

Here in the Northern hemisphere it is supposed to be summer and yet many parts of Europe have seen unseasonably poor weather. Throughout parts of Italy, Spain, Germany and Greece there have been storm force winds and hail stones the size of golf balls.

Alternatively temperatures have soared into the forties causing morbidity and mortality. It is often said that we cannot control the weather, but our life style has certainly affected it.

Whether you believe in global warming or not most countries agree that we have to take more care of our environment.

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) highlight three distinct aims for the environment:

Protecting the Planet (Goal 13)  
Life Below Water (Goal 14) and  
Life on Land (Goal 15).

In addition they relate to Clean Water & Sanitation (6), Clean Energy (7) and Responsible Consumption (12).

If we can achieve these we will have a direct effect on food production, reduce poverty and inequalities and improve health.

This is something we can all work towards by reducing our own carbon footprints, avoiding plastics and non-biodegradable materials and by reusing and recycling as much as we can.



Reducing waste and disposing of it responsibly protects our environment and many species of wildlife so although we may be tired of hearing about the SDGs they do make a lot of sense.

Our Programme areas aim to support women and girls, poverty, hunger, ill health and education are our main concerns, but if we do not look after the environment it is the women and girls who suffer most, so let's do something about it.

**Barbara Dixon**  
Programme Director

## Elder Abuse

The [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#) is over but our focus on it must remain. The UN General Assembly has allotted 15th June as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a day that hopefully countries and communities will turn their attention to this rather overlooked aspect.

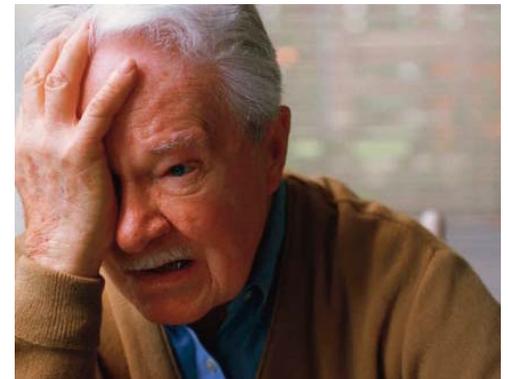


SI Enniskillen & District held a talk at their meeting on Elder Abuse. It made interesting reading and I was all admiration for them for taking up this often neglected and underdiagnosed area. The talk was an effort to raise awareness as also to educate the members on a subject that has been low in the priority of government.

So why do elders get left behind? Does not the UN urge us to recall that a central principle of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) is to "ensure that no one is left behind" and to "reach the furthest behind first"? Is it not a violation of human rights to ignore, neglect or abuse a group of humans on the basis of their age?

[WHO](#) (World Health Organisation) in its reports on ageing has written, "Populations around the world are rapidly ageing. Ageing presents both challenges and opportunities. It will increase demand for primary health care and long-term care, require a larger and better trained workforce and intensify the need for environments to be made more age-friendly."

All types of elder abuse can have an impact on the health and wellbeing of the older person. What really is Elder Abuse? Various agencies define it broadly as any form of mistreatment that results in harm or loss to an older person. A breach of trust in a relationship which is otherwise based on an expectation of trust. It is generally divided into six categories: physical, sexual, financial, psychological, neglect and domestic violence. Studies carried out in eight different countries under the auspices of the WHO, reflect a varying pattern of abuse, a lot of it steeped in traditions, culture and local leanings-which make change a challenge.



Victims of abuse have been shown to have shorter expectancies than non-abused older people.

The personal losses associated with abuse can be devastating and include the loss of independence, homes, life savings, health, dignity, and security. With the aging of today's population, there is the potential that elder abuse will increase unless it is more comprehensively recognised and addressed.

