

ROUNDTABLE SERIES

MAINSTREAMING KNOWLEDGE ON AGEING

TAKEAWAYS



ACCESS TO CULTURAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES: Tackling individual interests towards intergenerational social construction

 **23** NOVEMBER
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 **9:30–11:10 (NY time)/
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This document has been prepared by the Division for People and Social Inclusion at UNITAR, Ms. Analucía Jácome, Senior Project Leader and Human Rights Expert, Mr. Rafael Padilla, SDP team, and Mr. Israel Ledesma, Graphic Designer. We hope you enjoy it!

MODERATOR



Mr. Alex Mejia

Director, Division for People and Social Inclusion
UNITAR

WELCOME REMARKS



H.E. Amb. Mme. Anita Pipan

Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva

“Older persons should have the right to access lifelong learning, vocational training, and capacity building.”

1. Currently, those age 60 and older constitute 12.3% of the global population, a figure expected to rise to nearly 22% by 2050, with 1.5 billion aged 65 and above. The increase in longevity is a manifestation of the progress achieved in human development and health over the last decades.
2. However, the rapid demographic shift has also shed light on the lack of adequate protection mechanisms, policies, and programs to address the situation of older persons. The socioeconomic, environmental, health, and climate -related impacts on the lives of older persons, especially older women who constitute the majority, are intensifying.
3. Ageing does not necessarily make individuals vulnerable. A number of physical, political, economic, and social factors contribute to the challenges that older persons face in the enjoyment of their human rights, as it has been evidenced during the Coronavirus pandemic.
4. Older persons are often denied the opportunities to learn because of systematic exclusion caused by ageism. We know that being active can vastly improve the quality of their lives; in this regard, access to cultural and leisure activities play an important part, a spillover to other spheres of their engagement in society, and contribute to making sure to be able to age with dignity.

HIGHLIGHTS ON SLOVENIA AND HEALTHY AGEING

Slovenia is active in various international organizations that deal with sustainable development and older persons, including the UNEC Standing Working Group on Aging, the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing in New York, or the Core Group of Countries on Human Rights and Older Persons within the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

At home in Slovenia, senior organizations and non-governmental organizations which carry out activities for older persons have established associations at the national level. They amplify the voice of older persons in proposing measures for sustainable solutions in programming and legislative documents, areas of poverty eradication, health and well-being, long-term term care, education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, decent work, reducing inequalities and sustainable cities and communities.



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED
NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA



5. A number of programs take place in different associations of older persons and other age groups at different levels, local, regional and national. This can span from cultural events, sports and recreational meetings, handicraft workshops, reading culture, to learning digital and other skills. These are joint activities that lead to the exchange and transfer of knowledge, where prejudices and stereotypes are broken down.



DID YOU KNOW?

Slovenia is a strong believer in the need for enhancing the protection, promotion, and well-being of older persons, they deserve no less. There are 15 multi-generational centres in Slovenia where different generations meet and cooperate through concrete activities and contribute to reducing ageism.



Focus: The importance of adequate protection mechanisms against ageism



Professor Alexandra Xanthaki

UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights
Professor of Laws at Brunel University London, UK

“Cultural life should be understood as an important human right for the development of society.”

1. Culture is a transformative concept, and it should be guaranteed to everyone, whether 3 years old toddler or a 96 years old father. Culture cannot be limited to specific activities and should not be restricted to the concept of rest and leisure. It permits all aspects of life; from dry legal texts to the vibrant colors and tempos of artistic endeavors; from our food, songs, and dances, to art, architecture, science and technology; from the expansive virgin cultural landscapes of mega cities to the quiet niches of small towns.
2. We have to recognize that States take positive obligations to better understand how they are going include older persons at intersectional level. There is an intergenerational gap between migrant older persons and younger generations of migrants. Migrants, by the mere fact that they're older persons, their voice is almost lost, as if they do not belong to the cultural life of society. States have to take very specific obligations to address this issue.
3. The recent experience of the pandemic has highlighted how much people of all ages and walks of life need to engage with the arts and culture to have these activities as an opportunity to meet with other, to connect at a human and sensory level, not just words. For example, in the UK, there are a lot of older persons who not only have lost the two years of their lives being in lockdowns but finding it extremely difficult to go back to the society.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON CULTURAL RIGHTS' EFFORTS TO PROMOTE CULTURAL RIGHTS

