

7th INTERNATIONAL LONGEVITY FORUM

13-14th November 2019, Rio de Janeiro

“Pathways to Life-long Learning”

The International Longevity Centre Brazil (ILC-BR) is an independent think tank focused on issues of population ageing. It is part of a global consortium of ILCs with presence in sixteen countries (ILC-GA). ILC-BR is headquartered in Rio de Janeiro with additional regional representation in the Brazilian State capital cities of Sao Paulo, Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte and national focal point persons on such thematic areas as ageing and race; gender; housing; culture of care; and age-friendly approaches; (particularly in relation to urban, hospital and primary care environments). All policy formulations developed by ILC-BR are guided by the Active Ageing approach which is defined as “the process of optimising opportunities for health, life-long learning, participation and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age”.

Previous ILC-BR Forum focuses were:

Developing a Culture of Care in Response to the Longevity Revolution (2013)

Gender and Ageing (2014)

The Age-friendly Approach (2015)

Toward Age-friendly Design (2016)

Building Resilience throughout the Life-course (2017)

The Future of Ageing (2018)

INTRODUCTION

The 7th International Longevity Forum explored the obstacles and opportunities relating to one of the four foundational pillars of the Active Ageing model – **Life-long Learning**. It has become clear that the educational assets acquired in youth and early adulthood no longer provide sufficient currency for longer, big change impacted lives. Longer lives are increasingly required to respond to a more complex range of intermingling and sometimes recurring variables. Fast-moving (and often unanticipated) technology arrivals are increasing the necessity for *all* individuals *at all ages* to acquire reflexive reprogramming habits

throughout their lives. On-going health literacy has become essential for self care; on-going financial literacy has become vital to manage income and expenses: and on-going technology literacy is increasingly required to sustain full participation and citizenship. The OECD considers continuous education to be one of the most important components of human capital in an ageing world. UNESCO views it as “*the key philosophy, conceptual framework and organising principle for education in the 21st century*”. WHO takes the view that investment in education is also an investment in health and well-being and the United Nations regards it as a major priority issue in the global development agenda.

“It is clear that unless there is investment in Life-long Learning, workers will have fewer opportunities to remain in the workforce as they age” said ILC-BR President Alexandre Kalache, who moderated the forum. *“We are living longer, and some of us are living better, but because of high speed social change, much of our acquired knowledge is expiring earlier”*. *“Yet”* he continued, *“Life-long Learning must go far beyond formal education and vocational upskilling”*. *“We must reinvent the entire culture of learning and mine the rich veins of human capacity at all ages”*. *“We must find new ways to structurally embed a truly inclusive Life-long Learning”*.

THE NEED TO CONSTANTLY UPSKILL WORKERS

“It is inconceivable that the formal education received before entering the job market is now able to cover the requirements of an entire life” observed OECD labour market economist Alessia Forti in her opening presentation. Clearly, *“it is necessary to help workers navigate workplace changes and acquire relevant new skills”*. *“Yet”*, she continued, *“on-going training for people already in the labour market presents difficulties from both the employee and the employer perspective”*. Issues such as: lack of time/ financial resources; inconvenient schedules/locations; and insufficient employer support; influence employees. Matters such as: identifying real workplace needs; absorbing costs; maintaining team cohesion; and the fear of losing workers to the marketplace after training; deter employers. In fact, *“most companies prefer to employ new workers rather than provide training to existing workers”*. Of course, this presupposes that there are new workers to be found. Population ageing and the trend toward more restrictive migration are creating new labour market scenarios throughout the world.

Many of the workplace training opportunities that are currently offered are not in line with the real skills that need to be developed. Some of them are simply in place to fulfil mandatory health and safety requirements. *“A third of workers say that the*

training that they have received was not useful”, Forti said. Within this already unfavourable context, there are groups with an even greater vulnerability – older adults; those with few qualifications; those who work in activities at high risk of automation; and those without a formal employment contract.

