

INPEA BULLETIN

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR THE PREVENTION
OF ELDER ABUSE

www.inpea.net



AUGUST 2007



INPEA is a standing
Committee of the IAGG

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GROWING OUR NETWORK

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do"

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15th, 2007, was by all reports an unqualified success. In Geneva, the list of people we have to thank is legion. Our host, Dr. Alex Kalache, Director WHO Ageing and Life Course was an ever present support through out the planning process and served as a consummate professional Chair of WEAAD along with INPEA President, Dr. Lia Daichman. Dr. Kalache secured the venue and arranged for refreshments.

The session was opened by Manuel Tornare, Executive Councillor of the City of Geneva, and generously provided a Cocktail reception at the conclusion of the event. Comments were made by Richard Blewitt, CEO, HelpAge International, followed by keynote addresses by Baroness Sally Greengross, and Stephen Lewis, President of Stephen Lewis Foundation. Dr. Lia Daichman addressed the gathering on behalf of INPEA.

June 14th marked a very exciting event, an innovation over last year. Dr. Astrid Stuckelberger, Chair NGO Committee on Aging at the United Nations Geneva and co-founder of the Geneva International Network on Aging (GNA) organized a Global Symposium and Open Forum on Progress and Future Strategies. The session opened with a welcome from Dr. David Cohen Association of Former WHO Staff Members, Dr. Astrid Stuckelberger, and Dr. Elizabeth Podnieks, Vice President INPEA and Founder, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

There were two parts to the program: Part 1: Best Practice and Needs in the Region, the UN and Internationally. Speakers included Dr. Charles - Henri Rapin, Founder of "Vieillir en Liberte," International Francophone Network against Elder Abuse, Geneva University Hospital, Jaqueline Cramer, President, "Alter Ego ", the Swiss Association against Elder Abuse and Mistreatment, Maurice Graber, Associate Director, Geneva Social Service, and Dr. Astrid Stuckelberger.

Part 2: Open Forum; Discussion and Potential Collaboration. This took the form of a lively discussion where local practices and future directions were discussed. Closing remarks were made by Roger Fontana, President of the Association of WHO Former Staff Members. The generosity and warmth of all these people in Geneva cannot be overstated. They exceeded all expectations of hospitality and so many important connections for INPEA were forged and will hopefully flourish over time. Astrid opened the doors; we will never forget what she did to make this WEAAD such a success.

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GROWING OUR NETWORK CONTINUED...

The morning of JUNE 15th was INPEA 's turn to shine. WE start by acknowledging Dr. Cynthia Thomas, Study Director Westat, USA. She came along when we desperately needed help months ago. Calm , efficient, knowledgeable , thoughtful and culturally sensitive, she filled so many roles, chaired the Planning Committee meetings and made herself totally indispensable. INPEA mounted an eclectic program with the challenging titles of : " Freedom from Elder Abuse ; A Human Right in a Society for All Ages " . Presenters : Susan B .Somers, Toshio Tataru, Cynthia Thomas, Christen Erlingsen,Jan Lorman, and Donghee Han. " Their sub- title was " Witnessing elder abuse and not seeing a thing ". The second part session was called " Global Trends and Impact of Immigration on Elder Vulnerability " with presenters , Toni Antonucci, Betty Malsk,Ryan Sampson and Bridget Penhale. All in all , WEAAD in Geneva 2007 was remarkable for taking a risk and having that risk prove to be exactly what was needed.

We were delighted that Dr. Toshio Tataru came from Japan to accept the Rosalie Wolf Award and the enthusiastic applause that greeted the presentation was clear indication of the high esteem and regard with which Dr. Tataru is held in the international elder abuse community.

WEAAD events around the world were amazing and wonderful for the demonstrated energy, commitment and creativity. Our Guest Editor , Maggie Evans, highlights the UK and Ireland; other activities appear in this Bulletin and on the website. We have seen that even the smallest initiative can make a powerful difference. What may have started out as small, often morphed to something larger, unleashing suppressed potential or possibilities. We saw it is not the scale or scope of the project that matters: it is the motivation and values that inform our efforts that truly matter.