In 2009 the Human Rights Council decided to establish, for a period of three years, a new special procedure entitled “independent expert in the field of cultural rights” through resolution 10/23. The Special Rapporteur reports annually both to the Human Rights Council, and to the General Assembly. Under this mandate, the mandate holder is asked to:

- Identify best practices of promoting and protecting cultural rights at local, national, regional and international levels;
- Identify obstacles to the promotion and protection of cultural rights, and submit recommendations to the Council on ways to overcome them;
- Work with States to foster the adoption of measures—at local, national, regional and international levels—to promote and safeguard cultural rights, and make concrete proposals to enhance cooperation at all levels in that regard;
- Collaborate closely with States and other relevant actors like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to study the relationship between cultural rights and cultural diversity, with the aim of further promoting cultural rights;
- Integrate a gender and a disability perspective into this work;
- Coordinate with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, other special procedures, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and relevant actors, representing the broadest possible range of interests and experiences, including by attending relevant conferences and events.



4. What is important is how International Human Rights Law and cultural rights guide us through the following:
- First, intersectionality: Addressing the different sections of the population and how their different identities interact creates obstacles in their ability to enjoy leisure, rest and culture and cultural activities.
 - Second, participation: Older persons should participate in how we ensure the specific programs to make them inclusive. It is an obligation that States have.
 - Third, the importance of creating common spaces: Where population of all ages can meet and talk together.



REMEMBER

The right of everyone to rest and leisure is set out in article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is closely linked to cultural rights.

Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights counters Article 23 by emphasizing the right to reasonable working hours and paid vacations. Despite its affirmation of leisure, it doesn't endorse idleness, as clarified by Cuban drafter Pérez Cisneros in the late 1940s. Article 23, influenced significantly by Latin American nations' input during the drafting process from 1946 to 1948, drew inspiration from their democratic governments and constitutions, which championed social and economic rights, including annual holidays and paid leave. These constitutional provisions served as a guide for the UDHR, earning approval even from the Communist bloc. In the words of Yugoslav drafter Vladislav Ribnikar, the right to rest without pay held little significance.

USEFUL SOURCES

- 30 articles on the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights | [Link](#)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70: 30 Articles on 30 Articles - Article 24 | [Link](#)
- Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights | [Link](#)



Focus: Access to tourism and culture for vulnerable groups



Mr. Igor Stefanovic

Technical Coordinator of the UN World Tourism Organization, UNWTO, Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department

“We should never group the older persons with disabilities or with specific access requirements when it comes to travel and tourism into one huge group.”

1. Access to tourism, leisure and culture is embedded in article 30 of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is the point of departure of facilitating access to tourism, leisure, and culture for all persons, with or without disabilities.
2. At least one third of persons considered as older persons have a diagnosed disability throughout their life cycle. We have to ask ourselves whether it's becoming a common experience for all worldwide, or if it's only happening in the most developed and mature economies. It is also something that we ask ourselves through tourism, because in 1999, we adopted the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as our roadmap to develop tourism globally.
3. We should ask ourselves whether active ageing and intergenerational dialogue has to do with the GDP per capita. We can see in Spain that the way you enjoy your free time varies between neighborhoods, even in the city of Madrid, with three or four million people. People living in an area where GDP per capita is higher, their free time, leisure, and way of travel, is totally different from the way people live in other neighborhoods.
4. Older persons with disabilities or with specific access requirements are too heterogeneous; we all have specific needs, and we always send the message to the tourism and travel sector that every client counts. If you are not able to accommodate specific access requirements of your customers – in this case older persons or persons with disabilities – you're losing money.
5. It's very important in the tourism sector to underline the business case, because if we only speak about human rights, our experience is that hospitality and tourism service providers do not care only about human rights, because it's only one part of the picture.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE UNWTO'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ACCESSIBLE TOURISM FOR ALL

UNWTO has developed the Action Agenda on Accessible Tourism. It encompasses initiatives aimed at enhancing training, establishing measurement systems, and raising industry awareness regarding the benefits of a diverse workplace. Stakeholders commit to aligning their marketing and commercial strategies, utilizing digital solutions to ensure accessible experiences for all customers, and integrating accessibility into product development and decision-making processes.

