



The road ahead for age-friendly community in Ukraine

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Abstract

As in other countries, Ukraine has persistent ageing stereotypes, with old age associated with wealth reduction, financial instability and social exclusion. Shifting these negative attitudes to active-ageing and seniors' inclusion requires a systematic challenge. Not so long times ago the majority of people in their third age were unaware of active-ageing or expressed scepticism about the feasibility of creating an age-friendly community in Ukraine. Since the large-scale integration of Ukrainian UTAs into the EU agenda for intellectual, economic and social progress of society and individuals regardless of age, the changes in lifelong activities and participation in personally and socially meaningful ways for seniors caused a new outlook for them involving active vitality and optimism, confidence in intelligence, personal and social inclusion.

This publication is devoted to the analysis of possible road ahead for the age-friendly community in Ukraine, negative stereotyping towards senior people from the side of business and individuals. The main goal is introducing methodology, practices and tools for the successful performance of initiative for age-friendly compass in Ukraine aimed to measure ageism in society.

Key words: *ageing stereotypes, age discrimination, age-friendly community.*

1. Introduction

Basically human capital is a valuable resource, and a cornerstone of competitiveness, economic growth and efficiency; intangible collective resources: all the knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence,

training, judgment, and wisdom possessed individually and collectively within a given population. In 2019 at one of almost several hundred Universities of the Third Age (UTA) in Ukraine, its staff calculated the total years of professional experience of its 50 senior students. They have got the amazing figure – 1562 years.

How society has explored (in positive connotation) this powerful resource, if ever? Either in declaring equality, our society discriminates and excludes older adults?

Historically for the last decades, society has changed the path to promote more age-friendly community for different levels of society in order to provide diversity on the basis of the best world practices and synergy potentials. At the global level it is a shift from a consumer society to practical measures for sustainable development, and at the international level – from declaring equality to a new political context that defines clear indicators of it.

In 2000 a conceptual framework for EU economy as the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based one in the world was presented in the Lisbon strategy. In 2005 it became clear that the objective would not be achieved without the real commitment of the EU member states and of internal driving forces. In 2010 it started in an even more uncertain context of the EU 2020 Strategy of a smarter, greener and more inclusive growth in a more integrated Europe. Since then the road ahead for an innovative model of human development has tended to creative actions through active participation and trust of citizens regardless of age and gender that provides on strengthening the capacity for creativity most members of society.

The innovative model of human development with the role of life-long learning in forwarding from information society into knowledge one has been also implemented in Ukraine to develop a more competitive, inclusive and sustainable European economy requiring a strengthened age-friendly agenda.

1.1 Literature review

In Ukraine seniors' inclusion into socio-economic life is an urgent problem of the society and closely relates to demographic ageing of the population. A demographic profile of Ukraine proves that the proportion of people in pension age is over 24%. The economic burden on the working population consists of 411 persons per 1,000, while the overall rate of economic activity is 723 dependents per 1000 persons of working age. The number of contributors to pension insurance is 15.2 million, the number of pensioners – 13.8 million, i.e. 90.8% of the average pension is financed. If in 1966 the share of the population of retirement age was 15.9%, in 2006 this figure has increased to 1,5times, and by 2046 it will increase to 35% of the total population of Ukraine.

The highest level of ageing population is expected to 2050s: people aged over 60 years old are expected to take 21.7 per cent of the total population, in

particular women – 26 per cent, men - 16.8 per cent (Population of Ukraine,2014).

By 2050 the population of retirement age will increase by 2 million. In 2061 the proportion of young people in the population of Ukraine will be 14.9%, and those aged 60 years and older - 31.2% (in 2013 - 21.4%).

The aforementioned statistics prove that Ukrainian society has entered an era of “ageing society”.

The problem of demographic changes and more significant problem of stereotypes connected with ageing, as well as ageism and seniors’ discrimination on the labour market have been described by numerous researchers, in particular, Fasbender (2017), Rauschenbach (2012), Göritz, Hertel, Posthuma (2009), Campion, Meisner (2012), Allore; Ng and Trentalange (2015), and others . In Ukrainian context problems of ageism and age-stereotypes have been investigated by Balakireva and Lokteva (2018), Kratt and Kirnos(2018) and others.

1.2 Research methods

This paper presents an analysis to outline of the ageism in society and business environment in Ukraine as well as people attitude to age-friendly agenda.

