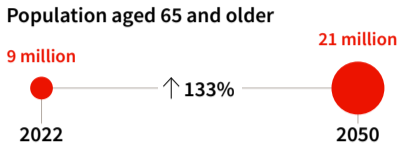


## The Aging Readiness & Competitiveness (ARC) 4.0

Among low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), Vietnam is relatively advanced in how it supports its older population. It has a legally enshrined aging policy and an active civil society that mark a meaningful response to the country's accelerated pace of aging. Significant progress has also been achieved over the past several decades in expanding coverage of social protection and access to education, helping to eliminate socioeconomic disparities across the lifespan. However, more efforts are needed to reduce gaps between urban and rural areas and implement aging policies more effectively.

### Demographic

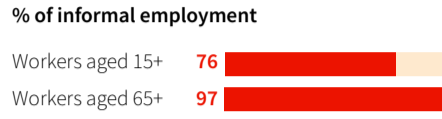
The share of the population aged 65 and older will more than double from 9% to 20% in 2022-50.



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

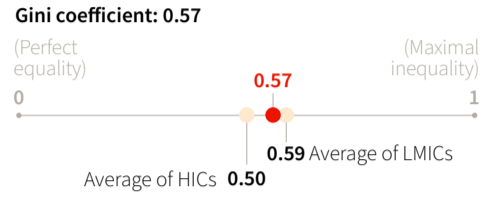
### Informal employment

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



### Income inequality

The income inequality is close to the average of LMICs but higher than that of high-income countries (HICs).



### Ecosystem for equitable healthy aging:

		Very unfavorable				Moderately unfavorable				Moderately favorable				Very favorable			
		Strength				Strength				Forces enabling equity		Forces resisting equity					
		1	2	3	4	4	3	2	1								
Public institutions	<b>Social protection:</b> Overall social protection coverage remains low: six in ten people are not covered by any social protection benefits as of 2020. Although the effective coverage of old-age pensions has more than doubled since 2000, only 41% of persons above retirement age receive a pension as of 2019. <sup>1</sup>	→				←				<b>Educational access and quality:</b> Educational attainment is generally low among older generations, particularly older women and rural residents, limiting their ability to access key information and resources. <sup>3</sup> Further, significant educational gaps remain among groups by location and wealth. <sup>4</sup>							
	<b>Financial protection for healthcare:</b> About 90% of the population aged 60 and older is covered by social health insurance, but affordability, particularly related to out-of-pocket costs, remains a barrier—one third of older adults avoid seeing the doctor because it is too expensive for them. <sup>2</sup>	→				←											
Legislative and policy landscape for aging	<b>Aging policy:</b> The Vietnamese government has robust policies in place to support older persons—including laws, a national action plan and even tax exemptions. <sup>5,6</sup> Existing legal provisions also promote the rights of the elderly and prohibit age discrimination. <sup>7</sup>	→				←				<b>Policy implementation:</b> There is a lack of coordination across government departments (healthcare, financial aid) coupled with inadequate human resources and funding. For example, local authorities need better mechanisms for distribution of financial assistance. <sup>11</sup> Moreover, less than a third of older people are aware of these policies, with an even stronger bifurcation of knowledge among urban and rural residents. <sup>12</sup>							
	<b>Age-friendly data:</b> The General Statistics Office (GSO), responsible for managing, conducting, and disseminating statistics, was established by national decree in 1946 (amended 2021). <sup>8</sup> In 2021, the GSO released a report <i>Population Ageing and Older Persons in Vietnam</i> , after announcing further exploration of population ageing using census data. <sup>9</sup> Non-governmental organizations also actively conduct national surveys, such as the Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in Vietnam, indicating a strong commitment to robust data collection. <sup>10</sup>	→				←											
Age-friendly society	<b>Civil society:</b> Vietnam has an active civil society, including the Vietnam Association of the Elderly (VAE), which has around 10 million members, accounting for roughly 90% of older persons in the country. VAE cooperates closely with local and national governments, the private sector, and NGOs, and sits as the vice chair of the National Committee on Ageing. <sup>13, 14, 15</sup>	→				←				<b>Networks of care:</b> The share of rural population has shrunk by 14 percentage points since 2000. <sup>19</sup> As rural adults are increasingly moving to urban areas for employment, many older adults in rural areas are left behind. This forces older persons to remain in the workforce and to continue to provide for and support their family members and communities. It can also put them at risk of lacking familial support of their own.							
	<b>Innovative approach:</b> Intergenerational Self-Help Clubs (ISHCs), a model started by civil society actors and implemented with strong government support, focus on the care of older persons and the promotion of their needs. ISHCs have improved health, social and economic outcomes in Vietnam through an array of interventions spanning social and cultural activities, community-based care, lifelong learning, rights promotion and resource mobilization and community-led development. <sup>16</sup> As of mid 2022, 4,700 ISHCs have been established throughout the country, and they have been replicated in several other countries throughout the region. <sup>17, 18</sup>	→				←											

**Methodology:** As part of the ARC 4.0 initiative, Economist Impact employed a technique to evaluate the ecosystem for achieving equitable healthy 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.

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