

## ILC USA ANNUAL UPDATE: 2013-2014

### ILC-USA at the Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center

With a mission to explore and better understand the aging process and its societal implications, Columbia University has established a university-wide, interdisciplinary aging center, named The Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center. Its inaugural director is Ursula M. Staudinger, Ph.D. The new Center, sited at the Mailman School of Public Health, reflects the University's recognition that the study of aging is inherently multi-disciplinary. The Center is the new home of the International Longevity Center – USA to pursue translational research, policy education, and engagement, as well as the Aging Lab, to pursue research. For details visit [www.aging.columbia.edu](http://www.aging.columbia.edu).

### Staffing Updates

**Ruth Finkelstein, ScD** joined as Director of the ILC-USA in April 2014. Dr. Finkelstein comes here following many years leading the award-winning Age Friendly New York City initiative (started with ILC Brazil President, Alex Kalache) and serving as a Senior Vice President at The New York Academy of Medicine. She brings a passion for transformational change and conviction that cities and communities must plan for active engagement of people across the life course. She will lead translational research, communications, demonstrations, policy, and public education activities at the CAC.

### Project staff added in 2014 include:

**Dorian Block**, Senior Staff Associate, who manages two of ILC-USA's projects – the Age Smart Employer Awards and an upcoming narrative project chronicling the daily lives of older New Yorkers. She was formerly the manager of Age-friendly NYC at The New York Academy of Medicine and an award-winning U.S. journalist.

**Robert Fiero PhD**, Researcher, received his PhD from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, and went on to a postdoctoral position at the University of Copenhagen. A short time later, he began a research fellow position in the Neurology Department at Columbia University. Robert's research focuses on the construct of cognitive reserve. More specifically, how cognitively stimulating leisure activities and personality interact to attenuate decline in older adults.

**Neesha Roy**, received her MPH from Columbia University in NY and is focused on both research and programmatic aspects of aging. Presently an intern at the ILC-USA, she also has a background in business and previously worked for UnitedHealth Group's Human Capital division.

**Dr. Ursula M. Staudinger** continues in her role as ILC-USA President and **Kavita Sivaramakrishnan** continues in her role as Associate Director.

## Research

ILC-USA is very pleased to report that the **Retirement Project** suggested during last year's Annual Meeting in Singapore has been received very well and a majority of the ILCs are participating. Currently, the first step of compiling the country comparative data set is under way. ILC-USA, in particular its President, Dr. Ursula Staudinger and the CAC Affiliate, Dr. Axel Börsch-Supan, has taken on the coordination of the project. Axel Börsch-Supan, PhD, Director of the Munich Center for the Economics of Aging (MEA) and Professor of Macroeconomics and Public Policy at the Max-Planck-Institute for Social Law and Social Policy in Germany, is acting as a Scientific Consultant to the ILC-USA.

## Advocacy

The ILC USA continues to strengthen its relationship with the **Age-Friendly New York City (NYC) Commission**, a coalition of public and private sector leaders from a wide range of industries, organizations and institutions in NYC who are dedicated to making the city a better place for older adults and to encouraging healthy and active aging for every New Yorker..

## Policy

In February, for the first time the **Age-Smart Employer Awards** were given out. ILC-USA was on the selection committee. Four companies ranging from large-scale companies like Pfizer to small businesses like a Brooklyn and Harlem Bakery and Restaurant were the first awardees.

In April, the ILC-USA subsequently announced the receipt of a major grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to continue the Age Smart Employer Awards program for a second cycle under the leadership of Dr. Ruth Finkelstein. recognizes employers – for profit and not for profit, large and small – who value the contributions of their older workers and so adopt policies and practices that encourage recruitment, retention, productivity, and satisfaction for workers of all ages. This year, the program added a particular focus on small businesses, which are such important economic drivers and employers of the majority of the work force.

During the International Federation on Ageing's (IFA) annual conference in Istanbul on October 5, 2013, **Age-friendly NYC was named the "Best Existing Age-friendly Initiative" in the world**. The award for Best Existing Age-friendly Initiative was the result of the 2013 Summa Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Innovation Awards

competition, which was created to recognize an existing-age friendly initiative that demonstrates innovation and visionary approaches to creating cities that are more inclusive of older people. As a representative of the Age-friendly NYC Commission, Dr. Fried joined Dr. Ruth Finkelstein, Director of Age-friendly NYC to accept the award.

ILC-USA leaders participated in the **IFA 12<sup>th</sup> Global conference on Aging**. Dr. Kavita Sivaramakrishnan (Associate Director, ILC-USA) organized a symposium on **Aging in Emerging Economies: Comparative Policy Perspectives from Brazil, China, India and South Africa**. Distinguished panelists scheduled to speak included: **Du Peng** (Director and Professor, Institute of Gerontology, Renmin University of China, China and President, ILC, China), **Alex Kalache** (President, International Longevity Centre Brazil, HelpAge International Global Ambassador), **Sebastiana Kalula** (Director of the Albertina and Walter Sisulu Institute of Ageing in Africa, Director of the International Longevity Centre South Africa ), **Kavita Sivaramakrishnan** (Assistant Professor, Columbia University, Columbia Aging Center, USA). The session was chaired by **Chris Gray** (Senior Director, Global Institutions, Corporate Responsibility Group, Pfizer).

