



Networks: IAGG's Global Social Initiative on Aging

Africa Programme

Under the auspices of the IAGG Global Social Initiative on Ageing (GSIA), and based on consultations with key academic stakeholders in Africa, plans are underway for a strategic programme to advance understanding of, and policy responses to the most salient challenges in the three critical social areas of 'liveability', 'families' and 'care' and older persons in Africa.

"Liveability" results from having access to sufficient economic and social resources to enable to meet basic needs and ensure a good quality of life. A particular concern in Africa are questions about the exclusion of older persons, relative to younger age groups, from contributing to, and benefiting from development. Activities on this theme will illuminate age-, generation- and/or cohort-related patterns and inequalities in access to material resources and impacts on survival and citizenship of older adults

"Families" and "Care" The world looks to families as the key social group in which older people are embedded and supported. In Africa, families are pivotal for understanding and addressing challenges of ageing, including that of care for older persons who are no longer able to live independently. A major challenge for Africa is to illuminate the realities that juxtapose dominant official discourses which uphold the strength of Africa's family values and support as a major, even moral, asset for development in the continent with major concerns about

the inadequacy of the care that families are able to provide in contexts of poverty, migration and social strain.

Activities on the themes of 'family' and 'care' will aim to generate a better understanding of the structures, content, adequacy and normative underpinnings of family support for dependent older persons and of their implications for thinking and policy on sustainable care models in Africa.

To this end, the programme will encompass a set of agenda framing, research and capacity building activities intended to (i) stimulate reflection and active discussion on the three themes among relevant African and international research, policy and civil society stakeholders as well as the public, (ii) develop the foci for subsequent GSIA-led knowledge creation and capacity building and (iii) advance global scientific and policy debates, broadly.

The forthcoming IAGG Africa Region Conference of Gerontology and Geriatrics, 17-20 October in Cape Town will provide a unique opportunity to learn more about, and engage with the GSIA Africa plans.

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