



SOCIAL PROTECTION TRAINING

for civil society organisations in The Gambia

from the 11th—13th June 2012 at the CIAM/NMCP Hall, Kanifing

Organised by Ageing with a Smile Initiative and the Mental Health Leadership & Advocacy Programme with funding from the Africa Platform for Social Protection



mhLAP—Gambia





An Introduction to its Objectives and Activities

Introduction

- In traditional Gambian society, older persons have always been adequately cared for by family members, neighbours and the wider community.
- Their contributions have been valued
- We are witnessing unprecedented changes in our lives
- The elderly face an increasing burden of chronic diseases including diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, cardiovascular problems and failing eyesight.



Ageing with a Smile Initiative

- A registered CBO
- Launched in January 2010 by the late Dr A. Gaye
- Promoting & protecting the health and welfare of older persons in The Gambia.



Aims and objectives of ASI

- To improve access to basic health care services for disadvantaged older persons in The Gambia
- To promote the re-integration of the elderly in Gambian social life
- To promote inter-generational dialogue and solidarity
- To advocate for the rights of the elderly in the country.

Membership

Ageing with a Smile Initiative

MEMBERS

VOLUNTEERS

SUPPORTERS

ASI's work is supported by 3 solid pillars

Pilot phase: Jan 2010 – Dec 2011

Implemented in the **Greater Banjul Area** by ASI members in partnership with medical volunteers from the Ministry of Health & Social Welfare, RVTH, Sheikh Zayed Regional Eye Care Centre and Pakala Clinic.

Interventions during the pilot phase

- The provision of free community-based screening and consultations
- The provision of home-based care for older persons living with chronic health conditions
- Promoting intergenerational dialogue and opportunities for older persons to meet and socialise with their peers
- Advocacy and the creation of awareness on the situation of the elderly in The Gambia.

Health screening and consultations during the pilot phase



ASI successfully conducted 7 screening programmes reaching over 600 older persons in the following 5 locations during the pilot phase:

- **Kanifing**, at the Gambia Red Cross Society Headquarters
- **Fajikunda** (2 times, May 2010 and July 2010) at the Fajikunda Red Cross Society/ Community Centre
- **Sukuta Health Centre** (Oct. 2010 and July 2011)
- **Old Jeshwang Health Centre** (Dec, 2010)
- **Leman Street Clinic** (April 2011)



Dr Louise Sarr, RVTH



Members of the medical team at a screening in Sukuta



A volunteer at the pharmacy



Health talk on nutrition and exercise



A volunteer from Sheikh Zayed Regional Eye Care Centre

Home-Based Care



Focus of the Home-Based Care

- It targeted older persons who were critically ill and were unable to access health care.
- The initial plan was to conduct their homes at least once a month.
- A total of 7 elderly patients were routinely visited during the pilot phase. Three (3) of them passed away.

FD's Case

- A woman aged over 100 years; too frail to walk or even eat without support
- Neglected by her family
- She was closer to a herd of goats and sheep than family members.
- Her bed heavily infested with bedbugs
- Bed under exposed electrical wires
- ASI mobilised support for her
- FD passed away in September 2011.





A colony of bedbugs found under FD's mattress

A team from the Vector Control Unit, Ministry of Health





More bedbugs

Advocacy and awareness creation



A presentation to the National Disaster Management Agency, Sept.2010

Meet with the Press



Official Launching of Ageing with a Smile Initiative

Date: Saturday 9th January 2010
Venue: Kanifing Municipal Council

Friday 1st October 2010

National Malaria Control Programme, Kanifing



International Day of Older Persons 1 October 2010



Ageing with a Smile Initiative
Supporting the elderly to lead healthier and dignified lives



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Lessons learnt from the pilot

Lessons learnt

- The attainment of good health is a top concern for the elderly in The Gambia.
- The provision of basic health care services such as routine screening for hypertension, diabetes and visual acuity testing can make a positive difference in the lives of the elderly.
- The Ministry of Health & Social Welfare, the private sector and the media are highly supportive of efforts intended to help the elderly.
- There is need to evaluate the effectiveness of current health care and welfare services for the elderly in The Gambia.

Lessons learnt (2)

- Gambians are motivated to give money and make their skills/expertise available to help the elderly
- The health of older persons especially those living with chronic health conditions largely depends on the support of other family members.
- The services provided by ASI are highly appreciated by community members- particularly the elderly who enjoy the friendly atmosphere and value the professional manner we conduct our work and the fact that our volunteers treat them with respect.

Challenges

- Raising adequate funds to support the work of ASI
- Members work on a voluntarily basis

Recommendations

- A national study on ageing be conducted to establish a true and complete picture of the situation of older persons in The Gambia,
- The Ministry of Health & Social Welfare to work with relevant partners and stakeholders to develop a national policy on ageing
- That routine screening of older persons be institutionalised as a way of detecting health problems early and that health workers be supported to conduct home-based care targeting older persons living with chronic health conditions

New Programme Areas

Key Programme Areas

- Health Promotion and Social Care Programme
- Elders Right, Advocacy and Protection Programme
- Culture and Inter-generational Programme
- School and Youth Programme
- Micro-finance Programme
- Training and Capacity Strengthening Programme



Some of the motivations for our members

The passion to make a positive impact in the lives of older persons

The opportunity to interact with and learn from older persons

The joy in meeting people of similar interests

The opportunity for career development through the acquisition of relevant skills and experience

For more information about ASI visit:

asigambia.weebly.com

www.facebook.com/ASIGambia

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Ageing with a Smile Initiative website. The header features the title "Ageing with a Smile Initiative" in a blue banner. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "Aims and Objectives", "Programme Areas", "ASI at Work", "Upcoming Events", and "more...". The main content area includes a large photograph of three elderly individuals. Below this is an "Introduction" section with a smaller photo of a healthcare worker examining an elderly woman. The text describes ASI as a community-based organization launched in January 2010 by the late Dr. Abubacarr Gaye, former Minister of Health and Social Welfare. It aims to promote and protect the health and welfare of older persons in the country. A caption identifies the late Dr. Abubacarr Gaye. The bottom of the page shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons.

The screenshot displays the Facebook profile page for the Ageing with a Smile Initiative. The page header includes the Facebook logo, a search bar, and an "Admin Panel" with options for "Edit page", "Build Audience", and "Help". The main profile picture shows a healthcare worker in a white coat with the ASI logo, examining an elderly woman. The page name is "Ageing with a Smile Initiative" with 758 likes and 2 people talking about it. The "About" section identifies it as a community organization launched in January 2010 to improve the lives of elderly people. Navigation tabs for "About", "Photos", "Likes", "Events", and "Notes" are visible. The page also shows "07 Friends" and a "Highlights" dropdown menu. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the browser and other open applications.

The end

“Older people play a vital role in African society today. Across the continent, millions of families would not survive without the contribution of older people – from caring for orphaned grandchildren to providing much needed household income. Yet older people are often excluded from development programmes and discriminated against by services such as health care.”

Older people in Africa: a forgotten generation; HelpAge International, April 2008



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