Older Women: Inequality at the Intersection of Age and Gender

Supporting the well-being of all older women across the world demands more and better data.

Many women are confronted with economic insecurity in old age.

26.3% of working-age women worldwide are covered under a pension scheme, compared to 38.7% of men.1

In lower-middle income countries, only 8.1% of working-age women are covered under a pension scheme, compared to 20.8% of men.1

The intersecting discriminations that women experience in their lifetimes have a cumulative impact in old age that make their situation more vulnerable in a crisis.

41% of women in the US aged 40–65 have lost job-based income since the beginning of 2020.2

14% of women in the US aged 40–65 have lost their jobs.2

20% African American

23% Hispanic

14% Asian

13% White

The pandemic adversely impacted older women’s income and ability to work.

61% of women aged 60-plus reported having lost income as a result of the pandemic.4

54% of older women aged 60-plus reported a reduction in paid working hours, compared to 38% of men.4

As women age, their social roles also evolve.

Women do an average of 2.5 times the amount of unpaid care and domestic work as men do globally.3

More than half of older women aged 60 and over reported increased time spent on unpaid care and domestic work during the COVID-19 pandemic.4

The invisibility of abuse and violence against older women makes their situation more vulnerable.

34% of women 60-plus reported experiencing violence or knowing someone who has since the beginning of the pandemic.5

63% of women 60-plus think that domestic violence has increased, while 85% think that sexual harassment has worsened.5

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2AARP survey “Women, Work, and the Road to Resilience: Working Women at Mid-Life and Beyond”.