To summarize our appreciation to our WEAAD co- sponsors: Dr. Alex Kalache, WHO Ageing and Life Course, International Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology (IAGGG), AARP International, NGO Committee on Ageing at the UN Geneva, Geneva International Network on Aging, Ville de Geneve. Without them WEAAD would not have happened.

Elizabeth Podnieks, Editor

OUR GUEST EDITOR REPORTS FROM THE UK AND IRELAND

United Kingdom

Hello to you all, let me introduce myself, I am Maggie Evans and I work as Executive Assistant at the Charity Action on Elder Abuse in the UK, we were very proud to be the lead co-ordinator in the UK for WEAAD and I am very pleased to be writing about how the day went in the UK and Ireland.

I would first like to say congratulations to everyone across the World who participated in World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2007, I know here in the UK it was not only a great awareness day but it was fun day too.

This year in the UK and Ireland we had over 450 events and sent out over 20,000 leaflets, a great achievement and I would like to thank everyone who took part especially the staff at Action on Elder Abuse, who helped pack up boxes, send out leaflets and rallied round to make the day so successful. It was hard work but we had great team spirit and I thank you all.

We had a great range of organisations and individuals participating this year including Adult Protection Teams, Care Homes, Care Providers, NHS, Sheltered Housing Schemes, Solicitors and of course the general public.

Many varied events happened on the day, in particular Care Homes across the country had not only awareness raising days but had fun days for the residents, staff and relatives.

OUR GUEST EDITOR REPORTS FROM THE UK AND IRELAND

A coffee morning and Elder Abuse awareness event was held to raise awareness on elder abuse. The event was well supported by residents of Ness Court, and others from around the area, also on hand was Age Concern Home Help Organizer for Cambridgeshire Jane Finch and local Police Community Support Officer Jonathan Hall. Care manager for Ness Court Elly Catling with her deputy ECM Josie Matthews both did a wonderful job in arranging a number ideas such as raffles and cake sale, while Elder Protections very own Ed Mullenger chatted with supporters about elder abuse and the WEAD events that have been taking place world wide.



Residents enjoying a cup of coffee along with event organizers.



The Careforce group had about 30 events across their branches in the UK; the one in Stevenage had the presence and support of both the Mayor of Stevenage, and the town centre Police Community Support Officer. They also held a coffee morning and awareness event at their Stevenage Careforce branch in Primmatt Road.

A 1936 Sunbeam car made its way across North Wales on 15th June to mark the second World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The car, supplied courtesy of Colin Knowleson MBE from Slaters of Abergele, travelled from Llangefni to Wrexham, stopping outside County Hall along the way. Representatives of Flintshire Adult Protection Committee and other supporters signed a parchment scroll expressing their commitment to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and to help safeguard them from abuse. The scroll will be presented to the Welsh Assembly Government to emphasise the commitment amongst agencies across North Wales to stop the abuse of vulnerable adults.



Senior citizens and their helpers joined Police Community Support Officers to proclaim their right to live with respect and dignity on Friday, June 15. It was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and older people from organisations and sheltered schemes across the borough were invited to Woolwich town hall. At 2.30pm they let off 93 purple balloons representing the total number of elder abuse cases that have been reported to Greenwich Council in the last year. Then, as guests of the borough, they settled down to enjoy themselves with a tea dance to the smooth sounds of Trinity School of Music, Greenwich.



Lyndon Hall Nursing Home, West Bromwich held a tea, coffee and cake morning which was attended by social workers, GP's and visitors and was enjoyed by all. They sent out flyers to all who knows them and even those who didn't they had many people turn up who all thoroughly enjoyed themselves and the chat around world elder abuse day was outstanding it was great to get such support from the local people. Looking forward to next year.

The day was marked at Darwin Court with a series of lectures to staff and general public.

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WELCOME NEW NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES!



INPEA welcomes two new National Representatives:

Prof. Jose F. Alves , from Portugal and Prof. Ismail Tufan, from Turkey.

NEW ON THE WEBSITE

- President Lia Daichman's address at WEAAD, Geneva, June 15th 2007
- Reports from INPEA President and Secretary General, Susan Somers from the INPEA Regional meeting held in St. Petersburg, Russia, July 7th, 2007



CHANGES TO THE BULLETIN!

