

The Excitement of Learning

Ernest Hemingway, the world famous writer, said, as he referred to the old fisherman with whom he sailed, he said, "I have learned so much from simple people."

This is our goal today, to realize the broad expanse of sources from which and from whom we learn, and to know that we learn throughout our lives, across our whole life span. Through some varied ages and programs, we will present the excitement of learning and teaching. We think, too, of the examples and persons we have known.

An older person walks slowly across the grass to the small square of newly turned earth. Looking at the tiny seedlings which he will plant, he smiles, rejoicing in a new learning, a new way of independence and creation, a new way of respect and gratitude.

A student walks home as the lights close in the library behind. Snow crunches under foot and the stars sparkle overhead in the cold winter sky. Books are heavy in the shoulder bag, but the student's heart is joyous, lightened by the cold steamy breath and the excitement of learning about centuries past.

At the end of the day a person sits in a chair, book in hand and joy in heart, to read and learn anew.

A teacher points to a page and asks, "What is this? What's this?" The child's eyes brighten in wonder. Words come fast through smiling lips. "Oh, that's an A. Yes, that's an A."

To learn to be, to reach for the stars and grasp meaning as we grow, this is the path we choose to illuminate as we celebrate the excitement of learning through all the years of life. Yes, that's an A.

Norma U. Levitt

Related Bibliography

- Socrates (460 -399 B.C.) : “developed the Socratic Method of teaching and discussion, in which one asks a series of easily answered questions that inevitably lead the answers to logical conclusions foreseen by the questioner”. (Webster).
- Aristotle (384-322 B.C.): “The only way to be is to ‘become’ and it should be obvious that ‘telling’ seldom produces knowledge, but interactive learning does” (Webster) (See Faure below).
- John Dewey (1933): “Knowledge comes through experience, and reality is defined through experience and through ‘action’ “.
- Malcom S. Knowles (1970). The Modern Practice of Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy. New York: Associates Press, 1970: “Andragogy is a conception of education understood as a process of continuing inquiry, thus, a life long process, particularly applicable in today’s world of accelerated change” ... “Psychologists are telling us that the need to grow is as fundamental to humans as any other psychological need. The most universally accessible way to grow is through learning. You do not grow old, but you become old by not growing. The motivation to turn to learning is quite different from getting on to being taught”.
- Alvin Toffler (1970): Future Shock. New York: Random House, 1970.
- Edgar Faure al. (1972). Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow. Paris: UNESCO, 1972: “We are entering into an era of civilization that is different from all previous eras in history, and to function in this new era people must continue to learn throughout their lives”.
- Marc Freedman (1977). “Towards Civic Renewal: How Senior Citizens Could Save Civil Society”. Intergenerational Approaches in Aging (Brabazon and Disch, Eds), New York: The Haworth Press, Inc. (1977): “Experience is a function of time lived, of what one has learned from participation in life”.

Note: For future references please consult websites on these topics.

2. Multigenerational relationships have the potential of advancing and stimulating:

- Active teaching / learning through the connections and communication among generations.
- Importance of including adults / older people who have many and varied experiences and a need to be attuned to current circumstances.
- importance of including young people, who have an innate curiosity and interest to learn, which is fostered through family and friends, community experiences, radio and TV programs, etc.

To conclude: as a result of generational exchanges adult / older people can enrich their personal occupational and political worlds by incorporating the younger generations' points of view and experience. In turn, younger people can gain an awareness of real life issues and possible responses to them, thus learning to build a body of knowledge skills and practical strategies that could last over a lifetime.

In sum, the ultimate goal of Multigenerational Relationships in Education: Teaching and Learning Together is to participate in a dynamic experience to achieve mutually enriching results for all generations involved as well as their communities. Ideally, educators and community leaders must actively share in leading, guiding, facilitating and organizing multigenerational educational programs to **build a society for all ages**, as per the dictum of the United Nations (2002).

1. Describe an experience where an older and younger person (persons) have interacted.
2. Indicate their ages, cultural / national background and settings where the experience took place as well as its date.
3. Analyze the process of how, when and where the relationship continues to develop.
4. Discuss the end result of the experience and its meaning for the various generations involved in terms of process and content learned, as well as their possible impact on community settings and society at large.

