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Sent: 07 June 2024 12:46
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Subject: Your Friday three - 7 June 2024

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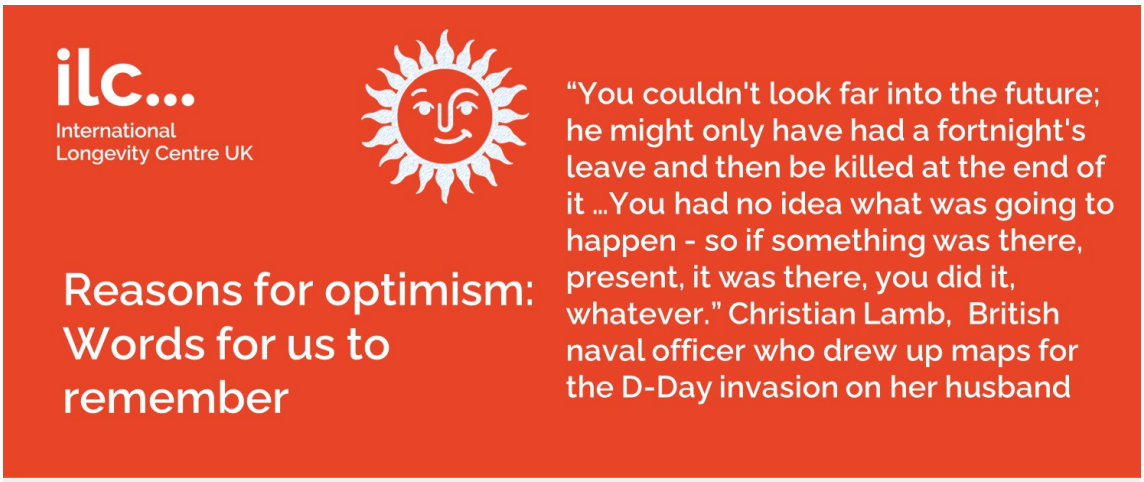
International Longevity Centre UK

Latest news

ILC Friday three

- Reasons for optimism - words for us to remember
- Healthy ageing - and electoral success in South Africa, India and Mexico
- Going for gold - global voices on healthy ageing

Reasons for optimism - words for us to remember



Human beings possess a unique power: the ability to communicate using words. This not only sets us apart from other species but also allows us to transcend time, bridging the past, present, and future. Words have an unparalleled capacity to stir emotions, convey wisdom, and make history come alive for successive generations.

This week the voices of the men and women involved in the D-Day landings 80 years ago, provide a poignant example of the evocative power of language.

Words have a unique ability to stir emotions in ways that images often cannot. Lyrics, poetry or anecdote can evoke the subtleties of human experience, transforming the mundane into the magical. In every language, humans use words to paint scenes in the mind's eye, eliciting feelings of wonder, nostalgia, or even sorrow. Words have the power to make us feel deeply, to connect us with experiences beyond our own, and to find beauty in the ordinary. This transformative power of language enriches our lives, making everyday moments more profound and meaningful.

But from election debates to job adverts, we need to use our words with care and respect those we're trying to communicate with. At the same time, words carry different meanings for different people and depends on context. For example, an employer recruiting for a "digital native", might, at best, inadvertently put off skilled applicants born pre-1990 and, at worst, be deliberately masking age-bias. In our report "One hundred not out", a title with intended meaning but not necessarily understood by all, we state, *"ageism serves no one's interests in an ageing society: we can't afford to underestimate younger or older people"* and that *"maintaining age-based assumptions is a folly."*

Great writers such as Shakespeare, Austen and Cevantes, epitomise the enduring power of words to explore and express the human condition. While their exploration and insights into the themes of love, hate, passion, and despair remain as relevant today as they were in centuries past; language evolves and can't be set in aspic. Words are meaningless unless they are listened to – and heard.

We're privileged this D-Day anniversary to hear, firsthand, the very old recount experiences of a time when they were very young – perhaps for the last time. Such accounts of bravery, sacrifice, and camaraderie serve not only as historical records but also as sources of inspiration and reflection. Far more than narrate events; their voices, with inflections from a different age, impart lessons on resilience, the cost of freedom, and the human spirit's capacity to endure. Soon those voices will be quiet but thanks to their diaries and their families as well as the work of writers and digital archivists their stories will hopefully endure and ensure that the significance of such events is never forgotten.

REASONS FOR OPTIMISM

Healthy ageing - in South Africa, India & Mexico

Does electoral success echo progress in healthy ageing?

Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index				
	Global Rank 2019	Global Rank 2022	Life span change 2019-2022	Health span change 2019-2022
South Africa	98	120	-4.7 years	-3.9 years
India	139	136	-3.2 years	-2.7 years
Mexico	54	44	+0.6 years	+0.4 years

Of course, words can also destroy, annoy, and misinform. We need to trust the source, and if the words represent commitments, then we want to see these delivered. In this election year, many citizens across the globe, made cynical by broken promises, might be turning a deaf ear to the soundbites and hyperbole coming from their political candidates. However, those voters who have previously benefited from government policies are, perhaps, more likely to vote in favour of the ruling party.

In recent weeks, there have been three particularly significant elections in countries large in both population size and land mass. It is interesting to compare the fate of the ruling parties in each of these with the progress they have made on our Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index.

South Africa
The African National Congress (ANC) remained the largest party but with a significantly reduced majority. President Cyril Ramaphosa's ANC secured just over 40% of the vote and just 159 out of 400 parliamentary seats, marking a notable decline from their previous results in 2019, where they had around 57.5% of the vote. This result indicates a growing dissatisfaction among the electorate with the ruling party, driven by ongoing issues such as corruption, economic challenges, and high unemployment rates.

Echoing this slide, in 2019, South Africa was ranked in 98th place on the Index and by 2022, had fallen to 120th out of 153 countries, with average life span and health span falling significantly post-pandemic.

India
The recent Indian general elections concluded with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) securing 292 out of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha. This victory allows Prime Minister Narendra Modi to continue his tenure, despite the BJP having lost their outright majority for the first time in ten years. The opposition, led by the Indian National Congress (INC), achieved its best performance since 2014, securing 234 seats.

In 2019, India was ranked 139th on the Index and while its total ranking had moved up three places to 136th out of 153 countries, both average health span and life span has worsened.

Mexico
Claudia Sheinbaum has been elected as Mexico's first female president following the June 2024 elections. Sheinbaum, representing the ruling party MORENA, secured a decisive victory over her main rival, Xóchitl Gálvez, taking office with a strong mandate from the electorate. Her presidency is expected to focus on continuing the

policies of her predecessor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, with an emphasis on social welfare, economic reform, and addressing corruption.

Mexico, however, has moved up our healthy ageing league table. In 2019, Mexico was ranked 54th but, by 2022, had moved up ten places to the 44th spot – and despite the impact of the pandemic our analysis showed slight improvements in both average life and health spans.

While, we would need to do further analysis to evidence such a correlation, but as European countries head to the polls it will be interesting to track the progress of incumbent governments alongside the Index.

EXPLORE THE INDEX HERE

Going for gold - global voices on healthy ageing



We're a week off from the UEFA Euro 2024 football tournament and there are just under 50 days remaining until the start of the Paris 2024 Olympics.

It's also just under 40 days until our very own awards ceremony in Paris as part of our Going for Gold project, supported by Sanofi. At this event, we will be presenting medals to delegates from countries who perform the best on healthy ageing and prevention.

As we get ready for a summer of sport, and ahead of our award ceremony, we're sharing an incredible series of short videos, where health experts, country leaders, policymakers and athletes highlight the importance of healthy ageing, prevention and physical activity in their countries. Here are just three of them:

Hon. Bronnie Taylor
The Hon. Bronnie Taylor, Member of the New South Wales Legislative Council and Shadow Minister for Regional Health, Shadow Minister for Trade, and Shadow Minister for Seniors, explains how NSW and Australia would perform at a "healthy ageing" Olympics.

WATCH BRONNIE TAYLOR HERE

Alan Smith

Former Leicester City, Arsenal and England striker, Alan Smith, discusses the importance of healthy ageing and his views on why diet, physical activity and health prevention are key to living a longer, healthier life.

WATCH ALAN SMITH HERE

HRH Prince Bereng Masupha Seeiso

HRH Prince Bereng Masupha Seeiso of the Kingdom of Lesotho explains how geography, self-sufficiency and diet play an important role in advancing healthy ageing in the African nation.

WATCH PRINCE SEESIO HERE

Will you be in Paris on 16 July 2024? Join ILC-UK and the ILC Europe Network for our Going for gold awards ceremony ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympics. For more information about this event please see here and click the button below to read more about the project.

READ MORE

To keep up-to-date with ILC events throughout the year, please continue to check our website on a regular basis.

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