



Roundtable Meeting Productive Aging for The Elderly in the World

■Date: February 8, 2013 14:00~16:30

■Venue: room “San”, Hotel NIWA TOKYO

■Hosted by: ILC—Japan

ILC-Japan has conducted the “International Comparative Study on Productive Aging and Health Promotion” as a research project for 2012. This project is funded by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare as a part of Health Promoting Project for the Elderly. Through this international comparison, ILC-Japan has also sought what the Japanese version of productive aging could look like.

We invited Baroness Sally Greengross from the United Kingdom to this meeting. She is Chief Executive of the International Longevity Centre UK and Co-President of the ILC Global Alliance. She talked about movements in developed countries, centering on the United Kingdom. An interim report on the study was also presented. In the next second session, vigorous discussion was seen among various experts in fields related to productive aging.

In this report, only the summary of the presentation by Baroness Greengross and parts of the discussion are introduced due to insufficient space. For details, please read the study report which will be released in the near future.

Program

<Part 1>

14:00 Opening Speech

Kunio Mizuta (President, ILC-Japan)

14:05 “Productive Aging” In the Super Aged-Society

Takao Suzuki (Director, Research Institute National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology)

14:20 Aging as a key element of a productive society

Baroness Sally Greengross (Co-President, ILC Global Alliance, Chief Executive, ILC-UK)

14:45 Participation by All and throughout Life - Second-Life Work Project

Hiroko Akiyama (Professor, Institute of Gerontology at the University of Tokyo)

15:00 International Comparative Study Report: Productive Aging in each country

Daisuke Watanabe (Research Fellow, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, Seikei University)

<Part 2>

15:20 Discussion with all participants

16:20 Tokyo Statement on Productive Aging

Participants' list

Hiroko Akiyama	Professor, Institute of Gerontology, The University of Tokyo
Ayako Fujita	Professor, Koshien University
Sir Alan Greengross	Observer
Baroness Sally Greengross	Co-President, ILC Global Alliance, Executive Chair, ILC-UK a crossbench (independent) member of the House of Lords
Katsunori Hara	Director-General, Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly, MHLW
Keiko Higuchi	Chairperson, The Women's Association for a Better Aging Society Co-Representative, Japan NGO Council on Aging
Tsutomu Hotta	Chairman, Sawayaka Welfare Foundation Co-Representative, Japan NGO Council on Aging
Fumio Isobe	Dean, Social Work Studies, Josai International University
Tsukasa Kanai	Head Office Executive, Corporate Social Responsibility Office, Corporate Planning Department, Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Holdings, Inc.
Teruko Kanehira	Former Vice Governor of Tokyo, Former President, Japan Legal Support Center
Hiroumi Kawamura	President, Foundation of Social Development for Senior Citizens
Rihito Kimura	Professor Emeritus, Waseda University
Jinichi Minagawa	Free Journalist
Toshihiko Miyajima	Advisor, Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Co., Inc. The late Director-General, Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly, MHLW
Kunio Mizuta	Advisor, Sompo Japan Research Institute Inc. Former administrative vice-minister, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
Shigeo Morioka	Hon. President, ILC Global Alliance Former CEO of Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. (current Astellas Pharma Inc.)
Taeko Nakashima	Senior Researcher, Institute for Health Economics and Policy
Keiichiro Namai	Standing Advisor, ILYA Corporation
Fumihiko Odajima	Corporate Fellow, Wellness Business Division, Ajinomoto Co., Inc.
Makoto Ogawa	Director-General, Employment Measures for the Elderly Persons with Disabilities Department, MHLW
Takiko Okamoto	Professor, Meiji Gakuin University
Kazuo Otsu	Journalist (Yomiuri Shimbun)
Shino Sawaoka	Chief Research Scientist, Research Planning Department, the Dia Foundation for Research on Ageing Societies
Hiroshi Shibata	Dean, Professor of Graduate School, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Human Arts and Sciences
Takako Sodei	Professor Emeritus, Ochanomizu University
Hidehiro Sugisawa	Professor, Graduate School, J. F. Oberlin University
Takao Suzuki	Director, Research Institute, National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology
Daisuke Watanabe	Assistant Research Fellow, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, Seikei University
Shiro Yamasaki	Director General for Policies on Cohesive Society, Cabinet Office



Ageing as a key element of a productive society

Baroness Sally Greengross
Co-President of ILC GA, President of ILC-UK

ABSTRACT

- Society must adapt to the New Demography. To be successful Productive Ageing can only happen in a 'Productive Society'. This includes employment, health care and housing considerations as well as the built environment, design for ageing etc.
- Productive ageing applies not only to formal occupation or employment, but encompasses all forms of social and political participation including education, volunteering, advocacy and decision-making
- Older people have an immense contribution to make through employment and voluntary activities in their community. Retaining older workers in the labour force helps them to stay healthy, active and productive
- As well as being of immense value to the wellbeing of the individual, this continuing contribution to the local community's social capital has an economic value that should not be underestimated.
- The promotion of healthy and active ageing requires a change of attitudes of individuals and society towards retirement and working longer. While Equality and Human Rights Legislation, including age being a protected characteristic, has reduced age discrimination in the UK, barriers to older peoples participation, both individual and institutional, remain and are underpinned by economic factors, including a depressed economy and a high unemployment rate.
- Older workers' attitudes and aspirations must shape the agenda for a strategic approach to employment in later life
- In the UK partnerships between local authorities and NGO's are an important element of care and housing provision for older people and similar partnerships between the Public, Voluntary and Private Sectors will ensure the efficient delivery of the full economic value to society that the funding and provision of Older people's services could provide.

