

ENIEC Newsletter



July 2014, no. 65

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News from the Chairman

Summer is here, and all over Europe people are gradually slowing down before vacation... Everywhere except on a small island on the east coast of Sweden. In a town called Visby (population 22 593) on the island of Gotland the first week of July is the most intense week during the year. It is called the week of Almedalen (Almedalsveckan) and some 25 000 people go there to meet politicians, government officials, lobbyists, representatives from civil society and many, many more. It is a carnival for people who are interested in politics and societal issues. All of this takes place during 8 days in a quite restricted area in the old town of Visby, surrounded by a wall that was built in 13th century when the town was considerably smaller

than it is today. EVERYBODY who is anybody is there. Every hotel room is booked for years in advance, every room in Visby and other towns nearby that is for rent is sold out. All seminar rooms, basements, restaurants and other localities that you can possibly think of to host a seminar in, is rented out. If you are really lucky you get to rent one of the old ruins from the middle age and use it for hosting a seminar – or why not have it in an old church?

All political parties represented in the Swedish parliament have one day to present their ideas and the leaders of each party gives a speech at exactly 7 pm every evening in a small park called Almedalen – hence the name of the entire event. Everything is free, you don't have to pay to attend the seminars or debates. All of this started in 1968 when the education minister at the time (later iconic prime minister of Sweden), Olof Palme, gave a speech on the back of a truck that was standing in Almedalen. Today it is one of the most talked about political events during the year in Sweden and since this is an election year it gets even more massive media attention than usual. The days are full of open seminars and political debates – the nights are full of partying. If you can find a place to sleep, it is entirely possible to live there for a whole week without paying for a single meal; the competition for an audience makes the organizers inventive when it comes to offering breakfast seminars, lunch seminars, evening seminars with buffet and of

course – rosé wine (obligatory during an evening in Almedalen).

I go there as often as I can because it is a terrific place to meet people, listen to interesting seminars, and learn what is going on in politics and civil society. You can literally not walk down a street without meeting a politician, TV-personality, journalist or otherwise know person. And with a few exceptions (like the prime minister) it is possible to just walk up to any politician to talk about issues that you want to discuss. So why am I painting this colorful picture of Almedalen for you? Well, because it is a place where all important issues are discussed. This year there are 3 500 open seminars for the public. For a potential audience to have a chance to orient themselves there is a list of all the seminars on a webpage on the internet, and it is also possible to search for specific topics. Since I am going tomorrow, I have done so and this is what I have learnt so far. There are 7 seminars about migration. Integration is talked about during 38 seminars. 12 events will bring up the topic of elderly care and 32 seminars deal with the issue of elderly. Exactly 0 seminars deal with the issue of elderly migrants. Friends, I know it is summer – but we still have work to do!

Jenny Malmsten, chairman of ENIEC



Jade project

Dialogue and Participation: Jade-project Promotes the Holistic Wellbeing of Ageing Somali Women in Helsinki

There is a lot of talk about the Somalis in Finland. Still, no one really knows or hears about the ageing persons. Jade-project works with ageing Somali women and promotes their holistic wellbeing through dialogue and participative methods. After a year of activities, we have reached nearly 50 women with whom we have seen a new world of opportunities rise.

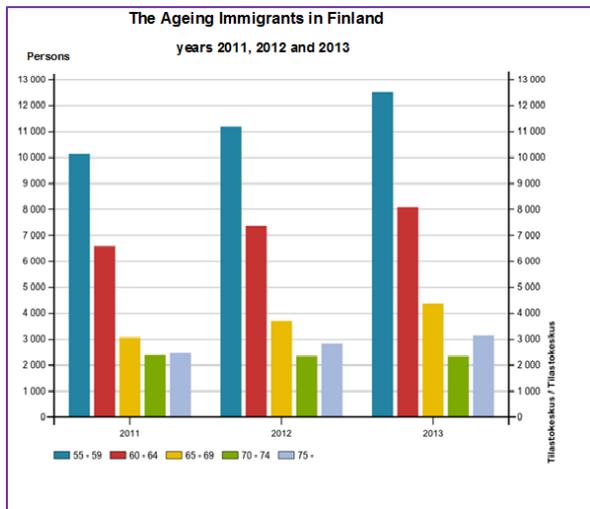
Finland: Immigration and Ageing

The number of ageing immigrants in Finland is relatively low in comparison with other European countries. Generally, immigration is regarded as a recent phenomenon, originated in the 1970s. Although the roots go further than that, the net migration started to grow only in the 2000s.

The growth of immigrant population led onto a reshaping of national integration policies and new Integration Law was introduced in 2011. The law recognises the diversity of foreign-born population and includes mentions to the so-called vulnerable groups: people with special needs, the ageing and women and children in difficult situations. Regardless, the ageing have remained largely invisible in the immigration debates and the municipal strategies and programmes include very few mentions to them.

