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Active ageing: The perspective of working life and intergenerational relations

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Structure of Presentation

1. Active ageing – what and why?
2. Active ageing – the drivers
3. Working life
4. Intergenerational relations
5. The future





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1. Active ageing – what and why?

People in later life want to be responsible and contribute in the workplace, the community and the family. They are also saying they need the skills to do this...

Global Ageing Survey, Leeson & Harper 2006, 2007, 2008.





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2. Active ageing – the drivers.

- More generations surviving together in the family
- A new intergenerational solidarity as we move increasingly into second, third and even fourth partnerships with extended families of a complicated and demanding nature
- New individual life courses, both professionally and personally, as we recognise and come to terms with our personal longevity
- New labour market dynamics: recruit, retrain and retain older workers –delaying rather than forcing retirement
- Retirement will become a time of contribution and responsibility, a time of empowerment and citizenship





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3. Working Life – the concept of retirement

In the 1940s and 1950s:

Rest

In the 1970s:

Reward

By the 1980s:

Right

The future:

Responsibility

Global Ageing Survey, Leeson & Harper 2006, 2007, 2008





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3. Working Life – patterns of retirement

- **Two key cohorts:**
 - Current late life workers aged 50 years and over**
 - Future late life workers currently aged 20-50 years**
- **Different needs and demands**
- **Different timescales**





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3. Working Life – patterns of retirement

- **Two key socio-economic groups:**

Professional, managerial workers - pulled out of the labour force by economic incentives and enhanced opportunities for leisure and consumption

Skilled and unskilled occupations - pushed out of the labour force by untenable working conditions and employer attitudes





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3. Working Life – patterns of retirement

- **Obsolete employment: late life workers located in dying industries/sectors**
- **Demand for new skills excludes late life workers as their training in early life is obsolete**

