

# Gray Panthers: Essential Advocates for UN's Global Development Goals

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The dedication of Gray Panthers may affect 800 million people over the age of 60 throughout the world. Gray Panthers are key players to assure the inclusion of the term 'older persons' in the UN's proposed "Sustainable Development Goals", which will influence the direction of future global development efforts.

Gray Panther leaders, Jack Kupferman and Frances Zainoeddin, are part of the team spearheading advocacy efforts for older persons in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We can count initial success as older persons are now explicitly mentioned several times in the first [formal draft of the SDG's and the associated targets](#). Yet, this is just the first step in the negotiation and adoption of these important goals.

With sheer dedication, the Stakeholder Group on Ageing (which includes [Gray Panthers](#)), proposed goals that assure the UN will collect data, disaggregated by age, for those over 60. These are all important triumphs; but it goes to show that many crucial topics have yet to be acknowledged. You will be sure to see further action by Gray Panthers in the future.



The work on the SDG's is an amazing accomplishment for the ageing community and for people growing older everywhere. However, Gray Panthers' work does not stop here. On August first, 2014, the [United Nation's Open Ended Working Group on Ageing](#) finished its fifth session. Gray Panthers was asked to provide inputs on several occasions, including the formal statement crafted by Frances Zainoeddin. Jack Kupferman frequently spoke on the importance of creating a legally binding human rights instrument to protect older persons globally.

The international efforts of Gray Panthers have been tremendous. Other projects include the beginning of a database to identify organizations that deal with the needs of older persons internationally. A team of dedicated interns conducted vast extended research on 15 countries.

In June 2014, Mr. Kupferman's efforts continued, as he organized and led several symposia at the 12<sup>th</sup> Global Conference of the [International Federation on Ageing in Hyderabad, India](#), including bringing the benefits of microfinance lending opportunities to millions of older persons. In India, he made great international contacts and worked to further global partnerships. Back in New York, Kupferman has, for several years, been the coordinator of effective efforts to

reach individual diplomats at the United Nations in order to inform them of issues facing older persons and to provide advocacy tools on the important matters immediately before them.



Domestically, Gray Panthers NYC board member, Caroline Bernal-Silva's social media campaign, 100 Days of Happy Older People, is a great success. Daily, the [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages receive new followers and ageing advocates. Furthermore, Caroline Bernal Silva is the liaison of the Ageing Community to the UN's online platform - [The World We Want](#). She worked closely with the UN Development Programme to assure that a webpage addressing the concerns of older persons was included in that website. This work propels the movement to recognize the needs of older persons at the international level and their inclusion in other goals, such as the focus on gender equality, financial stability, lifelong learning, universal health care and others.

The commitment of Gray Panthers is inexhaustible. Small, strategic and tenacious Gray Panthers remain important supporters for older persons, domestically, internationally, and now virally!

Together with likeminded advocates, Gray Panthers as part of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing will work to ensure that the final version of the 2015 SDG framework includes explicit references of older persons and is adopted by all nations.

Gray Panthers persevere with tremendous volunteer efforts and successes, such as visits to the missions of the United Nations, the 100 Days of Happy Older People Campaign; the mapping of each nation's stated position on issues of importance to older persons; and academic research as to whether older persons may be subject to the death penalty in any nation. Additionally, led by HelpAge International, young Gray Panthers were instrumental in the planning and success of an important panel discussion- Transformative Human Development- at the UN on the development issues felt by both younger and older generations.

Gray Panthers further their involvement in many ways in the greater NYC area, such as research on the NYC rent subsidy program, (Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program), developing new ways to confront ageism from an intergenerational perspective, and attendance to the fracking rally on June 30th, 2014.



In partnership and through hard work, Gray Panthers impacts our local communities, as well as the world.