The INPEA BULLETIN is moving with the times and undergoing some revisions in organization and presentation.. We express sincere appreciation to Susan Somers and Lynn Hyland as they leave the editorial board. They are missed already! We welcome Betty Malks (USA) who will be responsible for layout and design. Our sincere thanks to our student volunteer Deina Warren over the past 10 months who will be leaving after this issue. Change never occurs quickly, but here are some immediate actions which will be piloted over the next year. Your comments are invited and encouraged.

The INPEA BULLETIN will publish 4 times a year.

- Each issue will have Guest Editor
- Articles are to be submitted to the Regional Representative , who will proof read and submit to the Guest Editor
- Guest Editors will have control of the editorial content and can organize the issue according to a special theme or focus as they choose.
- Regular features will include:
 - conference calendar
 - "Meet our Members" (profile of INPEA members & colleagues)
 - News, reports, research, policy, best practice

Hopefully these changes will result in creativity and innovation. We want the Bulletin to evolve into a smart , reader friendly, informative vehicle for INPEA to share ideas and resources ; the Bulletin belongs to the membership, its success and excellence depends on individual contributions. Please make this happen.

Guest Editors

September , 2007 Maggie Evans, Executive Director, Age Concern, UK

November, 2007 Dr. Mala Kapur Shankardass, National Representative, India

February , 2008 Dr. Ariela Lowenstein, Regional Representative Europe

May 2008 Volunteer needed!!



MEET OUR MEMBERS: DR. MONICA FERREIRA



In this Bulletin we introduce readers to Dr. Monica Ferreira, INPEA Regional Representative for Africa.

Monica has literally put a face to elder abuse in Africa. She has worked tirelessly to bring INPEA to Africans and Africans to INPEA. Her modus operandi has been to identify a key person in a country, and encourage and work with him or her to mobilize individuals and interest groups to establish an INPEA chapter. Country chapters organise themselves, their structure and their activities. A chapter elects a national representative. Thus far, nine African countries have INPEA chapters - Cameroon, Ghana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, The Gambia, Togo and Uganda - and Monica is working with colleagues in additional countries to form a chapter.

She stays in close touch with national representatives, who report to her regularly on anti-elder abuse activities in their country and on the growth of their chapter. She forwards information from INPEA's head office to the representatives, which they send on to their chapter's members. Overall, she consults with them, mentors them where she can, and encourages and supports them in their projects. She tells how much she indeed learns from them and is humbled by their creativity, dedication and hard work!

Monica knows what it is like to struggle with scarce resources in African settings, where organisations may have great hopes and dreams of what they would like to achieve, but are limited through a lack of resources. Yet she is always able to put a positive spin on situations. Gifts that Monica brings to Africa, she also brings to INPEA. She is a believer: she believes in our work, our organization, our vision and in a strong INPEA Africa. But more than just believe, she takes concrete action, and applies her intellectual skills to assist global INPEA with problem solving and decision making.

Monica responds to e-mailsher comments are realistic, thoughtful, practical and collaborative; always diplomatic and culturally sensitive. She has been an ongoing supporter of the Bulletin. As our proof reader, she has been faced with poor spelling, appalling grammar and shaky construction, but always responds with humor and dignity.

Monica retired as the director of the Institute of Ageing in Africa at the University of Cape Town at the end of 2006, but continues to be active in the field of ageing as the director of International Longevity Centre-South Africa (ILCSA). She has made elder abuse one of ILCSA's key programmes - as has INPEA President Lia Daichman done the same with ILC Argentina. Elder abuse in Africa occurs in particular settings and as a result of multiple factors - very often relating to poverty endemic in the continent. Monica has striven tirelessly to publish her own research on elder abuse and policy review papers in international journals, to draw global attention to the types of elder abuse that are manifested in the region, which may be more violent and horrendous than those in other developing regions and certainly in more developed regions

We salute Monica as we thank her for her contribution to elder abuse prevention and to INPEA. She has given generously of her time, energy and good will. She generates enthusiasm and commitment, thereby making a positive impact on the development of elder abuse awareness, ultimately contributing to a safer and better place for older persons.