The basics for implementation age-friendly indicators started in 2006 with elaboration the Global Age-Friendly Cities Concept by the World Health Organization and launched an era of large number of age-friendly initiatives all over the world. But because of the lack of the capacity and tools to develop and conduct evaluations of these initiatives there have been developed indicators to evaluate age-friendly activities in communities.

In Ukraine little is known about the effectiveness and outcomes of age-friendly community initiatives.

Unfortunately, there is a gap between new challenges for ageing in Ukraine and community awareness about diversity and human rights of older adults.

At the same time the age-friendly agenda in Ukraine with its focus on the long-term strategy and shift from ageism to diversity needs adaptation and active implementation with innovative age-friendly indicators that allow supporting the varied needs of communities, in other words age-friendly compass for conducting evaluation of realization on international and national level, business environment and individuals.

On the international view implementation of Basic Convention of the International Labour Organization # 111 (1958) with its focus on the fight against discrimination and principle of non-discrimination in the workplace as well as on the national one Labour Code of Ukraine, Article 2-1 ensure equality of labour rights regardless of any circumstances. National Strategy of Sustainable Development of Ukraine until 2020 on 12 January 2015 № 5/2015, Programme for Healthy Active Longevity until 2022 and other

concepts of 'successful ageing' became basic components that accompany ageing (low probability of disease or disability; high capacity for learning and physical activity; active participation in society and so on).

This paper's analysis followed by a brief review regarding active-ageing and seniors' inclusion for age-friendly community based on sociological study "Social inequality: perception by Ukrainian society" conducted by the All-Ukrainian NGO "Sociological Association of Ukraine" with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation (Balakireva, Lokteva, 2018). It allowed the authors study manifestations of social exclusion in the labour market because of the empirical basis of the research. It was the results of the survey that was conducted in the first decade of September 2017 in 24 regions of Ukraine and Kyiv. A total of 2046 respondents aged 18 and older were interviewed.

Finally, this paper will suggest methodology of a pilot project for age-friendly compass in Ukraine. This initiative "Age-Friendly Compass: from Ageism to Diversity in Ukraine" based on international indicators to measure age-friendly environment in Ukraine belongs to NGO "Association of the Universities of the Third Age" Clepsydra" (AUTAC).

The goal is to support age-friendly socio-economic investment in Ukraine aimed to measure the shift from ageism to diversity with quantitative tools, i.e. age equality and friendly environment. AUTAC (www.3age.com.ua) was founded in Kyiv, Ukraine in 2016 on civic platform of several NGOs with the purpose of cooperation and integration in the field of life-long learning and developing social platform for adult education, human rights and development and availability of life-long learning. Its principal activities are trainings and seminars, methodological support for other NGOs, seniors' mobility and exchange programs, publications and research, as well as international and national senior sport and wellness events, senior tourism, workshops and other cultural and educational events. AUTAC has been involved into elaboration of innovative strategy for Ukraine how to develop age-friendly labour markets on national and regional level, implement social responsibility into urban and rural development and senior study-tours.

The project initiative "Age-Friendly Compass: from Ageism to Diversity in Ukraine" is expected to be implemented in Ukraine, open for partnership and international cooperation on the large scale. In 2019 a pilot-group for project's probe was selected from UTA-Smila City (Cherkas'ka oblast) as a typical city with ageing population and high concentration of older adults and small but sustainable University of the Third Age (about 50 senior students).

1.3 Analysis results

What can prove necessity of age-friendly initiatives to be implemented in the community?

It was grounded by several reasons.

Firstly, in Ukraine it is obvious that age structure of the economy was formed under the conditions of a younger population, and then it had become more old.

As a result, there was imbalance regarding to:

- reduction of workforce;
- possible slowdown in economic development;
- increasing social expenditures for older people at the expense of other age groups;
- increase in tax burden;
- reduction of savings;
- rising pension spending (further raising the retirement age, reducing traditional pension schemes, calculating pensions, other «unpopular» reforms for the population).

In the long run, increasing the number of pensioners and reducing the number of employed population and taxpayers will mainly depend on the dependence of the state of the pension system and quality of life on the economic situation (Fig.1).

