

2009 VISITOR PROGRAMME ANNOUNCEMENT



It is with great pleasure that we can announce that Professor Alan Walker has accepted our invitation to be the 2009 Visiting Fellow to NZiRA. His visit to New Zealand will take place in October (5th-23rd), 2009. We formally acknowledge the generous funding assistance from the Victoria University of Wellington Foundation which supports this invitation.

During his visit, Prof Walker will give the opening Keynote address to the 2009 Conference of the New Zealand Association of Gerontology and Age Concern New Zealand.

In addition to his role as Director of the UK New Dynamics of Ageing Research Project, Prof Walker has global status in the field of research in ageing, as Director of the European Research Area in Ageing, and as an advisor to the UN on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and WHO on active ageing. He hopes to share as much of this experience as possible with New Zealand researchers at all stages of their careers.

In accepting our invitation, Prof Walker has written:

“As well as directing the UK's largest ever research programme on ageing, I bring a European and global perspective. Equally, I am coming to NZ to learn from colleagues about their research priorities and NZ examples of good practice in research and policy making. Ultimately I hope that the visit will have mutual benefits and will start longer term collaborations with UK and other European researchers in this field. Ageing is a global phenomenon and we need international research collaboration if we are to produce the best evidence for policy and practice aimed at successful adjustment to this historically unique development.”

Professor Alan Walker, University of Sheffield, England.

Professor Alan Walker
(BA, DLitt, Hon. D.Soc.Sc. (HKBU), FRSA, AcSS)
Professor of Social Policy and Social Gerontology
Director of the New Dynamics of Ageing Programme



Academic Profile

Dr Alan Walker joined the University of Sheffield in 1977. He directed the £3.5 million ESRC Growing Older Programme, 1999-2004, and the UK National Collaboration on Ageing Research, 2001-2004. He is currently Director of the £20 million ESRC, EPSRC, BBSRC, MRC and AHRC New Dynamics of Ageing Programme and is also Director of the European Research Area in Ageing and is spending most of his time on research.

Research

His research interests span a wide range in social analysis, social policy and social planning. He Chairs the European Foundation on Social Quality, which is based in Amsterdam. He currently directs the New Dynamics of Ageing Research Programme funded by five UK Research Councils. He has published more than 20 books, over 200 reports and more than 300 papers in scholarly journals and edited volumes; his work has been published in more than 20 languages. He is a founding Academician of the Academy for Learned Societies in the Social Sciences. He has been active in the UK voluntary sector for many years and co-founded the Disability Alliance in 1974, and is currently Patron of the National Pensioner's Convention.

A SELECTION OF MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

Walker, A. (2006) (ed.) *Understanding Quality of Life in Old Age*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Walker, A. (2005) (ed.) *Growing Older in Europe*, Maidenhead, Open University Press / McGraw Hill.

Walker, A. (2005) (ed.) *Understanding Quality of Life in Old Age*, Maidenhead, Open University Press/McGraw Hill.

Walker, A. and Hagan Hennessy, C. (2004) (eds) *Growing Older - Quality of Life in Old Age*, Maidenhead, Open University Press/McGraw Hill.

Research Topics

QUALITY OF LATER LIFE

Director of the ESRC Growing Older Research Programme on Extending Quality Life (1999-2004).

The twin objectives of the programme were to establish a broad-based multidisciplinary and co-ordinated research programme designed to generate new knowledge on the extension of quality life; and to contribute to the development of policies and practices in the field and, thereby, help to extend quality life. The research topics covered by the programme were defining and measuring quality of life; inequalities in quality of life, the role of technology and the built environment, healthy and productive ageing, family and support networks and participation and activity in later life.

DEVELOPING MULTI-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ON AGEING

Director of the New Dynamics of Ageing Research Programme (2005-2012)

This multi-disciplinary research programme is sponsored by the ESRC, EPSRC, BBSRC, MRC and AHRC. For further information see <http://www.newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/>

DEVELOPING EUROPEAN COLLABORATION IN AGEING RESEARCH

Director of the European Forum on Population Ageing Research (2002-2004)

For further information see <http://www.ageingresearch.group.shef.ac.uk/>

Director of the European Research Area in Ageing (2004 - 2008)

For further information see <http://era-age.group.shef.ac.uk/>

Director of the UK National Collaboration on Ageing Research (2000-2004)

The objectives of the NCAR were to stimulate new multi-disciplinary research groups in the field of ageing; to develop a new cross-Research Council approach to research on ageing with an explicit interdisciplinary theme; to encourage stronger links between research and policy and practice in the ageing field; and to develop the European dimension of ageing research in the UK.

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON SOCIAL POLICY IN EUROPE

This mainly focusses on the welfare regimes of the Member States of the European Union and the social policy competencies of the European Commission. Convenor of the European Social Policy Research Network has been formed under the European Sociological Association and co-founder of ESPAnet.

DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING THE CONCEPT OF 'SOCIAL QUALITY'

This is designed to provide an independent rationale for social policy in Europe. The concept comprises social inclusion/exclusion, social cohesion/anomie, socio-economic security/insecurity, and social empowerment/subordination. A European Foundation exists to co-ordinate this work, with members in all EU countries and with links to the European Commission. Prof Walker is Chair of this European Foundation on Social Quality which is based in Amsterdam. For further information see <http://www.socialquality.org>

SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY

This research covers a broad field and includes theoretical work on the social construction of old age and the relationship between ageing and welfare/social policy; empirical research on the social relationships of old age, attitudes towards ageing and socio-economic security in old age; policy evaluations in the areas of pensions and long term care and comparative research on the impact of societal ageing in both Europe and East Asia and the politics of old age.

AGE AND EMPLOYMENT

This research covers the impact of ageing workforces, age discrimination in the labour market, labour market policies on older workers, employers' responses to workforce ageing and good practice in the employment of older workers. He was responsible for the first European research of actions to overcome age barriers in employment, covering seven EU countries and co-led the development of a European Code of Good Practice on age and employment.

CHINESE AND EAST ASIAN WELFARE

This is a long-standing interest of Prof Walker's in the welfare systems of East Asia and China, through his work with many PhD students from Hong Kong, China, Japan and Taiwan, researching the Confucian, family oriented, ideology, and comparative work on models of welfare east and west.

EMPOWERMENT

This research is largely subsumed under that on social quality and social gerontology but also includes a general interest in ideas of empowerment and the mechanisms by which citizens can be involved actively in decision making and research.

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

As well as general interests in social policy and ageing I have a specific interest in relations between the generations both at a macro level (the social contract) and, at a micro level, within families.

New Dynamics of Ageing website:

<http://www.newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/>

ERA-AGE website: <http://era-age.group.shef.ac.uk/>

Growing Older Programme:

<http://www.growingolder.group.shef.ac.uk/index.htm>

European Forum website:

<http://www.ageingresearch.group.shef.ac.uk/>

Department of Sociological Studies web site:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/socstudies/>

New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing www.victoria.ac.nz/nzira

New Zealand Association of Gerontology www.gerontology.org.nz

Age Concern New Zealand www.ageconcern.org.nz/

NZAG Conference 2009: www.confer.co.nz/ageing2009