

Strategies to Reduce Some Identified Problems of the Aging Population in Nigeria

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Abstract: This exploratory paper attempted to shed light on the increasing number of the aging population and the need to finetune specific strategies that will provide a solution to some of the issues of aging as identified. As emphasis was on curbing birth rate and reducing infant mortality, the goals were accomplished and the attention should change and must focus on improving the quality of life of older adults. The case study method of Iberenta was used, and the rights, privileges, and status, which were accorded to older adults in pre-colonial Nigeria, were reviewed. Focus shifted to uncovering some strategies that among other things, will curtail poverty in old age and revive the negative attitude towards older adults; reduce the burden on family so that they can guarantee the general well-being of older persons; restore and strengthen intergenerational link; establish affordable communities with age-friendly integrated social care system that will promote healthy aging and removing the responsibilities that orphans of people with HIV impose on older people. The land was the main factor of production identified, and we argued that if the owners can relinquish the land to those in need, the cocoa production, which made the village to flourish will be rekindled. The recommended solutions are not capital intensive because there is always the tendency for the government to claim that there are no funds to tackle the issues confronting older adults. Our proposal is a win-win situation where the young, the youth, the young, and older adults can all find a reason to co-exist peacefully, a position that will see some of the problems of the aging population reduce, if not eliminated.

Keywords: Ageing, Older adults, intergenerational gap, care-givers, age-friendly environment, land, cocoa, drinking water

I. INTRODUCTION

Until recently, issues and policies concerning aging were considered as not very important to the people in Africa. The predominant theme was a way to curb the fertility rate, which was assumed to be strictly responsible for increasing the population at an alarming rate. Today, the game has changed. As life expectancy is rising, the world over so needs to care for the aging population. The campaign to stop indiscriminate mating has been somewhat successful but has led to yet another set of issues. People are living longer and must be provided with appropriate care at old age. Still, the population of young people that are required to provide the services is either not increasing or have better things to engage them and, as such, not interested in delivering care-giving to their older adults. Social support denotes functions rendered to an individual to support and can be provided either by a family member, friend, or colleague (Bekele, Rourke, Tucker, Greene, Sobota, Koornstra, Monette, Rueda,

Bacon, Watson, Hwang, Dunn & Guenter, 2013). The traditional support systems are collapsing, and new approaches must be adopted. This paper focused on how to cope with the many problems of the older population in Africa.

Arguably, urbanization exerts destabilizing effects on traditional family structure and renders the experience of older adults valueless (Hiskey & McPherson, 2013). How important is the elderly to African society? Before the advent of the western culture cum urbanization, Africa was predominantly family-focused, and leadership was mainly focused on maturity of age. Old age was considered honorary and came with pride and dignity. It does not matter the social status of a person in the society, just having made it to old age with grey hairs was enough to command respect and authority. It was the envy of all to grow old so that all the respect that was offered to the elderly would be reciprocated as well.

Some of the reasons why old age was highly revered were that custom and rules were transmitted orally through the society, and the earliest members of the family were considered as the repository of valuable information. Old age also came with lots of responsibilities, among which was carrying out some judicial duties. Bribery and corruption were unheard of, and as such, people tendered justice with mercy based on facts. The family structure was strictly extended and was also very large because of the need for workers to farm the plantation. It was customary to marry many wives and have many children having a good number of wives, and many children became a case of class status, and people were ranked based on how many wives and children they had. This system created a highly intergenerational structure where dependency became a relay. Parents raised the children, and the children, in turn, knew that it was their civic duty and responsibility to take care of their parents at old age.

But with the arrival of the colonial masters, respect for old age, which was considered as valuable gradually eroded and intelligence became measurable only through academic achievement. Unfortunately, as of the time, it was apparent that only the younger ones were disposed to attend school. As such, they quickly accumulated valuable knowledge that grey hair was considered not very important to the smooth functioning of society.

