

communism, n. the theory, or system, of social organization, the so-called communism, a social system, see, n. communally, one who lives in a commune
commune ² (kəmūn'), v. i. to be in close touch (with); (N A) n. (kom'-) communio
ner, n.

communicate (kəmū'nikāt), v. t. of, to transmit; to reveal; v. i. to share; to confer by being connected; to partake of the Eucharist; mutual understanding (with) communicability (-bil'), -ableness
communicant, n. one who communicates; one who partakes of the Eucharist; the act of communicating; communication

Pension Communication

Final report

Project members

Leading member

Sweden: Swedish Pensions Agency (SPA)

Supporting members

Germany: German Federal Pension Insurance (DRV-Bund)

France: National Old-Age Insurance Fund for Employees (CNAV)

Peru: Derrama Magisterial

Russia: Pension Fund of the Russian Federation (PFR)

Indonesia: National Social Security Administering Body for Employment (BPJS Ketenagakerjaan)

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Executive summary

This project on pension communication can be found among the activities defined in the work plan of the Technical Commission on Old-age, Invalidity and Survivors Insurance (TC Pensions) for 2014-2016. The project aimed at collating experience on what is being done around the world in the field of pension communication, analyse effects of different approaches, and establish what the current best practices are. The results of the project is presented in this report as well as through input to new communication guidelines made available in the ISSA academy for excellence.

Information for the project was collected through an information inventory (aimed at compiling already existing knowledge) and a questionnaire sent to 41 ISSA member institutions around the world.

It is important to consider the type of pension system in place (DB, DC or NDC), the degree of development (newly or well established pension system/organisation) and the cultural and local context when deciding about suitable communication measures. It is also vital to include already at an early stage plans for measuring and evaluating implemented activities, to improve the outcome and better reach the targets set. The report shows that following-up and measuring effects of communication activities is an important area for improvement for most administrations.

All communication activities should take their starting point in the costumers need and expectations. A customer orientation should not only be present in regularly communication activities, but should also be a priority when e.g. designing decision letters.

Interest and lack of time is often critical factors when trying to reach pension savers. It's therefore helpful to inform people about the actual outcome of their behaviour instead of explaining the often complex structure of the existing pension system. Even so, many institutions currently do not.

It's vital for all institutions to be aware of their customers' specific needs, life circumstances and preferred communication channels when deciding on communication activities. This can be achieved by actively defining and addressing specific target groups with customized communication measures. Working with life situations can e.g. be a successful way to make information feel relevant to the customers. Throughout this report can be found several examples showing that it's easier to reach and more effective to work with smaller, well defined target groups. Also the tolerance for more in-depth information is higher when it's perceived as relevant.

Pension information in general and forecasts in particular should aim at providing a complete picture, that goes beyond the own administration, including all sources of pension, on a national as well as international level without overburdening the customer with excessive information.

Background

This project on pension communication can be found among the activities defined in the work plan of the Technical Commission on Old-age, Invalidity and Survivors Insurance (TC Pensions) for 2014-2016, where it's listed as supporting ISSA topical priority 3: Dynamic Social Security: A key condition for inclusive societies and economic growth.

The need for information to participants is inherent in all pension systems, in particular in DC and NDC systems. As regards pension, many studies have been made over the last 30 years by the ISSA, and by many others, on issues of sustainability, adequacy, system design, fairness, longevity, benchmarks etc. However, one area that has so far not been dealt with to any great extent by the ISSA is pension communication. Irrespective of a country's social security system, there is a need for knowledge on effective methods to explain to participants how the system works, how different individual behaviours affects the individual pension, and how most pension systems are an agreement between generations.

The project aimed at collating experience on what is being done around the world in the field of pension communication, analyse effects of different approaches, and establish what the current best practices are. The goals with establishing best practices in the area of pension communication were twofold. Most important is to strengthen the individual consumers by customising information that meets their specific needs and expectations. Information that allows individual consumers to make informed decisions about their pension without being overloaded with redundant system information. Secondly, best practices can help provide useful input for decision makers in both the design and policy phases.

The results of the project is presented in this report as well as through input to new communication guidelines made available in the ISSA academy for excellence.

The information gathering and analysis were made keeping in mind the needs of the individual participants as well as the needs of the social security administrations. The first activity of the project, an information inventory aimed at compiling already existing relevant research, case studies and publications in the area of pension communication and financial behaviour. The information retrieved were collected through the resources of the ISSA Secretariat, studies of open sources and gathering of good examples from the members of the project group. For this purpose a set of questions (see Annex 1) were answered by the members of the project group. The replies were compiled and analysed and the need for additional information gathering determined. The full results of the information inventory can be found in the interim report Pension Communication - Activity 1, Information inventory, Version 5.0 (attached to this report), with the exception of the reply BPJS Ketenagakerjaan in Indonesia. Examples from Indonesia can however be found in this final report.

Following the information inventory a questionnaire was prepared and sent to social security institutions. The questionnaire was sent to 41 selected member institutions in 38 countries spread over all continents (see Annex 2). A total of 20 replies was received, i.e. a response rate of 48,8% based on the number of institutions who received the questionnaire. The collected material have been analysed and the main conclusions are presented in this report. All replies to the information gathering can be found attached to this report.

The context matters

Patterns identified in the study of open sources, available research and through the replies received through the questionnaires to members of ISSA, shows that it is important to consider the type of pension system in place (DB, DC or NDC), the degree of development (newly or well established pension system/organisation) and the cultural and local context when deciding about suitable communication measures.

In relation to the degree of development (newly or well established pension system/organisation)

It is natural and often necessary when implementing a new system/organisation to, as a first step, make the basic functions of the administration work (paying benefits and collecting contributions). Secondly focus is shifted to the perception of the services. Finally, attention can be directed towards more progressive communication strategies based on e.g. research on financial behaviour etc.

