



FACILITATING THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE ELDERLY IN SOCIETY THROUGH LINKAGES AND REFERRALS MECHANISM

SOPROEN

SOCIAL PROTECTION ENGINEERING

Committed to people

DISCUSSION PAPER written by:
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

MIES

Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social
(Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion)

L&R

Linkages and Referrals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “baby boomer” generation, which is people aged between 55 and 80 years, significantly influenced the world, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century, in terms of labor, politics, and social dynamics. Nowadays, opportunities for this age group are diminishing dramatically, despite their wealth of experience and vast knowledge accumulated throughout their lives.

Since 1950, there has been a noticeable aging of the population, meaning there is an increase in life expectancy. This change has been driven by technological advancements in the field of medicine and evolving lifestyles. This aging process is accompanied by challenges, particularly for those with fewer resources. Employment opportunities for older adults are decreasing drastically. They face numerous obstacles in the transfer of knowledge and skills and encounter difficulties in building social networks with peers who share similar interests or hobbies.

In this context, the mental health and well-being of many older adults is deteriorating rapidly, resulting in a significant loss for society. Urgent attention is required to address these issues and design programs and mechanisms that promote their well-being and mental health. Therefore, the social protection sector could develop and implement mechanisms encouraging older adults to continue actively participating in society.

This document develops a proposal focused on potential actions and instruments to implement mechanisms that allow elderly individuals to maintain an active lifestyle. This involves accessing services, engaging in new work tasks, sharing knowledge, participating in social networks, and pursuing leisure activities with their peers. The document contextualizes the aging process, outlining objectives and means to ensure a healthy aging process. It addresses various perspectives, goals, and approaches, incorporating a biological, psychological, and social focus while considering cross-cutting aspects such as culture and spirituality in the lives of the elderly.

The text discusses the limitations and opportunities of paid employment for the elderly, a topic of great social and economic relevance in our society concerning the extension of working life, socially productive activities, voluntary action, political involvement, and social activism. The new paradigm suggests that older adults could take on the role of service providers, allowing others in need of their services to seek them out. For many elderly individuals, giving meaning to their lives is crucial, especially after years of learning and contributing to society. A mechanism for this process could involve working to provide selfless service to others or engaging in personal growth through activities such as volunteering.

The elderly are remarkably changing their paradigms, expressing interest in participating in various social networks. Furthermore, studies indicate that elderly individuals can rejuvenate their brains and achieve complete well-being by engaging in a series of activities. These activities include having a purpose, looking ahead, exercising, adopting healthy practices, maintaining a social circle, and interacting with younger people.

SOPROEN presents a comprehensive proposal for the care of the elderly, focusing on four key aspects: access to necessary services, employment opportunities, knowledge and wisdom transfer, and the formation or access to social networks. The aim is to enable this age group to achieve an improvement in their quality of life and expectations. The purpose of this proposal is to outline the feasibility of implementing a mechanism that facilitates the generation of opportunities for the elderly population, allowing them to lead an active life, enhance their levels of satisfaction and well-being, and continue contributing to society through the transmission of their experience and knowledge.

1. INTRODUCTION

The first half of the 21st century is being characterized by a shift in population structure. People are living longer, and the percentage of elderly individuals in the total population is rapidly increasing worldwide. Demographic changes are already threatening, or their effects are underway depending on the country, to reduce workforce participation and savings rates, increase healthcare expenses, and put pressure on health and pension schemes.

However, it is worth highlighting that demographic changes have also led to adjustments, with technological and institutional innovations mitigating the progressive effects of population aging. Examples of this include modified retirement policies, women-friendly workplace policies, changes in healthcare systems, increased investments in educating the elderly, and adjustments in the lifestyle model, among others.

Currently, people tend to or want to maintain an active lifestyle until their early 80s. However, older adults face numerous obstacles, which are intensified in less developed countries. Some obstacles include but are not limited to:

- Despite the age and acquired knowledge, those with fewer resources find it challenging to quickly access essential services for their daily lives, especially those related to health.
- There are limited job opportunities for older adults. In low- and middle-income countries, employment opportunities are often taken by young individuals entering the job force at low costs due to high levels of unemployment.
- Transmitting their knowledge and wisdom becomes significantly difficult, even at a very low transactional cost. They struggle to find suitable spaces to share, teach, train, or guide younger individuals with the knowledge acquired over 30 or more years of work and experience.
- When it comes to leisure activities, elderly members encounter difficulties in building social networks with peers who share similar interests, hobbies, or inclinations toward recreational, sports, social, or other types of activities. As time passes, these networks diminish and are limited to a few close family members and friends.

In such circumstances, the mental health and well-being of many older adults deteriorate rapidly, and society rapidly loses a crucial asset. It is well-known that maintaining good health and an active lifestyle could help delay aging and prolong life. In addition to the increase in life expectancy, improving the quality of life is achieved by providing a sense of purpose, opportunities for socialization, personal development, and contribution to the community, among other benefits.

It is necessary to consider these aspects in designing public policies that promote the well-being and mental health of elderly people. There is a need to design and implement innovative mechanisms that encourage older adults to continue actively participating in society. This technical note outlines an innovative strategy by SOPROEN to achieve the mentioned objectives. Through this strategy, SOPROEN can assist the government in launching a comprehensive pilot program to test, adjust, and enhance the operation of the mechanism that facilitates and encourages

older adults to continue active participation in society.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE TECHNICAL NOTE

The objectives of this technical note primarily focus on the population with fewer resources, specifically targeting older adults participating in social protection sectors. However, the proposed mechanisms do not exclude individuals with higher economic resources.

2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Propose possible actions and instruments to implement mechanisms that enable older adults to continue actively participating in society. This includes accessing services, engaging in work tasks, sharing knowledge and wisdom, and/or connecting to social networks to carry out recreational activities with peers who share similar interests.

2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Outline the paradigm shifts in behavior among the elderly in the market to facilitate their participation.
2. Propose practical and innovative mechanisms to facilitate the

involvement of the elderly individuals in various activities.

3. Present an operational proposal to be considered by authorities and development agencies dedicated to managing issues related to the rights, active participation, and care of the elderly.

3. CONTEXTUALIZATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Due to the significant demographic and technological changes of the 20th century, the role of elderly individuals has gradually diminished towards the end of the last century. However, with the increasing growth of this population and its greater significance, the role of the elderly is undergoing a drastic transformation. Their influence will be crucial in shaping the way societies adapt in the near future, not only in developed countries but also in economies of middle and lower levels.

3.1 The aging process

Aging is intrinsic to all living beings; what is born at some point expires. This law transcends our reality as human beings and compels us to consider the aging process as a factor that becomes universal to existence. One aspect of aging is the factor of heterogeneity in each individual; their peculiarities become more pronounced over time. Each person undergoes a different

aging process, and as individuals age, they become more distinct.

Table 1 illustrates various types of the aging process: medical, functional, mental, and social. Each of them outlines the objectives and means to achieve a positive and healthy aging process.

