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# The future of retirement

October 2023



WS Global CIO Office

# Preparing for longer lives and changing demographics

Population ageing is the dominant demographic trend of the twenty-first century—a reflection of increasingly longer lifespans, declining fertility, and the progression of large cohorts of the population to older ages. Never have such large numbers of people reached ages 65+ (the conventional ‘old-age’ threshold).

The size of this group is expected to reach more than one billion over the next three to four decades. Among the older population, the group aged 85+ is growing especially fast and is projected to surpass half a billion in the next 80 years. This trend is significant because the needs and capacities of the 85+ cohort tend to differ significantly from those of the 65- to 84-year age range.

The differences in the progression of this phenomenon are expected to be considerable across countries. Japan is currently the world leader, with 28% of its population aged 65 and over, triple the world average. According to UN statistics, by 2050, 29 countries and territories are likely to have larger elder populations than Japan has today.

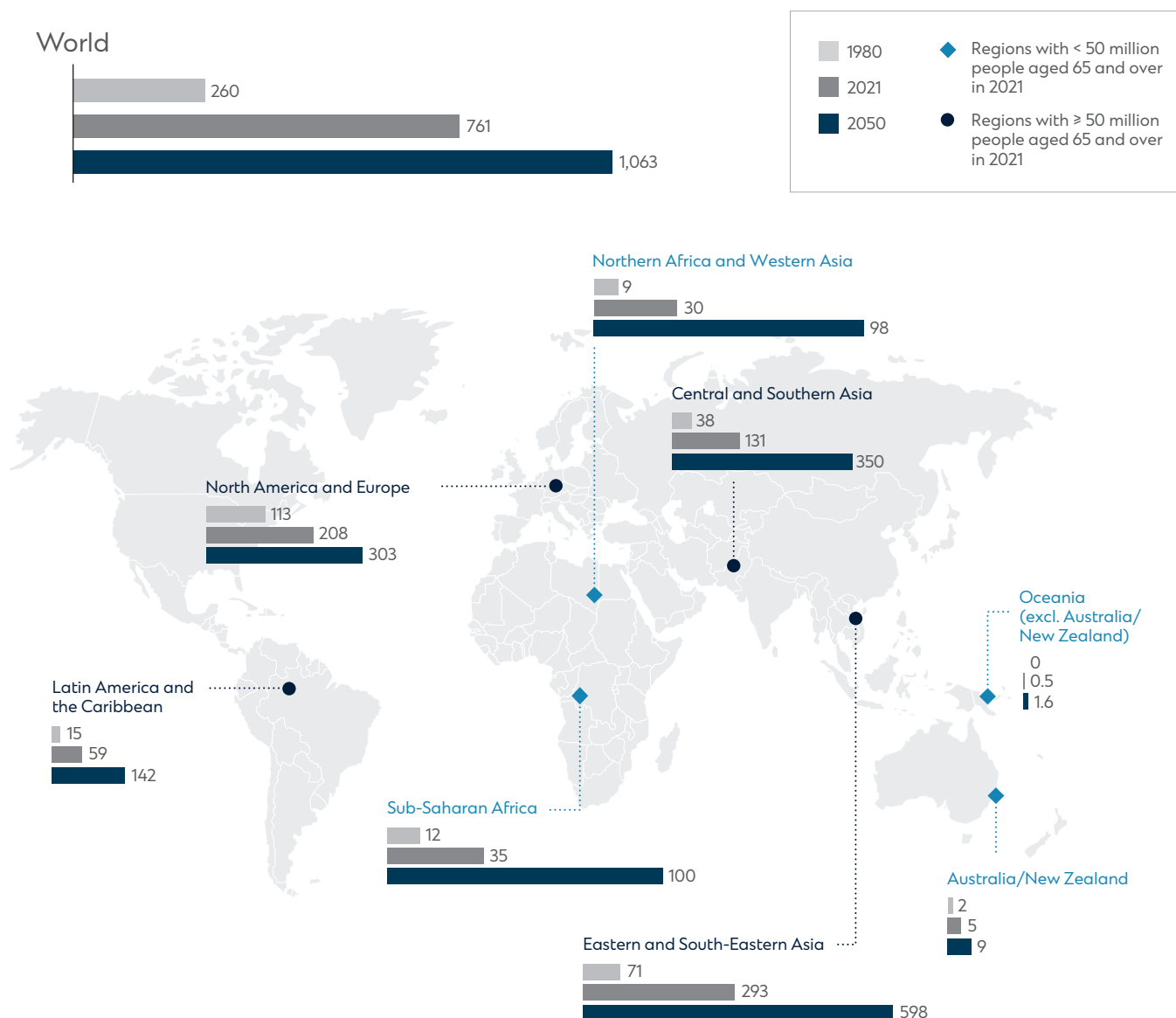


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## Number of people aged 65 years or above in millions, world and regions, 1980, 2021 and 2050



Source: United Nations (2022a)

With rising life expectancy, the societal shift towards diverse career trajectories, changing familial responsibilities, and evolving consumer behaviours makes the traditional one-size-fits-all retirement model look increasingly outdated.

**Shift in career choices:** The 21st-century work landscape is far from linear. The U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics found that the average individual now holds multiple jobs and even experiences career shifts in their lifetime. With people increasingly exploring ‘gig work’, freelance opportunities, or even mid-career sabbaticals, access to savings might be needed at diverse life stages and not just post-retirement.

