

INTERNATIONAL LONGEVITY CENTRE CANADA UPDATE--2016-2017

Since its creation in 2015 the International Longevity Centre of Canada has focussed on advancing the rights of older people both domestically and internationally. In the last year we have partnered with the newly created LIFE Research Institute at the University of Ottawa to bring together multidisciplinary and multi-sectorial expertise to advance knowledge, training, policy and programming on issues related to individuals' realignment to change biological, physical, mental and social environments in the life cycle. Our aim is to build stronger communities by including business, government, academics, and NGO's in advancing the societal changes necessary to respond to the demographic age boom.

INTERNATIONAL

ILC Canada partnered with the Canadian government to host a Side-event at the Open Ended Working Group at the United Nations on December 14, 2016 entitled Ageism and Human Rights of Older People. The Canadian Ambassador to the UN, Mr. Marc-Andre Blanchard, spoke on Canadian action to combat ageism. A series of experts described ageism in the workplace, in hospitals and in long-term care facilities. The need for a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons was discussed and the UN Expert on the Human Rights of Older Persons, Ms. Rosa Kornfeld, presented the conclusions and considerations from her recent UN report.

Work on the need for a Convention and ensuring that the Canadian government is supportive, is on going. ILC Canada is also in discussions with the private sector on support for this initiative and has begun to engage other human rights based NGO's in the advocacy needed to move the issue domestically and internationally.

Partnering with the Grandmothers Advocacy Network and uOttawa, ILC Canada sponsored a one day event entitled "Older Women Count" on December 5, 2016. This participatory forum provided an opportunity to learn more about the rights and lived experiences of older women in sub-Saharan Africa and Canada. It allowed participants to explore ways to enhance and protect those rights, including the use of a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The Canadian Federal Minister for Women, Patricia Hajdu, was the keynote speaker.

ILC Canada has contributed substantially to the UN Stakeholder Group on Ageing (SGA), notably through the Research and Analysis committee, as well as to the UN Habitat Older Persons Partner Constituent Group (PCG) of the General Assembly of Partners (GAP). These include:

- In collaboration with a coalition of health NGOs led by the NCD Alliance, preparation of several in-depth, succinct texts on the SDG Health Goal (Goal 3) for older persons and most of the other goals/targets relevant to the health of

older persons. This analysis of the key issues, advances, challenges and recommendations may be disseminated via the SGA website.

- Collaborative preparation of a SGA position paper for the 2017 High Level Political Forum.
- Collaborative preparation of an advocacy brief for the World Health Assembly on inclusion of older persons in global health policies addressed at the 2017 WHA.
- Ad hoc input to statements and briefs related to UN Habitat General Assembly of Partners to promote inclusion of older persons in global urban policy development.

ILC Canada President Margaret Gillis and Associate Michael Kidd attended the OEWG meeting in July 2017; they are working with a group of interested Canadian NGO's and private sector partners to seek Canadian Government support for a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

DOMESTIC

ILC Canada -uOttawa held its first Forum on Age-friendly Business in May 2016 and produced a "Report on the Main Issues for Business Adopting to the Aging Population". Priority issues included healthcare, homecare/residential care, transportation (particularly air) and the aging worker.

This year we want to take action on these issues and will be focussing efforts on advocacy, policy, and programming. A second Age-friendly Business Forum is planned for April 2018 with a focus on outcomes from the last meeting and next steps in regard to evidence based solutions to better the quality of life of older people.

HEALTH INSTITUTIONS

In Canada, 2017 is a prime year for advocacy on changes to the Canadian health care system as the government recently announced new funding. ILC Canada organized a consortium of sixteen of the largest Canadian health and mental health associates, (such as the Canadian Medical Association and the Mental Health Commission of Canada) to advocate for separate funding for seniors and seniors mental health in the Health Accord. We believe we are the first group to organize key stakeholders to focus on the Health Accord. We are in the midst of a series of meetings with key Canadian government health officials to look at better ways to deliver health and to assure health care workers have the most up to date information when making decisions that impact the lives of older people.

Simultaneously, we have also been working with the Canadian Medical Association on their "Demand a Plan" program, which calls for a national strategy on seniors.

HOME CARE/RESIDENTIAL CARE

Residential and home care is another area where we are advocating for change. The federal government has recently announced \$3 billion for home/residential care. In preparation for the anticipated increased funding of homecare we have developed and improved upon a list of the supportive housing innovations worldwide. We now want to ensure that the new Canadian system is flexible enough for innovation.

In the fall of 2016, ILC's Drs. Louise Plouffe and Gloria Gutman (two of only twenty experts invited) met with Canadian federal Ministers Philpott (Health) and Duclos (Children and Families) to provide advice on the key needs of Canadian seniors. We advocated for homecare/residential care, age-friendly communities, among other issues, and will be following up on it post budget with advice on programming.

TRANSPORTATION

With our partners in the Faculty of Health Sciences at uOttawa, we are in discussions with a major carrier to create an airport that is age-friendly from curbside to airplane seat. This is particularly poignant after two older travellers died from falls at Pearson International Airport because of a lack of wheelchairs.

OLDER WORKERS

This is another human rights issue that we have been promoting with uOttawa experts. We have been working with government to ensure that older workers are treated with the same respect and integrity as young workers. Examples of our work including demanding the government (through a letter to the PM) change its stated policy on older workers, which signalled to Baby Boomers it was "time for them to go". We have attended a meeting with government to expand its funding programs for disabled and marginalized workers to include more displaced older workers.

PUBLICITY

ILC Canada has had press coverage on the our work on the need for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons in **The Hill Times** (Parliamentary newspaper) and **Policy Options**. Dr. Louise Plouffe has been in lengthy interview on the national CBC on ageism in the workplace and the census data on aging.