INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GERONTOLOGY AND GERIATRICS

The Global Social Initiative on Ageing
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Report on the Global Social Initiative on Ageing
Strategic Planning Meeting, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada
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[1] Participants of the March meeting are included in appendix 1

1. What is the Global Social Initiative on Ageing?

The Global Social Initiative on Ageing (GSIA) is a core activity of the International Association of Gerontology (www.iagg.info and www.wun.ac.uk/research/global-social-initiative-ageing). The mission of the GSIA is to foster collaborative, trans-national approaches to the creation and transfer of knowledge at the intersections of global trends and population ageing. The GSIA will address critical challenges arising from these global trends including:

- The ability of families to sustain intergenerational support in the face of poverty, pandemics, and changing family structures and beliefs.
- The sustainability of older rural populations who face increased poverty and out-migration of young people arising from the impact of climate change.
- Global shifts in world economies toward the individualization of risk that have led to increasing income disparities, older adults who are left behind in migratory transitions, and widening north-south divides.
- The erosion or absence of social welfare provisions that have resulted in increasing social and economic costs to older adults, their families and communities.

Through their understanding of place, of people in place, of intergenerational family and community relations, and of cultural settings, social scientists are uniquely placed to highlight issues of aging that have international importance. Population ageing has profound implications for the economic status, family resilience, and caring capacity of nations, communities, and citizens of all ages. In turn, economic instability and changing family structures have multiple impacts on international patterns of migration and on global shifts of resources, including human labour. The creation and application of social scientific knowledge, derived from scholarship around the world, is crucial to enabling human societies to find good solutions to address global issues in ageing.

The GSIA is an initiative of the IAGG and has been adopted as one of its core activities. The GSIA brings together scholars from all regions of the world. It is strategically placed both to draw on its global network of social researchers in ageing and to make its expanding and increasingly internationalised and comparative knowledge widely available. Participants in the GSIA have resolved to share, exchange and co-produce research and knowledge on social aspects of population ageing with the aim of placing this knowledge on international agendas to move forward understanding of key global issues in ageing, many of which require collaborative and urgent attention.

The GSIA also aims to contribute particularly to the Behavioural, Policy, and Practise areas of the IAGG in building multi-disciplinary bio-psycho-social approaches in gerontology and its applications.

The GSIA has received initial financial support from the World Universities Network (WUN), the IAGG, and universities in all world regions. It welcomes collaboration with other global networks of scholars, and will be working to engage all those committed both to improving understanding of population ageing through social scientific inquiry and to sharing the knowledge which emerges with all who shape policies designed to create a society for all ages.

Mission: *The Global Social Initiative on Ageing fosters capacity building and the creation and transfer of knowledge on global, cross-national and regional issues of individual and population ageing toward creating a society for all ages.*

2. Strategic planning for the GSIA

Population ageing is a key feature of the early 21st century. In all world regions, proportions of older adults are increasing rapidly. Yet often they are invisible in the face of other global challenges such as climate change, poverty, economic development and the politics of migration that have dominated the international stage. The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, with the United Nations Programme on Ageing (2007) produced a comprehensive Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21st Century[2] to guide research that can inform implementation of the Madrid Plan[3] for constructive action on behalf of older people and ageing societies. This initiative builds on this work.

3. A social perspective on aging: central principles.

The social perspective on ageing is the hallmark of the GSIA. Its' central premise is that human development and the experience of old age occur within multiple social contexts consisting of hierarchically organized and mutually interacting social arenas that themselves change over time. Social contexts also provide an organizing paradigm for understanding diversity and inequality in old age and over the life-span, and their consequences. The GSIA's social science perspective on ageing emphasizes methodological pluralism and encompasses a wide range of approaches from theory to policy development, drawing on scholarship from all regions of the world.