In relation to cultural differences and local conditions

Legal and culture differences have to be taken into consideration when presenting information messages and choosing channels. It will also have an impact on how information is perceived by the beneficiaries.

Certain differences, reflecting local conditions, can e.g. be detected in the choice of communications channels. The National Insurance Fund (Cameroon) uses e.g. local radio stations as one channel for their communication measures.

Culture differences might have an impact on how administrations look at their customers and perceive the need for a customer oriented approach. The balance between legally comprehensive information and more simplified targeted information that lack legal value is often impacted by local traditions and the legal environment of the administration and their beneficiaries. This is a challenge for several organisations. Communication measures do however risk becoming incomprehensible, if the legal perspective is predominant.

Cultural differences also have an impact on if and to which extent institutions find it appropriate to point people towards a beneficial behaviour.

In relation to the type of pension system in place (DB, DC or NDC)

The main difference between DB and DC systems in terms of communication can be found in the need for forecasts and calculation tools. The size of a future benefit is known in case of DB systems, therefore forecasts are not relevant. DC and NDC systems on the other hand are depending on a series of variables and connected with a degree of uncertainty, which creates a need for more information and supporting calculation tools to help beneficiaries understand and predict their future pensions. The uncertainty also creates a need for conveying crises information, which is seldom needed for DB systems.

In relation to the strength of the private market

A market with strong private actors puts additional pressure on communication measures. Simplified and reliable information becomes more important with an increasing number of actors competing for the attention of the customers. The competition also increases the costs and necessary efforts.

Focus on the customer

The project group has identified a number of areas that are important from a customer point of view. First and for most there is need for a more customer oriented approach that goes beyond the own administration, creating an increased awareness of all sources of pension and perhaps other social benefits. An increased customer orientation could be the answer to many issues raised by the responding institutions.

Relating communication to life situations (first job, having children, retiring etc.) can be a successful way to make the information feel relevant to the customers. Especially as the tolerance for more in-depth information is higher when it's perceived as relevant.

Aggregated data on customer needs and behaviour

To better understand the customers' needs for information services and preferred channels it can be a good idea to gather and map relevant data on customer needs and behaviour. This can be achieved by analysing both web statistics, experience of staff in customer service and customer surveys (both qualitative and quantitative data). A good analyses makes it easier to identify, define and prioritize actions to meet the customers' needs.

Incentives for the customer

Personal incentives for the customer (what's in it for me?) are important to the outcome of any communication campaign when attempting to influence the customers' knowledge or behaviour.

The customers are not interested

The OECD Pensions Outlook 2014¹ identifies communal challenges regarding pension information: There are three main challenges for any communication initiative in the area of pensions: the lack of interest in the topic for a large part of the population (especially the young), the perceived or actual complexity of the topic, and the low level of financial awareness, knowledge, motivations, confidence, skills and responsibility of consumers, especially among the more vulnerable groups.

¹ OECD (2014), OECD Pensions Outlook 2014, OECD Publishing. Chapter 5, Pension communication: Pensions statements and national campaigns <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264222687-en>



A majority of the responding institutions find it helpful to inform people more about the actual outcome of their behaviour instead of explaining the (often complex) structures of the system. Communicating favourable behaviour could be done in a first step through simple messaging and in a second step through more elaborate guidance.

Research concerning financial behaviour shows that the complexity of the pension system makes people feel that the burden of gaining information is not weighed up by the benefits of understanding the system². Information should therefore be simple, short and easy to understand and aim at explaining how different decisions in life affects the future pension. It's also beneficial to help customers sort amongst available information by pointing them in the right direction. This is often done by designing default alternatives that do not require people to make active choices.

Social security institutions can and should have an interest in influencing the choices of their customers through their communication measures. A majority of the responding institutions have also identified informing about the factors most important for determining the size of their beneficiaries' future pension as an important area that impacts their communication strategy. However, most institutions have none or little information about the awareness of the beneficiaries.

Only two responding institutions (the Social Security Administration (USA) and the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation) have measured the awareness of their beneficiaries or have relevant research. The Pension Fund of the Russian Federation has e.g. conducted in 2014, with the help of an independent research centre, a survey to determine the awareness among the beneficiaries.

The information inventory shows that in the United Kingdom, the Pensions Act 2008 established new duties which stated that employers need to provide their UK workers with access to a workplace pension plan that meets certain minimum standards. Some workers will be automatically enrolled into the pension plan and others can ask to join. The former is called 'automatic enrolment. These reforms affect the majority of UK employers and are intended to help up to 11 million more people save for retirement.

The auto-enrolment, based on the "nudge"-theory in behavioural finance³, has been a success. Predictions of opt-out rates running at 33% or so have been trashed; the industry average so far is just 9%, according to official Department for Work and Pensions estimates. Some providers report higher opt-out rates, however, particularly among older workers.

The UK also has the Behavioural Insights Team, a government-financed research institution dedicated to the application of behavioural sciences.

In Latin America, policymakers are beginning to learn that the design of the default investment option is extremely important in mandatory individual systems, since a significant percentage of participants will likely fail to make an active choice. The design of the default portfolio in Latin American countries was to select a more aggressive default option for younger participants and a less aggressive one for older participants. In Chile, for example, members who do not make an active choice are assigned to balanced funds based on a participant's expected time horizon until retirement and gender. The rule for assigning members to one of the five funds involves dividing them into three age groups, where younger members are

2 Oliva S. Mitchell och Stephen P. Utkus (red) Pension Design and Structure: New Lessons from Behavioral Finance, Oxford University Press (2004)

3 Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, Nudge (book) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

assigned to a fund with more equities and older member to one with a higher allocation to fixed income instruments. Members can choose funds in the two extremes of the spectrum (fund A and fund E), but the default funds are only those in between. In Chile, they also have a regulation to prevent pensioners and members close to retirement from taking high risks with their mandatory savings. The design of the default option in Mexico and Peru points in a similar direction⁴.