Forti identified the need to: improve the coverage and inclusion of all adult education; to more closely align training content with job market demand; to raise the quality and outcomes of offered training; to introduce sustainable models of funding; and to strengthen governance mechanisms. She outlined the OECD initiatives on adult education. They include research, reports, orientation guides and a platform where adult learning systems of member countries can be compared across seven domains –urgency; coverage; inclusion; flexibility and orientation; alignment with needs; perceptions of training; and finance.

ENTITLEMENT TO LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Former International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director of Human Resources, Mark Levin called attention to the phenomenon of ‘atomisation’. For many, *“work is no longer a place that you go to every day”*. *“Professional activity is now more individual, with many people working at home, in small units or entirely independently”*. The so-called ‘platform economy’, exemplified by Uber and other operators, is creating a new landscape and it is prompting concerns about a deterioration of working conditions. On the other hand, *“population ageing has created a need for greater work life flexibility – both for personal renewal and to enable care-giving”*.

Levin related how the ILO and its entire tripartite constituency recognised the need to review and reinvigorate the current labour social contract. *“This commitment is reflected in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Labour adopted by the International Labour Conference in June*

2019.” The document states that *“full and productive employment and decent work for all are key elements of sustainable development and therefore, must be a priority objective of national policies and international cooperation”*. The Declaration reinforces the ILO call for a *“universal entitlement to Life-Long Learning”*.

The traditional three-stage model of the life-course (school, work, retirement) is being reinvented. The trajectories of longer lives are more complex. They increasingly contain a life-long mix of education, self-employment, formal employment, caring responsibilities, leisure and temporary, part time or voluntary work. There is greater porosity in the boundaries between these different phases of life and it is becoming less determined by social expectation and chronological age. The new paradigm *“requires multiple opportunities for Life-long Learning alongside public policies that guarantee universal social protection (such as income support during times of transition), the portability of benefits and the counting of non-formal work toward retirement”*.

THE EXPERIENCE OF AGE-FRIENDLY UNIVERSITIES

The Co-ordinator of the Global Network of Age-friendly Universities, Christine O’Kelly, described how the idea of an Age-friendly University grew out of the WHO Age-friendly Cities project and was prompted by a 2009 meeting in Dublin that was convened to launch Age-friendly Ireland. Participants at the meeting, who included both Christine O’Kelly and Alexandre Kalache, championed the need to build a new age-friendly culture in the educational setting. *“We viewed longevity as an opportunity, not as a crisis”* she said. The movement resulting from these initial interactions was formally launched in 2012 at Dublin City University (DCU). Ten principles of an Age-friendly University (AFU) were identified. *“It is necessary to answer questions such as: what is your institution doing to meet the needs of older students;*

what are the challenges and barriers in place; how can you contribute to proactive age-friendly actions in your workplace?” *“Age-friendliness, like ageing itself, is a dynamic relational process”* observed Kalache. *“It is a journey that can never be considered complete”*.

The Global Network of Age-friendly Universities, with a current membership of 58 institutions in Europe, North America and Asia, organises network sharing; encourages collaborative research; provides training opportunities; supports financial mechanisms for exchanges of students, researchers and employees; and engages with industry and civil society groups. Dr Kalache stressed the importance of mainstreaming ageing across all educational curricula. *“Suppose that you graduate from university in 2020”* he said. *“The chances are that you will still be performing your professional activities in 2070”*. *“At that time in Brazil, the 60 plus age group will constitute 35% of the population – up from 17% today”*. *“Whatever is your chosen professional field, an enormous number of your patients, clients or customers throughout your working life will be older adults”*. *“If you have little idea about what makes them tick, then you are not going to be very effective in your professional life”*.