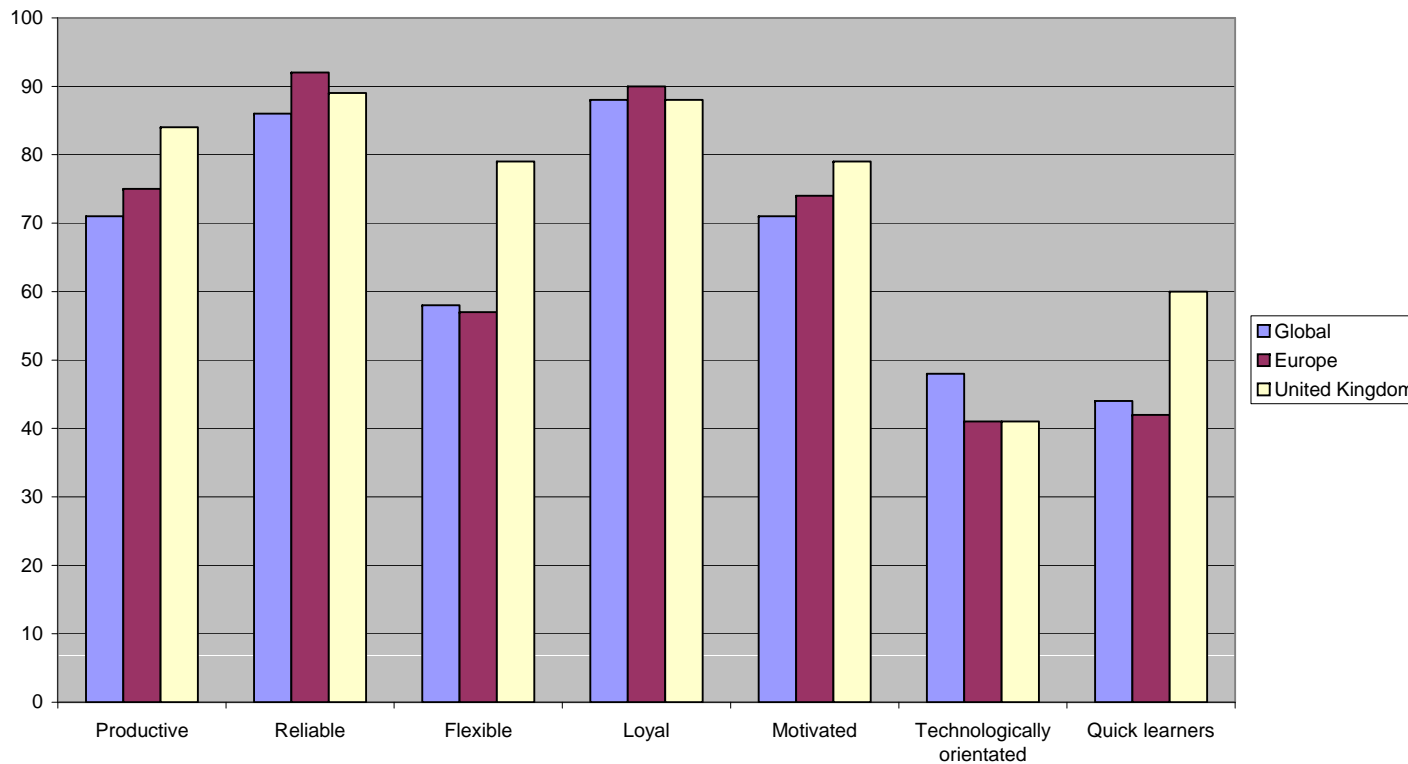




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3. Working Life – young vs. old

Are older workers the same or more.....than younger workers?

