

Manifest #SoyMayorSoyComoTú 2021

As in previous years, from Grandes Amigos, Fundación Pilares para la Autonomía Personal, Envejecimiento en Red, HelpAge España and Matia Fundazioa, organizations that, from different fields, work for the rights and welfare of the elderly, we unite to make visible and denounce the inequalities that many people live every day because of their age. The age discrimination that exists at all levels of society limits their rights and prevents them from enjoying goods and services that correspond to them under the same conditions as others.

For the fifth year, we join together on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Older Persons to denounce the fact that reaching the age of majority cannot mean a reduction of our human rights or our dignity. For more than a year and a half, the pandemic has shown that there are prejudices and stereotypes associated with aging and older people that cause ageist and discriminatory attitudes towards this social group, so we want to challenge the whole society to build a world for all ages and to change our view of old age.

If we want to live as long as possible, enjoying quality of life and all our rights, we must first recognize our own ageist attitudes in order to overcome the age discrimination that exists in our society and change our relationship with old age: (CORPORATE COLOR)

- **Rights, discrimination and old age.**

Age cannot determine the value of our life and dignity. All people should be able to enjoy our rights and the highest level of quality of life without discrimination throughout all stages of our lives. Ageist attitudes lead to inequalities, violence, poverty and exclusion, are a violation of our most basic human rights and attribute a lower social value to older people that justifies the age discrimination that exists socially and culturally throughout the world.

The creation of a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons would help to ensure that older persons, in all their diversity, can enjoy dignified, full and secure lives.

- **Paradigm shift in care.**

Contrary to the usual social imaginary linked to old age, the elderly are an enormously diverse group. However, the predominant social narrative encourages age discrimination (or ageism) of these people and, in particular, of those who need support in their daily lives.

This way of thinking leads to "one size fits all" practices that tend to satisfy their demands, but in no way respond to the real needs and desires of each individual. Hence the urgent need to take firm steps towards a new model of care that promotes a professional accompaniment centered on the person, which recognizes and

attends to that richness and uniqueness, and does so preserving identity and capabilities, favoring personal autonomy and giving meaning to the day to day, from what is significant for each one. In short, regardless of age or circumstances, each person should receive the care they need and want.

To achieve this, resources must be reorganized in such a way that they can be adapted to each person and to their family and community environment, as proposed in the model of comprehensive and person-centered care: offering quality comprehensive care and supporting the continuity of life projects so that life continues to have meaning.

- **Knowledge and research to improve the quality of life.**

Aging is a heterogeneous social and demographic reality on a global scale, it is a success of the population and at the same time a challenge that must be faced from different multidisciplinary approaches. Among them, we are committed to the development of R&D projects and scientific dissemination activities on active aging, quality of life and gender that promote a positive image of old age and aging as opposed to ageism. Therefore, we believe that in order to defend a diverse, positive and participatory image of older people, which avoids discrimination, prejudice and age stereotypes, it is essential to facilitate an informed discussion, based on scientific knowledge, on aspects related to aging; as well as the integration of interdisciplinary activity around research and innovation in aging; provide quality and useful information and resources to professionals interested in aging; and disseminate and support research, experiences and innovative initiatives that help to improve the quality of life of older people.

- **An active role in society**

We call on society as a whole to eradicate ageism as a challenge that, sooner or later, will affect the entire population. Public administrations, companies and each person in their private sphere must take into account the elderly in every act, gesture or decision they make on a daily basis. In addition to the aforementioned legal measures aimed at guaranteeing the protection of rights in old age, it is necessary for the public and private spheres to promote initiatives that facilitate the inclusion and active presence of the elderly in the life of their immediate environment and in society in general, through volunteer projects, neighborhood networks, socialization and other forms of citizen participation. The elderly have the same right as anyone else to be protagonists in public life. In turn, we demand actions to raise awareness from an early age about ageism and the importance of acquiring healthy habits, such as the need to remain socially active and the exercise of rights at all stages of life and intergenerational relations, thus bringing the reality of aging free of prejudices and stereotypes to the different generations. Likewise, the effort to reduce the digital divide does not exempt public administrations and companies from the responsibility of continuing to guarantee access to basic services to any person through traditional channels.