Parminder Raina, Director of the Faculty of Health Sciences at MacMaster University in the Canadian Province of Ontario, presented his institution as a case study of an Age-friendly University. MacMaster has a strong research component on longevity and is accompanying the lives of 50,000 people between the ages of 45-85. It also operates the most comprehensive online data base in the world for evidence-based information on ageing. On-campus age-friendly initiatives involve all faculties. Focuses have been such issues as walk- ability, signage, cost of parking and internal transportation. An Age-friendly Committee was established that includes senior university administrators, researchers and students with a mission to establish the priorities within a long-term plan. However, *“we cannot wait for people to decide to come to university”* Professor Raina said. *“We need to act beyond the institutional walls”*. *“We*

need to take Life-long Learning to outside communities". MacMaster University has entered into partnerships with libraries for example, as places of learning for older adults.



Above: full house at Unibes Cultural; Alexandre Kalache, president of ILC - BR and ILC - GA; speakers from symposium in official photo

A panel discussion followed: Prompted by ILC-BR, *"we are working hard to incorporate the ten AFU principles and to join the global network"* said Emilio Moriguchi of the Faculty of Medicine of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Luiz Ramos of the Medical School of the Federal University of Sao Paulo (UNIFESP) highlighted his institution's longitudinal study which has followed the resident population in the vicinity of the university for almost thirty years. *"We recently signed an agreement with the City of Sao Paulo to transform Vila Clementino [where the University is located] into an age-friendly neighbourhood."* Marilia Louvison of the Faculty of Public Health at the University of Sao Paulo (USP) gave an account of her institution's Open University for Older Adults scheme which made more than three thousand spaces available for students aged 60 plus in their undergraduate and extension programmes in 2019. She also described their Active Ageing programme for employees that is coordinated by ILC-BR Institutional Director, Egidio Dorea. *"Cross-cutting Active Ageing policies permeate the university"* she said.

ARE WE TRAINING PROFESSIONALS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY?

"Current medical students" observed graduate student at the Souza Marques School of Medicine, Caroline Pedrosa *"do not leave university prepared to deal with the multi-morbidities, increased risks of complication and the poly-pharmacy of older patients"*. *"Furthermore"*, she added, *"there is little or no substantial engagement with the realities of the public health system [where the majority of older people are treated] by traditional medical schools"*. Fourth year medical student at the ABC Medical School (FMABC), Julia Baltazar, produced data to illustrate some of the important gaps in medical training. Brazil has one Geriatrician for every 12,086 inhabitants whereas

the WHO recommendation is 1:100 – a deficit of 28,000 professionals. Not all medical schools even include the disciplines of geriatrics and gerontology. *“We are still largely training health professionals for the 20th century”* observed Kalache. *“We need more Geriatricians and Gerontologists but more importantly, we need all health-care providers to have an understanding of geriatrics and gerontology”*. *“All specialisations – from cardiology, oncology and urology to immunology and pharmacology – require specific training on older person care”*. Eliane Moraes Falcao of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) described how medical schools in fact, often perversely, foster a detachment from humanised care. She cited a survey comparing attitudes of students in their first year with their second year that revealed significantly hardened and more pragmatic preoccupations. *“The implications for older person care are obvious and alarming”* she said.

COGNITION AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

“Research shows a strong relationship between learning and the prevention of cognitive loss” reported Jerson Laks of the Rio de Janeiro Federal University (UFRJ) Alzheimer Disease Centre. *“The cognitive, cerebral and neural reserves increase with learning”*. *“Childhood education is a particularly powerful preventative factor for dementia”*. *“Due to the still enormous challenges in the provision of quality basic education in Brazil”* he continued, *“we are storing up problems for the future”*. 35% of dementia risk is modifiable. Such activities as physical inactivity, social isolation and smoking play roles. More is being learnt about our capacity to generate responses that are helpful to us. *“Research on so-called ‘neuroplasticity’ has revealed that the brain is far from hard-wired and it is able to significantly change its own function, even its own physical structure, right through into very old age”* added Kalache. *“Human beings are more than just their default settings”*.

