

What does Education for Sustainability have to do with Ageing/Gerontology?

"We live in a rapidly ageing world. In the UK alone, more than 1,500 people celebrate their 65th birthday every day. There are currently 90 million older people living in India. By 2030, the number will have increased to almost 200 million.

- How can we ensure that years added to lifespan are active and healthy?
- How may our built environment be adapted to the needs of older people?
- How do we harness potential in later life?
- How can poor countries provide for older people without sacrificing economic growth?"

<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/ageing/>

Global ageing and climate change are two of the fundamental challenges and opportunities of our time. Topic areas of relevance to sustainability already in the Ageing/Gerontology curriculum include:

- **Poverty:** Many older people are among the poorest, often living in the most ecologically depleted and environmentally risky areas with young dependents.
 - social protection & extending existing social protection floors to climate adaptation
 - Resource poverty: older people are at risk of being energy poor (and associated health risks) due to their low income and increased need for fuel as we move to a post-peak oil world; water poverty; food poverty
 - Rapid increase in ageing populations in developing nations (where 60% of older people live) – what are the challenges to achieving sustainable economies, societies and environment poverty in the poorest countries?
 - financial crisis and the need to work longer
- **Population:** understanding population change; human rights; family relations in an ageing population; social, economic, environmental and political implications of ageing populations; ageing in a multi-racial and multi-ethnic society; social inclusion; inter-generational relations
- **Inequalities:** in health and the use of health care services in later life; gender differences in pension protection; increased vulnerability of older generations; pension protection for minority ethnic groups; resilience to crises
- **Health & well-being:** social policy and welfare; discrimination and exclusion; accessibility – housing and transport design; trends in health, disease and longevity; impact of health & disease over the lifecycle; impact of HIV/AIDS on older people's families and communities
- **Participation:** the role of older people in families and communities as leaders, consumers, workers, educators, business people, health providers and knowledge holders
- **Globalisation:** providing for older generations without sacrificing economic growth; changing labour markets; demographic change and impact on older people, families, societies; workforce migration, increased caregiving by older generations and the impact of displacement on more vulnerable populations

Key skills for social scientists which sustainability teaching cultivates: interdisciplinarity; informed decision-making; ethics in research; synthesis of different opinions, theory and data; oral and written communication; critical thinking; problem-based learning.

Find out more: Contact Julia Kendal (j.kendal@soton.ac.uk) for more information including case studies on teaching sustainability in this area.