Table 1. Objectives and Means of a Healthy Aging

POINT OF VIEW	OBJECTIVES	MEANS
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging without suffering from diseases that may affect the quality of life. • Minimizing life threatening diseases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. • Control of risk factors. • Early diagnosis and comprehensive treatment.
Functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic activities (self-care), instrumental (interaction), and advanced (specific to each individual). • Being able to walk and be self-sufficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of disability and accidents. • Maintenance and recovery of positions or roles. • Sports activity and rehabilitation.
Mental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of intellectual capacity and mood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene and mental activity. • Training your memory and participation in cultural activities. • Adaptation techniques and promotion of values.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family, social, and intergenerational integration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining contacts. • Economic coverage and adequate housing. • Prevention of solitude, inclusion in social roles, and family / intergenerational integration.

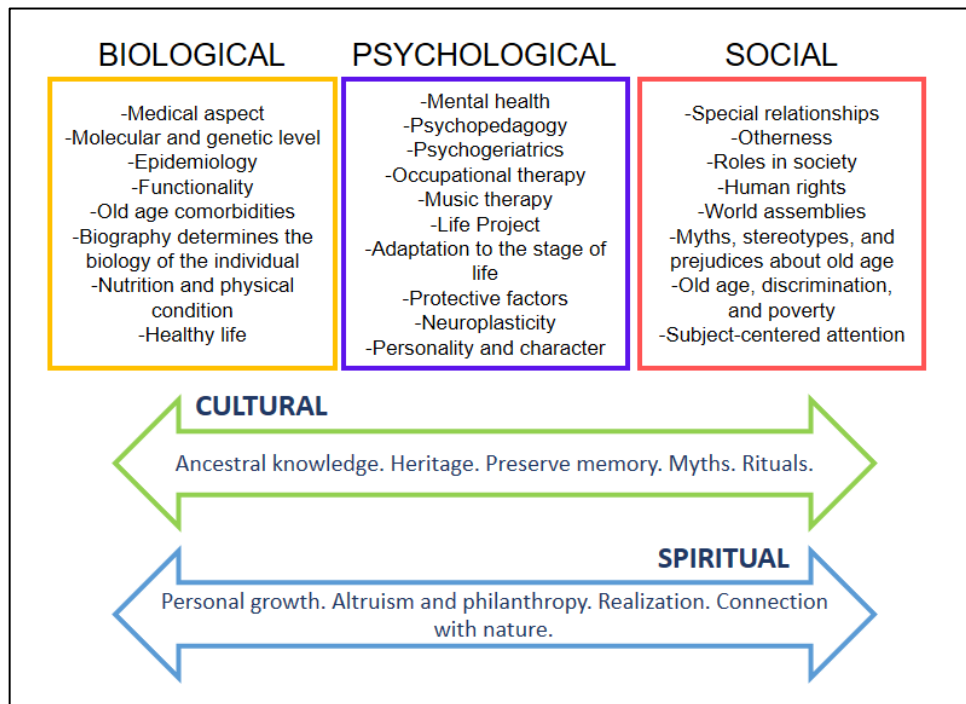
Source: Book “La Vejez Positiva” by Alfonso Cruz Jentoft, 2015.

The fundamental aspects of the aging process have been explored in-depth by Gerontology, which addresses aging from the perspectives of biology, psychology, sociology, culture, spirituality, among other

branches—all aimed at enhancing the quality of life for individuals in the elderly stage. The comprehensiveness embraced by Gerontology has led to the distinction of three approaches: the biological, the

psychological, and the social and spiritual aspects are included (see (Biopsychosocial). Additionally, cultural *Figure 1*).

Figure 1. Biological, psychological, and social approach



Source: Developed by Ayala Consulting

Gerontology encompasses the key pillars of the aging process and proposes a social change to improve the conditions for future humanity. From a biological standpoint, it involves contributing to healthier ways of living, employing prevention and rehabilitation methods that are both suitable and user-friendly, and incorporating advanced technology in medical supplies and medications with a naturist approach.

Psychologically, gerontology aims to establish a more open approach to diversity and the use of effective alternative therapies. It employs strategies to enhance adaptability and acceptance in individuals. Socially, it seeks to improve legal and political conditions for older people, encouraging active lives and maintaining social relationships to eliminate discrimination and prejudice.

Culturally, a fundamental aspect appears as a cross-cutting theme, involving the preservation of ancestral knowledge, memory, history, universal knowledge, and the safeguarding of myths and traditions that perpetuate a logical thinking of wisdom (UMAI, 2021). The spiritual aspect is also cross-cutting and relates to personal growth, altruism, and philanthropy.

Elderly individuals can assume responsibility for their personal growth and contribute to society by cultivating

relationships. Indeed, many older adults opt to sustain their daily activities even after retirement. This emerging paradigm seeks to advance a "society for all ages," a motto endorsed by the United Nations in 1999. This reflects an elevated appreciation for the profound value of the aging process, offering an opportunity for the transmission of experience and knowledge to new generations (Jentoft, 2015).

Table 2. United Nations Principles for the Elderly

TOPIC	PRINCIPLES
Independence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to food, water, housing, clothing, and healthcare through income support from family, community, and fostering self-sufficiency. 2. Opportunities for employment and exploring other income-generating possibilities. 3. Participation in decisions regarding the timing and extent of work activities. 4. Access to suitable educational and training programs. 5. Safe and adaptable environments tailored to individual preferences and suitable for continually changing capacities. 6. Ability to reside in one's own home for as long as possible.
Participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Integration and active participation in society, including contributing to the formulation and implementation of policies for their well-being and sharing knowledge and skills with younger generations. 8. Actively seeking and seizing opportunities for community service and volunteer work in appropriate roles. 9. Formation of movements, businesses, and associations.
Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Enjoy access to the protection and care from family and community in accordance with the values of each society. 11. Access to health services that optimize their optimal level of physical, mental, and emotional well-being, thereby preventing or delaying illness. 12. Access to social and legal services to ensure higher levels of autonomy, protection, and care. 13. Access to appropriate institutional care that provides protection, rehabilitation, and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment.

	14. Uphold their human rights and fundamental freedom when residing in homes or institutions where care or treatment is provided. Respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs, and privacy is met, as well as their right to make decisions about their care.
Self-fulfillment	15. Seize opportunities to fully develop their potential. 16. Access to educational, cultural, spiritual, and recreational resources of society.
Dignity	17. Live with dignity and security, free from exploitation, physical, and mental abuse. 18. Receive dignified treatment, regardless of their economic contribution.

Source: Book “La Vejez Positiva” by Alfonso Cruz Jentoft, 2015.

