

# OUR VOICES, OUR RIGHTS

## WHAT OLDER PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THE NORMATIVE ELEMENTS OF THEIR RIGHT TO AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

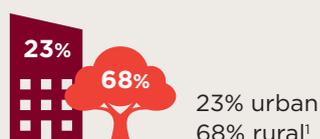
### KENYA



Older people in Kenya value their autonomy and independence highly and want to see their right to this officially recognised by their government or the United Nations.

This is the main finding of a consultation held from December 2018 – January 2019 with 101 older people. Participants were asked what they thought about different aspects of autonomy and independence. The findings presented here aim to capture their views. They are not intended to be representative of the population of older people as a whole.

#### ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS



55% with disabilities

#### Deciding where and with whom to live

Ninety-eight per cent of participants said having the freedom to decide where and with whom to live was very important or important. Having this freedom was important because they could live in 'a set-up they admire', could do 'all they wish to do', 'fulfil their desires', 'exercise their freedom' and live 'comfortably', 'free from stress'.

*'I could lead my own life and enjoy autonomy.'*  
68-year-old man

#### Making decisions about what matters in life

Ninety-seven per cent said having the freedom to make decisions based on their own will and preferences about the things that mattered to them was very important or important. Having this freedom allowed them to 'meet their goals'. It made them feel 'comfortable' without any 'pressure'.

*'It means living a life of my choice.'*  
84-year-old woman

#### Autonomy and independence in everyday activities and participation in society

Ninety-seven per cent said it was very important or important to carry out everyday activities based on their own will and preferences. Having the freedom to carry out these activities as they wished enabled them to 'avoid stress' and live 'a happy life' with no need 'to bother anyone'.

*'My life becomes mine and my wishes remain as I wish.'*  
87-year-old man

#### Deciding about care and support services

Ninety-nine per cent said it was very important or important to make their own decisions about their care and support, including planning ahead for future support.

*'There would be freedom of choice.'*  
72-year-old man

### Supported decision-making

Ninety-four per cent said it was very important or important to have access to support for making decisions about their care and support.

Ninety-seven per cent said it was very important or important to have a trusted person or persons to support them in decision-making about their care and support.

Eighty-five per cent said it was very important or important to have the opportunity to issue advance instructions about the kind of medical care or treatment they wanted to receive in the future.

### Deciding about palliative care

Ninety-six per cent said it was very important or important to decide for themselves, with support if necessary, the type of palliative care they would receive if they needed it. This was important as they would get 'the care they needed', 'at the right time', 'from a qualified person' and 'from a caregiver of their choice'.

*'I shall get the services required and be able to have my choice which I am comfortable with.'*  
*81-year-old man*

### Overall response by gender

Women and men value their autonomy and independence equally highly. On average, 95 per cent of women and 96 per cent of men said it was very important or important to them.<sup>2</sup>

### Official recognition of rights by the government or the United Nations

Ninety-nine per cent said it was very important or important that their government or the United Nations officially recognise their right to autonomy and independence.<sup>3</sup>

Recognition would mean that their rights would be 'secured in the law'. Their freedom would be 'safeguarded' and they could 'demand their rights'. The government could be 'held accountable' and older people would not be forced 'to do what they don't like doing'.

*'I would have freedom to exercise my right without fear because I would be protected by law.'*  
*79-year-old woman*



Roopa Gogineni



HelpAge International

1. 9% answered 'Other'.
2. Average based on responses to a number of questions about the level of importance attached to normative elements of the right to autonomy and independence.
3. Average based on responses to a number of questions about recognition of the normative elements of the right to autonomy and independence.

This consultation was funded by Svenska Postkod Stiftelsen (Swedish Postcode Foundation) and conducted by Karika  
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