

Perspectives on Sustainable Growth

Matthew Kaplan
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Intergenerational Pathways to a Sustainable Society

 Springer

Perspectives on Sustainable Growth

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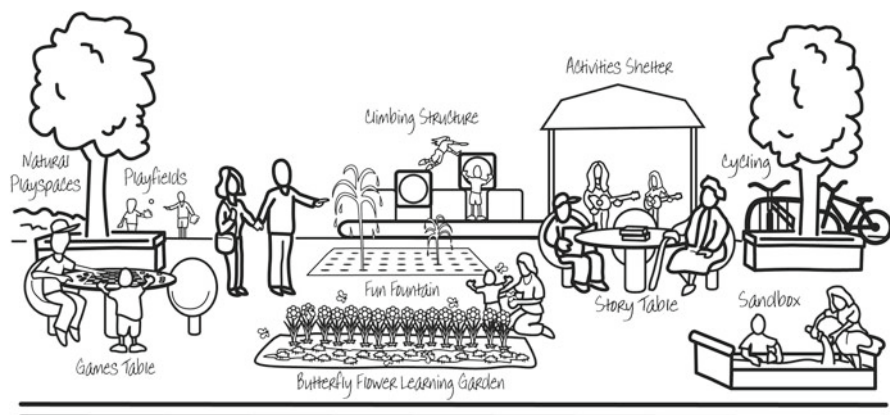
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Intergenerational Pathways to a Sustainable Society



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ISSN 2199-8566 ISSN 2199-8574 (electronic)
Perspectives on Sustainable Growth
ISBN 978-3-319-47017-7 ISBN 978-3-319-47019-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-47019-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016955821

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

“No one can win the war individually, it takes the wisdom of our elders and young people’s energy.” [A line from Glory, a song written by John Legend and Common.]

Writing about the US civil rights movement of the 1960s, these two artists captured the essence of intergenerational solidarity and how vital it is to creating and maintaining strong, interdependent communities and families. Whether addressing current societal issues on the micro or macro level, the most effective solutions have a distinct intergenerational dimension. *Intergenerational Pathways to a Sustainable Society* embraces the intergenerational concept as a way to provide a comprehensive look at critical areas including healthy lifestyles, sustaining family life, preserving the environment, and supporting all members of society against the backdrop of a worldwide longevity revolution.

The authors have dedicated their lives to advancing intergenerational practices as thought leaders, researchers, coaches, teachers, and advocates. This book is built on their extensive years of experience providing rich content including robust examples, international perspective, conceptual depth and breadth, and a big dose of heart and soul.

The result is a virtual treasure trove of evidence-informed intergenerational programs, policies, and sites taking root across the globe. The fact that these prolific authors are based in different continents, yet all highly engaged on the international stage, provides them with a useful vantage point for identifying common points of understanding with regard to how intergenerational practices are conceived, understood, and appreciated across geographic regions and cultural contexts. At the same time, they provide a nuanced understanding and a realistic appraisal of some of the challenges associated with replicating/modifying successful models across national borders and cultural realities.

In the overview, the authors state “As we emphasize throughout the book, strong intergenerational relationships are not only at the root of healthy and productive aging; they are also an important component of sustainable societies.” Indeed this theme resonates as intergenerational strategies are presented as a unifying force promoting sustainable families, communities, and societies.

Intergenerational solidarity inside and outside of the family is addressed in the book. Research by Leng Leng Thang and Alan Hatton Yeo has found that children and young adults who participate in intergenerational programs show greater interest in their own older relatives. In the role of elders, whether in a community or family setting, the so-called *grandparent advantage* is perpetuated through the recycling of knowledge, passing down of traditions, and providing solid roots.

It is society's loss when generations are artificially segregated by policies, programs, living arrangements, and systems of service delivery. The knowledge and wisdom found in the grandparent advantage are left dormant and the appreciation for that wisdom and fresh perspectives are isolated. We are all richer when resources are used to connect generations rather than separate them. In order to thrive our societies need to engage and value the assets found in every generation.

Intergenerational solutions use resources judiciously and can encourage a thriving economy. They represent "economies of scope" wherein a single intervention or program helps or positively affects multiple issues and populations. For example, a shared child and adult day care site relieves stress on a middle generation of caregivers by providing quality care in one location, eliminating the time needed for multiple trips to various care facilities supporting greater productivity in the workforce.

In the conclusion of the book, authors Kaplan, Sanchez, and Hoffman state, "In terms of building sustainable intergenerational relationships, we find concepts such as the 'circle of care' to be compelling, particularly when placed in the broader context of what Kingson, Hirshorn, and Cornman (1986) describe as a 'social compact,' referencing our common stake, even across generations, to contribute to the public good (including one another's welfare)."

This sense of mutual obligation provides an important force for helping people find meaning in their lives, a sense of connection and belonging in their communities, and opportunities for enriching the lives of others.

Values tied to the "social compact" concept must also underpin efforts for envisioning—and working to build—more cohesive, caring, and *sustainable* societies. It is this continual return to fundamental questions about the values we as societies choose to live by that I think is so important and powerful.

The authors ask, "*What values do we want to guide us as we seek to set the course for our collective (societal) future?*" They probe this question in multiple contexts.

At the root of many of the most compelling intergenerational strategies for sustaining families and family life is an emphasis placed on values of mutual support and reciprocal care. In the realm of lifelong learning and education, there is a *valuing* of elders' experience and indigenous knowledge as a way to broaden and deepen the formal and informal learning processes in educational institutions and other community settings.

In the world of work, organizations that have been most successful in structuring multigenerational workforces tend to value generational diversity as an asset. They establish practices for capitalizing on each generation's strengths and facilitating intergenerational communication, teamwork, and knowledge transfer upward and downward the generational chain.

Environmental stewardship and community service are core values that drive intergenerational initiatives aimed at preserving and caring for the natural environment. Nobel Peace Prize recipient Wangari Maathai summed this up well when she said, “The generation that destroys the environment is usually not the generation that suffers. If they go into the forest, they will be digging their own graves and that of their children and grandchildren.”

With regard to values related to community building, the authors state, “A premium is placed on values of social inclusion for members of all generations and intergenerational cooperation; this contrasts with notions of perpetually conflicting or competing age-based needs, interests, and ideas for community improvement.”

The book’s multilayered emphasis on values serves as a helpful reminder that building a sustainable, livable society requires moral clarity and commitment as well as technical know-how.

Tin Kampl, president of the Youth Council of Slovenia, said “The struggle between generations is not the way to a better society. Only solidarity and mutual assistance can bring wellbeing for all of us.”

In today’s tumultuous world, the need to connect and not divide generations is critical. We must look at the longevity boom as a benefit not a burden and embrace our generational diversity just as the civil rights leaders of the 1960s did. *Intergenerational Pathways to a Sustainable Society* is a guide to help us all understand that we are stronger together. And together we can build a world in which people of all ages are valued and engaged.

Donna M. Butts

Reference

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Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to our many colleagues who have generously shared their experience and insights related to their research and practice in the areas of intergenerational studies, health and human development, family studies, lifelong learning and education, community development, environmental design, workplace design and workforce development, environmental education, and cross-cultural studies. We are also thankful for the following individuals who read through and provided critical feedback on earlier versions of book chapters: Elizabeth Larkin, Mae Mendelson, Daniel George, Lisia Zheng, Claudia Azevedo, and Pilar Díaz.

We would like to also acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for granting us permission to reprint images of their photos, figures, and other creations in our book. This includes Thomas Laird [illustrations of multigenerational and intergenerational playground scenes], Donna Butts (Executive Director of Generations United) [Intergenerational Family Connections Matter and Valuing Vaccinations Across Generations], Ee Ching (Candice) Ng [images of her two “human bonding artifacts” prototypes: “Digital Heirlooms” and “Remember Me-Inheritance Kits”], Rajiv Mehta, of Atlas of Caregiving [for the Family Caregiving Map], Stan Lembeck and Matthew Lembeck-Edens [for permission to use their family karate photo from 2002], SyracuseCulturalWorkers.com [for permission to use the “An Elders Pledge Notecard” image; Deidre Scherer, thread-on-fabric ©1992-2002. Text by Orrin Onken. SCW©2012], Alex Russ [photograph of participants of a Garden Mosaics program (developed by Cornell University)], and Barbara Ashendorf and Diana Post (Director of the Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance) [for permission to share the winning entry (photo and poem) for the 2015 Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Intergenerational Contest].

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Chapter 1

Overview

Abstract This chapter provides an overview of the book. It begins by laying out the multi-faceted rationale for linking intergenerational engagement and sustainability concepts. The central argument is that strong intergenerational relationships are not only at the root of healthy and productive aging; they are also an important component of sustainable and livable societies. Against the backdrop of demographic changes in which the proportion of older adults in the population is growing, intergenerational programs and practices are framed as measures that help ensure the social inclusion of older adults, thereby increasing their potential for making important contributions to their families, communities, and overall society. This chapter also aims to articulate a nuanced understanding of intergenerational encounters which distinguishes between “involvement,” i.e., simply participating in activities, and “engagement,” which alludes to the degree to which participants invest their physical, cognitive, and emotional energies into their intergenerational encounters. This chapter also introduces a framework for bridging intergenerational research and practitioner perspectives. The intent is to create an accessible resource that can be used to inform the efforts of educators and practitioners working in a wide range of multigenerational settings, including schools, community centers, libraries, parks and recreation facilities, workplaces, and residential settings. A parallel objective is to expose those who do basic research on intergenerational relationships to insights drawn from practitioner experiences and perspectives that can be useful in ensuring that research questions and theoretical frameworks are grounded in practice.

We are participants in a “longevity revolution,” a demographic phenomenon which implies a rapid increase in the proportion of older adults in the overall population.

As noted in a UN report on population aging, “Globally, the number of older persons (aged 60 years or over) is expected to more than double, from 841 million people in 2013 to more than two billion in 2050. Older persons are projected to exceed the number of children for the first time in 2047” (United Nations, 2013, xii).

This global phenomenon is seen and experienced differently in different parts of the world due in large part to variability in fertility and mortality rates and in social and economic factors. For example, in less developed regions the older population is growing faster than in more developed regions. Currently, about two thirds of the world’s older adult population live in developing countries, with projections point-

ing to an increasing concentration of the world's older population in less developed regions (United Nations, 2013).

Against this backdrop of demographic data, there is divergence in viewpoints about the prospects for aging societies. On the one hand, there are clearly some challenges that need to be addressed, such as how aging populations can strain health care systems and contribute to increases in health care costs. There is also concern about the phenomenon of falling old-age support ratios, i.e., number of working-age adults per older person in the population, in terms of strains placed on pensions and social security systems (WHO, 2012). Problems related to inadequate health care services and high poverty rates among older adults are particularly pertinent in poorer countries, where there are limited social security systems and often inadequate infrastructures or social institutions in place (United Nations, 2013).

The World Health Organization defines four types of actions that societies can take over the life-course to enhance the health and well-being of older adults:

- Promote good health and healthy behaviors at all ages to prevent or delay the development of chronic disease.
- Minimize the consequences of chronic disease through early detection and quality care (both chronic care and long-term care).
- Create physical and social environments that foster the health and participation of older people.
- Reinventing aging—changing social attitudes to encourage the participation of older people (WHO, 2012, pp. 23–24).

In the last two action categories, there is reference to the importance of ensuring social inclusion of older adults, thereby increasing their potential for making important societal contributions. With a commitment toward changing social attitudes toward aging and nurturing intergenerational bonds, a positive side of population aging emerges in the form of stronger, more sustainable families, communities, and workforce.

As we emphasize throughout this book, strong intergenerational relationships are not only at the root of healthy and productive aging; they are also an important component of sustainable societies.

Before we begin discussing the “sustainable society” part of this assertion, we delve into some of the many dimensions of intergenerational relationships and provide a broader rationale to justify adopting an intergenerational lens for societal planning. In an earlier publication (Kaplan & Sánchez, 2014), we framed this justification in the context of seven *imperatives*. Thus far, we have touched only on the first one, the *demographic imperative*, pointing to the relevance of the current aging population trend for fostering intergenerational relationships. The other six imperatives are labeled as follows: *restoring the circle of care*, the *active aging imperative*, the *social cohesion imperative*, the *livable community imperative*, the *cultural continuity imperative*, and the *relational imperative*. In one form or another, we revisit these imperatives throughout this book, with an emphasis on probing the relevance of these underlying themes in the quest for creating a sustainable, livable society.

The idea of people coming together across age groups to help one another, learn from one another, and work for the common good is nothing new. Historically, it

would occur as an integral part of our daily experience in the normal course of family and community life. However, rapid demographic and social changes over the past 40 years (e.g., changes in family structure, childbearing age, elderly dependency ratios, likelihood of four-generation families, new roles for women, delay of life transitions and life-course fluidity, weakening of collective identities, erosion of intergenerational trust, rising of generational diversity, etc.) have made it necessary to develop auxiliary means for helping people of different generations get to know one another and share in the richness (and challenges) of each other's lives. Hence, we speak of structured (intentionally developed) activities, programs, policies and places. The ultimate vision is one of an "intergenerational way of life."

We contend that this intergenerational vision, which we illustrate with diverse examples throughout this book, is strikingly congruent with the quest to establish a "sustainable way of life." For aging societies to be sustainable, all generations must be able to coexist successfully at any given time and across time (non-contemporary generations). Living longer lives may mean as well living in more multi-generational families and multi-generational social structures in an unprecedented scale for human society. Even though it cannot be assumed that the number of people who will experience a four- or even five-generation family situation shall increase automatically,¹ the possibility of living in multi-generational contexts is higher than ever. In times when life courses are becoming more fluid and new life stages are emerging (Harper, 2013) in some parts of the world, we draw upon the linked-lives principle at the heart of life-course approaches (Bengtson, Elder, & Putney, 2005) and the lifelong adaptive capacity claimed by life-span perspectives (Lieberman, 1975).

Our approach is one of linking sustainability concepts from various contexts that have an intergenerational relations dimension and applying them to programmatic efforts to address some of society's most intractable problems, including those related to under-performing educational and work-related systems, fragmentation of support systems for dependent or vulnerable populations, and needed neighborhood renewal and regeneration efforts (Bernard, 2006; Buffel et al., 2014).

In particular, we highlight the potential of intergenerational engagement strategies for contributing to: the health and well-being of individuals, increased stability and caregiving capacity of families, a more engaging and responsive education system, family-friendly work policies, and stronger, more cohesive communities.

We also aim to provide a nuanced understanding of intergenerational encounters. In exploring the impact of intergenerational programs on individual health and well-being, for example, a fundamental distinction is made between "involvement" and "engagement." The former generally refers to what participants "do," i.e., the activities in which they participate, whereas the latter refers to the "quality of one's connection to an activity or role or the act of attaching psychological importance to an activity or role" (James, Besen, Matz-Costa, & Pitt-Catsoupes, 2011, p. 9). It is this concept of "engagement" that captures participants' investment of physical, cognitive, and emotional energies into their intergenerational encounters.

¹This is because "the development of increasing numbers of living generations within family is counteracted by the increase in intergenerational spacing" (Lundholm & Malmberg, 2009, p. 5).

This book also aspires to help build and bring further focus to the intergenerational studies field, which, to some extent, is bifurcated. On one end, there is a robust group of scholars who conduct basic research into intergenerational relationships in family, community, and workplace contexts. On the other end, there are applied researchers who focus primarily on the intervention side of the field, i.e., they frame their work to inform the development of intergenerational programs, policies, and planned environments. Whereas it is reasonable to view both ends as *two sides of the same coin*, in reality there is a disconnect; both sets of professionals tend to track different orbits in terms of professional affiliation, conference attendance, publication venues, and research questions and methods.

At the root of our efforts to bridge research and practitioner perspectives, we seek to broaden our understanding of the concept of intergenerational practice. By summarizing major intergenerational theories and basic research studies that have a bearing on intergenerational practices in a wide range of settings and with a wide range of objectives, we hope our efforts serve a translational research function. Our primary intent is to create an accessible resource that can be used to inform the efforts of educators and practitioners working in a wide range of multigenerational settings, including schools, community centers, libraries, parks and recreation facilities, workplaces, and residential settings. Another goal is to expose those who do basic research on intergenerational relationships to insights drawn from practitioner experiences and perspectives that can be useful in ensuring that research questions and theoretical frameworks are grounded in practice.

Each chapter will include a description of underlying theoretical perspectives, conclusions drawn from a review of empirical research in the literature, examples of innovative, evidence-informed, successful practice, and a conclusions section that ties chapter content to broader sustainability and intergenerational engagement issues and concepts.

The featured programs and practices are drawn from the academic literature, the “gray literature” (which includes reports, newsletters, bulletins, and articles of interest from government agencies, community organizations, research centers, and popular media sites, much of which is readily accessible online), and from our 50+ collective years of personal experience in this field of inquiry and practice.

In reporting on these initiatives, we emphasize their quality of life implications with regard to healthy human development, family life, lifelong learning, community development, opportunities and experiences at work, and preservation of the natural environment.

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Chapter 2

Introduction

Abstract This chapter broadly sets out to conceptualize and frame sustainability at the generational interface. More specifically it aims to explore sustainability from an intergenerational *value-added* perspective—the *Intergenerational Gambit*. To this end the core argument is to present issues related to age, aging, and generations not only as challenges or even problems but as sources for the generation of innovative responses to some tenacious societal issues and for paving pathways for facilitating quality lives for all generations in a sustainable custom. In order to do so ‘age/aging’ is broadly explored after which the challenging question of how an aging society can be considered sustainable is posed and grappled with. “Intergenerational pathways” are subsequently posited as options and how such pathways might offer strategies towards a more sustainable society. These intergenerational strategies are then teased out in three parts: clarification of intergenerational terminology, a conceptual framework, and the historical context. Ultimately this chapter argues for the benefits of the continuous presence of meaningful social relationships, meaningful social roles, effective educational institutions, opportunities to find meaningful work and a manageable work-family balance as well as a healthy physical environment.

2.1 Exploring the Link to Sustainability

When hearing about sustainable development, many people tend to think about macro-level challenges, on the scale of “preserving our planet.” Images that might come to mind relate to the quest to sustain our ecosystem, including the resources we need to live (energy, food, clean water, etc.). Attention is drawn to important questions, such as: How can we establish sustainable practices in areas such as agriculture and food development, industrial and economic development, and energy production?

In contrast, our intended contribution to inquiry and practice tied to the concept of sustainability is centered on the quest to build *sustainable social relationships across generations* at home, in the workplace, and in community settings. We focus on ways to foster intergenerational relationships that contribute to the emergence of a populace that is healthy, always learning, and with strong family and community supports.

We employ a multi-dimensional perspective and adopt an integrated view of “sustainability.” This involves tuning into, and attempting to “link up,” sustainability concepts in the following domains:

- Ecological (natural environment, in balance with the built environment)
- Socio-cultural
- Demographic
- Economic
- Political (includes governance practices)
- Bio-psycho-social determinants of health
- Community development (in historical context)

Our overall focus is on exploring ways in which an intergenerational perspective might contribute to such an integrated view of sustainability in terms of how it applies to: individual lifestyles, family and community relations, community development processes and structures, human service programs, organizational culture, institutional practices, social policy, cultural traditions, and overall quality of life. In the process we tap into key concepts related to societal sustainability: interdependence, equity, cohesion, distribution and consumption of available resources, age-integration, life-course and life-cycle approaches, and sustainable health and well-being.

We treat the concept of sustainability as both an end goal in itself as in working to sustain valuable environmental, cultural, and human resources, and as a means for achieving other goals, e.g., sustainable schools that provide lifelong learning opportunities for all generations and sustainable families that provide effective care for dependent family members.

2.2 Finding Sustainability in an Aging Society

In a way, this is a “trick question.” The headwinds against providing a coherent and compelling response have to do with the subjective meaning of the word “age” or, in this case, “old age.” So, we first attempt to address this issue head-on.

2.2.1 What Does It Mean to Age?

This is a classic question being asked with increased frequency due in large part to the dramatic worldwide increase in the proportion of older adults in the general population. This is also one of the trickiest questions to answer, no easier than the question of what it means to be “human.” The problem lies in the fact that there is no one way to experience the aging process, nor is there one set of meanings associated with aging and reaching old age. We do know, however, that how we view the

aging process (including our own) affects the way we choose to spend our time, how we think about and plan for the future, and the extent to which we thrive to remain active, civically engaged, and socially connected with others—across generations and across community settings.

In the U.S., over the last few decades there has been a steady flow of alarmist pieces in the media providing doomsday scenarios of the growing aged population seeking ever-expanding entitlements, breaking the social security bank, overwhelming our health care system, and destroying national productivity. Some of the catch phrases noted in this literature, such as “graying is about paying” (Peterson, 1999) and (describing old age as) “a season without a purpose” (Cole, 1997), tune into negative social and economic consequences for society. In subtle and not-so-subtle ways, the aging process has been often portrayed as a time of physical, mental, and economic vulnerability and decline. Consequently, retired older adults are viewed as more of a burden than a resource for society, and that they are seen as less productive than people who are in the workforce. More recently, the International Monetary Fund (2012) has warned about the so-called “longevity risk,” “the financial consequences associated with the risk that people live longer than expected” (p. 2).

The U.S. mainland is not the only place where such negative views associated with aging can be found. Let us look at sayings across cultures and nations which convey negative characterizations of old age and aging.

- Swedish: “Youth goes in a flock, manhood in pairs, and old age alone.” [“Unga lever sina liv i flock, vuxna i par, och gamla ensamma.”]
- Hawaiian: “An oldster who has never reared children sleeps by the roadside.” [“Elemakule kama ‘ole moe I ke ala.”]
- Chinese: (Teaching an old person to learn is like) “asking a cow to climb a tree.” [“Rang lao niu shang shu.”]
- Irish: “The old man hasn’t the place of the cat in the ashes.”

Woven into such sayings are stubborn myths of aging such as “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” and older people are destined to become less social and more isolated as they age. From the same source that we used to find these proverbs about old age (Kaplan, Ingram, & Mincemoyer, 2001) here are several that reflect negative stereotypical views about childhood and youth.

- Chinese: “He who has no hair on his lip can’t be trusted to do anything well.” [“Zui shang mei mao ban shi bu lao.”]
- Spanish: “Youth is an illness that time cures.” [“La juventud es una enfermedad que se cura con el tiempo.”]
- Korean: “There is blood on your head and it is not dried off yet.” [“I piga meoli e igo ajig tteol-eojyeo geonjo doeji.”]
- Hungarian: “The eggshell is still on your butt.” [“A tojáshéj még a seggét.”]

Research shows how the conditions are particularly ripe for age-based stereotypes to flourish when there is limited intergenerational contact in family and community settings (Abrams, Crisp, & Marques, 2008; Stearns, 1989). For example,

when young persons have limited intergenerational contact in their lives, they are more likely to be influenced by negative media portrayals of older adults where old age is often associated with disability, passivity, and isolation. The inverse also applies; older adults with limited contact with youth are more likely to accept negative stereotypes of youth, e.g., as being naïve, loud, disrespectful.

Herein begins a cycle that can hamper the development of positive intergenerational relationships in people's lives. Communication science researchers provide insights with regard to how negative stereotypes influence people to make premature assumptions about those who fit into the stereotyped group. These assumptions then influence interpersonal behavior in several ways. It has been shown, for example, that the stereotypes many people hold of older adults influence how they communicate (including the questions that are asked and the responses that are encouraged) and what they communicate about with older adults (Harwood, 1998). Age-based stereotypes even influence whether a person's talents, contributions, and feelings are acknowledged. This paints a picture of ageist attitudes and stereotypes being persistent, wide-reaching, and, in many cases, self-fulfilling. In 2012, a survey on discrimination in the European Union revealed that 45% of Europeans still believe discrimination against people aged 55 and over is widespread (TNS Opinion & Social, 2012).

Fortunately, we are in an era of emergent counter-narratives that reflects more positive views and terminology related to aging and retirement. Such terms are found throughout this manuscript; here are a few:

- “active aging”
- “productive aging”
- “successful aging”
- “lifelong learning”
- “reinventing retirement”
- “senior volunteerism”

Charlotte Yeh, chief medical officer of AARP, in writing about the need for a self-empowering mindset associated with aging, calls for a “re-setting” of the terms of aging:

“The lexicon has accommodated this thinking, as ‘healthy aging’ and ‘well-being’ have become holistic frames—for defining not just physical health but also mental health, social connection, functionality, hearing, seeing, community engagement, and stage-of-life possibilities” (Yeh, 2015, n.p.).

In an interview for a New York Times article on “The Wisdom of the Aged” (Leland, 2015), Laura Carstensen, founding director of the Stanford Center on Longevity, described some other positive aspects of aging: “The older people get, the more positive they are about aging and the more adaptive they are to their limitations. Social science tends to define old people by their disabilities. But people don't define themselves that way” (n.p.).

We concur with this assessment. We also advocate for a shift away from the paradigm for viewing aging as a biomedical problem (and as a problem at all) which

equates advanced age with illness. This perspective is convincingly challenged on many fronts, including a UN Human Rights Council report (Grover, 2011) which states the following:

“This position is not only inconsistent with the holistic approach to human health, but it also perpetuates a perception of older persons as dependent and sick. When considering the health of older persons, the Special Rapporteur is of the view that there must be a paradigm shift away from the perception of older persons as a ‘social burden’ to one that emphasizes the process of ‘active ageing’ and that will reorient our ideas about ageing to focus on the continuing contribution of older persons to society” (Grover, 2011, p. 5).

This orientation is one in which older adults are seen as having valuable societal contributions that they can make, do make, and must make in order for a society to thrive. They share important values, such as a sense of stewardship over the environment, and knowledge and skills, such as how to open a bank account and how to go for a job interview, that young people need to survive and thrive.

The sense of urgency for older adults to contribute—e.g., to the health and well-being of younger generations, to prospects for the future of the workforce, and to the civic vitality of their communities—is reflected in Maggie Kuhn’s (Gray Panther’s founder) exclamation,

“We don’t have a single person to waste” (Maggie Kuhn, quoted in Moody, 2010, p. 415).