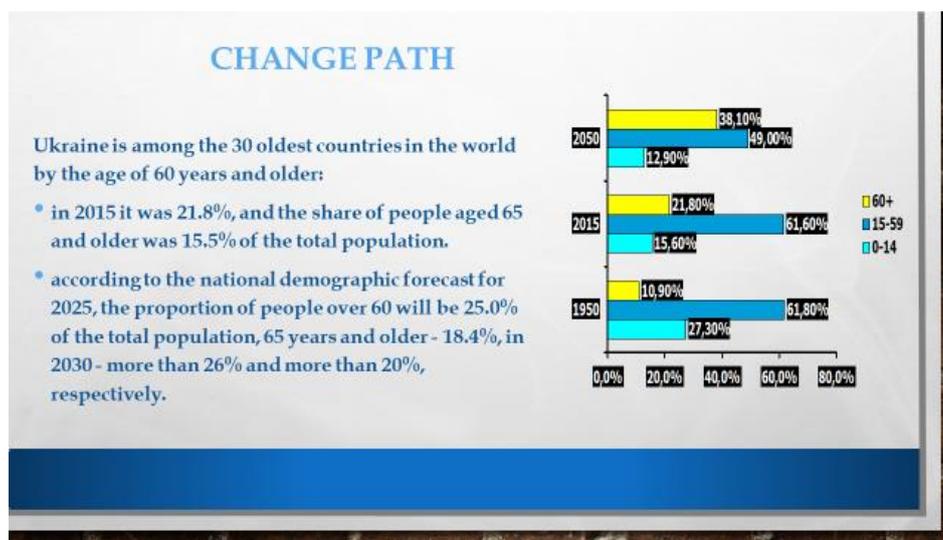


Fig.1. Proportion of people under 60 in Ukraine, 2015 – 2025 (be compared), Sources: Population of Ukraine (2014). Imperatives of demographic ageing. Kyiv: ADEF-Ukraine, 288

There is also a reconsideration of the work-life balance, the abandonment of an outdated retirement policy, or other restrictive measures in relation to the employment of older adults.

Secondly, on the national level people don't have requirements and created opportunities to solve social, economic and environmental problems associated with progressive ageing effectively; there are no increasing public policy focus on life extension and sustainable development.

In spite of defining in public policy important strategic documents of “new generation” as Strategy for Sustainable Development of Ukraine 2020; Draft Strategy for Sustainable Development Strategy of Ukraine 2030; Strategy for Healthy Active Longevity 2022 the Roadmap of these strategic documents are uncertain (WR 1-3).

It should be noted that the application of purely legislative norms is not sufficient to overcome discrimination because of deep sources of its origin. Thirdly, road ahead for age-friendly community needs priorities for implementation 25 key indicators assessing progress of reforms for Sustainable Development of Ukraine as well as institutional/organizational support of the Strategy (WR 1)].

In the Draft Strategy for Sustainable Development Strategy of Ukraine 2030 strategic vision for sustainable development is based on ensuring national interests and fulfilling Ukraine’s international commitments to sustainable development. The development involves: overcoming imbalances that exist in the economic, social and environmental sectors; building peaceful, secure and socially cohesive society with good governance and inclusive institutions; ensuring the partnership within institutions of public governance and others (WR 2). In direction for healthy living, wellbeing and quality education in sustainable development’s operational objective is promoted well-being for people regardless of age. Accordingly, the specific tasks for achieving this goal are as follow: providing indicators of life expectancy at birth up to the level of EU countries; establishing information and awareness campaign among the population about necessity of healthy lifestyle.

Among the operational objectives this priority also identifies provision of inclusive and equitable quality of education and life-long learning opportunities for people regardless of age. Therefore, Strategy for Healthy Active Longevity 2022 contains definite agenda for combating demographic changes, including the implementation of comprehensive measures to ‘support older adults’, ensuring their active participation in social development, improvements of quality of life, protection their rights (WR 3). *Finally*, the authors agree with the statement that it is necessary to change the culture of attitude towards the older adult in society as a whole towards a more respectful attitude, which in turn will contribute to reducing the level of ageism and discrimination (Kratt, Kirnos, 2018).



Fig.2. International Workshop of UTAs, Kyiv, October 2019

Why it was decided to conduct more age-friendly community initiatives?

The authors found the answers for their further solutions in social survey “Labour Discrimination of Older Adults: Results of the Sociological Survey” (Balakireva, Lokteva, 2018).