Betty F. Mals was selected by the Who's Who in the World for inclusion in the 25th Silver Anniversary Edition of "Who's Who in the World". She has been selected for the reference value of her outstanding achievements, and it is a testament of her hard work and dedication to success. In 2006 and again in 2007, she has also been selected for inclusion in the "Who's Who in America".



For the past two years, world leaders, non-governmental organizations, communities and individuals have manifested their commitment to increase awareness and knowledge of the issue of elder abuse on June 15th. We now must deliberate what is the most effective way for INP EA to perpetuate and continue developing partnerships with government, civil society members, and individuals in addressing elder abuse issues through World Day. In the past, the Executive and Regional and National Representatives have organized a formal event at two locations: UN, New York and WHO, Geneva. These have involved months of preparation along with expenses borne by the member. Is this the best use of time and resources?

Would it be more effective to have WEAAD organized by the host venue? The Executive and Representatives would then concentrate on being external facilitators/mentors to countries, organizations, individuals, needing advice, references, assistance in grant writing proposals etc. They would function on more of a consultant basis, while the host organization would arrange the program/speakers (mainly drawn locally) on site. Anyone would be welcome to attend but they would not have the responsibility of mounting the program.

A critical question is where to celebrate WEAAD 2008? Our dream is to go to Africa, India or Asia -but we are not quite ready to undertake such an initiative without substantial funding. Please think about it and respond. Your suggestions are valuable: we hope you will share your comments. (elizabeth.podnieks@utoronto.ca).

NEWS FROM AFRICA

INPEA Africa on the march

Reports in from national representatives of African INPEA member countries tell how thousands of elders marched to mark WEAAD 2 and draw attention to the scourge of elder abuse. In South Africa's Limpopo province, 260 elders took the streets carrying placards saying "Stop killing us" (violent crime is rife in South Africa and homicide of isolated vulnerable elders is common). Thousands more marched in other provinces and distributed pamphlets. National Representative Pat Lindgren (pat@actionelderabusesa.co.za) informs that awareness days were held, and talks, training sessions and radio interviews given in the weeks leading up to June 15. White socks bearing the Action on Elder Abuse South Africa (AEASA) logo were handed out to older persons at all events, to wear in solidarity with victims of elder abuse.

National Representative of INPEA Uganda, Richard Semanda (agedr@yahoo.com) reported that activities in his country focused on creating awareness in children's groups and schools. A competition was held to encourage schools to stage music, dance and drama presentations and debate among community members in the week leading up to June 15. Joint winners were the Munyonyo Church of Uganda Primary School and St Peters Primary Nsambya. NGO The Aged Family Uganda (TAFU) was the primary organiser of the events. The church-based Radio Maria broadcast messages to stop elder abuse, while leaflets and postcards were handed out, a students' poster competition was held, and e-mail messages and circulars were distributed widely. A key event was a visit of children of Munyonyo to an isolated 105 year old woman, when discussion on elder abuse ensued among community members who were present at the visit.

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NEWS FROM AFRICA CONTINUED..

INPEA Togo national representative Samuel Dzahini (unisold2005@yahoo.fr) reported that a highpoint of activities in his country were those held at EPP Christ Roi School in Kpalimé. Themes of two presentations and subsequent debate were: “To pay one’s respect to our elders,” recognising that older people are neglected in society nowadays; and “Affection and welfare for our elders,” suggesting how older people’s welfare may be improved and their vulnerability reduced. Discussion ensued on the planning of a recreational centre for elders and young persons: “An elder and young people house.”

WEAAD 2 activities of INPEA The Gambia also largely focused on the youth. Senior and junior secondary school students were sensitised to various forms that elder abuse takes and the importance of retaining a strong cultural value of respect for elders. “Youth for Elders Clubs” were introduced in senior schools in Banjul. Students and a club co-ordinator staged a dramatisation of elders’ views of past and present generations, with an aim to inculcate positive attitude towards elders in youths. The report was submitted by James Nwodo (thegambiaapea@yahoo.com), Secretary-General of The Association for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (TAPEA).