More information about research on financial behaviour can be found in Annex 3.

Life situations

Relating communication to life situations (first job, students etc.) can be a successful way to make the information feel relevant to the customers. Especially as the tolerance for more in-depth information is higher when it's perceived as relevant, e.g. personalised information for teachers in public schools as provided by Derrama Magisterial (Peru). The example of Derrama Magisterial also shows that it's easier to reach and more effective to work with smaller, well defined target groups.

Target group orientation is a guiding principle of the communication strategy of the German Federal Pension Insurance. This is for example reflected by the structure of the homepage. The prominently located button "Lebenslagen" (life situations) leads the visitors to a page where they can choose a life situation similar to their own in order to get suitable further information.

The Swedish Pensions Agency has a similar approach, where the information on the organisation's website is structured according to three basic phases in life: Saving for retirement, Planning retirement and Living with a pension. This is to make the information more relevant and easy to find for most of the visitors to the website. See figure below.

The Swedish Pensions Agency also analyses customer needs based on these phases in life. Through surveys, statistics and gathering of data in different ways the organisation has identified needs and questions regarding pensions that are common in the different phases. This is helpful when trying to construct comprehensible, simple and relevant information to the public.

⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/finance/private-pensions/39368306.pdf>

Based on the needs of pension savers and pensioners

Saving for retirement

- How do pensions work?
- How much money will I get when I retire?
- Should I save for my retirement? How much?
- What affects my pension? How much do different options affect?
- When to study? And for how long?
- How long to stay home with my children?
- Do I have to make choices?
- Which fund should I choose?

Planning retirement

- When can I stop working?
- How much do I get a month at different options?
- Should I work extra / part time?
- How to handle my economy if I can not be bothered to work longer?
- How much do I have to live on when everything is added together?
- How does my pension compare to others?
- How do I apply?
- Which fund should i choose?

Living with a pension

- What affects the pension?
Reduced pensions?
- How much do I have to live on when evereything is added together?
- What happens when a family member dies?
- Can I get help with the rent?
- What happens to my case?
- Which fund should I choose?

Reaching out and supporting customers

The European Commission, the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, made a report in 2013 “The right to retirement pension information”, which pointed out some best practices concerning pension communication. One of the most important conclusions in the report was the need to tailor pension communication to target groups. The report says that “Communication has to meet the information needs and characteristics of the receivers. Different target groups might need different types of information, as well as require it to be delivered through different mediums, in accordance with one’s gender and/or economic, occupational and educational background.”

Why is focus on the target group such an important part of all communication? Simply because the communication becomes more efficient, because the member of the target group feels that the information concerns just them. Target-group orientation is something everybody knows when talking to other people. Few would address their mother in the same way as their employer. Adapting to the target group is something natural when you see your target in front of you. It becomes harder when you do not see them.

In fact, the target group decides all other things when it comes to communication – you must use a channel that reaches the target group, your message must be adapted to the target group, you must use a language and tone that is suitable to the target group, and you must know your target group to find out how many times you have to repeat your message to reach them. You also have to consider if there are other actors that communicate with the same target group and perhaps will disturb your communication with other, and perhaps contradictory messages.

In this chapter we will draw some conclusions and show examples concerning target-group-adaption, use of channels, how institutions deal with communication from the market, and how they choose to provide support to their customers.

Target groups

Targeting efforts should not only focus on the content of the information, but also the channel used and the presentation. It’s also easier to reach and more effective to work with smaller, well defined target groups.

The answers from the questionnaire show that some institutions are more focused on customer needs, which help them in defining their relevant target groups. Even so, the responding institutions could possibly benefit from focusing more on certain target groups, given the large number of target groups mentioned, instead of trying to reach everyone with equal efforts. It should be kept in mind that also institutions who consider all target groups to be equally important single out certain groups for specific campaigns and information measures.

Targeting based on age seems to be the most common approach used by the responding institutions and the need (short term and long term) of the target group used to define the necessity for targeted communication measures. However, the need (short term and long term) and size of the target groups have to be put in relation to the administrative costs when planning and deciding on the use of targeted information measures.

Segmentation of the population into sub-target-groups can be fruitful to personalise the communication. The BPJS Ketenagakerjaan in Indonesia maps the beneficiaries based on their characteristics: age, gender,



education level, place of residence, the usual communication channel used, etc. They then pick out suitable communication channels that are tailored to the characteristics, and considered most cost effective and efficient. Finally, the chosen communication channels are monitored and evaluated through pilot projects in order to gain input for further improvements.

When you log on to the Swedish Pensions Agency's website you are automatically categorised based on your age as well as your interest and knowledge in pension matters. Based on the categorization, you will receive information adapted to your needs. This segmentation strategy has proven to be successful 70 per cent of the times, according to statistics from the Swedish Pensions Agency. Segmentation is also used to add different supplementary information to the annual pension forecast, the orange envelope, which is distributed to 4,9 million pension savers.

Channels and channel-strategies

In the questionnaire institutions were asked to provide examples of successful communication projects. The examples, together with all other replies to the questionnaire, can be found attached to this report. However, a few common communication strategies can be seen throughout most of the projects mentioned in the replies to the questionnaire. The responding institutions:

- focus more on the channels used rather than the results and effects of the communication measures/projects.
- allocate a multichannel approach to reach their targets and set goals.
- provide, in many cases, Internet based personal accounts.