- According to its results every third person of 45-59 years faces age discrimination in the labour sphere. Among all respondents, every fifth respondent reported that he was denied employment due to his age (23.0%). The obtained assessment shows the stability of the age discrimination factor in employment.
- The next most frequently mentioned reason for failing employment is a lack of digital skills: computer, internet, office equipment, and more. Almost every tenth respondent identified this cause (8.9%). The discrimination in employment due to lack of digital skills increases with age. The share of those who reported cases of discrimination in work placement due to a lack of these skills was highest in the 56-65 age group (15.0%) and the lowest among young people aged 18-25 (7.2%). Older adults may not have sufficient knowledge of information technology (office equipment, computer, Internet)
- The next most cited reasons, according to the respondents, related to employment refusals are health (6.9%) and gender of respondents (5.9%). Every tenth respondent in the age groups of 46-55 years and 56-65 years experienced discrimination in the workplace due to health status.
- In addition, respondents from the pre-retirement age (46-55 years - 33.4%) and retirement age (56-65 years - 33.6%) mentioned employment discrimination.
- Among women, a quarter (24.0%) reported that they had experienced discrimination in age-based employment. In the group of men, the

number of those who confirmed having experience of age discrimination in employment constitutes a fifth (20.6%).

In general, older and younger representatives may face employment discrimination because of the potential need for additional training and advanced training or retraining.

At the national level, the fight against discrimination is conducted through anti-discrimination legislation. Currently, in 29 countries, legislation prohibits direct and indirect forms of age discrimination (Kratt, Kirnos, 2018). In addition to legislation, developed countries are sponsoring large-scale state information campaigns aimed at overcoming the reluctance of employers to hire and retain senior staff. Governmental bodies have created anti-discrimination bodies.

At the level of organisation/business, necessity of consequences of age discrimination have to be evaluated for reducing the impact of stereotypes and discrimination against the older adults in society and on the labour market. Employers should recognize the impact of demographic trends and change their corporate strategies, offer more flexible and competitive working conditions for attracting and retaining older adults.

Working conditions need to be based on skills, competences and results rather than age. Equal access to education and development, regardless of age, will make effective use of the potential and talents, retain them for longer in the workplace and pass on knowledge to younger generations (Kirnos, 2018).

The authors of the paper made the conclusion that in Ukraine there is still the necessity:

- to raise awareness about ageism as a violation of human rights of people;
- estimate level of ageism and develop indicators of age-friendly community for different levels of society and organisation/business in order to provide diversity on the basis of the best world practices and synergy potentials – from ‘passive’ access to citizen engagement to consensus in socio-and economic investment.

Aforementioned can facilitate older adults’ reintegration into active social life and will serve to change perceptions about the seniors. It will form a new outlook for the seniors involving active vitality and optimism, confidence in intelligence, and personal and social inclusion. It was at the very rarely time in Ukraine seeking to solve the problem of ageism in community, negative stereotyping towards older adults at labour market, on the side of media and members of society.

If not, the increasing number of older adults tends for increasing ratio of discriminated seniors in prospect because of the trend for ageing population (Fig.2)