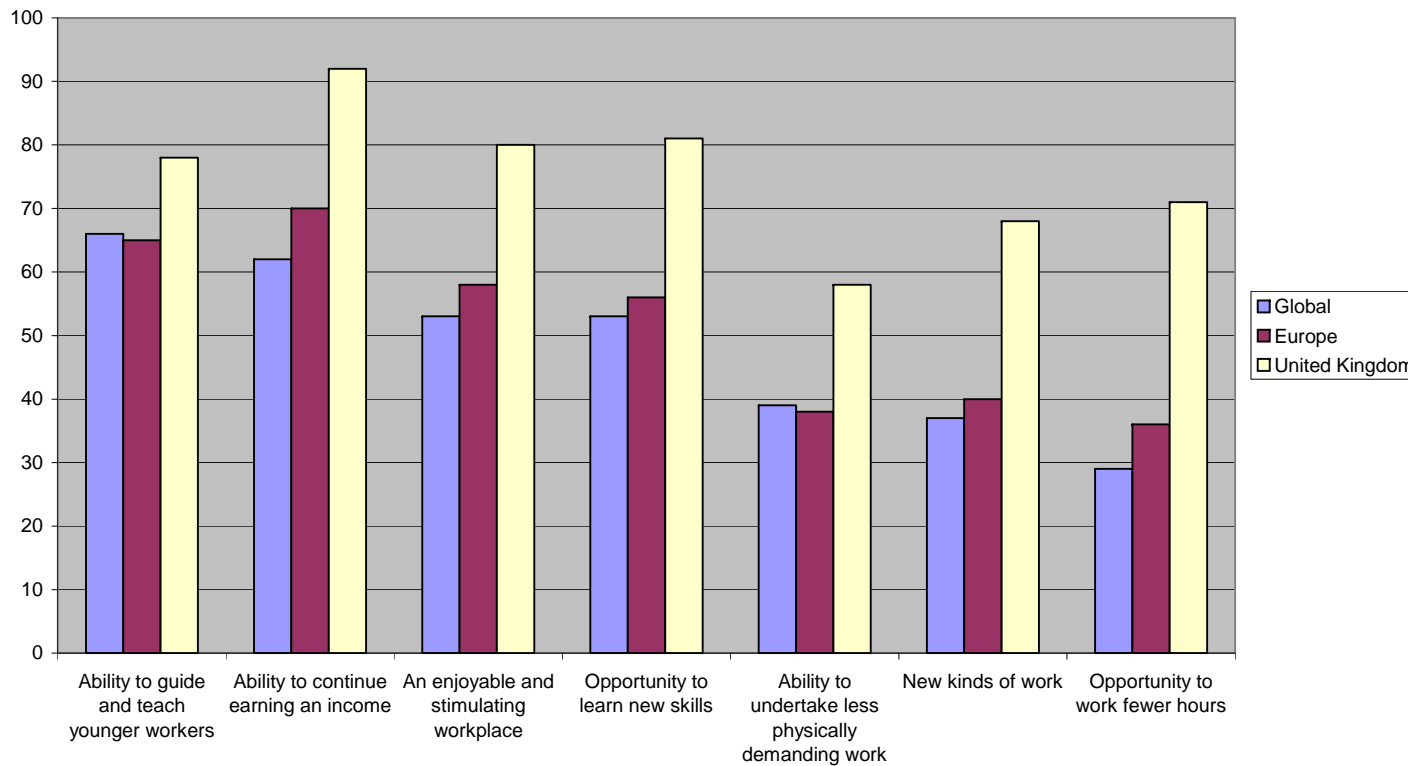




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3. Working Life – retain / retrain

Which does your organisation currently offer to workers aged 50 and older?