A majority of the responding institutions find Internet to be the most efficient way to communicate with customers. Several institutions also use social media in various ways. Internet is of course in most cases a cost-effective way to reach out. In organisations where cost-control is more important than reaching beneficiaries, it can be tempting to consider a banner on their own website as good enough. But often, it takes more to get a real effect in the target group. That is why a multichannel approach seems to be favoured by the responding institutions when reaching out to the public. However, most institutions prefer to be contacted through Internet services, while a few prefer phone, letters or personal meetings.

The use of financial incentives is generally very efficient, if the necessary resources are available to the administration. The Pension Fund of the Russian Federation illustrates the use of information on financial behaviour with the successful implementation of the Government Pension Co-Financing Programme where each voluntary insurance contribution is matched by the government. Almost 16 million people have joined the programme, resulting in a six fold increase of the amount of voluntary insurance contributions paid.

The National Insurance Fund (Cameroon) has conducted a very successful campaign to get pensioners to receive their pension through their local bank or through an electronic wallet. During the course of the campaign the use of banks by pensioners went from 0,27 % as at 1 January 2008 to 96,8 % as at 31 December 2014 (including 9 % electronic wallets).

Personalised meetings are preferred by e.g. Derrama Magisterial (Peru) and the Social Insurance Institute

– National Social Insurance Fund (Ivory Coast). Derrama Magisterial has focused its information activities to individual meetings and personalised services due to the specific group of beneficiaries (teachers in public schools). The meetings are arranged in the office or home of the beneficiary, thus minimizing the effort requested from the beneficiary. Derrama Magisterial also uses individualised accounts and information material, to further limit the effort required by the target group.

The Social Insurance Institute - National Social Insurance Fund in Ivory Coast also prefer personalised meetings that provide an opportunity for direct feedback.

The BPJS Ketenagakerjaan in Indonesia, provides information and service through internet and social media, but also through Kiosks, placed in strategic places. They also offer personal meetings at service point offices, in cooperation with banks, minimarkets, supermarkets and local governments. Thus, the beneficiaries can be reached even in the most remote areas.

The Swedish Pensions Agency provides information and service in around 100 local offices (shared with the Tax Agency and the Swedish Social Insurance Agency). It is possible to book a meeting, in personal or online through video, with a customer service consultant. Sharing offices and staff with two other major governmental agencies have proven to be very cost-effective and have also provided a possibility to offer service at a level that would otherwise not have been possible.

To facilitate their work, many institutions try to influence directly or indirectly customers to use certain channels, e.g. the Social Security Administration (USA). *“To reduce the strain on resources and to allow us to handle more complex cases in our local offices, we do encourage the public to use our online services to obtain information or to file their claims. We also encourage members of the public to use our online services to verify their earnings and obtain estimates of their benefits so they have timely information and to reduce print and postage costs to the agency.”*

The need for Internet based personal accounts are addressed by several institutions through various services. Good examples of how personalised Internet accounts can be used are found in e.g. Italy (National Social Insurance Institute) and Japan (Japan Pension Service).

The Japan Pension Service uses Internet based personal accounts both to inform and to interact with beneficiaries. The National Social Insurance Institute in Italy uses Internet based personal accounts to create transparency by making it possible for the beneficiaries to e.g. see contributions made and to create and see the impact of different scenarios when making a decision about when to retire etc. In addition to the Internet based personal accounts, a mobile app has also been created with tailored information that enables beneficiaries to make informed decisions based on the specifics of their own situation.

Since 1 October 2013 the German Federal Pension Insurance offers its customers the possibility to communicate securely via De-Mail, a procedure which is similar to e-mail. In addition, available online services enable customers to safely access their own insurance record, for example to retrieve data in order to plan their supplementary private old-age provision. Furthermore, the customers can exchange electronic messages with their pension insurance institution. Pensioners, for instance, can print out a pensioner ID or a pension statement for submission to the tax office. Both the online services and De-Mail are advertised on the Internet, in brochures and at trade fairs. The customers also receive information on the possibility to submit applications electronically, using the online services, when their insurance record is updated.

Consumer support

Raising awareness of savings is important to institutions where private pension savings is an important part of the pension system. Some institutions even stimulate savings in various ways. Good examples can be found in e.g. Canada (Quebec Pensions Board) and the USA (Social Security Administration). The Quebec Pensions Board encourages through various information measures their beneficiaries to calculate their savings needs for when they retire. However, the emphasis is on people aged 35 to 49. *“The Board feels that at this age the citizen has access to a healthy income and can save a portion of it. It is also early enough for the savings to yield conclusive results. We also think that retirement starts to be a less abstract subject at this age”*. It should be noted that information provided to this age group need to be short and specific due to the time constraints and the level of interest of the group.

The Social Security Administration (USA) *“emphasizes that Social Security is only one part of retirement, and encourage the importance of other incomes and savings”*. This is reflected in all the information activities of the administration.



...and in relation to the private market

An overall conclusion given in the OECD Pensions Outlook 2014 report is that Government pension communication campaigns should avoid confusion with private providers' campaigns. It is important to maintain an effective control of the campaign, avoid mixed messages and ensure the objectivity of the information provided.

A few examples of this are given. In Estonia, for example, private providers agreed to postpone their advertising until the government's campaign was completed. In Poland, the government went as far as restricting the marketing campaigns used by pension providers during its own campaign.

Experiences of Hungary and Poland demonstrates that providers' advertising and marketing campaigns can overshadow the government's information campaign and, in certain cases, give rise to a situation where consumers over-estimate the benefits and under-estimate the costs and risks of the DC system.

Most responding institutions do not provide help to their beneficiaries in relation to the private market. Concrete examples of cooperation can however be found in e.g. the replies of the German Federal Pension Insurance, the National Insurance Institute (Israel) and the Mexican Social Security Institute.