As part of the conference's lasting impact, a Compendium of Best Practices presented in San Marino will be jointly published by UNWTO, Accessible EU, and ENAT in 2024. Ongoing research will further explore accessibility in cultural and nature-based tourism, digital solutions, and other exemplary practices in the years to come.



UNWTO
World Tourism Organization





DO NOT FORGET!

The obligation of the government is to facilitate access to tourism, leisure, and culture for all people, especially those who might be counted and grouped into vulnerable groups.

DID YOU KNOW?

The second edition of the UNWTO Conference on Accessible Tourism took place in San Marino from November 16 to 17, 2023. The Action Agenda, considered a transformative initiative for disability inclusion and the impact of tourism on Sustainable Development Goals, garnered commitments from conference participants to achieve tangible outcomes.

USEFUL SOURCES

- UNWTO launches san marino action agenda for accessible tourism for all | [Link](#)
- UNWTO – Accessible Tourism | [Link](#)
- San Marino Action Agenda 2030 | [Link](#)



Focus: New longevity and healthy ageing



Dr. Diego Bernardini

Doctor, expert, writer, and lecturer in Gerontology
 Professor “Health of Older People”
 Director “International Diplomate of New Longevity”

“We need to start to see longevity as a process, at personal and collective levels.”

1. We are looking at how ageing is not only quantitative but is mainly qualitative in the way that people are living the second half of their lives. We are living a new longevity area, which means that we are in a new century with a new culture – constantly evolving – where a massive and diverse group of the population is growing and defining new roles.
2. New longevity means functional capacity, experience, wisdom, life course, life course approach, life transitions, empowerment, rights, talent. Also, a paradigm of urgency, more than productivity, and a paradigm for knowledge and a connected society. Urgency as the capacity to contribute, give, share knowledge, to transmit values and more. This idea is based on intergenerational culture, a point of view to think and to analyze society.
3. Individuals have a very bad habit. Older people usually are “the others,” not myself. Looking for ways to facilitate the mindset change, the evidence shows interesting things. Firstly, education is the main social determinant in our lives.
4. Narrative is another key point, in particular about the second half of our lives. Evidence shows that people start to feel “not young” around their 40’s. So we are considering life expectations beyond 70s in most countries around the world as the longer life period and also should be an interested period.
5. We have the possibility, as never before, to think about our future. The new longevity is a real phenomenon. We aren’t talking about the future, we are talking about the present, our present, where we need to confront and to solve the challenges of the longevity pedagogy for a longevity literacy for the society of new longevity, where intergenerational action plays a determinant role.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE WORK OF DR. DIEGO BERNARDINI ON AGEING

Diego Bernardini holds a PhD and a Master’s degree in Gerontology from the University of Salamanca, Spain. His educational background encompasses degrees in medicine and physiotherapy from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. With expertise in family medicine, geriatrics, public health, rehabilitation, and medical education, he has pursued additional training in the United States (American Board of Family Physician), the United Kingdom (University College of London), and Switzerland (World Health Organization).

As a postgraduate professor in Argentina, Mexico, and Spain, he served as a Visiting Professor at the University of Malaya in Malaysia in 2014. Furthermore, Dr. Bernardini is the Program Coordinator of the International Longevity Center (ILC-BR) in Brazil since 2015. He has also contributed his expertise during a three-year tenure at PAHO/WHO in Washington DC, as well as engagements with the World Bank and other institutions.





REMEMBER

Best education means best opportunities and equity societies. In this regard, the idea of longevity pedagogy is an intended need. It is mandatory to start training our new generations in the values, opportunities, and also challenges of longer lives. This topic should start in the first years of formal education and should be facilitated during the whole childhood with intergenerational action, where different stakeholders play a role.

USEFUL SOURCES

- Dr. Diego Bernardini webpage | [Link](#)
- Book - Bernardini - The new longevity is dressed in diversity. 2022 | [Link](#)



Focus: The role of museums and cultural spaces for healthy ageing



Dr. Bryan Kennedy

President of Bryan P. Kennedy Art Consulting
Expert in visual literacy and creative ageing

“In the framework of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, it’s time to act now for cultural facilities and museums.”