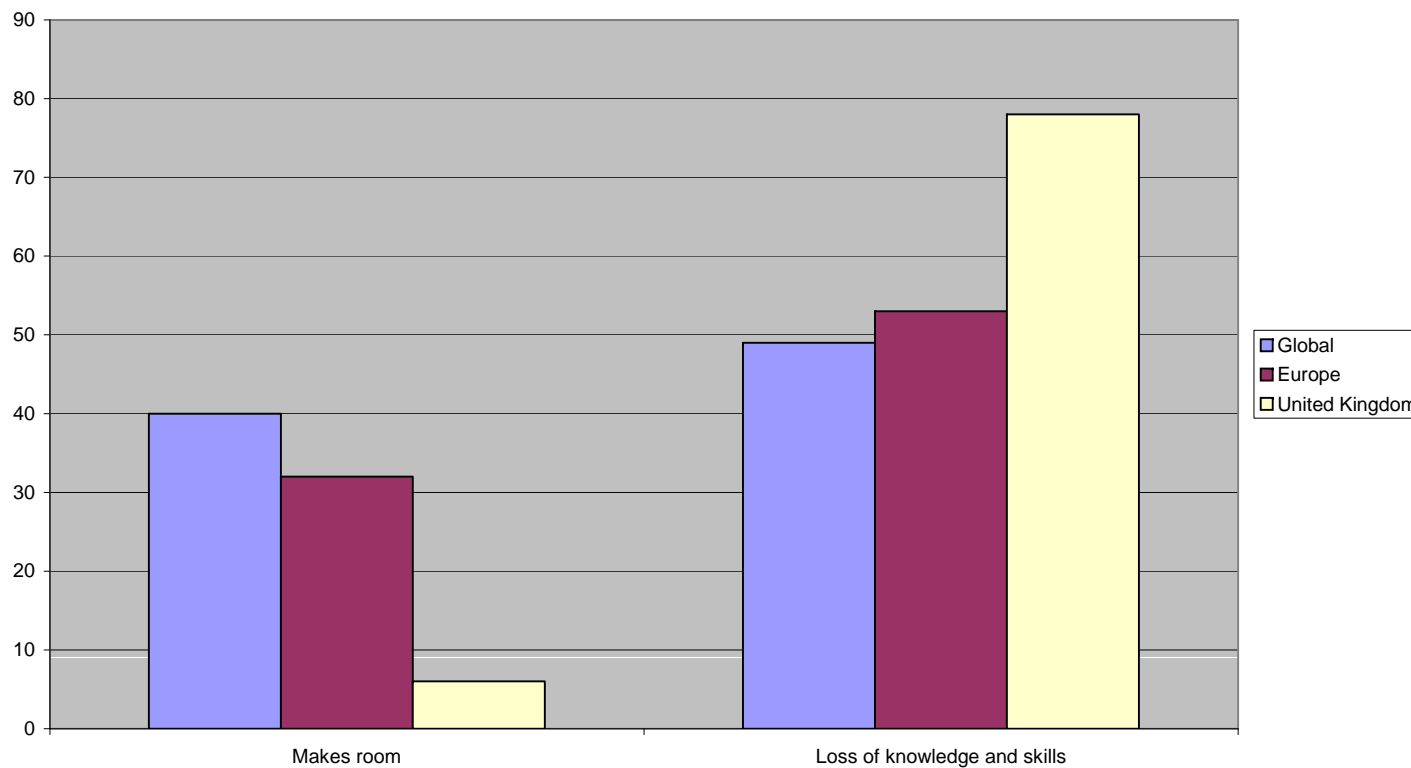




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3. Working Life – out with the old...

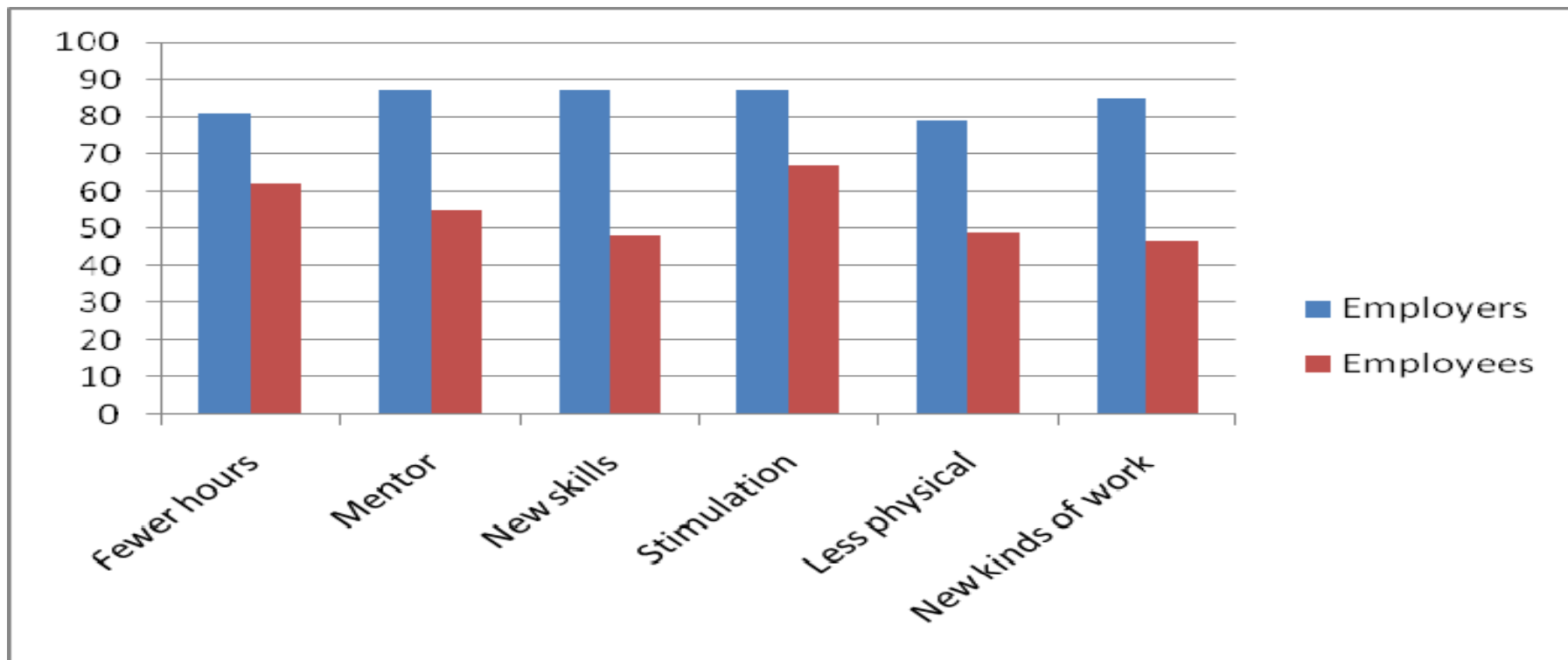
When late life workers retire, it means...