Finally, HelpAge’s Africa Regional Development Centre in Nairobi, Kenya (INPEA Board Member Tavengwa Nhongo (tnhongo@helpage.co.ke) is HAI’s regional representative) worked with partner organisations in Kenya, Mozambique and Zambia to engage in talk shows on radio and television and to distribute advocacy materials in various forums. In Mozambique, older people delivered a letter to the Minister of Women and Social Affairs petitioning for legislation to protect their rights. In Kenya, 800 elders attended the launch of a shelter construction project which will enable older persons to “live in decent shelter.” Another event celebrated in Kenya was the commencement of a feeding programme for orphans and their carers, many of the carers who are older people.

In keeping with African traditions of intergenerational reciprocity and solidarity, WEAAD 2 events in member countries thus largely included children in activities, which were aimed at sensitising the children to elders’ vulnerability to abuse, and at encouraging them to respect and show affection to elders, in an effort to stop abuse. As Richard Semanda in Uganda points out: “The youth are the older persons of tomorrow.”

Monica Ferreira, Regional Representative: INPEA Africa
monica.ferreira@uct.ac.za



INPEA Uganda’s Richard Semanda visiting Mrs. Jjaaja Nanfuka, 105, in Munyonyo.

The Second World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (2nd WEAAD) in Togo (West Africa)

15th June 2007

The NGO UNI.SOL.D organized the 2nd WEAAD (15th June 2007) of INPEA in TOGO at Kpalimé in a school called EPP Christ-Roi.

The activities began in the morning of the 15th June 2007 at 7h30 a.m. by the reception of participants. After the reception, the national representative Samuel DZAHINI greets the participants and the presents the objectives of INPEA. He also invited people to join INPEA.

At 9h15 a.m., Amouzou ZOUHONGBE presented the first communication on the theme: “to pay one’s respect to our elders”. In the debate of this theme, we recognize that older people are neglect in our society nowadays.

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NEWS FROM AFRICA CONTINUED..

Georges DJAKAO presented the second communication at 10h27 a.m. on the theme “Affection and welfare for our elders”. We discuss about the theme and people gave many ideas for the welfare of elders.

After the two communications, we have a discussion about the building of a leisure centre for elders and the young persons (elders and young people house) in our town Kpalimé. The centre will receive elders and young persons from Togo and other countries over the world for activities together. This leisure centre shall be a place where older persons from Africa, America, Europe, Asia, and Australia can spend moments to relax. We are inviting all the network of INPEA for the realization of this project at Kpalimé in TOGO.

Samuel DZAHINI.



From right to left: AKAGBO Komla, DZAHINI Samuel (National Representative), DJAKAO Georges and ZOUHONGBE Amouzou.



Participants



OTHER WORLD REPORTS

News from the UN

On June 7th, the NGO Committee on Ageing, with the sub-committee on elder abuse, co-chaired by INPEA representative Pat Brownell and International Psychological Association representative Margot Nadien, sponsored a successful program at the UN Church Center in New York City on elder abuse policy and research in Israel, with Ariela Lowenstein as the keynote speaker. INPEA representative Susan Somers serves on the planning committee of the 2007 International Day of the Older Person (IDOP), co-chaired by IAGG representative James Collins and IFA representative Helen Hamlin, scheduled for October 4 at the UN in NYC.

During the academic year 2007-8, Pat Brownell will provide task supervision for an INPEA student, Temple Byars, a graduate student in social work from the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service, who will serve a field placement with JASA in New York City and one day a week at the UN representing INPEA. In this capacity, she will attend NGO committee on Aging meetings, staff the sub-committee on elder abuse, and assist with planning for an INPEA-led briefing on elder abuse for DPI in late Spring 2008. The last event is currently under discussion with DPI staff.

Pat Brownell, UN Representative

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OTHER WORLD REPORTS CONTINUED..

Ontario Provincial Police Report-Canada

The Ontario Provincial Police - Seniors Assistance Team joined hundreds of other community-based organizations, across Ontario, in recognizing June 15th, 2007 as the second annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Statistics Canada indicates that 10% of seniors over the age of 65 suffer from one or more forms of elder abuse. Research has also shown that there is a great reluctance by older adults to report these crimes to police or service providers to stop the abuse from continuing.