Five principles inform the social point of view on ageing and the GSIA's approach is organized around these:

1. Multiple contexts. Ageing takes place within multiple social contexts that are organized hierarchically. They include population structures (e.g. population ageing, fertility and cohort flow, migration, and mortality) and major social institutions (e.g. the economy, nation-state, the voluntary sector) at the *macro-societal level*; social groups and their distinctive though often changing values and norms (community, civic engagement, workplace, family, culture, race/ethnicity, and religion) at the *mezzo-social level*; and interpersonal relations (e.g. social networks, marriage and relationships, intergenerational relations) at the *micro-social level*. At the *individual level*, the GSIA draws on a wealth of scholarship showing that human agency provides many opportunities for older people to alter their social contexts and to define quality of life in their own terms.
2. Dynamic and interactive contexts. Ageing takes place within social contexts that are dynamic, changing and interacting over time. Social institutions and population structure

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[2] www.un.org/**ageing**/documents/**AgeingResearchAgenda**-6.pdf

[3] Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. Madrid, 8-12 April 2002. United Nations, New York, 2002. Available: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/397/51/PDF/N0239751. pdf? OpenElement Assessed: 25 May 2007.

change in ways that influence ageing trajectories and outcomes. Economic downturns may delay or accelerate retirement decisions and reduced fertility may have unintended consequences for family caregiving. Disciplines at the boundaries of social science - including in the engineering, legal, epidemiological, and health professions - are also relevant where they intersect with social aspects of aging. Multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches fit comfortably with the social paradigm in studying ageing. For instance, technological change has the potential to alter the terms of interpersonal relationships and to provide greater autonomy for older people.

3. <u>Diversity and inequality</u>. Long-term institutional and social arrangements have led to inequalities of gender, social class, race/ethnicity, and age. For instance, unequal access to education earlier in life has consequences for the accumulation of resources in later life and the timing of retirement. In exploring diversity and equality we highlight themes of cumulative advantage and disadvantage over the life course, the increasing individualization of risk that has accompanied reduced institutional commitment to older adults and the substantial inequalities in quality of life between older adults in developed and developing nations.

4. <u>Methodological and theoretical pluralism.</u> The GSIA has determined to be inclusive with respect to both methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, as well as historical-comparative approaches and methods used in the humanities are relevant to answering important research questions in the social study of ageing. Longitudinal and comparative methods are particularly useful for understanding dynamic and contextual aspects of ageing. Openness to new theoretical perspectives are an important element of the GSIA's approach and the emerging scholarship of new scholars is encouraged.

5. <u>Scope.</u> The social perspective on ageing encompasses a wide variety of activities, including theory construction, model building, basic knowledge generation, action frameworks, applied and evaluative research and policy analysis, as well as application of critical theory, a self-reflexive meta-paradigm that questions essential assumptions about the aging research enterprise. Evidence-based knowledge communicated to, and built with, relevant stakeholders, policy-makers, and practitioners further widens the scope of the social in ageing.

4. Aims and objectives

<u>Objective 1: Knowledge creation, synthesis and transfer</u>
Knowledge about social aspects of ageing must be consolidated, and it must be transferred to key stakeholders in a timely fashion. The following GSIA activities will help meet this objective (see details of these activities in Timelines and Activities):
   a. Solidify the evidence
   b. Deepen multi-disciplinary concepts, methods, and theories across and within social science disciplines
   c. Transfer new knowledge quickly to broad audiences

<u>Objective 2: Engage members of the IAGG</u>
Active engagement of social gerontologists in IAGG and the GSIA is needed in order to build the momentum, and to create buy-in from the membership. The following GSIA activities will help meet this objective (see details of these activities in Timelines and Activities):
   a. Engage senior social gerontologists from all world regions to create 'state of knowledge' publications for GSIA

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b. Create structures within the IAGG to support working groups to articulate IAGG inter-regional social research agendas to national and international social and policy priorities as per the Madrid Action Plan

c. Develop funding sources and coordinating/ advisory mechanisms, to ensure representation from all regions at IAGG regional and world congresses