The National Insurance Institute (Israel) has developed a counselling service for the elderly. *"The service is run by professional social workers and volunteers. The volunteers undergo an academic training course to be able to provide guidance and support to the elderly and their families on various issues, including finances."*

The German Federal Pension Insurance provides comprehensive independent guidance to its beneficiaries. *"This service is rendered by specially trained consultants who give a free of charge and neutral presentation of options for old-age provision."*

The Mexican Social Security Institute gives information about *"loans from retirement plans that can be requested from private sector financial entities. The best and cheapest options available for pensioners are reviewed."*

Forecasts and information relating to all pension pillars

Information relating to all pension pillars

It's crucial for beneficiaries to get an overview of all pension pillars to be able to make informed decisions about their pensions. The information should preferably be provided on an individual level. However, individualised information on all pension pillars could potentially raise questions related to data integrity. Just over half of the responding institutions inform about all pension pillars. In most cases the information is provided on a general level. However e.g. the Department of Human Services (Australia) provides more individualised information about the range of pension pillars through its Financial Information Service (FIS), which offers comprehensive retirement planning.

An example, referred to in the information inventory, concerns the United Kingdom. A special body in the United Kingdom, the Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)⁵, provides pension information concerning all pillars. TPAS is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions, which gives information, guidance and help relating to state, occupational and private pensions.

On the European level, there is an NGO called AGE Platform Europe⁶ that among other things works for better pension information. They argue that information about pensions should cover all sources of pension (state, occupational and private schemes), that it should be communicated at the same time, be dynamic and available from the very beginning of one's working career.

Standards for presenting pension forecasts

The main focus of pension information is a projection of expected future benefit. This information can be provided in a number of ways. However there should only be one standard for how this amount should be calculated and presented. The standard is based on many years of international experience in the USA, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Holland and Sweden⁷. The standard pension projection answers the question: if the present legal and contractual arrangements that I am covered by and my present income persists unaltered until my retirement what pension can I then expect.

The standard pension projection:

- Is a monthly amount (if benefit is paid monthly or other interval if benefit is paid at other intervals)
- Presented at the legal retirement age (other ages may be added, but are not standard)
- Presented/calculated in today's prices and income level. That is either zero inflation and income growth should be assumed in the projection, or if price and/or income growth is assumed in the calculation of the pension benefit, the pension benefit should be discounted by inflation and/or income growth. (other assumptions may be added but are not standard)

⁵ <http://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/>

⁶ AGE Platform Europe was set up in January 2001 following a process of discussion on how to improve and strengthen cooperation between older people's organizations at EU level. Membership is open to European, national and regional organizations, and to both organizations of older people and organizations for older people. Organizations of older people will have the majority of votes in our decision-making bodies. Membership is open only to non-profit-making organizations. The work is financed by grants of the European Union, membership fees and donations.

⁷ Orange report, Annual report on the Swedish Pension system 2007 (page 7, The Information Challenge), <https://secure.pensionsmyndigheten.se/download/18.361b851614f842fc4f510de4/1446806341596/Orange+Report+2007+english.pdf>.

- If return on capital has an implication for the pension benefit such pensions should also be presented in today's prices and income level. (other assumptions may be added but are not standard)
- If mortality/life expectancy has an impact on benefits or standard retirement age the projection of mortality used by national statistic's office or corresponding should be used
- If there are options in the legislation or contract, for example, other payment periods than life either the default option should be used in the information

The OECD Pensions Outlook 2014 report addresses the issue of providing pension projections to individuals. It argues about the possible implications and the complexity in doing this, for example about projections being uncertain and difficult to present in a user-friendly way, and discusses pension projections as a possible way of empowering individuals to take active steps to improve their retirement income.

It also addresses the need and difficulty in providing information of an individual's total pension: "Ideally, the accounting information provided in the annual pension statement would be comprehensive, covering the member's pension accruals from all private sources and the state pension. However, this type of combined statement is unusual. The reason given for this is the difficulty of coordinating data between different plans and providers, among other factors."

The report concludes that the pension statement should ideally combine all pension information relevant to the individual, incorporating information from all pension sources (PAYG-financed pensions as well as private and funded pensions) given the overall structure of the pension system. The value of pension information to the individual is significantly diminished if information only relates to a single plan. Three examples of suggestions when designing statements with pension forecasts mentioned are:

- The most important figure for the consumer is likely to be the projected monthly income, which should be highlighted.
- Assumptions should be net of actual charges and take account of future inflation, so that the member sees the projected monthly income in "today's prices".
- Even the term "projection" might be misunderstood and a suitable user-friendly synonym should be adopted, such as "forecast" or "indication". Mathematical and technical accuracy should give way to user friendly language.

Practical examples and experiences of providing forecasts

A majority of the responding institutions send to their beneficiaries an individualised forecast covering their part of the pension system. The forecast can normally also be accessed through Internet. Reminders are sometimes sent to encourage beneficiaries to access their Internet accounts, e.g. the Social Security Administration (USA) sends annual reminders through e-mail to their beneficiaries, with a registered online account, asking them to review their online statement.

The responding institutions are of the opinion that forecasts:

- make it easier for beneficiaries to predict their future pensions (an expected future pension amount).



- provide a better transparency for the beneficiaries.
- help beneficiaries plan their future carrier choices, retirement age and need for savings.

The current age and the foreseen retirement age of the beneficiary are together with the size of the contributions and/or the income the most important variables to make up a good forecast according to a majority of the responding institutions.