The Russian-speakers make the largest group of the ageing immigrants, followed by the Estonians and Swedish-speakers. Over the past few years, the share of the non-Europeans, however, has grown rapidly. In eight years' time, the number of Somalis of 50 years and older has more than doubled and a similar trend can be seen amongst certain Asian groups. This growth can be seen reflected in the statistics, *see below*, in a notable increase of the 55–59 year olds. The reality is that

Finland's ageing population is becoming more and more diverse. The elderly services in the country are not designed for it.



Jade: Holistic well-being for ageing Somali women

Jade-project is a three year innovation project, based in Helsinki and funded by the Finnish Slot Machine Association (RAY 2013–2015). It is part of a national program *Active Age – Never Mind the Years* which aims to improve the psycho-social wellbeing of the ageing. Jade is administered by a small social NGO *Kantti ry*, whose activities for ageing Somali women since several years form its basis. The project is directed at African women of 50 years and older and it aims to improve their holistic wellbeing and integration, as well as to increase the awareness of culturally-sensitive elderly care. At the moment, all Jade's 46 participants are Somalian, the largest group of Africans in the country.

At the core of the project is direct customer work. We organize four weekly groups: exercise groups, Somali-speaking conversation and wellbeing group, Finnish language and Mathematics. Since the beginning, it has been important for us to include the participants in the design process of our activities. This way we have ensured that we offer services that are beneficial for them, whilst we have had the chance to learn more about their interests and needs.

Over the past year we have talked about stress and trauma, gone swimming, tried out different exercises, celebrated Women's Day and the Finnish Independence Day with Kantti's Finnish-speaking residents. We have also gone fishing, which for the most has been the first time in their lives. At the moment, we are designing an exhibition for coming November, in which the women are showcasing their dearest memories. After only one year, we have noticed the initiative and responsibility of the women rise. They have also grown more eager to try out new things.

The other side to Jade's participatory approach has been to seek recognition for the women's voices and needs. By increasing the visibility of ageing immigrant women, we aim to raise awareness about challenges related to the increasingly diverse ageing population in Finland and its uniqueness. We have encouraged dialogue between service providers, municipal workers, researchers and students with Jade participants, project workers and our collaborators. So doing, we have aimed to lower the threshold for the current and future service providers to pay notice to the needs of the ageing immigrants.

Final thoughts on participation, agency and accessibility

In Finland, you rarely hear talk about the ageing Somali women. The times you do, they tend to be surrogated into a position of victimhood and passivity. It is true that many feel invisible and expendable. Others have expressed feelings of anxiety and stress in their new home country. All of them feel homesick, even if they acknowledge that the life they desire doesn't exist in Somalia. Yet, Jade participants are active and motivated women. Often the efforts are cut by barriers in the service system. The feelings of inadequateness are connected with low Finnish language skills, as it increases their dependency on others. Many times they are simply not listened to or valued as individuals. They are users but not part of the societal services, designed for the

young and the abled. Yet, they rarely complain.

As a project, we struggle with the *how* to talk about these issues. We don't want to concentrate on the negative, as we consider it crucial to emphasize the agency. Still, it is important to address the issues that affect the wellbeing of Jade's participants and so many others in a similar position. You can hear these women sing "*Hanoolaato Somalia, hanoolaato Finland*" (*viva Somalia, viva Finland*). They want to make it their home here, and they deserve to have their voices heard and their rights respected.

Hanna Rantala

Getting started with financial problems



Photo: Robert de Hartogh

Getting Started with financial problems of older (migrant) women. Right now!

At the NOOM association more signals came in that older migrant women cannot manage their finances themselves and have to deal with a growing poverty. Sometimes they even cannot withdraw money.

For this cause a manual was developed for local groups on how to address these issues to the policymakers. It turns out that it is very important to let the older women speak for themselves.

A round table discussion with politicians and policy makers may therefore be a good way to bring these problems under their attention. Because the women themselves indicate that they would like to tell what problems they run into!

In response to the crisis, more and more communities actively work on a fine policy on poverty. But the question here is whether municipalities also have the position of older (migrant) women on their agenda. This group is likely to get an accumulation of additional financial cuts.

As a sequel to a previous project of NOOM, to create miracles with little money (in which older women themselves experience and exchanged tips) FNV Woman and NOOM deployed a follow-up. In November 2013, they organized three regional meetings with women who work professionally or as a volunteer with older women. Together, they identified the issues and formulated a number of practical solutions.

Based on these meetings FNV Women NOOM made recommendations for municipalities, institutions and self-help organizations. A handy targets-card was drawn. In addition, a manual was designed full of tips and ideas how local groups can go to work. For example by means of a round table discussion.