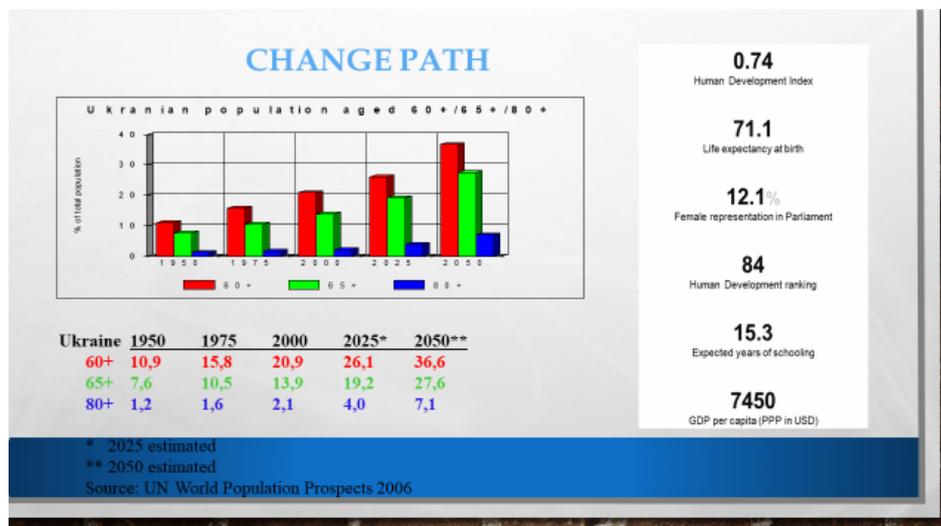


Fig. 2 Ukrainian population aged 60+/65+/80+, 1950-2050, Sources: Population of Ukraine (2014). Imperatives of demographic ageing. Kyiv: ADEF-Ukraine, 288

What can project initiative “Age-Friendly Compass: from Ageism to Diversity in Ukraine” achieve, i.e., what are the expected long-term results of it?

The objectives of the project initiative are as follow:

- To estimate age-friendly environment in UTA of a pilot region as a possible road ahead diversity.
- To increase in number of community (organisation/business) conducted evaluation of their age-friendly activities with education and promotion seminars and trainings for different levels of society in order to prevent ageism.
- To develop methodology, practices and tools to support National Strategy of Sustainable Development of Ukraine until 2020 on 12 January 2015 № 5/2015, Programme for Healthy Active Longevity until 2022 on the basis of the best world age-friendly practices and experience.

The ‘Age-Friendly Compass’ becomes a tool for indicating diversity in primary (age) and secondary (education/culture) dimensions in preventing ageism as well as formation and development age-friendly community for diversity. In particular, long-term results are in implementation best practices at National Strategy of Sustainable Development of Ukraine until 2020 on 12 January 2015 № 5/2015, Programme for Healthy Active Longevity until 2022 based on indicators for age-friendly community. The results promote recommendations and tools for government/executive bodies (Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Infrastructure in Ukraine) to support older adults (today and in prospect) with legislation and budget initiatives in maintaining independence and access to services they require. It reflects citizens’ future needs, generates age-friendly

awareness and citizens' engagements, provides all stakeholders with useful information, creates social trust between regional/local governments and community that is often felt lacking in traditional approaches to civic inclusion.

Within the project initiative the first activities in pilot UTA-Smila were as follow:

- Analysis of the best age-friendly practices
- Moderating strategic session and elaborating plan as well as implementation of basic indicators for age-friendly community
- Delivering trainings for seniors and local authorities about ageism as a violation of human rights.

Stated on September 15, 2019 at the pilot group of UTA-Smila the number of participants of the project initiative was 35 seniors. Age distribution of them was as follow: aged to 50 years old – 4 seniors; from 50 to 60 years old – 11 seniors; from 60 to 70 years old seniors- 15; 70 years old and older – 5 persons.

All seniors are women. Their total previous professional experience is 1162 years.

The educational background is as follows: secondary education – 4 seniors; professional technical/special education – 10 seniors; higher education – 21 seniors.

All of them have attended UTA-Smila activities since 2016, in particular they prefer: information and computer technologies – 23 persons; foreign language (English) - 20; social protection – 13; basics of psychology – 12; healthy lifestyle – 17; culture and art – 1; finance – 11; handmade – 10; tourism – 7.

In preliminary discussions, these 35 senior ladies proved that they faced ageism and negative stereotyping towards older workers while their working cycle and towards older people when retired to some extent. While moderating the strategic session and then delivering training for these senior ladies the initiative group of the project came to the conclusion about the great importance of the age-friendly agenda in Ukraine.

The statistics prove that the number of women aged 65+ is twice as high as men. Women have lower pension income due to periods of child rising and differences in salary. On average, the level of salary of men is 25 % higher compared to women (Balakireva, Lokteva, 2018).

In old age, the risks of deprivation poverty are 1.5 times higher for women compared to men. Each sixth women household is poor (has 5-6 traits of deprivation) compared to each tens men's household. More than a quarter (26,7 %) of single older women aged 60+ live below the deprivation poverty level, while only 17 % of men are poor according to deprivation poverty indicators. The average level of deprivation poverty in Ukraine is 18.4 % (Kratt, Kirnos, 2018).