Throughout Ontario and the rest of the world, abuse and neglect of older persons is largely under-recognized or treated as an unspoken problem. Unfortunately, no community or country in the world is immune from this costly, public health and human rights crisis. Research indicates that public education campaigns like World Elder Abuse Awareness Day are vital to informing citizens of the cost of abuse in our society.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is an opportunity for all Ontarians to recognize and value the contributions made by seniors every day in communities across the province. Currently Ontario's seniors population is estimated to be 1.64 million which represents 13% of our total population.

The Ontario Provincial Police is committed to supporting "Safe Communities... A Secure Ontario" for all citizens, including our seniors', through public education, awareness and crime prevention initiatives. Members of the Ontario Provincial Police will be conducting information sessions on seniors' issues in partnership with other community agencies, throughout the month of June which is also seniors month.

As citizens of Ontario, we all need to work together to protect our seniors from unscrupulous people who may intentionally be targeting our aging population. Preventing elder abuse is a community challenge which will not be resolved quickly by one person or one approach and will require a community effort to stop the abuse.

For more information visit the OPP website at: www.opp.ca

Geneva

Highlights from WEAAD Keynote Speakers

Stephen Lewis of the Stephen Lewis Foundation (formerly of the UN) spoke about the potential links between HIV, poverty and elder abuse, drawing on his experiences of working in Africa over a number of years. He has had recent experience of setting up groups of Grandmothers (since March 2006) and of developing a campaign in this area. Many grandmothers and older women in Africa are courageous and resilient but their lives have often been shattered by the experience of HIV and AIDS, especially when they have assumed responsibility for care-giving for (adult) children who are sick, or for grandchildren if their parents die or are too ill to provide care. The women's experiences of domestic violence, infection, hunger and poverty are all indicative of the predicament facing women who are ageing in Africa. Evidently some of the older women have experience of abuse, violence and neglect (including at times violent sexual assault and rape) and these issues need to be considered within the framework of elder abuse.

The Grandmothers' campaign has given voice to emotional and eloquent expression of the despair facing many women. The women are sophisticated in their narratives and profound in both their resilience and their vision. The campaign provides psychological, emotional and (some) financial security for the women and it is hoped that the network could make a difference to the lives of older women. Additional links between INPEA and the foundation may be fruitful in future and further contact to explore these possibilities was encouraged.



OTHER WORLD REPORTS CONTINUED..

Richard Blewitt of HelpAge International then spoke and emphasised the role of HAI in fighting for the rights and dignity of older people and that elder abuse was high on the organisation's agenda. He illustrated this by drawing on work undertaken in Mozambique in recent years and the provision of para-legal support to older women who have experienced violence. The support included assisting women to access appropriate health care as well as helping women to obtain identity documents and to resolve land disputes. Social situations in relation to older women and concern about the vulnerability of female refugees has lead HAI to call for the development of special programmes to alleviate poverty and to combat all forms of discrimination against women. Their work also involves challenging views about older women (particularly in relation to witchcraft) and improving access to services, including health and social services as necessary. Providing redress for older women is important, with an overall aim to make violence unacceptable and intolerable. Any future Human Rights Commission must include the rights of older people, especially older women, with a mainstreaming of ageing across all items.

Lady Sally Greengross of the UK discussed developments across Europe in the last two decades in relation to elder abuse. Whilst there was a particular focus on developments in the UK, especially concerning the recent release of the UK prevalence study findings and matters relating to regulation of the care workforce, Lady Greengross also spoke of the need to look at what was taking place across Europe and the ways in which European and International level conventions are being converted into law and how this is then implemented in different countries. The need for a Special Rapporteur on Ageing was underlined as being of major importance, as was the need to discover more about what works in relation to elder abuse (for example help-lines and advocacy schemes with a specific remit to focus on abuse). Issues of neglect, domestic violence and human rights are clearly essential and changing current attitudes and values towards old age and later life and the culture of youth is clearly necessary in future. Dignity and respect for old age should be central, with older people honoured as the backbone of society. Cultural attitudes and diversity also need attention. Finally, individuals have a responsibility to make international organisations take action in relation to pressing problems. Human rights extend throughout life and do not/should not stop at any age but there also needs to be acknowledgement that there are differences in approaches to such issues within and across the European region and work needs to be undertaken to try and resolve or at least minimise these issues. Life-course, gender and human rights perspectives are very important here, as abuse contains dimensions relating to ethics, justice, social and human rights.

