

ILC South Africa Activities Report 2011

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 research, education, policy and clinical service organisation, with a focus on Geriatric Medicine, Geriatric Neurosciences, Psychogeriatrics and Gerontology. ILCSA is operated independently of the IAA, and with a social rather than a clinical focus. It has its own branding, thrusts and programmes, but shares IAA premises, facilities and resources. The mission of ILCSA is to promote healthy and productive ageing, and optimise older persons' full participation in society.

Website

ILCSA's website (www.ilcsa.uct.ac.za) is being updated. ILC partners and other interested persons are invited to view the website shortly for news items as well as comprehensive descriptions of ILCSA programmes and activities noted below.

Programmes

ILCSA's mission is carried out through core and other programmes. Productivity and progress in the programmes were as follows:

- *Combatting elder abuse and marginalisation, and fostering human rights.* Dr Ferreira continued to engage with scholars, organisations and agencies to advance knowledge and understanding of the problem of elder abuse and policy action in South Africa within a human rights framework. Dr Kalula worked with the South African Older Persons' Forum (SAOPF), which has a priority focus on elder abuse and older persons' rights, through her membership of the Board. Jill Adkins, a specialist in elder law, human rights and ageing, engaged with ILCSA in several capacities in the broad area. Kalula and Adkins gave presentations in a Socio-economic Rights and Older Persons' symposium held in Cape Town.
- *Supporting and empowering older persons affected by HIV/AIDS.* ILCSA continued to work with NGO partners (Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS (GAPA), in particular) to support and empower older carers. ILCSA researcher George Petros produced a Policy Research Brief (01/10), encompassing a policy framework, entitled 'Supporting older caregivers to persons affected by HIV and AIDS', based on outcomes of a survey conducted in three provinces at the IAA and ILCSA. ILCSA disseminated the policy brief and it on the website.

- *Persons with dementia and their caregivers: Care and support needs and responses.* Several studies based in the Memory Clinic operated by the IAA at Groote Schuur Hospital/University of Cape Town, including building client and caregiver profiles, were continued. Issues and responses to the globalisation of dementia was the theme for the ILC Global Alliance symposium convened by ILCSA in Cape Town in October 2010. Head of Geriatric Medicine at the IAA, Dr Marc Combrinck, gave the first ILC Robert Butler Memorial Lecture in this symposium. A Declaration on a Global Response to Dementia: A Call for Action was drafted in the symposium, and subsequently disseminated by ILCSA, on behalf of the Alliance, to stakeholders worldwide for comment and input. The presentations and panel discussion in the symposium, and the Declaration incorporating feedback were prepared at ILCSA for publication in a special issue on dementia of IFA's *Global Ageing* (published in July 2011). ILCSA carried out a scoping exercise towards shaping up a project on dementia, preferably in the area of policy action, in which several ILC partners might engage collaboratively.

Other ILCSA programmes carried out aimed at improving the quality of geriatric care in the country were:

- *The practice of and dilemma in the use of physical restraints in hospitalised older patients.* An investigation was carried out at Groote Schuur Hospital by Drs Kalula and Petros to generate knowledge to inform policy and practice in this area. The findings are being written up, and will be presented in a research seminar in Cape Town in September. A journal article is being drafted and a policy framework crafted.
- *The prevalence and prevention of falls in community dwelling older persons.* Dr Kalula completed a large survey in areas of Cape Town and is writing up the findings, with a view to informing national policy and practice in the management and prevention of falls in later life.

Events and activities

Notable events and other activities in which ILCSA staff participated include:

- Continued engagement with ILCSA associates in the African Research on Ageing Network (AFRAN) and consortium partners, including the HelpAge International Africa Regional Development Centre, to establish a regional training centre on ageing, in Nairobi, Kenya, supported initially by UNFPA.
- Dr Kalula's participation in a policy dialogue on improving health care for older persons, between members of SOAPF and the national Minister of Health; in Pretoria in June 2011.
- Dr Kalula's participation in a ministerial Summit on Non-Communicable Disease, towards improving management and prevention of NCD; in Pretoria in September 2011.

- Planning, with associates in AFRAN, of an IAGG Africa Region conference to review progress in implementation of recommendations of MIPAA in Africa; to be held in Cape Town in October 2012. Dr Kalula is the Convenor of the Local Organising Committee for the conference, and she and Dr Ferreira serve on the Scientific Programme Committee (www.iagg.cmc-uct.co.za). The conference programme is to include an ILCSA Robert Butler Memorial Lecture . to be given, it is planned, by Dr Alex Kalache.
- Extensive media interviews and reporting, which afforded opportunities to promote ILCSA, and ILC concepts and philosophy, and their translation in South African settings.

Future plans

ILCSA's action agenda for 2011/12 includes continued

- development of initiatives to improve geriatric care and training in the areas of public health care for older clients; the management and prevention of chronic diseases; and quality health care in hospital settings;
- development and implementation of Africa appropriate education and training programmes in Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine (in co-operation with ILCSA associates in AFRAN);
- participation in national and sub-regional policy development, implementation and evaluation. Production and dissemination of policy briefs and consensus papers;
- engagement in initiatives and activities to empower and capacitate older persons, in partnerships with NGOs, including the South African Older Persons Forum, as well as 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; and
- solicitation of medium to long term financial support for ILCSA.

Evaluation

Now in its seventh year of operation, ILCSA is once again satisfied with progress made within constraints it is faced with, 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 promoting ILC principles, values and objectives in the SSA sub-region. In addition to activities aimed at building ILCSA, Dr Ferreira engaged intensively in operational and policy related activities of the Global Alliance in her capacity as a Co-President.

ILCSA continues to face organisational and institutional challenges: The first being to secure a stable funding base of its own; the second being to overcome ageist discrimination and a low priority accorded ageing as a reality and an opportunity, and a policy and funding priority in our society; and the third being the marginal position of the President (Dr Ferreira) within the host institution because of her retired status. ILCSA remains undeterred nonetheless to overcome the obstacles and constraints, and to remain productive and influential.

Final remarks

We thank ILC partners for their collegiality, co-operation and encouragement during the year under review, and remain inspired by achievements of each of them. In particular, we thank Dr Masako Osako in the Secretariat for congenial and professional support, management and encouragement.

Dr Ferreira personally thanks co-presidents Mr Shigeo Morioka and Baroness Sally Greengross for their collegiality and co-operation as the Executive strived to carry out tasks and responsibilities towards building an inclusive, credible and influential Global Alliance. Equally, she feels it a privilege and honour to work with partners in the Alliance in this capacity.

Finally, Dr Ferreira is delighted to be returning to The Netherlands, her paternal family's country of origin, to participate in the 2011 Annual Meeting; Dr Kalula is disappointed however that she will not join us in the meeting. Both thank the host ILC partners, Marieke de Waal especially, for excellent preparation for and sympathetic hosting of the meeting.

Monica Ferreira (Honorary President, ILCSA)
Sebastiana Kalula (Director, ILCSA)

Cape Town
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