Dr. Ursula Staudinger attended and presented at the 10th annual **Science and Technology in Society (STS) forum** in Kyoto, Japan, held from October 6-8, 2013. The STS forum seeks to create a global human network based on trust and to provide a framework for open discussions regarding the further progress of science and technology for the benefit of humankind, while controlling ethical, safety and environmental issues resulting from their application. Dr. Staudinger presented on “Dementia and Brain Plasticity” during the session “Brain Medical Science.”

Dr. Ursula Staudinger, President of ILC-USA, delivered the keynote address at the **ReServe National Conference** held in Boston, MA in July. ReServe places older adults who have ended their primary career into positions at nonprofit organizations. Since 2005, ReServe has expanded from a pilot program in New York City to six offices around the U.S. placing older adults in 743 nonprofits. Dr. Staudinger’s talk “More Years, More Life: The Plasticity of Aging” focused on the ability to modify the aging process through changes in behavior and the environment.

Dr. Ruth Finkelstein, addressed the **Village-to-Village Network's annual meeting** in Washington, DC on September 30, 2014. Dr. Finkelstein participated in a plenary panel, focused on the importance of harnessing top-down and bottom-up strategies to create Age-friendly communities.

Dr. Ruth Finkelstein was the keynote speaker at **Harvard University’s event “Aging + Place: Designing Housing and Communities for Aging Populations,”** held at the Harvard Graduate School of Design on October 17, 2014. Dr. Finkelstein joined distinguished panelists discussing opportunities in architecture, planning, and policy to enhance older adults’ well-being through affordable, accessible, well-connected housing, as well as through models of long-term care that support aging in place.

## Training

The **Age Boom Academy 2014**, which took place between June 12 and June 14 at Columbia University, offered nearly 30 working journalists, editors, and producers in all media an illustrious panel of speakers on the timely topic of Voters over 65 and the changing political landscape. This event was sponsored and organized jointly by the Columbia Aging Center and the Columbia Journalism School, and aimed to interest and inform a broader spectrum of reporting on aging issues. This year's Academy, under the leadership of Jack Rosenthal, Pulitzer Prize winning former New York Times editor and current President Emeritus of the New York Times Company Foundation, Dr. Ursula Staudinger, Director of the Columbia Aging Center, and Dr. Bruce Shapiro, Professor, Columbia Journalism School, brought together stellar experts from around the U.S. on the policies and politics of aging.

The ILC-USA led a half-day training and orientation to the issues of aging in New York City for the **Global Leadership Fellows from the World Economic Forum** in July. The training included a tour of a street corridor where local residents successfully advocated for design changes following the death and several injuries of older adults and a hands-on simulation of riding a city bus with physical impairments. The World Economic Forum's Global Leadership Fellows Program is a three-year program for young leaders from over 40 countries.

**The Columbia Aging Center-ILC-USA has been working with the National Coalition on Aging (NCOA) on the development of an innovative Aging Mastery Program** being piloted in more than 20 communities around the US. The ILC-USA staff are leading the evaluation design and implementation as well as working on content design toward a rapid cycle of innovation, scale and spread. The program provides older adults with information, skills, and encourages daily practices for successful aging.

## Publications

Dr. Ruth Finkelstein, Director of ILC-USA, is also a lead author on a report released in July from The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) entitled **"Resilient Communities: Empowering Older Adults in Disasters and Daily Life."** Drawing on lessons from Superstorm Sandy, a storm which left hundreds of thousands stranded and without electricity in 2012 in the New York area, the report presents an innovative set of recommendations to strengthen and connect formal and informal support systems to keep older adults safe during future disasters. To read the report:  
[http://www.nyam.org/news/docs/pdf/Resilient\\_Communities\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.nyam.org/news/docs/pdf/Resilient_Communities_Report_Final.pdf)

Dr. Ursula Staudinger comments on achieving personal wisdom in the Huffington Post  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/11/personal-wisdom-hacks\\_n\\_5575214.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/11/personal-wisdom-hacks_n_5575214.html)

Dr. Ursula Staudinger discusses the question of how to make shrinking populations more productive.

<http://projectm-online.com/global-agenda/demographics/how-to-make-shrinking-populations-more-productive>

Dr. John Rowe comments in USA Today on how institutions in the United States need to be better designed to support an aging society.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/30/america-aging-health/2508981/>

Dr. Ruth Finkelstein, Director of the International Longevity Center-USA, discusses managing an aging workforce with The Economist's Intelligence Unit:

<http://www.economistinsights.com/leadership-talent-education/opinion/managing-ageing-workforce>

Dr. Linda Fried discusses "Making Aging Positive" in The Atlantic

<http://www.aging.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/Dean%20Fried%20article%20Making%20Aging%20Positive%20-%20Health%20-%20The%20Atlantic%20-%20.pdf>