**Modern lifestyle choices:** Today’s retirees are more interested in new beginnings than winding down. Many envision their 50s and 60s as a time for travel, education, or starting new ventures. This desire to “live in the moment” necessitates a more flexible approach to savings.



**Changes in family dynamics:** The nuclear family model and increasing global mobility mean many individuals provide financial support to children's overseas education or assist ageing parents well before their own retirement.

**Cultural perspectives on ageing:** Increasingly, many cultures don't perceive retirement as a cessation of work but a transition. In such societies, elders remain engaged in community roles, family businesses, or farms, for example.

In this publication, we look at key considerations an average investor needs to have and what actions they can take for successful retirement planning, given rising life expectancy, and various societal shifts.



By failing to prepare,  
you are preparing to fail.

– Benjamin Franklin



# Start early to tackle longevity risks

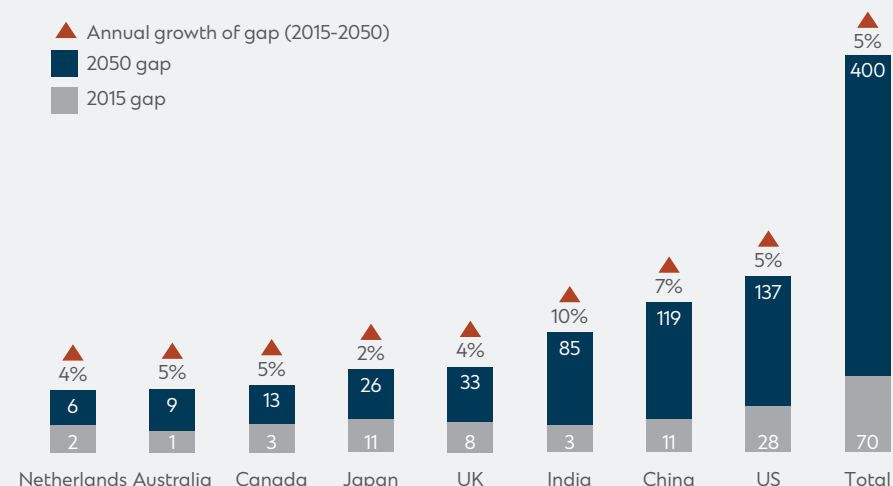
Increasing life expectancies and longer lifespans globally have raised the risk of people outliving their savings.

According to the World Economic Forum, workers are not saving nearly enough for their retirement, which has led to a USD 70 trillion savings gap in eight of the world's largest established pension systems or populations\*. That staggering figure is predicted to increase to USD 400 trillion by 2050.

Focusing on saving and starting the investment journey early have become extremely important in the planning process for a potentially extended retirement period. Taking advantage of the magical power of compounding is one of the most effective ways to tackle longevity risks. An example in the 'Hypothetical savings' chart shows that investors who started saving and investing 10 years earlier would have close to double the saving at retirement. This assumes the two investors made a one-time USD 5,000 investment and earned the same 6% per annum return on their investment.

