

The Aging Readiness & Competitiveness (ARC) 4.0

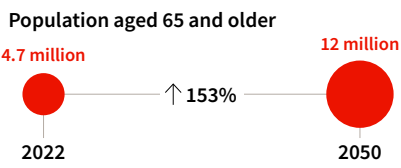
Colombia



Colombia is notable for the strides it has taken to codify the rights of older people through an institutional framework and longstanding social welfare programs. The government has created a clear mandate against age discrimination and even passed laws to deter elder abuse; it also oversees contributory and non-contributory pension schemes along with a universal health insurance scheme. However, pension coverage rates are low, the universal health insurance scheme is not comprehensive—leaving many without necessary assistance, and civil society does not focus on the welfare of older people.

Demographic

The share of the population aged 65 and older will increase from 9% to 21% in 2022-50.



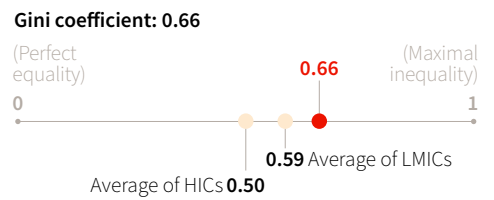
Informal employment

The majority of workers are employed informally, who do not have secure employment contracts or workers' benefits.



Income inequality

The income inequality is higher than both the averages for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and high-income countries (HICs).



Sources: UN, International Labour Organization, World Inequality Database, Economist Impact.

Ecosystem for equitable healthy aging:

		Very unfavorable				Moderately unfavorable				Moderately favorable				Very favorable			
	Forces enabling equity	Strength				Strength				Forces resisting equity							
		1	2	3	4	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4				
Public institutions	<p>Social protection: The Colombian government has several programs in place to aid older persons—both contributory and non-contributory, which underscores its desire to reach more people through social protection. The most prominent of these is the non-contributory pension program called Colombia Mayor, which was launched in 2003.¹ The government also runs multiple savings programs, and another non-contributory pension called Ageing Colombia, which guarantees a minimum income for the most vulnerable older people.²</p> <p>Still, only 51% of people over retirement age receive a pension,³ and the receipt of pensions is highly concentrated among the wealthiest members of the population.⁴ In general, there is a major issue with distribution of pensions by gender and geographic area; more than 85% of older women do not receive pensions; in rural areas, less than 10% of older people receive pensions, and for women in rural areas this number is essentially zero.⁵</p>																<p>Healthcare quality: Despite a successful expansion of universal health coverage, health outcomes and quality of care need to improve. Sixty-five percent of deaths in the country per year are due to poor quality of care.⁷</p>
	<p>Financial protection for healthcare: A universal health insurance scheme, entitling all citizens to health benefits, has been in place since 1993.⁶</p>																<p>Educational access and quality: Most people who are illiterate in Colombia at present are older than 60.⁸ On average, men and women over the age of 60 have only studied for a total of 5.5 years, and significant gaps persist stratified by location and wealth.^{9,10}</p>
	<p>Legislative and policy landscape for aging</p> <p>Aging policy: Colombia is legally committed to developing an institutional framework to secure the protection of the rights of the elderly and has made many strides to this effect, even ratifying international protocols.^{11,12} Colombian law has established a “clear mandate” against ageism.¹³ In 2018 the government passed a law designed to deter children from neglecting or abusing their older parents.¹⁴</p> <p>Age-friendly data: Colombia’s National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), which is responsible for planning, collecting, analyzing and disseminating official statistics, has worked to disaggregate data and increase the visibility of different population groups (e.g. by gender and age).¹⁵ Additionally, Salud, Bienestar and Envejecimiento Colombia (SABE), conducted by the government in 2015, was the first survey of its kind in the country aimed at understanding aging issues.^{16,17}</p>																<p>Policy implementation: Currently, government programs for older people are often not well-funded or sustainable.¹⁸ Only a small percentage of older adults are active in political groups or organizations advocating for decisions to benefit society and the country, meaning that they do not have a significant say in implemented policies.^{19,20}</p>
Age-friendly society	<p>Civil society: During covid-19, a non-governmental organization (NGO), Alianza por la Solidaridad, coordinated with the local government in isolated areas to set up rapid-response medical teams to move from house to house and find older people exhibiting coronavirus symptoms in order to provide them with assistance and support; these teams will operate in the coming years.²¹ However, the overall proportion of NGOs working on aging throughout the country is very low.^{22,23} According to data from an independent researcher, 3,063 out of the 296,467 NGOs working in the country, equivalent to just 1%, are focused on older people.^{24,25,26}</p>															<p>Geographic divides: Older people living in rural areas are more economically and socially vulnerable.²⁷ They face unemployment, low incomes, inability to access healthcare, and even drug trafficking and armed conflict.²⁸ Adults living rurally must endure the most of any conflict’s consequences, such as being forced to abandon their homes or lacking access to basic services such as water.²⁹</p>	
																<p>Ageism: Older people face discrimination and are often seen as useless, weak or a burden to their families or the state, which serves to legitimize various forms of abuse.³⁰</p>	