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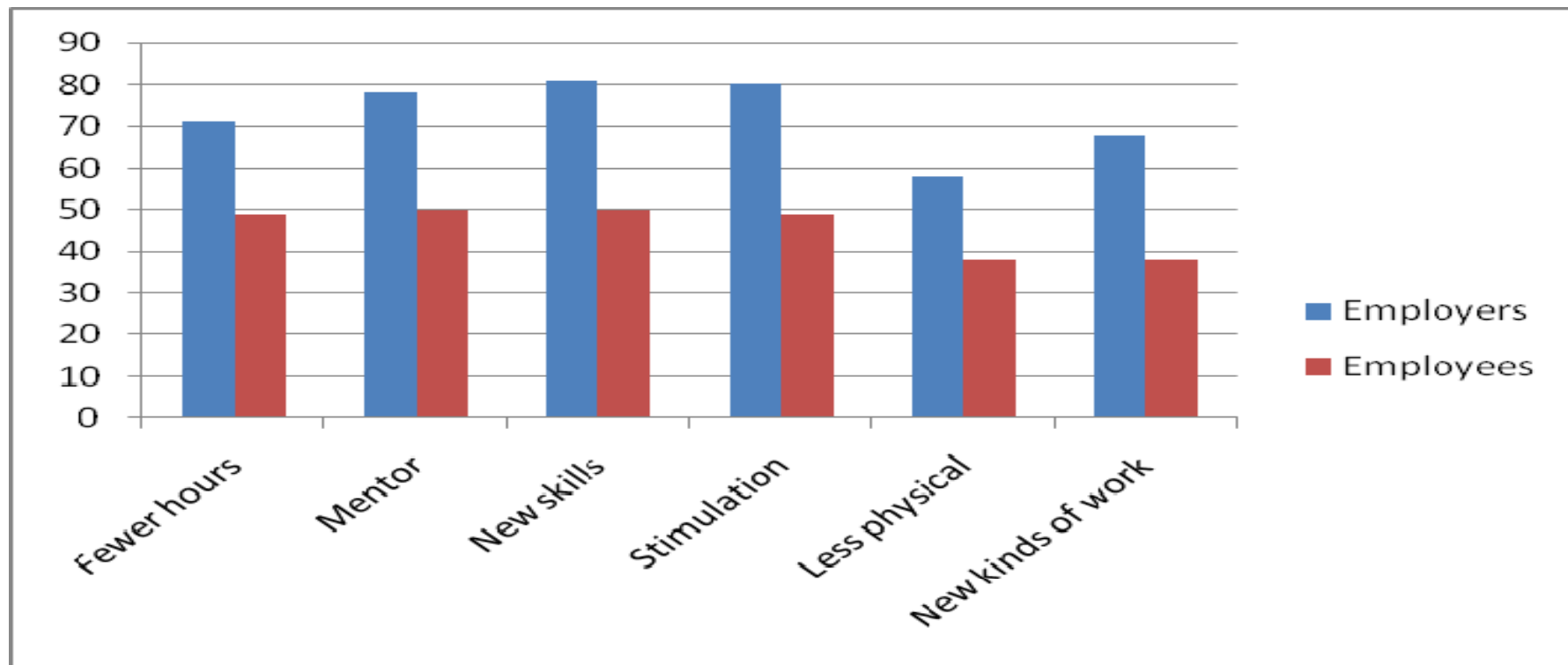
3. Working Life – retain / retrain – employers could do