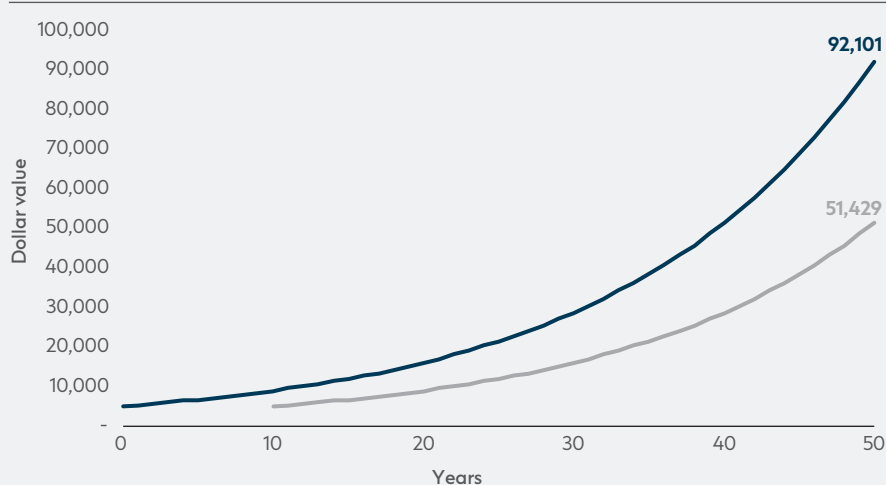
## Retirement savings gap increasing globally

Size of retirement savings gap (USD trillions, 2015)



Source: Mercer, World Economic Forum

Hypothetical savings that two investors can have by investing USD 5,000 at the rate of 6% (per year) at different points of time (10 years apart)



Source: Standard Chartered

\*These countries are Australia, Canada, China, India, Japan, the Netherlands, the UK and the US.





## Prioritize financial education

Financial education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of retirement planning, equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions about their financial well-being.

By empowering people to navigate the world of personal finance, financial education can help mitigate potential risks and ensure a secure retirement.

**1. A range of studies consistently highlight a significant lack of financial literacy among individuals.** According to a survey conducted by the National Financial Educators Council, only 24% of millennials (US based) demonstrated basic financial literacy skills. This knowledge deficit can have severe implications for retirement planning, as individuals without financial education are more likely to make poor investment choices, accumulate excessive debt, and fail to save adequately for retirement.

**2. The shifting landscape of retirement planning demands greater financial acumen.** With the decline of traditional

pensions and the rise of self-directed retirement accounts, individuals are now responsible for managing their own retirement savings. This is particularly relevant considering the rise of new assets such as cryptocurrencies and digital assets. For example, Bitcoin, the most well-known cryptocurrency, experienced a significant rise in value, reaching a market capitalization of over USD 1 trillion in 2021. Without proper financial education, individuals may be susceptible to the volatility and risks associated with these assets, potentially jeopardizing their retirement savings.

**3. Financial education has a positive impact on retirement outcomes.** A study by the Employee Benefit Research Institute found that individuals who participate in financial education programs are more likely to contribute to retirement plans, increase their savings rates, and diversify their investments. These individuals tend to make more informed investment decisions for their retirement portfolios, considering factors such as risk tolerance, asset allocation, and long-term investment strategies. Therefore, they are more likely to 'right-size' any investments based on the risks and opportunities of the underlying asset classes and how they might fit into a portfolio.

# Inflation-proof your retirement plan

Longer lives potentially mean longer retirement periods.

It is crucial to consider the potential effects inflation can have on the long-term goals and account for them in the final projections.

First, retirement can span several decades, during which the cumulative effects of inflation can significantly erode the value of savings. Furthermore, inflation impacts various aspects of retirement, including housing, daily living expenses, and leisure activities. Failing to protect savings from inflation can lead to a gradual decline in the ability to afford these essential and enjoyable aspects of retirement. Without protection, individuals risk falling short of their desired standard of living in retirement. It is not only essential to account for the impact of inflation and currency fluctuations on investments, but also to

understand their effect. Even inflation of 1-2% can have a significant impact on both the value and income-generating capacity of a portfolio. For instance, the table below examines the effects of inflation from two perspectives.