A QUESTION OF EQUITY

“Learning opportunities do not occur equally” remarked Alexandre da Silva of the Faculty of Public Health at the University of Sao Paulo (USP). Drawing on the 10 years of data from the Longitudinal Study of the Health of Older Brazilians (ELSI-Brazil), Professor da Silva gave specific research focus to the variables of race and skin colour. The starting point is to acknowledge that *“in general, the Brazilian black population endures worse circumstances”* he said. In his research, da Silva examined how such factors as previous life conditions; school experiences; discrimination; sense of community; and health history; influence the likelihood of engaging in learning activities after 50 years of age. Unfavourable determinants such as: having lived in a rural area up until the age of fifteen; having never studied or having started late; and having illiterate parents; were found to be more common among Black Brazilians. The perception of feeling discriminated against because of skin colour and poverty was much stronger among the group of black Brazilians who did not participate in learning activities. The data also revealed that this group had worse health outcomes. Professor da Silva gave a historical over-view of education for black people in Brazil. *“Poor performance is less related to ability than to harsher daily realities”*. When discussing Life-Long Learning, *“we must consider the specificities and needs of each social group”* he said. *“Many international studies indicate that life-long learning as currently offered is inclined toward the already advantaged”* said Kalache. *“Those who could benefit the most tend to participate the least, and participation tends to decrease with age”*. In addition, *“it is also clear that many of the new technologies are reinforcing inequalities because they impact certain groups disproportionately”*.

Writer and ethno-racial specialist Lia Vieira stressed the importance of reinforcing the many different cultural perspectives to learning – both formal and informal. *“I come from a culture of African*

origin where ancestral knowledge is transferred through the narration of the elders” she said. It requires time management, calmness and affection along with the perception to recognise the moments of learning when they appear. *“Learning over time is learning for life”*.

OLDER ADULTS' RIGHT TO LEARN

Gerontologist Laura Machado addressed the issue of illiteracy among older adults. *“Being literate is fundamental to access most forms of education and to exercise full citizenship”*. The illiteracy rate among older Brazilians is around 30%. Article 20 of the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons specifically references the right to education. The Brazilian National Council for the Rights of the Elderly, in its last session before being effectively dissolved by Federal Government decree in 2019, determined that all projects financed by the National Fund for Older Persons should contain a specific component for the eradication of older adult illiteracy. *“Without literacy, it is very hard to talk about comprehensive Life-long Learning”* she said.

Machado described one particular literacy project in an extremely poor, rural municipality in the State of Ceara in which she was involved. Preliminary research revealed that illiterate older residents were particularly susceptible to financial abuse. *“They were being victimised both by financial institutions offering inappropriate credit and other products and tricksters acting as proxies to access their finances”*. The two year project concentrated on developing literacy instruments for daily life. *“The initiative successfully fostered empowerment, greater autonomy and an increased exercise of citizenship”*.

International efforts to introduce “hard law” legislation in the form of a United Nations Convention to protect the rights of older persons, including the right to learn, continue to be frustrated.

A REFLECTION ON TIME

Philosopher Walter Kohan of Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ) began the second day of the Forum with a reflection on the meaning of time. Professor Kohan, also the author of the book ‘Paulo Freire, More than Ever’, described how the ancient Greeks used at least three words for “time” and how each had relevance to learning.

Khronos represents *“the number of movements between before and after”* such as that which is measured by a clock. *“There is only the past and the future. There is no present because the action never stops”*. *“There is also no qualitative difference. Each second is exactly the same as another – as it must be to make counting feasible”*. Khronos is very useful and practical. The education system is completely reliant upon it - school classes are defined by the chronological age of the children; the work of the teachers is organised by schedules, the content is contained with semesters; and the tasks are given deadlines. *“The result is that everyone has to learn and do the same activities within the same khronos despite their very different life-cycles and sensitivities”*. *“Khronos standardises and annihilates differences because it is indifferent to quality”*.