<u>Objective 3: Build research capacity in ageing</u>.
In order for the IAGG to speak to global social issues in ageing in a timely fashion, research on contemporary social issues in ageing in all regions must be mobilized and created where needed. Consolidation of the current 'state of knowledge' will provide a basis for pinpointing knowledge gaps and areas for capacity development. The following GSIA activities will help meet the objective of building research capacity in social dimensions of ageing:

a. Support and link current country-specific programs for students and new scholars; use the International Council of Gerontology Student Organizations to develop new training programs and linkages

b. Use existing programs to foster exchange schemes for new and established scholars

c. Develop collaborative, inter-regional research projects with an explicit training/capacity building dimension

d. Offer seminar/short course series on the three main GSIA themes

5. **GSIA strategic themes**
   The GSIA must have a global reach and to achieve its main focus must be on priority areas of international relevance. Three themes have been developed as primary foci for the GSIA's initial activities. They encompass work that is already of high priority among social gerontologists and the IAGG/UN Research Agenda on Ageing. A unique feature of the GSIA's commitment is its determination to make connections between its work and global issues beyond ageing (e.g. climate change, global financial crises, international migration) to tie into existing momentum about world problems/issues. The three themes are:

✓ **Families.** Around the world there is much commitment to inter-generational ties in which families support their older members and about how ageing family members support children, grandchildren and other family members. There is great concern in many regions about whether these arrangements are sustainable in the face not only of rapidly changing age structures within societies and communities, but also of poverty, pandemics, and shifting family structures and beliefs. The objective of this theme is to identify global trends in the discourses and realities of family strengths and obligations, to understand socio-economic and cultural factors underpinning inter-generational support, and to inform strategies for supporting social and policy action.

✓ **Liveability.** In world economies, global shifts in pressures toward the 'individualization' of risk have led to increased income disparities, older adults left behind in migratory transitions, and widening north-south divides and strains on traditional bonds and social processes. Vulnerable older people will be affected seriously by the economic, environmental, and social shocks associated with social change. The objective of this theme is to identify trends in the inclusion/exclusion of older adults from material resources (income, adequate food and shelter), and from full citizenship toward creating more inclusive societies. This theme also addresses key environmental issues of sustainability and environmental risk for older people.

✓ **Care.** Enabling the provision of adequate care to the world's rapidly ageing population has been equated with climate change in its global importance. Population ageing, the erosion, inadequacy or absence of social welfare provisions, together with new pressures on working age populations are imposing complex social and economic costs around the world on family/friend carers, paid care workers, workplaces, communities and governments associated with caring for frail older adults. An important dimension here is to understand how self care, health promotion, and mutual support can enhance independence and well-being. The objective of this theme is to document diverse challenges in managing care for frail older adults in all regions of the world, and to work towards an appropriate and sustainable balance between formal and informal care systems in all countries.

To address the challenges outlined in the 3 themes requires us to:
- Create and transfer knowledge about the priorities and issues outlined below
- Encourage joint publications with scholars from different regions
- Undertake cross national and cross regional comparative studies to understand the diversity and complexity in late life families
- Use existing data bases for further study (possibly by postgraduate students) or comparative purposes

The 3 themes also require knowledge transfer:
- within the academic community
- with emerging scholars
- The United Nations, World Health Organisation, and other international organisations.
- Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) at national and international level
- policy makers
- professionals working with elderly people and families
- private sector
- with researchers working in settings/countries with fewer resources, such as Eastern Europe and Africa

21st Century Global Challenges of Population Ageing: Families

Population ageing has a profound influence on the economic status, family resilience, and caring capacity of nations, communities, and citizens of all ages. Families are still the main social institution in almost all societies and this will continue in the future despite changing family structures and new social policy contexts. Around the world there is much discussion about how families and communities support their older members and about how ageing family members support children, grandchildren and other family members. In many regions there is great concern about the ability of families to sustain such support in the face of poverty, pandemics, and changing family structures and beliefs.

The objective of the Families theme is to identify global, regional and national trends in discourses and realities of family strengths and obligations, toward creating strategies for strengthening and supporting them.

Global issues and challenges affecting families

1. **Changes in form and greater complexity**:
Around the world, family forms and structures are changing and family life is becoming more complex. This is playing out in smaller families (arising from low fertility rates) and through extended lives the co-existence of more generations within families. Families are also becoming more complex and variable through more frequent divorce and remarriage, and more families comprising couples with only one child or without children and with cross-cultural and transnational characteristics.