All of them strictly complied with those guidelines and referred to their interesting work with kindergarten and elementary school children by presenting and analyzing the activities in which they were involved, such as praying, dancing, singing, drawing, painting, baking and eating with older persons.

The active interactions between those two age groups were described by the panelists as important examples of the relationships that were developed between them in performing those activities. Outstanding experiences related to teaching and learning in the arts and at the university level were offered as very significant ones, as were also the instances provided by projects from a “university without walls”, where teaching and learning activities are based on informal relationships and communication. A 93 year old expert lady did a lively demonstration of her art in creating puppets, in which she involves children and older persons, promoting interactions among them and stimulating writing plays that they later perform, gaining much recognition for these activities.

Issues of accepting and understanding persons of different cultural backgrounds and religions came up, which were analyzed in depth, as well as their impact on everybody’s life, while being recognized as a vital source of knowledge and insight to enable us to live in a multicultural society such as ours.

Comments were also made about popular culture and current political issues and their influence on today’s younger and older generations as well as their respective positions about those issues. Related to this point, the following quote by Rabbi Martin Zion, who lost a son in the tragic events of September 11th, 2001 was read:

Our fixation on personal autonomy has been psychologically devastating. It has destroyed the family. The old, in their search for independence, end up alone. The young, isolating themselves from the old in search for freedom, end up confused, bewildered and depressed by problems that could be so much better handled if aided by the experience of the older generation. Dispel the illusion of quick solutions, narcissism and the rush to independence. Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger persons. (The Spirit, N.Y.C., August 2005).

After a dynamic discussion with the audience, the basic ideas that emerged from this program can be synthesized as follows:

1. Multigenerational relationships involve concepts based on actions to associate, bond, build bridges, communicate, connect, cooperate, exchange, interact, join, participate, partner, relate, share, unite and the like.

Inspired by the knowledge that health gains result from social connections, University Without Walls has enhanced its programming to include more multigenerational classes like “Shalom Israel: A Concert for Spring”. Joyous contact with children takes place in holiday celebrations over the phone. Another new, Internet-based program currently being offered is “Sharing our Wisdom”. It connects young people seeking advice on solving problems in their lives with elders who respond as a group with some possible solutions, based on their collective life experience.

In 1989, DOROT (a Hebrew word meaning “generations”) launched its teleconference-based educational program, University Without Walls. Its purpose is to serve elderly individuals for whom getting out in the community is difficult or impossible due to physical or geographical challenges. Each year, UWW’s 400+ senior students choose from a diverse array of over 200 classes, holiday celebrations, and support groups.

DOROT was founded in 1976 by a group of Columbia University graduate students in response to their observation of the isolation and loneliness of the elderly in their community. DOROT today is a model for volunteer-based senior programs nationwide. Its mission is to enhance the lives of the elderly by providing physical and emotional support. DOROT serves 10,000 older persons and those who care for them.

SUMMARY

Rosa Perla Resnick¹⁰

The Program that the Sub-Committee on Multigenerational Relationships, NGO Committee on Ageing, developed for this year was inspired by the Madrid International Plan of Action of Ageing (UN 2002), which includes the following recommendations:

Strengthening of solidarity through equity and reciprocity between generations. (p. 22) and Full utilization of the potential and expertise of all ages, recognizing the benefits of increased experience with age (p. 21).

On the basis of the above, the Sub-Committee decided that the goal of the program would be to present experiences of older and younger people from different cultural and national backgrounds to illustrate the great potential and value that teaching and learning together have “to build a society for all ages”. We reminded ourselves that “experience is knowledge and skill acquired by practice and observation” and “education is to bring out / to develop from a latent potential stage a real product to existence” (Webster Dictionary).

In this connection, a panel of four qualified talented persons was invited to present their experiences in various settings to highlight the value of multigenerational relationships in fostering teaching / learning situations across the life span. Thus, in order to identify common threads of thought and action, they were asked, within ten minutes, to abide by the following guidelines:

¹⁰ Rosa Perla Resnick, Ph.D. / D.S.W. – International Immigrants Foundation (NYC), Chair, Board of Directors; Co-Chair, SubCommittee on Multigenerational Relationships, NGO Committee on Ageing; International Assn. of Gerontology (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil); and International Assn. of Schools of Social Work (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), representative to the UN.