The “Elders’ Pledge,” presented in full in Fig. 2.1 (below), is another powerful declaration that conveys an affirmative and empowering view about the aging experience.¹

Yet, it also must be recognized that there are no definitive answers to the question, “What does it mean to age?” In a way, it is like trying to find the right answers to a Rorschach test, whereby subjects are asked to share their perceptions or interpretations of a series of inkblot images. The responses provide more information about the perceiver than about the randomly produced image itself.

In a similar vein, we contend that aging is just another way to look at life and living. Aging focuses on the inescapable fact that time passes as we live. However, the passing of time implies both a sense of duration (“I am still alive”) and a sense of dynamicity (“I am not the same person anymore”). Whether life timelessness may lead to positive (e.g., continuous development and learning) or negative (e.g., decay and frailty) interpretations is something that remains open for discussion and subsequent action, both in personal lifestyles and broader efforts to influence cultural views about what it means to “age.”

¹ Here is some history of “An Elder’s Pledge.” The author of an earlier version was Orrin R. Onken, a lawyer practicing Elder Law in Oregon. It was the “Syracuse Cultural Workers” group that adapted the pledge to apply to all elders, whether American or not, and paired it with the artwork of Diedre Sherer. Posters, note paper, and bookmarks using the pledge can be purchased online from Syracuse Cultural Workers.

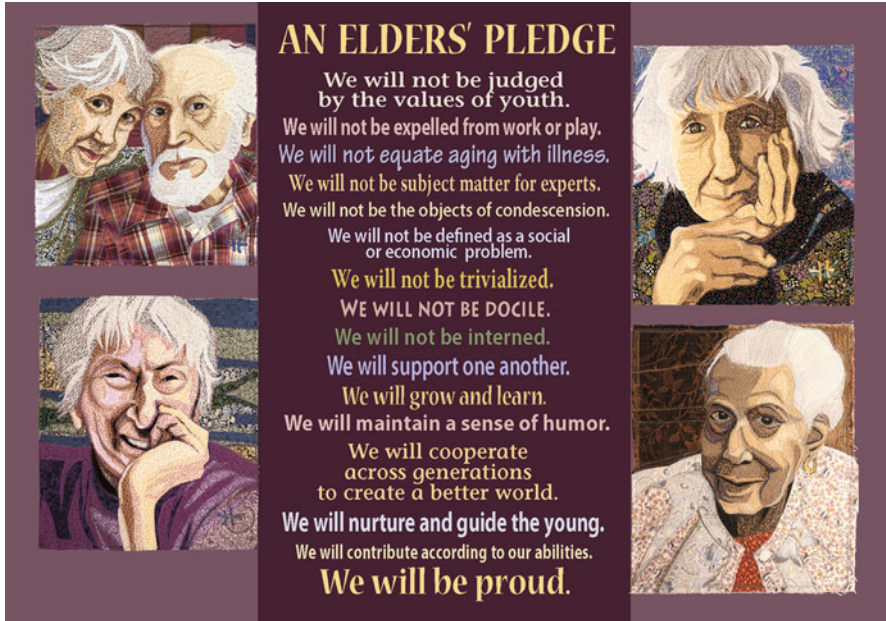


Fig. 2.1 An Elders' Pledge. Image used with permission from SyracuseCulturalWorkers.com. Deidre Scherer, thread-on-fabric ©1992-2002. Text by Orrin Onken. SCW©2012

2.2.2 *Intergenerational Applications: Calls for an Age-Integrated Society*

The intergenerational applications featured in this book emerge from a more positive paradigm for viewing population aging.

We take an assets-oriented approach, which begins with recognition of the contributions that older adults—and individuals at all ages and from all generations—can make to their families and communities. At the heart of this perspective are mainly values of social inclusion (for members of all generations) and “intergenerational solidarity.” This contrasts with notions of perpetually conflicting or competing age-based needs, interests, and ideas for community improvement (Zaidi, Gasior, & Manchin, 2012). However, we leave leeway as well to considering the combination of integrative and conflictive aging and intergenerational experiences.

Typically, intergenerational practitioners and advocates aim to actualize the *potential* of older adults for making meaningful contributions to the lives of others. They do this by developing programs, policies, and places that create pathways for capturing older adults’ (as well as other generations’) time, talent, and experience—and do it in ways that help address society’s most pressing needs.

One of the themes that cuts across all chapters is the age-related stereotype-busting properties and potential of intergenerational programs and practices. The underlying rationale is as follows: In order to help people understand and appreciate

those who are different from themselves—whether this difference is based on race, ethnicity, gender, or, as discussed here, age and generation—it is necessary to go beyond simply providing them with information *about* the “other.” It is through shared experiences and regular (ideally, prolonged) contact that attitudes are changed. Intergenerational programs provide such experience.

Participants learn firsthand how popular age-related stereotypes are often inaccurate and should not be allowed to affect how they view and relate to others. For example, participating children and youth tend to learn that despite the physical limitations of some older adults, they also have extensive knowledge, interests, abilities, and engaging personalities. The role of intergenerational practitioners in influencing such attitudinal change is also worth consideration. The most highly skilled ones tend not to deny or paint over generational differences. Rather, they engage participants in reflective group process designed to promote critical thinking about how stereotypes tend to obscure the ability to see individual differences (Brabazon & Disch, 1997). There is also some evidence with regard to how increasing sensitivity to age-related stereotypes also pays dividends in how people perceive themselves (e.g., McGowan & Blankenship, 1994). This theme is further explored in the next chapter (Chap. 3) which looks at program impacts on individual health and well-being.

In returning to the opening question posed in this section—How can an aging society be deemed sustainable?—our response, in sum, is to emphasize the power and potential of healthy intergenerational relationships. When there is mutual trust, reciprocity, and sincere caring across generations, people are more likely to see beyond their own personal, often short-term, interests, and tune into how they might find meaning and opportunity to connect with others in pursuit of the common good.

2.3 Intergenerational Terminology, Underlying Conceptual Framework, and Historical Context

2.3.1 Clarifying Intergenerational Terminology

In working on this book, we encountered much variation in how certain terms are defined and interpreted. Hence, before proceeding further we thought it would be useful to provide some clarification in terms of our use of terms.

- “Intergenerational programs:” We begin with the phrase “intergenerational programs” and take the approach of deconstructing both words—“intergenerational” and “program.” Insofar as the prefix “inter” refers to “between,” the word “intergenerational” alludes to what takes place *between generations*. Here, we are referring to cooperation, interaction or exchange between generations. Following Sánchez, Sáez, and Pinazo (2010), we suggest that it is the relationship (*inter*), not the subject (*generation*) that matters most here. The individual, or individual

generation, is not at the *nucleus* in these relationships. The real essence is in what occurs *between* individuals. It is through interaction with others (Donati, 2011) that multiple perceptions of, and ways of functioning in, family and community contexts are gained. To give primary preference to the noun “generation” would mean cultivating an approach that delimits attention to interactive processes between generations and how this interaction affects our perceptions of “family,” “community,” and “society.”

As for “generations,” the term points out individual and collective time-bound phenomena such as age, cohort belonging, kinship relations, and historical events. The focus is not only on the “bookend generations”—children and older adults, grandchildren and grandparents, even though much of the focus of intergenerational programming is on such young-old engagement; technically, the reference is to the engagement (sharing of skills, knowledge or experience) between any two (or more) generations.

There is also variation in how “programs” are defined. One line of emphasis tunes into highly structured social and human service *programs* that have a finite, activity-specific curricula, with a beginning, middle and an end to the program. If just a single, one-time only activity is involved, we use the phrase “intergenerational activity” rather than program.

- “Intergenerational practices:” Whereas the term “intergenerational programs” is often used to refer to a rather narrow definition of planned and highly structured programs of intervention and the term “intergenerational practices” (or “intergenerational programs and practices”) alludes to a broader array of intergenerational intervention options, inclusive of cultural practices, policies, and designed environments. This broader meaning of the word “practice” is consistent with the definition provided by Beth Johnson Foundation (2011):

“Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.”

- “Intergenerational” versus “multigenerational:” It is worth clarifying the distinction between interventions that are “intergenerational” and “multigenerational.” To say that a program or setting is “multigenerational” simply implies that participants represent more than one generation. The emphasis is on ensuring that members of different generations can be present, feel welcome, and engage in the activities. In contrast, “intergenerational” implies an orientation for working with generation-diverse populations and activating new relationships (sometimes in the way of reciprocal learning experiences) that are rooted in the interactive processes between generations.

There is a “gray area” here, insofar as some initiatives cast as multigenerational take on intergenerational characteristics and vice versa. For example, consider the concept of “aging in place,” which calls for vibrant, engaging communities that recognize the needs of seniors and their contributions. It is basically a multi-

generational concept, although it occasionally enters into the “intergenerational” domain without being labeled as such. As noted by Oberlink (2014):

“Aging in place supports the notion that older persons should be able to maintain a desirable lifestyle by participating in their communities, remaining independent as their health allows, having access to educational, cultural, and recreational facilities, feeling safe, and living in an intergenerational environment” (p. 6).

In the 2014 report, “Best Cities for Successful Aging” (Chatterjee & King, 2014), of the 14 innovative and effective highlighted “programs with purpose” across the U.S., through which “older adults are finding ways to successfully *age in place* and engage with their communities” (p. 32), 10 have a significant intergenerational component. These programs are wide ranging, with older adults functioning as tutors, foster grandparents, child advocates, and health, workforce preparation, and arts coaches and educators in various community settings.

- “Intergenerational practitioners:” This term is used quite broadly in this book, and is meant to include a wide range of professionals, including:
 - human service professionals who work with families and seek to address intergenerational communication and relationship issues affecting the health and well-being of family members,
 - educators who work with multi-generational groups in an intergenerational way, and
 - community development professionals who engage young people, older adults, and the generations in-between in critical dialogue about community issues and joint efforts to address issues of common concern.
- “Intergenerational shared sites” (also referred to as generation-integrated settings): According to AARP (1998), intergenerational shared sites refer to settings in which “multiple generations receive ongoing services and/or programming at the same site, and generally interact through planned and/or informal intergenerational activities” (p. v). There are many shared site configurations, including joint facilities consisting of a nursing home and child care center, an adult day service center and child care center, a community center that incorporates programs serving children, youth, and adults (and with age-integrated programming), a senior center within a school, etc. (Jarrott, 2007; Sullivan, 2002; Thang & Kaplan, 2013).
- “Intergenerational advocacy” generally refers to calls for increased investment in the education of the young, financial security for older adults, and support for families as they care for their members. The tacit understanding is that when one generation thrives, they will be in a better position to provide financial and other types of support for other generations. Take Social Security, for example. An intergenerational advocacy stance might emphasize how it is in everyone’s best interest to support the long-term solvency of the Social Security system. For current workers to draw benefits when they retire, they must count on contributions made by future generations.

- “Intergenerational communities:” According to Generations United’s annual *Best Intergenerational Communities Awards* program, intergenerational communities are places, with flexible geographic boundaries, that:
 1. provide adequately for the safety, health, education and basic necessities of life for people of all ages;
 2. promote programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between people of different generations; and
 3. enable all ages to share their talents and resources, and support each other in relationships that benefit both individuals and their community (Generations United, 2014, p. 1).

“An intergenerational community is not just one where multiple generations reside. It is one where individuals of all ages are considered integral and valued members of the team. The families, structures, facilities and services that children, youth, and older adults encounter in the community and in day-to-day interactions and relationships reflect this perspective. Partnerships are essential to intergenerational communities and can be between local government, older adult living communities, schools, businesses, local cultural and community organizations and services, families, and community members of all ages (Generations United, 2014, p. 1).”

- “Lifetime neighborhoods” (as defined by ILC-UK)—are those which “offer everyone the best possible chance of health, well-being, and social, economic and civic engagement regardless of age” (Kneale & Sinclair, 2011, p. 12). The focus is on older people, but the features of lifetime neighborhoods are portrayed as benefiting people of all ages, even though there is not always a clear direct and immediate benefit for younger generations.
- “Neighborhoods for all ages:” What constitutes a neighborhood suitable for all ages is not explicitly “intergenerationally fair” or clearly changed to meet the needs of older and younger people (Kneale & Sinclair, 2011). This critique is akin to some discussion about the “age-friendly” communities and cities movement, as described in detail in Chap. 6 (“Intergenerational strategies for sustaining strong communities”).
- “Communities for All Ages:” The CFAA model developed by Temple University (U.S.) places emphasis on cultivating intergenerational strategies to address critical issues, establishing local alliances across diverse organizations and systems, and offering training and technical assistance in intergenerational practices. There are some other uses of the term “communities for all ages,” similar to uses of the term “neighborhoods for all ages” (in the UK), that are more multi-generational than intergenerational.
- “Age-intentional communities:” This term was coined by Generations United to describe Reston, Virginia, one of the 2014 “Best Intergenerational Community award” winners (Generations United, 2014). In the small town of Reston (located within the Washington, DC metropolitan area, with 58,000+ residents), values of intergenerational engagement are woven into many domains of the town’s planning history, philosophy, and development. An intergenerational orientation is

reflected in decisions made in designing the configuration for housing and open space (five village centers, with many pathways and open space areas connecting the neighborhoods), in the enduring and productive partnerships among over 13 community organizations committed to collaborating on a wide range of intergenerational programs and activities, in the decision to merge a children's center, senior center, and adult care center into a single (shared site) facility; and in special events that infuse an intergenerational component (e.g., there is an annual "Grandparents and Grandchildren Nature Walk" event at the Walker Nature Center) (Generations United, 2014; GIA, 2015).

- "Intergenerational environmental education"—refers to environmental projects that are action-oriented as well as education-oriented, and includes a broad range of environmental initiatives, including those focused on environmental health, monitoring, appreciation, and restoration; pollution prevention; and energy conservation (Liu & Kaplan, 2006).
- "Intergenerational contact zones"—serve as spatial focal points for different generations to meet, interact, build relationships (e.g., trust and friendships), and, if desired, work together to address issues of local concern. They can be found in all types of community settings including schools, parks, taverns, reading rooms, clubhouses, museums, community gardens, environmental education centers, and multi-service community centers. This is a useful concept for conceptualizing and creating sustainable intergenerational spaces. Kaplan, Thang, Sánchez, and Hoffman (2016) provide examples for how the intergenerational contact zones concept could be applied to the design of intergenerational settings.
- "Intergenerational (studies) field:" The intergenerational field is "the body of theories, policies, research projects, and networks specifically concerned with intergenerational relationships" (Sánchez et al., 2010). Our use of the term is in the context of efforts to share information, collaborate, form strategic partnerships, and coalesce lessons learned from intergenerational researchers, practitioners and advocates at the local, regional, national, and international levels. References to an "intergenerational field" tend to allude to a finite domain of inquiry and action, bounded by a clear set of approaches, questions, and skills that practitioners need to function effectively (Newman et al., 1997; Rosebrook & Larkin, 2003). The systematic study of intergenerational initiatives is gaining legitimacy in academia, and this is reflected in a relatively new journal (2003) devoted to publishing intergenerational-themed work in the areas of program development, policy, and research—*Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*.

2.3.2 *Key Themes and Concepts in the Intergenerational Literature*

- **Intergenerational interdependence:** This term refers to the relational and interdependent nature of human endeavors upward and downward the generational chain. In general, the concept of intergenerational interdependence when applied

to intergenerational relationships places emphasis on how our lives—across generations—are inextricably linked. This concept cuts across all chapters of this book. Here are a few ways in which the concept plays out:

- Sustaining individual health and well-being: Enhancing the health and well-being of one generation has implications for contributing to the health and well-being of other generations. For example, when older adults are healthy and active, they are in a better position to contribute to the social, emotional, and intellectual development of others (WHO, 2012).
 - Sustaining families and family life: In stable and cohesive families, with effective lines of intergenerational communication and teamwork, family members provide and receive needed care, emotional support, and financial and other resource assistance when needed.
 - Sustaining strong communities: When people of different generations recognize that they have overlapping quality of life concerns and interests, such as access to safe and affordable housing, healthy foods and desirable recreational spaces, they are better positioned to envision and craft a joint plan for comprehensive community development that engages and supports all residents.
 - Establishing sustainable work environments: Mixed-age teams tend to encompass multiple perspectives and skill sets for meeting goals and solving problems. A multi-generational workforce also has the capacity to mentor and provide on-the-job training for new workers and to protect organizations against “brain drain” when older adults retire.
- **There is power in generational diversity**, but it depends on how that diversity is “leveraged:” Diversity in any setting can be seen as an asset (or set of opportunities) rather than a problem or deficit. In a workplace setting with an age diverse workforce, for example, intergenerational teams could be established to promote convivial learning and joint problem solving. Such measures take advantage of this diversity and reduce the potential for intergenerational tension and misunderstanding. The challenge of leveraging the strengths of intergenerational diversity is articulated and embraced from several perspectives. It is a recurrent theme in the work of Generations United, such as in their call for an “age advantaged” society and their description of “age-optimized” communities (Generations United, 2014). Schiller, Moehle, and Whitehouse (2015), in their introduction to a special issue of the *International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry* on intergenerational engagement in family and community settings, provide a succinct argument for embracing generational diversity:

“When generational differences are leveraged as strengths rather than treated as barriers to understanding, transformative conversations emerge and our capacity for positive possibilities expands” (p. 6).
 - **Emphasis on interagency and cross-sectoral collaboration:** In the domain of intergenerational practice, a recurring point of emphasis centers on strategic partnerships and coalition-building actions. Various strategies have been developed to broker partnerships and establish broad, multi-party collaborative sys-

tems across the public, private, and voluntary sectors. Here we are referring to the development of formal structures for achieving common purpose, including: to develop new intergenerational programs and practices, establish mechanisms for identifying and sharing best practices, advocate for age-integrated public and private funding streams, and work to integrate effective programs into existing service systems or large scale initiatives.

- **Life-cycle, life-course, and sustainability:** From an intergenerational perspective, the quest for societal sustainability involves a tale of trajectories (to understand our experiences we must tackle them as enmeshed in a web of processes and transitions stretching from birth to death) and linked lives (individual lives are interconnected as we move on through the life-course). Moreover, social structures and individual lives shape each other. Our interest in sustainable social relationships across generations as a requirement for sustainable societies stems from evidence showing that social bonds that form throughout our lives affect our own life-course and that of others (McDaniel & Bernard, 2011). Currently, many of those social bonds may be of an intergenerational nature given the stretching of the life cycle. Intergenerational relationships throughout life must be approached as connected to age-linked trajectories and transitions embedded in institutional contexts. For instance, decision-making processes and possibilities of a successful job transition for older people are linked to the life-course pathways of significant others around (e.g., spouses, relatives, friends, co-workers from different generations, and community members) (Fournier, Zimmermann, & Gauthier, 2011).
- **Concept of intergenerational solidarity:** In this case we are talking about expressions of unconditional trustworthiness between members of different generations (Lüscher et al., 2013). The World Health Organization connects intergenerational solidarity, interdependence and aging in the following way: “Ageing takes place within the context of others—friends, work associates, neighbors and family members. This is why interdependence as well as intergenerational solidarity (two-way giving and receiving between individuals as well as older and younger generations) are important tenets of active ageing” (WHO, 2002, p. 12).
- **Concept of intergenerational justice:** Both a norm and a virtue, the notion of justice needs to be tackled through an intergenerational lens in our multi-generational world. Justice refers sometimes to fairness (ethical balance between generations), other times to equity (economic balance between generations). In short, the issue at stake is that some generations may either provide benefits to other generations or hinder possibilities for other present or future generations to live a good life. Research on societal sustainability has benefited from this broadening of the concept of justice to include current generations’ responsibilities and obligations with regard to future generations (e.g., guarding and passing on inherited cultural heritage).
- **The “social ecological model:”** This refers to a broad-based, theoretical framework for understanding human development. Throughout this book, we take an “ecological systems” approach, as introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1981), for tuning into the complex array of factors—including individual thought processes,

interpersonal relationships, organizational structures, public policies, and community systems and situations—that influence how humans behave. It provides a framework for looking at the interaction between people and the many spheres of environmental influence. The intergenerational domain is a part of the “psychosocial environment.” However, this intersects with other spheres of the environment—e.g., the natural, built, food, chemical, and socioeconomic environment. The social ecological model is useful for examining the multi-dimensional facets of health and well-being, including lifestyle behavior interventions, social influences on health and disease, and the organizational factors, public policies, and environmental design influences on human activity and health services.

- **An empowerment perspective:** The act of coming together with others for the purpose of amplifying an ability to improve one’s surroundings fits in nicely with “empowerment” ideology. Rappaport (1984) describes empowerment “as a process: the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives” (p. 3). The concept of “empowerment” involves actual life circumstances and real (not only perceived) quality of life issues. Intergenerational professionals who embrace an empowerment framework tend to focus on civic engagement processes and community change objectives and methods. They aim to instill in participants a sense of “active citizenship” and a commitment to collaborative (intergenerational) community-based problem definition and problem-solving. As program participants gain knowledge about community issues, gain skills to affect community change, and find others with similar concerns to work with, they become “empowered.”

2.3.3 Intergenerational Practice in Historical and International Context

At this point, it is fair to say that there is a significant amount of international attention and effort in this area. Throughout the globe, we see contributions expanding the range and depth of knowledge (theories, research outputs, and evidence-based practice) and actions (especially public policies and targeted funding for intergenerational programs/spaces) aimed at taking positive advantage of the potential nested in intergenerational interactions and relationships involving groups from different generations.

In this section, we provide a brief review of some of the historical and cultural factors that have influenced how intergenerational practices have taken form over the past 35+ years.

There are some solid organizational pillars for promoting international cooperation around issues related to aging and intergenerational relationships, including WHO, UNESCO and ICIP (International Consortium for Intergenerational Programs). Actually, the United Nations—the umbrella organization for WHO and UNESCO—made a clear move to connect aging and intergenerational relationships

when in the aftermath of its Second World Assembly on Aging claimed that intergenerational solidarity had to be enhanced –among other strategies– through developing “initiatives aimed at promoting mutual, productive exchange between the generations, focusing on older persons as a societal resource” (United Nations, 2002, p. 17). In February 2015, the United Nations’ General Assembly adopted a resolution on the follow-up of the Second World Assembly on Aging in which the call to foster intergenerational solidarity was included. From the UN perspective, there has been an ongoing concern about solidarity between generations as a fundamental factor for the achievement of a *society for all ages*.

The ILC (International Longevity Centre) Global Alliance,² a multinational consortium consisting of member organizations, aims to address longevity and population ageing in positive and productive ways, typically using a life-course approach, and highlighting older people’s productivity and contributions to family and society as a whole. The Alliance partners carry out the mission through developing ideas, undertaking research, and creating forums for debate and action in which older people are key stakeholders. In 2012 one such a dissemination activity was the publication of a report ‘Global Perspectives on Multigenerational Households and Intergenerational Relations’ by the ILC. This report provides a global snapshot of multi-generational networks and the intergenerational relationships within these. Continuity and change are themes emphasized throughout.

In line with UN policies on aging, WHO has been promoting active aging as a four pillar framework based on health, lifelong learning, participation, and security. In an updated report of WHO’s landmark document, *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework*, the ILC (2015) in Brazil has highlighted where and how intergenerational strategies are linked to fostering active aging:

- Under the lifelong learning pillar, supporting active aging requires the promotion of “intergenerational exchange and informal learning within families, communities, and workplaces” (p. 16);
- Regarding the participation pillar, cultivation of “intergenerational relations, contact, dialogue and solidarity” (p. 17) is considered a pathway to enable people’s participation throughout their lives, including in older age.

International interest and innovation in this area are growing as we witness quantum leaps at the local, regional, and state, and national levels. For instance, the government in Ecuador is currently implementing a “National Agenda for Intergenerational Equality 2013-2017” mainstreaming intergenerational equality across sectors in all national legislation. In Germany, the Federal Government has received 579 applications for the *Mehrgenerationenhaus* [Multi-generational House] 2017-2020 program.³ The Australian Government has committed to publish an “Intergenerational Report” every 5 years, assessing “the long-term sustainability of current Government policies and how changes to Australia’s population size and

²The ILC Global Alliance website: www.ilc-alliance.org

³See: <http://www.mehrgenerationenhaeuser.de/meldungen/topnews/news/579-bewerbungen-zum-neuen-bundesprogramm-mehrgenerationenhaus-2017-2020/>

age profile may impact upon economic growth, workforce and public finances over the next 40 years” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015). An example at a regional level is furnished by the European Parliament’s declaration on representation of the rights of future generations and on intergenerational justice in EU decision- and policy-making (European Parliament, 2016). In this document the Parliament encourages European Union member states and regional actors to embed the issue of intergenerational solidarity and justice into decisions and policies.

We also see similarities and differences across countries and cultures with regard to how intergenerational practices are conceived and perceived. In most Western countries, intergenerational program design tends to be focused on developing relationships and support systems between individuals who are not biologically related. In societies in Asia (Thang, Kaplan, & Henkin, 2003) and Africa (Adjaye & Aborampah, 2004), there is more of a tendency to focus on ways to strengthen intergenerational interdependencies and social cohesion in the family context. It is the family that is seen as the principal conduit in the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and values. Within the broader intergenerational field, however, we are beginning to see some convergence between both intergenerational domains. This includes interventions that welcome family involvement in community-based programs and community involvement in family-based programs.

Along with the increased globalization of intergenerational programs and practices has come increased cultural diversity and awareness of the role that culture plays in intergenerational practice. At times, cultural considerations even come to the foreground in program development efforts. Case in point is Wexler’s (2011) action research aimed at developing new intergenerational health promotion initiatives in Alaskan Native communities. Wexler’s culturally-consonant approach for data collection and health promotion involved taking care to accommodate indigenous values and traditions with regard to intergenerational communication dynamics, participatory forms of community engagement, and local health practices. Wexler also emphasized the need to be sensitive to concerns about cultural identity loss in communities with histories of experience of punitive policies for speaking indigenous languages and engaging in traditional cultural practices.

Over time, in part as a function of the growing international (and multi-cultural) attention to the need to strengthen intergenerational relationships, there has been a broadening in meaning, to encompass a wider range of intergenerational engagement phenomena. We see references to “intergenerational practices” (which includes cultural traditions such as local festivals with a distinct intergenerational engagement component), “intergenerational policies” (e.g., tax policies to provide financial assistance for families supporting older relatives at home), “intergenerational design” (i.e., planning/creating physical environments that are conducive to intergenerational exchange), and “intergenerational studies” (which refers to a field of study that focuses on effective intervention strategies and skills that intergenerational practitioners need to function effectively).