Bridget Penhale, July 2007

Jerusalem, June 13, 2007



Israel should have a good track record in its treatment of its senior population, for Judaism is demonstrative in its commandment to respect the elderly. In Leviticus 19:32, the Torah commands us to rise in the presence of an older person and honor the aged. Similarly, the fifth of the Ten Commandments is to honor our parents.

The success of the Pensioners' Party in Israel's past elections would also create the impression that our elders are cherished and respected members of Israeli society.

So does the Jewish state really need to commemorate World Elder-Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15 - established to help society "recognize and respond to the mistreatment of older people in whatever setting it occurs, so that the latter years of life will be free from abuse, neglect and exploitation."

Unfortunately, the simple answer is "yes." In over 30 years of working with elderly people from all socioeconomic backgrounds, but mostly the poor, I have seen horrifying cases of abuse. Sometimes the abuse is intentional; often it has come about through neglect that may be hard to label outright abuse.



OTHER WORLD REPORTS CONTINUED..

ONE ELDERLY woman who comes to mind was bedridden, living in a damp stone house in one of Jerusalem's oldest neighborhoods. Her poor health and frail body made it difficult for her to hear and even harder for others to distinguish her mumbled words.

Her son and daughter-in-law were reluctant to move her to a retirement home because their elderly mother would have to sell her own home in order to pay for the care. They said she wished to remain in her home and leave it to them as an inheritance. So they tried to care for her as best they could, and Ezrat Avot eased the burden by bringing her easily-digestible hot meals daily.

When the winter winds chilled her room we gave her a radiator. During a visit a couple of weeks later our volunteer noticed that the radiator was missing. The daughter-in-law had taken it for herself (when confronted with the theft she returned it).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines elder abuse as "a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person."

According to this definition (and basic ethics) the daughter-in-law in my example was guilty of abuse by stealing a possession necessary to keep her mother-in-law warm. But was keeping the old woman in her home until she passed away - soon afterwards - also an act of abuse? How can you gauge when concern is really abuse? And does anyone care?

A 2005 STUDY by Haifa University revealed that 18.4% of seniors in Israel were exposed to at least one type of abuse: physical or sexual violence (2%), verbal abuse (8.1%), limitations on freedom (2.7%) financial exploitation (6.6%); and a massive 25% suffered from neglect that led to a lack of food, hygiene and medical treatment. Sadly, most of this abuse or neglect was on the part of family members or caregivers.

If these statistics are not sufficiently shocking, a more recent survey by Haifa University of seniors admitted to Hadasah University Hospital, Jerusalem and Rambam Hospital, Haifa, revealed that 26.5 % reported that they had been abused, or were deemed by hospital staff to have suffered abuse.

The physical and/or mental vulnerability of the aged puts them at risk in the first place and makes it difficult for them to report abuse.

The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, in its promotion of an Elder-Abuse Awareness Day states that "empowering older persons is the most effective tool in the response to elder abuse."

In Israel, WEAAD was commemorated in the Knesset on Tuesday, June 12, and special lectures that evening were sponsored by Ezrat Avot for the English-speaking public to learn more about and share their concerns.

We offer Hebrew/English/Russian info-cards with hotline numbers to report, or receive support for seniors suffering emotional, physical or financial abuse. IN ORDER to ensure that our older citizens are truly cared for, it is vital to educate the Israeli public toward the achievements, rights and contribution of seniors in our society. For this reason, Ezrat Avot has developed intergenerational programs, including Project Kirvah (an elementary school curriculum on aging and intergenerational relationships) and a national student photography contest (closing July 15) to illustrate the real lives and roles of seniors in our society.



OTHER WORLD REPORTS CONTINUED..

And in order to empower those seniors who live alone, Ezrat Avot is building the Jerusalem Seniors' Atrium - a one-stop center that will centralize all government and health services needed by the city's elderly under one, wheelchair-accessible roof and provide a comfortable venue for senior cultural and leisure activities.