A few of the recommendations:

- Provide consultation hours at easily accessible locations neighbourhood, where older women can go for information, if necessary, in their own language. Also facilitate self-help organizations to do this.
- Facilitate education and training for volunteers who are familiar with the various communities, including key figures.
- Support initiatives of organizations to learn older women to manage their finances and administration themselves. Help them to increase their knowledge about withdrawing money out of payment terminals, internet banking and finding information about financial arrangements.

Margôt Scholten

Expositions

Two Expositions in Belgium about older migrants

In the museum MAS in Antwerp, a beautiful Belgian city, you are able to visit a small and interesting exposition about Turkish and Moroccan people who went in the 60s and 70s to Belgium to work. You can admire their amazing stories. So if you like to visit a city with a lot of charm and nice cafes and also want to see something about older migrants? Come to Antwerp!
<http://www.atlas-antwerpen.be/programma/50jaarmigratie>

But also another great Belgian city offers an exposition about older migrants! In Gent (Ghent) you can visit MIAT (till January 2015). Maybe you can combine a visit to these cities during the summer??
<http://www.miat.gent.be/nl/activiteiten/tijdelijke-expos/expo-straffe-gasten-50-jaar-arbeidsmigratie>



Reports/articles

Three interesting reports/articles to read while having vacation!

1. NARI

The National ageing research institute (NARI) of Australia published a couple of years ago an interesting report about the memory of Asian older migrants who live in Australia.
http://www.mednwh.unimelb.edu.au/nari_research/pdf_docs/Literature-Review-1Aug2011.pdf

2. Mental health of the ageing immigrant population: This article concerns the mental health of older people who have moved from their country of birth – the older immigrant population
<http://apt.rcpsych.org/content/9/1/31.full>

3. Is Dementia Differentially Distributed? A Study on the Prevalence of Dementia in Migrant, Urban, Rural, and Tribal Elderly Population of Himalayan Region in Northern India. An article from India, far away but very interesting!
<http://www.najms.org/article.asp?issn=1947-22714;year=2014;volume=6;issue=4;spage=172;epage=177;aulast=Raina>



Interesting sites/reports

Four interesting sites/reports about Ageing Worldwide

Global AgeWatch Index

How are older people faring?

Population ageing is transforming economies and societies across the world. The Global AgeWatch Index ranks countries by how well their ageing populations are faring.

It is based on four domains that are key enablers of older people's wellbeing: income, health, employment and education, and enabling environment.

Find out more about the [Global AgeWatch Index](#) and where your country is in the ranking!

World Population Ageing 2013

In the area of *population ageing*, the *Population Division* prepares a national, regional and global overview. This report is the fourth in the series *World Population Ageing*

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WorldPopulationAgeing2013.pdf>

The Pension & Development Network

This network specializes in the development of micro pension products. Since 2008 the Pension & Development Network has worked with some of the leading Dutch financial institutions to use their expert knowledge to enrol micro pensions in developing countries.
<http://www.pensiondevelopment.org/>

10 facts on ageing and the life course

The ageing of the world's population - in developing and developed countries - is an indicator of improving global health. The world's population of people 60 years of age and older has doubled since 1980 and is forecast to reach 2 billion by 2050. This is a cause for celebration. Older people make important contributions to society as family members, volunteers and as active participants in the workforce. The wisdom they have gained through life experience makes them a vital social resource.

However, along with these benefits come special health challenges for the 21st century. It is important to prepare health providers and societies to meet the specific needs of older populations. This includes training for health professionals on old-age care; preventing and managing age-associated chronic diseases; designing sustainable policies on long-term and palliative care; and developing age-friendly services and settings.

http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/ageing/ageing_facts/en/

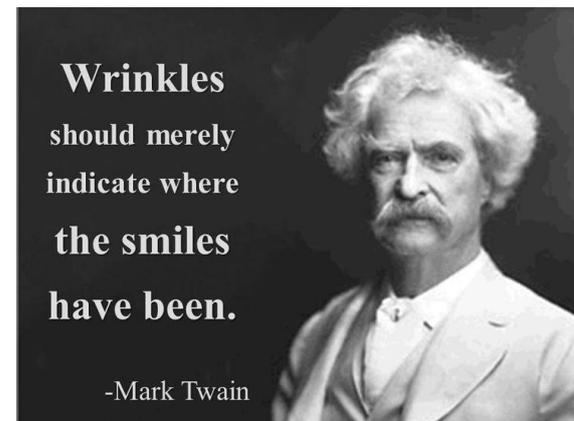
Conference

Conference about cross cultural aspects of dementia

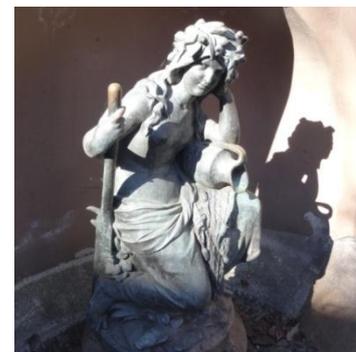
At the 10th of October, an interesting conference will take place in Amsterdam about cross cultural aspects of dementia. Like we have heard in Oslo it is extremely important to have good and suited screening of dementia. The conference gives a lot of information about this topic. There will be plenary sessions but also workshops. More information:

