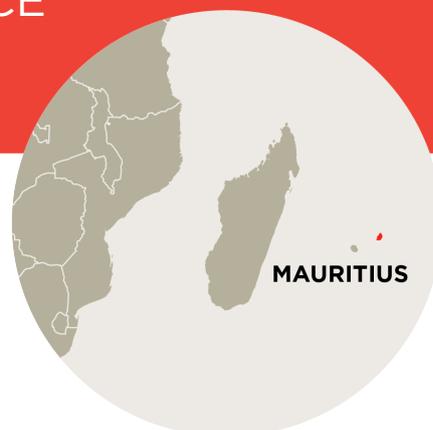


OUR VOICES, OUR RIGHTS

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

MAURITIUS



Older people in Mauritius 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 100 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



100 in total:
50 women
50 men



46% urban
52% rural¹



17% with
disabilities

Deciding where and with whom to live

Eighty-one per cent of participants said having the freedom to decide where and with whom to live was very important or important because 'freedom was a right'. They could continue being 'independent' and 'keep their identity'. Everyone in the family should have 'equal recognition'.

'Choosing for myself would mean recognising my dignity.'
72-year-old man

Making decisions about what matters in life

Ninety 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. It meant they would still be 'valued in the eyes of others' and their 'wishes were respected'. It meant they 'do things at their own pace' which was 'essential for happiness'.

'The day I don't have this freedom I will feel useless and helpless.'
80-year-old woman

Autonomy and independence in everyday activities and participation in society

Ninety-five per cent said it was very important or important to carry out everyday activities based on their own will and preferences. This made them 'feel autonomous', 'accomplished' and 'useful to their family' and 'to society'. They did not want to 'feel like a prisoner' but to 'continue being independent' and 'equal'.

'Without the freedom, I would not feel equal to my husband.'
60-year-old woman

Deciding about care and support services

Ninety-one 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.

'Although I'll ask the opinion of my family, in the end I'll make the final choice.'
66-year-old man

Supported decision-making

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

Eighty-four 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.

Seventy-one 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 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. They could 'plan for a better end of life', 'suffer less' and 'die without pain'. They would feel 'more at ease with the treatment or therapy'.

'To die peacefully, being conscious I made the choice.'

72-year-old man

Overall response by gender

Men value their autonomy and independence slightly more than women. On average, 90 per cent of men and 83 per cent of women said it was very important or important to them.²

Official recognition of rights by the government or the United Nations

Seventy-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.³

Recognition meant 'rules couldn't be imposed to control their movement', older people would be 'fully integrated into society', the government would introduce 'additional laws', and rights would be 'guaranteed'. Older people's 'voices needed to be heard'.

'They should know that even in a [residential care] home we must have the right to autonomy.'

90-year-old woman



DIS-MOI



DIS-MOI

1. 1% answered 'Other' and 1% 'I prefer not to say'.
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.

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