We also need to pay attention to each country’s ... institutional structures, policies, and economic conditions that have a bearing on intergenerational relationships

at home, in healthcare settings, in schools, at the workplace, and in natural settings such as parks.

Such historical, cultural, institutional, and policy-related factors and considerations provide some context for understanding current directions being taken with intergenerational work.

Hopefully, continued development in this international field of inquiry and practice will result in a deeper understanding of the potential of intergenerational engagement to enrich people's lives and help address vital social and community issues.

In the next section, we explore applications in the context of sustaining human health and well-being across the lifespan.

2.4 Transcending the Challenges Encountered in Intergenerational Programs and Practices

For the most part, the intergenerational literature reports on programs and practices that have been deemed successful in achieving intended objectives. Most of the written materials and videotape accounts of intergenerational programs tend to emphasize the positive and downplay the difficulties. Certainly, this literature is packed with lessons learned with regard to effective practice. Some common themes include: find great partners, provide training for project staff members (especially in program facilitation skills), conduct program orientation sessions for participants, and plan activities that are developmentally appropriate as well as in synch with participants' goals and interests. Some of these themes are explored in greater detail throughout this book.

However, what about intergenerational endeavors that *do not work out* quite as well as intended? To provide a more balanced view about some of the challenges involved in doing intergenerational work, Kaplan and Rosebrook (2001) surveyed intergenerational practitioners and requested that they share their "false starts"—affectionately referred to as "bloopers"—in an open and honest way.⁴ The 20 stories that were collected (from 15 respondents) fit into the following 14 categories of the types of things that can and sometimes do go wrong in intergenerational programs.

1. Forming Partnerships: Trying to get the "right" team of collaborating organizations together: Selection of inappropriate partners; lack of clarity about respective roles and responsibilities; and differing perceptions of words like "exchange," "interaction," "collaboration," and "sharing."
2. Recruiting Participants: Ineffective recruitment campaigns (i.e., not generating enough participants); unanticipated challenges of recruitment (e.g., "tough crowd" at a senior center); and lack of interest or responsiveness.

⁴Survey results were originally presented at the 2001 Generations United Conference (Kaplan & Rosebrook, 2001).

3. Orientation and Training for Participants: Insensitivity to the needs and expectations of participants (on the part of staff, volunteers, and other participants); divergent expectations about participants' role(s); and lack of interest or unanticipated reaction to planned activities.
4. Funding: Difficulties obtaining, receiving, and/or dispersing funding.
5. Activity selection: Activities are not developmentally appropriate – i.e., did not take into account competencies (e.g., readiness to create and explore) or limitations (e.g., in terms of mobility and cognitive functioning).
6. Selection of setting: Inappropriate choice; unanticipated occurrences; poor acoustics; inclement weather; inappropriate furnishings, etc.
7. Communication dynamics: Conflict (or misunderstandings) involving participants, staff, and/or administrators; disconcerting exchanges between children and senior adults; and violations of cultural norms (e.g., in regard to greetings, touch, humor, etc.).
8. Floundering levels of participation: For example, an abundance of “mysterious” no-shows.
9. Ill-conceived implementation of activities: Abrupt activity beginnings and endings or lack of smooth transitions.
10. Lack of clarity about program objectives: For example, uncertainty about the needs that are being addressed or the quality of life enhancements that are being sought.
11. Evaluation: Inappropriate selection/use of evaluation tools, misunderstandings associated with some aspect of the research enterprise.
12. Program publicity: Missed opportunities for providing due recognition for volunteers and professional partners; inaccurate publicity of program; missed opportunities for publicity, etc.
13. Improper use of labels or terminology: For example, “old folks,” “rug rats,” “brats,” “curtain climbers,” “geezer,” etc.
14. Logistics: For example, involving transportation difficulties, computer technologies and communication strategies.

To get a sense of the intergenerational practitioners' pain and passion associated with the stories they shared, consider the following two examples:

“I had organized an intergenerational walking tour for participants of a community center located in a tough urban neighborhood. This activity was designed to enable the participating youth and older adults to show each other those neighborhood sites for which they have good feelings or about which they wish to learn more. One of the sites on the tour was a local candy shop. While in the shop, one of the young participants, a particularly hardened 13-year old, started cursing wildly at the store owner for not being nice to her in the past. One of the seniors appeared to be visibly uncomfortable with this language, and I thought I was going to faint on the spot.”

“We have a case of a senior (90+) who lives in a long term care (assisted living) facility who seems to be focused primarily on flirting with the staff -- dancing, talking, etc. Problem: He's taking too much attention. Our program is geared to teaching social skills and communication skills for children with special needs. He wasn't really “with” the program... But the kids loved him... He's very outgoing and funny...(He wears a suit and bow tie, hat, and a hanky out of his pocket.) He was once in show business (maybe a comedian)... He is

there for the instructions at the beginning of each day. But he just smiles and is charming. He's oblivious to the program. He enjoys himself and the kids adore him. The problem is that he sort of sucks attention from everyone... Some of the other seniors complain and seem to resent him..."

On one hand, these stories provide solid reminders about the importance of advance planning and making sure to clarify objectives and expectations to all parties before the program begins. Another aspect of these stories of (program-related) trial and tribulation is that they remind us that intergenerational work is a dynamic, challenging process involving real, and sometimes unpredictable individuals and situations. Just as we learn from the "success stories," false starts and bloopers can be equally instructive; both types of experiences yield valuable insights about ways to frame intergenerational practice to achieve desired objectives.

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Chapter 3

Intergenerational Approaches for Sustaining Individual Health and Well-being

Abstract This chapter explores several “pathways” through which intergenerational programs and practices contribute to health and well-being across the lifespan. It begins with a review of some foundational concepts that lend support, as well as help set the parameters, for intergenerational interventions that promote physical activity, healthy eating practices, and other lifestyle behaviors that have a bearing on physical and mental health. Another theme explores program impact on how older adults perceive themselves, particularly with regard to whether they adopt positive or negative cognitive scripts associated with aging. This discussion is informed by social psychological research into the relationship between self-perception and health. Intergenerational program examples are presented which aim to reduce the actual and perceived loneliness that many older adults experience, and provide them with meaningful social roles and a greater sense of purpose in life. Particular emphasis is placed on intergenerational models designed to provide social, emotional, and instrumental support for individuals who live in vulnerable situations and with unmet needs for assistance.

3.1 Foundational Concepts

3.1.1 Emphasis on Health from a Lifespan Perspective

Health does not just happen at discrete periods of life; it needs to be nurtured across the lifespan. Our lifestyle behavior choices at a young age can have lifelong consequences. We know, for example, that many chronic health problems in old age could have their origin in poor health habits established during early childhood (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2010; Mistry et al., 2012).

Intergenerational programs provide a context for people across generations to learn about the interconnectedness of health issues they face. Program participants also learn about health issues and concerns from multi-generational perspectives.

They learn to see beyond the moment in which they are living and appreciate the cumulative effects—throughout the lifespan—of lifestyle choices such as how they eat, engage in physical activity, and engage the health services available to them.

3.1.2 The Relationship Between Self-Perception and Health

There is a body of research in the field of social psychology which points to the power of self-perception for influencing health outcomes. Fitting into this broader line of research, Rebecca Levy and her colleagues have conducted studies that reveal how older adults' self-perceptions related to age have an impact on their functional health outcomes (Levy, Slade, & Kasl, 2002), cognition (Levy, 2003), and risk of mortality (Levy, Slade, Kunkel, & Kasl, 2002). In their study indicating an effect on actual survival, they collected data on 660 participants of the Ohio Longitudinal Study of Aging and Retirement (OLSAR), all aged 50 and older. Levy and colleagues found that those individuals who held more positive age stereotypes lived on average 7.5 years longer than their peers who held negative age-related stereotypes. In considering the possible mechanisms through which self-perceptions of aging can influence longevity, they identified “will to live,” defined as “a judgment that the perceived benefits of one's life outweigh the perceived hardships,” as an important mediating variable. Those with positive self-perceptions of aging were more likely to have a greater will to live.

We could draw from the work of gerontologists and psychologists to develop strategies for increasing awareness and stimulating change away from potentially negative cognitive scripts associated with aging. A good set of examples can be found in the literature on reminiscence interviewing/life review methodologies that stimulate senior adults' reflection about their lives. At the forefront of this movement is the work of James E. Birren, past associate director of the Center on Aging at the University of California, Los Angeles, who developed a “guided autobiography” approach that entailed asking older adults questions that stimulate such reflection. For example: If your life were a book, what would its title be? What would the title and the theme of your current chapter be? (Kleyman, 2000).

Older adults who share their life histories and circumstances with young people are likely to benefit from this opportunity to reflect upon their life accomplishments, aspirations, and sense of meaning. At the same time, as noted by McGowan and Blankenship (1994), the young person who is engaged in an intensive process of learning about an older adult's life (including their state of health and well-being) is also engaged in an exercise in self-understanding. Participants are challenged to reflect upon their own assumptions about people of different generations and this evokes a certain amount of self-reflection. For example, an individual whose previous self-concept is one of being objective and fair-minded in the way they view and treat others might be hard-pressed to reevaluate such a notion upon learning that they are susceptible to, and might have unintentionally perpetuated, stereotypical notions about certain groups of individuals.

3.1.3 From “active aging” to “active living”

One of the cornerstones of many official reports on healthy aging is a call for “active aging” (Grover, 2011). On the other end of generation-specific health promotion campaigns, we see initiatives labeled as “active living” interventions, yet focused on increasing the physical activity levels of children deemed at risk of childhood obesity (Sallis et al., 2014). Essentially, we are advocating for an integrated “active living” paradigm that recognizes the importance of active lifestyles for all generations, and sets the stage for collaborative (interagency and cross-sectoral) efforts aimed at developing behavior influence campaigns and environmental and policy strategies designed to promote active lifestyles for the entire population. We still use the term “active aging,” but what we have in mind extends to the attitudes and behaviors of all generations, not just older adults, in line with most recent approaches to active aging as a life-cycle endeavor.

3.1.4 From Health Literacy to Health Promotion

In most intergenerational programs that have a health education component, participants work with an orientation toward translating knowledge (health literacy) into action (health promotion). This often includes collaborating on efforts to modify their own behaviors as well as the behaviors of other community residents (across generations) to adopt healthier lifestyles and work cooperatively to address local health-related concerns.

3.1.5 Drawing Upon the Social Ecological Model for Understanding Health Behavior

In the Introduction chapter, we noted that Bronfenbrenner’s (1981) ecological systems approach for understanding human behavior is a useful conceptual framework for examining the role of intergenerational engagement in broader human development terms. The individual is viewed as being embedded in a family, a community, in a society, and in eco-systems. There is a social context within each of these domains of influence and there are multifaceted relationships between the domains.

This theoretical framework is useful for examining health behavior and framing health promotion programs (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, & Glanz, 1988). Just as we know that family and peers can have a powerful social influence on the acquisition of health-harming behaviors (e.g., smoking), such influence can also act in a more salutary way. Relationships with significant others (whether family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues at work, or others in the community) can influence and model decisions about how people seek medical care, cope with stress, engage in exercise, and plan meals (McLeroy et al., 1988).

The social ecological model also helps to direct attention to the physical as well as the social environment. If the goal is to encourage more children to walk to school, it is not enough to dot the walking path with neighbors willing to look out for and perhaps even escort the student walking groups. Some degree of land use planning, aimed for example at creating open, visible, and pedestrian-friendly walkways, would also be of considerable value in encouraging students to walk to school. One benefit of the model is that it treats “infrastructure” as an essential component of public health.

3.1.6 Social Support and Health

There are many properties of the social environment that have implications for health. An important construct for exploring the role of social factors in promoting health is “social support.” According to Sheldon Cohen (2004),

“Social support refers to a social network’s provision of psychological and material resources intended to benefit an individual’s ability to cope with stress. It is often differentiated in terms of three types of resources: instrumental, informational, and emotional (e.g., House & Kahn, 1985). Instrumental support involves the provision of material aid, for example, financial assistance or help with daily tasks. Informational support refers to the provision of relevant information intended to help the individual cope with current difficulties and typically takes the form of advice or guidance in dealing with one’s problems. Emotional support involves the expression of empathy, caring, reassurance, and trust and provides opportunities for emotional expression and venting” (p. 676–677).

There are many studies that note the beneficial effects of social support on physical health, including effects on the cardiovascular, immune and endocrine systems (e.g., Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996). Even the perceived availability of social support, in particular emotional support, has direct effects on health and buffers the negative effects of stress (Cohen, 2004; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010; Martire & Franks, 2014). Intergenerational programs are rich sources of both perceived as well as practical social support.

3.2 Health Benefits of Being Intergenerationally Connected with Others

In this section, we draw on the literature that more generally explores the multidimensional links between social engagement and physical and mental health, and extrapolate from this literature to identify and discuss some distinctive characteristics of health promotion interventions that have an intergenerational component. The intergenerational program examples that are noted have clear implications for expanding participants’ social networks, generating new opportunities for finding a sense of purpose and meaning in life, and providing support and encouragement for staying active and engaged in civic life.

3.2.1 *An Antidote to Loneliness?*

An important thread in the literature that explores the connection between social connectedness and health outcomes points to social isolation. Both actual loneliness (objectively measured) and perceived loneliness (as a psychological state) have been associated with a number of negative health outcomes including early mortality (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, & Stephenson, 2015).

Angelique Chan's research in Singapore illustrates how perceiving oneself as lonely, even when living with family members, is more a predictor of poor health and mortality risks than living arrangements or even actual social networks outside the household (Chan, Raman, Ma, & Malhotra, 2015). Similar results (on the relationships between loneliness, health, and mortality) were reported in a study of older adults in the U.S. (Luo, Hawkey, Waite, & Cacioppo, 2012).

In terms of intervention implications from their research on older adults' loneliness, Chan et al. (2015) reported,

“Our findings highlight the need for a multidisciplinary approach to policy and programming for older adults who report feelings of loneliness in the community. From a social perspective, programs that encourage intergenerational bonding, particularly programs that are supportive of increased interaction among family members within households (either by facilitating space, time, or support, e.g., work-life balance programs, caregiver support programs) may decrease feelings of loneliness among older family members” (p. 1376).

Intergenerational programs tend to be effective measures for reducing the experience of social isolation and feelings of loneliness, particularly when introduced as part of, or as a complement to, larger (neighborhood- and city-level) strategies, services, and support structures aimed at promoting and maintaining older adult civic engagement.

In a report that highlights successful interventions developed by Age UK and members of the *Campaign to End Loneliness* network to reduce loneliness and isolation in later life (Jopling, 2015), intergenerational contact is noted as a key feature of several interventions. A primary component of “LinkAge Bristol,” one of these initiatives, is its community development approach which involves creating local activity *hubs*, each with a local advisory group providing guidance and support for offering a plethora of inspiring social activities.

“Throughout the city [of Bristol], hubs offer a wide range of activities including archery, choirs, cooking, holistic therapies, golf, IT, ping pong, walking, football, and yoga. Local *What's On* guides are used to show people what is available in their community. LinkAge also supports the development of more friendly, cohesive and empathetic communities through its intergenerational work, by celebrating cultural diversity and by challenging age stereotypes. Volunteers are the keystone of the organization and LinkAge has seen ‘virtuous circles of volunteering’ where people start by attending activities, but later become volunteers” (Jopling, 2015, p. 47).¹

¹Interventions such as the LinkAge Bristol initiative fit into a larger conversation taking place in municipalities on multiple continents about ways to respond to the issues being discussed here (e.g., the dangers of loneliness, loss of purpose, and the need to rethink/refit community infrastructure and services). One line of intervention receiving much attention in recent years is the “age-friendly” cities and communities movement (Fitzgerald & Caro, 2014) which is described in detail in Chap. 6 (“Intergenerational Strategies for Sustaining Strong Communities”).

It is important to keep in mind that positive and meaningful social relationships are vital for the health and well-being of all individuals, including those with cognitive deficits. As noted in a report on dementia from the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life (2016):

“Many people living with mild or moderate symptoms of dementia still have awareness of themselves as a complete individual with a distinct personality, a preserved sense of self and dignity, a sense of purpose, a desire to contribute to and satisfy needs, to form and develop social relations, to try new things and grow, even if words are sometimes out of grasp or what is happening is difficult to understand” (p. 6).

The Sodexo report continues with a prescription for integrated care in communities.

“[There is a need to] integrate care in our *communities* rather than concentrate it in isolated ‘facilities’. It should also shape our *philosophy* so that we grow beyond the ritual of ‘programs’. What would this look like? Suggestions based on experience of multi-generational and community engagement include *mutually beneficial* sharing, as a matter of course, of cherished activities that can be meaningful at very different levels of cognitive and physical ability such as music, exercise, story-telling, gardening and cooking” (p. 9).

One intergenerational strategy for addressing loneliness and transforming life in long-term care facilities is the “Eden Alternative,” a model developed by geriatrician William Thomas which involves infusing the nursing home setting with plants, animals, and children. “Edenized communities” provide residents with opportunities to have routine contact with children and assume responsibility for living things. It’s a formula for countering the loneliness, helplessness, and boredom typically found in nursing home settings. Bearon (1997) summarized Thomas’ new nursing home operating paradigm as follows:

“Residents are encouraged to take a primary role in caring for the plants and animals and interacting with people of all ages, and, according to Thomas, grow more vital from the variety of daily experiences, the companionship, and a sense that they are caring for others” (1997, n.p.).

This type of innovation in some residential care facilities reflects the evolution from person-centered, to relationship-centered, to community-centered care, the latter two of which place emphasis on how crucial intergenerational relationships can be in long-term care.

In some cases, intergenerational programs are found to expand the social connections of older adults in unanticipated, yet still quite welcomed, ways. For example, older adults who volunteered in a program in which they read books to school children (Fujiwara et al., 2009) reported increased frequency of communication not only with the children who participate in their school-based volunteer activities but also with their own grandchildren. They also reported increased contact with distant friends and improved self-rated health compared with control groups (of non-participating older adults).

3.2.2 The Health Benefits of Volunteering

Several studies conclude that older adults who volunteer tend to have a lower mortality risk, a higher level of functional ability, lower risk of depression, and higher self-rated health (Holtgrave, Norrick, Teufel, & Gilbert, 2014; McNamara & Gonzales, 2011; Scommegna & Lee, 2013). There are also many anecdotal accounts that attest to the powerful and rewarding sense of social connection associated with their volunteer experiences. For example, an older adult who volunteers with Lent Experience Corps (in Portland, Oregon) stated,

“It’s the opposite of a thread you pull and the sweater comes unraveled. You pull on this thread, and you find yourself connected” (Freedman, 1999, p. 211).

In 2010, a mixed methods evaluation of a randomized control trial assessed whether a series of volunteer interactions with children at The Intergenerational School in Cleveland, Ohio provided more benefit than a peer-group activity for persons with dementia living in residential care. Researchers found a significant decline in stress in the group that volunteered with children, and qualitative analysis identified three main pathways through which intergenerational volunteering affected participant QOL (quality of life): perceived health benefits, increased sense of purpose and sense of usefulness, and the formation of supportive relationships (George & Singer, 2011).

However, it is not always possible to attribute a causal effect to the volunteering activity. Scommegna and Lee (2013) note that volunteers may be different from non-volunteers in fundamental ways. They state, for example, that “healthy people are more likely to volunteer and poor health is a barrier to volunteering, making it difficult to determine to what extent (if any) volunteers’ better health is a benefit of volunteering” (p. 7). Scommegna and Lee (2013) also suggest that health outcomes associated with volunteering can be partially explained by the fact that many volunteers are enlisted through their clubs, churches and other organizational affiliations. Members of such organizations are already “joiners” to some extent and hence more active and involved in community affairs. They also allude to Neal Krause’s (2009) research which suggests that religiosity, particularly one’s level of commitment to their faith, may contribute to beneficial effects on the health of older support providers.

In considering other factors that might help to explain the health benefits found to be associated with intergenerational volunteering (and volunteering in general), it is worth considering the degree to which volunteers are afforded with a sense of purpose and the opportunity to choose social roles they deem meaningful. These themes are explored in the following two sections.

3.2.3 Health Benefits Associated with Having a “sense of purpose in life”

Purpose in life is a major factor often associated with the health of older adults.

In some studies, this connection is quite robust, even strong enough to predict the likelihood of developing Alzheimer’s disease. For example, in research reported in

the American Heart Association's journal *Stroke* (Yu et al., 2015), it was found that elderly people with a strong sense of purpose in life are almost 2.5 times less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.

The relationship is not so simple or clear, however. As noted above, correlation does not imply causation. There are many other factors involved and possible alternative explanatory frameworks. For example, people with a strong purpose in life tend to be more active physically and mentally, and this could help explain their health status. Or, it might be that certain character dispositions, a correlate of sense of purpose in life, might have a stronger bearing on one's mental and physical health as they age.²

There are many ways to develop a sense of purpose in life. This depends in large part on what a person in late adulthood values, how one derives meaning from one's life, and the types of civic involvement opportunities that one is likely to find "fulfilling."

Psychologists Erik and Joan Erikson, in their theoretical framework for understanding psychosocial development across the lifespan, emphasize how late adulthood is a time in life when the impulse to give back to society, to leave a legacy—which they labeled as "generativity"—becomes an urgent need.

One aspect of generativity—which the Eriksons' establish as being the inverse of "stagnation"—is a redirection of attention towards future generations. It is the realization that "I am what survives of me." It also involves considering how one has impacted others in their lives, including family, friends, neighbors, and society as a whole. Herein lies the roots of a growing sense of civic responsibility and interest in opportunities to "give back" in retirement (Parisi et al., 2009), and this often takes the form of participation in intergenerational programs. Some have developed the neologism "intergenerativity" to reflect the "generative" dynamic that can emerge from "intergenerational" relationships (George, 2015; George, Whitehouse, & Whitehouse, 2011).

3.2.4 *Meaningful Social Roles and Health*

Related to the concept of generativity is the notion that one way to find or rediscover a sense of purpose in life is through taking on new and meaningful social roles. We refer to a social role as "meaningful" from the perspective of the individual actor (sense of personal meaning) and in the broader societal context (the degree to which a role is deemed to have social value).

²Given the complexity of intergenerational relationships and the difficulty in parsing causes/effects, we advocate for the use of mixed methods approaches in intergenerational research aiming to evaluate program impact on multi-dimensional variables such as "sense of purpose" and "quality of life." Creative approaches like Photovoice, video analysis, and long-term participant observation can also provide deeper engagement than conventional research models.

Heaven et al. (2013) reviewed empirical and theoretical literature on the links between social roles (during and after the transition to retirement) and well-being outcomes. One of their main research questions was: “What kinds of intervention have been developed to promote social roles in retirement?” Seven of the 11 interventions they focused on in their review of the literature involved intergenerational program models designed to provide a robust source of “meaningful social roles.” They emphasized the need to consider how these roles are interpreted by the participants, for example in terms of the extent to which they evoked feelings of worth, purpose, and perceptions of usefulness.

Heaven and colleagues noted that all or most of the intergenerational interventions they reviewed met criteria associated with quality social roles, such as providing an explicit functional role, requiring an explicit commitment to roles, and roles performed in groups. Here are some examples: For the Foster Grandparents program, participants act as “grandparents” to neglected children; for school volunteer programs such as Experience Corps and the Japan-based REPRINTS program, participants take on formal roles in which they assist children in various capacities; through the national (U.S.-based) RSVP program, participants find formal placements in local voluntary organizations; and for mentoring programs in workplace settings such as Older Mentors for Newer Workers, retirees function as mentors for newer workers in the organizations in which they were employed.

3.3 Intergenerational Pathways for Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

3.3.1 Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, by 2020, two-thirds of all disease worldwide will be the result of lifestyle choices (Chopra, Galbraith, and Darnton-Hill (2002). Some lifestyle behaviors that have a bearing on health include: diet, physical activity, sleep patterns, weight loss, tobacco use, overconsumption of alcohol, stress management, and adherence to recommended health screenings. In this section, we focus primarily on intergenerational strategies for promoting healthier eating habits, increased physical activity, and recommended vaccinations.

3.3.2 Intergenerational Rationale and Strategies for Promoting Physical Activity

Being physically active is closely linked with aging well (Chodzko-Zajko, 2014). It effectively increases functional mobility (Gretebeck, Black, Ferraro, Holland, & Gretebeck, 2012), management of chronic health conditions such as diabetes and

hypertension (Lloyd-Sherlock et al., 2012), and contributes to brain health in several ways (Fried, 2014; McAuley & Rudolph, 2010), including the reduction of depressive symptoms for older adults with major depression (Blumenthal, Smith, & Hoffman, 2012).

Physical activity is also crucial for children's health. Childhood obesity is a major public health crisis of global proportions (Karnik & Kanekar, 2012). Part of the problem is an increase in sedentary lifestyles. Children are generally spending more of their time in front of television sets, playing video games, and watching computers. Not only does this influence children's health, it also introduces another hurdle for families trying to establish new family traditions involving healthier lifestyles (Higgins & Murray, 2010).

There is still the question about what it takes to motivate people to exercise in the first place. As signified in the social ecological model cited above, individual choice about physical activity is embedded in a complex web with other factors (e.g., built environment, demands of work, neighborhood safety, community infrastructure, social relationships, etc.). Hence, it is not enough for an individual to simply know that adopting an active lifestyle is an important component for attaining good physical and mental health. Although the benefits of physical activity have been documented extensively, more than half of adults in the U.S. are not active enough to gain these benefits (Bowen, Matlick, & Mowbry, 2010; Kruger, Carlson, & Buchner, 2007).

Much has been learned from prior research on how to motivate people to be more active. A major theme in the literature emphasizes the role of social support, whether it is from peer-led groups (Bowen et al., 2010) or intergenerational groups (Teufel, Holtgrave, Dinman, & Werner, 2012). In both domains (mono-generational and intergenerational), there is evidence to suggest the power of tight-knit social groups for providing individuals with support and encouragement to try new activities and make a greater effort to incorporate active lifestyle behaviors in their daily routines.