Whatever ostensible advances pensioners may have made in the political sphere, we need more grassroots education and social awareness in order to ensure that we have mechanisms to prevent our grandparents from being isolated and abused.

The writer, a past recipient of the Ministry of Welfare Award for Volunteerism, is co-founder and director of Ezrat Avot. info@ezratavot.org or www.ezratavot.org

This article can also be read at <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1181570268480&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

INDIA & AUSTRALIA

News from India

2007 was the focus of the Second anniversary of WEAAD. Starting May the count down on bringing awareness on issues of abuse, neglect and marginalization of older persons began. The observance of the International Day of Families gave an opportunity to deliberate on concerns related to 'Persons with Disabilities'. Prior to this many discussion meetings at various levels - with the government, civil society members, and older people themselves were organized by Dr. Mala Kapur Shankardass, the INPEA Representative to review issues and solutions related to concerns of abuse in the wider context. As a result of these different partners and stakeholders got involved with the activities organized during the month by Dr. Shankardass as part of INPEA and her India based organization Development, Welfare and Research Foundation.

On 15th June Dr. Shankardass as Representative of INPEA and Managing Trustee of Development, Welfare and Research Foundation (DWARF) organized the Second Anniversary of WEAAD as seen in the picture below, where she is addressing the gathering which had the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi, Shrimati Sheila Dikshit as the Chief Guest. The event had the cause supported at the State level of the Government of Delhi, at the central level of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and of the Police and the Judiciary. It was collaborated by HelpAge India, Delhi Federation of Associations of Senior Citizens and the Habitat World. It was organized at India Habitat Centre and had the active participation of a huge gathering. The program which focused on strengthening partnerships to address elder abuse issues had an important addresses by the Hon'ble Shrimati Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi, special comments by Mr. M M Sabharwal, Emeritus President, HelpAge India; Dr. Mala Kapur Shankardass, Representative INPEA; Mr. A N Sood, President, Delhi Federation of Associations of Senior Citizens; Mr. S B K Singh, Add'l Commissioner of Police, Headquarters, Senior Citizens Cell, New Delhi and by Mrs. Kiran Puri, Director, DWARF. Many Senior Citizen Associations and Rotary Clubs from different states of India participated and contributed their success stories in dealing with abuse. Members of these forums shared their experiences and thoughts on combating abuse and neglect of older people. Serious deliberations were held on promoting conducive environments for the well being of older persons and working towards reducing and removing unfavorable circumstances impacting on quality of life of older persons.

United Nations Information Centre also organized observance of WEAAD in Delhi. Lt. Governor of Delhi, Mr. Tejinder Khanna and Mr. Arbind Prasad, Jt. Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment addressed the gathering. The event had collaboration with Anugraha. Many other organizations and senior citizens groups in various parts of the country and in the South Asia region also organized activities and programs to bring awareness on elder abuse. Clearly, elder abuse has become an issue which is drawing attention in India and other countries of South Asia.

Dr. Mala Kapur Shankardass, INPEA Representative for India & South Asia



OTHER WORLD REPORTS

News from Australia

The Australian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse is now well and truly active again and has had several successful meetings. Seminars on WEAAD in both 2006 and 2007 were sell out events in several cities, and there is a high level of interest. The Australian Association of gerontology has been very supportive and our next national meeting will be held just before the AAG National Conference in Adelaide in November.

Professor Gerry Naughtin and I are the ANPEA Co-Convenors. Gerry's office supports the teleconferencing for meetings and my office is supporting the development of a data base of ANPEA members, and a catalogue of useful references. We feel that there are a number of people who may be willing to nominate for a position with INPEA in the future.

Associate Professor Susan Kurrle

Curran Chair in Health Care of Older People, Faculty of Medicine, University of Sydney, Clinical Director and Senior Staff Specialist, Division of Rehabilitation and Aged Care, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital, Australia

The bulletin is produced at INPEA head office, University of Toronto.
Editors: Elizabeth Podnieks (Elizabeth.podnieks@utoronto.ca), Monica Ferreira, Mala Kapur Shankardass (m_k_shank@yahoo.com), Betty Malks (Betty.Malks@ssa.sccgov.org). Design and layout, Priscilla Aleman.