The group developed wonderful relationships in learning together and using music, art, forms of theater, and speech. Everyone forgot themselves and had a marvelous time. This is teaching and learning together and across the lifespan.

Puppetry has even started a whole new phenomenon in the psychiatric and medical fields. Voices emerge from children who won't often talk, won't speak out or speak about the pains they have, but will start to communicate using puppets. It is a marvelous field. I have been involved for 45 years. However, as a performance and communication field, it has been around for thousands of years.

DOROT's University Without Walls

Fran Rod⁹

On January 22, 2007, a group of seventh grade religious school students from Temple B'nai Abraham in Livingston, NJ presented "Shalom Israel: A Concert for Spring" in commemoration of Tu B'Shvat, the Jewish holiday known as "The New Year of the Trees" and the beginning of the spring season in Israel. Together, these NJ teens and a group of 12 seniors from all over NY and NJ, joined together by telephone, and "visited" the land of Israel through story and song. An audiotape of the concert, created by the children with the assistance of their cantor, was sent to each "guest" as a gift. The reactions from the seniors were laudatory: ***"It was excellent. The children's voices and the songs were delightful and brought back beautiful memories"***.

"I loved it! The gift that we received before the class was wonderful and useful. The concert was a sentimental journey back. So delightful. I can't wait until the next one!"

The director of the temple's religious school was grateful for the opportunity to work with DOROT. She pointed out that most of these suburban teens do not have contact with older people in their 80's and 90's. Participating in these telephone programs increases their sensitivity toward the aged population. And they have so much fun!

Solid gerontological research confirms the notion that older persons who challenge themselves to learn new things and remain socially active increase their chances of maintaining cognitive vitality (Institute for the Study of Aging and the International Longevity Center-USA). Furthermore, a 2005 study reported in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health found that older persons who have meaningful friendships live longer than individuals who lack these connections.

⁹ Fran Rod has been the New Jersey Outreach Coordinator for DOROT's University Without Walls since 2000. In that capacity, she has been responsible for bringing the program to seniors throughout the state, creating new courses, and finding qualified facilitators. The University Without Walls provides several hundred courses for homebound elders each year that are conducted on the phone or online.

Communication and Learning with Puppets

Bernice Silver⁸

I use puppets to communicate with children and seniors, and to teach them about puppets and things that are important socially and individually. Puppetry is the oldest and most widely used performance art in the world. And children love it.

This is an elementary hand puppet that I teach the children to make, and of course they decorate it. I tell them how to use their hands for it, and how to get it started. I also tell them that, although I'm going to give them elementary puppets today, I also have made other puppets. I have this puppet that is forty-five years old.

I also get children involved – I have them stand up front when I perform. I generally get four or five youngsters and give them each one of these different puppets. This group has six different pieces, and I have six children standing in front of me. I get them singing the song, and each one gets a different character. There might be a cat, a dog, or a hippopotamus, and they have to produce sound effects, and so they are already in performance stage. And they just love the idea of being that animal. I have many pictures here showing the children and the adults in communication with one another, and participating in the production of these things. And then I teach songs to them.

I write my own songs as well singing well-known ones. I wrote something for ecology that goes like this: “Way down yonder where the waters flow,” and they join in “the seahorse who played the banjo, because that’s the thing he knew how best to do. He sang about rivers, he sang about streams, and all of those strange things in his dreams, and a peculiar happening in his glimmering seas.”

“He sang about the octopus, because their tentacles would multiply, one grows short, the other one grows long. He sang of crabs that are growing crabbier, and the fish that are growing shabbier. And that’s the very reason for this song. So dear friends, take my advice. Do think once, do think twice, before you throw the plastic in the sea. It won’t hurt you, it won’t hurt me, but sure will cause some misery, to brother Dolphin in his glimmering sea.”

What happened in this example is these dear children, and their adult mentors - who you can see in some of these pictures - had about fifteen little groups and, within the one hour class, selected their own material, set up a stage, learned about the whole field, and really got a tremendous amount of information, which they were thoroughly delighted with.

And it opened up a whole new channel for them and for their mentors - the seniors with them - because the mentors were not telling them what to do. It demonstrates that when there is participation between the human element - the children who are just beginning to learn, and the adults who have already learned so very much – there is no need to force or tell the children what to do. Both groups can and do work beautifully and creatively together.

