Time to Ageivism

5th AGE Annual Conference

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Hello!
I’m Prof. Issi Doron

*I would like to thank you for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts

*A word about the nature of this presentation: not an academic presentation.
Let’s start with you what you all know very well: We are living in an age of demographic revolution.
Figure 2-1. Young Children and Older People as a Percentage of Global Population: 1950 to 2050

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007b.
FERTILITY v. LONGEVITY

Figure 1. Total fertility rate and life expectancy at birth: world, 1950-2050

- Total fertility rate (children per woman)
- Life expectancy at birth (years)

[Graph showing trends in fertility and life expectancy over time]
Graph 1.1.2: Age structure of the population in 2013 and 2060, EU28 and E.A. (persons)

Source: Commission services based on Eurostat EUROPOP2013 data.
<table>
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<th>Country</th>
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2. The Debate around A New HR Convention

Let’s move to another topic you know: describing the recent debate around the need for a new international human rights convention for older persons.
Some Historical Context

- The historical ignorance
- The UN/Global level
- The non-European level
- The European level
The Current Debate

The supportive argument:
- Covering gaps
- Setting norms
- HR Success
- Education
- Symbolism
- Real Need

The opposing arguments:
- No Gaps
- Soft Law
- Too many HR
- Ineffective
- No Real Need
Recent Developments

- The UN OEWG (since 2011)
- The UN OHCHR Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All HR by Older Persons (Ms. Rosa Kornfeld-Matte; since 2014)
- The Inter-American Convention on Protecting the HR of Older Persons (June, 2015)

And what about Europe?
3. Why Is This Happening?

Why is has the debate started?
3.1. The Changing Paradigm: From Burden to Opportunity
3.2. Realizing Ageism

Ageism can be seen as a process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this for skin color and gender. Old people are categorized as senile, rigid in thought and manner, old-fashioned in morality and skills [...] Ageism allows the younger generations to see older people as different from themselves, thus they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings.
The way Ageism Works
4. But what are we missing?

Why am I here? What don’t you know??
Are We Missing Something?

- Such a dramatic change:
  - Active Aging
  - Age Friendly Policies
  - Healthy Aging
  - Productive Aging
  - Successful Aging
  - The “success” of the Baby Boomers

- So what are we missing?
We are missing two of the most important thing:

1. **Social Justice**
2. **Ageism**
WHY SOCIAL JUSTICE? - 1

- Rights as “natural” objects;
- Social Justice as a “relative” object;
- The absence of “social justice” in the current debate;
- The cetrality of “justice” within the context of the rights of older persons: the life-course perspective.
Ageivism is the political ideology behind the social movement for social justice to older persons. Ageivism is the foundational basis for Social Activism in old age.
Why Ageivism?

I believe that there is evidence that supports the following:

- Older adults are unique and distinct social group;
- Many older Europeans experience discrimination and exclusion;
- Significant portions of older Europeans are ignored, silenced and humiliated;
- Older adults in Europe are “constructed” as an economic “problem”, “burden” and as the “source” of the current “young” Europeans’ socio-economic troubles;
I would like to argue that these realities will not change without AGEIVISM:

- No social change was made without a social struggle;
- No difference was made without a sense of political identity;
- Without political identity and political ideology, there is no future for the human rights of older persons in Europe.

SO = WHAT WE ARE MISSING IS NOT BEING “ACTIVE” OR “SUCCESSFUL” BUT BEING “ACTIVISTS”
Concluding Remarks

So, where am I going?
Can we make a difference?

- I am not an idealist or a revolutionary;
- I am a realist and a pragmatics;
- We need ideology to lead our way;
- We need also need an international convention for the rights of older persons, no less than women, children, or persons with disabilities needed their own HR conventions;
- If there anything we can learn from the most recent HR Convention – i.e. Persons with Disabilities – is that we cannot move forward without visible and powerful political identity and activism.
- Older Europeans need to play a key role in the development of AGEIVISM and of political activist leadership.
- We need you. And this is why I’m here.
Thank You!

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