Second, longer lifespans often come with increased healthcare expenses. Healthcare costs tend to rise at a higher rate than inflation, and retirees generally may consume more and/or increasingly costly care with time. The 2023 Global Medical Trends Survey reveals that costs are expected to continue rising in most regions (figure below), with a high global average real (net of inflation) growth rate of 6.5%.

Purchasing power of USD 1m today based on the different inflation rates over different periods of time

		Inflation rate				
		1.0%	1.5%	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%
Years	15	861,349	799,852	743,015	690,466	641,862
	20	819,544	742,470	672,971	610,271	553,676
	25	779,768	689,206	609,531	539,391	477,606
	30	741,923	639,762	552,071	476,743	411,987

Source: Standard Chartered

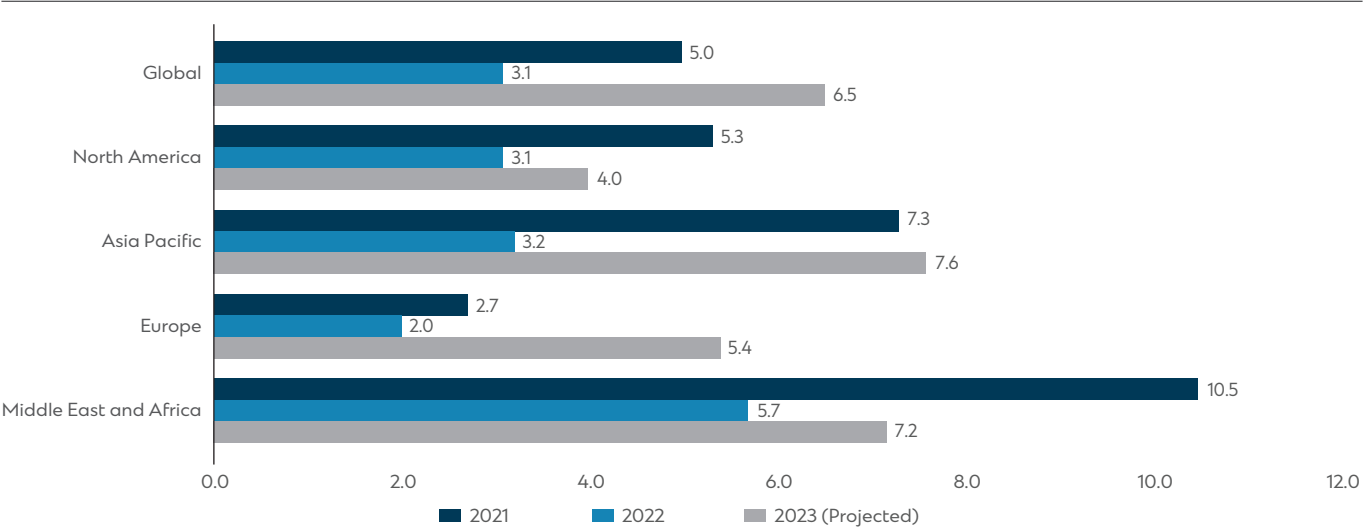


Careful planning, incorporating rising healthcare costs, factoring in potential medical expenses, and long-term care insurance options are needed to safeguard against potential financial burdens.

Healthcare costs can vary by region – urban areas would typically have higher healthcare costs than rural.

Understand the available healthcare benefits for retirees, set aside a contingency fund to cover unexpected medical expenses, opt for long-term annuity plans and review the retirement plan, including any health insurance plans, to ensure it meets one’s needs and budget.

Growth rate (net of inflation) in medical cost by region



Source: IMF, Standard Chartered





# Consider state and occupational pension systems



Understanding the implications of changing demographics on government pension plans and social security, such as potential adjustments to retirement age, benefit calculations or government reforms, is vital for successful retirement planning.

This is especially critical for individuals that have worked and lived in different countries and continents.