2. **Living arrangements**
In many societies living arrangements and household structures are rapidly changing, with older adults more often living separately from offspring - sometimes by choice - and many older adults, especially women, living alone. In some contexts, more grandparent-headed families are found, particularly in societies where younger adults have been affected by pandemics or have moved away for economic reasons.

3. **Migration**
Large population movements from rural to urban areas are occurring in many regions, particularly in China, India and Africa. There is also growing transnational migration, especially in and between parts of Europe, Asia and North America. Migration often involves workers leaving their children in their home country or region in the care of grandparents and sending money or remittances home to support these family members and/or pay for children's education. Many migrant workers face complex issues of exclusion / inclusion in their destination country or region, and even where family reunion is possible, the acculturation of older migrants in the destination region or country can be challenging and difficult.

4. **The changing role of women and their increased labour force participation**
As women enter the paid workforce in growing numbers in many parts of the world, many families find they are working harder, with women facing especially difficult challenges in combining paid and unpaid work. Balancing work-family responsibilities is a new pressure for many men too, with greater involvement of men in family life in many societies and with both men and women increasingly affected by the need to provide care to sick, frail or disabled family members. Deep gender and socio-economic divides persist in many countries, and these patterns remain largely unexamined in developing countries particularly in Africa and Asia.

5. Intergenerational family solidarity and conflict

How (and if) families are managing to maintain intergenerational solidarity and what support they will need to sustain positive intergenerational relationships and equity among kin is a topic of growing importance in ageing societies. In some contexts, changing family roles, relationships and structures are giving rise to new tensions with families, and in organising the care of frail older people conflict can arise between siblings about what is right, appropriate or possible.

6. Older adults' contributions to family life

Caring for grandchildren has become an important part of life for many older people around the world. This role is especially evident in Africa, where HIV/AIDS has placed new support burdens on older women in particular. Evidence is widespread of older people's role in providing instrumental, financial and emotional support to younger generations, although how this contributes to the intergenerational transmission of values, traditions and family history remains inadequately understood. Knowledge is also relatively sparse on how far older people are involved in decision making, not only in matters affecting themselves, but also in those affecting younger generations and the choices they make about where to live and work.

The 3 highest priority issues/challenges in this theme are:
- To understand diversity and complexity in late life families
- To understand diversity in generational transfers, support and strains in families
- To better understand how changing gender roles in families and across regions affect the nature of family relationships and resources

21st Century Global Challenges of Population Ageing: Liveability

'Liveability' concerns the influence of the social, economic, cultural and environmental contexts in which older people live to enable a good quality of life and self-determination; and their agency in shaping their contexts. It includes both objective and subjective factors: how people feel about and make sense of their situation is as important as the situation itself in determining how they experience quality of life. Population ageing profoundly influences the 'liveability' of citizens of all ages. In turn, liveability is fundamental to well-being in later life. Our understanding of how global trends, events and issues are related to how older people interact with these contexts, and the quality of life outcomes of their interactions, will be advanced only by engaging social scientists in meaningful ways in the generation, translation and mobilization of knowledge about liveability.

The concept of 'liveability' is multi-dimensional, comprising the material, social, institutional, built and natural environments. The material dimension includes economic security, access to necessary and appropriate goods and services, and aspects of paid and unpaid work in later life. The social dimension encompasses societal level values and attitudes and behaviours that influence social and civic participation and integration of older people in society (eg. through discrimination and ageism). The built and natural environment dimension incorporates a persons interaction with their environment and highlights concepts such as ageing in place, climate change and the design of living environments. Global, national and local political, economic, and other social institutions similarly influence older persons' experiences of liveability and resulting quality of life.

'Liveability' stresses the need for older people to be able to shape their living context to meet their needs and to participate in society as full citizens with dignity, rights and responsibilities. 'Liveability' also recognises social and historical change, placing older people's experiences within a life course framework.

The objective of the Liveability theme is to highlight key factors that facilitate social and civic participation, social inclusion and subsequent social justice and basic human rights for older people across the world; to identify threats to the survival of older people and their ability to take action and participate in the circumstances of their lives; to review the environmental contexts in which older people live.