Undoubtedly, the current knowledge about the process of healthy and active aging is extensive and comprehensive. However, it is evident that the majority of older adults do not age in accordance with the aforementioned recommendations. Many fail to attain the full and satisfying life intended for this stage. Barriers to accessing information and communication isolate older adults, hindering their development and the pursuit of a fulfilling life. It is these barriers that must be dismantled to enable older adults to actively participate in society.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The main challenges or barriers that older adults must overcome to continue contributing to society as they would like are as follows:

- Countries with middle and low incomes often grapple with economies characterized by high levels of unemployment or informal employment. Public policies in these nations frequently prioritize

the youth over older adults in the labor market.

- Job offerings and opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and skills for older adults are scarce and often unsuitable for the conditions and limitations of this population. Older adults typically have access to basic jobs when possible, which are generally unrelated to their past experience.
- Instead of leveraging the experience and knowledge of older adults, they are often asked to take courses, undergo training, and acquire new skills for better job opportunities. This approach sometimes neglects the valuable experience and knowledge gained throughout their active working years.
- There is a lack of technological and/or physical tools that enable older adults to offer their services and express their desire to transfer knowledge and skills. They often rely on the means and networks they have built over the years, which may be limited or not suitable for the current reality of a digitized society.

- There is a scarcity of digital or physical mechanisms that enable older adults to access social networks with peers or younger individuals who share the same interests and hobbies. While they strive to maintain and strengthen existing networks, these may not necessarily align with the interests and hobbies they wish to explore.
- Cognitive limitations in older adults hinder their ability to seek new opportunities. They may lack the inner strength they once had in their youth or the knowledge of current digital networks to search for and find employment, opportunities for knowledge transmission, or simply to access leisure activities of interest.
- Negative and misguided perceptions about older adults persist among those responsible for hiring new employees. There is a belief that older adults possess outdated or old-fashioned knowledge, experience that does not apply to new managerial models, or that they are simply not productive given their advanced age. Addressing these biases is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and age-diverse workforce.

Due to the factors mentioned above, the conventional approach of searching for job opportunities, specific services, or activities of interest among existing offerings does

not effectively work for older adults. For instance, when a young person enters the job market, they typically seek employment by applying to numerous companies through digital means, tailoring their resume to meet the specific requirements of each employer. However, this proactive and adaptive process is often not undertaken by older adults.

On the contrary, public and private entities tend to focus on retraining older adults, teaching them new skills, and placing them in job pools. This approach, while well-intentioned, often overlooks the inherent limitations and, more importantly, the preferences of older adults. The example illustrates that current strategies may not adequately consider the unique needs and desires of the older demographic, necessitating a more nuanced and personalized approach to address their specific challenges.

Hence, there is a crucial need to shift the paradigm concerning the participation of older adults in the market. The initial step involves understanding the conditions and limitations specific to older adults and subsequently establishing mechanisms that encourage their ongoing participation and contribution to society. As individuals age, their behaviors, practices, and ways of thinking naturally evolve, encompassing not only personal aspects but also extending to their political, economic, and religious views. Instead of attempting to change or retrain them, it is imperative to leverage the solid knowledge and wisdom they have

accumulated over the years. Recognizing and harnessing these valuable assets can lead to more meaningful and productive engagement of older adults in various societal spheres.

To facilitate the active participation of older adults in the market, it is proposed that they position themselves as both service providers and seekers, depending on their specific needs and offerings. This adaptive approach acknowledges the changing roles and aims to ease their involvement, taking into account their limitations and preferences. By embracing a dual role, older adults can more effectively navigate the market, offering their valuable skills and experience where needed, while also seeking opportunities that align with their interests and capabilities. This approach fosters a more inclusive and dynamic engagement of older adults in the economic and societal landscape.

For instance, older adults can proactively offer their services for work under specific conditions, outlining factors such as their preferred working hours, available days, types of activities they can perform, maximum travel distance, desired fees, and other conditions that align with their circumstances and preferences. Simultaneously, individuals seeking these services can utilize a digital application—either independently or with the assistance of a facilitator—to access information, filter through options, and select potential candidates for interviews and hiring. This approach empowers older adults to define the terms of their engagement while

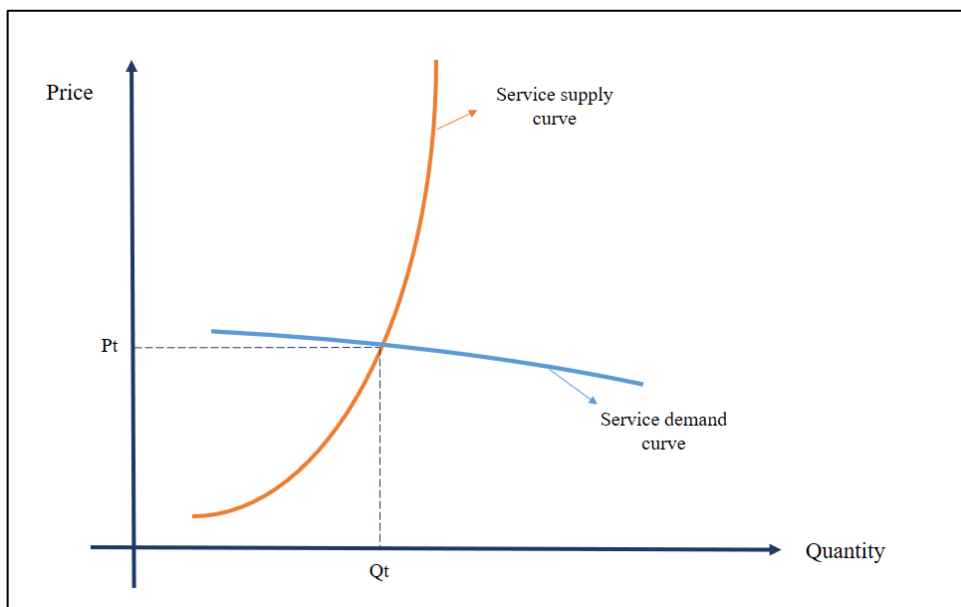
providing a streamlined and accessible platform for those in search of their services.

This paradigm shift implies a substantial effort from intermediaries, often in the role of facilitators, to bridge the gap between supply and demand. A dedicated group of professionals should work precisely on assisting service providers in publishing their offerings and ensuring they reach the widest possible audience of service seekers. These intermediary services can operate on both paid and unpaid models, depending on whether the provider is seeking employment or solely looking to share knowledge and skills. This approach acknowledges the pivotal role of facilitators in creating a supportive and inclusive platform that benefits both older adults and those seeking their services.

Figure 2 illustrates a steeply inclined service supply curve, possibly influenced by the characteristics outlined for older adults. On the other hand, the demand curve is likely to have a flatter curvature with a slight decline, as these services may not be deemed crucial or highly essential for society at large. Abrupt changes in supply (movements to the right or left) may not significantly alter the equilibrium transaction value. An increase in demand (leftward movement to the right) could only occur with an exogenous intervention from the government, potentially changing incentives for utilizing services provided by older adults (e.g., tax reductions for hiring an older adult). It is expected, in any case, that the supply will continue to grow or

gradually shift to the right due to ongoing demographic changes.

