



AGEING SOCIETIES

The Silver Revolution

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SESSION ROADMAP

AGENDA

From the global
shift to practical
responses

9 topics
3 chapters

01 THE GLOBAL SHIFT

- 01 The Global 65+ Population: Overview
 - 02 Male vs Female: The Gender Gap in Ageing
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02 HOW AGEING PLAYS OUT

- 03 South Africa's Ageing Population
 - 04 Quality of Life Among the 65+ Population
 - 05 Developed vs Developing Countries: Diverging Impacts
 - 06 China's one-child policy fuels growing elder-care strain
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03 CARE, COST AND RESPONSE

- 07 Financial Strain of an Ageing Population
- 08 Old Age Homes vs Family-Based Care
- 09 Solutions

The Global 65+ Population Is Growing Faster Than Ever



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The Global 65+ Population Is Growing Faster Than Ever

10.3%

share of world aged 65+ in 2024, up from 5.5% in 1974

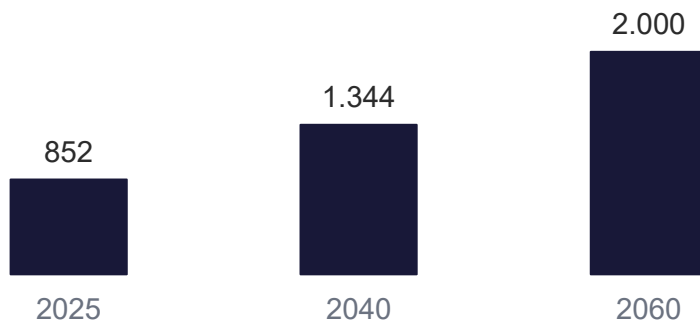
20.7%

projected global share aged 65+ by 2074

77.4

years — projected global life expectancy by 2054

World Population Aged 65+ (millions)



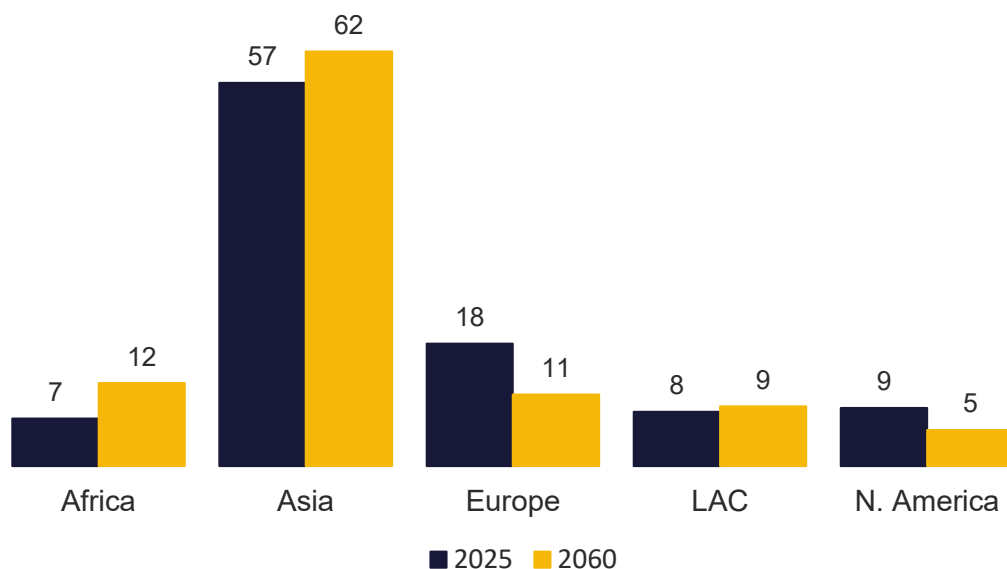
A Historic Crossover

By 2060, Africa's 65+ population (**249M**) is projected to overtake Europe's (**214M**) in sheer numbers — even though Europe remains the “oldest” region by share.

The Global 65+ Population Is Growing Faster Than Ever

Every Region Is Ageing — Asia and Africa Are Ageing Fastest

Share of World's 65+ Population by Region (%)



Asia

487M → 1.238B by 2060 — the largest elderly population throughout the period.



Africa

Fastest growth: 60M → 249M, more than fourfold by 2060.