As civilization and technology took turns on the society, the structure on which the family depended gradually began to crack. The younger generation took advantage of the

new culture and, through the acquisition of education, developed quick access to the new way of life, migrated to the urban areas. In contrast, the older ones were abandoned in rural areas. Urbanization allowed for structures where people moved to and were able to gain employment. It soon becomes inevitable that young people will vacate the villages and migrate to urban cities. The older adults who depended on the strength of the younger generations to sustain themselves at old age were abandoned in the village, and hence the need to find better alternatives to issues of old age and care-giving in Africa. Any attempt to proffer solution to the problems of old age in Africa must begin by providing the answer to the following questions:

How do we curtail poverty in old age and revive the negative attitude towards older adults? How do we reduce the burden on the family so that they can guarantee the general well-being of older persons? How do we restore and strengthen intergenerational links? How do we establish affordable communities with an age-friendly integrated social care system that will promote healthy aging? How do we remove the responsibilities that orphans of people living with HIV impose on older people?

Curtailing poverty in old age would constitute the most significant achievement towards coping with the problems of the older population in Africa. In addition to the lack of infrastructure and high level of illiteracy menacing older people in Africa, unemployment, underemployment, world trade barriers, structural adjustment policies are only a few others that have complicated the issue. There are no formal sectors in the rural villages, which make it impossible for the older villagers to have any sort of access to the credit facility. Even when international organizations like the World Bank, the United Nations, and others intend to extend credit facilities, older people in the villages face strict discrimination because they lack collateral to guarantee the loans. However, most African countries have farmland, and we argue that slight modifications on ownership and usage land could provide ample opportunities to achieve expected results.

II. TWEAKING LAND OWNERSHIP & MANAGEMENT RIGHTS TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

The supply of land has remained fixed, but the population has continued to increase, and each surviving generation received only a portion of the farm but did not do much to improve the condition of the farmlands, which they inherited. There is a need for family farms to evolve to allow for the changes in the way capital is organized, as it is very crucial to improved productivity (Weller, Smith & Pritchard, 2013). Many children who obviously could not sustain their livelihoods on the meager income from the farm sometimes abandon their farms and are hired on a “fee for work” basis to help the others. Due to the lack of know-how, most communities watch what used to be their only source of income dissipate and vanish. Looking for hybrid land ownership and management rights will facilitate improved farming methods, increase access to land, and embrace

farming best practices. This has become necessary because in many African rural communities, growing outward migration to the cities has accounted for very few people staying back in the villages. Those who have little or no option or incentive to remain in the communities are non-farm owners, have no access to factors of production, and do not have the workforce that the grandparents had to cultivate the farm to full efficiency. Any social movement with the intention of curbing poverty among the aging population must embrace new approaches to using existing factors of production in our rural communities, especially land.

III. ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF USING EXISTING RESOURCES IN A RURAL COMMUNITY. A CASE STUDY OF IBERENTA

Zooming in and taking a closer look at Iberenta in the South Eastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria as a case study. Iberenta is located at (DMS) 5 degree 27 inches 0N, Long (DMS) 7 degrees 35-inch 60E, and at an altitude of 141 meters above sea level. The village stretches to about 7km radius and is home for approximately 25,000 people. The topography of the soil supports the cultivation of cocoa and palm fruit, and these two crops are the raw materials for chocolate and oil palm, respectively. Laying more emphasis on cocoa which is believed to be an area of substantial comparative advantage for this particular village, and have the likelihood to generate a sustainable income for the community. An improved system could simply involve the taking over of the individual cocoa farms and merging them to allow for a more centralized operation. The reason behind this proposal is none but the simple fact that 80% of the cocoa plantation has not been improved upon for decades and has remained dormant and unproductive.

IV. THE REDUCTION IN FAMILY SIZE & THE UNWRITTEN TRADITION OF LAND INHERITANCE

The family size has tremendously reduced as more and more people are adopting the culture of one man one wife, and are no longer having multitudes of children as was the tradition in the past. Bear in mind that the villagers fared a lot better when the very first generations that started the crop production were in charge. The farm owners’ lifestyles provided them with the ability to exercise an overwhelming authority and power to dictate how the plantations were managed, cultivated, and maintained. However, today, due to a series of transfers to many children, production and yield have dramatically reduced. For example, my great grandfather had four wives and a total of 21 children. Eleven of the children were male, and the rest of them were females. This family size allowed him to claim a significant portion of land and furnished the necessary workforce that was needed to work on the farm. They also practiced other types of farming that provided the food to feed the whole family. He apportioned small pieces of the farmland to specific male issues for more natural control and management and retained the right to rotate the plantation at will.