Methodology: As part of the ARC 4.0 initiative, Economist Impact employed a technique to evaluate the ecosystem for achieving equitable aging in 10 countries based on Kurt Lewin’s force field analysis. This approach compares forces that either promote or resist change, allowing for analysis of factors that may not be readily comparable within and across all countries. Building on our desk research and supplemented by expert interviews, we outline the forces that enable and hamper aging equity. We then conduct a qualitative assessment to score their relative strength on a scale from 1 (“weak”) to 4 (“strong”). All scores were independently assessed by two raters (with an inter-rater reliability—Cohen’s kappa—of .72), who then reconciled differences.

Lack of inclusion of a force does not necessarily indicate its absence from a country. It typically means that we decided to focus elsewhere or that there was not adequate research available on the particular subject. Moreover, because of the nature of evaluation—complex matters are collapsed into simple scores—we note that not all readers will agree with all scores. Further, these scores are not intended to facilitate explicit rating or ranking, but rather to foster qualitative examination of complex dynamics through simplified heuristics. It is our hope that these overviews will encourage reflection and action.

1. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/577061468197093248/pdf/WP57516.pdf>
 2. <https://www.inia.org/mt/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2.2-FULL-Edited.pdf>
 3. International Labour Organization. ILOSTAT.
 4. <https://www.inia.org/mt/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2.2-FULL-Edited.pdf>
 5. Economist Impact interview with Augusto Galan, April 2022.
 6. <https://equityhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12939-020-01241-0>
 7. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/publication/external-assessment-of-quality-of-care-in-the-health-sector-in-colombia>
 8. Economist Impact interview with Augusto Galan, previously Minister of Health and Ambassador of Colombia to UNESCO, and currently Director of Así Vámos en Salud, April 2022.
 9. https://tbinetnet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/COL/INT_CESCR_CSS_COL_27307_S.pdf
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 11. <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2020-10-20/colombia-congress-passes-law-ratifying-inter-american-convention-on-the-protection-of-human-rights-of-older-persons/>
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15. <https://www.data4sdgs.org/partner/dane-national-administrative-department-statistics-colombia>
 16. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31607769/>
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 18. Economist Impact interview with Augusto Galan, April 2022.
 19. https://tbinetnet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/COL/INT_CESCR_CSS_COL_27307_S.pdf
 20. <https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/colombia-assisting-elderly-amidst-coronavirus-pandemic>
 21. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/46964685.pdf>
 22. <https://www.lasociedadcivil.org/noticia/sociedad-civil-en-colombia-un-mapeo-georeferenciado/>
 23. This estimation includes groups working on Gerontology (110), Geriatrics (1), Residential Care and Adult Day Programs (2553), Adult Education (2) and Senior Centers & Seniors’ Rights (397).
 24. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/46964685.pdf>
 25. <https://www.lasociedadcivil.org/noticia/sociedad-civil-en-colombia-un-mapeo-georeferenciado/>
 26. https://tbinetnet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/COL/INT_CESCR_CSS_COL_27307_S.pdf
 27. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26281330_Health_Care_for_Older_Persons_in_Colombia_A_Country_Profile
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