Global issues and challenges in liveability:

1. Poverty and social inequality
Many parts of the world face extreme poverty and enormous social inequality. Poverty is a predominant feature of life for many in Africa, and South and Central America, India, China as well as in many other countries in Asia and Europe. Older people may be among the poorest of the poor. In some developing countries survival in the face of extreme environmental conditions is the foremost challenge. Only once issues of survival have been addressed do other challenges to liveability come to the fore.

In more developed countries less obvious forms of social inequality and economic insecurity still need to be addressed by social scientists. Global shifts toward the individualization of risk have led to increased income disparities within and between generations, even in developed countries. Uneven pension adequacy and low savings rates among baby boomers in Canada and the US, for example, present increased risk of poverty in later life for some. At the same time there is a rising level of wealth amongst some older people emphasising the increasing

economic security gap among older adults and making remaining at-risk groups, such as unattached older women, less visible. Intergenerational transfers, particularly financial contributions of older adults to support younger generations are necessary to family stability in some regions, while in other regions older adults rely on financial support from children.

Lack of access to basic resources (eg. due to endemic economic deprivation, social and political instability or conflict, policy reform that reduces access to economic security, health and other social benefits where they exist at all) increases risk of isolation for some older adults in some communities, and may force others to assume important social and community responsibilities.

2. The contributions to liveability of older people

Older people have much to contribute to society but these are neither fully realised nor valued across the world. Concerns in developed countries about the shrinking workforce and need to entice older workers to stay in or return to the labour force fail to recognize ongoing contributions of existing older workers (often made out of economic necessity in the absence of adequate economic security policy). Nor does it recognize the equally valuable unpaid work and social contributions that other older adults make, for example by caring for older or younger generations. We know little about how the global economic downturn is affecting such contributions—either forcing older people to take on onerous and perhaps unwanted responsibilities (eg. 'compulsory volunteerism) or excluding them from taking on such roles if needed or desired. One of the objectives of this theme is to identify threats to the survival of older people and their ability to take action and participate in the circumstances of their lives, with particular focus on exclusion of older adults from material resources (adequate income, food and shelter).

3. Living Environments

The impact of such global trends as social and political change and instability, natural disasters and climate change on the lives of older people has grown in importance**.** The safety and security of older people around the world living in volatile environments require a coordinated response from social scientists engaged in discovering the influence that social and political change and upheaval have on 'liveability'. Geographical inequalities between North and South, and between rural areas and cities, are widening as migration transitions play out across the world, potentially leaving older people isolated, excluded and vulnerable. The threats and opportunities to 'liveability' created by such movements differ across the world. Liveability also implies that some places offer better environments in which to grow older. 'Ageing in place' and individual responsibility have become the gold standard in many Western democracies, bringing into sharp focus the importance of designing home environments and age-friendly communities that support independent living. Rapid technological change is contributing to social and economic globalization and has the potential to both enhance and detract from liveability, depending which side of the 'digital divide' one is on.

The 3 highest priority issues/challenges in this theme are:
1. to document across regions structural provision throughout the life course that enables and adequate resources/income for later life and an adequate standard of living
2. to assess supportiveness of living environments for older people and how to enable age supportive homes and communities
3. to understand the social forces influencing liveability and which of these create risk at an individual level

21st Century Global Challenges of Population Ageing : Care

The issue of providing care to an ageing population has been equated with climate change in its global importance. Population ageing, now affecting nearly all the countries of the world, creates a growing demand for care. Across the lifecourse giving and receiving care is normative and ubiquitous and a major source of well-being for individuals and families, yet the supply of care is increasingly uncertain, scarce and/or variable. Around the world how this care can or should be provided is a focus of important debate. The balance between family, state and voluntary action in resourcing and delivering care is a difficult and complex issue worldwide. Within this theme, the GSIA will create, synthesize and mobilize knowledge, addressing global challenges in managing and enabling care to frail older adults. Finding sustainable ways to balance formal and informal care systems in different cultural and regional contexts as they face changing economic and social pressures will be crucial to the achievement of human well-being worldwide.

