# Demographic Change: Equality and Wellbeing:

# A Search for Evidence

## Background

This paper describes the “Equality and Wellbeing” programme being undertaken by the Joint Programming Initiative “More years: better lives” (JPI) in 2018. It is designed to inform all those involved of the purposes, operation and timetable of the work, which will take place between January and October 2018.

Overall responsibility for the programme rests with the JPI’s governing body, the General Assembly (GA), advised by its Scientific and Societal Advisory Boards (SAB and SOAB).

## The aim of the programme

A key reason for creating the JPI “More Years, Better Lives” is the belief that demographic change is leading to changes in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and wellbeing across Europe and beyond. These changes have complex and potentially damaging effects which are not sufficiently understood.

In the light of this, our Equality and Wellbeing programme has two interlocking aims:

* **Inclusion and equity:** the promotion of a fairer society. This is the societal dimension
* **Quality of life, wellbeing and health:** the promotion of individual wellbeing. This is the individual dimension

Since we believe that securing one will also secure the other, these can be treated as two dimensions of a single issue, and we are treating them as complementary parts of a single overarching programme of work.

The purpose of the programme is to better understand what can be done, in the context of demographic change, to promote a society in which the distribution of resources and opportunities is more equitable[[1]](#footnote-1), and which promotes the wellbeing of all its people.

The programme aims to produce, in a relatively short timescale, evidence on the relationship between demographic change, equality and wellbeing. The papers and associated workshops can be used to plan future work by the JPI and its members; to foster alignment between the work of the JPI and other agencies and programmes; and to inform the wider community of stakeholders, policymakers and researchers. The JPI may wish to publish the papers in some form.

## The shape of the programme

Within the overall programme, we have identified eight **specific topics** in need of attention.

For each topic we seek to understand whether, and in what ways, demographic change is increasing or decreasing equality and wellbeing, and conversely, the ways in which changing patterns of equality and wellbeing may be affecting demography.

Work on each topic will be led by one of the Member States’ representatives on the JPI’s General Assembly (the sponsor).

For each topic we aim to produce **a short paper**. The process of producing the papers may vary between topics, reflecting their different nature, and the state of knowledge of each. However, in every case, one or two experts will be commissioned to produce a paper.

For each topic, **an expert workshop** will be convened, either at an initial stage to gather intelligence and ideas before the paper is written, or to review a draft paper. It is expected that such workshops will include representatives from appropriate stakeholder organisations and, where appropriate, from projects already funded through the JPI MYBL. The secretariat will draw the attention of sponsors to appropriate contacts, including SOAB members.

When all papers are completed, the JPI will convene **a conference**, at which the authors will present their papers to members of the GA, SAB, SOAB, the other authors, and appropriate stakeholders and policymakers. This event will be used to assist the JPI in identifying priorities for future work, which may include Joint Calls by the JPI itself, and other activities.

There may also be **a second conference** (perhaps linked to the first) to present the work to a wider audience, and we may wish to **publish the papers** in some form.

In addition to informing the JPI itself, the papers could **contribute to the JPI’s role in alignment** of research across countries and agencies, informing the work of policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders.

## The topic papers

Each topic paper will:

* Outline what is known about the topic and its relationship to demographic change, equality and wellbeing (including what agencies are active in the field)
* Identify research gaps (no more than 5 per topic)
* Identify key policy implications and implementation issues (no more than 5)

Each paper will be short (max 12 pages), produced by one or two expert authors commissioned by a GA member. The authors must have appropriate expertise and knowledge across relevant disciplines and a range of JPI member states.

The papers should be written for an educated and interested lay audience, including policymakers and other key stakeholders.

The demographic context is critical: there are many important issues of equality and wellbeing which have nothing directly to do with demographic change, and which are therefore outside the remit of our JPI, and thus outside the remit of this programme.

## The topics

The topics of the commissioned papers all have a focus on demographic change and its relationship to equality and wellbeing. The key question, sponsor country and national expert is shown in the table below:

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| **Topic** |
| **Public attitudes** |
| How are public attitudes to demographic change formed and influenced, and do those attitudes increase or diminish equality and wellbeing? |
| **Engagement** |
| What is known about the extent and nature of older peoples’ engagement in wider society and about effective, or potential ways of enabling all older people to remain fully engaged? |
| **Inter/intragenerational relationships** |
| How is demographic change affecting distribution of resources and opportunities between generations, and within generations, and how do these interact? |
| **The relationship between paid and unpaid work** |
| How is demographic change affecting our understanding and management of the relationships between paid and unpaid work, and what are the roles of regulation and legislation in this? |
| **Policy Integration** |
| What good examples of integration of policy related to an ageing society exist across government departments and agencies at national, regional and local levels, especially in social care and health? |
| **Measures of wellbeing, quality of life and health** |
| How well do existing measures of wellbeing reflect the distinct experiences, values and aspirations of older people, including the oldest old? |
| **Migration and demography** |
| How far, and in what circumstances, can migration alleviate or aggravate the predicted problems arising from demographic change, and how does this vary according to the kind of migration? This might offer a number of alternative scenarios. |
| **Oldest Old** |
| Here we will build on the paper produced by Janice Keefe and Marja Jylhä following the Oldest Old Workshop held in Paris in October. |
| **New Care technologies** |
| How can new care technologies support equality and wellbeing of older people |

## The authors

The author/s of each expert paper will be commissioned and paid by the lead GA member. Authors will:

* be familiar with the topic across a range of countries participating in JPI MYBL,
* have a reasonably broad disciplinary perspective. ,
* be available to undertake the work in a relatively short timescale,
* be available to attend a workshop and the final conference,
* be able to write clearly for a lay audience.

## Timetable

The topic work will be carried out by the expert authors, overseen by the lead GA members (the “sponsor”). The workshop and report writing is to be completed by 1st July. The papers will then be presented by the authors at a specially convened JPI event for members of the General Assembly and its two Advisory Boards in the early Autumn of 2018.

This will enable the General Assembly to reach decisions about future work when it meets in October. It may then wish to publish the reports in some form and/or to convene a more public conference to present the results.

1. For simplicity we have called the programme “Equality and Wellbeing”, but we recognise that inequalities can arise for many reasons, bad and good, and eliminating them is not only impossible, but sometimes undesirable. “Inequity” by contrast implies that some people are barred from opportunities available to other people for reasons which are inherently unfair. Here we are concerned with eliminating inequity. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)