Europe

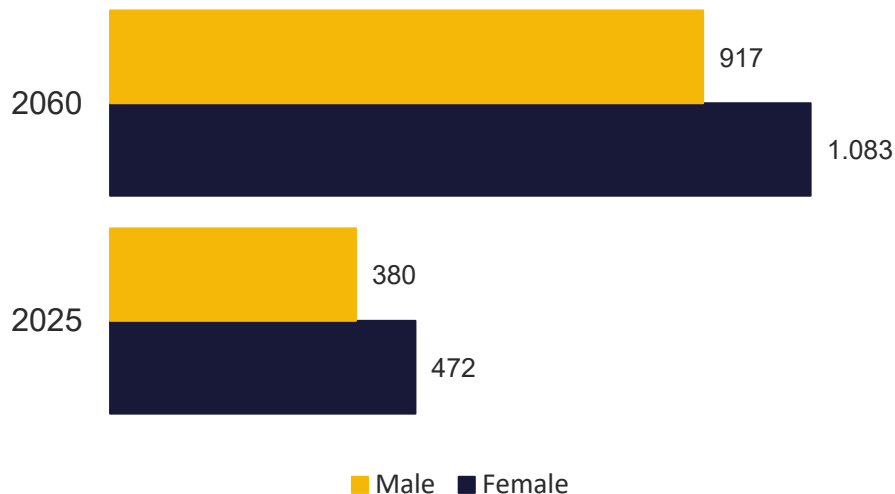
Share of global elderly falls from 18.3% to 10.7% as other regions grow faster.

The Global 65+ Population Is Growing Faster Than Ever

Ageing Is Not Gender-Neutral

Women consistently outnumber men in the 65+ bracket, and the gap widens with age — roughly 80 men for every 100 women aged 65 and above worldwide.

65+ Population by Sex (millions)



Female share: **11.6% → 21.2%**

Male share: **9.3% → 17.9%**

- Women generally live longer due to lower cardiovascular mortality and historically lower smoking rates.
- Older women are more likely to be widowed and live alone; older men more often have a live-in spousal caregiver.
- Interrupted or unpaid labour histories leave women with smaller pensions and greater reliance on state support.
- Modern economies require highly educated labour forces, delaying the start of family formation. Women, vital integration into the modern workforce has suppressed birth rates as education and wealth creation are the priority.

South Africa's Ageing Population

The older population (60+) rose from 3.6 million (7.7%) in 2002 to 6.6 million (10.5%) in 2025 — an increase of 3.0 million people in 23 years.

6.89%

of SA's population is 65+
vs a 10.7% world average
— still notably younger

65

older men per 100 older
women in 2025, down
from 67 in 2002

60.9%

of South Africa's older
population is female

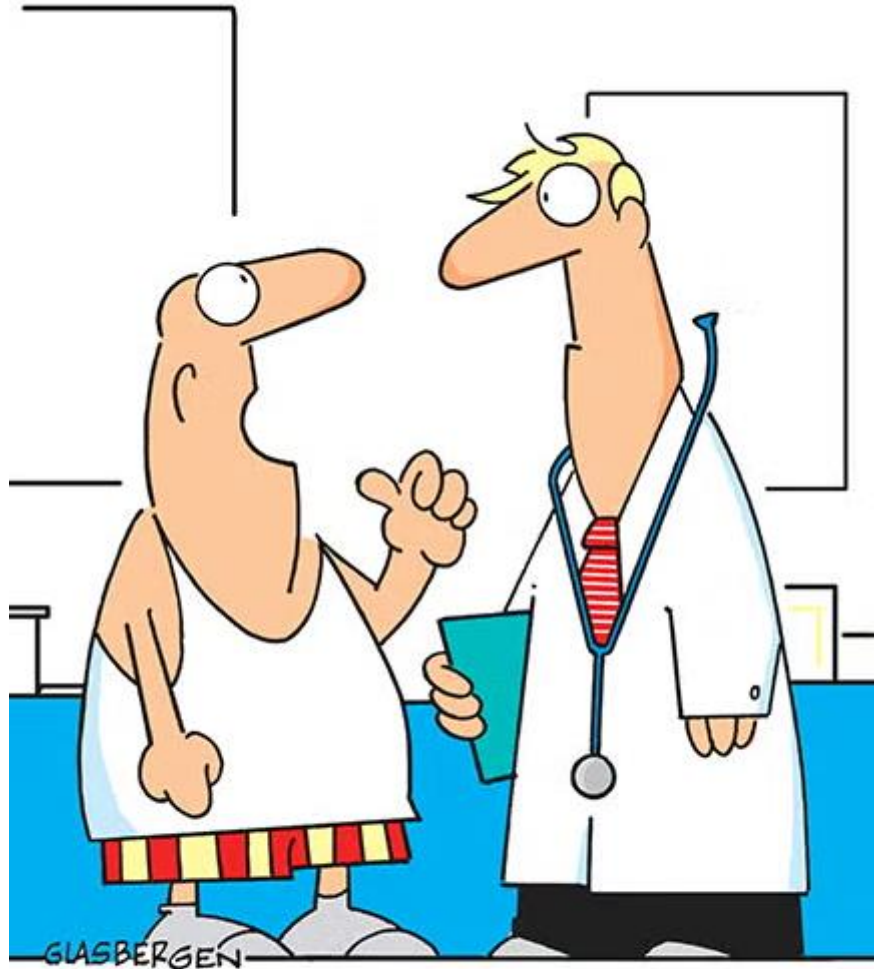
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ageing index (60+ per 100
under-15s) in 2022, up
from 30 in 2017

