

ILC CANADA - BIENNIAL UPDATE

May 2021 to November 2021

RESEARCH

One of the key research projects for ILC Canada is the Caregiving Project with the ILC GA. Work is underway on the three main research segments, qualitative, quantitative and policy and we are preparing to look at funding at country and international levels. ILC Canada is currently focused on preparation of the policy paper.

ILC Canada is also working with uOttawa and ILC GA partners in a study on the impact of COVID 19 on older people residing in the community. Our aim is to respond with policy and program options to enhance the human rights of older persons.

Other research projects under development are:

- Implementation of framework for action to reduce ageism using the World Health Organizations strategies outlined in their 2020 report. Specifically, we aim to focus on three proven approaches: policy and law, educational activities and intergenerational contact interventions.
- A study is underway reviewing the impact of UN Conventions on Rights Recipients.
- Primary research interviews of civil society activists who are advocating for a UN convention on the rights of older persons have been completed. We intend to write a paper on the history of UN activism and the need for a human rights approach to aging issues.

ADVOCACY

Domestic:

ILC Canada has been leading the Canadian movement to have the government support and lead a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons (UN CROP).

We wrote and distributed an election platform for the Canadian Federal Election requesting funding for low-income seniors and to fight elder abuse. The document also demanded that Canada support and fund a renewed “continuum of care” to avoid the heavy death toll of older Canadians in the pandemic and that Canada support a UN CROP.

A new write in campaign is in development targeting the newly appointed Ministers for Senior and Global Affairs.

We have convened an “Advisory Committee” of 10 high level organizations on aging to help us develop tools (election platform, letters to Ministers etc.) and a strategic plan to move the UN CROP issue forward in Canada.

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LC Canada is part of the “Ontario Seniors Care and Assistance Roundtable” (OSCAR), which is looking to develop solutions to the current crisis in Long Term Care in Ontario. Work to date included a sub-group that developed guidelines on what to consider before moving a family member from Long Term Care during the pandemic. The group also developed a list of immediate actions for government to take in order to support the psychosocial and emotional well-being of residents of Long Term Care during lockdown.

International

ILC Canada continues to play a key role in advocating for the rights of older persons internationally.

ILC Canada’s Dr. Kiran Rabheru is currently Chair of the Steering Committee at the Global Alliance on the Rights of Older Persons (GAROP) and President, Margaret Gillis is the Chair of the GAROPs, National Advocacy Working Group on the UN CROP. We are members of an ad hoc discussion group on international human rights which meets Thursdays to discuss strategy.

ILC Canada has been working with Canada’s Global Affairs to increase our visibility at the UN Human Rights Council assisting them with including older women on Resolution 47 concerning the abuse of women with disabilities and lobbying to have Canada support Resolution 48

As part of the ILC International Team, ILC Canada is the NGO member of the United Nations European Economic Commission (UNECE) working group to Mainstream Aging. ILC Canada President Margaret Gillis will be speaking at the Joint Forum of Civil Society and Scientific Research as part of the Ministerial Conference on MIPAA in June 2022.

POLICY/PUBLICATIONS/MEDIA

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed long standing systemic problems in long-term care in Canada, the rise in elder abuse by some 250% and patronizing ageist attitudes towards older people in the press and society at large. ILC Canada has been working to challenge these ageist issues.

Older people in Long Term Care have been left to die in their beds with no medical assistance, dealing with the virus unattended or dying of dehydration or malnutrition. COVID 19 has revealed a system so incapable of responding to a crisis that it has to rely on the Army to rescue vulnerable people. Moreover, as COVID

numbers soared and health care systems were under pressure, ageist triage policies were revealed that could deny people over the age of 60 access to ICU..

Both Dr. Kiran Rabheru and Margaret Gillis have been extremely active exposing ageist policies and impacts, spreading the word on the need for a human rights-based approach through webinars and publications. Examples include numerous presentations to the IFA Global Conference including:

- “Ageism the need for a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons” a webinar with Amal Rafeh of UN DESA, Craig Mokhiber of UN Human Rights, Vania de la Fuente Nunez WHO , Margaret Gillis and Kiran Rabheru of ILC Canada.
- “Investing in Preventative Health” with ILC UK, speakers included Kiran Rabheru and Shain Raichura of ILC Canada and Arun Himawan and Lily Parsey of ILC UK and Walter Ricciardi of the World Federation of Public Health Association.
- “Why a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons? COVID 19 and what you can do” with IFA’s Cynthia Stuen,, Jane Barratt, IAGG’s Kenneth Madden and ILC Canada’s Kiran Rabheru and Margaret Gillis.

Dr. Rabheru was successful in having an entire edition of the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry focus on “Combatting Ageism, Mentalism and Ableism; It’s time for a United Nations Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons.”

Margaret Gillis and Kiran Rabheru were contributing authors to “Promoting the Health of Older Adults: The Canadian Experience.” Edited by Irving Rootman, Peggy Edwards, Melanie Lavasseur and Frances Grunberg.

Kiran Rabheru co-authored “Dignity of Older Persons with Health Conditions: Why Should Clinicians Care” in Frontiers in Psychiatry.

ILC Canada’s Shain Rancura and ILC UK’s Lily Parsey co-authored “Money Talks: Investing in proactive health measures to support healthy aging.”

All our has led us to demand that human rights be at the forefront in the pandemic and we have been active in media and on line (twitter, ILC website and FB) demanding change.