

**FOR A FULLY HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN AGEING
CRESCENDO – October 8-9, 2005 – Bossey / Geneva**

Because of the ageing of the world population, society will undergo massive changes.

This begins by modifications in the perspective and the commonly understood vision of ageing.

This complex and multidimensional topic calls for an approach, which is also multi-dimensional.

Identity and mission of the Crescendo network

- Crescendo speaks of ageing... concretely this concerns large portions of population, from the younger retired people of 60 years of age to persons at the end of life... very different realities.
- Crescendo meets new challenges in our societies.
- Crescendo wishes to be a spirit more than an institution: a space for encounter and collaboration embodying a common spirituality.
- The role of Crescendo is to be a platform of associations and of NGOs so as to promote the exchanges of experiences, ideas, concrete projects and reflections by a pluridisciplinary approach... The platform could also conduct concerted actions with governments and international authorities.
- Crescendo is the only pluridisciplinary organization of the Conference of the International Catholic Organizations involved in ageing.
- As a network, Crescendo should favour bonds and strengthen the potential of each one, encourage reflections and joint actions among the organizations.

Course of action:

Draw up a document containing a synthesis of the seminar to make Crescendo known

- *with the elements of reflection proposed during the seminar*
- *with a plan of action.*

Make an inventory of the different international meetings and events concerning ageing and collect the desired information.

Preliminary remark on the talks during the seminar

The talks made it possible to see daily life with the benefit of hindsight.

The panels brought out the various facets of ageing according to different cultures in the world.

We also perceived the diversity of approaches according to the various organizations represented: university, ICO, religious congregation...

Propositions

1. Promote a **positive vision of ageing**, by integrating into it the **cultural and spiritual dimension**.

Bring about some change in mentalities by appropriate **communication**.

Course of action:

World Day of the Elderly: October 1st each year

- *Incite the member organizations to communicate by relying on the support of their actions;*
- *Put on Crescendo's website (updated) the initiatives of each one, publications, research;*
- *Organize with a few members a meeting at the UN, UNESCO or at the Council of Europe... to denounce/propose a specific point.*

Create an introductory CD-Rom to spread its message and to present the diversity of the organizations which act together in this network.

Furnish the sit of the International Catholic Organizations with the theme of ageing.

2. Promote **the active role** of the elderly in society, by enabling them to be, or to become, an integral part of social life, by highlighting their experience and their wisdom.

Course of action:

Make a survey to have the elderly express their preoccupations, ideas and needs.

1 specific theme each year: loneliness / solitude, AIDS... volunteer work, leisure, culture...

Use the bulletin Crescendo (a 4-page layout) to make known the positive initiatives favouring the fulfilment of the elderly and their social usefulness.

Involve the media by adjusting together regular programmes on ageing (each organization taking a turn to intervene).

3. Incite, in the family of the United Nations, the creation of a specialized organization concerning the elderly (like UNICEF for children, UNIFEM for women...).

On the **level of the Church**, also incite the creation of a **specific body** for the elderly.

Course of action:

Discover the initiatives taken by the member organizations to make generous use of the local and regional organizations and make them known on Crescendo website.

Obtain the consultative status at the Council of Europe, of ECOSOC...

Invite the member organizations to take propositions, on behalf of Crescendo, to international authorities (UN meetings on women, the family, AIDS...). Establish mechanisms of representations within these bodies.

Try to have Crescendo included in the Pontifical Yearbook, in the yearbooks for the laity and the family.

Have links made between Crescendo and the different websites of these Councils.

4. Deepen the reflection and action concerning **questions on ageing** (new challenges that call for new initiatives):
- by an analysis of concrete situations and **actual** realities: diagnosis giving the basis for action requiring structures and appropriate initiatives: research laboratory organized by Crescendo; material and human means...
 - by encouraging work **on a network** by the different actors (health, social, of the state, of associations, charitable organizations, spiritual...) in this field.
 - by highlighting the role of the **family** whenever possible, while remaining attentive to single people, to those who have lost their children or who live far from their loved ones.
 - by promoting **voluntary help and social awareness**.
 - by developing **intergenerational approaches** (also within the organizations to which we belong.
 - by favouring **concerted steps of the members of these networks at specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations** (WHO, ILO, UNDP, World Bank...).
 - by fighting **specific deficiencies**: solitude and loneliness, unsuitable social politics, the poverty of the elderly, and in particular of women, insufficient care...
- Do not broach the problem of ageing in general, for it is too vast and not specific enough.

Course of action:

Collaborate with universities and academic institutions in the field of research and of the analysis of issues linked to ageing.

Involve students in exchanges between universities of different countries.

Seek financial plans which will enable this type of exchange.

Propose a programme of formation on the manner of approaching the elderly, accompanying them, communicating with them... according to the different socioeconomic conditions in which they live.

Share existing tools in the domain of research and formation.

5. Develop **an approach based on the universal rights of the person, taking into account the environment and the social, economic and cultural diversities** of the various regions in the world.

Course of action:

Promote the implementation of the charter of the elderly.

Involve the commissions of Human Rights in the promotion and the protection of the rights of the elderly.

6. Develop a **spirituality adapted to the life of ageing persons**.

Course of action:

Create a small working party responsible for working on this question and create a tool within a year (2 encounters and work on the Internet).

7. **Open the network more widely** to other Christian organizations.
Strengthen contacts with **other religions**.

At the end of this encounter, the participants commit themselves to transmit the results of the work of Crescendo to their organization and to their networks.