Yet still, even when people have social support and opportunities to engage in more physical activities, behavior changes do not necessarily follow. Getting people to engage in more physical activity is not a simple or automatic process that can be readily swayed by social influence or manipulated by edict or legislation. In fact, there are cases in which "active aging" policies enacted by governmental agencies responsible for health promotion can actually have a negative effect.

An example is the following story about a senior center in a medium-sized town in the south of Spain. A steadfast group of senior center members played dominoes on a daily basis. For over a decade, it was one of the most popular activities in the center, a cherished tradition for the center's membership. In 2011, the activity was discouraged and suggested to be canceled due to changing government policies on senior center programs. The membership reacted very negatively to the new policy; there were bitter complaints and even some individuals who canceled their center memberships (Fig. 3.1).

This was the same year in which the local aging services agency enacted a new regional implementation policy for promoting "active aging" programs. Those senior centers, like the one in the story, that did not meet a certain requirement for level of physical fitness type activities were forced to change their programs of



Fig. 3.1 A Game of Dominoes. This group of friends has been playing dominoes together at this senior center for many years. You could tell from their expression that they take their dominoes very seriously

activity, deterring some low physical fitness activities—like bingo—and replacing them with activities with a high physical fitness component, like Tai-Chi, gymnastics, and nature hikes.

This “active aging” policy was touted as a holistic and prevention-oriented approach to promoting health and wellness in the older adult population that was in line with directives in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging; specifically priority direction #2 which was devoted to “advancing health and well-being into old age”—(United Nations, 2002). The irony is that the way it was implemented violated other principles of “active aging.” An evaluation of the “active aging” approach among Spanish practitioners and older people concluded that being active was not about doing a particular type of activity –whether playing domino or going for a walk– but about taking pro-active responsibility of one’s health and participatory engagement in the context of the surrounding social fabric. Therefore, the problem with the proposed exercise program was with how it was developed and imposed on the members in a way that violated social norms and activity traditions at the center.

Here are some lessons to be learned from the senior center episode:

- (1) People want to choose, and they will choose, activities that they enjoy.
- (2) People want to choose, and they will choose, activity partners whose company they enjoy. The social environment plays a big role in framing the timing, type, and quantity of physical activity in which they choose to engage.
- (3) It is important to distinguish between “being active” and “being active the way I tell you to be.” This brings into play the concept of empowerment, including the term “self-empowered aging” which is gaining attention in the U.S.

In fact, an entire issue of *Generations*, listed on the American Society on Aging's website (<http://www.asaging.org/web-seminars/introduction-self-empowered-aging>) focuses on the theme of "self-empowered aging." In this issue of the journal, Paul Irving (2015) defines the term as follows:

"Self-empowered aging means taking control of one's life, learning, updating and improving skills, taking risks, building confidence, assuming power over personal circumstances, and developing the resilience to overcome inevitable challenges to come. In a society that has yet to fully appreciate the potential of older adults, self-empowered aging improves one's odds to accomplish later life goals that others may discount, and to enjoy self-esteem and satisfaction that others may lack... There are many roads to self-empowerment, depending upon an individual's personal objectives, inclinations, and values" (n.p.).

In line with this perspective, we view "active aging" not as a static measure of physical activity, but rather as a dynamic interaction between the external conditions of an individual's life, the internal perceptions of those conditions, and one's lifestyle choices. As John Beard, director of WHO's Department of Aging and Life Course, notes, active aging is more than just engaging in physical activities, such as riding bikes and going to the gym, and having good health care. There is a need to pay attention to the social context; this includes opportunities for continuing to participate in social, economic, cultural and civic affairs (WHO, 2012).

Physical activity is learned and fostered within the social context of the family, neighborhood, and community. Social relations influence physical activity and vice versa. Culture plays into both sides of this equation and therefore should be considered by those who study as well as those who promote health-oriented physical activities.

For example, walking is viewed as a distinct intergenerational bonding activity in some communities in Australia where residents share Yiriman cultural and historical roots. The practice of walking together energizes intergenerational relationships and provides an important function in building an intergenerationally shared experience of community (NYARS, 2006).

"For those involved in Yiriman, walking is not simply a recreational activity or something that just involves physical exercise. Here, walking is also a means through which the young get exposed to education, hunt and collect food, meet other groups, travel to and carry out ceremonies, burn areas of land and carry out other land management practices, send messages and communicate, 'freshen up' paintings, collect and produce material culture such as tools and other implements, 'map' boundaries and collect intelligence and build knowledge" (p. 115).

Several intergenerational strategies have been proven effective in motivating older adults to actively seek out, join, and stay involved in structured physical activity programs.

The first strategy (or actually, set of strategies) does not focus on promoting physical activities per se, but rather on providing opportunities to engage in active and meaningful social roles that, extemporaneously, involve a healthy dose of physical activity. For example, an older adult might choose to join a school volunteer program without considering prospects for subsequent health benefits, yet, still experience and enjoy such benefits. Tan, Xue, Li, Carlson, and Fried (2006) frame the health benefit results reported from a study of volunteers of the Baltimore

Experience Corps as an example of how a health promotion intervention, embedded in an intergenerational volunteer program, has the potential to increase physical activity and contribute to the health benefits associated with such activity.

There are many examples of intergenerational programs and practices in which heightened physical activity is a byproduct of other program objectives, such as learning about community history (through walking tours), learning about nature (through nature hikes), and learning about marine biology (through visits to local streams and other bodies of water).

For families that are caught in a “time squeeze” of not having enough exercise time or family time, there are family-oriented fitness programs that provide an answer to both dilemmas. Some possibilities include family-oriented/intergenerational karate, Tai Chi³ (Perry & Weatherby, 2011), yoga, soccer, bowling, and dance.

For example, there is a family karate school in State College, Pennsylvania that only admits students who sign up with at least one other family member. The rationale is that the opportunity to spend quality time with family member(s) might serve as an effective motivator for students to join and train regularly (Kaplan & Scaglione, 2007). Here are some response themes and quotes from members of this karate school when asked, “How do you feel about training in karate as a family?”

[Added incentive to be active:]

“Doing karate with your family makes it much more difficult to find excuses not to train. There may be occasions when one of us didn’t feel like going, but out of a sense of obligation to the others we grudgingly went. Whenever this happens, without fail, by the time the class is over we are always glad we did.” [Father, 43-year old, who trains with his wife, two daughters and two sons; 8 years of karate training]

[Creating family traditions:]

“We celebrate our ‘success’ after each Sunday night with some store bought egg-rolls. This has now become our Sunday night tradition—Karate & then Egg Rolls. The kids love it.” [Mother, 36-year old, who trains with 2 children and her husband; 2 months of training]

[Sense of family unity—Working as a team:]

“I think it is fun and makes your family a team more than it is. It helps us have more to do and more to talk about. Also, I like how it is a challenge to get to the next belt with your family. Lastly, our new motto is from the Special Ops—No one is left behind.” [12-year old boy who trains with his mother, father, and younger sister; 2 months of training]

The adult in the photo (Fig. 3.2, below) attends class more as a way of spending quality time with his grandson than for the physical activity of karate. Nevertheless, he still enjoys the physical benefits of this form of exercise.

There is a body of evidence suggesting the efficacy of structured intergenerational health promotion programs for influencing young people to change their physical activity behavior as well as eating habits. For example, OASIS Institute’s intergen-

³Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese form of self-defense. Recent research indicates that those who practice this system of slow and controlled movements are able to improve or maintain strength, flexibility, and balance. Practitioners also report enhanced relaxation and a sense of well-being (Jahnke, Larkey, Rogers, Etnier, & Lin, 2010).



Fig. 3.2 Family Karate Time. A grandfather and grandson training together at a family-oriented karate dojo in central Pennsylvania. Photo: Matt Kaplan

erational health programs have shown promising results with regard to influencing young people to adopt healthier diets. The Institute’s *CATCH* (Coordinated Approach to Childhood Health) *Healthy Habits* program (2011–Present), which builds upon the Institute’s earlier *Active Generations* program (2006–2010), has been found to enhance children’s knowledge about nutrition and fitness, increase their fruit and vegetable consumption, and for the senior volunteers as well as the children, increase physical activity (Teufel et al., 2012).

The *CATCH* program is now nationwide and entails multiple interventions that add up to a comprehensive approach to childhood obesity prevention. The after-school program in San Antonio, Texas includes family activities such as grocery store scavenger hunts designed to improve shopping skills for high nutrient food choices (Hora, 2009). At this and other *CATCH* sites, partnerships are forged with community planning organizations to advocate for changes in the physical environment to promote more active lifestyles, such as creating walking trails (Hora, 2009).⁴

3.3.3 *An Intergenerational Approach to Nutrition Education and Healthy Eating Practices*

3.3.3.1 Introduction

There are several entry points where concepts of sustainability loom large in discussion and debate focused on ways to get people to consume healthier foods. One focal point is tied to the increased attention to what is termed “sustainable food

⁴More information on research conducted on OASIS programs can be obtained from the organization’s website: <http://www.oasisnet.org/AboutUs/Research.aspx>.

systems,” where the focus is on healthy foods—ways to grow it and bring it to market. There are also many variables tied to the post-production *human factors* side of the equation, extending to people’s knowledge, values, and behaviors with regard to purchasing, preparing, and consuming food. In this section, we focus on the challenge of educating people about the relationship between diet and health.

There is no question that, across the lifespan, people can benefit from education about the importance of a healthy diet. However, there are different pedagogical approaches to nutrition education and, as we note in this section, not all lead to the desired behavioral changes.

We distinguish between mono-generational, multi-generational, and intergenerational approaches for nutrition education. In particular, we advocate for more family-based intergenerational approaches to nutrition education. An intergenerational perspective, when applied to behavioral issues with a strong family component (such as patterns of food selection, food preparation, and eating practices), places emphasis on improving communication dynamics within families (Hanks & Ponzetti, 2004). The value of this orientation for influencing eating practices is signified in the following sections that provide the rationale, parameters for operation, and results for an intergenerational nutrition education program entitled FRIDGE (“Food-Related Intergenerational Discussion Group Experiences”).

Basically, what we are suggesting is to infuse an additional dimension into our understanding of “sustainable food systems”—i.e., the integration of sustainable family communication and cooperation centered on food-related decision-making that favors healthy over unhealthy eating practices.

3.3.3.2 Food-Related Family Communication Challenges

Many nutrition education programs are designed for mono-generational audiences without the active participation of other family members. The emphasis tends to be on providing accurate, timely, and usable information to one generation at a time. Even when programs are deemed family-oriented or family-focused, the nutrition information is often presented either to parents or children, with instructions to take that information home to share with other generations. To illustrate an inherent limitation of such an approach for influencing family patterns of food selection, a study of children in a school program on choosing fruits and vegetables found that children were limited in their ability to make better choices at home because it was the parents who continued to make decisions about what food was brought into the home (Domel et al., 1996).

The point here is that even if a child learns about the fundamentals of healthy eating, this does not mean that he or she will be able to put that knowledge into practice. They may face barriers at home when trying to apply what they learn. Other family members who have not gone through the nutrition education training that targets children are not likely to have the same enthusiasm for changing their food-related behaviors as those who did participate. Also, without family support, children are likely to have problems with food access as well as limitations in food preparation (e.g., appliances, space, etc.).

An alternative, *age-integrated* approach aims to provide children, parents, and grandparents from the same families with joint opportunities to learn about, discuss, and act upon the same nutrition and health information. They are encouraged to figure out how they can fit what they learn about healthful foods into their shopping budgets, work and play schedules, and family eating practices at home (Kaplan, Kiernan, & James, 2006).

To inform the development of such intergenerational nutrition education programs, a team of nutrition educators and social scientists from Penn State University conducted a focus group study to examine how families discuss (and under what conditions they discuss) issues related to eating healthily, and whether families perceive a need to improve the way they have such discussions (Kaplan et al., 2006). Three focus groups were conducted in geographically and culturally diverse low-income communities in Pennsylvania. Each group consisted of 4–8 families, each with at least one 10–14 year-old child, 1–2 parents, and, if available, grandparents and other relatives in caregiving roles. In total, 17 families, with 44 individual participants, took part. Representation from the different generations was balanced with 17 children, 20 parents and seven grandparents (all of whom prepare meals or snacks for their grandchildren at least three times a week).

Whereas almost all the parents and grandparents in the study understood the consequences of poor diets for today's children (e.g., obesity, chronic disease), many expressed anguish over their inability to help their children eat more healthily. Most of the study participants noted that they found it hard to understand and negotiate other family members' food preferences, agree on appropriate food portions, collaborate on food selection decisions, and figure out ways to eat together. Common communication difficulties involved *conflictual communication patterns* and *disengagement from communication*.

“It’s futile. It’s not It’s not always a pleasant conversation. Sometimes I’m to the point of crying because I think I’m doing all the right stuff and it’s still not the right stuff.” (Parent).

“And my husband and I try to talk healthfully to him and he, ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah,’ but as long as he doesn’t feel full, then it’s just not enough. It doesn’t matter whether it’s healthy or not.” (Parent).

“When there’s a disagreement... they’ll go to Grandma’s to eat.” (Parent)

“...Usually when we have dinner, then I just walk upstairs and like if I don’t see something I like I’ll go back downstairs.” (Child)

Several families described a communication dynamic in which it was the children who dominated food-related decisions, leaving adults without input. The research team labeled this phenomenon “authoritarian childing.”

“Like this morning, I had made cream of wheat. And I had (packaged meat) and orange juice. She didn’t stop in the kitchen. She kept going. And I’m calling her to come have breakfast and she’s going to school.” (Grandmother)

“When she goes to school she stops at the Waffle House and picks up all kinds of junk food and it defeats the purpose” (grandmother). The girls’ mother added: “...But, we really can’t stop her.”

There were also some families in the study that managed to effectively avoid conflict and misunderstanding when communicating about matters related to food. One theme commonly noted by these families is that they made an intentional effort to involve children as partners in meal planning, food shopping and meal preparation.

“My mom says if I cook breakfast that I can pick out the stuff I want to cook. If they want eggs, I’ll choose the kind of eggs I want.” (Child).

“When my dad makes like homemade mashed potatoes and stuff, I like help him with mashing them with the masher thing.” (Child).

“He cooks. And when I was working, I’m telling you, he would call and say, ‘Hey mom, how do you make such and such a thing? Or how do you make...’ And not thinking that he would literally do it, but when you came home and opened the door, you’re like ‘Man, what the heck is that smell?’ It’s something that you knew you always made. But he made. That’s the way we did it.” (Parent).

3.3.3.3 The FRIDGE Program

Drawing upon the focus group study findings noted above, the Penn State team set out to develop the FRIDGE program. FRIDGE, consists of 16 activity modules that fit into three sections:

- 1) *Enhancing family communication about food:* Activities build family members’ communication skills and encourage sharing about views and experiences related to food (selection, preparation, and consumption).
- 2) *Learning together about food and nutrition:* Activities provide information about nutrition, food portions, and healthy food preparation methods.
- 3) *Working as a team to improve family eating practices:* Activities encourage family members to use learned communication skills and nutrition knowledge to improve their family eating practices and set healthy eating goals.⁵

Several FRIDGE activities involve creating a *dietary knowledge timeline* to help family members of different generations develop a better appreciation of the impact of historical food recommendations/guidelines on each other’s eating habits. In one of these activities, called *Match the Food Guidance System to the Date*, each family gets a series of pictures (and descriptions) of the various historical food guidance systems along with a separate list of dates. They are then tasked with matching each food guidance system with the correct date—1940s, 1950s–1960s, 1970s, 1990s, and 2005.

Another activity, *Back to the Future, Food Time Capsule*, has participants sort pictures of food and food preparation tools into eras and then discuss the values and lifestyles of families in each era. For example, food and tools from earlier eras show a pride in ‘baked from scratch’, family meals and more ethnocentric meals. Children are encouraged to compare current lifestyles with those of the past.

⁵The FRIDGE curriculum is available online at: <http://extension.psu.edu/youth/intergenerational/program-areas/nutrition-health/fridge>.

The *Coolish or Foolish* activity is designed to help participants become more aware of the social pressures that influence others in their family to eat in unhealthy ways. In this activity, participants break into family groups and review several pieces of advice generally given out by nutrition educators, such as to eat 4–5 cups of fruits and vegetables each day. For each piece of advice, family members take turns answering some questions about how they (and their peers) view, and the degree to which they follow, this advice. This activity generates good conversation about social pressures that may come from friends, family members, food companies, restaurants or other sources, such as the Internet.

In the *Dinnertime: What Does It Mean to Eat Together?* activity, participants first read a humorous poem about one family's very hectic dinner time dynamics. In family groups, they then reflect upon what dinnertime is like in their own homes, discuss ways to improve family interactions during this important family time, and create poems that reflect shared visions of what they would like dinnertime to be like.

Some other FRIDGE activities are designed to help family members express their views about food and family, and to work together to develop a shared vision and plan as to how they can better communicate and cooperate to eat more healthily. Through a series of *Sharing Visions* exercises, participating families generate common vision statements about *How We Communicate*, *How We Learn Together about Nutrition*, and *How We Work Together to Eat Healthfully*.

To conduct a FRIDGE program requires staff with family communication facilitation skills as well as nutrition education skills. The facilitator(s) play a crucial role in stimulating and extending family dialogue. This “conversational” framework, which is woven throughout the curriculum, often takes the form of the facilitator asking participants a series of provocative food and nutrition-related questions, such as “What should be done to curtail harmful junk food?” and “What can individual family members do to make meal time easier for other members in their family?” The facilitator also helps to generate discussion about social values, e.g., attitudes toward cooperating with, and displaying civility toward, other family members.

Results from a pilot study of the FRIDGE program indicate that the program functions as both a nutrition education and a family communication enhancement program. Participating family members upgrade their efforts to work together to plan and adopt shopping, meal preparation, and family meal routines around the goal of eating more healthily at home (Kaplan, Alloway, & Middlemiss, 2009).

3.3.4 Valuing Vaccinations Across Generations

In 2016, Generations United, in partnership with the Gerontological Society of America and the American Academy of Pediatrics, launched the “Valuing Vaccinations Across the Generations” awareness campaign. The campaign, with support from Pfizer, aims to bridge efforts for immunizations within segmented groups into an intergenerational conversation within families and among generations. The intergenerational perspective is one of advocating for vaccinations in the

context of the commitment of caring between generations. Another line of intergenerational reasoning involves raising awareness of how certain illnesses that can be passed between older and younger generations (e.g., flu, pneumonia, and whooping cough) are preventable with immunizations.

The campaign includes:

- An intergenerational discussion guide for grandparents, families and friends.
- Memes and brief video testimonials from people who lived through epidemics.
- Traditional and social media toolkit.
- An informational infographic depicting the value of vaccinations across the ages. [See Fig. 3.3, below.]

The Valuing Vaccinations Across Generations campaign resources are continually updated, shared with a variety of news media outlets, and posted online at: <https://bandageofhonor.org/>.

Dreyer and Ingman (2004) describe another intergenerational approach for promoting vaccinations. The Seniors and Volunteers for Childhood Immunization program, originated in 1993 at the Texas Institute for Research and Education on Aging at the University of North Texas, enlists senior volunteers to educate parents who may not have firsthand experience with the devastation of diseases that are now vaccine preventable. With support and reminders from the senior volunteers and local agencies, parental actions resulted in improved and sustained preschool childhood immunization rates. Over the course of a 10-year period following the program's inception, more than 250,000 infants across Texas were enrolled in the program, with close to 500,000 immunization reminders sent to families.

3.3.5 Creating Intergenerational Settings That Are Conducive to Active Living and Healthy Eating

The main focus of healthy living interventions discussed thus far has been on the social environment and how it can influence lifestyle behaviors. We now turn our gaze to factors related to environmental design.

It is difficult to exercise in communities with no physical activity amenities, and it is hard to find healthy, fresh foods in communities deemed as “food deserts.”⁶ People need places to walk if they want to walk to work, buildings where they can take the stairs if desired, and walkways that children could safely use to walk to school.

In this section, we focus on some intergenerational design approaches and examples for creating indoor and outdoor environments that are conducive to healthy, active lifestyles for people of all ages.

⁶Food deserts are areas that lack access to affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat milk, and other foods that make up the full range of a healthy diet. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers.

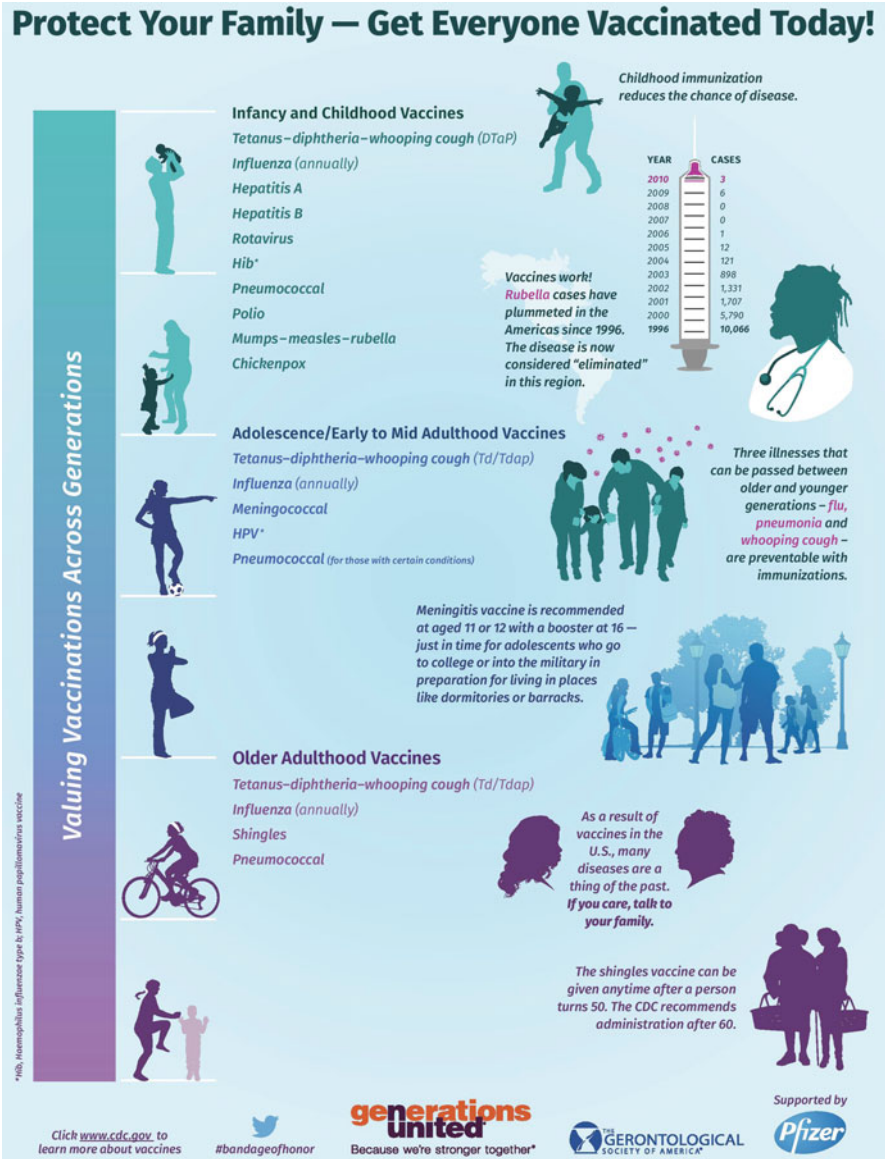


Fig. 3.3 “Valuing Vaccinations Across Generations” infographic. This informational infographic, developed as part of the “Valuing Vaccinations Across Generations” campaign, illustrates the importance of vaccinations across the lifespan. [For more information about this campaign, see: <https://bandageofhonor.org>]

Ghazaleh, Greenhouse, Homsy, and Warner (2011) articulate the intersection between active living and smart growth principles.

“First, staying active through creating walkable and dense development patterns is a positive feature of smart growth development. Positioning schools, grocery stores, libraries, recreational amenities, and playgrounds within walking distance when designing or re-designing neighborhoods can help achieve the physical activity needs required to remain healthy and combat obesity. Biking and walking lanes, safe and well-designed parks, open space and recreational systems, and pedestrian access are all components of smart growth principles that promote physical health for all community members” (p. 8).

Built and natural environments that inspire people to congregate and engage in physical activities are filled with parks, playgrounds, gardens, and streets and sidewalks that include biking and pedestrian activity spaces (Nike, 2015). Additional features that promote active lifestyles include public open spaces, community gardens, and convenient and affordable public transportation options (Knight Foundation, 2015).

O’Neill (2016), in her article, “Intergenerational Gatherings among the Water and Willows,” describes the intersection between environmental design, activity planning, and public participation for facilitating multi-generational presence and intergenerational engagement in West Lake, a large and very popular natural park in Hangzhou, China. The site serves as an epicenter of local music, dance, Tai Chi, Chinese chess, and other activities that reflect the shared cultural heritage and sense of cultural identity that attracts people of all generations, and that invites them to interact. O’Neill identifies several other factors contributing to the site’s success and popularity, such as the inclusion of great “age neutral” amenities and a philosophy of leaving it to park visitors to “follow their own interests” in choosing which activities to engage in and with whom (O’Neill, 2016).

Intergenerational shared sites⁷ often function as ideal settings for conducting healthy living programs and activities. By virtue of the fact that shared sites tend to have relatively stable and predictable environments and consistent clientele, they are good settings in which to develop integrated, multifaceted, and sustainable health promotion activities.

- Healthy living theme activities at JEWEL (Joining Elders With Early Learners), a large (22,000 square feet) shared site facility consisting of a childcare center and an adult day program in Westchester, New York: In the Breakfast Buddies program, classes of children take turns sharing breakfast with the older adults. Other onsite intergenerational activities include regular dancing and exercise sessions (Bellamy & Meyerski, 2011).
- The F.R.E.S.H. (Food and Relationships for Equitable and Sustainable Health) program at the Lucille W. Gorham Intergenerational Community Center

⁷Intergenerational shared sites are settings in which “multiple generations receive ongoing services and/or programming at the same site, and generally interact through planned and/or informal intergenerational activities” (AARP, 1988, p. v). This includes purpose-built age-integrated centers and other community settings designed for multiple generations to meet, interact, and engage in joint activities.

(Greenville, North Carolina): Youth package and organize the delivery of fresh produce and healthy recipe cards to homebound seniors. The cards are delivered on foot by a cadre of youth and adults interested in increasing their exercise and engaging in community service.