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3. Working Life – retain / retrain – employers are doing





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4. Intergenerational relations

Family identity

Family solidarity

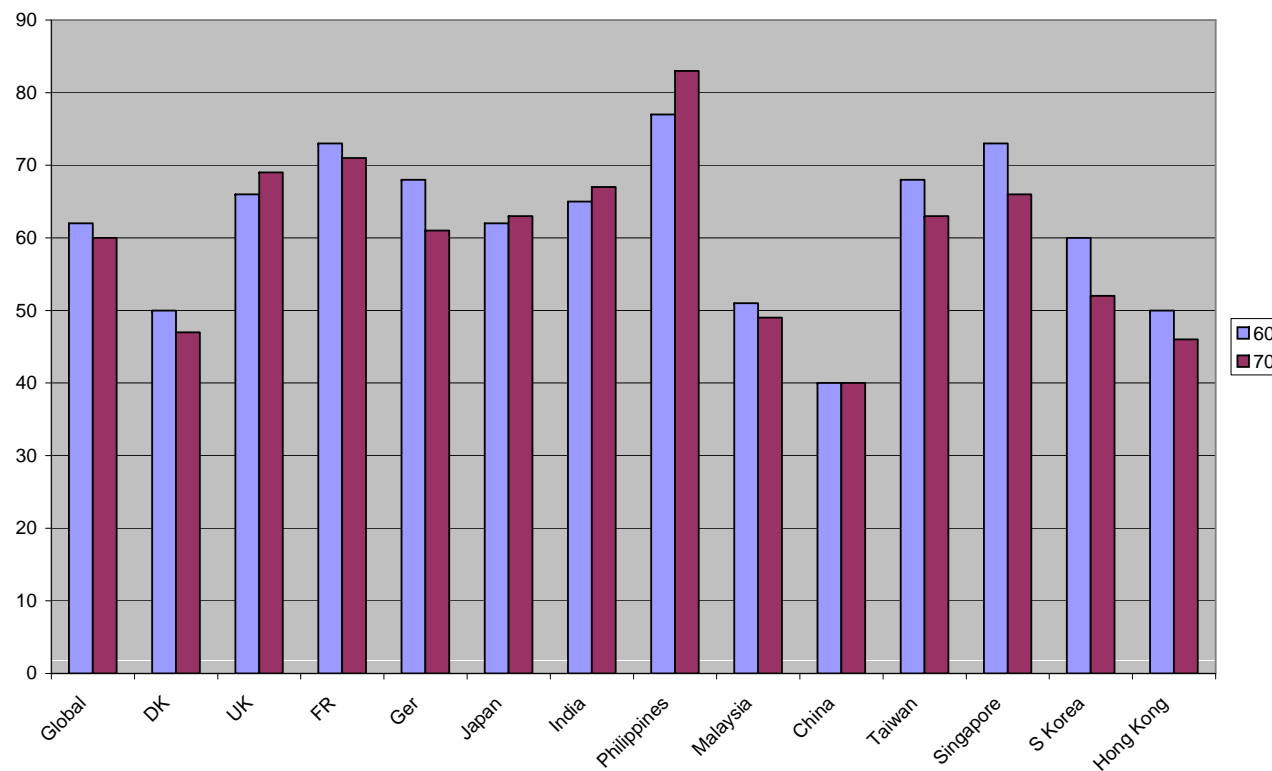




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4. Intergenerational relations – family identity

Proportions identifying primarily with "family"

