



# 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://asigambia.weebly.com)

[www.facebook.com/ASIGambia](https://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: Home, Aims and Objectives, Programme Areas, ASI at Work, Upcoming Events, and more... A large image of three elderly people is displayed. The main content area is titled "Introduction" and includes a photograph of a healthcare worker attending to an elderly person. The text describes the organization's mission and its launch in January 2010 by the late Dr. Abubacarr Gaye, former Minister of Health and Social Welfare. It highlights the organization's goal to promote and protect the health and welfare of older persons in the country. A quote from the late Dr. Abubacarr Gaye is also included, discussing the challenges of aging in a traditional Gambian society.

Ageing with a Smile Initiative

Home Aims and Objectives Programme Areas ASI at Work Upcoming Events more...

Introduction

Ageing with a Smile Initiative (ASI) is a community based-organisation which was launched in The Gambia in January 2010 by the late Dr Abubacarr Gaye, former Minister of Health and Social Welfare. The organisation aims to promote and protect the health and welfare of older persons in the country.

The late Dr Abubacarr Gaye

In traditional Gambian society, older persons have always been adequately cared for by family members, neighbours and the wider community. Changes in our life styles explained by a number of factors including growing economic problems are forcing individuals and families to be more concerned about their own development rather than caring for and supporting others. This situation is putting the lives of many disadvantaged



The screenshot shows the Facebook page for the Ageing with a Smile Initiative. The page features a cover photo of a healthcare worker attending to an elderly person. The profile picture is a circular logo with the text "Ageing with a Smile Initiative" and "ASI". The page has 758 likes and 2 people talking about this. The "About" section describes the organization as a community-based organization launched in January 2010, aiming to improve the lives of elderly people in the country. The page also includes tabs for Photos, Likes, Events, and Notes, and a section for 97 friends.

facebook

Admin Panel Edit page Build Audience

Ageing with a Smile Initiative

758 likes · 2 talking about this

Community organisation  
Ageing with a Smile Initiative (ASI) is a new and innovative drive launched in The Gambia in January 2010. It aims to improve the lives of elderly people in the country. Please

About Photos Likes Events Notes

97 Friends

# 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



**Ageing with a Smile Initiative**

*Supporting the elderly to lead healthier and dignified lives*