- Scheduled and unscheduled fitness activities integrated into the Meadows School Project (British Columbia, Canada): During a five-week period in which a class of sixth graders is relocated to a nearby assisted living facility,⁸ students and older adults accompany one another on walks on the facility's spacious grounds and participate in joint fitness activities such as armchair fitness classes, seasonal craft projects, science fairs, spelling bees, sing-a-longs, and upkeep of the rabbit and chicken habitats (Carson, Kobayashi, & Kuehne, 2011).
- Garden as Learning Laboratory (Southern Pines, North Carolina): FirstHealth spearheaded an effort to transform an unused lot adjacent to a public housing project into a 5600 square foot organic community garden which functions as a "learning laboratory" and a source of healthy food for local low-income children, volunteers and other community members. Working with volunteers from the Master Gardeners program and at-risk children from a Boys & Girls Club and the Town Rec program, FirstHealth established a hospital farmer's market and initiated a "farm to cafeteria" program (Hora, 2009).

3.4 Intergenerational Approaches for Supporting Vulnerable and Underserved Populations at Home and in Community Settings

In this section, we explore intergenerational strategies targeting individuals who are encountering specific types of challenging situations. We focus on intergenerational interventions among five broad groups:

- (1) Military veterans
- (2) New immigrants
- (3) Children and youth in foster care
- (4) "At risk" children and youth
- (5) Individuals with HIV and AIDS

These interventions span formal programs, public policies, informal community support systems, and environmental design interventions. In some cases, inter-agency collaborations and public-private partnerships are forged to leverage resources and contribute to the potential of these models for improving outcomes for vulnerable populations. Informal neighborhood networking and support systems

⁸Technically, this is more of an 'immersion' model than a 'shared site' model insofar as the students were relocated rather than co-located with the older adults as is the case with the typical shared site program.

often emerge in ways that complement formal service delivery systems and enhance organizational capacity for effective delivery of needed services.

In many cases, what drives these initiatives is a moral imperative for helping those in need. At root is a simple question, “Are we in this together?” The implied and somewhat encouraging response when considering the plethora of intergenerational initiatives described in this section is a resounding “Yes.” We see people crossing lines of family, community, tribe, and age, with a moral commitment and corresponding action to help those who are in vulnerable situations, often experiencing social isolation or frayed social ties in their communities, and with unmet needs for care and support. These programs tend to be mutually beneficial – those who are helping others find as much value as those who are being helped.

3.4.1 Military Veterans: The Mission Continues

Military service is all about stepping up to provide service to others. But what about the times these individuals need support themselves? This is a particularly pertinent question when considering the formidable challenges that many veterans face with regard to community reintegration after their tours of duty are completed.

In the U.S., there are federal government policies and programs aimed at providing support for veterans. This includes educational benefits, health care, pensions, employment assistance, and various benefits for their dependents and survivors. However, this is not always enough to lead to a smooth landing upon re-entry into civilian life.

In this section, we review intergenerational initiatives that are framed not only as services provided *for* veterans, but also as pathways for enhancing the social re-integration and healing process for those returning to civilian life with injuries. Such initiatives provide valued opportunities for veterans to offer service and support for others in the community (Bellotti, 2010). As noted earlier in this chapter, volunteering and other civic engagement experiences, particularly those that contribute to one’s sense of purpose in life and provide meaningful social roles, can have significant physical and mental health benefits.

3.4.1.1 Services Provided for Veterans

There are many examples of projects in which youth provide services for veterans. These initiatives emanate from schools and youth organizations and tend to involve limited, short-term intergenerational engagement experiences. Examples include: campaigns to write inspirational letters to military troops, day of caring events (e.g., creating valentines for veterans), and book drives for local veterans’ hospitals. As an example with a longer term youth volunteer commitment, students who are members of the S.A.V.E. (Students Against Vandalism Everywhere) program in Coventry, Rhode Island (U.S.) occasionally clean up Knotty Oak Cemetery & re-flag veterans’ graves.

3.4.1.2 Veterans Serving Others

Also prevalent are intergenerational programs that engage veterans from a “service to others” framework. For example, the Long Island State Veterans home, which provides skilled nursing care, adult day health care and short term rehabilitation to the 250,000 veterans who reside on Long Island (New York), encourages the veterans they serve to engage in intergenerational programs with elementary, high-school and college students. Such activities tend to keep participating veterans active and connected within the community.

The Corporation for National and Community Service has a compelling service-oriented philosophy for engaging veterans in intergenerational service initiatives:

“Service is really what veterans want to do. A lot of them leave the military reluctantly. They were injured, medically retired, or retired for family reasons. But those people don’t want to sell insurance or work in retail. They won’t find the same sense of purpose they had in the military. If you put them in a place where they can be in front of children and serve, they can really make a difference. I wish there were more opportunities like that.”—Iraq/Afghanistan veteran (CNCS, 2016).

A common context for intergenerational programming with veterans is tied to the goals of “sharing history” and “sharing stories,” including those related to war-related events and experiences. Students learn history through interviews with veterans, books, special events, and other activities designed to help them honor and recognize veterans. Here are some examples from the U.S.:

- The Veterans History Project provides a collection of U.S. veterans’ accounts of various war efforts as well as a template for conducting new interviews with veterans.
- RSVP of Scioto County, Ohio coordinates events with local elementary schools as part of *Read Around the World Day*. The senior authors of *Memoirs of WWII—A Time to Remember* (a book published by the Scioto County RSVP) read aloud their stories (primarily their memories of WWII) to students in third through sixth grades.
- *VA Kids* provides a website, games, and service opportunities for students (in grades 6–12) to learn about and honor America’s veterans.
- Children visiting a senior center in Staten Island (New York) during Veteran’s Day hear stories and look at center members’ medals, pictures and other memorabilia from World War II (Stein, 2010).

The *Voicing Experience through Service* (VETS) project, funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service in partnership with the National Service Inclusion Project, goes beyond the goal of facilitating the collection, preservation, and increased accessibility of personal accounts of American war veterans. The project also aims to assist with transition planning for youth with disabilities and increase their participation in community service. VETS pairs young people and veterans to write and submit oral histories to the Library of Congress. VETS has submitted several hundred oral histories and developed strong partnerships with a number of local, state and national partners. Information on the VETS project and

support materials for implementing the project in the classroom can be found online.⁹

One of the most sustainable of all of the initiatives in this section is an intergenerational shared site facility in Maui, Hawaii. The primary goal of the *Nisei Veteran's Memorial Center* is to function as a living memorial to WWII Nisei (2nd generation Americans of Japanese descent) veterans. The center is intended to be a place to “teach younger generations gratitude for those Nisei Soldiers who provided for us.” Phase one, completed in 2006, consists of two buildings to house the *Kansha*¹⁰ Preschool program and the Maui Adult Day Care Center. Structured activities involve art, literacy, music and movement. Informal activities and conversations regularly take place on the playground. Phase two, which is currently under construction, is an education center where documents and artifacts from the Nisei Veteran Archives will be used to help create educational opportunities for clients, parents, students, family members, and the community to explore the rich heritage of the Nisei (Mendelson, Larson, & Greenwood, 2011).

3.4.2 *New Immigrants*

Across the lifespan, one of the key factors that affects the level of adjustment for immigrants is language competence. Second language instruction (in the primary host country language) is a critical component to ensuring labor market success for immigrating adults and academic success for their children (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2007; Menken, 2008). Second language learning is also crucial for the psychological well-being of immigrating families. As noted in an American Psychological Association report, many older adult immigrants “experience loneliness and isolation related to difficulties in navigating a cultural context in which they may no longer be revered or sought out as respected elders by family and younger members of their communities” (APA, 2012, p. 96). Acquiring language skills ameliorates this isolation and enables elders to share their wisdom and experience with younger generations.

Despite the importance of second language learning, there is uneven investment in language support across immigrant-receiving countries and there are noticeable disparities within countries with regard to program quality (Christensen & Stanat, 2007). Students in ill-equipped language acquisition programs are more likely to encounter frustrations and drop out (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2000).

Fortunately, there are some promising intergenerational program models with a second language learning component that can play a role in expanding and improving such opportunities for new immigrants.

Project Shine (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders) started as a national service learning program at Temple University's Intergenerational Center in 1997 to mobilize college students to provide services to immigrant communities

⁹See: <http://vetsmanual.pbworks.com/w/page/6518304/FrontPage> or <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/vets/>.

¹⁰*Kansha* is a Japanese word meaning deep respect and gratitude.

and older adults. The program was conceived with two goals in mind: to strengthen older adults' English language and literacy skills, in part as an aid for meeting the linguistic requirements of citizenship-granting policies, and to help college students better understand their own cultural roots and the life values of older generations (Skilton-Sylvester & Henkin, 1997). As the program expanded over the next decade—to at least 12 U.S. cities, 16 universities and over 100 community partners—program activities extended beyond English language acquisition to include conversations and workshops about citizenship, workforce preparedness, health literacy, and civic participation. These additional program components have implications for helping immigrant populations to become more socially integrated into the fabric of their communities.

In programs such as Intergenerational Bridges, an after-school mentoring program for recent immigrant children and youth that is run by the JCA Heyman Interages Center in Rockville, Maryland (U.S.), older adults play an important role in providing students with encouragement, social support, and assistance in navigating second language learning program requirements. Students who are recommended to participate in the program by their ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teachers meet with their adult mentors (age 50+) on a weekly basis. Beyond these one-to-one sessions, participants take part in larger group discussions about peer pressure, bullying, and goal setting, and engage in extracurricular activities which further strengthen students' language and living skills. Activities include crafts, music, dance, exercise, language or board games, and field trips to sites such as the local zoo.

There are various other approaches to involving older adult volunteers as second language educators. One such model is the IG-ESL (Intergenerational-English as a Second Language) program which was piloted in Hong Kong in 2013 (Lai & Kaplan, 2016). A group of older adults with high-level English language proficiency skills were recruited through Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Institute of Active Ageing (IAA) membership to engage a group of college students with beginner to mid-level English language skills for an intensive three-month period of English language instruction, language practice, and intergenerational relationship-building activities.

IG-ESL older adult volunteers are trained in intergenerational communication strategies and second language learning processes. They learn about language learning theories, for example van Lier's (2004) ecological framework for creating *authentic language learning* experiences (i.e., embedded in real world experiences and interests), and the philosophy of creating a *context rich learning milieu*, which involves laying out objects and cues throughout the classroom that could be used to stimulate English language communication while playing games, creating video clips, discussing current events, writing letters to newspaper editors, and so forth.

One of the outcomes of the IG-ESL pilot program is that the older adult participants gained a useful credential—and extra motivation—for engaging in further work (paid and unpaid) as ESL educators in the community. Along these lines, one such participant stated at the end of the program:

“I will use [such] program experiences to influence the youngsters and help those who are weak in English Language, for example, the new immigrants or those organizations that need English volunteering teachers to help their minority group.”

The intergenerational component involved finding ways to capitalize on older adults’ knowledge associated with their generational position and life experience. For example, one college student commented,

“Frankly there are things that the youth cannot do without the guidance or advances by the senior adults. For instance, we do not know the meaning of the idioms which was using [sic] in the ads since it refers to some traditional habit of Chinese and I never knew that before.”(Lai & Kaplan, 2016).

3.4.3 *Children and Youth in Foster Care*

For children and youth in foster care, some factors that are linked to positive outcomes include: a stable living situation with placement stability (Schofield & Beek, 2005); access to community supports (including available services, supportive school personnel, and community social and economic resources); and access to quality independent living programs to help youth transition out of foster care when the time comes (Geenen & Powers, 2007).

The presence of a caring adult can serve as a protective factor that contributes to the well-being of children and youth in or aging out of foster care. Such adults are not necessarily family members; they might be mentors, advocates, teachers, neighbors, or other adults present in a young person’s life. Positive outcomes for youth in foster care who have such supportive individuals in their lives include: greater resilience, lower stress, less likelihood of arrest, reductions in homelessness, higher levels of employment, less delinquent conduct, and better physical and mental health (Ahrens, DuBois, Richardson, Fan, & Lozano, 2008; Development Services Group, Inc., & Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015).

Beyond developing interventions geared to connecting foster youth with caring adults, some professionals with an intergenerational orientation take a different tack. The *Intergenerational Community as Intervention* (ICI) strategy emerged from the Hope Meadows community-wide initiative established in Rantoul, Illinois in 1994 as a way to address the foster care crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, where there were not enough families to care for the growing numbers of children who were flooding the Illinois foster care system. The Hope Meadows planned community offers rent-free housing to parents who care for 3–4 children in the foster care system who have been deemed “hard-to-place,” and rent-reduced housing for older adults in exchange for six hours each week of volunteering to babysit, mentor, tutor, garden, or otherwise support the families (Eheart, Power, & Hopping, 2003). The goals are to promote permanency as well as community and caring relationships for adoptive families, while offering safety and meaningful purpose in the daily lives of older adults. The Hope Meadows model has been proven to result in developmental benefits for the foster children and an increased sense of purpose for the older adult residents (Eheart & Hopping, 2001).

3.4.4 “At risk” Children and Youth

Many intergenerational programs target children and youth who are deemed “at risk” (e.g., for drug and alcohol abuse, school truancy, premature sexuality) and are in need of social and emotional support and guidance in their academic and career pursuits. Various models have been established which place older adults in roles such as mentors, coaches, caregivers and other types of providers of needed social and emotional support (Ventura-Merkel & Friedman, 1988).

Intergenerational mentoring programs establish relationships of mutual caring, understanding, and trust between young people and people with more experience (Flaxman, Ascher, & Harrington, 1988). Such relationships are particularly important for reaching youth who are considered “at-risk” for truancy, criminal activity and drug abuse (Rogers & Taylor, 1997; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995).

One of the most studied and highly regarded intergenerational mentoring programs is the Across Ages program that was originally developed in 1991 by Temple University and funded through a 5-year federal grant for substance abuse and prevention for high-risk junior high school adolescent students in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. There are four main components to the Across Ages curriculum (Taylor, LoSciuto, Fox, & Hilbert, 1999): *mentoring, community services, classroom-based life skills curriculum, and family activities.*

- In the *mentoring component*, older adults (age 55 and over) are paired with 1–2 youth and meet twice a week for a 12-month period. The adults are recruited to provide mentoring, life skill coaching, and community service. Activities include work on class projects, school-related field trips, and sporting and cultural events.
- In the *community service component*, the youth, often with their mentors, go on biweekly visits to nursing homes for conversation and activities with the residents.
- In the *classroom-based life skills component*, youth work with teachers and program staff who conduct sessions on topics such as stress management, self-esteem, problem solving, general health, and substance abuse prevention.
- In the *family activities component*, parents and other family caregivers are brought into the youth-mentor orbit of conversation, shared meals, entertainment, and other activities.

The Across Ages program has been extensively evaluated, including with a classic randomized control group design with pre-tests, post-tests, and 6- and 12-month follow up surveys with participating youth. Student participants show positive outcomes in terms of an increase in awareness, self-confidence, and skills to help resist drugs and overcome obstacles, and a decrease in problem behaviors including substance abuse. Other positive outcomes attributed to program participation include improvements in students’ school-related behavior and overall attitude towards school (Taylor et al., 1999). The program has been successfully replicated in sites all over the U.S. Originally school-based, the program is now conducted in a variety of settings during both school and out-of-school time. Sites include Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs, mental health agencies, and community service organizations.

3.4.5 *Intergenerational Community Support Systems for Individuals with HIV and AIDS*

The global AIDS pandemic, with 36.7 million [34.0 million–39.8 million] people living with HIV in 2015, has had the most severe impact in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) where 25.8 million people live with the virus, accounting for 70% of the global total. South Africa, the country with the highest number of persons living with AIDS, is particularly affected. With around six million people living with HIV/AIDS, the distinctive feature of the pandemic is the concentrated toll it takes on young adults in the prime of their productive and reproductive lives (UNAIDS, 2016). This toll tends to cluster within the intimate space of families and the long-term generational momentum of these epidemics affects both ascending and descending generations. As the number of orphans grows (currently 2.3 million in South Africa), the caregiving burden falls disproportionately on the oldest members of families (particularly grandmothers) who step in to care for their grandchildren. USAID's analysis of DHS and MICS data (2004, 20; also see Makiwane, Schneider, & Gopane, 2004) indicates that up to 60% of orphans live in households headed by older people (again, mostly grandmothers). With virtually no institutional care options for AIDS patients or orphans, and in most cases not even considered, poor grandmother-headed networks in particular have ultimately to provide the necessary shelter and care in-house (see Ferreira, 2006 for an overview).

Roodin (2004), in describing how family support systems are not enough to respond to the emerging threat of HIV and AIDS in some African countries, emphasizes the need to establish additional layers of community support:

“The challenge is to move from family-based intergenerational responsibilities to developing the social support of the larger community and the willingness of those in need to utilize such support. This encompasses enormous cultural change and will be difficult to accomplish. Developing programs, creating a caring community to meet the needs of these children, and changing the ethos of cultures that have relied exclusively on family support in times of crises is indeed one of the most compelling intergenerational challenges of the next decade in Africa” (Roodin, 2004, p. 216).

Two formalized intergenerational initiatives in South Africa to support grandmother-headed multi-generational households are worthy to be briefly noted, namely *Circle of Care* and *Grandmothers Against Poverty & AIDS* (GAPA).

Cook and White (2006) describe the *Circle of Care* approach for supporting South African communities affected by HIV and AIDS. The preliminary planning process took place from 1999 to 2004, during which time the Child and Youth Care Agency for Development (CYAD), a South African non-governmental organization (NGO), in partnership with the University of Victoria's International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) and Aboriginal Liaison Office (ABLO), worked to identify and reinforce community and cultural assets for supporting child and family resilience.

The fundamental concept of *Circle of Care* is that “local governance, in partnership with Communities, forms an invisible circle of care around their most

vulnerable citizens” (Cook & White, 2006, p. 68) which includes children, youth, women and older adults. The intent is to create a participatory research and community development tool that could be used “to assess strengths and weaknesses in the care and support of orphans and vulnerable children” (p. 69). Local facilitators then work with communities to *analyze* this information to create and carry out plans of *action* to fill the gaps in the lives of these children. This approach places “emphasis on *community dialogue, critical discussion* and *partnership* between key stakeholders—in this process, children and elders” (p. 72). Local leaders, institutions involved in education, health care, and child protection, traditional healers, and national and international NGOs and international agencies (e.g., UNICEF) can play a role in this process.

GAPA (*Grandmothers Against Poverty & AIDS*)¹¹ was founded in Khayelitsha (near Cape Town) in October 2001 as the implementation phase of a research project funded by Bristol Myers Squibb undertaken by the Albertina and Walter Sisulu Institute of Ageing in Africa at the University of Cape Town (Ferreira, Keikelame, & Mosaval, 2001). Drawing on the findings of this research, which in the main highlighted the deep need for support of grandmothers caring for grandchildren in the context of poverty and HIV/AIDS, a program offering support across a wide spectrum of levels was developed.

Not only did they, in the conceptualization of this program, focus on the development of educational workshops, support groups, income generating activities to support grandmothers in their second parenthood role to indirectly benefit the younger generations in their care, but also interventions of direct benefit to younger generations.

To this end the GAPA Aftercare program was established with 212 children registered in 2015 and five trained grandmothers who act as aftercare teachers. The GAPA Aftercare aims to provide a safe space for vulnerable children after school in the afternoon; a stimulating environment and effective occupation-based program that will contribute to enhancing child learning and development; and a context in which intergenerational play is both celebrated and manifested. A pre-school bursary scheme for around 150 children was also established in order for needy grandmothers to be able to send their young grandchildren to a safe and stimulating environment while they have some time to enrich themselves at the GAPA empowerment programs.

Illustrative of the enduring bonds generated at the GAPA Aftercare program is the following story of three boys that was shared in GAPA’s 2015 annual report:

“Three boys, now aged 18 years, who grew up at our aftercare, visited GAPA on the day they were heading to the mountains/bush for Initiation. One of the boys, Themba (pseudonym), often comes to GAPA and uses our computer to apply for bursaries. He keeps us informed of the comings and goings of high school life, and having just written and passed Matric (Grade 12) in 2015, he would share stories of how he was asked to say a speech at their valedictory or prom evening. He has even helped us translate a letter or two into isiXhosa. He had told us that he would be going for initiation, a traditional ceremony that takes

¹¹ The GAPA website can be accessed at: <http://www.gapa.org.za>.

place in the isiXhosa culture when a boy transitions from childhood into manhood. However, we had not expected to see him on the day, (they wear particular clothes and paint their faces). But on that day from the distance we saw him and Ayo walking into our centre and the grannies started ululating. Themba said they had come to honour and thank the grandmothers for believing in them and loving them and had come to ask for the grannies' prayers for their journey ahead. There were many tears shed. It was an honour to witness this act of humility and strength to come for blessing from the grandmothers. Initiation is a very private ceremony, of which women are restricted from knowing any details. Asking for prayer was a sign of bringing them in, including them in this journey of becoming. He and Ayo have recently returned with a copy of Themba's Matric Certificate showing that he had passed well" (Grandmothers Against Poverty, 2016, p. 20).

These programs furthermore provide final-year Occupational Therapy students from the University of Cape Town with practical training/internship opportunities at GAPA, which offers intergenerational interaction on a different level. Here the focus is on community development practice as well as child learning and development. Various collaborative projects as well as screening and assessments, intervention and program development take place. During 2015 GAPA has welcomed 12 such students (4 students each have a cycle of 7-week sessions, 3 times a year).

Although the continuous challenge for GAPA is the scaling-up of interventions, the model has already been replicated and has commenced in other countries such as Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho and Kenya.

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Chapter 4

Intergenerational Strategies for Sustaining Families and Family Life

Abstract Families in all their configurations are the key social group within which different generations are embedded and supported. Against a backdrop of normative, social and demographic changes, intergenerational relationships within families are under considerable strain in terms of social and health care as well as economic and infrastructural capacity challenges. This chapter aims to explore how families are/could be supported through formally organized intergenerational programs across a broad array of geographies and contexts. To this end, the inter-connectedness of generations within families is acknowledged and these intergenerational programs—to support and complement the family—are briefly described. In the main, these programs focus on family support in two contexts: caring for older adults with chronic health conditions, and grandparents and other relatives raising children. Some principles and a range of examples on intergenerational strategies for supporting families in both contexts are also provided.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores several “pathways” through which intergenerational programs and practices can help strengthen and sustain families.

Though often taken for granted, strong families—across the entire pluralism of family forms—are arguably the most crucial building block in creating an enduring and vibrant society. Amidst normative, social and demographic changes, intergenerational connections within families play a critical role in terms of resilience and success at the individual, family, community and societal levels.

Families are resilient to change and strong in many contexts, continuing to provide care for, and also receive care from, older people. In many countries, a societal expectation exists that adult children will look after their parents in old age, the so called *intergenerational contract*. Interdependence is a norm across the globe—particularly intergenerational interdependence through the family. Whereas friends are increasingly important in the social fabric of older people’s lives with greater independence, it is in the family where care is exchanged and where the interdependency lies across generations.

In some countries the state plays an indirect role in fostering family-based caregiving. For example, in Singapore housing policies positively enable adult children to live closer to parents but may serve to disadvantage children who want to live further away from their parents. In Japan, long-term care insurance rules enable older people to afford a range of care options, which could in turn reduce their reliance on the family for care, although cultural traditions still lead to a higher than expected number of multigenerational households. This suggests that even where options exist to promote external care, the family may remain the main care provider for elderly parents.

Changes are highlighted even where we see strong family bonds: the reduction in multigenerational households and institutional care (with a few exceptions); changes in attitudes, migration patterns and demographics; and changes in the patterns of reciprocity. Globalization has also opened up the possibilities of transnational care even across continents (India), and changed the ebb and flow between urban and rural areas.

Intergenerational interdependence, a recurring theme throughout this book, has special meaning in the context of family relations and family life. Family members are interdependent in terms of caregiving, emotional support, and financial and other resources that flow among family members. As one exemplification of this concept, Fig. 4.1, below, presents an infographic developed by Generations United and Alliance for Children and Families as a complement to their 2014 report, “Intergenerational Family Connections: The Relationships that Support a Strong America” (Generations United, 2014).

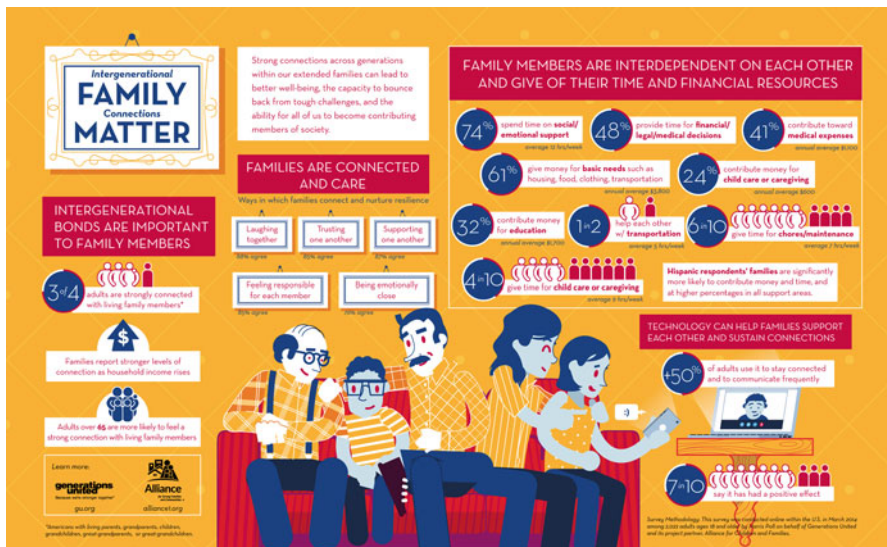


Fig. 4.1 “Intergenerational Family Connections Matter” infographic. This infographic was created as a complementary resource for the 2014 report, “Intergenerational Family Connections: The Relationships that Support a Strong America,” developed by Generations United and Alliance for Children and Families

Though of particular relevance to the U.S. case, the core dynamics of complex interdependencies and how these interface with family well-being (as illustrated in Fig. 4.1) are generally the same in the European, Asian, Latin American and African contexts. For example, as one of only seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)¹ to provide social pensions to the over 60 share of their populations, the majority of older South Africans receive a non-contributory pension. This is a means-tested grant paid to some 2.7 million women and men from the age of 60, worth approximately \$100 per month. Although specifically paid to older individuals, these grants are pooled and redistributed—especially by black African females—at household and community levels to generally provide childcare and care for disabled, ill and unemployed individuals or members in the household (Barrientos et al., 2003; Ferreira, 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Sagner & Mtati, 1999).