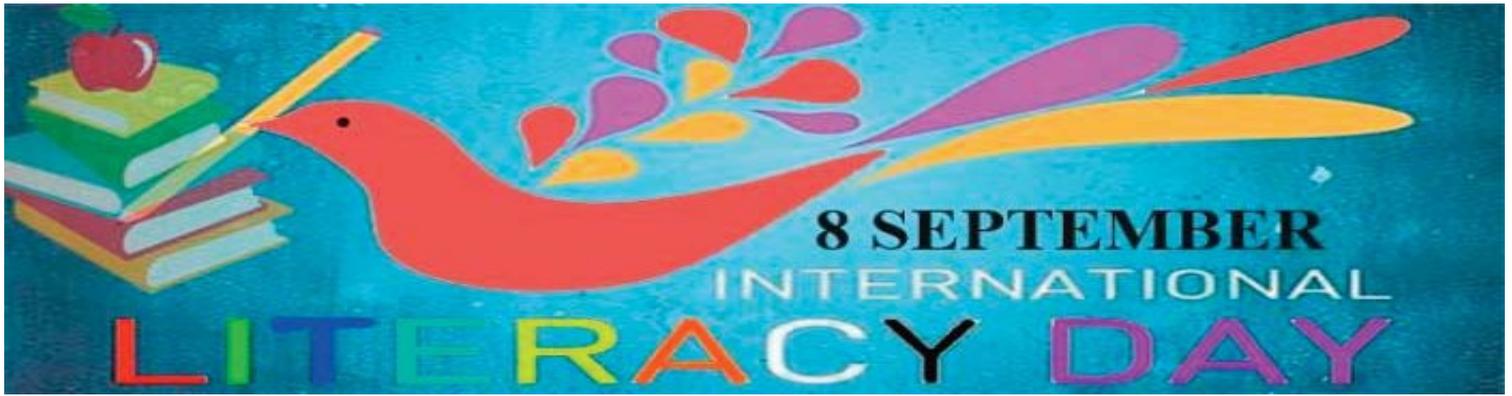


It is heartening to know that several clubs have structured their projects to some manner

of support for elders - whether it is knitting mittens, singing Christmas carols, reading to them, or having bridge sessions, tea parties and much more. This is a concern that Soroptimists have extended to elders in their communities - and by next World Elder Abuse Awareness, figures should reflect a change.

**Nisha Ghosh - APD Violence & Conflict Resolution**

International Literacy Day



In 1965, [UNESCO](#) proclaimed 8th September as [International Literacy Day](#). Its aim is to highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and societies. On International Literacy Day each year, UNESCO reminds the international community of the status of literacy and adult learning globally. Celebrations take place around the world. Soroptimists world-wide mark this day with book sales to raise money for [Book Aid](#) and even give away books which clubs have collected throughout the year to share the enjoyment of reading.

There are an estimated 775 million adults who lack minimum literacy skills; one in five adults is still not literate - two thirds of them women; over 60 million children do not attend school and many more attend irregularly or drop out. Research has found a link between illiteracy and countries in severe poverty, and between illiteracy and prejudice against women. Although great strides have been made to improve literacy at primary level worldwide, there is still a long way to go to meet [Sustainable Development Goal 4](#) by 2030.



UNESCO's 2017/18 [Global Education Monitoring](#) (GEM) report, this year's theme is *Accountability in Education*, will be published on 24th October. This second GEM report series will continue its assessment of progress towards the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) on Education (SDG4) as well as other related education targets in the SDG agenda. The report will also investigate accountability-related issues in education, analysing how all relevant actors – the international community, government, teachers, schools, parents, students, civil society and businesses – can provide education more effectively, efficiently and equitably and address global commitments to SDG4. You can register now to receive an [e-version of this report](#).

Can technology help to improve literacy? I came across an innovative project with the potential to end illiteracy. Project Literacy's [Worldreader](#) programme provides digital books to children and families in the developing world. The organisation uses e-readers, mobile phones and other digital technology to reach readers in 69 countries, providing them with over 28,500 book titles in 43 languages.

Worldreader created its [Open Library](#) to provide a single place for people everywhere to discover, read, and collect free e-books in a variety of languages, from different parts of the world. The Open Library provides storybooks to read to children, access to textbooks to help students with assignments, as well as giving people access to important health information. Worldreader's mobile reading app is available on any internet-enabled mobile phone, including on the simplest feature phones. You can find out more about this project by accessing Worldreader's 2016 [Annual Report](#).

I was touched by one highlight from their 2016 Annual Report, "We launched *Anasoma*, a research project that seeks to understand how books can empower women and how we can encourage more women to read using their mobile phones".

Jan Hemlin - Acting APD Education

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