

The 15th Conference of Young Demographers will take place in February 2024

The Conference of Young Demographers traditionally offers an exceptional opportunity to spend three days discussing current demographic issues. It gives students and early career researchers the chance to learn and get feedback and advice from their colleagues from all over the world in a very friendly environment. This year the conference is again co-organised in cooperation with the Association for Young Historical Demographers (AYHD).

The 15th annual Conference of Young Demographers will take place from 7 to 9 February 2024 in Prague at the Faculty of Science, Charles University. Although the conference is mainly focused on (historical) demography, all young researchers (including those who are young in mind) from various fields of population studies (sociology, epidemiology, and maybe even economics) are welcome. The working language of the conference is English.

As in previous years, we support the use of posters as a main form of presentation, not only for finished projects, but also for works in progress. Posters are the best!

Abstract submission is already closed. However, you can still join us as a passive participant in the conference. Registration for passive participation will open in January 2024.

The final programme of the conference will also be announced in January.

For more information, including information about passive participation in the conference, please visit our website (youngdemographers.github.io). Please feel free to contact us with any questions at: yd.demographers@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you in Prague!

On behalf of the Organising Committee:

Anna Altová, Kateřina Brázová, Klára Hulíková, Joris Kok (AYHD), Barbora Janáková, Louise Ludvigsen (AYHD), Tim Riswick (affiliated supporter), Jitka Slabá, Adéla Pola, Martin Vondrášek and Lukáš Kahoun.

Redakce

The 2023 (eng)aging! Conference & Technology Fair

The sixth edition of eng(aging)!¹, an international conference on population ageing associated with a technology fair, took place in Prague and was streamed online on 19–20 June 2023. The event was

attended by many world-renowned experts, including the Deputy Director of the International Institute on Ageing at the United Nations-Malta, Rosette Farrugia-Bonello, along with Jérôme Pigniez, the founder and

1) The long-term (eng)aging! project focuses on fostering a society-wide debate about accelerating demographic change and population ageing. The project aims to stimulate a constructive discussion about these trends and to look for ways to make use of them for the benefit of society.

president of On-Medio and SilverEco.org, Matt Flynn, Director of the Centre for Research into the Older Workforce and a lecturer at the University of Leicester School of Business, and Michal Halperin Ben Zvi, an expert on digital engagement and the use and adoption of digital products and services by older adults.

The 2023 edition of the conference discussed two topics: the potential of the silver economy to benefit all generations; and how to build capacity to manage crises and their impact on older persons' lives. Key insights from prominent figures in the field of healthy ageing and the silver economy were shared. The speakers captured the core ideas surrounding ageing, the silver economy, and the importance of an inclusive perspective. 'Healthy aging should be viewed as an investment with benefits and returns', noted Rosette Farrugia-Bonello. Jérôme Pigniez (FR) stressed the pervasive impact of ageing on products and services, stating, 'No product or service can avoid being suitable for older people. The ageing factor affects everything'. Pigniez advocated for an intergenerational perspective to prevent conflicts, stating, 'We must counter things like #okboomer. To avoid generational strife, we must prioritise an intergenerational mindset'. Recognising the diverse nature of the senior demographic, Pigniez further noted, 'Seniors encompass a remarkably diverse group. A single solution cannot apply to all; it's a magic notion if everyone were alike'. Summing up the essence of the silver economy, Pigniez concluded, 'The concept of the silver economy isn't about pessimism; it's about seizing opportunities'.

Special panels featuring experts from the Visegrad countries (V4), Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Germany took place and underlined crucial challenges in supporting older people during crises. Iryna Kurylo (UA) stressed the 'urgent needs for medicines, food delivery, and transport of older people' during wartime. Lucie Vidovicova (CZ) underscored the role of 'emergency agents' during crises and emphasised the need for their training in crisis care for older people. Kaja Zapadowska-Kling (PL) addressed food insecurity, noting 'budget constraints, knowledge gaps, geriatric care limitations, and affordability' as key factors.

Scholars also illuminated crucial aspects of digital inclusion and ageing and underscored the

critical importance of addressing digital inclusion for older adults. Tomasz Drabowicz (PL) noted that 'older age is the biggest predictor of a drop in digital skills', signalling a concerning decline in digital proficiency with age. The shift to digital services was emphasised by the observation that 'access to digital services has become digitalized. Those excluded risk becoming second-class citizens', underlining the potential consequences of digital exclusion for older individuals. Marek Hasa (CZ) proposed a forward-looking approach: 'Connecting generations through digital media co-creation can tackle loneliness as a by-product'. This approach emphasised the dual benefits of digital engagement. 'Volunteering-driven, cross-generational digital literacy transfer projects' were highlighted as solutions to bridge digital gaps. Collaboration and shared knowledge were underscored as tools for fostering inclusivity.

In the context of the economic implications of ageing, experts provided insightful perspectives. 'Age is a pivotal factor influencing people's economic behaviour', noted Olga Gagauz (MD). This underlines how age shapes financial decisions and actions. Gagauz further pointed out that '[i]ntergenerational redistribution in an ageing society necessitates careful evaluation of social, economic, and fiscal consequences'. This highlighted the complexities of balancing resources across generations. Łukasz Jurek (PL) highlighted the impact of pension instability on retirement choices, noting that 'in countries with uncertain pension systems, individuals tend to opt for earlier retirement, seeking greater certainty'.

At the Technological Fair, a diverse range of presentations offered insights into innovative solutions for older people. Michal Halperin Ben Zvi (IL) highlighted the importance of understanding the ageing stages for inclusive design: 'Learning about the ageing stages aids in implementing inclusive design'. Patrícia Szabó (HU) introduced a virtual reality game project focused on rehabilitation and memory exercises that shows potential for providing older adults with health support. Tibor Guzsvinecz (HU) discussed aiding indoor navigation by using voice commands, QR codes, and cell phone cameras, emphasising their functional role. Adam Kaczmarek (PL) shared the benefits of accessible games, where health and mood can be monitored through gameplay

sessions. Rongbo Hu (DE) showcased the motivating potential of exergames for encouraging older people to exercise. Kateřina Macháčová (CZ) presented the platform PERMANENTO and described its role in combating physical inactivity. Ann-Kristin Schwarze (DE) from Biozoon discussed ethical responsibility in health enhancement through texture modifiers and high-protein food products. Cecilia Sik-Lanyi (HU) talked about holistic accessibility design, including templates, alternative text, fonts, and approaches tailored to older people. Bence Halmosi (HU) discussed the potential of using chatbots in rehabilitation, while also acknowledging their limitations. Ali Raheem Mandeel (HU) highlighted the positive impact of APH-ALARM on Aphasia patients' independence and security through pictogram use. Charlie Zhao (DE) addressed the evolving landscape of service robots, unveiling new possibilities in the service industry. Lenka Víznerová (CZ) presented the 'Život 90' Emergency Care project's comprehensive

technological system for emergency signalling. Vítězslav Mergl (CZ) introduced the 'Bless System' for seniors living alone, which employs non-disruptive monitoring sensors for households.

The event, which took place under the auspices of Marian Jurečka, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, was co-organised by the Active Ageing Centre and the KEYNOTE company.

The partners of the conference were the International Visegrad Fund, Czech-German Future Fund, JTI, and Česká spořitelna.

Detailed outputs from the Conference & Technology Fair in the form of a report, a photo/video gallery, and PowerPoint presentations are available at www.engagingprague.com.

SAVE THE DATE – The 2024 edition of the *(eng) aging!* Conference & Technology Fair will physically take place in Prague on 20–21 June 2024 and will also be simultaneously streamed online.