However, in a 2015 report by the UK's Government Office for Science which examined how an aging population is affecting relationships between the generations, a fair amount of attention is focused on pressures on family relationships in various contexts—including health care, financial outcomes (wealth accumulation vs. debt), housing arrangements, and employment practices (Keating, Kwan, Hillcoat-Nalletamby, & Burholt, 2015).

The report states:

“From a societal perspective, families are seen as a backstop against concerns about unsustainable health, economic and social care systems in the face of rising proportions of older adults in comparison to working-age populations. Yet there are tensions between increasing expectations of families to care for dependent members and concern about their capacity to do so” (p. 6).

In the next section, we review some of these challenges faced by families with extensive caregiving needs, such as when caring for a frail or ill elderly relative or when a grandparent or other relative is left to care for a child. When it comes to considering ways to support such families, we advocate in favor of working to establish a “continuum of support” at the state/family and public/private interface. Components of such a continuum might thus include formal programs run by human service agencies and community organizations, inter-organizational networks and coalitions, and informal family- and community-based support systems. The basic premise, however, is that it is helpful to think beyond the roles and responsibilities taken by human service professionals and overburdened family caregivers.

We further propose three interlinked principles for interventions aimed at strengthening or complementing family caregiving support systems:

1. Such interventions should be appropriately contextualized within the “world” of the participants.
2. Efforts should be made to ensure that any “outside” family support interventions are synchronized with families’ needs for information, resources, and emotional and instrumental support.

¹Other countries are Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mauritius, Namibia and most recently Zanzibar.

3. Family strengths as well as problems should be taken into account when developing and conducting intervention programs. This entails working to empower care recipients and family caregivers to become more knowledgeable, proactive, and effective in their efforts to find needed services and strengthen their family situations.

Later in the chapter, we present some intergenerational strategies for strengthening and sustaining families in other contexts, including when there is no particular challenge or dysfunction. These examples illustrate the importance of challenging age-segregated interventions, engaging entire families, promoting communication with regard to issues of shared interest and concern, and establishing family practices that instill a stronger sense of family identity, greater family cohesion, and sustainable family traditions.

4.2 Support for Family Caregiving

Caregiving is simultaneously a health care issue, family issue, community issue, and broader societal issue and includes diverse exchanges, both tangible and intangible, by individuals to each other (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980). Before we provide a range of examples on intergenerational strategies for supporting families we endeavor to provide two departure points in assessing such initiatives in both home and community settings.

4.2.1 A “circle of care” as Foundational Concept

The topic of caregiving goes beyond focusing solely on meeting the needs of the person receiving care. As in the previous chapter (in the segment on “intergenerational approaches for supporting vulnerable and underserved populations at home and in community settings”), we draw upon the “circle of care” concept to reflect values of mutual support and reciprocal care. Here, this foundational concept provides a broader and more holistic way of viewing the family caregiving dynamic. By meeting the needs of an elderly family member that individual is likely to be in a better position to help meet the needs of others in the family. An elderly relative who, for example, receives needed assistance with shopping and cooking is better able to continue to live in the community and be available to assist a young family member who might need help with homework. Such agency does not depend on what the older adults are not able to do, but instead on what they can do. Even if a senior family member has mobility challenges, that individual is still able to engage a child in storytelling, writing, and word play. In this sense, the act of receiving assistance does not relegate the senior to a passive role in life, nor cut off their capacity to provide meaningful care and support for other family members.

4.2.2 A Comparative and International Perspective

While individual regions are at different stages of demographic transition, the overall trend is clear: population aging is a global phenomenon. As population demographics shift, policy changes and programmatic interventions are needed to support families in terms of their care needs. Against this backdrop family caregiving across the lifespan is an international issue. As noted on the website of IACO (International Alliance of Carer Organizations), a global coalition incorporated in 2012, “Caregiving is truly an international phenomenon. No nation is without family caregivers, and the ways in which nations support the needs of caregivers are many.”

However, there is not necessarily a convergence of policies and/or social initiatives in ‘one-size-fits-all’ approaches. Rather, against the background of the mentioned changing demographic trends, this section embeds intergenerational programmatic interventions in different geographies and multidisciplinary configurations. There is a heterogeneity of experiences and inequalities in relation to well-being, that exist between aging families located at different intersections in the social structure, with a particular focus on socio-economic and geographical (rural-urban) position, gender and age (Hoffman, 2014b).

An explicit global perspective on aging families and their experiences seeks to discern and understand impacts of major trends such as international and domestic migration, diffusion of information technology, and widening inter- and intra-country inequality. It also addresses differences and similarities between regions. Accordingly, when considering perceptions and practices related to family caregiving, it is necessary to pay attention to factors related to culture and country (place and space), including local traditions, trajectories of social and demographic change, family structures, economic resources, institutional frameworks, and national policies. Hence, we take a comparative and international perspective when considering family caregiving issues. In so doing, we draw distinctions between the types of family caregiving challenges faced by different countries. Of particular relevance for this aspect of family caregiving is the subset of intergenerational studies literature as well as the broader family studies and cross-cultural literature that focus on cultural differences in terms of family experiences, obligations and behavior towards older generations and by older family members to younger generations.

Dhemba and Dhemba (2015) note differences in the plight of older persons in developing regions, such as in SSA, compared to wealthier countries, including the U.S. and Western Europe. The rise in the proportion of older persons in the more developed regions of the world, at least up to now, happened against the background of increasing employment, rising living standards, and an overall expansion of state resources. In contrast, most caregiving in the more developing regions of the world, and specifically SSA, is negotiated within contexts of family poverty and constrained societal development, which manifest in lower life expectancy, scarcity of resources, lack of institutional support, risk of serious illness, social protection measures for vulnerable groups including older adults, and socio-economic pressures on traditions and norms for family caregiving.

A common theme in the literature is how caregiving norms and traditions are in flux in most developing countries experiencing rapid urbanization pressures. This raises concerns about the nature of, and possible shifts in, normative perspectives and expectations regarding the appropriate role of family and formal care provision as well as the adequacy of care and its impacts on the well-being of both care recipients and care providers (Aboderin & Hoffman, 2015). There is a likely disconnect between normative conceptions, policy approaches and programmatic interventions for aging families in Africa and the realities of intergenerational relations and support in these regions. In view of this, a critical perspective is called for to examine the extent to which western gerontological perspectives on family caregiving, dependencies, and intergenerational support (Fine & Glendinning, 2005; Rummery & Fine, 2012) are able to capture these developing world realities.

Within the Asian context, a study conducted by Knodel and Napaporn (2011) documents some of the ways in which family traditions of providing personal care for dependent children and older adults are under pressure in Thailand (also see Fan, 2007; Wong & Leung, 2012 for the Asian experience). The significant role that grandparents play in the care of young children can become problematic when the size of families decreases, when children's parents migrate away to find employment, and when elderly family members develop care needs themselves (also see Hoffman, 2014a for the South African reality). Such trends also have serious implications for filial elder care, and this often leads to shifts in living arrangements. To address such circumstances, the Thai government is exploring pilot programs to address the issue. One such effort is aimed at expanding community-based intergenerational home-care assistance through paid volunteers. Thailand is not alone in seeking ways to supplement family caregiving with additional home-based support for older adults. We see examples of such efforts across the globe as will be discussed below.

In this next section, we focus on family caregiving in two contexts: caring for older adults with chronic health conditions; and grandparents and other relatives raising children. We endeavor to provide some principles and a wide range of examples on intergenerational strategies for supporting families in both contexts.

First we describe several examples in which intergenerational initiatives could be configured to support families caring for older adult relatives.

4.3 Eldercare

4.3.1 *Intergenerational Home Visitation Schemes*

Intergenerational service learning programs involving high school- and college-aged youth, represent an important source of additional support for older adults who are isolated, frail, and/or burdened with chronic illness, and their families. The potential benefits of such programs in terms of impact on the youth as well as the service

recipients are well-documented (e.g., Blieszner & Artale, 2001; Roodin, Brown, & Shedlock, 2013). What receives less attention is how family caregivers fit into the equation.

An instructive example is the *Visiting Aphasia Scheme*, which is the site of one of the case studies highlighted in Finn and Scharf's (2012) report on intergenerational programs in Ireland. This program was developed by the Speech and Language Therapy department at the University of Limerick as a means to counteract the isolation that many older people with aphasia (following stroke) experience as a result of their communication disability. Annually, 28–30 students are paired with 14–15 older people with aphasia as conversation partners for an hour a week in a variety of settings, including hospitals, nursing homes and the person's own home.

The program was successful overall, however, it worked best in the domiciliary setting rather than the hospital setting due to several factors, including the increased involvement of supportive net of kin at home and the absence of constraints posed by hospital policies. The meetings that took place in homes were more conducive to the formation of friendships (and, in some cases, continued contact) between the adults with aphasia and the students than meetings that took place in clinical settings (Finn & Scharf, 2012).

4.3.2 *Caring for the Caregiver*

Caregivers often have health-related problems associated with the demands (and stresses) associated with providing care for their loved ones. For instance, one study found that one-third of family caregivers of people with dementia were depressed (Covinsky et al., 2003). In being the primary caregiver for a relative with dementia, for example, it is commonplace for caregivers to experience social isolation. They lose out on needed social and emotional support (including from those who share similar challenges) as well as instrumental support which includes learning about local services and how to access them (Adler & Mehta, 2014).

There is a growing body of research indicating that support for these caregivers contributes not only to their own health but also to the quality of care they provide for their loved ones (Gaugler, Zarit, & Nikzad, 2006). Intergenerational programs have a role to play in providing respite (planned temporary relief by substitute care) for stressed and time-strapped caregivers. Caregivers who receive emotional support, respite, and companionship from youth volunteers (as well as from older adult volunteers) report reduced feelings of stress and isolation and an improved sense of security and self-esteem (Osborne & Bullock, 2000; Power & Maluccio, 1998). Time Out is a program in which college students provide respite services for families caring for a frail older adult. Of the families participating in the program, 89% felt that the respite care relieved the stress of caregiving and 96% attributed their ability to keep their relative at home to program participation (Campbell, 2002).

Support for caregivers can also take the form of technological aids (e.g., for finding needed information and resources), and better access to medical care.

4.3.3 *Communication Training for Family Caregivers and Caregiver Professionals*

In many families, members could use help communicating and working together effectively, particularly in times of stress, such as when care needs escalate and important care-related decisions need to be made.

Communication specialists, who are primarily concerned with the *relational* nature of communication, that is, how “the communication behavior that takes place between two or more individuals defines their relationship” (Nussbaum, Pecchioni, Robinson, & Thompson, 2000, p. 2), have a role to play in helping family members (including the primary care provider and the individual(s) receiving the care) to communicate more openly and effectively with one another.

The literature on intergenerational communication includes some strategies for helping family members to traverse the emotional and physical distance between them (Williams & Nussbaum, 2013). Some recommendations for improving family communication include: establishing two-sided (two-way) communication channels; and framing communication to be low pressure (not forced), non-judgmental and tied to family members’ real life experiences.

Communication training programs could also be structured to help those who provide and receive care to tailor/adapt their communication behavior to the “specific other” rather than the categorical or “generalized” other. This is relevant in the context of helping family members to gain a greater awareness of how age-related stereotypes might inadvertently influence how family members communicate, including during times in which they provide and receive care from one another (Ryan, Meredith, & MacLean, 1995).

4.4 Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

Kinship care is defined as the full-time care, nurturing and protection of children by grandparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. These families are known as “kinship families” or “grandfamilies.” There are many reasons for the raising of children by grandparents or other relatives, few of which are positive. They include parental incarceration, drug abuse, death, divorce, teen pregnancy, mental health issues, poverty, neglect, family violence and (particularly in the case of Southern Africa) HIV/AIDS. In Southern Africa, HIV/AIDS is known as ‘the grandmothers’ disease’. Although older persons themselves are at risk of being infected, the major impact of HIV/AIDS they experience is at the level of managing the care of their ailing children and/or caring for their grandchildren. First described by Kelso (1994), the term refers to those children who have been orphaned by losing one or both their parents as a result of AIDS and are cared

for by their grandmothers (also see Wilson & Adamchak, 2000). The term neatly encapsulates the gendered and intergenerational nature of these relationships through the prism of downward support.

In the U.S., families in which children are being raised by grandparents are diverse ethnically, geographically, and economically. As might be expected, the causes, needs, and experiences of these families vary widely. However, beyond these differences there are also trends that are common among grandfamilies. For example, while not a definitive characteristic of these families, poverty rates have been shown to be 60 % higher among grandparents raising grandchildren than among other grandparents in the U.S. In addition, the problems that these families confront relate to widely experienced challenges associated with child care, health services, housing, legal issues, and education. The caregivers themselves are also more likely to be in poor physical health, and to suffer from depression (Littlewood, 2014).

In this section, we describe a wide range of interventions aimed at supporting grandfamilies, including support groups for relative caregivers, kinship family retreats, supportive public policies, alternative public housing facilities, and resource centers. However, relative to the numbers of these families, such services still only exist on a small scale. For there to be an expansion of services, and a broader adoption of supportive legislation, there needs to be a greater level of public awareness of the difficulties that many of these families face.

Efforts to build public awareness around kinship caregiving challenges include television call-in shows, radio segments, and public forums focused on related themes. There are some curricula with information and multi-media materials that could be useful in planning and running such public forums.²

An ambitious but appropriate goal is to work toward creating an integrated web of programs, support systems, interagency collaboration systems, and social policies designed to help grandfamilies navigate the challenges they face. This entails framing the many threads of possible intervention into complementary levels of action focused on:

- **Strengthening families:** Includes efforts to provide family members with emotional and instrumental support and improve family communication dynamics.
- **Strengthening individual agencies:** Includes efforts to train staff and improve programs and services offered.
- **Strengthening service delivery systems:** Includes efforts to establish broader grandfamily-friendly policies and ensure that there is interagency collaboration and cooperation in providing services to grandfamilies.

The intent is not simply to expand or extend programs and policies in the grandfamilies arena, but rather to create a continuum of support (as described earlier in

²One such multi-media resource is “Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Doubly Stressed, Triply Blessed,” developed by Penn State Extension (Kaplan, Hanhardt, & Crago, 2011).

this chapter) and promote a culture of “reflective practice” which draws upon evidence-based approaches for making a positive difference in the lives of members of grandfamilies (Kaplan & Perez-Porter, 2014). It is also important to recognize the resiliency of many grandfamilies and acknowledge and build upon relative caregivers’ adaptive abilities, readiness to learn, and motivation to succeed (Hayslip & Smith, 2013).

4.4.1 Support Groups and Other Family-to-Family Support Systems

“I thought I had the baddest kids in the world. When I got [to the support group] and heard other grandparents speak, it was comforting for me to know that there are some other bad ones. It helped me to deal with them.” (Support group participant in Georgia, quoted by King et al., 2009, p. 233)

Research on relative caregiver families highlights the sense of social isolation that many family members feel. Support group participants appreciate the opportunity to share and discuss common concerns and trade insights (Jones, Chipungu, & Hutton, 2003). Many also serve an educational function. As an example, they may invite professionals to speak on specific items of interest at support group meetings. Some support groups also take on a proactive advocacy component as they work toward making changes in local, regional, and/or national policies.

Another form of family-to-family support is peer mentoring. A good example is Maine Kids-Kin’s “Grandfamily to Grandfamily” program for relative caregivers unable to make support group meetings. Program director Barbara Kates describes the program as follows:

“Volunteers complete a five hour training to raise awareness of listening skills, remain non-judgmental, accessing resources, understanding boundaries, and maintaining records. When relative caregivers call our office, we offer them the option of talking to another grandparent trained in supporting their peers. If the caller agrees, we will match him or her with a volunteer and the volunteer will begin with weekly contacts for the first month. The pair will then continue as needed for up to 6 months. We began matching pairs this year, but the initial survey from participants tells us how much they appreciate the volunteers and knowing they are not alone” (Kates, 2009, p. 3).

4.4.2 “Kinship Navigator” Programs

“Kinship Navigator” programs provide relative caregivers with a single point of entry for learning about services they might need in many areas, including health, financial assistance, legal assistance, and housing. They are effective in helping

caregivers not only obtain a better understanding of the services available to them, but also the routes they must follow to obtain these services. This is particularly valuable when service delivery systems are fragmented, uncoordinated, and with gaps in certain service areas (Cox, 2009; Generations United, 2008). Some kinship navigator programs go beyond helping relative caregivers with service information and referrals. For example, the Florida Kinship Center which runs a navigator program also offers a “warmline” so that relative caregivers receive emotional support as they work to navigate the complex and often disjointed array of agency services (Littlewood & Strozier, 2009).

4.4.3 *Respite Care*

For many grandparents taking on parental roles, it is the sudden lack of free time and the inability to come and go as they please that is one of the most difficult adjustments. This concern is reflected in the following quotes from grandparents raising their grandchildren:

“Having all four children here is overwhelming at times. Children are time-suckers. They are so demanding. The hardest part is not having any time to myself, not really having my own life” (Volunteers of America, 2012, p. 14).

I don’t have the freedom I once had because I have to worry about someone being there for them. So any appointments I have or anything I want to do, I have to take them with me or ask and take them to their other grandmother’s. I was getting used to sleeping in and now I’ve got to make sure I’m up to get the oldest one off to school...by that time the little one is up” (Volunteers of America, 2012, p. 14).

The case for respite care services for kinship care providers is summarized in a policy brief from the Family Strengthening Policy Center (2007):

“High-quality, accessible respite care is essential to the well-being of all family members and to the long-term sustainability of the grandfamily arrangement. While respite providers engage children in positive social and educational activities, the grandparent or relative has time to participate in support groups, obtain services so the family can function effectively, or secure health services that protect their ability to raise children (Family Strengthening Policy Center, 2007, p. 1).

A good example of a senior volunteer program approach to providing respite care to grandparent-caregivers is run by the Southwest Michigan AAA (Area Agency on Aging). They carefully match volunteers and families, train volunteers, maintain regular contact with families and volunteers, and evaluate program impact on all involved. During their weekly visits, the family-friendly volunteers engage children and youth in educational and recreational activities while relieving grandparents of caregiving responsibilities (Family Strengthening Policy Center, 2007).

4.4.4 *Kinship Family Retreats*

Kinship family retreats represent a holistic approach for supporting children and their caregivers. Whereas most programs for relative caregiver families target the adult care provider, kinship family retreats are designed for the entire family.

A kinship family retreat is like a camp for grandfamilies; it provides a safe, stress-free setting for family members to spend time together and strengthen their relationships. Crago and Kaplan (2011) describe a weekend mini-camp model, with families arriving and getting settled on a Friday evening and for the remainder of the weekend taking part in family meals, hands-on workshops for caregivers and children, and a wide range of recreational activities. The workshops for the caregivers include topics such as stress management, conflict resolution, parent education, and life skills education. Workshops and activities for the children and youth address issues related to anger, stress, self-confidence, and family communication strategies.

An activity that works well at these retreats involves having each family make a “family banner” which tells a story about their family. Families work on their banners during family time or other free time during the retreat and they present and display their banners at the closing family celebration event. Working on the banners provides families with time and opportunity to discuss issues related to family identity, and this contributes to a sense of family unity. This is particularly important for kinship families with members who have experienced upheaval and are struggling to adapt to new family dynamics. It is also a way to help grandfamilies generate ideas for new family activity traditions.

Families participating in the retreats tend to appreciate not having to think or worry about treatment, therapy, or referrals. They are not there as ‘families in need.’ They are simply families spending some quality time together. As one grandparent put it after participating in a retreat organized by Penn State Extension in 2008, ‘It’s been a weekend where we’re all the same—we’re all normal’ (Crago & Kaplan, 2011, p. 1).

4.4.5 *Advocacy*

Some organizations, such as the National Committee of Grandparents for Children’s Rights (NCGCR), have a strong advocacy component. The mission of NCGCR is to advocate and lobby for substantial legislative changes that protect the rights of grandparents to secure their grandchildren’s health, happiness and well-being.

Grandparents Plus (<http://www.grandparentsplus.org.uk/>) is another organization with a policy and social change orientation. Based, in the UK, they work to support grandparents and the wider family by:

- *Campaigning for change* so that grandparents’ many contributions to children’s well-being and care is valued and understood.

- *Providing evidence, policy solutions and training* so that grandparents get the services and support they need to help children thrive.
- *Building alliances and networks* so that grandparents can have a voice and support each other, especially when they become children’s full-time caregivers.

4.4.6 Housing for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

A trend in the U.S. is the development of new apartment housing geared specifically to grandfamilies. Grandfamily housing projects generally provide an array of support services, educational programs, and recreational activities as well as low rent accommodations.

The first such facility in the U.S., GrandFamilies House (Boston, Massachusetts) was established in 1998 by Boston Aging Concerns Young and Old United (BAC-You) after four years of research, planning, and collaboration with other organizations. This facility was designed to be accessible for older adults (e.g., with grab bars in the bathrooms and other “universal design” features) and safe for children (e.g., with protective covers over outlets and playgrounds viewable from apartment windows). The facility includes an on-site pre-school and an after-school and computer learning center which adds to the possibilities for intergenerational engagement (Gottlieb & Silverstein, 2003).

Similar developments have emerged in Chicago, the Bronx (New York City), Hartford (Connecticut), Baton Rouge (Louisiana), and Kansas City (Missouri) (Gentile, 2014). GrandFamily Apartments in New York City, developed by Presbyterian Senior Services and the Westside Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing, Inc., provides what administrators call a “one stop shop” to housing, social services, support services, youth programs and entitlement assistance. Building amenities include a library, playground, and roof garden. In Chicago, Illinois, grandfamilies share the Coppin House housing complex with other families. This facility consists of a 54-unit, two-building complex; 24 of the units are taken by grandfamilies and the remaining units are for young adults moving out of the foster care system (West, 2009).

In their evaluation of GrandFamilies House in Boston four years after it opened, Gottlieb and Silverstein (2003) suggested several factors related to planning, space, and design issues that should be taken into consideration when developing such facilities.

“To meet the complex needs of elders and children of varying ages, adequate common space is needed. Ideally, there should be a large community room—large enough for youth activities, dances, and parties, but designed with the flexibility to be broken down into smaller spaces as needed. The community room should be available regularly and should be located apart from residential units (perhaps adjacent to management offices), to minimize noise disturbance. On-site programming should also be housed apart from residential units. There should be adequate outdoor space for a children’s playground, seating areas for elders, family cookouts, and recreation space for youth” (p. 25–26).

Other recommendations from Gottlieb and Silverstein (2003) are to include prospective tenants and neighbors in the initiative planning process, and conduct a preliminary assessment of the proposed neighborhood in terms of the availability of elder and youth programs and services, access to shopping and public transportation, and potential safety issues.

4.5 Technological Tools to Strengthen Family Communication and Caregiving

4.5.1 Introduction

Demographic changes and subsequent increasing social and health care needs are occurring in parallel with exponential growth in the application of information and communications technology (ICT). ICTs have the potential both to intensify social and health care delivery, and also to ‘disburden’ social and health care systems (Bowes & McColgan, 2013; Braun, Catalani, Wimbush, & Israelski, 2013). From a family communication perspective, this is an exciting and positive development and the penetration specifically of mobile technology is particularly deep in SSA. Statistics provided by the International Telecommunications Union (2013) indicate that people living in low-income regions are today the majority owners of mobile phones.

Technology is playing a continual expanding role in helping family members to connect with one another even when living far apart. We know from those who study family dynamics that family relationships are not static; they need to grow and evolve along with the needs, abilities, and interests of individual family members to form more cohesive relationships. The more opportunities family members have to engage, support, and learn from and with one another, the better. Accordingly any technology, tool or solution designed to strengthen family relationships should be flexible and multi-faceted enough to allow patterns of communication to evolve over time. So we need to determine how technology can foster intergenerational understanding and relationship enhancement. One of the biggest challenges we face in our techno-social age is determining how ‘high tech’ can become ‘high touch’ (Sánchez, Kaplan, & Bradley, 2015).

In recent years, there has been a surge in attention paid to how technology-based solutions have the potential to lighten the burden that falls on family caregivers. In the following sections, we look at two technology-enabled systems with caregiving applications within and outside of families and consider some ways in which technology can be used to enhance grandparent-grandchild communication and strengthen relationships across the potential barrier of geographic distance.

4.5.2 Family Care Mapping

As noted by Adler and Mehta (2014) in their report on outcomes from the roundtable “Catalyzing Technology to Support Family Caregiving” convened by the (U.S.) National Alliance for Caregiving, technological innovation can support family caregiving by inspiring more family conversations, learning, and joint plans of action aimed at improving the care system for older family members. They further describe the *Atlas of Caregiving* pilot project which led to the development of a system to help families create *family care maps*. These are “dynamic system maps” of family-specific, complex family caregiving landscapes. A care map is a helpful way to visually display all the individuals who are providing care, the relationships between them, and the services that are involved. This process can be used to support a family’s efforts to strengthen their care networks, thereby shifting the burden from individual caregivers to multiple caregivers. Figure 4.2, below, provides an example of one family’s care situation in family care map form.

