



October 24, 2012

Active Ageing Indicators for the Active Ageing Index (AAI) in EU27 Countries

by Asghar Zaidi

On behalf of the project team: Katrin Gasior,
Maria M. Hofmarcher, Orsolya Lelkes, Ricardo
Rodrigues, Bernd Marin, Andrea Schmidt, Pieter
Vanhuysse, Eszter Zolyomi and Michael Fuchs



The background: EC-sponsored UNECE / ECV Project

.... the 'Active Ageing Index' (AAI) project is a jointly-managed research project between EC, UNECE and European Centre Vienna; undertaken within the framework of activities of the EY2012.

Its aims are:

.... to develop and launch an Active Ageing Index (AAI) measuring outcomes of economic and social activity and independent and healthy living of older people.

.... the AAI is expected to serve as an evidence tool to monitor active ageing outcomes and potential at the country level, with a breakdown by gender, for mutual learning and advocacy of most appropriate policy implementation

This work is undertaken:



- ... by a large team of researchers with diverse areas of specialisations, within the tight time frame of 2012
- ... in close consultation with the UNECE Expert Group, which includes many distinguished international experts on active ageing and intergenerational relationships, from UNECE, European Commission, OECD, academia and civil society organisations as well as from Eurostat and national statistical agencies (UK, IT) and also representatives of policymakers (BE).
- ... (also) to work with the UNECE's Working Group on Ageing, formed by UNECE's Member States in 2008.



What conceptual choices?

- ✓ **Definition:** Active ageing refers to **the phenomenon** in which, with rising life expectancy on average, people are expected and allowed to continue **to participate longer** in the formal labour market as well as in unpaid productive activities (such as care provision to family members and volunteering) and **live healthy, independent and autonomous lives** in their older ages.

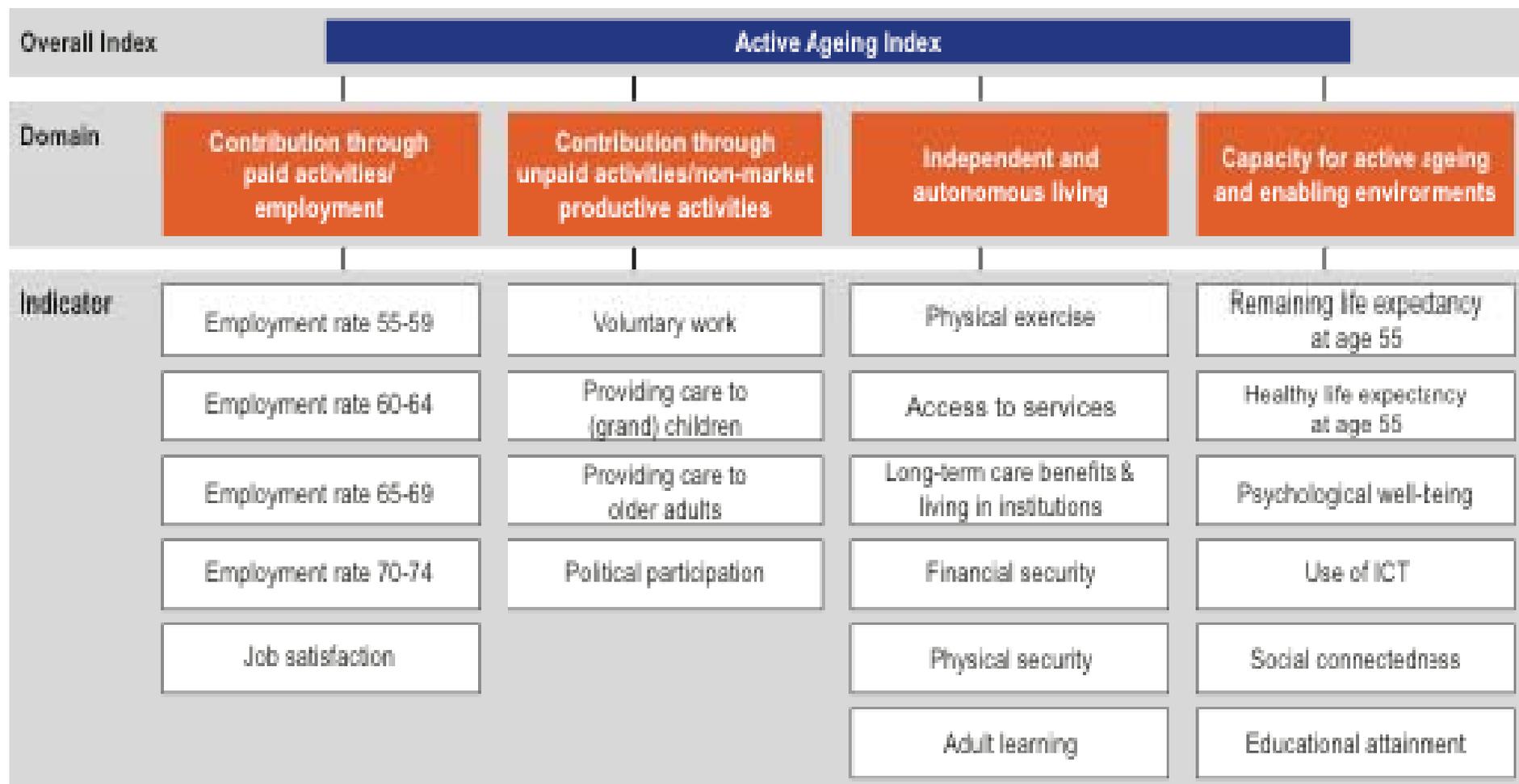
- ✓ **Novelty:** The AA measurement divided into two broadly defined dimensions:
 - a) actual experiences of active ageing (by countries and subgroups within countries)
 - b) capacity / ability to actively age (that can still be tapped to improve their quality of life and to make public welfare systems more sustainable)