These reasons force women to seek employment in older age to survive and provide them an adequate subsistence level. Ageism and negative stereotyping towards older people and older workers hamper and decrease opportunities of employment for older women. So, women are the beneficiaries of this project. Rising awareness in society about advantages and strong points of older workers, combatting ageism via information campaign could potentially rise the opportunities of employment and active social life and engagement for older women.

As a preliminary result of activities with the pilot group of UTA-Smila it was decided by participants to write and publish articles in the local newspaper “Gudok” where participants would like to spread the idea of the project, share information about principles of age-friendly community and explain negative consequences of ageism in society.

Then project initiative will include different other activities such as:

- Elaboration the guide for focus-groups and questionnaires for experts and questioning them of the in other pilot UTAs and cities as well as processing the data and making summary.
- Delivering seminars to pilot UTAs and regions on the issues of age-friendly community and ageism as well as creation of an open project web-platform of age-friendly community in Ukraine to share acquired experience, relevant practices and foster dialogue with citizens on access to data.
- Design, publishing a guide-book on age-friendly compass in Ukraine and its promotion.
- Organizing events on age-friendly diversity agenda in Ukraine.
- Dissemination of results: articles in media, TV and radio broadcasting, etc.

Finally, after implementation of all project activities project-team is expected to have environmental impacts and benefits relevant on this problem raised in Ukrainian society, in particular:

- For government/executive bodies: better methodology on the basis of indicators and priorities of age-friendly community, social trust.
- For local governments (municipalities, social services for social protection of population, local councils): better regulation with age-friendly tools.
- For business: better HR knowledge as well as explore new age-friendly practices, design flexible age-friendly corporate policies path, adapt indicators to increase productivity, reduce costs and improve social responsible business.
- For community organizations: better age-friendly knowledge as well as attitudes and values for diversity.

The project initiative is to create opportunities to involve all generations in shaping future age-friendly culture and social systems, preventing ageism, although many older adults' express scepticism about the feasibility of creating an age-friendly culture for diversity. As the large-scale transformation of the world continues, human capital becomes more important for intellectual, economic, social and sustainable development of people, regardless of age. With the changed social infrastructure older adults are more likely to pursue lifelong activities and participate in personally and socially meaningful ways, and develop new interests and sources of fulfilment.

2. Discussion

In the project initiative presented in this paper the authors also included diversity issues of its activities. Active members of community after the pilot implementation of the project activities could share their experience and good practices of age-friendly cities and communities' initiatives via media and created in future the web platform. After finishing the project, we plan to continue updating information on questions of ageism, age diversity, age-friendly community on this web-platform. The NGO AUTAC will also provide webinars and consultations for active members of communities, who want to implement initiatives and projects concerning age-friendliness. Prepared seminars and sociology survey results will be shared among UTAs in Ukraine under the NGO AUTAC and among its partners in Ukraine and abroad.

Besides further discussions are going to promote gender equality for seniors as well as human development, specifically in the areas of health, nutrition, and education. Also actual problems to be discussed in connection with creating the road ahead for age-friendly community in Ukraine are championing human rights, inclusive and accountable governance, democracy, peaceful pluralism, and respect for diversity.

This will be eliminated at the other authors' publications.

3. Conclusion

As concluded older adults in Ukraine are affected by ageism and negative stereotyping in society. But even more senior women are in more disadvantaged situation compared to men. They have lower income compared to men, 26.7 % of women aged 60+ live below the deprivation poverty level. So, they seek for paid employment in pension age to provide money for living. But the opportunities are decreased due to ageism.

Unawareness about ageing translates negative images of ageing, which spreads in society. Stereotypes are based on lack of information. Information campaigns and programs of intergenerational communication could change

the attitude. So, the culture of ageing and attitude towards this phenomenon should be formed from childhood. Rising awareness and culture of society on questions of ageism and age-friendly community could change the situation in long-term perspective.

Understanding the generations' differences mean diversity.

Setting-up of a social partnership networking needs to be focused on cooperation relationships at national and international level in order to build sustainable development of Human rights, Age-Friendly Community and Diversity as well as to promote sympathy, fellow-feeling and unity among the followers of different faith; to run, manage, maintain and carry on the above society for the welfare of the people; to help the aged, sick, helpless, indigent and handicapped persons, as well as cooperation and exchange of information and expertise within the social partnership networking performing work in the field of rule of law, human rights and freedoms of man and citizen on the basis of equality, mutual benefit observance of generally accepted norms and principles.

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