⁸ Bernice Silver is a 93 year old international puppeteer who travels extensively to perform for multigenerational audiences, and recently returned from an international puppetry conference in Russia. She creates her own puppets, and writes and produces puppet shows. She has also worked as a folk singer, nursery school teacher and arts and crafts instructor.

throughout the generations is vital in sustaining a strong community. Older adults can share their experiences and give advice concerning topics such as career options and parenting. The lessons we learn at young ages can be transmitted into our lives and make us more perceptive to the world in which we live. Youth of the younger generation can teach their elders about technology. We can also share what we learn in school with our elders. The world is transforming little by little each day and many elders aren't aware of the technological, political and international state of the world. As young people we should, without hesitation, be eager to give our time and knowledge to our elders.

In addition to being students of Fairleigh Dickinson University and members of various extracurricular activities on campus, we are also members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA). AKA was founded on January 15, 1908 at Howard University in Washington, D.C. and is America's first Greek sorority founded by Black college women. Our ages range from teenagers to women in their later years of life. Serving the community is a major goal of the Sorority. From 2006 until the year 2010, AKA's National Program will be known as ESP (Extraordinary Service Program) and will consist of several platforms. The undergraduate platform is called "Economic Educational Advancement through Technology" and we, the Fairleigh Dickinson Nu Kappa Chapter of AKA has implemented that platform by establishing a program to educate senior citizens about computer technology. On February 8, 2007 four members of our chapter began a computer basics course at a local senior citizen center in Hackensack, New Jersey. Initially we were surprised that the seniors had no knowledge of how to work the computer but their eagerness to learn energized us to share the knowledge we possess. Simple functions young people take for granted, such as turning on the computer and playing Solitaire, excited the seniors.

The lessons we learn when we're young can be transformed into lessons we teach when we become the older generation. Putting two or more generations together may at first glance seem to have no common ground, but they actually complement one another. The older generations, with their experiences, can give younger generations direction and counsel on issues they will face. The younger generations, with our knowledge of current technology, can keep our elders informed and up to date. Race and age barriers disappear in this growing process because there is a realization that we need one another.

It is important for all of us to remember that we are never too old or too young to give of our time and to share our expertise. Multigenerational relationships are keys to self-preservation and culture-preservation.

Unlike music videos and violent movies where sex and misogynistic images race across the teen eye until the teen spirit is desensitized to death and human sentimentality, intergenerational exchange provides students with a forum to literally slow down the human experience. “At-risk” students literally smell the roses when they sit with an elder for hours, looking at the aqua veins of tired hands, the facial expressions that change with the texture of life stories.

In the end, the elders and students are inseparable, and the students walk away, carrying the life force of the elder mentor who taught them about love, family, and the world. Each elder walks away knowing that he or she has helped to improve the world by investing time with its future. In the case of our school, our elder mentors have promised that they will continue to work with our students for as long as “God allows us.”

Multigenerational Perspectives on Teaching and Learning across the Life Span

Samantha Hinton⁶ and Htadra Jameison⁷

Since 1945, Fairleigh Dickinson University has been associated with the United Nations. We have a partnership with the Ambassador's Club at the U.N. and also the Department of Public Information. The United Nations Pathways, organized by Fairleigh Dickinson's Office of Global Learning, provides multiple U.N. programming for our FDU community. These programs include lectures and video conferences. Through these programs, students and professors are given the opportunity to be involved in an interactive global dialogue with UN ambassadors from various parts of the world. It is our pleasure to be a part of the NGO Committee of Ageing's subcommittee of Multigenerational Relationships panel.

Graduation is drawing nearer for college seniors all over the country and as we step foot into the job market we begin to realize that a degree isn't the only requirement for most entry level jobs. Experience along with a degree is essential in becoming a successful professional. Experience can be defined as knowledge or skill gained from time, observations and encounters. Outside of the business arena, enlightenment gained from experienced individuals can be instrumental in many areas of a person's life.