The objective of the Care theme is to explore the global issues and challenges related to care and highlight the commonalities and differences across countries/regions

1. **Family transformation**
   In many parts of the globe, smaller family size, more complex family patterns and the geographical separation of generations create the need for new or unfamiliar care arrangements. More older people are providing care, both for other elders and for younger family members; growing numbers of people are caring at a distance; and many families need additional support with complex care needs.

2. **Boundaries around private, public and voluntary provision**
   Among the most fundamental challenges to finding sustainable ways to achieve a culturally and socially appropriate balance between formal and informal care systems for an aging population is resolving questions about who should be responsible for care to older adults. This is often couched as debate about how 'risk' should be shared. This debate is driven by ideological orientations, social and cultural values and norms, and economic conditions. In many parts of the world political rhetoric emphasizes the primacy of family care on the grounds that it is "better" and "cheaper" than formal care options, despite a growing body of evidence of negative economic, social and health consequences for both caregivers and receivers.

3. **Work and care**
   Many adults of working age experience tensions in providing care to family members alongside paid work or generating family income. Where paid work predominates, careers, work organisation and household income come under pressure, especially if individuals lack support with caring roles; where informal economies prevail, or systems of care support are lacking, extreme poverty and exhaustion too often threaten the very sustainability of care. Some successful adaptations exist; sharing understanding of these and exploring what more is needed in diverse socio-economic systems is a key task for GSIA social scientists.

4. **Values and norms about care are shifting, complex and variable between and within societies**
   Important to understanding debates about sharing risks arising from population aging, and about how best to organize paid and unpaid work, are individual and dominant societal values and norms about what constitutes (quality) care and who should be responsible for care. Values and norms evolve over time and vary across societies.

5. **Migration and its implications for care**
   As migration within and between societies grows with changing global pressures and opportunities, complex chains of giving and receiving care have emerged. Some developed welfare systems are increasingly dependent on migrant caring labour, sometimes in exploitative or unregulated contexts. For affluent families, migrant, live-in labour may provide attractive 24/7 care solutions, but the impact of these arrangements on those needing care in the families of migrant workers are little studied or understood. Migration within societies presents other challenges leaving older family members without traditional forms of support creating gaps in care that require new solutions.

6. **Variability and unpredictability of care needs and care trajectories**
   Most current knowledge about provision and receipt of care is based on cross-sectional data. Yet we know that caregiving has multiple episodes, trajectories, and on-going implications that are cumulative in nature. We also know that care needs and trajectories vary considerably across individuals, across cultural and social settings, and across geographic locations. However we know much less about life course patterns, let alone how they vary across settings.

7. **Gender and other forms of inequality**
   Women, living longer than men in almost all societies, are especially affected by the growing care needs of older populations and more likely to have a lifelong responsibility for providing family care. In some societies, the shift towards gender equality, and in particular greater female participation in paid work, implies the need for all members of society to play their part in providing care. How this is to be achieved remains a troubling question for policymakers and decision-makers worldwide. Men's role as caregivers is evolving in different ways in many parts of the world; in many communities women still deliver most care with implications for their own health and financial wellbeing.

   The 3 highest priority issues/challenges in this theme are:

   1. to understand the availability and capacity of families to care for older adults and this varies across countries/regions
   2. to forecast demand for and availability of family care
   3. to document the impact of migration patterns on the availability of family care

6. GSIA Timelines and activities
   Note: The following are initial plans for GSIA activities. These will evolve with further planning and implementation of the initiative.

The organization and rapid pace of research lives often leaves little time for critical thinking and action around using research to influence global social issues in ageing. Working strategically and with the right people will help meet the challenge of how to create knowledge that will be positioned to inform global issues that influence and are influenced by older people.

There are 3 elements that are foundational to this initiative:
1. A strong international voice—credible, coordinated, and timely.
2. A global agenda, carefully crafted and articulated in a way that will capture decision makers such as governments, industry and the media.
3. Added value in facilitating multi-disciplinary, cross-national research and writing publications in the priority theme areas
4. A clear structure and sustainable process. There need to be leaders who will carry forward the vision, *and* human and financial resources to make it happen.