Figure 2. Supply and demand curve for services by elderly individuals



Source: Developed by Ayala Consulting

In the context of leisure activities, an older adult can express their desire to engage in a specific activity, taking on the role of a demander for the service. The older adult seeks available offerings in a digital application with the assistance of a facilitator. Upon finding a suitable match, they can apply, specifying conditions for participation such as frequency, schedules, activity characteristics, the area they can travel to, and other relevant preferences. In this scenario, it is assumed that there is an organized group offering the activity, and they are open to accepting more participants

for various leisure activities. However, if such groups don't exist, the older adult can also take on the role of an offeror, inviting others to form a group or join their existing one for these leisure activities. Given the flexibility of older adults to act as both demanders and offerors simultaneously, the intermediary role of the facilitator is crucial in assisting to connect demanders and offerors to form the groups they are seeking.

The success of this market will be heavily reliant on intermediary facilitators and the technology developed, particularly digital applications, to cater to the specific needs of

older adults. Innovations in these aspects are crucial to developing efficient mechanisms tailored to the unique requirements of this customer demographic. By focusing on creating user-friendly digital platforms and supportive facilitator roles, the market can better address the diverse preferences and limitations of older adults, enhancing their overall experience and participation in various services and activities.

This model is complemented by a linkages and referrals (L&R) mechanism tailored to the characteristics of older adults, who frequently have diverse service needs. Facilitators play a pivotal role in assisting older adults by actively searching for the service providers they require and subsequently making the necessary referrals. This allows older adults to connect with and receive the required attention. Importantly, the selection of the service provider remains in the hands of the older adult with the need. Facilitators must possess the necessary information about the providers to empower the older adult in making a selection according to their limitations and preferences. This personalized approach ensures that older adults can access the services they need

with consideration for their individual circumstances and preferences¹.

Such a mechanism has the potential to incentivize the active participation of older adults in the market and, most importantly, promote and facilitate their continuous contribution to society in general. This approach not only enhances the well-being and mental health of older adults but also fosters a more inclusive and supportive societal framework. In the subsequent chapters, the proposal or mechanism to facilitate greater participation of older adults in society will be outlined, exploring avenues to create a more age-inclusive and engaging environment for this demographic.

4. MECHANISM FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Paid work for older adults holds significant social and economic importance, as it entails acknowledging their rights, capabilities, and contributions to society. According to CEPAL², in Latin America, the main factor driving older individuals to seek or retain paid employment is the absence of a sufficient pension. This is

¹ The website www.soproen.com includes technical notes that elaborate on the mechanisms of referrals and links, as well as single-window mechanisms for citizen services. The system of referrals and links for older adults would be the same as that used for the

rest of the population within the social protection system.

² <https://www.cepal.org/es/enfoques/la-insercion-laboral-personas-mayores-america-latina>

reflected in a negative correlation between the proportion of older people with access to retirement and the employment rate within this age group. The inadequacy of pension options is the primary driver of the economic necessity for older adults to stay involved in the workforce, underscoring the need to address pension-related challenges for a more secure and dignified aging experience.

4.1 Employment situation of the elderly

Currently, older adults seek to continue and extend their work activity, aiming to remain in their long-term jobs. When this is not possible, they attempt to find employment through available means and applications, although not always with the necessary detail and resilience. The approach to job searching may vary among individuals who have not yet retired, those who have already retired, and those who do not plan to retire.

The strategies differ mainly due to the retirement laws of the country, especially when retirement is mandatory. For those who are not retired, the job search is necessary because they have been dismissed before reaching the age and contributions required to qualify for a pension. Initially, they seek jobs related to their profession, but if not possible, they settle for any kind of basic formal job opportunity. Their goal is to complete the contributions and time required for retirement.

For retirees, the barriers are higher, as it becomes more challenging for them to find

employment. If retirement is mandatory, working formally generally results in a pension penalty. Retirees are left with two options: either seek job opportunities using intermediaries who often take responsibility for providing invoices or to put their details for payment. This option comes with costs, as the retiree must pay them a commission to play that role. On the other hand, retirees are individuals willing to transfer knowledge and expertise at minimal costs. They are available to participate in volunteer work and leisure activities.

On the other hand, for the older adult who knows they will never retire because they did not contribute to the social security system, they will try to extend their working life as much as possible. This type of person, usually poor and around or below the poverty line, is willing to accept any type of work, whether formal or informal. They are aware that they don't have many options for tailored job opportunities, and their goal is solely to survive.

4.2 Mechanisms to encourage the labor participation of older adults

It is proposed that older adults take on the role of service providers so that others who may require their services can find them. To offer more options, their category will be taken into account—whether they are not yet retired, already retired, or will never retire. Each type of person will provide information appropriate to their situation. The information is uploaded to the dedicated digital application, including

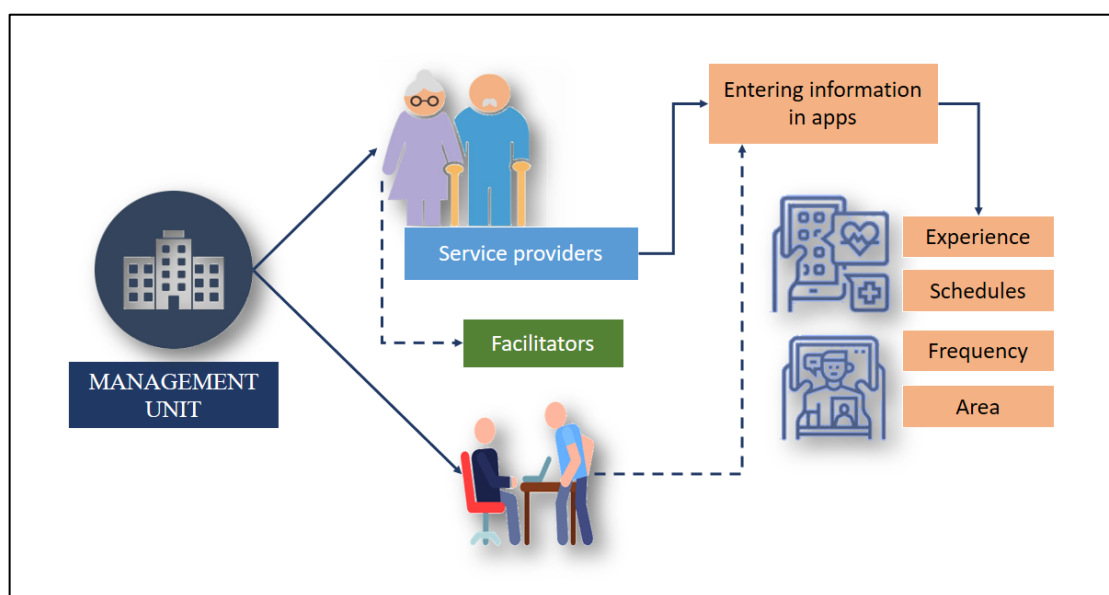
experience, schedules, frequency, area, and any other conditions the older adult wishes to add. Facilitators will be there to assist them.