Tomorrow's society will be even more ageist... if action is not taken today

Demographic and sociological projections foresee a much older and lonelier society than today's, and one that is not very friendly to the elderly. If today 1 out of every 5 people living in Spain is 65 or older, in less than half a century it will be 1 out of every 3. This, in a context of increasingly reduced family networks, low birth rate and new family models. At the same

time, the population is concentrated in increasingly large urban centers, which increases distances and travel times, making it difficult to socialize with loved ones, all this mixed with impersonal and individualistic lifestyles. The rise of anti-aging and anti-wrinkle fashions, which not only determine the consumption habits of millions of households, but also define a dominant vision of life that exalts youth and penalizes old age, especially for older women, does not help either. Moreover, this super-commercialized world measures the value of people according to their productivity, with all that this entails for those who are retiring. Moreover, as this pandemic has shown, we live in a system that has dosed the right to health care and life according to the age of the patients.

Against this backdrop, an ageist society, which rejects old age and condemns those who grow old to loneliness simply because of their age, can have even more serious effects on the health, well-being and dignity of the elderly.

This struggle that unites the undersigned entities must be a cross-cutting cause that runs through all levels of society from top to bottom, so that the public and private sectors, civil society organizations and citizens become involved in the eradication of ageism, in facilitating dignified and healthy aging and in building a world that treats all people equally and provides the same opportunities regardless of their age.

October 9, 2021



Fundación Pílares para la autonomía personal is a statewide non-profit organization, whose mission is to contribute to the improvement of society by supporting the maintenance of dignity throughout life, through innovation, knowledge and cooperation. It develops programs and services in the social field to increase the quality of life of people in vulnerable situations (elderly people, people with disabilities, etc.) and provide comprehensive and personalized solutions that safeguard the autonomy of people and their rights to live a dignified life. Promotes the Model of Integral and Person-Centered Care (MAICP).

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Grandes Amigos is a statewide non-profit volunteer NGO, which since 2003 has been preventing and addressing the loneliness of the elderly in their homes and residences. Through different programs of face-to-face and telephone emotional support, neighborhood networks, socialization and awareness-raising, it contributes to the welfare, health and dignity of the elderly and to building a society free of ageism, which cares for, includes and treats all people equally. With a cross-cutting vision of loneliness and aging, involving public and private agents and citizens, Grandes Amigos has created bonds of affection and neighborhood support among more than 2,000 elderly people and volunteers in the last year.

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[Envejecimiento en Red, EnR?](#) is a collaborative web platform, a meeting point science-society around aging and the elderly. A space for the interaction of the different agents interested in this heterogeneous and multidisciplinary field. EnR? arises from the collaboration between the Fundación General CSIC and the Institute of Economics, Geography and Demography (IEGD) of the CSIC, with the aim of being a reference in knowledge and contrasted, rigorous and quality information on research and innovation in aging, both personal and population, with an important documentary and multimedia base.

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[Matia Fundazioa](#) is a private non-profit foundation in the general interest with more than 130 years of experience. It is a reference in the care of the elderly in Guipuzcoa and in research on aging at national and international level. In 2002, it decided to create a research institute (Matia Institute) that facilitates the integration of research/action and the generation of knowledge based on evidence and daily practice. Working on the principles of person-centered care, its purpose is to accompany people in their aging process to improve their well-being, generating knowledge and personalized services that promote their autonomy and dignity.

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[HelpAge International España](#) is an affiliate organization of HelpAge International. It was founded in 2008 with the aim of raising awareness among the Spanish population about the needs of the elderly and to help finance the network's international cooperation and humanitarian aid projects. We work through awareness raising, sensitization and training so that older people know and claim their rights and face discrimination. We also work to build a society that is friendly and sensitive at all levels to the reality of the elderly and their rights.

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