Each portion was expected to yield certain tones of cocoa and the ability to realize a said quantity translated to a strong managing skill, and whoever was in charge of the portion that had the best yield was appropriately compensated. This system of governance engendered competition among the plantation heads as each sort to manage the portion allocated to them in a way to return maximum yield. It was easy to predict how many tons of cocoa were expected to be harvested per season, and this prediction served as collateral and basis to obtaining pesticide and specific farming tools on a credit basis from the merchants.

When grandfather passed on, the law of inheritance mandated that every male member of the family be assigned a portion of the land under the right to the family estate. The regulations also allowed some unmarried female daughter of the family to a smaller piece of land. The assumption was that females will get married and should not be heirs of the estate in their father's places. Allowing unmarried females to own a smaller portion of land was a sort of amendment or addendum that was added to the unwritten law that guaranteed some kind of income security to the females, just in case they decided not ever to get married. If, after receiving the land, a female heir eventually chooses to marry, such a person was expected to relinquish the property to the male children of their particular mother who becomes the new landlord. Consequently, everyone managed their little portion without having acquired the same level of expertise as the original owner.

Very few had mastered the act of cocoa farming, which was very tedious as the pesticides had to be applied at specific periods of the year to save the destruction of the cocoa beans by the pest. The ones who knew how to manage their limited resources focused on their tiny portion allowing the others to waste. In search of a means of survival, most migrated to the urban areas to perform meager jobs as most were uneducated. But has cocoa seized to be a staple cash crop? The answer is no. We can revive the community economy to an extent where it will empower the older population and help to stimulate the nation's economy.

V. CURBING THE EFFECT OF REDUCED FAMILY SIZE BY ADOPTING ALTERNATIVE LAND USE IDEAS

If we can introduce fresh ideas to put the available resources, in this case, fallow cocoa farms to good use, we can unleash the financial potentials of this community, and by so doing, improve the quality of life of both the young and old members of the city. Instead of allowing the land to waste because the owners can no longer boast of the family size needed to provide the vast workforce required to cultivate the farms. An ideal situation would entail appointing an interim administrator to take over and control the farms just like our great grandfathers did when they were still in control. It is a given that no matter how energetic an individual may be, there is always a time to step aside. "Scholars argued that functional disability is socially structured and 50 years old agricultural laborers perceived themselves old judged by their inability to

manage manual labor expected of them" (Ladusingh & Ngangbam, 2016 p.90). While few people may not experience some sort of disability, there is still a need to hand over at a point in time, and hence the need for an interim administrator. Once a central command is assumed, it will be easier to re-assign the plantations by portions, and each assignee will have an obligation to meet the set expectation as the focus will be on meeting the expectations needed to meet the approval of the administrators, and to contribute to the well being of the entire community. Knowing very well that manual labor has limited outcome and is time-consuming, we will then proceed with a plan to obtain some kind of credit facilities from the bank to facilitate the acquisition of pieces of machinery towards improved and mechanized farming. With the general accord of the community, we can re-partition the land to ease the passage of agricultural machinery and enhance the landscaping of the entire cocoa plantation. The proceeds from the farm will be distributed according to the size of the first portion of land owned by each family in the village. The unused human resources will also be freed and allowed them opportunities to be retrained in other areas, as well as offered the opportunities to attend school for educational enrichment. A different form of resources also referred to as capital, is the condition necessary for communities to increase their ability to generate sustainable resources and provide services to its members (Winterton, Warburton, & Martin, 2014). This plan will revive the economic strength and financial position of the older adults in the community. Attaining such height would have been otherwise impossible as they would have lived at the mercy of their respective children who had nothing much to offer due to the lack of know-how to handle the farm successfully.

VI. REDUCING THE CAREGIVERS BURDENS PLACED ON IMMEDIATE FAMILIES MEMBERS

The second facet of our innovation will be looking at solutions that will reduce the care-givers' burden placed on members of the immediate families. When the strategy is put in place, we share the opinion that the general well-being of the older adults will be guaranteed, at least, to an acceptable level. Care-givers stress has been reported as the most essential reason why elders are abused (Baumhover and Beall 1996). The case is not any different in this part of the world. Taking care of older adults, particularly in Africa, was conceived by many as an obligation that must have to be fulfilled in exchange for all the care and support received as younger individuals. When the family size and system were still intact, younger family members were readily available and took turns in caring for older adults. The emergence of new labor and economic climate changed the narratives, and more and more young ones migrate to the cities, and very few people are left behind to cater for the older ones.

