

Social Innovation Public Lecture

Putting a Face to Demographic Change

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Abstract

Demographic change is a precursor to many serious social consequences experienced by older citizens in a world where the focus tends to remain fixed on the youth of today. Labour market shortages, unparalleled health care expenditures and changing family structures are just a few of trends challenging governments globally. Alongside these facts are a multitude of misperceptions about productivity or lack thereof of 'older people' which often results in a one-sided conversation about the burden of ageing society. This presentation will explore the myths and misperception of population ageing, question outdated definitions, describe a 'new norm' in policies and programs and give purpose to the concept that older people are central to the community of tomorrow.

Social Innovation Public Lecture

Adult Ageing

Big Pictures and International Solutions

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Abstract

International perceptions of adult ageing are changing dramatically over a relatively short historical period. Whether population ageing is seen as a threat, an opportunity or some combination of both, has become a serious question of global reach. In order to adapt to such changes policy-makers are beginning to realize that as well as being a problem of demography, it is also a question of culture and cultural adaptation. It is a question for national governments which has also been taken up by international organizations. In this presentation the perspectives of two such organizations are examined in more detail. These include the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities initiative and the World Economic Forum's Agenda Council on Ageing Societies. Both of which the speaker has direct experience. First, the changes in perspective between the first and second UN plans of action on ageing will be used to set the scene for a world in which population ageing has climbed the social and political agenda. Then, the model adopted by 'Age Friendly Cities' will be examined. The broader, and as yet less developed perspective of the WEF Council will then be looked at in more detail. In both cases the perspective adopted, the inclusions and the omissions will be critically assessed in order to discover how the question of ageing is being seen and responded to. Finally, the presentation will conclude with a number of questions and issues that could take the discussion forward.