Achieving bright future for the super-aging society: a collaborative effort

“Productive Aging” is a concept with wide range of meanings. It includes work-related issues, volunteer activities in local areas, as well as maintaining strength and agility. These concepts are integrated in the idea of remaining healthy, functioning, and independent until the end of life, an endeavor that proves itself to be a truly collaborative effort.

Various experts in fields related to productive aging are here today. We hope to hear a variety of opinions and different perspectives and explore what the Japanese version of productive aging could look like in the future.

■ Elderly people playing a leading in a society

Tsutomu Hotta (Director, Sawayaka Welfare Foundation)

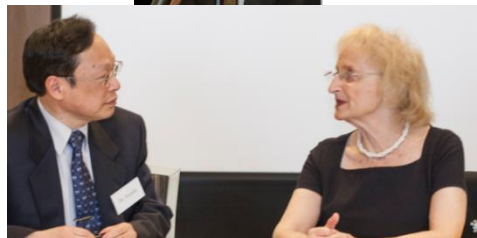


I have been working on rebuilding the cities in Tohoku region where the big earthquake and tsunami hit. Together with other members from the Sawayaka Welfare Foundation across the nation, I visit 9 cities and towns to promote our vision to the people, medical personnel, long-term care corporations and local governments. Our vision is to rebuild these cities with comprehensive care system. That means to make the cities into a place where the elderly can remain until they die, and everyone, young and old, can help each other with strong bond.

I would like to introduce two activities from the viewpoint of productive aging.

One is about the volunteer activities by the elderly to rebuild cities. Many elderly people are engaged in this city rebuilding activities as volunteers who are full of energy. Younger generations need to go out and work for living, so the remaining elderly started non-profit organizations in the local areas utilizing their own experiences. They gather together on a regular basis for discussions, and collect opinions from the victims of disaster in order to bring those voices to administrations and being active on various issues.

The second activity is one in which the elderly make and sell accessories like corsages. People started gathering at places like temporary housings and organizing activities like these that will help form bonds among victims from disaster and create purpose in life. In one group, the leader is a woman who is 98 years old.



■Change of attitude towards the elderly

Teruko Kanehira (Former Vice-Governor of Tokyo, Former Director of Japan Legal Support Center)



Something I am wondering is whether we have been working to understand the aging society from the best direction. We have always believed that the elderly is a population that we should support, and we have sought ways that families, administrations, national government and local governments can provide this support. However, I think this idea needs to be reconsidered in today's circumstances.

Once you retire and start living in your own community, you cannot help realizing how many other elderly people there are in the neighborhood. Wherever you go, there they are, everywhere, in the morning, noon and night. Then you finally realize that community is sustained by those elderly people. It means that community will not survive unless, as elderly people, we help other elderly. We must not depend upon young people or the administration to help the elderly.

However, I have noticed that men do not come out very much. They may have kind wives who are taking care of them at home, but one concern I have is regarding what those men will do if their wives pass away before they do.

■Approach from a work perspective

Hiroko Akiyama, Ph.D. (Executive Committee Professor, Tokyo University Institute of Gerontology)



In old age, men have more serious issues in general than women. I have been working on building communities in preparation for an aging society in Kashiwa, city of Chiba Prefecture and Fukui Prefecture. After men retire from work, they have no friends in the neighborhood, no business cards to exchange with which to introduce themselves, and they often do not know what to do or where to go. This is a very noteworthy phenomenon in urban areas.

For these circumstances, we are working towards helping retired men to be able to do something outside their homes as soon as they retire. Providing work opportunities works best for them and it is the least challenging thing for them to do. Starting volunteer work is too difficult for those retired businessmen. Therefore we encourage them to start with a simple community activity, and we reiterate that going out is the most important thing at this point. Then they will see what is happening in the community and they may start thinking about how they can spend their time. They may get ideas in what areas of their expertise may be helpful, and that could be the starting point of getting outside and trying paid or non-paid volunteer work. I strongly feel that this is a very effective way for men to improve their post-retirement lives.



■ Approach from an education perspective

Ayako Fujita, Ph.D. (Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Koshien University)



My research focuses on how the elderly can go beyond ageism and be productive. The elderly people themselves are used to seeing themselves as “someone who should be supported by other people.” Consequently it is hard for them to be active right away even if they are told to be productive.