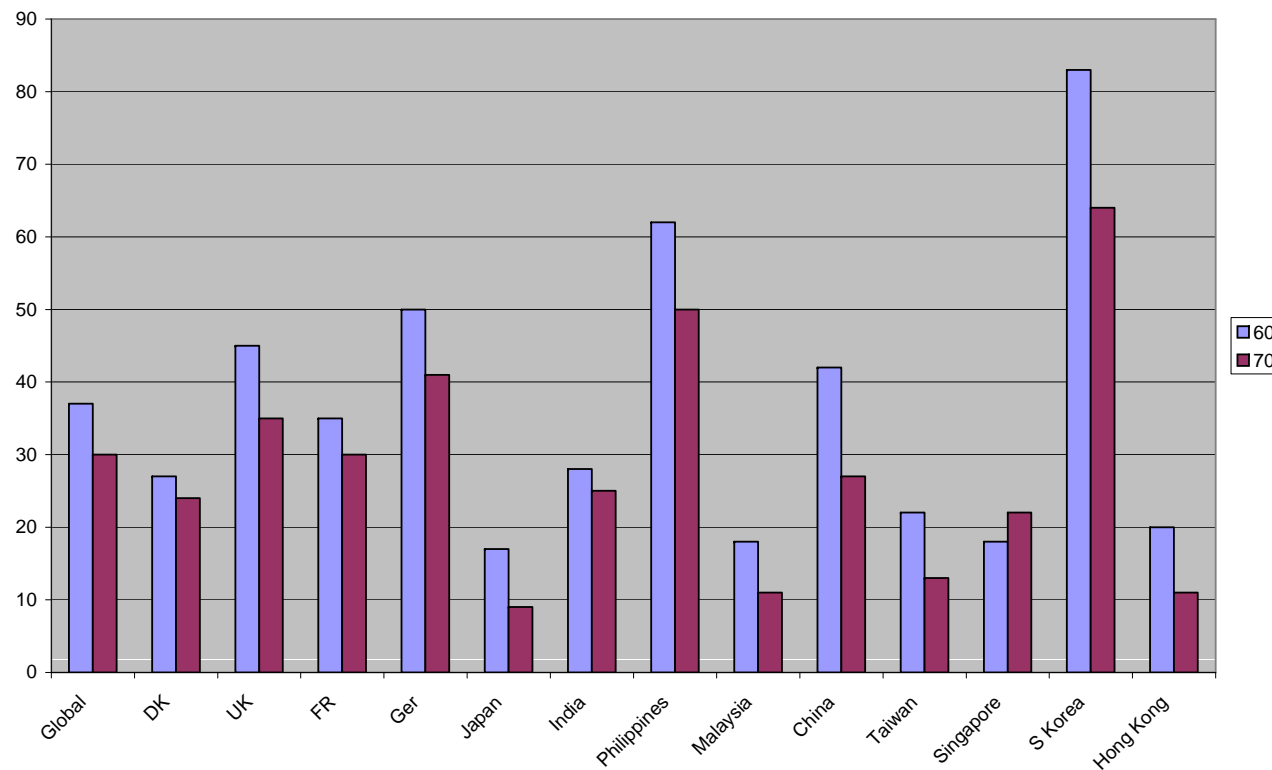




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4. Intergenerational relations – family solidarity

Proportions providing financial support over previous 6 months to relative or friend