As outlined in the theoretical framework, the likelihood of success for an older adult to be seen by potential service recipients and chosen depends on exposing their information to the widest possible audience. Additionally, the likelihood of success may increase if the government establishes direct incentives that benefit the service recipient. For example, tax reductions for

the hiring agency if they employ one or more older adults.

The mechanism includes a management unit and facilitators who assist the service provider first in uploading their information and then in seeking demand. The greater the number of options or demand, the higher the probability that the older adult can find paid work. *Figure 3* illustrates the basic steps to assist the older adult.

Figure 3. Mechanisms to encourage the labor participation of the elderly



Source: Developed by Ayala Consulting

5. TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Similar to the previous chapter, this section delves into and comprehends the current context of the elderly concerning their desire to transfer knowledge and experiences. Once this objective is clarified, a specific proposal is presented to address the shortcomings or issues identified throughout the analysis of their situation.

5.1 Current state of knowledge and skills transfer systems

For many elderly individuals, giving meaning to their lives becomes crucial, particularly after years of dedicated work in specialized roles, contributing significantly to society. One way they find purpose is through selfless service to others, a pathway to personal growth. Within the sociological realm, volunteering emerges as a form of social engagement fostering various types of human interaction.

The mutual benefit becomes apparent when actions are framed within supportive spaces for the transmission of knowledge, where both the elderly individual and the young person can learn and grow through social interaction. Furthermore, the elderly individual makes it clear that they are not "obsolete." Studies confirm that nowadays, older individuals generally have good

health and are capable of continuing to contribute to society in areas such as art, history, business, administration, volunteering, and various other activities.

However, despite the fact that knowledge transfer is generally done at minimal cost, there isn't much demand for it. Currently, competitors are social media platforms, where young professionals can access YouTube videos to understand new topics, learn skills, and gain insights into processes, among other things. Therefore, the opportunities for knowledge transfer by older individuals are no longer as essential unless it involves topics that require manual skills. For these and other reasons, the transfer of knowledge and wisdom has lost much of its strength.

5.2 Mechanisms to encourage knowledge transfer

Given the current situation and digital competition, older individuals must perform these tasks using professional knowledge transfer methodologies. It is necessary for older adults to share their knowledge through coaching and mentoring. When they lack these skills, knowledge transfer may become less sought after.

Table 3. Differences Between Coaching and Mentoring

COACHING	MENTORING
• Can be an internal or external member of the company	• Conducted by an internal professional from the same organization
• Formal	• Formal and informal
• Individual or group	• Individual
• Targeted at all employees	• Targeted at individuals with high potential
• The goal is to improve performance	• The goal is to improve personal development
• Moderate duration	• Long duration

Source: Own elaboration based on the study by Heures and Gimpera (2012)

Although both techniques are very useful, mentoring is more suitable for knowledge transfer. "Mentoring" involves leveraging the knowledge of a mentor with extensive experience in specific domains and combining it with eagerness to learn and receive lasting contributions for their personal and professional development, thereby enhancing the company with trust and commitment. Organizations promote these programs to improve performance and gain an extra benefit in terms of enhancing the quality of life at work for their members (Rodriguez, 2006). If they had access to information about older adults offering this type of service, one could expect increased opportunities for these individuals.

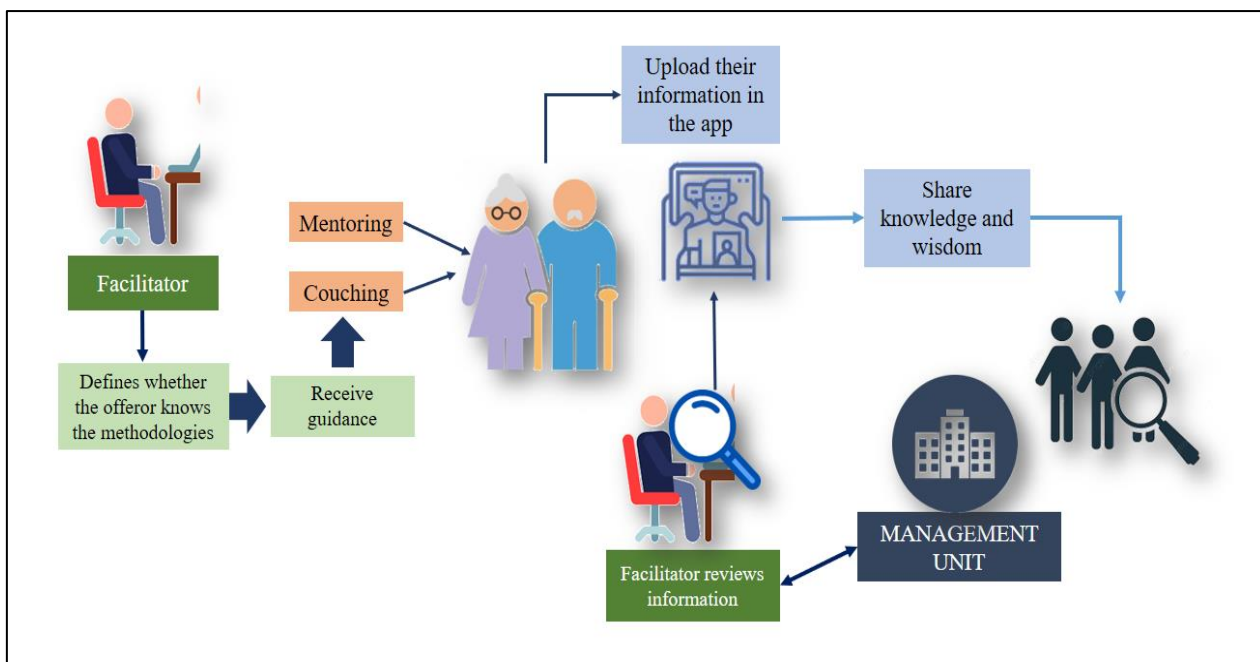
Based on the information provided above, it can be deduced that as a precondition for older adults to transmit their knowledge and wisdom, they must receive some guidance on coaching and mentoring. An older adult may have a lot of experience in a specific activity but not necessarily in teaching or transmitting it to others. Although this transfer of knowledge and wisdom comes at lower transactional costs, the task must be

carried out well for the demander to be fully satisfied.

On the demand side, the challenge for facilitators is first to identify them and then convince them to take advantage of this opportunity. As mentioned earlier, companies and entities have biases against older adults, perceiving their experience and knowledge as outdated and not very necessary in today's world. Hence, the need for the management unit not only to identify potential demanders but also to work on convincing them to consider this option.