Universities for the elderly have great impact on cultivating volunteers. In Osaka City, there is a University for the Elderly established in 1979, and I have been involved in their activities since then. The City of Osaka had been giving a grant to the university, but it was suddenly discontinued since the Mayor changed to Mr. Hashimoto. When the university was forced to be independent, the elderly stood up for themselves and started managing it as “a university by the elderly for the elderly.” They are now in their third year. When the grant-funded administration ran the school, there were 800 students. Now the number has risen to 1,800 despite an increase in tuition.

People who come to the university attend mostly for pleasure, and 70% of them are men. I have been engaged in their activities hoping that the university will serve as a place of re-education and provide them an opportunity to work within our society.

Changes in attitude can be seen within 30% to 40% of the students each year. Those students are the ones who make many friends at school and begin to share the value of wanting to do something for the aging society. These students often begin to participate in volunteer activities together after graduation.

■ Time to challenge propositions

Shiro Yamasaki (Director General for Policies on Cohesive Society of the Cabinet Office)



I happen to work in the Cabinet Office right now, which is a position from which I am able to oversee the overarching issues of the country. I oversee issues of aging as well as low birth rate. While it is important to enhance individual’s performance, I foresee that our country will have to face serious challenges on a large scale in the future. Urban areas especially will have to face a full-scale challenge of mass aging for the first time in history. Large-scale risk management for medical care and long-term care is not enough. I think the most critical issue for the aging population is about housing. Not having your own home in old age can

derail your entire life plan. Unless we consider housing as a basic necessity for life and respond accordingly, whatever measures the government takes or services it provides are fruitless endeavors. Nobody is here today from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, but I am deeply concerned about the future unless we seriously tackle the issue of housing.

I think that this issue is the deciding factor of whether Japan can build a productive aging society. Whether Japan can demonstrate a functioning model of society will have a big influence on other Asian countries where aging is advancing rapidly.

■ Balance between self-help, mutual help and public aid

Katsunori Hara (Director, Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)



The long-term health insurance system will be reviewed soon and ways to make the system sustainable is a major challenge. It is often said that the combination of self-help, mutual help and public aid is important, but the long-term health insurance system which acts as the safety net when long-term care is necessary is public aid. Unless the structure of this public service is solid, self-help and mutual help will not be nurtured in society.

On the other hand, public aid is not strong enough by itself to support the super-aging society. One implication of this is that there will be many elderly who will need long-term public care. It is crucial to build capacities of self-help and systems of mutual help in society for individuals to support themselves and communities to support each other. We as a government also want to work hard to establish self-help and mutual help in our society. We have heard various ideas and advice today from all of you. We hope that you will continue bringing the wisdom together and we, the administration, are willing to support your work.

■ Crusade for productive super-aging society

Keiko Higuchi (Director, The Women's Association for a Better Aging Society)



The combination of declining birth rates and continuing aging that we are facing in the near future is an unprecedented situation on an enormous scale. Therefore, I think that everyone, male and female, will have to use their full potential to overcome the challenges of this situation. In that sense, I was very pleased today that you discussed not only work issues for healthy elderly people but also included conversation about others; frail people, very old people and ways that their activities of daily life can contribute to a productive aging society.

We need to do all-out battle against this new super-aging society. Our lifespans have extended, and it is significant of a period peace and prosperity. This all-out battle is to support the elderly until the very end with dignity and never exclude them but support them as a cohort.

Productive Aging

TOKYO STATEMENT

Participants of the Round Table Meeting
International Longevity Center–Japan
International Longevity Centre –UK

With the Longevity Revolution, the world entered a new and unprecedented stage of human development, the impact of which has been made greater because of its speed. While many people now enjoy healthy long lives, institutions such as education, work, politics, economy, ethics, and elderly people's way of living have been rendered obsolete. This is the opportunity to make fundamental changes in outdated mind-sets, values, and socio-economic arrangements to meet this new era of longevity.

For instance, society needs to abandon the notion that people make contributions in their working lives in return for support in retirement. Such an approach does not understand the value of social contribution by the elderly throughout life.

In order to truly enjoy benefits from longevity, elderly people themselves need to be independent, live actively, and keep contributing to society.

We believe it is important to clarify the rights and responsibilities of the elderly for better and happy living.

- When possible, older citizens have a responsibility to remain in the labor market to contribute to the socio-economy, which will also enable retention of skills and minimize the fiscal burden on taxpayers. Employers and society should also support the elderly to enable longer working lives.
- The elderly have a responsibility to remain active in their communities after retirement. Many old people are eager to be involved in volunteer work to stay active after retirement. Volunteering should be flexible, enjoyable, and oriented towards utilizing the skills, wisdom and the experiences they have developed during their working lives.
- The elderly should have a right to remain in their own homes. At the same time, it is also important for the elderly to work on establishing independence and mutual aid systems in their communities. In addition to the elderly who are healthy, those who need assistance and care can also contribute by lowering the degree of social dependence by having the determination to live dignified lives with appropriate “personalized” care plans which also contribute to the new economy.
- Advanced aging countries have a responsibility and are expected to lead the world to prove that longevity makes society affluent and all generations can benefit from it.