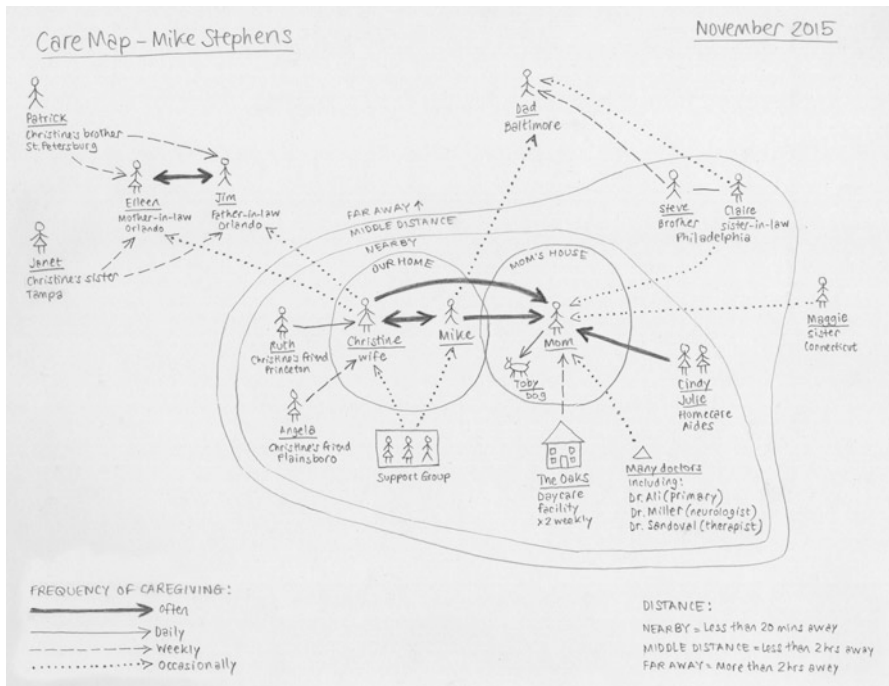


Fig. 4.2 Family Care Map. An example of one family’s *family care map*. The Atlas of Caregiving website (<http://atlasofcaregiving.com/put-your-family-caregiving-on-the-map>) provides a 5-min video documenting the process. [Published with permission Rajiv Mehta, director of the Atlas of Caregiving Pilot project]

Rajiv Mehta, Principal Investigator of the Atlas of Caregiving project, notes that the care map seems to have struck a chord with many. A recent line of interest took the form of a community foundation in Santa Barbara, CA organizing a series of care map workshops for small groups of family caregivers and social workers. Mr. Mehta showed participants how to draw a care map, helped them draw their own, and then led discussions about their reflections on what they created.

Participating caregivers reported:

- finding some solace in discovering that they weren't alone;
- becoming more aware of the support they already enjoyed as well as additional levels of support that they could potentially call upon; and
- gaining ideas from hearing about other people's circumstances (Mehta & Nafus, 2016).

Kathleen Kelly, Executive Director of the Family Caregiver Alliance (U.S.), stated, "Each family is unique, with unique dynamics, strengths, capacities, and resources. Care mapping provides the opportunity for caregivers to increase awareness of their own care system and illuminate where additional assistance may be needed" (Mehta & Nafus, 2016, p. iv). By making the caregiving challenge seem more finite and manageable, this is likely to reduce stress on the part of the caregiver and lead to more sustainable caregiving scenarios.

As a function of its capacity to diagram the people involved in particular care situations, the care map tool also has broader research applications. For example, it is a useful tool for teams of researchers studying novel methods, including the role of technological advancements, for gaining a better understanding of the challenges faced by family caregivers (Mehta & Nafus, 2016).

4.5.3 Community Care Networks

The "BCN Smart City" initiative in Barcelona, Spain involves a host of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for all local residents. Several of these projects hone in on the goal of establishing care networks for isolated older adults on both family and community levels. The Vincles BCN project was launched by the City Council's Area of Quality of Life, Equality and Sport as a small social experiment aimed at developing technology-enhanced methods using i-Pads to tap into family networks, community care networks, "proximity circles," and "trust networks" in support of isolated older adults.

Another initiative designed to establish a community care network for isolated older adults in Barcelona, and complementary to family support, is the RADARS project. A network of social service providers, shopkeepers, neighbors, volunteers (including from the Red Cross), and professionals from local associations work together to provide support to help residents, 75 years of age

and older, to continue living in their own homes. One component of this support system is a “Telephone Monitoring Platform” through which volunteers keep RADARS project clientele informed about local social services as well as social activities.

These programs do not aim to replace family care but generally aim to complement it through facilitating access to useful resources through technology.

4.5.4 An Aid to Long Distance Grandparenting and Family Remembrance

In an increasingly globalized world, geographical distance has a profound impact on the quality of relationships between family members across generations. A 65-year old grandfather living in England who is dissatisfied with the communication (or lack thereof) with his grandchildren living in the U.S. relates his experience as follows:

“It’s interesting, very, very, very rarely do we contact them, and that’s not because we don’t want to it’s because, our son will say ‘do you want to talk to granddad?’ and they’ll say ‘no’, because they’re doing something else, but I think it’s as much to do with ... they don’t know us, they don’t know us” (Tarrant, 2015, pp. 294–295).

This quote illustrates the difficulty with long-distance communication, even with an array of ITC options available. Although the advances in ITC options provide family members with additional ways to communicate over great distances, it seems challenging to get the connection started and to sustain the relationships.

However, new and updated technology is being utilized, and applications are being developed, to help family members stay in contact and maintain lines of social support across geographic distance. This is consistent with other research reported in the literature which notes that families seeking to extend communication and relationships over great distances, is one of the major reasons for learning about and using new technologies (e.g., AARP, 2012; Harley, Veter, Fitzpatrick, & Kurniawan, 2012). For example, Ee Ching (Candice) Ng, who is currently on the faculty in the School of Art Design & Media at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, developed the following two prototype devices to preserve family history and help younger family members engage with and remember their older relatives:

- The “Digital Heirloom:” Family members work with an older adult relative to create recordings that highlight cherished family memories with that individual. These recordings are then embedded in a device that plays back voice audio clips when triggered by a motion sensor. See Fig. 4.3, below.
- The “Remember Me - Inheritance Kit:” These kits contain personal items that belong to a cherished family member. By embedding a memory chip that contains



Fig. 4.3 Digital Heirlooms. Digital Heirloom devices could be stationary or mobile, as pictured above. Published with permission from Ee Ching (Candice) Ng

personal recordings, stories, histories and messages into these items, they provide a living, personalized record of that person’s existence. See Fig. 4.4, below.

Images of these devices were presented as a poster exhibit at the 2011 Generations United conference (Ng & Kaplan, 2011). The title of the poster captures the intergenerational dimension of these objects: “Human Bonding Artifacts - Two ideas for using emerging technologies to strengthen intergenerational relationships within the family.”

REMEMBER ME - INHERITANCE KITS

NEW ARTIFACTS FOR REMEMBERING

What is it?

'Remember Me - Inheritance Kit' contains personal items that belong to a cherished family member. By embedding a memory chip that contains personal recordings, stories, histories and messages into these items, they provide a living, personalised record of that person's existence.

REMEMBER ME - INHERITANCE KITS

Personal diary with RFID (embedded data) chip

Smoking pipe with RFID (embedded data) chip

RFID (embedded data) chip reader; Will display audio and visual information stored in the RFID chips that are swiped over the surface

Personalized container for 'Remember Me' items

Antique watch with RFID (embedded data) chip

Technological Elements

- RFID ID-20 Reader
- RFID 125 Mhz Chip
- Arduino Uno Microcontroller
- Processing Programming Environment
- Arduino Programming Environment

Fig. 4.4 Remember Me - Inheritance Kits. Published with permission from Ee Ching (Candice) Ng

Although still a long way toward optimally engaging cohorts of older generations digitally with their younger family members—especially in view of digital inequalities across generations and regions—new computer-based technologies provide opportunities for intergenerational links. With the necessary support such a (re)engagement could transcend generational divisions as well as physical distances that often exist among family members (Harley et al., 2012).

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Chapter 5

Intergenerational Strategies for Promoting Lifelong Learning and Education

Abstract This chapter highlights the relational nature of learning and especially notes that through education, intended intergenerational practices have great potential to foster sustainable relationships in society. Examples of international intergenerational programs focused on lifelong learning and education in countries as different as Germany, India, Spain, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and U.S. are presented as pathways to combat the following three main threats to sustainable societies: cultural discontinuity, lack of trust, and the increasing challenges to living in diverse contexts. Special attention is paid to the move from multi-generational learning and education contexts to intended intergenerational endeavors at all levels. Purposeful efforts are made to facilitate interaction between generations to enhance learning and education. The traditional paradox in evidence is that most of our school systems consist of age-segregated classrooms while a community of teachers, families and students from different generations are living side by side. This phenomenon is highlighted. In order to illustrate how this paradox may be solved, we present a few cases of international intergenerational initiatives carried out in educational settings where generations meet purposefully to teach and learn together across the lifespan.

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 *Learning, Education, and Relational Practices*

That learning and education must be approached as lifelong processes is common sense. After all, it is evident that we are learning creatures from the moment of birth, even earlier according to some new research into prenatal development. What has not been so obvious is how education extends throughout life as well.

Peter Jarvis (2001), one of the leading international experts in the study of learning, has suggested that it is through learning that human beings “create and transform experiences into knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, senses and emotions” (p. 10). Hence, learning is the food for continuing change in the person: everyone is able to learn and change as long as they are alive. Where we differ from

Jarvis is when he asserts education is just subsumed within learning, for “education is learning in a formal situation” (p. 2). We believe it is not just that.

As we understand it, education, unlike learning, brings into play not only the community, much more than a group in the formal context, but instead, the forging of a moral community (Fernández Enguita, 2016). At its heart, education is a moral practice rather than a technical or technological enterprise. As formulated by Gert Biesta (2012), this latter idea leads us to one of the main differences between learning and education: “...education is a *teleological* practice, that is a practice framed and constituted by purposes.” (p. 583). Yes, we may say that learning can have a purpose (e.g., learning to read so that I am able to learn more). However, whereas learning purposes do not necessarily have to be connected to a sense of the common good, educational endeavors are judged by their desirability regarding our membership in a certain community. Education is not just concerned with change but also with improvement of the world we live in.

Moreover, education is a *relational practice* for it always implies someone else with whom, from whom, or for whom it is possible. If learning emphasizes the potential for ongoing development and change, then education calls our attention to the set of values which make learning a desirable endeavor in relation to influencing others. As Biesta states, “whereas ‘education’ is a relational concept that, in most cases, refers to the interaction between an educator and a student, ‘learning’ denotes something that one can do alone and by oneself” (Biesta, 2011, p. 66).

Consequently, there may be self-directed learning but not self-directed education, at least not in equal terms. Those talking about self-directed education have mostly referred to self-directed instruction, another way to coin self-directed learning. It is through education that we keep being members of a moral community throughout our lives, not just uniform members (*I am just one of us*), but distinctive, diverse and incomplete members (*I am a unique human being*) because our relational nature always entails being in touch with others whose lives are linked and interdependent to ours: “Every person is a knot in a net of relationships” (Panikkar, 1993).

Briefly, we might say, on the one hand, “*I am alive, therefore I can learn*”, and on the other hand “*I belong (in a human community), therefore I am an interdependent human being.*” The continuing nature of change and interdependency makes learning and education lifelong, ongoing and based on contingent accomplishments; we never can take for granted what it is that we will be able to learn or what the results of education will be.

5.1.2 *Learning, Education, and Intergenerational Practices*

How is it that the lifelong character of learning and education connects with an intergenerational perspective? Adopting an intergenerational perspective leads us to wonder about time-bound connections and disconnections across the life-span (birth to death), the life-cycle (development stages which reproduce), and the

life-course (social and historic timing as per our linked lives) (O’Rand & Krecker, 1990). In the end, generations can be viewed as specific locations within demographic, familial, organizational, historic, and individual time. Therefore, one way to understand that learning and education are life-long consists of paying attention to dynamics throughout life within the framework of several interrelated and intersecting generational positions.

For instance, those college students who have finished their studies in 2016 take with them forever not just a degree, but also another indicator to add to their profile of generational identities, namely being a student from the 2016 Class. Whether, when, and how they will use this indicator is a matter to unfold. However, for them to explain their lives, referring to the year of their college commencement may instill a certain sense of continuity regarding their life-cycles, as well as a sense of connection through a life-course cohort-linked experience—that of all students in the 2016 Class. Actually, in many current societies mandatory education years in school constitute an institutionalized way to organize part of the life cycle and therefore those years are important in terms of generational identity. Unsurprisingly, many of our sustainable social relationships across generations are woven within the school system: wasn’t that the basic narrative in Mitch Albom’s best-selling book *Tuesdays with Morrie*?

5.1.3 *The Question at Stake*

From the perspective of our book, the key question at stake regarding the triangle of lifelong learning, lifelong education, and intergenerational relationships would be the following: *to what extent are our current learning and educational practices powerful sources of (un)intended and sustainable intergenerational relationships?* The authors in this book argue that there is a lot of leverage to be gained in lifelong learning and education towards more sustainable societies, and the intergenerational nature within learning and education is at the core of that leverage to be unleashed.

Every day, everywhere in the world, thousands of children and youth spend a significant number of hours with their teachers at schools, vocational training centers, and colleges. We all seem to have assumed that it is good for our younger generations to attend a formal system of education as an ensemble of mono-generational groups of pupils engaging with a few adults—their teachers and the school staff. Actually, the age at which children typically enter the school system might be considered an official start for them to a new lifelong pathway for learning and education.

The more developed a country is, the more accepted is the idea of staying longer in the school system, including not just compulsory education, but also all the formal education institutions. However, during all this school time awareness about intergenerational processes and the weaving of intergenerational relations taking place is not the norm. Children and youth tend to spend time with classmates of

similar age, similar competence level and similar seniority in the school organization. For instance, mix-age or mix-competency groupings are unusual, and even deemed inappropriate in many schools, with rural schools by necessity being the exception to this rule (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015). When such groupings are incorporated into the system, it is not always the case that the intergenerational component of these groupings is made visible.

Hence, a paradox arises: while schools gather different generations every day, typically school teachers and instructors in the classrooms are in different generational positions than their students, and many times are not able to recognize the intergenerational nature of the learning and education process going on. We are losing an opportunity to build social fabric and to develop the interdependency mentioned above; therefore, society's sustainability loses terrain.

Our hypothesis in this particular chapter is clear: the more we are able to connect different generations so that they can interact, relate, and get mutually engaged in learning and education throughout life, the more we will be increasing and strengthening our chances to make our societies sustainable. Why? Because life is a project whose span, cycle, and course make us all linked to other people along a continuum of time through processes of both bonding and bridging, and intergenerational endeavors are geared to link up specific positions in a life time (generations), and to preserve a sense of connection between past, present, and future relationships (relational sustainability).

5.2 Creating Purposeful Intergenerational Lifelong Learning and Education

Nowadays, many learning and education settings are multi-generational. Different generations congregate at venues where learning and education is taking place. However, a collection of generations does not guarantee anything regarding what is really at stake here, namely how people from different generations interact and mutually engage while keeping their generational identities in mind. All schools are multigenerational sites by definition. Schools are typically structured around learning and education, partially organized through encounters and interactions between teachers and pupils who belong to different generations, hence their obvious intergenerational nature. However, this type of taken-for-granted intergenerational composition does not correspond to meaningful, everyday relations at each and every school. The fact that people from different generations are together, and even interact, does not equate to intergenerational exchanges and education. Hence, our interest is to identify settings where the advantage of their multi-generational status has been taken to promote and adopt sustainable intergenerational relationships as an intended underlying principle. Examples of the latter can be found internationally and we will present a few of them below.

That intergenerational lifelong learning and education can be made purposeful and make a difference, leads us into the realm of intergenerational programs. Biggs and Lowenstein (2011) have argued that intergenerational initiatives are opportunities for people to place themselves in the position of a different generation in four main steps: (i) becoming critically aware that generational identity is a key factor in social relationships; (ii) understanding similarities and differences between generations; (iii) taking a value stance around generational positions; and (iv) acting with generational awareness. Otherwise said, intergenerational practices are sensitizing instruments to recognize and engage in the web of generations and intergenerational interactions around us. Moreover, and getting back to Biggs & Lowenstein's analysis, intergenerational endeavors can facilitate participants to experience two particular features of intergenerational relationships:

“First, the degree to which it is possible to place oneself in the position of the age-other and develop empathy between generations; second, the possibility of working towards negotiated and sustainable solutions” (p. 140).

Of course, this idea of producing “sustainable solutions” must be based upon sustainable relationships working for the common good. It is through fostering lifelong learning and education, because they have to do with lifelong change and interdependency, personal development and the forging of moral communities, that intergenerational approaches can provide contexts to find sustainable solutions around three main challenges: multiplication of boundaries which make us feel an uncomfortable sense of discontinuity and disconnection; erosion in intergenerational trust; and struggles to build one's identity within a world of increasing difference and diversity.

Intergenerational programs in lifelong learning and education may counterbalance current tendencies in relationship fragmentation insofar as these programs may develop “the capacity to place oneself in the position of the other and to locate sources of solidarity that make for lasting and positive social relations” (Biggs & Lowenstein, 2011, p. 146).

5.3 Combatting Discontinuity and Disconnection

Time flow always combines continuity and discontinuity, as the Polish sociologist Bauman (2007) has reminded us. However, the current rhythm and scope of ongoing and ubiquitous changes in many societies worldwide is disturbing, as “...discontinuity of experiences is almost a universal phenomenon affecting similarly all age categories” (p. 124). In this context, intergenerational programs promoting lifelong learning and education may present a pathway for society's sustainability. Our reasoning lies in the twofold nature of generational identity and intergenerational endeavors. On the one hand, there is intergenerational continuity: each generation is generated by a previous one with which it has something in common. However, there is also discontinuity: each new generation displays a partial break of its bonds

with the previous generation from which it emerged. This combination of continuity and discontinuity is at the basis of intergenerational strategies' capacity to combat excessive discontinuity and disconnection. Actually, assuring cultural continuity has been coined as one of the imperatives behind the increasing interest in intergenerational programs (Kaplan & Sánchez, 2014).

Thus, intergenerational learning is one form of deterrence against disruptions to cultural and historical traditions of passing on the knowledge from older generations to younger ones. The plight of indigenous peoples—such as Native Hawaiians, Native Americans, the Maori of New Zealand, and Aborigines of Australia— who have experienced cultural dislocation, social fragmentation, and physical relocation across generations proves it (Kaplan & Lapilio, 2002). In India, the Aastha Foundation for Welfare and Development (a non-governmental organization based in Delhi) has been funding several intergenerational programs including some in which older adults function as “culture watchdogs.” Based in community centers, they engage local children and youth (5–15 years of age) at least once a week and educate them about local traditions, celebrated festivities, and the importance of maintaining a sense of cultural identity despite an influx of Western values. Cultural values and ethics are conveyed through telling stories, sharing anecdotes and “small talk.” This intervention is seen as a response to the erosion of the traditional value system and ethics from the younger generations of Indian society in metropolitan cities like Delhi (Kaplan & Chadha, 2004).

Let us move now from India to Western Europe:

“We have all learnt things we would never have known about Reading's history and even our own families, as we would have never had the reason to ask. It has given us the chance to spend our afterschool time doing something fun as well as educational, rather than going home just to sit on the sofa.” (Armstrong, 2012, p. 295).

This last excerpt was made by a participant in the *Historypin*¹ after-school group at the Littleheath School in Reading (United Kingdom). It is an example of how an intergenerational strategy can be useful for both providing a non-formal learning opportunity and engaging different generations around cultural continuity—including initiatives aimed at recording and preserving local history, collective and personal histories, and cultural heritage. The passing of knowledge and the discovering and preservation of hidden histories are at the heart of this program. Obviously, in this particular case it is not just that learning does happen, but thanks to intergenerational learning, life-spans and life-cycles may stretch out as far as the capacity to keep memories alive expands. Hence, social processes articulated around these memories and collective imagery are sustained.

¹“Historypin.com is an online, global archive to which people can add photos, audio, video, stories, and memories by pinning them to a particular place and time on the Historypin map. The Historypin app also lets people add and explore content while walking around their local areas. Since its launch, Historypin has been a catalyst for numerous online and offline collaborations between older and younger people” (Armstrong, 2012, p. 294).

Another service being rendered by *Historypin* to society's sense of connection and sustainability has to do with its potential to reduce social isolation, and therefore to support healthier lives:

"Historypin is proving to be an extremely powerful catalyst for positive intergenerational contact and the reduction of social isolation. Both on individual and community levels, Historypin has brought people together across generations and cultures and created a sense of belonging within communities. New friendships have been made between older and younger people, social confidence has increased, and new skills have been learned. Families have found out more about one another and people have gained a sense of understanding and pride in their local areas" (Armstrong, 2012, p. 296).

Intergenerational technology programs have demonstrated as well significant capability to foster lifelong learning and education (Sánchez, Kaplan, & Bradley, 2015); some 11% of 46 intergenerational programs with a strong technological component surveyed in 11 countries admitted to have adopted *cultural continuity* as their area of intended impact. *All Together Now*, in the U.S., and *Generations Together*, in the UK are just two of those programs. The latter makes possible for over 100 school children from 8 schools across Worcestershire to carry out interviews with older members of their community. Stories are recorded, edited, and archived so that they may be retrieved and used in school projects demonstrating how powerful the combination of technology, non-formal and formal education can be to fight the sense of discontinuity.

Technology may be used either face-to-face or through virtual environments that can also function as resource and learning hubs to preserve continuity and connections. For instance, the originators of the EU-funded, multi-country *Grandparents and Grandchildren* program established the "Internet Gym," a multilingual website with supporting materials for young tutors (including teaching exercises and other pedagogical resources designed for them), older adults, and professionals who either conduct or are considering to conduct such programs (Schneider, Tosolini, Iacob, and Collinassi (2012).

Third, Richardson, Collin, Rahilly, and Bolzan (2011) have explored the *living lab* space, a virtual setting created for youth to conduct workshops on social networking and cybersafety for adult participants. It is described as a "non-hierarchical space of intergenerational dialogue and learning that generated mutual respect between the young people and adult participants" (p. 8). These examples hint at how further development of virtual environments, for more fluid, multi-faceted, and participatory intergenerational exchanges, might herald a paradigm shift for extending the possibilities of intergenerational interaction beyond what any individual could have conceived of as possible even recently.

5.3.1 *Mix-age Intergenerational Education*

If we focus now on formal education, The Intergenerational School (TIS) may be highlighted as an outstanding international example of how to connect different generations' lives and relationships in a sustainable way. TIS was founded as a charter school in inner-city Cleveland, OH in the year 2000 under two main principles: (i) learning is a lifelong developmental process, and (ii) knowledge is socially constructed within the context of a diverse community of personalized relationships. TIS began with 30 students but now serves about 225 children aged 5–14. Its mission is to connect, create, and guide a multigenerational community of lifelong learners and spirited citizens.

TIS believes that lifelong learning in a school cannot be fully accomplished unless people from across the life-span become involved as both learners and teachers. Hence, the strong intergenerational emphasis in the TIS model: “Intergenerational learning allows younger learners to watch older learners go about learning. That is how the younger children learn how to learn...how they come to know about knowing” (The Intergenerational School, 2009). How does TIS actually organize the engagement in the school of learners from all generations? Multi-age classrooms and a group of multi-generational volunteers participating as co-learners in the school life on a regular, intentional, and carefully planned bases constitutes the main answer to that question. It is through this approach of making the school a multi-generational community of lifelong learners and teachers that discontinuity and disconnection are confronted in different ways. This is exemplified in the following quotes from a TIS guidebook for teachers (The Intergenerational School, 2009):

- “In making connections with the younger generations, elders realize that they have a powerful opportunity for a lasting legacy that will outlive them;”
- “teacher is the guide-on-the-side, sitting next to the child, looking to ‘lead forth’ existing knowledge or experience within a student... then helping the student to construct connections between the old and the new;”
- “when content (...) is connected to context in real life, learning comes alive;”
- “the connections [of children’s learning to academic, civic, economic, and empowering ends for that learning] are strands in the narrative of learning, now made more meaningful, and education becomes learning for life.”

On a personal interview by this book’s authors, one teacher in TIS said that the heart of this school is with connections between students and mentors from different generations: “It is these connections that students are making that help in their learning.” We would add that (good, strong) connections are what makes TIS a sustainable community.

Mix-age intergenerational learning and education as implemented at TIS is an interesting approach towards an increasing engagement between generations throughout life. In many school settings age discontinuity has become the norm, despite the fact that a long historic tradition of bringing up the young in non-age-segregated contexts exists (Pratt, 1986). However, many times in life our successful

experiences of learning and education are not necessarily age-segregated (e.g., informal family education). Actually, a strong case is being made for multi-generational classrooms not only in the school system but also in higher education where student's age diversity is increasing steadily:

“Multigenerational classrooms in formal higher education may constitute windows of opportunity to rethink the practice of teaching as far as they may become venues for triggering processes of intergenerational learning, i.e., learning between the generations stemming from an awareness of differences accrued through individual and group affiliation to diverse generational positions” (Sánchez & Kaplan, 2014, p. 475).

While literature on multi-grade (Quail & Smyth, 2014), and multi-age learning (Simonson, 2015) in the school does not yet provide enough categorical evidence to support its effectiveness, cases like TIS combining a mix-age and an intergenerational approach at different levels proliferate (e.g., the Integrative Montessori Volksschule² in Munich, Germany, the Ramon y Cajal School³ in Zaragoza, Spain, and Cregagh Primary School⁴ in Belfast, Northern Ireland). The need to research further and deeper into both the principles, nuts and bolts of mixed age intergenerational education seems obvious.

5.4 Strengthening Intergenerational Trust

Human trust, “the single most important ingredient for the development and maintenance of happy, well-functioning relationships” (Simpson, 2007), has been mainly approached four-fold: as an expectation, a probability, a moral commitment, and a personal predisposition. We consider trust to be a relational asset which has to do with interdependence and bonding capacity with others, a key ingredient in sustainable societies. We argue that intergenerational relationships are instruments for the development and support of a sense of trust, in times when trust and social capital are eroding rapidly: “intergenerational learning and education is understood to have immense potential for overcoming this gap and reaching new forms of solidarity and trust between younger and older generations” (Schmidt-Hertha, Krašovec, & Formosa, 2014, p. 2).

Anthropologist Mary C. Bateson (2010) has formulated the question which constitutes the focus of this section in the chapter: *how can we manage to teach younger generations who they can trust and, at the same time, make them capable of trusting along their lives?* Bateson believes that we can only achieve this if those of us who are no longer children offer young people examples of trustworthiness. In other words, we will make it happen if we are capable of trusting others and of putting this

²http://www.montessori-muenchen.de/?seite=werkstatt_allgemein

³<http://www.changemakerschools.org/profiles/2016/3/2/ceip-ramn-y-cajal>

⁴<http://www.cregaghprimary.org.uk/intergenerational-project/>

trust into practice. We are interested to find out the extent to which this may be achieved through lifelong intergenerational learning and education.