<http://www.cursussencongressen.nl/bijeenkomst/congres-cross-culturele-aspecten-van-dementie-1409.html>

Quote of the month



Oslo - art



Presentation of an ENIEC member



Alina Athamo

Hello brothers and sisters, hello ENIEC-family! I hope everybody is doing fine and enjoys summer vacation. Thanks, Cobie, for your invitation and for the chance to introduce myself to all of you.

A few words about myself:

More than 20 years ago I moved from Russia to Finland, from St. Petersburg to Jyväskylä. I had graduated from St. Petersburg State University of Cinema and Television I could not find work where I could use my professional skills permanently. Once I was invited to lead a project for young immigrants in a media-workshop ...and that was the beginning of my project career. Thus, since 1999 I have been working in NGOs in the same city, Jyväskylä, with immigrants of different ages and backgrounds, from different cultures, and the last 9 years especially with elderly people. During the last 6 years I have been working in my "own" NGO (Monikko ry), which was founded in 2008. Its aim is to bring together people of different ages and cultural backgrounds in

the Jyväskylä region. More information → www.monikkoyhdistys.com.

In our organization we have the project Paloma for elderly immigrants, and the idea is to create a permanent model for promoting the well-being of ageing immigrants and preventing social exclusion. The model is developed primarily in cooperation with the network of the municipal services for the elderly, and other local institutions. In Paloma-project we have the elderly people mostly from Russia and former SU, Afghanistan, Iran, Burma, Congo. By the way due to local official statistics at that moment in our city the elderly immigrants speak on 35 languages...I like my work and I do my best to develop Monikko organization forward. We hope to find in ENIEC- family good partners for cooperation work with some common interests and areas, for example 'elderly- exchange', cultural or sports event for the elderly people. Is it possible? All suggestions are welcomed.

Relation to ENIEC:

The first time I have heard about ENIEC was from Hilikka Linderborg in 2008 at the national seminar of elderly immigrants in Helsinki, organized by The Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged. I was interested in it but in that moment I was so busy with organizing and developing of my own association on a local level in Jyväskylä. In 2011 collaboration work with Eva Rönkkö reminded me about ENIEC again. Thank you, Eva! The first meeting with big ENIEC- family was in Brussels, and the second- in Oslo. Both were great!

Thoughts about ENIEC:

The international ENIEC- family is really big, and has sympathetic 'relatives' in many countries. Forgive me if I still I don't remember all the names of the family members, and some people are still waiting for my messages. I promise that I will do my best! But truly, I like the idea of the organization, the international collaboration work for developing together new ways for helping elderly immigrants and how to support our network and how

to effect positives changes at all. And of course to be the part of ENIEC- family is great honour and pleasure.

Something about your personal situation:

I like an active style of life and want to change many things in our everyday- life in better way. I participate in different civic activities, sports and cultural activities on both national and international level. Last month, 12-15.6 I participated in the 6th IWG world conference on women and sport in Helsinki "Lead the change be the change". More than one thousand participants from the 95 countries! We had a great time!

Also I have a family- lovely husband, 2 smart grown-up children and 2 pretty cats. I divide my time like this: 50%- for family, relatives and friends, 45%- for work, network and studies. The rest time is for the rest, of course for travelling.

Have you been to the Annual Meeting in Oslo?

In Oslo I liked everything from the beginning to the end.

Where will you be in April 2015?

Hopefully with you, ENIEC family!

Invitation:

I would like to pass on the word as next month's profile to the ENIEC member from the country of our next annual meeting in 2015.



Summer

The editors wish you all very nice and sunny summer holidays



www.eniec.eu

Join the ENIEC **LinkedIn** group, become a follower of @ENIEC on **Twitter** and join the ENIEC group on **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/59752467020/>



When can you expect the ENIEC newsletter?

Around the: 28th of September 2014

Deadlines:

Before the 15th of the month that the newsletter will be there, all input should be sent to the editors.

Who are the editors:

Maria Dolores Casal - Sanchez

mcs445@nyu.edu

Margôt Scholten

margot@smc2.nl

Yvonne Witter

y.witter@kcwz.nl

Layout: Cobie Schippers

c.schippers@ggzingest.nl