Multigenerational relationships have positive advantages for people of all ages. This is because society is advancing at a faster rate than ever before. Teaching one another and spreading knowledge

⁶ *Samantha Hinton is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and is a senior at the Metropolitan Campus of Fairleigh Dickinson University. Since high school she has worked in the upward Bound Program, a summer educational program that seeks to prepare high school students to attend and do well in college. She is extensively involved in community service and volunteers at a food bank in Hillside, New Jersey, and at the Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition, she works 30 hours a week at a hospital in southern New Jersey.*

⁷ *Htadra Jameison is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and is a senior at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Since high school she has volunteered at her church mentoring a youth group, at a homeless shelter and at a facility that serves orphans. At her university, she leads an organization called 'Nubian Ladies' and works in STOP – an organization that campaigns against child trafficking and prostitution.*

intergenerational days has been long-lasting. The culmination of this program is the letters that are written and sent between students and elders. A bond is forged, a bond between our friends at JASA and the Manhattan Day School seventh and eight graders each year as young and old learn cooperatively and learn to value and appreciate one another.

Our students are taught by action and practice that we must listen to the generations before us in order to learn valuable lessons and then WE can be the transmitters of those lessons to others.

We, at Manhattan Day School, live a life full of opportunities to interact with seniors and learn from them. As we teach our children to demonstrate respect and care to our senior citizens on a regular basis, they grow up in a world in which the previous generation is a real part of their lives.

Intergenerational Education: Societal Medicine

Maxine Nodel⁵

In my 25 years of urban educational service throughout New York City, the most powerful instructional and humanistic medium that I have observed and participated in is intergenerational education. In our society, where both the elderly population and impoverished inner-city students are left by the proverbial curb, an instructional construct that can become a symbiosis for societal growth and health is not only refreshing; it is vital for the future of our nation.

The essence of intergenerational education is simple; young and old meet for the purposes of mutual social, emotional, artistic, and academic benefit. For the elderly, many of whom suffer from chronic loneliness, boredom and depression, the ability to work with inner-city teenagers provides them with a sense of purpose. Once immersed inside a classroom, elders have a chance to share their life stories, to reveal tales of obstacles and victories, love and sacrifice. On the other end are students who come from worlds of struggle and systemic oppression, students who listen now to stories from folks who have ‘been there and done that’ and who are alive, at the age of 95 for example, to share their wisdom, as well as being role models for resiliency. For example, a holocaust survivor can teach a teen gang member about Fascism and how “homeboys” in the concentration camp “hood” didn’t fight each other, because they understood who the *real* enemy was.

In addition to the life-lesson epiphanies that sprout throughout intergenerational exchanges between elders and teens, the legacies that the elder participants pass onto their surrogate grandchildren are personified in the dramatically improved behavior of the students; student rage and frustration is lessened; student belief in self is increased; student outlook on life is now half-full. The case of my students, who all participated in the intergenerational program, is a good one – all of them dramatically improved in the areas of self and world attitude, attendance, and academics.

⁵ *Maxine Nodel is the Principal and founder of the Millennium Art Academy, a public high school in the Bronx, New York City, that uses an intergenerational and arts paradigm as a pedagogical framework for its students. For the past 25 years she has devoted her life to the cause of urban education in New York City as a principal, teacher, English and education professor, staff-developer and curriculum writer. She is a 2006 Cahn Fellow – Distinguished Principal at Columbia University’s Teachers College.*

Multigenerational Activities at Manhattan Day School

Judy Melzer³ and Aviva Yablok⁴

Manhattan Day School has approximately five hundred students age two to fourteen. It provides students with a dual-curricular program, which includes both Judaic and secular subjects, and follows New York State's curricula, which gives students many opportunities to give to their world and, hopefully, yours today as well, as you hear something about them.

From the first day a child begins his/her studies at Manhattan Day School, he/she is taught the concept that our senior citizens are important to us and that it is an obligation (a **mitzvah**) to show honor and respect to them. Our staff, lay leadership and community members continually provide us with many ways to practice this fundamental idea.

On the most basic level and the level which helps our youngest students with this concept, we make weekly visits to the Esplanade Senior Residence. Our two and three year old children become comfortable with the residents, bring them flowers, sing to them and enjoy snacks together. Each Friday a group of our four and five year olds prepare Sabbath food packages and deliver them to seniors within our community. Parents often join as does a local Rabbi who has arranged these visits. As the weeks go by, relationships develop and all of the people involved in these visits look forward to them with great anticipation. Parents who supervise, the children, the teachers and the seniors benefit from the moments spent together.