For instance, each country in Asia or the Euro area may have its own government pension and social security systems that have eligibility criteria and benefit structures. Countries in the Euro area generally have well-established social security systems that provide pensions and other benefits to retirees. In the US, policymakers are now also considering the idea of replacing social security with

private retirement accounts in an attempt to lift the rate of returns on retirement contributions and boost national saving and future economic growth. People would be free to choose from different fund types, such as a money market fund, an index fund, a REIT, and a US government bond fund, which will allow them to withdraw from their funds when they have reached the retirement age or even opt for a lump-sum distribution if they become disabled. As with some pension plans, their children could inherit funds accumulated in the account if the person passes away before reaching the retirement age.

Being aware of local regulations and tax implications related to investments and understanding the specific rules and regulations governing these systems in your country of residence and how they may impact your retirement income is crucial, as they often vary between countries. It is also key to stay informed about any policy changes that may affect your retirement income and consider how contributions and years of service impact the amount of pension one will receive. A professional advisor can help navigate the investment landscape and select suitable investment vehicles for a retirement portfolio.

# Reimagine the retirement life of the future for the right planning

As we look ahead to the future, there are several compelling changes in the way people live that individuals should be aware of when planning for retirement.

## Housing preferences and options

Retirement living preferences are evolving, with a shift towards more flexible and diverse housing options. Many retirees are opting for downsizing, embracing smaller, low-maintenance homes, or even exploring alternative housing models such as cohousing or senior co-living communities.

Additionally, the demand for age-friendly and accessible housing is increasing as individuals aim to “age in place” – the concept of ageing in which seniors are encouraged

to grow old in their own homes or within the communities where they live. According to a 2023 Gen Z and Millennial survey by Deloitte, a majority indicated that they have already and/or are likely to have an energy-efficient homes.

Being aware of these changing housing trends and considering suitable options can help individuals plan for housing that aligns with their desired retirement lifestyle and needs.







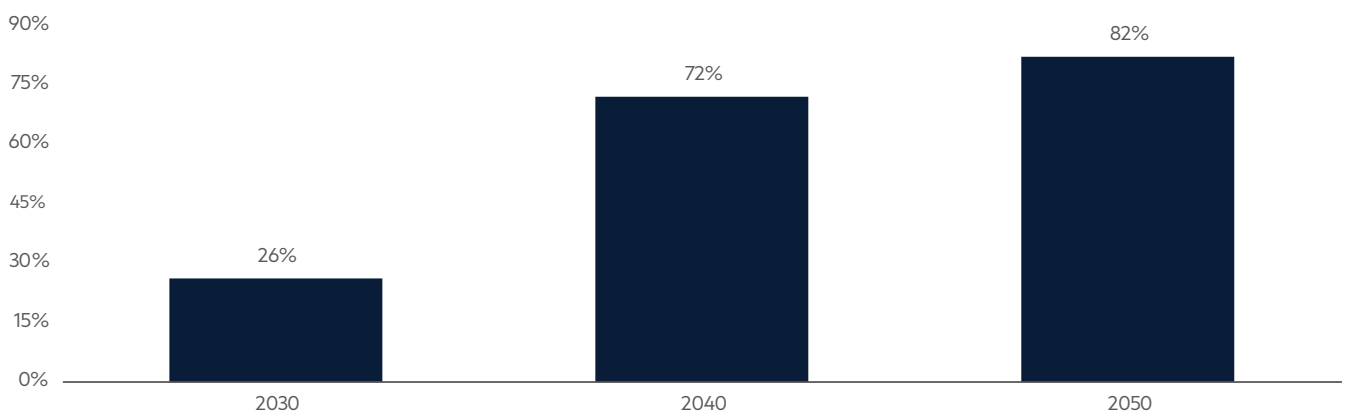
### Transportation advancements

The transportation landscape is undergoing rapid transformations with the rise of electric vehicles, autonomous driving technology, and shared mobility services. These advancements can significantly impact retirement planning. Electric vehicles can offer cost savings in terms of fuel and maintenance, while autonomous vehicles may provide increased mobility options for individuals with limited driving capabilities. The global market share of electric vehicles is growing rapidly. According to a survey by Statista, it is projected that by 2030, one in four new cars sold will be battery-powered.

It is projected that this figure will increase to over 80% by 2050.