Life expectancy in 2025: **69.6 yrs (women)** vs **64.0 yrs (men)** a 5.6-year gap

Older female-headed households show higher child-to-older-person ratios, pointing to a greater caregiving burden on older women who are also more likely to live in extended households or alone.

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“I could be a healthy person if you’d stop finding things wrong with me!”

Quality of Life Among the 65+ Population

Living Longer Doesn't Always Mean Living Healthier



The Global Picture

- 73% of U.S. adults 65+ lived with two or more chronic illnesses (2016–2019).
- Social isolation and loneliness are widespread among older people worldwide — a significant, often neglected, health risk (WHO, 2025).
- Chronic loneliness carries a 26% increased mortality risk, comparable to smoking or physical inactivity.
- An estimated 871,000+ deaths a year are linked to loneliness worldwide — roughly 100 every hour.



South Africa: Real Gains, Real Gaps

- Formal housing among older persons: 75.8% (2002) → 91.3% (2024).
- Internet access among older persons: 22.6% (2009) → 86.6% (2024).
- 88.7% said clinics were easy to reach and more affordable than hospitals (2022/23).
- Employment is falling among older men but rising among older women who are concentrated in domestic work.

Quality of Life Among the 65+ Population

Health outcomes and access, older persons

Indicator	Value	Setting
Adults 60+ living with a mental disorder	14%	World
People living with dementia	57 m (2021) → 139 m (2050)	World
Share of dementia cases in LMICs	>60%	World
ADL limitations, aged 65–74	38.4%	South Africa (WHO 2015)
ADL limitations, aged 75+	49.2%	South Africa (WHO 2015)
Disability prevalence, older persons	27.5% (2011) → 25.0% (2022)	South Africa
Disability, older black Africans	27.0% (2022)	South Africa
Effective health coverage, older adults	≈48%	South Africa (WHO 2015)
Clinics easy to reach (older persons)	88.7% (2022/23)	South Africa
Leading reported conditions	Hypertension, diabetes, arthritis	South Africa

Developed vs Developing Countries: Diverging Impacts

Ageing is a global phenomenon but unfolding on very different timelines and with very different resources to manage it.

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

- Highest current share of older persons; Japan's 65+ share rises from 17.2% to 36.4% (2000–2050).
- OECD old-age dependency ratio nears 50% by 2050 — roughly one retiree for every two workers.
- Pension, healthcare and social-security systems were built over decades of prosperity ageing after becoming wealthy.
- Still under mounting fiscal strain, but with greater relative capacity to fund old-age care.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

- Ageing much faster than developed nations — often unprepared for the realities this brings.
- Share aged 60+ projected to rise from ~10% (2018) to 30% by 2050.
- Many are ageing before becoming wealthy — a reversal of the pattern seen in richer nations.
- Often use a lower cutoff age (60, not 65) in national policy, reflecting shorter healthy working lives.

Developed vs Developing Countries: Diverging Impacts

High-income countries are aged now; low and middle income countries are ageing faster and from lower incomes and will host 80% of the world's older people by 2050.

Ageing indicators by World Bank income group

Group	65+ share (2024)	Old-age dependency (2024)	Workers per person 65+	Life expectancy (2023)
High income	19.6%	30.3	3.3	80.1
Upper-middle income	12.0%	17.5	5.7	—
Lower-middle income	—	9.3	10.8	69.6
Low income	—	6.0	16.8	64.5
Low & middle income	—	12.7	7.9	72.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.2%	—	—	—
World	10.2%	—	—	73.3

Old-age dependency = persons 65+ per 100 aged 15–64. The high-income ratio is 5.1× the low-income ratio; the life-expectancy gap is 15.6 years.

China's one child policy fuels growing elder-care strain

In place from 1980 until gradually relaxed from 2015, the policy reshaped China's population structure — producing today's “4-2-1” family model.