In summary, an appropriate mechanism for older adults to offer knowledge transfer is to upload their information in the application developed for this purpose. The facilitator initially checks whether the offeror is familiar with appropriate methodologies for transmitting their knowledge and then decides whether orientation is needed. On the other hand, the facilitator also has the task of searching and identifying demanders of the service. Once identified, the next task is to interview them and convince them to consider this option on the terms proposed by the offeror.

Figure 4. Mechanisms to encourage knowledge transfer



Source: Developed by Ayala Consulting

6. ACCESSING AND CREATING SOCIAL NETWORKS

Elderly individuals, like the rest of the age groups in the population, are changing their paradigms in a surprising way. In their desire to appear young, active, and trendy, these individuals are seeking to participate in various types of social networks. Furthermore, studies indicate that older adults can rejuvenate their brains and achieve full well-being if they engage in a series of activities, including having a purpose, looking forward, exercising, adopting healthy practices, maintaining a social circle, and interacting with younger people.

Socialization among groups that can share preferences, feelings, and emotions becomes significantly important. This contributes to improving personal relationships among groups of older adults. Social and support networks play a crucial role in achieving well-being among older adults.

6.1 Functioning of social networks

Given the great interest of older adults in participating in social groups, usually, they first try to form these groups with close people, including family and friends they

have acquired over the years. However, this option is often limited as it focuses on social activities that they have had throughout the years. Another limitation is the geographic location of friends; not everyone lives in the same neighborhood or even in the same city. Therefore, meetings may end up not being very frequent.

Thus, various programs and interventions have been created to encourage and facilitate the formation of different types of social networks with peers who are not known. In this way, older adults have options to choose from and participate in those that interest them. There are many types of social networks for recreational, cultural, and social activities.

Despite the rapid development of these networks for older adults, there are significant barriers to overcome, starting with the digital divide. It is a highly debated issue in recent times, as older individuals face difficulties in handling and understanding the digital dimension and the technological advancements. By reducing dependence on older adults and enhancing their autonomy in managing their time and freedom, technology can be adapted to their needs and even provide activities that contribute to their satisfaction and personal fulfillment (Ullmann & Sunkel, 2019).

Another barrier is that many groups of older adults are informal, do not appear on social networks, are not promoted, and therefore, it makes it difficult to find and participate in

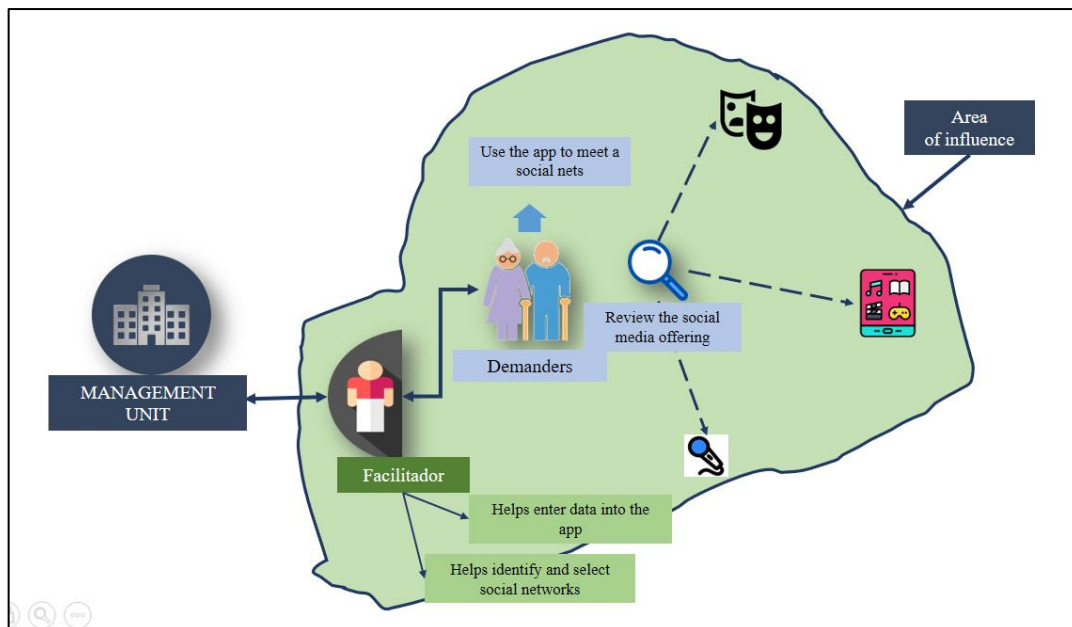
these groups. Additionally, there are not enough facilities when older adults want to form new groups; the digital divide and lack of access to digital networks prevent them from promoting their projects.

6.2 Mechanisms to form or join social networks

If the older adult is illiterate in the use of digital applications, the facilitators that would be working in the management unit would always be ready to help them upload their information. This way, the barriers related to digital divides can be reduced.

Unlike the processes of finding work or transferring knowledge, in this case, the older adult takes on the role of a demander to use the digital application and find a social network that interests them. For example, the demander (older adult) can review the different types of entertainment social networks within their geographical area of influence. If that is the case, facilitators can assist the older adult in identifying and even selecting social networks in their area of influence. In summary, facilitators can help the older adult enter their personal information and data as a demander, assist in identifying existing and active social networks in the area of influence, and, of course, help the older adult select networks of interest.