The few people often left behind were those judged as not being intelligent and considered unfit to survive the stress of the city. If these assertions were to be accurate, the care of older adults was entrusted or forced upon the lowest

class members of families in the village. These caregivers have their issues to deal with but have not many options than to willingly accept their duties. They are not trained for the job and must always rely on their intelligence in trying to resolve whatever problem that the older adults may have. It is not uncommon that due to lack of trained medical personnel, the villagers often have a way to carry out their diagnostics, which results in more burdens to both the older persons and the care-givers.

There is an urgent need to educate the general public on the new dimension of mental health challenges, primarily as they mainly affect the aging population. Care-givers face enormous challenges, especially when mental conditions kick in. Some of the mental health issues, that were almost undiagnosed, unidentified and unknown in the past include but not limited to, depression, dementia, Alzheimer, anxiety, schizophrenia etc. These conditions are real, have become rampant and can be managed. Unfortunately, many untrained and sometimes unpaid family care-givers have no exposure to these ailments, yet, the burden of managing these strange mental illnesses fall on their shoulder. There is a tendency to feel that a new person emerged outside the person with psychological health-related issues (Riley, Evans & Oyebode, 2018). Yet, not much is done to educate the care-givers who have no prior exposure to the condition of the people under their care. When properly trained, family members, including caregivers, can understand the available resources and access, such as reducing the crisis associated with memory-related illness (Chong, Abdin, Vaingankar, Ng & Subramaniam, 2016). For example, a case of undiagnosed dementia may be interpreted as witchcraft attack from the next-door neighbor or even family members. Often when the native doctors had exhausted all their avenues, and the problem still lingers, the caregivers are forced to engage in extended fasting and prayer with the hope that God will heal the person. This may extend to months and sometimes years, but there are limits to how much a person can be stretched. Once the elastic limit is reached, with no form of assistance or support from any source, the stressed and exhausted caregiver becomes frustrated, and both parties are left to share the grief of each other.

Should the community adopt presently recommended strategy and the newly suggested approach happen to lead to some level of sustainable financial resources, there may need to establish a system of adult daycare, and recruit and train people whose job will be to care for the older adults. Care-givers and close family members will be prepared to understand the several conditions that are associated with old age, and develop the knowledge and understanding, and realize that the witchcraft and demon possession often associated with mental illnesses are uncorrelated. Part of money realized from the proceeds from the farm will be set aside to pay these caregivers, and as such, few people may see new incentives and decide to relocate back to the village to boost the existing care-giver's pool. The model of daycare will be such that the immediate family members will be relieved of

the burden of providing caregiving round the clock. This will allow the care-givers some time to recuperate, which may eventually rekindle the love that they had for their older adults. The reduced burden on the immediate families will go a long way in improving the general welfare of older adults. The new dispensation of economic prosperity will support the claim that the stress and burden of caregiving often lead caregivers to abuse adults (Pillemer and Finkelhor 1988).

Restoring & Strengthening Intergenerational Links

The next focus will be shifted to restoring and strengthening intergenerational links as none can argue against its tremendous benefits to the older adults. Studies show that lack of social support on the part of both the caregiver and the older adult are good predictor of elder abuse (Pritchard, Havitz, Howard, 1999). To strengthen the intergenerational link, we will encourage cordial relationships and cooperation between the older adults and their younger ones. The need for intergenerational collaboration is supported by the fact that support or community services from the government are non-existing, and the only thing which kept the young and old moving was family (Li, Chi & Xu, 2013). In cases where our financial strength is not adequate to build recreational facilities as would be the case in the western world, we will encourage a sort of workshop where the older adults will be more than happy to teach some skills to the younger ones. It has been argued that a balanced relationship in exchange is smoother achieved when both parties feel they are getting something in return. Park (2017) posits that health outcomes can ameliorate when there is a combination of bonding and bridge social capital, and these two are arguably embedded into intergenerational relationship Studies have it that older people will reside close to at least one family member and provide and receive support from the relationship they maintain with their grandchildren (Bultena & Powers, 1976). Others affirmed that adult children are the closest and most valuable source of support for older adults, asserting the natural occurrence and long-standing nature of a parent-child relationship as a critical factor (Umberson, 1992).

