

ILC South Africa

History and scope

ILCSA was admitted to the ILC Global Alliance in June 2005. It is operated within The Albertina and Walter Sisulu Institute of Ageing in Africa (IAA) in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town. The IAA is a cross-disciplinary teaching, research, policy and clinical service organisation, with a focus on Geriatric Medicine, Geriatric Neurosciences, Psychogeriatrics and Gerontology. ILCSA is operated independently of the IAA, and has its own branding, thrusts and programmes, but shares IAA premises and facilities, and draws upon the IAA's financial and human resources. Dr Monica Ferreira is the honorary president and Dr Sebastiana Kalula is the director of ILCSA.

Website

ILCSA's website (www.ilcsa.uct.ac.za) is to be updated shortly. ILC partners will be invited to view the website for comprehensive descriptions of ILCSA programmes and activities noted below.

Programmes

During the period under review, ILCSA continued to operate two earlier core programmes; one earlier programme was transferred to the IAA, and a new programme and new projects were embarked on. Progress and projects under the programmes are as follows:

- *Supporting and Fostering the Functioning and Involvement of Contributive Elders (SUFFICE)*. ILCSA completed its activities under the SUFFICE project, which will be operated within the IAA forthwith. Drs Kalula and Petros are collaborating with Dr Barry Gurland and colleagues at Columbia University (NYC) on the project, which will have a strengthened focus on the impact of AIDS on the health of older carers.
- *Combatting elder abuse and fostering human rights*. Dr Ferreira continued to engage with scholars and agencies to advance knowledge and understanding of the problem, and policy action in South Africa. Dr Kalula worked with the South African Older Persons' Forum (SAOPF) which gives priority focus to the problem. Jill Adkins, a specialist in elder law, and human rights and ageing, engaged with ILCSA in several capacities in the broad area.
- *Supporting and empowering older persons affected by HIV/AIDS*. ILCSA continued to work with NGO partners (including Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS) in this field. ILCSA researcher George Petros completed a PhD dissertation on a related topic, and is preparing articles and policy briefs.

A new core programme established during the review period is:

- *Persons with dementia and their caregivers: Care and support needs, and responses.* The Memory Clinic operated by the IAA at Groote Schuur Hospital/University of Cape Town conducts studies among clinic clients and their caregivers. A dedicated programme will aim to meet the care and support needs of this population. In January, ILCSA convened a two-day workshop in conjunction with ILC Netherlands to develop a research proposal for funding, in which about 12 researchers, and several representatives of NGOs and government participated. Dr Hans Meij represented ILC Netherlands in the workshop. A proposal was submitted to the South African–Netherlands Programme for Alternatives in Development (SANPAD), which had funded the workshop, but was unsuccessful. The proposal will be submitted to other funding agencies.

Three additional research projects conducted under ILCSA programmes are:

- An investigation of the *feasibility of a government supported funeral insurance scheme for social pensioners*, who by implication are poor and uninsured, and vulnerable to exploitation by private sector operators in a society in which funerals are traditionally elaborate and costly. The study report was submitted to the national NGO South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID), which commissioned the research, and policy implications of the study outcome are being taken forward.
- An investigation, from a human rights approach, on *the practice of, need for, and alternatives to the use of physical restraints in hospitalised older patients* in the Western Cape, with an aim to inform policy and guide practice, and to enhance the quality of geriatric care. Data collection and capture are complete, and awaiting analysis.
- An investigation into *the prevalence and prevention of falls in older persons* in South Africa. Scant knowledge is available in this area, and neither dedicated programmes to manage and prevent falls. Dr Kalula participated in a workshop in Vancouver, Canada on falls in old age as a global problem, aimed at the development and piloting of a falls prevention curriculum. The training curriculum will be piloted in Cape Town, with South Africa chosen for being a developing country.

Output

ILCSA staff members published work fairly prolifically during the period, and new titles will be listed on the updated website shortly.