Figure 5. Mechanisms to join social networks – demander role

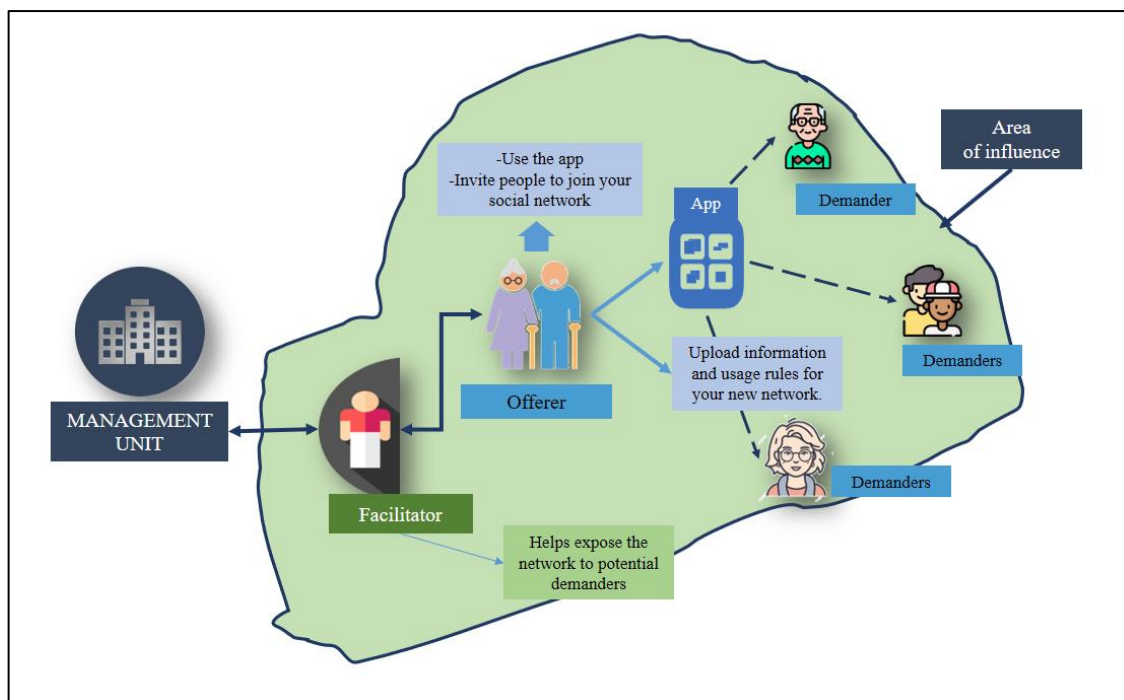


Source: Developed by Ayala Consulting

Additionally, the older adult can take on the role of an offeror, meaning they can promote the creation of a social network around an activity that interests them. They can then use the application to invite others to join their network or social group. In this regard, the offeror must upload sufficient information explaining the rules of

operation and functioning of this new group. If applicable, videos and other promotional forms can be included to encourage potential peers who are looking to be part of this social group. The role of facilitators is crucial in exposing this group to potential demanders so that the network can be formed and eventually function.

Figure 6. Mechanisms to join social networks – supplier role



Source: Developed by Ayala Consulting

It's possible to create social networks that not only allows older adults to socialize with their peers but also generates intergenerational connections. As this process unfolds, innovative and new networks may emerge. It is crucial for the management unit to be vigilant about these initiatives that can originate from older adults with unique and special interests. For instance, a social network for working on old popular music sheets or for reviving cultural activities from the past may emerge.

7. COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL PROPOSAL

Considering the models proposed in the previous chapters, it is possible to integrate all the detailed aspects and mechanisms to formulate a comprehensive proposal for addressing the needs of older adults in four key areas: access to required services, employment opportunities, knowledge and wisdom transfer, and establishment or access to social networks.

7.1 Business model

This operational proposal aims to help older adults increase their life expectancy, improve their quality of life through having a sense of purpose, and provide opportunities for socializing with peers, among other benefits. The proposal aims to establish an intervention managed by a management unit responsible for the digital application developed for this purpose, with officers acting as facilitators. Ideally, this business model could be self-sustainable.

Nevertheless, given that this project is being targeted at older adults, a demographic that may not be accustomed to this type of business model, might require state subsidies for its operation. In any case, part of the operational costs could be covered by the fees paid by both service providers and its recipients. For this intervention, a mixed public-private alliance is proposed.

The state finances the design and implementation, while the private company operates the intervention. Given the characteristics of this intervention, the state would subsidize the participation of economically disadvantaged older adults measured through the existing Household Social Registry in that country. Non-poor older adults will pay for the services provided by the unit. It is worth noting that with a higher number of participants, transactional values should decrease and be accessible to a greater number of people.

In this proposal or business model, it is suggested that the older adult play different roles depending on the type of activity they seek to perform, whether as an offeror or a demander. The following table summarizes the roles of the older adult.

Table 4. Business Model

BUSINESS	OFFEROR	DEMANDER
Search for health and other specialized services	Service providers	Older adults
Job opportunities	Older adults	Agencies, companies, individuals
Knowledge and wisdom transfer	Older adults	Agencies, companies, individuals
Access to social networks	Various types of social groups	Older adults
Formation of social networks	Older adults	Various types of social groups

Source: Developed by Ayala Consulting

7.2 Proposal mechanisms

The proposal includes four key processes aimed at helping and benefiting the elderly:

1. Search and selection of urgently needed services:

- a. Objectives: Identify and select services that the elderly individual may need at a given time.

2. Work participation:

- a. Objectives: Offer the possibility for the elderly individual to take on the role of a service provider, allowing a significant number of potential clients to review their offerings.

3. Knowledge and wisdom transfer:

- a. Objectives: Assist and facilitate the elderly in transferring their knowledge and wisdom at a low transactional cost.

4. Formation of social networks or access to specific social groups:

- a. Objectives: Support the elderly in forming and accessing social networks, whether with peers or younger individuals, to engage in leisure activities and other interests.

7.3 Involved actors

i. Central Government

The Ministry of Social Development, through its department or agency responsible for addressing issues related to the elderly and implementing, supervising, and evaluating public policies, would be in charge of establishing and forming this public-private partnership. The unit for this intervention could initially be located within this department. The functions of this department would include:

- Establishing the public-private partnership to implement this project.
- Supervising the detailed design and implementation.
- Supervising and approving payments to the project related to the use of the platform by elderly individuals with lower incomes.
- Conducting evaluations of efficiency, processes, and the impact of the project.
- Serving as the point of contact with development agencies that can participate with financing and technical assistance.
- Other functions related to its mission.

ii. Program management unit

It is proposed that the program management unit be operated and managed by an agency, company, or entity outside the public sector.

This agency would be the partner of the government in carrying out this task. The responsibilities of the unit would include:

- Project operation on a day-to-day basis, managing and improving the platform, having facilitators whose role is to connect suppliers and demanders, assisting elderly individuals in uploading their information, and guiding them in what they wish to accomplish.
- The unit will have financial and accounting capacity, as well as promotion and marketing capabilities to reach the widest audience possible.
- The unit will be responsible for identifying, inviting, qualifying, and registering various types of agencies that may demand the services of the elderly.
- Performing other complementary tasks that contribute to the successful operation of the project.

iii. Facilitators

Individuals linked to the project who can be part of the Unit or are in constant contact with the management unit have various responsibilities:

- Assist the elderly in entering their information and provide the necessary guidance.

- Assist in basic training processes for the elderly to promote their services more effectively.
- Review whether the provider is familiar with appropriate methodologies for knowledge transfer and determine if the elderly individual requires guidance.
- Seek and identify potential service demanders, conduct interviews, and carry out an induction process with them.
- Assist the elderly in identifying and selecting social networks in their area of influence.
- Help the elderly enter their information as service demanders and providers.
- Identify existing and active social networks in the demander's area of influence.
- Promote social networks created by the provider to potential demanders.
- Carry out the necessary activities for the social networks of providers to form and function properly.
- Perform other relevant activities as needed.

iv. Elderly Service Seeker (Demander)

Elderly individuals take on the role of service seekers within their area of

influence through the use of the application, engaging in the following activities:

- Contact the Unit for assistance in identifying and selecting urgently needed services.
- Review the offerings of social networks and services, whether they are from the government or private entities.
- Enter data for the search in the digital application.
- Receive services as agreed upon with their service providers.

v. Elderly Service Provider (Supplier)

Elderly individuals take on the role of service providers using the application within their area of influence through:

- Offering various services in the pursuit of finding paid employment and/or transferring knowledge and skills at a low transactional cost.
- Promoting the creation of a social network around an activity of interest by inviting others to join their social network.

vi. Specialists in mentoring and coaching

Professionals specialized in these areas have the primary objective of guiding older adults so that they gain basic knowledge

about the process of knowledge and wisdom transfer.

