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**MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF
POPULATION AGEING:
THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING
AND TRAINING**

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Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



CAPACITY BUILDING



As was emphasised in the *Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing* itself and in various UN General Assemblies, the very implementation of the Plan fundamentally requires two essential facets which, though distinct, are intrinsically related. These are: national capacity building and the mainstreaming of ageing into national development policies and programmes on ageing.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



The report of the Secretary-General entitled *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing* delivered at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in 2006, highlights the fact that the existence of national plans of action, programmes and services, although important, are not by themselves effective indicators of a country's implementation of the recommendations of the Madrid Plan.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



These depend fully on the individual country's human capacity to implement and oversee these policies and programmes. Capacity building is thus aimed at strengthening the country's ability to meet these needs in various sectors be they economic, legal, medical, political, social, etc.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



One of the five essential elements of national capacity building highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, in the light of the recommendations of the Madrid Plan of Action, is *Human Resource Development* which “encompasses investment in training for the acquisition of skills in crucial areas of expertise”. It is seen as the key element of any effort made at capacity-building.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Although in many countries the need for training in the fields of geriatrics and gerontology has been recognised, this recognition has not yet been translated into action as one would have expected. The growing needs far outweigh the efforts made so far. Most of the people providing a service to older persons still lack the necessary training. This is the more so in rural and remote areas where the need is very pronounced.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



Governments are thus being faced with a two-edged sword. On the one hand they are being faced with a rapid growing older population especially in the rural and remote areas. On the other hand, very often these areas lack the basic resources and trained personnel to provide these services.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



When referring to education and training in the various aspects of ageing, there is the danger of restricting them to high levels of specialisation given at universities resulting in the production of geriatricians and gerontologists. While not minimising this need, it is important to emphasise the fact that training should be made available at all levels and for different functions.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



***The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002* constantly reiterated, in various articles, the importance of training and of having trained personnel. Issue 4 in the Second Priority Direction is totally devoted to the training of care providers and health professionals.**

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



The same Plan, however, emphasises the fact that the need of education and training is not only limited to the health professionals and the formal carers but should be open to all and at all levels. Moreover, because of the multi-faceted nature of ageing, the two Plans of Action emphasise the need of developing multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary education and training programmes.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



Education in the field of ageing thus needs to be multi-sectoral in nature covering:

- 1) levels of specialisation for the professionals;**
- 2) those who directly work in the field of ageing or/and with older persons; and**
- 3) the older persons themselves.**

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGEING (INIA)



A number of countries stand today at a critical turning point for confronting the challenges and issues generated by the rapidly growing older population. In order to meet the special needs of this phenomenon adequately, training of personnel has become a major issue that needs to be tackled with urgency, lest events overtake history.



Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta

It is precisely within this need that, following the First World Assembly on Ageing, and the ensuing *Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging*, the United Nations General Assembly, in its Resolution 37/51, recommended ‘inter alia’ the promotion of training and research, as well as the exchange of information and knowledge in order to provide an international basis for social policies and action.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



As a result of its Resolution 1987/51, the UN Economic and Social Council recommended to the Secretary-General, the establishment of the International Institute on Aging (INIA). On the 9th October 1987, the United Nations signed an agreement with the Government of Malta to establish the Institute as an autonomous body under the auspices of the United Nations.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



Its UN mandate is tripartite in nature namely:

- 1) To train personnel from developing countries who are working or who intend to work in the field of ageing or with older persons;**
- 2) To provide advocacy to developing countries in matters concerning capacity building in the areas of ageing and older persons; and**
- 3) To act as a practical bridge between developed and developing countries in the area of information exchange in the field of ageing.**



Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta

INIA provides multi-disciplinary education and training by annually running, in Malta, short-training programmes of two weeks' duration in:

Social Gerontology,
Economic and Financial Aspects of Ageing,
Geriatrics,
Demographic Aspects of Population Ageing.



Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta

This October, INIA organised, for the first time, a training programme on

“Policy Formulation, Planning, Implementation and Monitoring of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing”.

It is aimed at Policy-makers to help them become more aware of the need to mainstream ageing issues into current and future development agendas in their countries while deliberating together how this can be carried out.



Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta

‘IN SITU PROGRAMMES’: Since 1995, INIA has been running ‘in situ’ training programmes.

Aware of the great heterogeneity which exists in the field of ageing and among older persons themselves, these are tailored to the specific needs and situations of the older persons in each of the countries or regions concerned.



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The participants in the ‘in situ’ programmes tend to be not only more homogenous in nature but also more familiar with the national or local situations.

Consequently, within a shorter period of time, they are better able to access the needs and situations of older persons, to analyse the local policies in the field of ageing, if any, and to examine the programmes and services available in their country.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



To ensure the highest possible form of professional training in the field of ageing, while stressing the totality of the human person, in running all its training programmes, INIA makes use of a strong multi-disciplinary teams of international experts bringing with them a wide variety of expertise and knowledge.

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SATELLITE CENTRES: In order to be better equipped in implementing its mandate in human resource developing and training in the field of ageing, INIA has set up three satellite centres in:

- **Singapore** for the ten ASEAN countries,
- **India** for the seven SARC countries and
- **St.Petersburg** for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.



Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta

It is hoped that, in the near future, INIA will set up other satellite centres in China, Latin America and in Tunisia.



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ADVOCACY: INIA also provides advocacy to governments to help them in formulating and implementing national and local policies and programmes in the field of ageing. Such a service has been provided to the governments of: Bahrain, Croatia, Egypt, India, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan and Tunisia.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



To implement its UN given mandate, INIA closely collaborates with various UN bodies and agencies especially the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the UN Regional Commissions. INIA's collaborative partners also include other international and national organisations, universities and non-governmental organisations.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



CONCLUSION



The gap between the projected increases of the older population and the, resulting, required services, combined with the parallel development of the personnel needed to carry out these services, creates a pressing and urgent need to train appropriate staff.

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Training programmes have to be tailored to the nature of the participants, the work they are doing and the needs entailed. Though the basic issues dealt with might often be the same, the approach differs.

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During the past 6 years, since the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the emphasis put on training and capacity building, there has been a surge in the number of requests made by various governments for INIA's training programmes both "in-situ" and in Malta.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



The challenges ahead of us, especially in the next 30 years, are huge.

Our work is a drop in the ocean.

However, we are very optimistic that together we can surely help our developing countries to prepare themselves to meet the challenges of Population Ageing by implementing the *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing*.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



In so doing we, who are at the crossroads, will not allow events to overtake history.

Joseph Troisi, International Institute on Aging, UN-Malta



THANK YOU

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