Kairos, on the other hand, can be best understood as referencing *“an opportune time”* or *“a certain moment for action”*, explained Professor Kohan. *“For some people, kairos is also very important for education in the belief that there are things that can only be learnt at a specific time and at a specific age. Educator Paulo Freire however, working mainly with people who had been ‘robbed’ of their regular learning time, promoted something like a race to educate people “in a time that was not their time”*.

Aion is like a *“child at play”*. *“A child can only play in the present”*. Unlike khronos, aion has neither past nor future – only the present. *“When a child invites us to play and we say that we can only do so for 15 minutes, the game loses its meaning”*. Aion is also the *“time of art, of love and education”*. Khronos gives us time at our place of learning,

but we can only learn in Aion. *“Education happens in the present”*.

THE DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS OF THOSE SEEKING ADULT LEARNING

It is clear that *“employers need experienced workers in order to achieve the best results”* said Tim Driver, Founder and CEO of RetirementJobs, a US initiative that connects businesses with older workers. It is also clear that *“adults over the age of 50 who are engaged in productive activities are healthier, happier and financially more secure”*. Furthermore, *“the wider economy benefits significantly from their contributions.”* International studies show that even relatively small increases in the labour force participation of over 50 year olds, translates into enormous macro-economic gain.

Age is still seen as an obstacle in the job market but this is decreasing. *“When we surveyed users of our services in 2009, 96% believed that their age was a problem”*. *“A similar survey in 2019 revealed that this perception had dropped to 83%”*. Additional survey responses revealed that *“66% of those surveyed sought an occupation totally different from their previous one”* and *“58% had sought out Life-long Learning opportunities”*. The respondents' interest in Life-long Learning was varied - 52% favoured distance learning; 15.2% preferred face-to-face and short training modules at night or on weekends; 2.7% were attracted to traditional college learning; and 30.2% selected a hybrid approach with a combination of learning formats.

Software engineer Morris Litvak gave an overview of the Brazilian platform MaturiJobs that he created in 2015. Initially established to provide an alternative space for the preparation and recruitment of over 50 year olds, it quickly evolved into a network community as both relationships and a greater understanding of the market place developed. Training for both the job market and entrepreneurship were added, as well as corporate programmes. In 2019, Litvak instigated Maturifest,

the first 50+ entrepreneurship festival in Brazil and launched MaturiServices, a platform to further support retraining, new-skill pursuit and competitiveness in the marketplace.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-CULTURAL BODIES

Retirement preparation specialist, Jose Carlos Ferrigno, described the workings of the Brazilian S-System, the vast network of ten non-profit organisations run by the private sector that implements a large proportion of the country's institutional vocational, educational, and training (VET) programmes; as well as many of its cultural activities. *“If we can establish a healthy distance from the tribulations and pressures of everyday life, we can find moments of learning that support critical thought”* he said. *“Reductionist approaches to education stifle creativity and inhibit the growth of a free-thinking citizenry”*. Alarmingly, more now than ever, learning has become a political front-line.

Psychologist Wallace Hetmanek of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) added to the remarks by detailing the importance in the Brazilian context of the learning environment provided by the University of the Third Age (UNATI). Although originally a European concept, the Universities of Third Age have developed their own distinct character in Brazil and they play a valuable role in facilitating both social and economic development.

THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

“A degree of personal financial security is a necessary enabler of Life-long Learning” observed Ana Leoni, Superintendent of financial education and market data at the Brazilian Association of Financial and Capital Market Organisations (ANBIMA). *“However, it is not simple to achieve”*. In addition, a level of financial literacy is required to protect against abuse and to facilitate security in older age.

“Because of a complex mix of psycho-social, cultural and religious reasons, talking about money is often considered taboo in Brazilian society” she continued. Added to this is a national tendency to *“live in the moment”*, as evidenced by the ubiquitous use of payment by instalment in Brazil. Studies show that 50% of people have an accelerated heart rate when dealing with money; 11% feel uneasy when analysing their bank statements; and 15% avoid opening their bank envelopes altogether. It is important to acknowledge that, for most Brazilians, current economic circumstances preclude almost any hope of achieving even basic levels of financial security.