Additionally, shared mobility services like ridesharing and car-sharing can offer affordable and convenient transportation alternatives for retirees. From the same survey done by Deloitte, data shows that 59% of Millennial correspondents reported that they have stopped or will stop driving a car. Understanding and incorporating these transportation changes into retirement planning can help individuals prepare for potential cost savings and increased mobility in their later years.

### Projected electric vehicle sales as a percentage of car sales worldwide between 2030 and 2050



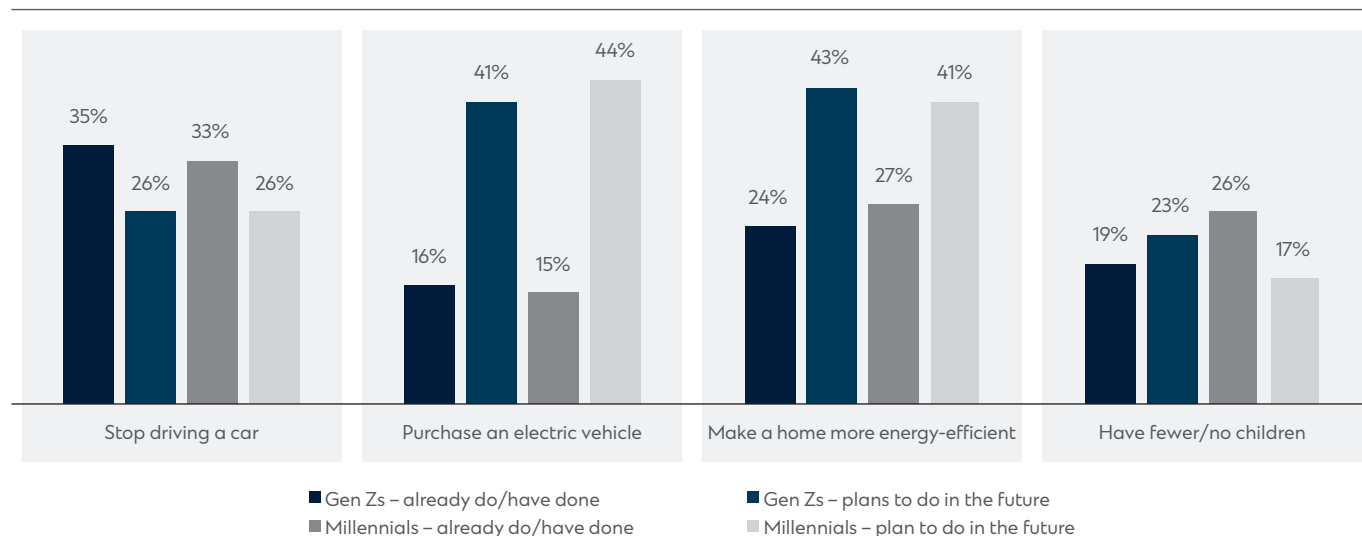
Source: Statista



## Communication and connectivity

The digital revolution has transformed communication and connectivity, and this trend will continue to shape retirement living. Technology allows retirees to stay connected with loved ones, access information, engage in online communities, and participate in remote work or volunteer opportunities. Understanding and embracing technology can enhance social connections, provide learning opportunities, and enable remote engagement, thereby enriching the retirement experience.

## Actions taken or intended in the future to reduce environmental impact



Source: Deloitte

## Conclusion

Preparing for retirement is undeniably more complex than merely setting aside a portion of one's income. It is a multidimensional endeavour that demands early action, sustained financial literacy, and a keen eye on broader economic undercurrents like inflation.

While traditional pillars like state and occupational pensions remain relevant, they might not be the silver bullets they once were, necessitating a multi-pronged approach to retirement planning. Beyond the economics, future retirees should also allow themselves the latitude to envision varied post-retirement lifestyles, breaking free from rigid or outdated stereotypes.

As we stand on the brink of an evolving future with increasing life expectancy, technological advancements, and shifting societal norms, it is imperative to foster a retirement mindset that's both financially astute and imaginatively unbounded. Indeed, retirement preparation is as much about financial prudence as it is about envisioning and planning strategically for the quality of life one would wish to have during retirement.

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