Providing forecasts about all pillars of the pension system is valuable from a customer point of view. It should however be noted that gathering and presenting data about all pillars of the system requires substantial resources. The Swedish Pensions Agency provides a comprehensive forecast covering all pillars of the pension system (www.minpension.se). A service that contains over 98 percent of all pension capital in Sweden. The information inventory showed that similar forecasts can also be found in Denmark (www.pensionsinfo.dk) and Chile (<http://www.spensiones.cl/apps/simuladorPensiones>). The Swedish and Danish forecasts are made available through websites that are collaborations between the state and the private sector and that collect information from all actors and thus make it possible for the individual to reach their own pension information and make a forecast on the total pension payment.

Other examples, referred to in the information inventory, concern the National Old-Age Insurance Fund for Employees in France, the German Federal Pension Insurance and the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation.

All customers over 45 receive every five years information from the National Old-Age Insurance Fund for Employees in France about their future pension. The information includes information about the contributions paid as well as a simulation of the future pension rights. The information provided contains data from multiple regimes to provide a complete picture of all regimes relevant for the basic as well as the complementary pension. Detailed forecasts can be accessed through the Internet in order to assess different scenarios. More detailed information are also provided through personal meetings organised all over the country with an outspoken goal to meet all consumers before their retirement to help advice on the right time to retire.

The German Federal Pension Insurance provides individual information through personalized annual pension forecasts. The forecasts can be accessed through the Internet and contains information about:

- entitlements accrued up to the present year.
- individual model calculations using contribution information on the last five years to extrapolate the amount of the future pensions.
- reduced earnings capacity benefits.
- information on real value loss.

When the personalized pension forecasts were introduced, the German Federal Pension Insurance undertook a survey to evaluate the extent to which the beneficiaries found the instrument helpful in planning their pensions. Most people knew and had read the information, they also found it helpful, but only a relatively small number were planning to take any action after receiving the information. The perception

of the pension forecasts was influenced by socioeconomic status: Younger people, people with low education levels and non-Germans were less likely to know about the pension forecasts.

Efforts to deliver forecasts have also been undertaken by the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation. As of 2015 all beneficiaries are able to access their personal accounts through the website. The information contains information about individual pension rights and options to choose individualized pension provisions in the Compulsory Pension Insurance (based on age and employment status). The personal account also includes an individual pension calculator. Introducing a personal account accessible through Internet is in line with the overall strategic direction of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation to increase the use of e-services, and according to a survey from October 2014, 60 percent of the citizens show interest in using this new service.

Other institutions instead provide various other types of Internet based calculation tools that can be used by the beneficiaries to get a better understanding of all parts of their future pension. Examples, referred to in the information inventory, concerns Netherlands, Belgium and France. Netherlands provides an online tool (<http://www.mijnpensioenoverzicht.nl>) that gives the beneficiaries information about how much pension capital they have gathered through their occupational pension. Belgium (www.mypension.be) and France (<http://www.marel.fr/>) provides calculation tools, into which the beneficiaries have to manually enter all their available data.

Methods for measuring and evaluating communication activities

Surveys are the most commonly used tool for measuring and evaluating communication activities, followed by customer statistics and web analytics.

The methods used for evaluating communication measures need to be carefully planned and adopted to the local situation. A good example can be found in Peru (Derrama Magisterial). Derrama Magisterial applies a direct way of measuring communication activities based on customer statistics (the number of new members), because of the limited sized and well defined target group.

Most of the responding institutions measure the impact of their information measures based on how successful they are in reaching the intended target group(s). However, measuring the number of people reached is not always enough to get an understanding of how well e.g. an information campaign has been received and understood. To better understand the impact of a campaign, reference to the size of the target group and the expected results (goals) is needed. In addition, it's also useful to measure how a campaign is perceived and, if relevant, its effect on the recipients awareness and behaviour.

Surveys are necessary to detect behaviour changes. However, the use of such surveys seems to be less common than expected, as only a few institutions are able to detect an influence on the behaviour of the customers.

The Social Insurance Institution in Poland has provided a good example of how external institutes can be commissioned to measure and evaluate the quality and impact of various information measures (as a benchmark). The Social Insurance Institution commissions a survey every two years using a panel and in-depth interviews.

It has proved successful for the Swedish Pensions Agency to create short movie clips for social media, e.g. Twitter and Facebook. They have measured the effects of their campaigns and have experience of what type of information measures that are most efficient to use when addressing people through social media. Studies have also been made on the impact of using social media to inform about upcoming events and activities relating to personal meetings.

The Swedish Pensions Agency has also undertaken a broader approach to measuring when evaluating a large communication initiative. This includes a combined analysis of e.g. web statistics, results from several surveys, media analysis, tracking of digital advertisements etc. This approach and the analysis have proven to be excellent tools for decision-making and achieving long-term cost efficiency.

Input for decision making

Most institutions provide input to the responsible decision makers in general or through specific work groups. Good examples can be found in the replies from the Department of Human Services (Australia) and the German Federal Pension Insurance.

The department of Human Services (Australia) has developed a well-structured process for feedback through reference groups which represent various customer cohorts. Discussions in these forums, as well as feedback from member organisations can inform policy development. The German Federal Pension Insurance uses experience from communication activities as input for decision makers. *“For example, the form and design of the pension forecast of the statutory pension insurance system and the positive experience with this tool are a starting point and basis for a discussion concerning the development of such information tools for other old-age provision products or for the development of legal guidelines for such product information”.*



Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions drawn from all the material that is the foundation for this report, can be summarized in these headlines. Institutions need to focus more on:

Effects, following-up and measuring

A majority of the responding institutions have identified their beneficiaries' awareness of the factors that are most important for determining the size of their future pension as an important area that impacts their communication strategy. However, they currently have none or little information about the awareness of their beneficiaries. Following-up and measuring effects of communication activities are therefore not surprisingly mentioned as an important area for improvement. Measuring and evaluating beneficiaries' awareness as well as changes in behaviour and other desired effects can help institutions tailor their communication activities to become more effective and to better reach their goals.

