

International Longevity Centre-India

Activities by ILC-I from June 2020- October 2021.

1. Due to Covid-19 pandemic which affected the populations world-wide, ILC-I decided to operate through an online mode, and hence we conducted a state level and national level webinar series through Cisco-webex application. National experts in the field of ageing were invited every Saturday to speak on different topics related and relevant to the issues and concerns of ageing.

Initially the focus was only on Covid-19 related topics, but later on the scope was broader and it included topics like “Health of senior women”, “mental health of the elderly”, “dental health of the seniors”, “Promoting active ageing”, “Prevention of falls among the older adults”, “Palliative care”, “Living will” and so on.

All the sessions were live streamed and hence, all these sessions are available on ILC-I's YouTube channel. Till date, ILC-I has conducted twenty-two national level and six state level online webinars through the Cisco-webex application. All the webinars were supported by Gharda Chemicals Ltd. under the Corporate Social Responsibility initiative (CSR).

2. Further, to stimulate the physical wellbeing and mental health of the older adults, ILC-I started its online "Happy Hours Café" which includes training of the senior citizens through the medium of 'Infotainment' (information and entertainment). Through these sessions, the elderly were given training in origami, they were taught the basics of Sanskrit and German languages, as also had some interesting brain games' sessions that they thoroughly enjoyed. There were eight sessions conducted by ILC-I with the help of eight experts.

3. Besides these two online programmes, ILC-I has begun an online survey study to know more about what kind of physical and emotional support the older adults had during the trying times of the pandemic. For this a special questionnaire was developed and through telephonic interviews of the senior citizens from various parts of Maharashtra, this survey has commenced.

4. In order to keep seniors engaged in fruitful activities, ILC-I had organized two state level competitions in 2020.

First one was an essay competition to mark the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) and another one was a poetry competition to understand the impact of the Corona pandemic on families and what happened to intergenerational solidarity during the long phases of lockdown.

Both these competitions received an overwhelming response. In June 2021 too, ILC-I organized a slogan competition to mark WEAAD and the older adults responded to this competition with unique and creative slogans on elder abuse. For all these competitions, the winning entries were given online certificates of appreciation and publicised on ILC-I's social media sites.

5. After receiving a good response for the online Happy Hours Café programme from the older persons in Pune, Maharashtra, ILC-I decided to conduct such sessions at national level.

Resource person Dr. Tejswi Kamble who is an occupational therapist and fitness coach is conducting this wellness programme online consisting of ten sessions of walking variations

and brain games. This is an ongoing programme started on 1st October 2021, launched on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons celebrated worldwide on 1st of October every year.

The session takes place on Friday evening and it is conducted through Cisco Webex application. At the same time, live streaming of the session is shown on ILC-I's official YouTube channel. No prior registration is required to attend the session. ILC-I aims to reach out to the older adults from varied parts of India through this programme in the near future.

6. Distribution of aid programme:

After the pandemic it was observed that, many Old Age Homes and care homes in Pune, Maharashtra had problems in obtaining funding and could not self-sustain their programmes and it adversely affected the senior citizens staying at the centre. Hence, ILC-I staff members did a short survey and visited such old age homes and tried understanding their needs. Medical equipment, day to day goods were shortlisted and now soon all the aids will be distributed among the selected old age homes. This programme is supported under CSR of Gharda Chemicals Ltd.

7. International webinar series under the aegis of the UNINIA and ILC-I Satellite Centre:

As the UN INIA Satellite Centre for the SAARC region, ILC-I had organised four international webinars in March 21.

The first presentation was by Ms. Rosette Bonello, Deputy Director of UN INIA, Malta. She conducted the first session on 6th of March 2021 on the topic “The global impact of Covid-19 pandemic on older persons!”.

The second session was conducted on 13th March by Dr. Ferdous Ara Begum from Bangladesh, and she delivered a lecture on “The Corona Pandemic-Older persons in Bangladesh and their changed lives!”.

To understand the scenario of Sri Lanka and Nepal, two important SAARC countries, ILC-I was fortunate to have Dr. Shiromi Maduwage from Sri Lanka and Dr. Lochana Shrestha from Nepal. They presented the real scenarios from their respective countries and oriented the participants on the topic “Interventions & strategies to help the older persons in Sri Lanka overcome the pandemic challenges!”.

The last session under UN INIA 2021 was delivered by Dr. S Siva Raju from Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, India. He is also an Honorary Director of ILC-I. Being an expert in the field of population ageing, he delivered the lecture on “Lessons learnt from the Corona pandemic & its impact on the future of older persons.”

The programme was concluded on 27th March 2021. After each session, the participants filled up the online feedback form and later the participants received an e-certificate for successful completion of the course.