Our school has become involved with JASA and DOROT (which means "generations" in Hebrew) and during our regular visits with them, we talk, sing, dance, cook, create, play and enjoy time spent together. The visits occur at our school, where seniors are welcomed to "our home". Alternatively, the visits sometimes take place in other community facilities in the neighborhood.

A typical day began a day when our seventh graders met with seniors from the JASA program, which is about five, six blocks from Manhattan Day School. This is one of numerous programs we have built a relationship with. We met our senior friends at the JASA Center. We introduced ourselves, and we became friends. We had lunch together, we spoke and we engaged each other in wonderful conversations.

The day progressed as we did arts and crafts activities together. The seniors were more proficient than the younger students, because there were some very artistic people in the JASA group. We worked cooperatively - this is a buzzword in education today, i.e., cooperative learning - to produce a collage, which was our end product. The end product was something that was created together with small, young hands and elders' more experienced hands. The excitement generated was incredible.

This particular day students continued with music and dance, in which our seniors had a wonderful time, and our younger students had difficulty keeping up! As a matter of fact, I think the seniors remained engaged longer than the younger students. The impact on the students of these

³ Judy Melzer is the Associate Principal for grades one through eight at the Manhattan Day School, which has approximately 500 students ages 2-14 and offers a dual curriculum program including both Judaic and secular subjects

⁴ Aviva Yablok is the Early Childhood Director for children ages two through five at the Manhattan Day School, which gives children opportunities to contribute to their world through programs that emphasize relationships with elders in their communities

Gradually the room filled past overflowing, and an inner luminescence illuminated the space as over 60 people arrived and greeted each other. Enthusiasm brightened as the program progressed. Multiple learning situations were presented, as noted on the Program, by a panel guided by our moderator, Professor Kevin Brabazon, a distinguished British expert in the field of multigenerational/intergenerational relations. Panelists shared their varied multiple teaching/learning experiences. By the end of the presentations, people in the audience were talking excitedly and enjoying the innovative, creative learning programs which were described.

The goal of the Subcommittee on Multigenerational Relationships, to broaden the horizons of lifelong learning, was enriched by the lively presenters. A summary presented in this report, prepared by Dr. Rosa Perla Resnick, widely noted for her work in academia and in international issues, expands the perspectives of teaching and learning across the generations.

The excitement of learning will resonate for a long, long time.

Kevin Brabazon²

It is my great pleasure to introduce the distinguished speakers today. The excellent group of presenters will offer a wide variety of perspectives – all of them multigenerational – on teaching and learning across the lifespan. The formal educational context is presented by Judy Melzer, Associate Principal for first through eighth grades, and Aviva Yablok, Early Childhood Director, from Manhattan Day School and Maxine Nodel, Principal of the Millennium Art Academy – a public high school in the Bronx that uses an intergenerational and arts paradigm for teaching and learning. Samantha Hinton and Htadra Jameison – college seniors committed to community service - will discuss the benefits of multigenerational service-learning and teaching, followed by Bernice Silver – herself a distinguished elder - who will provide insights on informal teaching and learning in a multigenerational context, using one of the oldest performing arts media in the world, namely puppetry. The last presenter, Fran Rod – New Jersey Outreach Coordinator for DOROT's University Without Walls – will make the case that learning is a lifelong process as she discusses the participation of home-bound elders in telephone and online classes.

² *Kevin Brabazon, Member of the Sub-Committee on Multigenerational Relationships; United Nations Representative for Generations United; Adjunct Associate Professor at New York University (NYU).*

PREFACE

Norma Levitt¹

We welcome you to the report of our seventh annual meeting, planned and implemented by the Subcommittee on Multigenerational Relationships of the Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) Committee on Ageing. Our members are listed in the printed program, as they are engraved in our gratitude and admiration.

The Subcommittee has developed and presented varied programs through the years on multigenerational relationships: situations in offices; caregiving; super centenarians over 110 years of age; migrants; as well as differing attitudes toward multigenerational relationships in various parts of the world. We have demonstrated that every global issue has multigenerational aspects.

This year the focus, fulfilling our particular point of view and specialized interest, was on Multigenerational Perspectives on Teaching and Learning Across the Life Span. This is in one of the fundamental concerns and planned actions of the United Nations.