Other key innovative elements could simply involve encouraging older adults to volunteer their services to the community whenever possible. The simple fact that they have a reason to step away from their homes to the place where they will be volunteering is rewarding, not only to their physical well being but psychological as well. Social participation has been linked to improved functional skills, improved health-related quality of life and increases survival skills, especially when it involves leaving home (Szanton, Roberts, Leff, Walker, Seplaki, Soones, Thorpe, Ornstein, Szanton, Walker, Seplaki, Thorpe, & Ornstein, 2016). At all costs and in all possible cases, we must pursue all possible avenues to ensure that our older adults are not confined in their homes. Most children who have moved to the cities in search of employment opportunities would not feel ashamed to return to pay their parents a visit for a lack of financial means to satisfy their parent's financial burdens. Some may

be able to bring their children to enjoy a meaningful interaction with their grandparents under more vibrant atmospheres that will be very re-comforting to older adults.

VII. BUILDING AN AGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

There is a need to establish affordable communities with integrated social services that are age-friendly. In the western world, emphases are laid on building code that is mandated to provide the infrastructure that is friendly to adults without discriminating against the disabled. While such systems do not exist in Africa mainly due to lack of government-sponsored buildings, we can use the existing resources to introduce modifications that will allow for the smooth movement of the older individuals to help reduce loneliness. Loneliness refers to the bad feeling associated with a shortage between the level of interaction desired by an individual against what is available to the individual (Palgi, Shrira, Ben-Ezra, Shiovitz-Ezra & Ayalon, 2012). Most of the community has buildings that were built with red clay; it will be cost-effective to add ramps to the houses to allow a frail older adult easy access in and out of the building to enable interaction with friends and folks. We can organize a gathering of the younger people in the community and ask them to volunteer their time for such a rewarding and fulfilling labor of love. Local recreational facilities which are known as town square could also be improved. These are the places where people meet like a sort of City Park, with the only difference being that there are no sitting facilities or public restrooms. It is often an eye-saw when older adults sit on the floor to enjoy the company of other cohort members; these are especially true for those frail elders who are weak and not able to stand for an extended time. Others have to struggle to make frequent stops to their homes to use the restroom because there are no provisions in most village gathering places. It is not uncommon that sometimes people will get home and become tired and decide not to come out again. When this happens, the socialization process that would have improved the psychological well being of older adults is cut short.

A good suggestion will entail the use of bamboo sticks, and rafter palm from the local forest to build mini make-shift sits for people to sit comfortably while interacting with one another. There is also a need to make two sets of restrooms, one for females and the other for males; this will also reduce the burden placed on older adults who are always in need to urinate and have to make decisions at times to go home without returning to the town square. Making provisions for both male and female restrooms in the town square will encourage older female adults to participate in the town square social gathering without feeling isolated or marginalized by their male counterparts. This will gradually increase the number of older adult participation in some kind of physical activity daily, resulting in some level of elevated well-being for older adults. As the evening gathering become a routine for a good number of older adults, we may need to

ask the community and public health workers to demonstrate their love and respect for these older adults by holding health awareness classes. These classes will educate them on the need for the physical and nutritional needs of older adults that are necessary for maintaining continued good health through life.

VIII. INCREASING ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER

The provision of clean drinking water is another big issue that requires urgent attention as the water conditions in most villages are horrible. Recalling during my days in high school, drinking water from the nearest stream was only possible by covering the water container with a person's shirt to allow the water to enter through the mouth, while the rest of the debris was filtered through the shirt, collected and thrown away. Waterborne diseases are detrimental to both the young and old, but the toll on older adults are even more due to the diminishing condition of their immune system. Seeking funding from donor agencies such as the World Health Organization and other international bodies to provide boreholes to the community will go a long way in providing a good source of treated drinking water for the community. Piped water systems improve health conditions, help free time, and may also ease tension among families (Mahasuweerachai & Pangjai, 2018). In the absence of piped water and funding to seek boreholes, we may explore the same strategy as demonstrated by The Future without Poverty (FWOP), where they used cheap materials to draw water closer to few communities in Mexico constructively. There may need to use simple pipes and attempt to bring water closer to home and ease the pain and suffering that older adults face in walking many miles down the stream to fetch water and attempt to carry the water home on their heads. For one thing, the sanitary conditions of the entire community will be enhanced as water becomes readily accessible to the community.