HEALTH LITERACY

“Health literacy is a resource that generates personal benefits such as healthier life-style choices and effective use of available health services” remarked Gill Rowlands of Newcastle University. Professor Rowlands produced data to show that individuals with lower health literacy find it more difficult to comply with medication regimes; are less likely to be involved with disease prevention (such as vaccination programmes, cancer screening); are more susceptible to develop multiple pathologies in the long term; are less likely to successfully manage progressive disorders; and tend to die earlier. All of these have enormous cost implications. *“Health literacy skills however, can be learnt and employed throughout the life-course and lead to both healthier ageing and stronger, more resilient communities”* she said. While health literacy aims to critically empower individuals, it also firmly apportions responsibility to create the necessary conditions and services for good health to the public sector. As illustrated in the ILC-BR publication **Active Ageing: A Policy Framework in Response to the Longevity Revolution** (pg 69), of the four dimensions of care (self-care; informal care; community care; institutional care), it is arguably self care that is the most powerful component, yet in most societies it receives the least in terms of

financial and policy support. In fact, financial resources are generally allocated in a direct inverse to the volume of care given – first, institutional care followed by community care, informal care and lastly, self care.

Eberhart Portocarrero Goss, community physician in the family clinic in the Rocinha favela of Rio de Janeiro, urged caution on too great an emphasis on the individual in relation to health literacy. Care must be taken not to exaggerate the power of the actions of a single person in the face of widespread systemic failings. It becomes too easy to lay an exaggerated responsibility at their door and to blame them for their inadequate health outcomes. In addition, are those individual responses truly scalable? *“Can individual to individual actions produce a stronger community or are we more likely just to achieve individual growth?”* And can such a focus inadvertently exacerbate existing inequalities in health and relieve society of too much of its responsibility?

THE MATURE STUDENT

Mature student Sandra Carpenter gave a brief background to her life and spoke about the reasons behind her decision to engage with later-life learning in the form of a university education. *“I missed many opportunities to study when I was younger. I was too busy with living”* *“Children and family were my priority”*. *“I always had the enthusiasm to learn but with age, I gained the luxury of time for myself”*.

LEARNING TO LEARN

“The awareness of the value of Life-long Learning goes back culturally thousands of years” observed Daniele Vieira, formerly of the UNESCO Institute of Life-long Learning (Hamburg) and current Adjunct Professor at the Federal Rural University of Pernambuco (UFRPE). *“It is not a modern concept”*. It is also important to recognise that it involves all

ages, occurs in many different settings (family, schools, communities, workplaces) and through various modalities (formal, non-formal, informal). *“Learning is part of everyday life”*.

Professor Vieira highlighted two landmark UNESCO publications. ‘Learning to Be’ (1972) championed Life-long Learning as a fundamental educational concept for both developed and developing countries. ‘Learning: the Treasure Within’ (1996) identified four components of Life-long Learning – learning to be; learning to know; learning to do; and learning to co-habit.

She listed five principle messages derived from the World Education Forum (2015) which should govern strategies for Life-long Learning:

All people, but particularly those in more vulnerable circumstances, must have access to Life-long Learning opportunities.

The development of policies and strategies for Life-long Learning requires strong multi-sectoral partnerships.

Multiple flexible entry points should be available to persons of all ages and educational levels.

Life-long Learning spaces and contexts should be established as widely as possible.

Life-long Learning must take advantage of the immense potential of modern learning technologies.

Professor Vieira highlighted the urgency for a more informed national conversation about which specific skill sets should be prioritised in the Brazilian context. She stressed the need for a systemic learning beyond formal education that is better integrated into society and is continuously monitored and evaluated.

