Brief for the Compendium

Summary

In celebration of International Women’s Day, the ILC-UK is producing a Compendium of Essays, entitled: Ageing and Women: Has the sisterhood forgotten older women?

The Compendium will be launched at a special afternoon tea in the House of Lords, to which all contributors will be invited to attend on 7th March, alongside guest speakers.

We are requesting contributions from selected organisations and individuals from academia, industry, politics, the voluntary sector and wider civil society who have a passion and expertise in this field.

Contributions should be in the form of short essays/think pieces, and be from 700 to 1000 words. All authors and their organisation will be credited in the Compendium and any associated publicity and promotional material.

Context

Every year on March 8th, actions, initiatives and events across the globe are held as part of International Women’s Day to promote and recognise the contribution of women alongside observing and highlighting inequalities and associated issues.

While it is widely acknowledged that the world is ageing, the intersection of age with gender has been historically ignored. We feel, as an organisation with a strong history of equality and human rights, it is important to highlight this issue and look to support this global endeavour.

Invariably women and men, as they age, share many of the same fundamental needs. Nevertheless, as is acknowledged in many parts of the world, older women are not only subject to specific challenges, but also critically, make significant contributions to their family, communities and wider society that are often overlooked.

Furthermore it has been recently argued feminism has tended to neglect the subject of older women and has been more focused on advancing the rights of younger women. Some commentators have argued that we are witnessing a ‘feminist generational divide’, with older women either at best ignored or at worst pitched against the younger generation. As women are living longer than men, we would like to frame the Compendium by asking if it is time the sisterhood refocused its efforts and energies and at what point do women become invisible to society?
Structure and themes for the Compendium

_In celebration of International Women’s Day, the ILC-UK is producing a Compendium of Essays, entitled: Ageing and Women: Has the sisterhood forgotten older women?_

The overarching aim of the Compendium will be to highlight some of the inequalities, discrimination and challenges older women face both at the UK and International level, but also to pay tribute to their contribution to their families and communities.

The Compendium will be framed in the context of:

(i) Has feminism overlooked the older generation in favour of the younger generation?

(ii) At what age do women become invisible?

The preface will discuss these questions in more detail, but feel free to consider these points in the essays/think pieces.

We do not intend to be prescriptive with regard to contributions, however below are some themes that may stimulate some ideas.

*Older women and public life* – How do older women negotiate public life and how can we challenge reductive conceptions of older age and older women, is it a ‘double jeopardy’?

*Older women, identity and intimacy* - Intimacy is a basic human need that is intrinsic to an individual’s sense of self and wellbeing and sustains throughout the life course. Regardless of age, individuals require companionship, intimacy and love and yet for older people this intrinsic right is often denied, ignored or stigmatised. At what point are women no longer considered sexual beings and why? What is the role of public discourse?

*Older women and health* – Paradoxically while women are living longer they are not necessarily enjoying a ‘healthier’ life, older women face unique health issues, for example, osteoporosis, breast cancer and diabetes occur more often in older women than in younger women. Lung cancers cause the greatest number of cancer-related deaths in women, followed by breast cancer, then colon cancer. This essay could consider if gender should be included as a key health determinant in disease prevention?

*Older women and caring* – Gender differences in the sphere of unpaid care are well attested, with family care often considered a euphemism for female care. What is the real cost of caring for women, to what extent are carers a forgotten and invisible workforce and will demographic and societal threats, particularly in developing countries, imply a dramatic shortfall in care provision?

*Older women and widowhood* – The loss of a life partner is a catastrophic event regardless of gender, leading to a loss of emotional and social support. However for women, as a result of gendered labour market experiences, widowhood can also lead to the loss of income and material wealth generally not experienced to the same extent by male widowers. How does society support women in this time of prolonged crisis? Who will speak-up for older widows to ensure that the loss of a partner does not needlessly lead to a loss of independence among older widows themselves?
Practical considerations/Style guide:

*The word count should be no more than 1000 words and no fewer than 700 words (however on request, we can be flexible).

*Please use the Oxford referencing system so use footnotes to present referencing information at the foot of each page of text. A footnote should contain the following information, with the title of the book or work in italics and all other text in normal font: Author initial and surname, Title, publisher name, place of publication, date, page number. For example: J.M. Coetzee, Life and Times of Michael K, Vintage, London, 1998, p.47

*The deadline is 22nd February, 2013, this is to ensure we have time to format and design the Compendium ahead of the House of Lords launch on the 7th March.

*The audience for this Compendium will be for a policy and public audience, so it should be accessible but at the same time, informative, thought provoking, ideally challenging and can offer solutions/recommendations.

*The essays provide an opportunity to reach a wide variety of different stakeholders and the Compendium will be distributed to over 6000 stakeholders from the academic, public, private and voluntary sector. Authors will also be acknowledged in all associated publicity material.

*Authors are requested to provide a very short biography of themselves/organisations of no more than four lines to sit alongside their essay.

*Essays can include charts, tables and case studies, if appropriate.

*Due to time constraints, we will only be making minor amendments/proofing please send all essays as a final copy, we are however happy to liaise with authors individually and answer any questions/provide assistance.

*ILC-UK reserves the right not to publish the think piece if the material is inappropriate.

Please find at the bottom of this document some links to writing that may provide some ideas in terms of style and tone. While we do not want to be prescriptive in terms of individual writing styles, ultimately the collection needs to make sense as a Compendium.

*http://blog.ilcuk.org.uk/2011/02/21/is-asking-for-experience-tantamount-to-ageism/

*http://blog.ilcuk.org.uk/2009/10/11/%e2%80%9cmost-people-are-other-people%e2%80%9d-oscar-wilde/


*We would welcome further discussion on potential themes. Additionally, if you have any queries, please contact Jessica Watson info@ilcuk.org.uk.