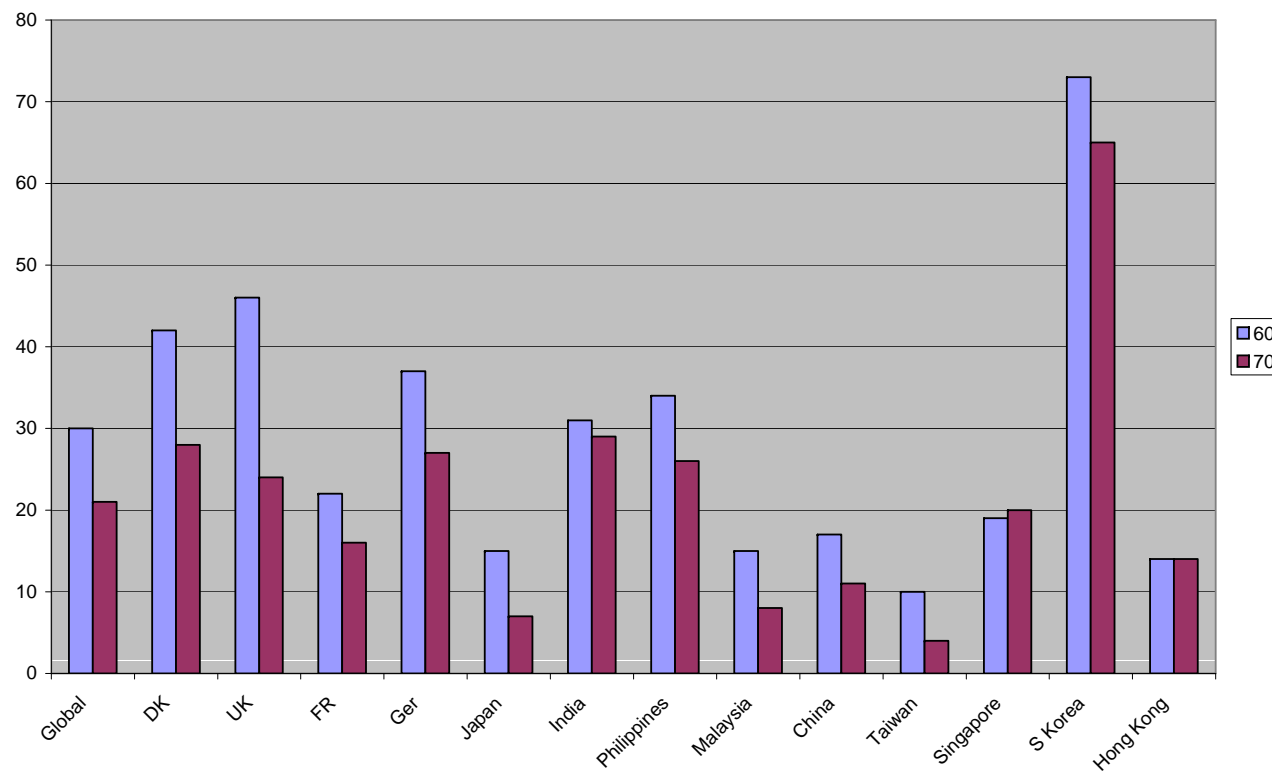




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4. Intergenerational relations – family solidarity

Proportions providing practical help over previous 6 months to relative or friend





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5. The future

The new demography and new social forces are likely to result in active ageing and lifelong learning being prioritized to promote work, family and community life.

Active ageing enables all to participate in complex democratic societies at all levels, and gives society a chance to pursue its social and economic development supported by socially integrated adults of all ages.





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5. The future

Active ageing will include self-promoted learning using information and media technology, community learning, work-place learning and skills development.

It must be pluralistically driven by individuals, communities, employers, governments, private enterprise.





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5. The future

New technology enables the blurring of leisure and education, education becomes a life-style choice enabling mental enhancement and enjoyment

Research indicates that mental development, brain capacity, and longevity are closely associated, so education contributes to active health life

Increasingly important part of public health agenda





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5. The future

And remember:

Mental capacity does not necessarily decline with age, and almost certainly not until late old age for most adults

- fluid intelligence (ability to carry out higher level cognitive functions) may decline from the mid-60s, though not at a standard rate, and possibly due to lack of use
- crystallized intelligence (acquisition of new skills through education) continues to grow throughout adulthood. Indeed, it may be that reduced mental activity among current older adults - in part due to lack of new mental opportunities and activities, and lack of focused training and educational opportunities - actually contributes to apparent decline in mental capacity





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5. The future

And remember:

- Few physical capacity changes are directly related to age. Most are heavily influenced by environment and life style. Those that are age related, such as sensory change, can be adapted for through aids.
- There is substantial evidence that adults of all ages wish to learn, are interested in new technology, and keen to upgrade their skills base. This is likely to increase with future cohorts.