Action plan:
Objective 1: Make IAGG a leader in international ageing issues
   Initiative #1: Solidify the evidence
      1. Commission three edited books on global issues in Families, Liveability/Inclusion, and Caregiving. Each book will have 'state of knowledge' chapters by authors who have written widely on a key topic within the theme.
         a. Editors to be scholars with international reputations in the theme area, willingness to create the prospectus for their books, and to recruit authors.
         b. Authors to be invited based on their expertise in an area of the broad theme.
         c. Authors to represent knowledge from all world regions.
      2. Solicit publishers for the edited books. Impact may be greater if there is one publisher for all three books. Publisher should:
         a. Be a high profile press
         b. Have international marketing capabilities
         c. be willing to make the publication available through Hinari or other methods to make it widely accessible to scholars, practitioners and policy makers in all world regions.
      3. Engage (and fund) one of more media people to write press releases from each of the edited books. Media people should:
         a. Have ongoing links with high profile national and international publications
         b. Be experienced in translating academic writing into accessible press releases and other outlets.
      4. Create impact statements that illustrate the value of such social research.
      5. Facilitate the conduct of comparative international research in the priority topic areas.
         a. Develop collaborative proposals across WUN Universities and other networks.

   Initiative #2: Transfer new knowledge quickly to broad audiences
      1. Develop a global social network of key knowledge users and knowledge brokers who are connected through twitter, blogs, wiki
      2. Set up social communication at conferences, meetings and other gerontology events worldwide with people dedicated to getting messages out to the network leading up to and throughout the conference(s)

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3. Communicate key findings and commentary related to the three main themes of Families, Liveability, Caregiving.
4. Engage members of the IAGG 2013 (Digital Ageing) and IAGG 2017 congress planning teams, as well as current IAGG board members, regional committee members and , and others from the technology/media communities to assist in developing and sustaining these networks.
5. Organisations such as the UN, WHO and AARP

Objective 2: Engage members of the IAGG.
1. Engage senior social gerontologists to create the first state of knowledge publications for GSIA (see initiative 1 above)
2. Engage students and emerging scholars as social science networkers to disseminate new knowledge (see initiative 2 above)
3. Create structures within the IAGG to support working groups to articulate IAGG inter-regional social research agendas
    a. Initial structure and directions were presented to the IAGG executive meeting in January 2011
    b. Full strategy including timelines and phased funding to be presented to the IAGG council at the next World Congress meeting in Seoul in 2013.
    c. Other activities related to the state of knowledge publications in Seoul. Eg: Inviting scholars to present at 2013 IAGG conference on research related to each of the themes. There could be symposia that address these themes from an international platform. Pairing of scholars from developed and developing countries to exchange knowledge and expertise so that cutting edge new ideas and solutions to issues can be generated. The pairing (or grouping) of scholars could be facilitated by IAGG regional chairs.

Objective 3:   Build Research Capacity in Social Aspects of Ageing
    a. Develop comparative research and build data bases on social issues in ageing (families, liveability, caregiving) among IAGG member countries
    (Needs further development around capacity building)

Timeline toward full implementation:
2010   July-December.
Meetings with key stakeholders at BSG and IAGG Social sciences meetings in the UK
Meetings with senior social science scholars and members of IAGG executive
Meeting with members of IAGG executive and regions at the GSA annual conference in New Orleans??
Undertake preliminary discussions with potential editors and publishers of the 3 books

2011
January   presentation of the GSIA terms of reference and action plan to the IAGG executive for discussion/ratification

March   Strategic Planning Meeting, GSIA Executive, University of Alberta, Canada

April   first announcement of the GSIA at the IAGG European Region conference. Announcement of editors and publishers for Families, Liveability, and Caregiving books

October 20-23   announcement, symposia around one or more of the GSIA themes at the PanAm Congress in Ottawa.

October 23-27   announcement of the GSIA and a multi-disciplinary workshop on long term care for the Melbourne IAGG regional meeting

2012

October   Symposia around one of more of the GSIA themes at the Africa Regional Conference of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Cape Town. Workshop on the work and care collaboration fostered by the GSIA

2013

June 23-27   World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Seoul, Korea. Korea planning committee to provide input to structure of announcements and social media leading up to and at the World Congress