THE ROLE OF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

A Director at the Dom Cabral Foundation (FDC), Claudia Andrade Botelho gave an account of her organisation’s executive training programmes. Designated the 10th best business school in the world by the Financial Times (UK), FDC offers

MBA and other courses. *“FDC understands that the career path is no longer a straight line”*. *“It is more like a spiral”*. *“And with each new turning, there must be an assessment of the past in order to see what is around the bend with full focus”*. *“Mentorship is a very important part of our programmes”* she continued. *“We put great value on intergenerational exchanges – older people guiding the young but also younger people supporting older colleagues, particularly in relation to technology”*. Botelho highlighted the FDC Career Design Trekker initiative which is structured to provide openings for professional and personal development at multiple career points. Activities occur in three phases – exploration: to enhance self-knowledge in all directions and to define purpose; design: to collaboratively build a navigation plan using mentor input and tailor-made learning; and acting: to implement the plan and learn from its execution. *“It has generated a lot of institutional learning for us as well as for the individual participants”*.

OBSTACLES AND MOTIVATIONS

“Brazil is very backward in educational terms” observed economist Marcelo Neri, Director of Social at the higher education institute and think tank, the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV). *“One of the biggest challenges is that more and more Brazilians are reaching advanced ages without even basic levels of necessary education”*. *“In terms of literacy, Brazil is 110 years behind the USA and 50 years behind Argentina”* *“It is crucial that continuing education strategies recognise this reality and respond appropriately”*.

“Those with better education have higher incomes, improved levels of employment, greater market stability and shorter working hours” alongside a host of health benefits. They also receive greater reward for any further advances in learning. *“A person with four years of schooling achieves an increase in pay of only around 8% per year of study”*. *“At the level of tertiary education, this percentage jumps to 21% and keeps growing”*. *“It is [therefore] clear that for those with an already high level of education, it is easy to feel motivated*

to continue studying as the returns are significant". And these rewards are not only monetary. According to the so-called 'happiness index', those with higher education in all different age groups, are more likely to be happy – a characteristic that is found to be even more pronounced in Brazil than other countries.

LEARNING THROUGH CULTURE

The 7th International Longevity Forum ended with a highly dramatic taster of the theatrical production 'Rugas' performed live by the actresses Vanja Freitas and Claudiana Cotrim. The play, researched by the performers themselves and dramatised by Herton Gustavo Gratto, is a strong observational essay on age and ageing. The brief performance was followed by a conversation with celebrated director Amir Haddad, co-founder of Teatro Oficina. The maestro spoke about his six decades of artistic activity, his dedication to street theatre, the democratising of culture and the need for constant personal reinvention. *"Learning is the most delicate, the most sensitive and the most profound human experience of all". "Eternal youth can only be achieved by eternal learning"*.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Life-long Learning must be more structurally embedded in all lives and all communities. In the Brazilian context, the need is even greater as we have missed opportunities to establish adequate educational base lines across large swathes of our population. According to the OECD, 31% of 15-19 year olds and 71% of 20-24 year olds in Brazil are not enrolled in education. How will these individuals be integrated into the rapidly changing global labour force? What health behaviours will they employ throughout their life-courses? What level of support will they be able to provide to their ageing parents? What sort of older citizens will they themselves have become by 2060? To what extent will their lack of skill preparedness for the new technological age continue to limit Brazil to the role of commodity exporter to the more sophisticated economies? In the 1950s South Korea, a country with few natural resources emerged from war with a much lower per capita income than Brazil. Education became their prime focus and today their per capita income is three and a half times that of Brazil. We undervalue Life-long Learning at our own peril.

Project organized in partnership with Bradesco Seguros.

With institutional support: from MSD, through its corporate responsibility program in Brazil; the Brazilian Society of Geriatrics and Gerontology; and the Open University of the Third Age / RJ.

Notes prepared by Luciana Fleury, Repórter, Dínamo Editora.