Documents adopted by the UN have strengthened the focus on lifelong learning. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons were adopted in 1991. Under the Section on Self-Fulfillment, the mandate is that "Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society." For 1999, the International Year of Older Persons, one of the four conceptual dimensions adopted by the UN is Lifelong Learning.

Among the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are several goals pledged by all the member states to achieve by 2015, namely: "to achieve universal primary education; to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education at all levels by 2015."

The Madrid International Plan of Action, adopted in 2002 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, recommended for action: "access to knowledge, education and training" including a fifty percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and encouragement of older workers."

In addition, in 2002, the 56th United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 2003/2012 the "Literacy Decade." Since this goal is at the heart of UNESCO, that agency was called to undertake a coordinating and catalyzing role in implementing the "Literacy Decade" principles, among which "education and freedom" were highlighted as the most relevant to people of all ages.

This year, the program developed and presented on March 1, 2007, was entitled "Multigenerational Perspectives on Teaching and Learning Across the Life Span." The day dawned damp and cold. Meetings contingent to the current Commission on the Status of Women had reserved all space in the Church Center and surrounding areas, so that it was necessary to look elsewhere. The International Immigrants Foundation generously provided a room.

¹ Norma Levitt, NGO Main representative to the UN; World Union for Progressive Judaism; Co-Chair Sub-Committee on Multigenerational Relationships, NGO Committee on Ageing; Wellesley, Phi Beta Kappa; Honorary President, Metro, UNIFEM, USA; Organizer/Chair, UNICEF National Organizations Advisory Council for Children; Advisory for UN Environment Sabbath; Advisory Council World Conference of Religions for Peace; Honorary Life President, Women of Reform Judaism

***MULTIGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON
TEACHING AND LEARNING
ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN***

Greetings and Introduction

Norma Levitt

Co-Chair, Sub-Committee on Multigenerational Relationships
World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ)
United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP)

Moderator

Kevin Brabazon

Sub-Committee on Multigenerational Relationships
United Nations Representative for Generations United
Adjunct Associate Professor at New York University (NYU)

Panel participants:

Judy Melzer and Aviva Yablok
Manhattan Day School, New York City

Maxine Nodel
Millenium Art Academy, Bronx, New York

Htadra Jameison and Samantha Hinton
Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, NJ

Bernice Silver
International Puppeteer, New York City

Fran Rod
DOROT, University Without Walls, New York City

Questions and Answers

Summary

Rosa Perla Resnick

Co-Chair, Sub-Committee on Multigenerational Relationships
International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG)
International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)
International Immigrants Foundation (IIF)

This programme is in support of the 51st the Commission on the Status of Women

Mission Statement of the Sub-Committee on Multigenerational Relationships of the NGO Committee on Ageing

To build lasting bonds among people of all ages, to share the world by living in the present, learning from the past and planning for the future in order to increase the understanding and visibility of the interdependence of values and interests among generations.

SOME ACTION SUGGESTIONS

- Ø Raise awareness and appreciation of the importance of multigenerational relationships in families and communities
- Ø Promote programs for grandparents and grandchildren in schools and communities, in places of worship, recreation, health care, civic organizations and the media
- Ø Advocate mainstreaming of ageing and multigenerational relationships in the work of governments, the United Nations and NGO Committees
- Ø Celebrate a Day of Multigenerational Cross-Cultural Relationships at all levels of society

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to the Members of the Sub-Committee on Multigenerational Relationships:

- ✓ Kevin Brabazon , United Nations Representative for Generations United
- ✓ Juanita Carrillo, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG)
- ✓ Helen Hamlin, International Federation on Ageing (IFA)
- ✓ Helen Roht, Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS)
- ✓ Mary V. Toumayan, Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA)
- ✓ Maria Grazia Zagami (Focolare Movement)

who, together with the Co-Chairs Norma Levitt , World Union for Progressive Judaism, Honorary President, Metro, UNIFEM, USA , Chair UNICEF National Organizations Advisory Council for Children and Rosa Perla Resnick, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG), International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Immigrants Foundation (IIF), created a program filled with information, education and inspiration.

With continuing recognition to the “World Conference of Religions for Peace” for their enabling support.



NGO Committee on Ageing
United Nations, NY

**THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON
MULTIGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF
THE NGO COMMITTEE ON AGEING**

REPORT OF PROGRAM

MULTIGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN

March 1st, 2007