IX. REDUCING THE BURDEN OF CARING FOR ORPHANS OF HIV RELATED DEATH ON OLDER ADULTS

Last but not the least issue that needs to be addressed in a bid to cope with the problem of the older adults in Africa are finding ways to reduce, or yet eliminate the responsibilities placed on older adults by the children of their late HIV infected children. There are little orphanages scattered here and there in Africa with no particular emphasis on the children of people living with HIV. Younger adults who moved to the city in search of greener pastures are affected by the HIV, and a good number died in the process. Often, most females stay home mothers who are forced to stay home and take care of the children. The result is a one-income family usually provided by the male. A dependency is established, and as such most men engage in indirect polygamy, having unprotected sex with multi sex partners. Even when their wives know the situation, most will not know what to do because they have few children and are entirely

dependent on their husbands. Upon the death of these family “bread-winner” husbands, a good percentage of the widows will move back to the village with the children and no income, thereby placing an extra burden on the grandparents.

There is a need to do more to create awareness and promote educational activities aimed at discouraging people from engaging in unprotected sex, especially for married couples who are tempted to venture outside their marriage for sex. Education does not only provide a pathway to improved economic conditions, but the social wealth it delivers also accounts for prosperity (Corbett & Forsey, 2017). Unfortunately, it is ok in African society for men to marry many wives and, at times, have kids outside marriage; most of the young adults saw their parents engage in such acts and concluded that it was ok for them as well. It is generally believed that with education, people may change their orientations and properly channel behaviors into respecting some basic rules of society. The practice will, in turn, reduce some sexually transmitted diseases, which are most detrimental, and will finally reduce the incidents of HIV orphans who are sent to live at the mercy of the grandparents.

For the many that are already living with the grandparents, efforts should be channeled towards building an orphanage to house the children and provide the guidance and education necessary to grow into respectable members of society. The orphanages constructed in the villages will make room for interaction between the older adults and young members of the family as a steady and continuous interaction will be beneficial to both parties involved. The orphans will understand that they still have loved ones that care about them, while the older adults will see a reason to live healthy and long as they interact and remember and play with their grandchildren.

The problems of old age may seem to be the same all over the world, but many efforts have been made in some countries than others. North America, Asia, Australia, and European countries have been fighting the cause of old age, and have collectively developed and exchanged ideas about the best resources that could be made available to improve the quality of life of the aging population. But unfortunately, some other countries, particularly African countries, are still lagging, and the necessary steps and infrastructures are still missing. Provisions of these basic needs would be considered vital to every member of society. They will go a long way in improving the quality of life of older persons in Africa.

X. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION FOR POLICY

Many are the problems confronting the aging population, but the priorities of government have failed to factor in these many challenges into a mainstream agenda. Few African countries have taken the lead towards aging friendly policies, but even at that, implementation has been slow, and not much has been accomplished. Times, when issues of aging are mentioned in gatherings where the youth and young adults are gathered, there is often a feeling that

those who have toiled and labored to position our continent are asking for a little too much. There appears to be a consensus that resources should be channeled towards the continual satisfaction of our youth. While we accept the fact that the child remains the pillars of tomorrow, we must strive to provide for our older adults, less the labors of our heroes’ past shall be in vain. This paper did not advocate government spending on older adults but suggested going back to the basics and mopping up resources from our abandoned farms and, by so doing, stimulate the economy for the interest of both the young and the old. The traditional method of land ownership should be reviewed, and land, a valuable resource, should be put at the disposition of those who can put it to good use. Our youth unemployment level has skyrocketed, and with the global trend of events, coupled with the outbreak of Ebola, laser fever, and Corona Virus, the financial market constriction will continue to deal with a hard blow to our present unemployment level. If the government can look into the land use act, and intervene in ensuring that land don’t sit in the hands of those who cannot use it but is put at the disposition of those who are capable and have the zeal to embrace agriculture, we will be on our way to prosperity.

This paper deliberately refused to discuss the issues of aging in isolation from the general problem of the larger society. Instead, the focus was identifying a practical solution that will translate to a win-win situation for people of all ages. When the youth are happy and productive, the children will benefit by learning from the action of their seniors, young adults will encourage the youth to do even more, and the spillover effect will help the members of the aging population. We know that during economic crunches, thinking outside the box is vital, and our narratives and suggestions have been such that both the government and private entities cannot find any excuses not to act. Together, we can re-create an environment where the quality of life of older adults will be improved, and where they will regain their status as respected members of the society, and the general public will cease seeing older adults as liabilities.

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