

ICCN

Nutrition and Economics

Nutrition and Health in Economic Development

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The interrelationship of health and sustainable development will be discussed in three ways:

- (i) historical evidence that improved health is a precondition for the generation of wealth-spreading growth; (ii) the role of health and nutrition improvement in raising global cognitive performance compatible with knowledge-led globalization; and
- (iii) the investment priorities for reducing global poverty, as measured by the millennium development goals for hunger and health.

Food, Aged Care and Regional Economics

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The hallmark demographic feature of the late twentieth century is extended life expectancy. Life expectancy in many countries around the world increased by as much as one in every three years between the 1960s and the 1990s. By 2030, the proportion of people aged 65 years and older in OECD member countries will have almost doubled. The rate of growth in the proportion of older people will be particularly marked for those aged 80 years and more.

The rapid increase in life expectancy since the 1960s has focused the attention of both individuals and governments on the consequences of living longer. For individuals, improved life expectancy is not simply a matter of longevity, but also quality of life. For governments, a key consideration in public policy is the diminished size of the workforce relative to those on social security or retired. Shrinking tax bases in ageing societies mean reduced economic capacity to respond to the public health, housing and transport needs of older persons. Reduced family size and functionality require governments and communities to provide substitute care giving services and facilities, especially to the rising number of dependent, disabled and frail older persons.

A proactive rather than reactive stance to meeting the needs of an ageing society is required. Indeed, trends that may have been perceived as threats to a national economy can be described as opportunities for regional economies. The particular opportunities regional communities can provide older persons seeking to enhance their wellness and quality of life need to be recognized. These include opportunities to participate in a meaningful way in the local economy, to develop healthy food habits, to maintain regular physical activity, to increase mobility and to be housed securely, but less expensively. Food and the food industry have an integral role to play in this scenario.

References

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