Events and activities

Notable events and activities in which ILCSA staff participated include:

- Engagement with ILCSA associates in the African Research on Ageing Network (AFRAN) and consortium partners to establish a regional training centre on ageing, in Nairobi, Kenya and supported by UNFPA.
- Dr Ferreira's convening and chairing of a special session on healthcare reform in the World Demographic and Ageing Forum's 6th Congress on Ageing and Generations, in St Gallen, Switzerland. ILC partners Sally Greengross, Harrison Bloom and Hans Meij presented papers in the session.
- Dr Kalula's participation in a SOAPF task force to investigate quality of care in frail care facilities.
- Extensive media reporting, which afforded opportunities to promote ILC concepts and philosophy, and their translation in South African settings.
- Several events to remember and pay tribute to Dr Butler and to honour his legacy.
- Planning and organisation of the 2010 Board meetings and an international symposium on dementia, in Cape Town (October 25-26).
- Planning of, with associates in AFRAN, for IAGG, a regional conference on ageing to review progress in implementation of recommendations of MIPAA in Africa, to be held in Cape Town in October 2012. The conference programme will include an ILCSA Robert Butler Memorial Lecture.
- Appointment of the Institute of Ageing in Africa as an International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) Collaborating Centre.

Future plans

ILCSA's action agenda for 2010–2012 includes a continuation of:

- Development of initiatives to improve geriatric care and training, including a focused survey of risks and management of falls towards policy intervention; knowledge audits of public healthcare for older clients and the management of chronic diseases; and assessment of the quality of health care in hospital settings.
- Development and implementation of Africa appropriate education and training programmes in Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine (in co-operation with AFRAN).
- Participation in national and sub-regional policy development, implementation and evaluation (with AFRAN). Dissemination of a series of policy briefs and consensus papers.
- Engagement in a range of initiatives and activities to empower and capacitate older persons, in partnerships with NGOs, including the South African Older Persons Forum, and through advocacy, programme and policy design and implementation, and fostering the replication of good practices.
- Organisational development of ILCSA, and core and new ILCSA programmes and activities. Promotion of ILC principles, values and goals nationally and sub-regionally.
- Solicitation of medium to long term financial support for ILCSA.

Evaluation

Now in its sixth year of operation, ILCSA may feel satisfied with progress it has made in

building the organisation and achieving a respected national and regional profile and relevance, as well as with its multiple engagements with national and sub-regional organisations and international and inter-governmental agencies. It takes pride moreover in contributing to the goals of the ILC Global Alliance, and in fostering dissemination of ILC principles, values and objectives in the SSA sub-region.

Drs Ferreira and Kalula participate in numerous local, national and international conferences fora, etc., and avail opportunities to share outcomes of ILCSA activities with scholars, practitioners and policy makers. In addition, they participate in media interviews, which helps to strengthen ILCSA's positioning, and awareness of its aims and goals in the national conscience. ILCSA has come to be recognised, respected and consulted as a centre of excellence, and is succeeding in changing a national mindset from a paternalistic and welfarist approach to "care for the aged," to one that recognises and values longevity, acknowledges older persons' contributions, and optimises their roles and participation in a changing society. Where ILCSA does indeed plan to strengthen its activities in the short term, is in the area of forging national policy debate on critical contemporary issues and disseminating outcomes, or advocacy – mindful nonetheless of a defensiveness of the government towards arguments for change.

ILCSA continues to face organisational and well as institutional challenges, with a first of these challenges being to secure a stable funding base of its own, and a second being to overcome ageist discrimination and a low priority accorded ageing as a reality and an opportunity, as well as a funding priority in our society. ILCSA remains undeterred nonetheless in its efforts to overcome such obstacles and constraints.

Final remarks

An activity report for the period under review must include an expression of the profound sadness ILCSA's staff and associates experienced at the sudden and untimely passing of Dr Robert Butler. The establishment of ILCSA was due solely to Bob's encouragement, help and loyalty. In turn, we at ILCSA have embraced his philosophy and vision for ILC fully. We commiserate with his family, friends and colleagues on his passing and loss. We will remember and honour his immense contribution and legacy, and will cherish his friendship and enthusiasm always.

We thank ILC partners for their collegiality, co-operation and encouragement during the period of review. We continue to be inspired by what each ILC achieves, as well as how Global Alliance objectives are met and negotiated collectively. In particular, we thank Dr Masako Osako in the Secretariat for congenial and efficient support and encouragement.

Finally, we are delighted to host the 2010 Board meetings and related events in Cape Town, and sincerely trust that the partners enjoy their visit to our city and country.

