

Funeza Servicios Funerarios, Mexico City, Mexico

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Treating older adults with dignity

Since 2019, government entities in Mexico have implemented policies aimed at fostering and promoting universal rights, with the purpose of building a more egalitarian society for all people at different stages of their lives, aligning with efforts at the international level paying special attention to the rights of the older adult; such as the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1991), the Proclamation on Aging (1992), the Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging (2002b), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons (2023), among other documents.

These collaborations have led to significant changes in the way older adults are approached and cared for in the different social fields (family, society and State), for example, the modification of the welfare approach used at the end of the 20th century, characterized by voluntary and community self-management actions aimed at this sector of the population with an approach focused on the vindication of their rights, especially their social and participation rights (Wasiak, 2022).

This new paradigm acknowledges the current and potential contributions of the population aged 60 and over to the collective well-being, cultural identity, the diversity of their communities and the economic, political and social development of nations, ensuring their right to a life of dignity in old age. It also highlights the importance of analyzing life trajectories, recognizing that the inequalities that intersect and accumulate over time become more evident and intensify in old age. These efforts have also included priority subjects, such as the eradication of violence and abuse (Law on the Rights of Older Adults [LDPAM], Article 3, Section XII; Article 5, Section I, paragraphs c and d; as well as Articles 9 and 10).

Mexico has been undergoing a demographic transition on a national and state level since 1950. The relevance of this phenomenon lies not only in the increase in life expectancy, but also in the forecast for the year 2030, where it is estimated that the population of older adults will reach 20.6 million, representing 15% of the national total. In this proportion, the State of Mexico will be positioned as the entity with the largest number of older adults, reaching 2.7 million. At the state level, Mexico City will stand out as one of the most aged entities, with 21.1% of its population comprising people aged 60 and over, that is, 21 out of every 100 inhabitants of this geographical region (National Population Council [CONAPO], 2023).

By the year 2050, population aging will be more accentuated; the proportion of people aged 60 and over at the national level will constitute a quarter of the total population (24.1%), that is, 1 out of every 4 people in Mexico will be 60 years old or older. In this scenario, in terms of volume, the State of Mexico will continue to be the entity with the largest number of old people at the national level, reaching 4.7 million. Mexico City will continue to be the entity with the highest

proportion of older people in relation to the total number of residents in this territorial unit, with approximately one third of its population being 60 years of age or older (CONAPO, 2023).

The vulnerability of older adults to discrimination, whether conscious or unconscious, motivated by age, and how this discrimination can be aggravated when it intersects with other factors considered grounds for discrimination, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among others. It is important to highlight these forms of intolerance, since they affect human rights and fundamental freedoms and are also a breeding ground for acts of violence. Discrimination against the older adults, as revealed by the data discussed, manifests itself mainly through stigmas and prejudices associated with statist practices, affecting their autonomy, health, inclusion and participation in society.

Within all the problems for this vulnerable segment of the population, we can highlight the following aspects:

1. Ensuring quality of life based on timely access to preventive medical care in a comprehensive environment: nutrition, physical and mental activity, social activities, nutrition and mental and emotional health.
2. To ensure economic stability by being able to be productive to society and have a fair and adequate economic remuneration to maintain a decent life with independence.
3. Ensure access to a closing of the life cycle through professional, dignified and humane funeral services that do not represent an economic problem for the older adults or their families.

The solutions available to cover this type of needs, such as Life Insurance, Medical Expense Insurance, Pre-need Funeral Plans and/or Funeral Insurance, currently the companies that offer this type of solutions have restrictions or limitations based on age, with the age limit established at 60 years of age. Leaving out this segment of the vulnerable population, which will have a significant growth in the following years.

In FUNEZA, we understand the current needs of this vulnerable social group and aligned with our commitment and vision to serve and help families through support, assistance and guidance for a life well-lived, we developed a comprehensive program focused on addressing the needs of the older adult population in Mexico City and the State of Mexico, where we have a presence.

The SOMOS TU COMPAÑÍA program includes the following actions that have impacted in 2023 and 2024 more than 60,000 older adults who have been incorporated into the program:

1. Elimination of the age restriction in the coverage of funeral services.
2. Incorporation of a comprehensive preventive telemedicine services platform called FUNEZA e-Doctor, which is included free of charge for all our users and offers 24-hour service through a cell phone app or via telephone for preventive medicine, nutrition, psychological care and legal assistance services.
3. Program "Al ritmo del corazón FUNEZA" which sponsors and organizes jointly with civil associations and local, state and federal government agencies, physical activation, recreational and social integration programs free of charge for older adults.
4. The "FUNEZA Emotional Recovery Center" program, which offers psychological consultations free of charge to the general public, as well as a calendar of activities aimed at integral health and social interaction through the creation of communities and support groups. After one year of

operation of this pilot test and due to the success and acceptance obtained, we will close 2024 with the opening of 2 additional Emotional Recovery Centers located in the State of Mexico.

CRECE CON FUNEZA Program, through this program we seek to reincorporate older adults into the economy, allowing them to create an income from the commercialization of our pre-need plans and funeral insurance. We have initiated a recruitment, training and education program that allows older adults to carry out this remunerated activity according to their time availability.

With these actions, and the growth of the program, we expect to be able to increase our reach in the following years to add to our network of affiliates at least 500,000 older adults, which will be an estimated 10% of the population of older adults in Mexico City and the State of Mexico, seeking to align ourselves with the actions of Dignification of this segment of the population in vulnerability.