1. Ageism hides in plain sight. It is within the museum sector as it is everywhere. Museums love to say that they are loved by their community. It is a fact that museums are mostly focused on younger rather than older audiences.
2. Most American museums are private and most of them have vast funds to bring school children on visits. None have funds to bring older people. Museums have children’s centers and family centers, but are there any that have centers for older persons?
3. The overarching feedback that is been received from thousands of satisfaction surveys and the approval ratings are that older persons want to be seen as to continue to have a sense of accomplishment in their lives and to reduce their social isolation by making new friends. Creative ageing classes come in a variety of forms; they can involve a professionally trained artist, in such art form, working with a group of older persons over a succession of weekly classes where participants explore their creativity and make something new.
4. For museums, older persons should represent a vast reservoir of potential visitors. In some museums, there is the perception that they have lots of older persons, but no, they are not representative of the entire community and there are those who do not go to museums regularly.
5. Older persons can be a real part of their workforce, including as future donors, if they are treated equitably with equal access to education programs and facilities, by making them feel comfortable and that they belong.

INTERESTING

Dr. Becca Levy from Yale University has been working for decades to demonstrate that many health problems ascribed to senescence -the biological process of ageing- are in fact due to having a negative age belief. Having a positive view of ageing, and that goes for museums too, can add to life. In fact, studies have shown that if you have a positive view of ageing, you can add seven years to your life. Joe Cocklin of MIT Aging Lab, has shown that far from being a drain on the American economy, older Americans actually help to drive it.





DID YOU KNOW?

Only 15% of Americans go to a museum more than once a year.

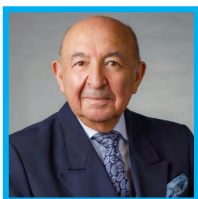
A study prepared in 2021 by the American Alliance of Museums, that covers all museums in America, showed that from the \$2 billion spent annually by US museums on education programs, 75% goes to school children under 18. 25% goes on to everybody over the age of 18. That is the definition of inequity! Museums have lots of good intentions, but they’re still plagued by ageism: With wall labels, tiny writing, darkened rooms, heavy entrance doors and a lack of comfortable seating.

USEFUL SOURCES

- Dr. Becca Levy and her research into healthy ageing | [Link](#)
- American Alliance of Museums | [Link](#)



Closing remarks for the whole series



Amb. Luis Benigno Gallegos

President of UNITAR's Board of Trustees

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ecuador

“There is no voice for the right to live at home, age at home, and have dignity at home.”

1. This year entails special attention to the UN Institute for Training and Research, UNITAR, for its 60's anniversary, as the agency with the mission to develop the individual, institutional and organizational capacities of countries and other UN stakeholders through learning solutions to enhance decision-making and support country-level action for overcoming global challenges.
2. As its Chair of the Board of Trustees and President of the Global Initiative on Ageing Foundation, I commend the efforts of the Institute in leading this initiative that has put together a powerful partnership among 10 UN entities, States, networks of civil society organizations, and academia.
3. UNITAR is grateful to organize this series in partnership with our CIFAL Global Network, UNDESA, UNFPA, IOM, UNWOMEN, UNHCR, WHO, OHCHR, ITU, ILO, the Group of Friends of the Human Rights of Older Persons UN Geneva; the Global Initiative on Ageing Foundation, GIA; the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuses; the International Longevity Centre; and the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva. and the Harvard Law School Project on Disability joined us.
4. This year, we focused on accessibility and its impact at individual and collective level through the celebration of five events. These discussions have served to better understand core elements on access to justice, labour markets, political participation, health and social services, cultural and leisure services, as well as engaging different actors.
5. UNITAR is a donor-based funded UN entity, so any support in this regard will be more than welcome. Raising awareness and using knowledge about the sensitivities around the aging and human rights of older persons.

HIGHLIGHTS ON UNITAR'S

UNITAR is a United Nations autonomous body with the mission of developing the individual, institutional and organizational capacities of countries and other UN stakeholders through high quality learning solutions and related knowledge products and services to enhance decision-making and to support country-level action for overcoming global challenges. In this regard, the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing has triggered UNITAR's interest in approaching other UN entities, as well as States, academia, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector for organizing this Virtual Roundtable Series.





USEFUL SOURCES

UNITAR’s Online Portfolio “Ageing & Older Persons” | [Link](#)





Decade of healthy ageing



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