Ten principles in the selection of indicators

1. **Outcome** indicators, instead of input or process indicators
2. International comparability within EU27 countries thus ruling out indicators drawn from national data sources
3. Coverage of countries
the minimum *syndicale* to be EU27 coverage; data for the most recent year
4. Replicability of results essential,
not necessarily annual; should rule out use of special module!
5. Access to micro datasets
SILC and ESS not an issue, and LFS will also be accessible, though with a time lag

6. Data quality considerations
e.g. Subjective variables subject to cultural bias, thus used only when absolutely essential and with caution!
7. Seeking to measure 'unrealised potential'
.... the work undertaken can be seen as a stock taking exercise for member countries for policy reforms!
8. Assigning normative value judgement
.... developing 'positive' indicators, with the clear interpretation of "more-is-better";
9. Disaggregating indicators, by gender/age
.... Gender sub-division most desirable; further considerations for disaggregation by age groups whenever necessary (lower age limit 55)
10. Parsimony over number of indicators selected
.... and smart use of left out indicators for the 'contextual analyses' in the follow-up project.

Selected indicators placed under four domains



Strengths

A transparent numerical exercise, with a potential to provide strong policy insights in the current context of ageing societies and their policy reform challenges

Caveats

The coverage and replicability requirements of the AAI have identified critical data gaps (especially in non-EU countries)

Essential future research

- ... Contextual analysis towards identifying sources of cross-national differences is essential work in this area
- ... Important to link active ageing experiences to positive outcomes (e.g. how and what forms of active ageing raise QOL of individuals concerned?)
- ... What impact of active ageing discourse on the financial /social sustainability of public welfare systems?)

For more detailed analysis, see

**Towards an Active Ageing Index
Concept, Methodology and First Results**

By

Asghar Zaidi, Katrin Gasior, Maria M. Hofmarcher, Orsolya Lelkes,
Bernd Marin, Ricardo Rodrigues, Andrea Schmidt, Pieter
Vanhuysse and Eszter Zolyomi

**European Centre Vienna
July 2012**



EUROPEAN CENTRE • EUROPÄISCHES ZENTRUM • CENTRE EUROPÉEN
FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH • FÜR WOHLFAHRTSPOLITIK UND SOZIALFORSCHUNG • DE RECHERCHE EN POLITIQUE SOCIALE
AFFILIATED TO THE UNITED NATIONS • IN ZUSAMMENARBEIT MIT DEN VEREINTEN NATIONEN • AFFILIÉ AUX NATIONS UNIES