Outcome of behaviour

To increase the awareness of the beneficiaries most institutions find it helpful to inform people more about the actual outcome of their behaviour instead of explaining the (often complex) structures of the system. Even so, many institutions do currently not inform about the actual outcome of people's behaviour. It has proven efficient to do this by simple messaging in a first step. When this is done, the target group might be interested in more elaborate guidance in a second step.

Customer orientation

An increased customer orientation could be the answer to many issues raised by the responding institutions. The customer orientation should not only be present in regularly communication activities, but should also be a priority when e.g. designing decision letters, which are an important part of the institutions communication with their beneficiaries.

Specific target groups

Relating communication to life situations (first job, students etc.) can be a successful way to make the information feel relevant to the customers. Especially as the tolerance for more in-depth information is higher when it's perceived as relevant, e.g. personalised information for teachers in public schools as provided by Derrama Magisterial (Peru). The example of Derrama Magisterial also shows that it's easier to reach and more effective to work with smaller, well defined target groups.

All communication activities should also take into consideration legal and culture differences. This includes the message conveyed as well as the channels used. It will also have an impact on how information is perceived by the beneficiaries.

All benefits

Institutions should have a holistic view on the customer's needs, and in the communication consider other benefits, incomes and savings that the individual might have. Examples from USA and Canada show this.

Forecasts of total pension

There is a need for a more customer oriented approach that goes beyond the own administration, creating an increased awareness of all sources of pension, on a national as well as international level (e.g. through improved cooperation between responsible institutions). As an example can be mentioned that among the responding countries in the questionnaire, only the Swedish Pensions Agency provides a forecast covering all pillars of the pension system.

Focus on the pension saver

Pension savers, people not yet receiving benefits, seem to be the biggest challenge when working with pension communication, due to lack of interest and lack of time.

Annex 1 – Questionnaire, Information inventory

The following 12 questions were sent to the members of the project group.

1. What methods do you use to explain your pension system to the beneficiaries? What do you think people actually need to know for their daily behaviour?
2. Are beneficiaries aware of what factors are most important for determining the size of their future pension? Is this an important thing to communicate for your organisation?
3. Do you know if the beneficiaries trust the system? How do you measure this?
4. Do you have experience of applying relevant research on financial behaviour to pension information? In that case, how was this done, and what are your most important results?
5. Do you provide pension forecast to the beneficiaries? If so, how is this done and what are your experiences?
6. Do you try to adjust the communication to different target-groups (i.e. formal/informal sector; young people/people just before the retirement age; employed/self-employed etc.)? How is this done? What are your experiences and results?
7. Segmentation is a way to categorize all your customers or beneficiaries. For example, every customer can be marked out in the register of customers as a member of a certain group. In that way, the company or organisation can easily sort out these sub-groups and adapt the communication. Do you work like this? In that case, what are your experiences?
8. Many Pension administrations work in an environment where the private market - for example banks and insurance companies - communicates in a powerful way. Do you see it as your job to support your customers in relation to the private market? In that case, how do you do this? What are your experiences and results?
9. How do you provide service to your customers or beneficiaries? What channels do you find successful and why? Do you try to make customers/beneficiaries choose more cost-effective channels? How do you do this?
10. Do you have good examples of cost-effective communication? Examples where you were able to get the same or better results of your communication on your target groups at lower cost?
11. Do you have good examples of how to follow up communications projects and how to measure the result of your communication?
12. Do you know of other examples where agencies or organisations work successfully in the fields covered in question 1-11? In that case, please provide information on who we should contact for further questions.

Annex 2 – Questionnaire, Information gathering

The following 20 questions spreading of eight different areas of communication were sent to selected ISSA members outside of the project group.

Successful communication projects

1. What was your most successful communication measure/project on pensions? Please describe the initiative and its effects briefly.

Target-groups

2. Do you adjust your communications to different target-groups (i.e. young people/people just before the retirement age; employed/self-employed, etc.)? Please elaborate
3. Which target groups do you try to reach? Are some target groups more important than others? If yes, please identify them and explain why.
4. Can you measure if you reach these target groups? Do you see an influence of your communication on their behaviour?
5. Do you try to reach people in the informal sector by communication measures? If so, how?

Customer orientation

6. Do you inform people about the whole range of pension pillars (not just the one you represent)? If so, how?
7. Are beneficiaries aware of what factors are most important for determining the size of their future pension? Is this important for the way you communicate?
8. Do you measure if beneficiaries have confidence in the expected provision of future retirement pensions? Is this important for the way you communicate?
9. Do you think it is helpful to inform people more about the actual outcome of their behaviour instead of explaining the (often complex) structures of the system? If so, do you point people towards a behaviour that would maximize pension benefits? Please provide examples.

Pension forecasts

10. Do you send a pension forecast directly to the recipients, for example by letters? If so, how frequently?
11. Is it possible for the customers to obtain a forecast by themselves (e.g. through the Internet) at their own convenience?
12. Does the forecast you provide include other pillars as well?
13. What are the results of providing these forecasts?
14. Given your experience, what kind of variables (for example retirement age, return on pension capital etc.) are the most important to make up a good forecast?

Communication channels

15. Please provide examples of efficient channels for communicating with the public.

16. Which channels do you prefer your clients to use when seeking info from you? Why? Do you try to influence your customers to use certain channels?

Consumer support in relation to the private market

17. Do you see it as your job to help your customers in relation to the private pensions market (banks, insurance companies etc.)? If so, how? Please provide examples.

Input for decision making

18. Do you provide input for decision makers, in both the design and policy phases, based on experience from your communication activities?