4 GRANDPARENTS



2 PARENTS



1 CHILD — SUPPORTS THEM ALL

This has increased financial, emotional, and caregiving pressure on working-age adults, while a shrinking labour force strains economic growth and social support systems.

Once parents of only children reach retirement age, an only adult child is expected to support both sets of parents — creating compounding financial and caregiving burdens.

Similar pressure is expected to grow as 1960s–1970s cohorts age — especially for families with limited social security or adult children unable to provide support.

China's one child policy fuels growing elder-care strain

China's Key figures at a glance

Indicator	Value	Year
Births officially claimed prevented by policy	~400 million	1980-2015 (disputed est.)
Total fertility rate	~1.0 births/woman	2023
Peak sex ratio at birth (males per 100 females)	120	2000
National population change	-1.39 million	2024 (3rd straight annual decline)
Population aged 65+	210 million (15.0%)	2022
Population aged 65+ (projected)	366 million (26-33%)	2050
Old-age dependency ratio	21.9%	2022
Old-age dependency ratio (projected)	~90% (peak)	2085-2090
Projected public pension fund depletion	By 2035	CASS projection

Financial Strain of an Ageing Population

The Cost of Care Far Outpaces the Support on Offer

As the old-age dependency ratio rises, fewer working-age taxpayers must fund benefits for a growing number of retirees, a strain felt hardest in South Africa's funding gap.

R93.89bn

spent by SA's Dept. of Social Development on older persons, 2022/23

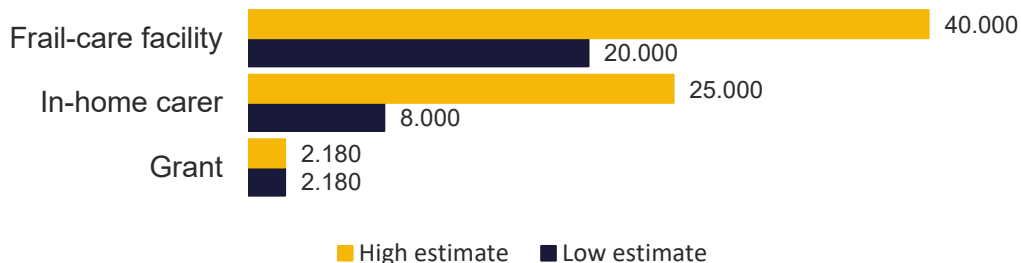
R2,180

monthly Older Persons Grant (2024), after a R100 increase

4M+

of SA's ~5.6M older persons rely on the Older Persons Grant

Monthly Cost of Care vs. the State Grant (ZAR)



Grants are the primary income source for 60.1% of older-person-headed households — ahead of salaries or wages (21.0%). Researchers argue the grant falls well short of covering real living, medical, and care needs.

Financial Strain of an Ageing Population



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Old Age Homes vs Family-Based Care

South Africa's Older Persons Act (2006) promotes “ageing in place” family care is the policy's bedrock.



Institutional Care

- State-subsidised old age homes are few relative to demand, with long waiting lists.
- Private frail-care and retirement facilities exist mainly for higher-income families (R20,000–R40,000/month).
- Existing facilities are frequently under-resourced, relying heavily on lay health care workers.



Family-Based Care

- The dominant model by necessity — the state's own policy relies on it as the primary care mechanism.
- Falls disproportionately on women, reinforcing gender inequality in paid and unpaid labour.
- Financially unsustainable at scale without expanded state support, researchers warn.

Solutions and Policy Responses

SERVICES & SUPPORT

- 01 Expand community-based and home-based care services to reduce the unpaid burden on family members, disproportionately women.
- 02 Review and increase the Older Persons Grant in line with the real cost of care, not just inflation.
- 03 Expand affordable medical aid access and strengthen public healthcare capacity for chronic disease management.
- 04 Formally recognise and support unpaid family caregivers — e.g. caregiver grants and workplace flexibility.

HEALTH, INCLUSION & PLACE

- 05 Invest in the safety, accessibility, and digital infrastructure of communities where older people live. Promote healthy diet and exercise to prolong good health.
- 06 Increase state-subsidised residential capacity in provinces with the highest elderly shares and populations.
- 07 Combat ageism by changing how we think, feel and act toward age and ageing. Active older adults transfer a wealth of knowledge and have much to offer
- 08 Create age-friendly environments so rural and urban communities foster the abilities of older people. Re-integrating older adults into daily economic and social roles limits mental decline, physical ailments, and isolation.

DISCUSSION

Questions?