- They are responsible for developing orientation content for older adults who are offering and demanding services.
- They work in conjunction with the management unit.
- They provide the respective guidance.
- They create connections between the actors.

vii. Digital application developers

The development of the application can be outsourced to a third party or handled by the private agency operating the Unit. Developers are responsible for:

- Developing the digital application to be used by older adults offering and demanding services.
- Ensuring the maintenance, improvement, and addition of new features as the project gains experience and identifies additional needs.

7.4 Project operation

The management unit is responsible for promoting the project's services, benefits, and advantages through a marketing

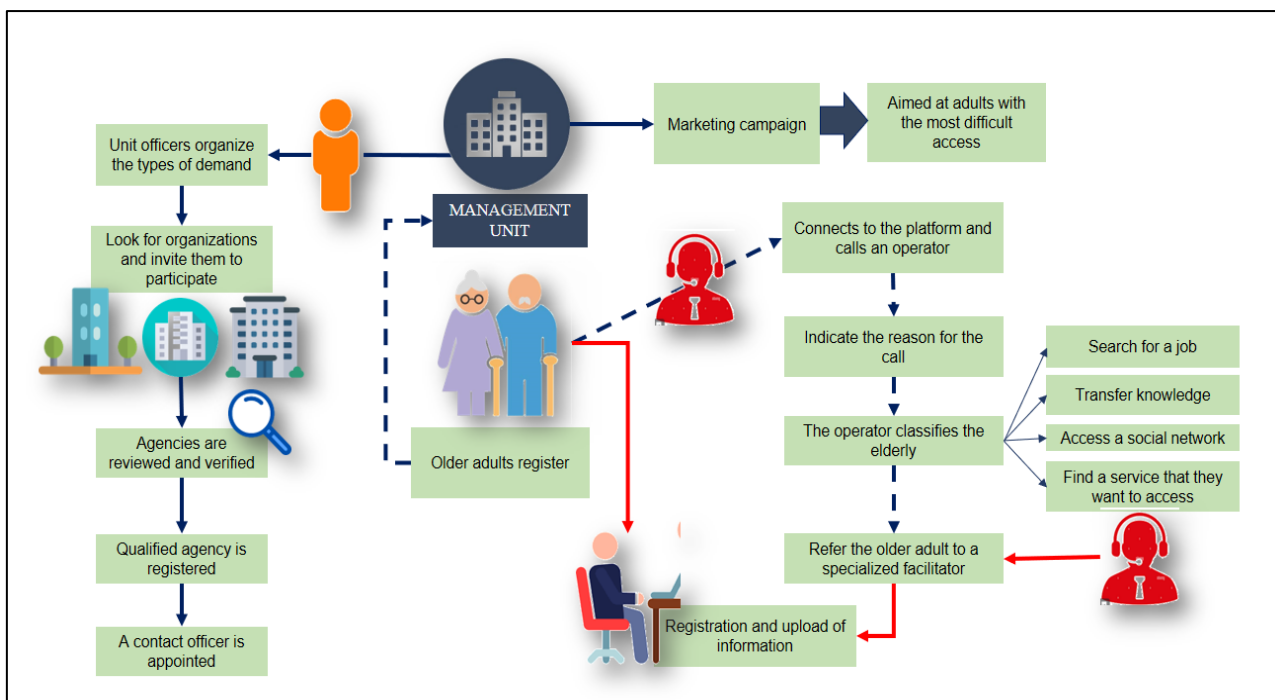
campaign targeting older adults. This campaign should include outreach to economically disadvantaged older adults, who may be more challenging to reach. Subsequently, the older adult can connect to the platform and contact an operator. In this initial call, the older adult will state the reason for their call. The operator will then proceed to classify the call, whether it's for finding employment, transferring knowledge and skills, accessing a social network, or locating a needed service. After the classification process, the operator refers the older adult to a facilitator specialized in the relevant topic to proceed with the registration and uploading of their information.

As older adults register, another group of officers from the Unit organizes the different demand categories that need identification. Afterward, they reach out to these organizations, either by calling them

or visiting them, and invite them to participate. During this process, they present the operational mechanism of the project, the benefits of hiring older adults, and related topics. The agencies that accept the invitation, which can be private or public, are registered after a thorough review and verification process. Specifically, they are asked to designate an official contact person within the agency whom older adults can reach out to establish a relationship.

The same process is carried out for services that older adults require and for social networks they can access. It's worth mentioning that social networks can be informal and not necessarily legally established. All this information is uploaded to the platform so that it can be viewed by both service providers and those seeking services.

Figure 7. Comprehensive project operation



Source: Developed by Ayala Consulting

The process of registering older adults and identifying potential service providers is permanent. For this reason, the project cannot be implemented nationwide in the initial stage; specific areas, such as municipalities, should be covered. In other words, the implementation should be done progressively in geographic areas to avoid dispersion. Otherwise, participants might be discouraged if there are not enough counterparts available, meaning a sufficient number of service providers and those seeking services to achieve meaningful connections.

8. STEPS TO FOLLOW

This operational proposal to support the elderly is an extension of the L&R mechanism that SOPROEN has previously proposed and developed for poor and

vulnerable households³. Therefore, it is a viable proposal with existing experience in the field, which can be used to implement this mechanism for the elderly. A pilot project could be useful to refine the processes in detail and make adjustments based on the specific characteristics of the country.

Furthermore, if a country's social protection system includes the development and implementation of an L&R mechanism, or if it already has one, then tailoring the mechanism to the needs of the elderly would be just an extension of it.

It is important to note that the implementation and operation of an intervention of this type will likely have a much lower cost than a social protection program, and in return, high impacts and benefits are expected. This technical note did not include a financial study to

implement such a mechanism, either on a pilot or national level, but it is a task that should be undertaken if there is interest from a development or state agency.

Finally, SOPROEN is well-equipped to successfully undertake the development and implementation of an intervention of this kind. The company boasts extensive experience and possesses the necessary knowledge to navigate the complexities involved. SOPROEN is not only poised to handle the operational design but is also well-prepared to spearhead the development of the digital application crucial for managing all the outlined processes detailed in the preceding chapters of this technical note. The company's track record and expertise make it a reliable choice for ensuring the success of such an intervention.

³ SOPROEN designed and implemented the Referrals and Linkages mechanism in Malawi. It also has a platform that can be adapted to the needs of different populations. Additionally, it has

proposed the implementation of these types of mechanisms in various technical notes and studies (see 'articles' on www.soproen.com).

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SOCIAL PROTECTION ENGINEERING

We take ethics seriously and our work is aligned with the following SDGs