Methods for measuring and evaluating communication activities

19. Please give examples of how you measure and evaluate the results of your communication activities.

Description of your national pension system

20. Briefly describe your pension system and your role in it (please try to keep your answer to a maximum of 200 words).

Annex 3 – Understanding financial behaviour – crucial when communicating pensions

If you want to communicate things that are generally perceived as difficult, and where the results of actions today comes to surface in the future, it is of great importance to understand how people normally behave in actual life. That is why we like to summarize the relevant research concerning financial behaviour.

Two systems that forms our thoughts

The Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman has shown that the human brain has two different ways of forming thoughts. One is called system 1, and forms thoughts fast, automatic, frequent, emotional, stereotypic and subconscious. The other is called system 2 where the thinking is slow, effortful, infrequent, logical, calculating and conscious. System 1 is at work when you detect that one object is more distant than another, or decide from which direction a sudden noise comes from. It is automatic and requires little or no effort. But you have to use system 2 when you compute the product of 17×24 . You must pay attention, or else you will perform less well. The division of labour between system 1 and system 2 is efficient. Most of the time we use system 1, and when things get difficult, such as the multiplication, we call for system 2. However, system 1 has systematic errors, biases. It sometimes answers easier questions than it was asked, and it has little understanding of logics and statistics. One more thing is that system 1 cannot be turned off. Kahneman concludes that system 1 is more influential, and that it is steering System 2 to a very large extent.

Based on Kahnemans research, Richard H Thaler and Cass R Sunstein concludes in their book “Nudge” that busy people are trying to cope in a complex world in which they cannot afford to think deeply about every choice they have to make. Other research shows that complex matters, such as pension systems, makes people feel that the burden of gaining information is not weighed up by the benefits of understanding the system .

We use rules of thumb

As Thaler and Sunstein says, people therefore adopt sensible rules of thumb that sometimes lead them astray. There are different rules of thumb that most of us apply, and that sometimes makes us make good judgments and sometimes bad.

Anchoring and adjustment. If you do not know the answer to a question this means you start with something you know, an anchor, and then adjust in the direction you think is appropriate. If I do not know the population of New York, I may estimate it is at least 10 times as big as my home town. This can be used to influence people, by changing the starting point or the anchor of their thinking. People will donate more money to charity if the options are 100 dollars, 250 dollars, 1 000 dollars and 5 000 dollars, than for example 50 dollars, 75 dollars, 100 dollars and 150 dollars.

Avaliability. Most of us tend to assess the likelihood of risks by asking how readily examples come to hand. If there are more homicides than suicides reported in the mass media, we might draw the wrong conclusion that homicides are more usual than suicides. Or, an example that is relevant concerning pensions and savings, people will buy stocks and funds that has done very well in the past, even if good results in the past are no evidence for good results in the future, and that other facts might suggest it is a bad investment.

Optimism and overconfidence. Most of us tend to think that our results or performance is above average. And we are also overoptimistic even when the stakes are high. At least in Sweden, about 20 per cent of marriages in the ages 30-59 go to divorce. But newlyweds think that the chance of divorce is nil, even people who have been divorced before. Unrealistic optimism is also one explanation to why lotteries are so successful.

Loss aversion. Research shows that we will be twice as miserable when we lose something, compared to the happiness we feel when we get the same thing. This produces a strong desire to stick with our current holdings. Even if a trade or a change would be in our favour.

Status quo bias. We tend to stick to the current situation for more general reasons than loss aversion. The tendency to sit on the same side of the breakfast-table is such an example. A pension-related behaviour that shows this is retirement savings plans where people pick an asset allocation and then forget about it. Examples from USA show this, as well as the premium-pension-system of Sweden where people can choose from 850 different funds. An option designed as “default” will therefore be successful in such systems.

Framing. Framing is a schema of interpretation which we use to make sense of the world. It is our own collection of anecdotes and stereotypes that makes a frame that we rely on to understand and respond to events. The choices we make are influenced by the creation of this frame. Framing can be used to influence us. The way in which a problem is presented will have a big influence on our decisions. Thalers and Sunsteins example is a doctor recommending a treatment, saying that out of 100 persons who took the treatment, 90 are alive after five years. If the doctor on the other hand says that out of 100 people, 10 will be dead within five years, our system will automatically think that many people will die and that I will be one of them.

If you also take into consideration the power of loss aversion, it is possible to influence people’s behaviour: if you don’t do this you will lose X amount of money. One example of this when it comes to pensions is the typical message from banks and insurance companies: the pensions will be low, and if you don’t save you will be poor and miserable when you get old.

The framing effect has consistently proven to be one of the strongest biases in decision making.

Thaler and Sunsteins conclusion is that people in common need some help to make choices that are good for them in the long run, in a complicated world with many choices. A good choice-architecture is the answer. It can be as simple as presenting the vegetables first at the school lunch. Or designing a good default option for the majority who are not interested in choosing different allocations in their pension plan.

Financial education is less successful

Based on what we know about how people think and behave, it is therefore less successful trying to educate people in financial matters. Academic analysis of financial education has found no evidence of measurable success at improving people’s well-being. Cole and Shastri studied financial education programs, mandated by state governments, and found that it didn’t have an effect on individual savings. Another scientist, Willis, concludes that a norms model of financial education could be effective in improving customer welfare only in conjunction with a reduction in the complexity of the consumer financial decisions and actions our society and marketplace requires.

Conclusions for pension communication

When it comes to the knowledge on financial behaviour, the conclusions for communicators trying to reach out with things that most people think is complicated or boring – such as pensions – are in short these:

- There is no point in trying to educate people in how the system works. Most people are rational and think the cost of invested time trying to understand complicated and sometimes boring things is too high, considering the reward.
- More important is how you design the system, communicating how different behaviours through life affect the total pension, and provide rules of thumb.
- Most people don't like to choose. If there are choices to be made, the majority will need a good default alternative.

