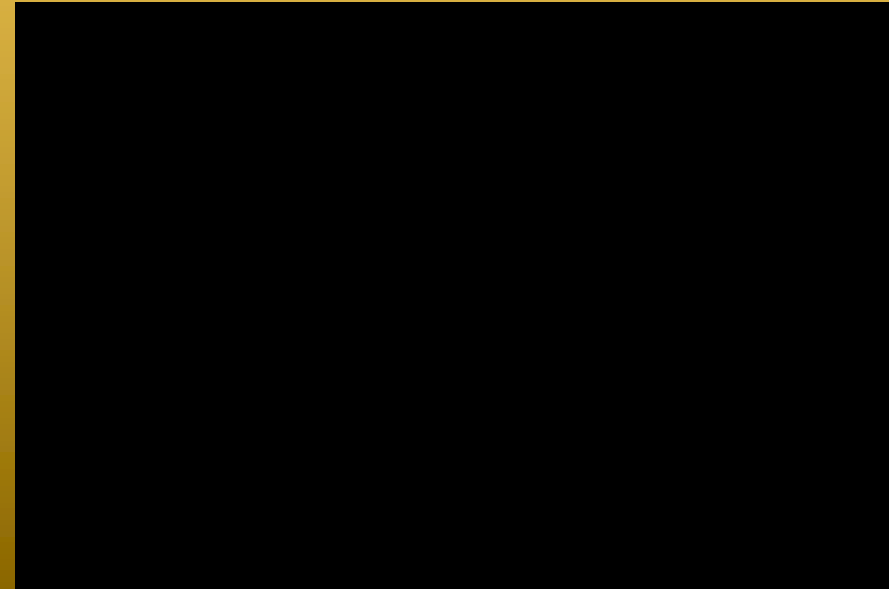
Doesn't  
capture the  
gender effect

Complex ageing  
perceptions and  
expectations

Advocacy  
Awareness  
New generations  
of older adults



## 4- Policy Direction & Implications



The United Nations (UN) 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- Goal 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”
- Goal 5: “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”; and
- Goal 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”

International polices on

- Age-discrimination; active ageing; social protection of older persons and accessibility to public transport, goods and services

Fiscal constraints

Competing policy priorities

Challenges to traditional  
social structures

- Extended families, closed-net communities

Environment & infrastructure

Awareness & stigma

- E.g., Dementia

- A growing interest in global ageing, particularly healthy ageing
- The UN decade of health ageing (2021-2030) – building on the 2030 SDGs
- An interest in LMIC and the MENA region in developing ageing policies and supporting the community as a whole
- Realization of the need for data, evidence and dialogue
- MENARAH's role in bring stakeholders together

# Thank you for Listening



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