Trust (as well as distrust) is relational insofar that it is generated through reciprocal exchange between individuals in interaction. Trust always emerges out of relationships in progress. Therefore, the nature and format of trust will be different depending on the relational structures and processes involved. In terms of well-being across the life span, it seems that interpersonal trust may be an important resource for successful development, and that older adults tend to show higher levels of interpersonal trust than younger ones (Poulin & Haase, 2015). Actually, age has proven to be positively related to generalized trust across 38 countries (Li & Fung, 2013).

In a study on how to attain a harmonious world through intergenerational connections, VanderVen and Schneider-Munoz (2012) concluded that mistrust represents one of the dangers to social relations, something that can be modified through intergenerational relationships:

“Where youngsters have a need for a primary attachment figure, an older person outside the family or, possibly, in the extended family can serve as an attachment figure and lay the ground for the development of the trust and hope that are the positive outcomes of this phase of development (Erikson, 1950/1963). This foundational sense obviously prevents the emergence of those beliefs based on distrust and sets the stage for harmonious relationships. Similarly, having a relationship with a younger person can promote a sense of well-being in an older person who not only would work to build trust in the youngster but whose own trust in the world enables him or her to still play a meaningful role.” (p. 123).

One of the most documented intergenerational programs in South America is *Shared Wisdoms* [Saberés compartidos], which was implemented in Montevideo (Uruguay) from 2009 to 2012. A recent report on this program (Korotky, 2015) has looked into trust-making among primary school students and older volunteers who interacted during school time. A teacher involved in this program explains how trust emerged:

“As time went by, children began to trust rapidly in the older adults. Children loved to be seated on their older adults’ lap. Sometimes, at home, as parents are in a rush they don’t have time [to spend with their children]. (...) Thus, something like being seated by an older person that apparently seems so insignificant it really means that children are trusting fully on these older volunteers. Children are expecting these older adults to take responsibility for what they need from them: feeling protected.” (Korotky, 2015, p. 58).

5.4.1 Intergenerational Mentoring

Intergenerational mentoring programs (IMP henceforth) constitute one of the first answers to our question at hand. Typically, mentoring is intergenerational itself since it consists of “a relationship developed between a more experienced older adult and an unrelated younger protégé whereby the mentor provides guidance, instruction and encouragement” (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010, p. 308).

After many years of implementing IMP, we know that trust, along with mutuality and empathy (Rhodes, 2005), is a basic component in intergenerational mentoring. Actually, IMP in schools have demonstrated that the mentor-mentee relationship, especially in the case of lower social class students, may be more appropriate as a source of trust than the teacher-student relationship, as this mentored student acknowledges:

“You can say stuff that you want to say but you can’t say anywhere else... you can speak to them (the mentor) as a friend, not a teacher... like you do have to behave but it’s not like you have to sit down and sit next to them at the board or something” (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010, p. 314).

Similarly, some 40 college students from the School of Psychology at the University of Barcelona, Spain involved in the *Sharing University* intergenerational project during the 2008–2009 academic year described their interaction experience with some 25 older citizens as follows [emphasis added]:

“It was a very enriching experience; ... pleasant; ... positive; ... communicative; ... productive; ... spontaneous and **trust-inspiring**, for both sides; ... It was a unique experience, there are no limitations to say whatever you think, and because we are not family, we open up so much more; ... We elders and youths have come together, we’ve exchanged experiences, and seniors and young people got on very well; ... It was really good to be able to come together with a group of people with whom we do not usually spend time, unless we do so with family members; ... It was a great coming together, where we were able to exchange ideas and life experiences, despite the difference in age” (Gárate, 2015, n.p.).

Typically, trust in IMP arises in the context of goal-oriented tasks (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011), and its lack is a predictor of premature match termination (Rhodes, Reddy, Roffman, & Grossman, 2005). According to Kupersmidt and Rhodes (2014), the three truly essential behaviors of successful mentors are the following: be trustworthy, be empathic, and be authentic. Actually, Noam, Malti, and Karcher (2014) expressly recommend helping mentors size up the degree of trust and safety demonstrated by their mentees.

Building intergenerational trust takes time, and lifelong learning and education require time; therefore, both tasks—building trust and implementing lifelong learning and education—may be approached as mutually attuned. In fact, Balcazar and Keys (2014) wonder about the minimal amount of engagement typically necessary to build trust in the mentoring relationship since below a certain duration threshold, trust would not be achievable. In line with this idea, the European project “Hear me” has developed a guide to train senior mentors in the context of at-risk-youth mentoring programs (Rothuizen, Klausen, & Hesselbjerg, 2011), advising the development of mentor-mentee trust over a succession of meetings, and admonishing older mentors to be reliable even if the mentee is unreliable.

High levels of trust within mentoring intergenerational relationships are associated with positive academic and behavioral outcomes:

- “Students who are at risk of academic failure in public elementary schools can make significant progress in reading skills through being tutored and mentored by older adults once a week during a single academic year” (Morrow-Howell,

Jonson-Reid, McCrary, Lee, & Spitznagel, 2009). In particular, their grade-specific reading skills can be up to 40 % higher than those of their low-reading counterparts not involved in the intergenerational program.

- “Youth (9–13 years old) participating a minimum of 2 h per week in a school- and community-based substance abused prevention intergenerational program showed significantly better attitudes toward school, the future, and elders, and had fewer days absent from school than those students who either were not mentored but were given other types of intervention or were provided with no intervention at all” (Taylor, LoSciuto, Fox, & Hilbert, 1999).
- “a national evaluation of BBBS [Big Brothers Big Sisters] mentoring programs found that levels of trust and closeness in mentoring relationships predicted positive academic and behavioral child outcomes above and beyond the effects of relationship length (...). Thus, the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship clearly influences child outcomes.” (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014, p. 443). Furthermore, a study on a local BBBS ‘Reading Bigs’ program (Larkin & Wilson, 2009) concluded that “when Bigs and Littles established a bond of caring for one another, they built a foundation of trust to discuss all manner of topics” (p. 27).
- After just an 8 week pilot, older adults, teachers and the school principal in the Generation Xchange program based in South Los Angeles, “all reported seeing evidence of benefits for children even in this short time in terms of both behavior (fewer reported referrals to principal) and achievement (improvements in reading and/or math).” (Seeman, n.d.).
- High school students in Southern Spain were assigned to either a group of older volunteers or their teachers to spend 10–12 educational weekly sessions around risks and risk-prevention associated with the use of technology and alcohol consumption. A mix-method analysis concluded:

“In general, as compared with the decision to do nothing about the matter, the option of bringing the secondary school pupils of our sample into contact with elderly volunteers to speak and learn about prevention risks and attitudes (vis-à-vis internet use and social media and alcohol consumption) is much more promising than the alternative of working with the pupils’ own teachers on the same matter.” (Pérez, Sánchez, García, & del Moral, 2015, p. 20).

At The Intergenerational School (TIS), the Reading Mentor Program has demonstrated as well huge potential to support acquisition and mastering of key skills for lifelong learners. Through this program over 70 volunteer adult/senior reading mentors commit to at least 2 h per week with students for one-on-one reading, sharing stories and building trustful relationships. In the 2013/14 academic year TIS reading mentors spent over 4000 volunteer hours with students (Whitehouse, Whitehouse, & Sánchez, 2016). The outputs from this effort may be ascertained in the context of the following excerpt about how TIS understands its intergenerational programming:

“The inclusion of older adults is an intentional design element in the school’s model. On a daily basis through our successful intergenerational programming, seniors and other community members share their time, wisdom and enthusiasm for lifelong learning with TIS students through structured learning programs. Not only do all of these events directly support and enhance the academic curriculum, the students gain life lessons and are prepared

for interacting with others that are different from them. It is an extremely valuable part of the model for TIS students to see older adults actively furthering their own learning. Some of the most successful activities are either side-by-side programs where both the TIS students and the seniors are engaged in their learning together, or programs in which the TIS students serve as mentor-teachers for the seniors. These experiences are inspirational for every person involved no matter where they may be on their own life journey. There is no doubt that these encounters are contributing to our students' success academically, socially, and developmentally." (The Intergenerational Schools, 2012, n.p.).

Experience Corps (EC), an intergenerational mentoring program at schools in the U.S. has been one of the most studied models. For instance, Rebok et al. (2004) reported on the EC program in Baltimore which was designed to support the needs of children in grades K-3 through older adult volunteers serving 15 or more hours per week during a whole academic year. They looked at EC's potential to combat disruptive classroom behavior and lack of learning readiness on children's literacy and behavior, and their preliminary findings indicated that the EC program led to improvements in both student academic achievement and behavior. Why? According to this source, older volunteers offered "stability, caring, and consistency, which are essential to learning, as well as the richness of their experience and presence as role models" (p. 90). More recently, Fried et al. (2013) accomplished a dual evaluation of EC concluding that improved readiness to learn among children in this program was a predictor of propensity towards lifelong learning as well as future educational achievement. In this case, the connections between this type of program, lifelong learning processes, and deep and mutually rewarding intergenerational relationships become evident.

5.4.2 Intergenerational Homesharing

Intergenerational Homeshare Programs (IHP) are another example of how a trustworthy context may enhance informal lifelong learning. In 2010 Spanish researchers made the evaluation of the top IHP in the country (by the name of Viure i Conviure) providing service to over 300 homeowners and homeseekers—most of them college students. Data from a questionnaire replied by 306 participants in this program indicated that behind IHP there is authentic learning taking place with regard to ability to relate to both relatives and non-relatives from other generations.

We understand that in multi-generational societies like the ones we live in, being competent to establish satisfactory intergenerational relationships becomes a key skill to move successfully along the life-cycle. In this sense, IHP offer a very unique and effective opportunity for learning how to share life experiences (and space and a sense of place) with people from different generations. Furthermore, IHP provide as well an environment where younger people may learn to value older adults, hence to lower ageism against the elderly. For older homesharers and younger homeseekers in Viure i Conviure, learning "new things [through] new significant life experiences" was deemed to be among the top five benefits gained through their intergenerational engagement in the program.

5.5 Learning to be in a More Diverse World

Intergenerational relationships are about diversity because they must transcend individual and even one's own group positions to meet and interact with people and organizations situated in different generational locations. In this journey from our generational positions to those of others personal identity is at stake. We are challenged to consider ways in which we are different and similar to those belonging to generations other than our own. We may wonder about the extent to which our way of being and doing overlaps with how others—from different generations—embrace the world around them.

Learning to live in a diverse world seems to us a basic principle for society's sustainability. The tension between preserving our own identity while being able to accept and live happily within diverse contexts may be positive as far as we have learned to cope with it. Intergenerational lifelong learning and education strategies can help in this regard.

5.5.1 Age Diversity

For a first example, let us think of multi-age classrooms in schools and colleges versus the traditional mono-age way to organize educational settings. How is it that a multi-age learning and education environment can enhance our capacity to live in a diverse world? Ohsako (2002) talks about a program in Hamburg, Germany enabling Jewish Holocaust survivors returning to Hamburg (who were born in Hamburg but immigrated to different countries during the Nazi-regime) to engage German schoolchildren through conversation and site visits. Are we able to anticipate fully the potential of such a program to facilitate children's understanding of the past as well as their readiness to live a future in contexts of diversity?

Regarding age diversity and the development of ageist beliefs, we know that high school students involved in ongoing intergenerational programming may hold a more positive image of older adults (Thompson & Weaver, 2015). However, it is not any type of intergenerational contact that will erode ageism: we need not only long-term intergenerational programs but also,

“interventions encouraging acquaintances to empathize with one another, to disclose information of a personal nature to one another, to work on communication accommodation so that interactions are comfortable and enjoyable, and to focus on what makes one another unique” (Christian, Turner, Holt, Larkin, & Cotler, 2014, p. 8).

On a similar vein, researchers evaluating The Meadows School Project (MSP) implemented in a south-central British Columbia (Canada) rural community underscored the importance of promoting intense intergenerational connections over time (Carson, Kobayashi, & Kuehne, 2011). Hence, the value of “immersion” intergenerational programs such as MSP through which 10–14 years old students are literally relocated to a nearby assisted living facility during 40 days in the academic

year. It is in this context of routine and intense intergenerational interaction at a fully different setting that positive learning outcomes evolve:

“Positive outcomes were also noted for the students, especially in the educational and developmental domains. For example, students increased their knowledge of the aging process. “At the end [of the project] it was not as hard to communicate with them [residents],” remarked one student. Furthermore, students gained a heightened appreciation of both the abilities of residents and the challenges residents face. “I learned that they [residents] can still learn a lot of stuff even though they are old,” noted a student. Myths were dispelled as students spent time with residents: “The most surprising thing was about my buddy . . . she flew planes!” Another student reflected, “I think the most surprising thing I learned is how much they [residents] love children, they love us so much, I was really surprised to see how much fun they had with us.” Finally, students gained historical perspective: “It was fun getting to know what it was like when they [residents] were younger . . . how they lived.” (p. 413).

At a higher education level, Dublin City University is leading an international movement to set up so-called Age Friendly Universities (AFU). AFU abide by ten principles among which there is the following one: “To promote **intergenerational learning** to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.” AFU will only be able to implement this principle if they welcome proactively on campus students from different generations. How to do it?

One possibility consists just in encouraging multi-generational course registration. An evaluation of a multi-generational course in a Spanish university showed that the participants’ main reason to keep engaged in the course was developing their capacity to gain a greater understanding and respect for different points of view (Lirio, Alonso, Herranz, & Arias, 2014). Similarly, Brooks (2005) concluded that age-mixing in UK further education colleges not only conveys positive messages to younger students about lifelong learning but also helps students to participate in more varied and interesting discussions:

“As a result, students became more sensitive to other possible interpretations of texts and images, which enhanced their learning” (p. 64).

In the particular context of multi-generational community college classrooms the numbers of non-traditional students in these classrooms are increasing steadily. Clemente (2010) recommends taking advantage of this age-diverse environment to discuss and learn about differences and similarities, a learning that is connected to identity building since the face-to-face intergenerational engagement in the classroom produces a deep reservoir of evidence on the relational nature of identities, especially in the case of older students. We believe that perceiving and experiencing one’s own identity as multifaceted and relational is a rich asset in our endeavors to achieve sustainable relationships during the life cycle.

Another possibility at the higher education level to learn about living in age-diverse settings is represented by models such as Lasell College (U.S.) in collaboration with Lasell Village, a continuing care retirement community sited on campus and integrated into the organizational structure of the college. Residents in this community must complete a minimum of 450 hours of learning and fitness activity each year. Obviously, intergenerational learning with Lasell College’s younger students is among the available options to meet that learning requirement. This combination

of two sites –a college and a housing facility for older adults– into a shared-site increases opportunities for learning and education at any stage in life.

Trudeau (2009) explored how intergenerational engagement as approached in the Lasell experience was beneficial: maintaining the connection with young people, providing a sense of continuity (“It’s terribly important for us to happen to know where we’re going today, and for them to know where we were,” said one older resident), and practicing intergenerational reciprocity, are among the identified benefits. Ted, one of the Lasell Village residents who participated in this research made a strong argument about how the shared-site he was living at offered a way to challenge age-segregation in society:

“Children are with children, teenagers are with teenagers, young adults are with young adults, we’re again a separate group. And, bridging I think helps our aging along, my aging process certainly, because I feel that I’m part of the population dynamic, actually. I’m not sort of over here, and, that’s terribly important, because it’s some way to bring us together. I think we remain, I think we do remain younger here. I think my friends here would agree with that. I think we’ll remain younger here because we are part of that dynamic. And we are not old folks in a, even a council for the aging for example. And so we are not all so separated, as the rest of the people. I think the young people feel the same way. God, here are old people. You know, we are hungry to know what it’s like to be part of that part of life. That also helps us feel that there is meaning in our lives, because we are important to them” (Trudeau, 2009, pp. 156–157).

Certainly, this last excerpt tackles several issues raised along the chapter. The *bridging* component mentioned would not be possible unless a consciousness around the urgency of maintaining connections in a diverse world was present. Continuity, connection, diversity, and meaning making mingle in the quest for more sustainable societies.

5.5.2 *Ethnic and Gender Diversity*

Since we are delving into pathways for lifelong learning and education to support sustainable relationships, ethnic-diverse and gender-diverse contexts will be interesting to look at. For instance, Yep (2014) describes a partnership between a college and a public library in Los Angeles, U.S. with participation of college women students and adult Asian women immigrants to foster dialogical town-gown relationships: “We intended for college students to learn not only from books and lectures but also by being engaged in the world” (pp. 53–54). Through collaborative creative writing projects and storytelling in the framework of a social justice service learning project, both students and immigrant women were able to learn about both intragenerational and intergenerational similarities and differences with a transformative purpose, as students themselves were able to acknowledge:

“(We) learned from each other’s experiences and helped to maintain a supportive space in which each woman could express her voice through writing and dialogue The flow of our voices allowed us to grow out of a classroom-dynamic and into a family” (Yep, 2014, p. 55).

In this project co-creating a new sense of place (to confront the many forms of displacement that both the adult Asian and the college women had experienced) was assumed to be a goal. All human relationships develop in a space whether physical or virtual. Places are meaningful spaces, more than just a backdrop or a container for actions. Hence, the need to cultivate a shared sense of place among diverse groups and generations if we really want to overcome the perception of diversity as an obstacle for sustainable societies. To this regard, the potential of intergenerational education to create livable places for diverse groups has been documented: examples of lifelong learning and education settings which may be considered *Intergenerational Contact Zones* abound (Brooks, 2016; Kaplan, Thang, Sánchez, & Hoffman, 2016). Actually, the following concept of intergenerational place-based education has been proposed as an approach to connect a diversity of interests in local and other places: “open-ended, ethical, embodied, and situated activity through which places and intergenerational relations are produced and skills, knowledge and values are learned.” (Mannion, Adey, & Lynch, 2010, p. 2). The “immersion” model of intergenerational program implemented by The Meadows School Project as described above attests to the objective of pursuing place-based and intense intergenerational education (Carson et al., 2011) as a means to enhance our capacity as lifelong learners.

The EMPOWERMENTTODAY project (Travis & Ausbrooks, 2012) has been developed by two social work educators to enhance the personal and academic success of adolescent male African Americans, whose high school and college graduation, as well as college retention rates are much lower than those for other ethnic groups. Implemented through a school-university collaboration, this initiative to promote positive youth development included intergenerational dialogues: adolescents and adults discussed the *Bring Your “A” Game* film and adults explained how they used some tools presented in the video to achieve personal success. Once this intervention carried out, “youths were able to think more critically about their circumstances and assess their existing strengths and resources with greater precision” (Travis & Ausbrooks, 2012, p. 188).

“It was a good way to become aware that sometimes one must learn to adapt to situations which you never anticipated in your life;” “[intergenerational] encounters were very satisfactory and productive, and they helped us to learn more about other cultures and places in the world.” These are words from two 14-year old students attending High School in A Coruña (Northwest Spain) and participating in the “Talk to me about emigration: The value of experience” intergenerational program. Since migration—both emigration and immigration—has become a strong trend in the country, understanding what it is like to leave one’s birth place and go to another country for years seems to be a good focal point for enhancing youths’ capacity to face diversity. The educational value of this initiative lies in the effective combination of a school-based social sciences curriculum, older emigrants’ experiences, and youngsters eager to live in a more diverse and mobile world.

In Ireland a doctoral candidate has focused her research on intergenerational learning as way to activate young children’s civic engagement in four Irish Primary Schools (Hanmore-Cawley, 2015). Appreciating diversity was among the themes explored through the qualitative component of this research. Results from language tutoring

activities (in Spanish, French, Italian, and German) delivered by retired language teachers indicated that diversity awareness among students had been increased not only in the classrooms but beyond, through “learning ripples,” as an older tutor explains:

“I see this project...like a stone dropped in a pond... You have the pupil, at the centre...learning a skill/task from the older generation [which]...ripples out to the home...and the children can help them now...In turn, those adults are talking to other people...thinking of their involvement in French...bringing the ripple further out because they are learning about other cultures...other languages...appropriate behavior and how other...cultures manage their systems...and they have new awareness of that. So, from one little classroom...I see that the interaction extends...into the community, and then further into the world.” (p. 195).

5.6 Conclusion

We hope this chapter has convincingly made the case that intergenerational strategies for promoting lifelong learning and education not only exist and deserve more attention but also are spreading internationally in number and formats. Today’s quest for more sustainable societies involves paying attention to issues like socio-cultural discontinuity, loss of trust, and augmented diversity. These issues require more relational strategies to boost social cohesion, positive interdependence, and a stronger social fabric. We are not just in front of a demographic imperative, but we are confronting to some extent an anthropological change: “we are evolving into a rather different species, inhabiting a new niche and challenged to adapt in new ways” (Bateson, 2010, p. 10). Intergenerational lifelong learning and education strategies are part of the response to these issues, as illustrated throughout the chapter.

Generational interdependency and the view that human beings—approached as learners, educators, and recipients of education—are knots in nets of relationships have been two capital ideas in this chapter to explain how we may be able to promote more sustainability in contemporary society. In this context, learning and education throughout life becomes a cross-generational endeavor; it will only be possible at its full potential if generations collaborate towards an interwoven future as all generations get more and more linked within a growing multi-generational population. We are witnessing a move in that direction; hundreds of intergenerational learning initiatives in non-formal, informal and formal educational settings are being implemented internationally. However, we must increase our degree of intergenerational awareness so that those initiatives can be fully leveraged and profited.

This chapter conveys a clear message to anyone interested in intergenerational lifelong learning and education: making possible for different generations to meet and interact is not enough if we intend to strengthen available opportunities to learn and educate from birth until death. We need to develop an intergenerational lens and sensitivity allowing for powerful and effective planning and implementation of generational encounters and interactions around learning and education. Providing a few relevant principles and cases to the latter task, this chapter has contributed to meet that need.

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Chapter 6

Intergenerational Strategies for Sustaining Strong Communities

Abstract This chapter explores intergenerational pathways for strengthening and sustaining communities. Distinctions are made between “mono-generational,” “multi-generational” and intergenerational conceptions of community and community development.

References to a mono-generational community, community setting, or community building process generally allude to local development practices focused on a single generation. A multi-generational community or site is where multiple generations reside. Community members, despite age or generational grouping, have access to community settings and opportunity for involvement in community activity. Intergenerational approaches to community development tend to begin with a process of identifying respective (multi-generational) priorities for community change and then drawing upon common interests to frame, plan and create opportunities for joint learning and action.

Various examples are presented of communities that have taken an intergenerational strategic approach to promoting civic engagement and responsive community development. Some considerations with regard to intergenerational environmental design are also introduced. This includes looking at how *intergenerational contact zones*, i.e., the spatial focal points of intergenerational encounters, can serve as a conceptual tool for studying complex, multi-generational community settings and as a design tool for creating innovative, responsive intergenerational meeting spaces.

6.1 Employing an Intergenerational Lens for Building Community

In formulating our notions about what it means for a community to be “sustainable,” we draw from Rachel Pain’s definition of sustainable communities – as “communities which are inclusive, cohesive and safe in the long term” (Pain, 2005, p. 36). We also agree with her assertion that “intergenerational practice has a valuable contribution to make to the achievement of sustainable communities” (p. 6).

A direct need exists for applied programming that expands our ability to better integrate all ages into local decision making and community-based development processes. For successful and sustainable community development to be achieved, it is essential that the diverse age segments of our localities come together to communicate about local issues and contribute to community improvement efforts.

The community issues that affect people in different age groups intersect at many points, as do the programs and policies that address those issues. It is increasingly understood, for example, that both young people and older adults are likely to benefit from investments that lead to a stronger economy (Van Vliet, 2011), strong schools (Friedman, 1999), and safer communities (LGNI, 2012). Yet, many civic engagement opportunities are framed as mono-generational endeavors, and driven by community development agendas that are cast as either children-friendly, youth-friendly *or* elder-friendly.

In this chapter, we acknowledge some of the positive features of these generation-centric initiatives, including providing valuable pathways for bringing new audiences into the community development arena. However, we also note missed opportunities, particularly with regard to stimulating intergenerational communication and cooperation in ways that can enrich and enhance the community development process.

In our foray into “intergenerational approaches for building community,” we focus on various points of intersection between intergenerational practice and community development practice, including standards, skills, and practices. When intergenerational work is framed in a community-building context, many of the concepts and strategies used are similar to those used in the arena of community development (Henkin & Brown, 2014). This includes an emphasis on promoting interagency and cross-sectoral collaboration and on adopting participatory methods for building the capacity of a local community to address community issues and initiate basic plans for change. As we explore these and other areas of intersection between intergenerational practice and community development practice, we note opportunities, potential synergies, and possibilities for collaboration between professionals in both realms.

The goal here is to lay the groundwork for identifying ways in which adding an intergenerational component can enhance community development work. This includes challenging traditional notions of “community,” broadening conceptions about who should have opportunities to contribute to the community development process, and developing communities in which people of all ages can thrive through unfettered and intentional intergenerational engagement and support systems.

First, however, we will clarify some of the terminology appearing throughout this chapter:

- “Civic engagement,” “community organizing,” and “participatory community development:” These terms allude to citizen engagement in the community development process.
- “Intergenerational practice:” A singular term meant to be inclusive of intergenerational “programs,” “policies,” and (environmental) “design.”

- “Community development practice,” “community organizing,” and “community work:” In the context of professional practice, these terms allude to work aimed at improving communities (including working with residents, collaborating across organizations, and engaging in professional community planning practice).
- “Age integration:” As expounded in this chapter, advocating for an “age-integrated approach” to community planning and development entails working with residents across generations, increasing their awareness of community issues that are of mutual concern, and creating joint opportunities for acting upon shared concerns.¹

6.2 Conceptual Pillars for Framing Intergenerational Strategies for Building Community

6.2.1 *Tackling Real World Issues in Diverse Community Settings*

Intergenerational practices, though often rooted in fields focused primarily on human development issues, also take form with the intention of addressing community improvement goals that transcend age. Program initiatives may be aimed at improving educational (lifelong learning) systems, improving care and support for dependent or vulnerable populations, increasing the responsiveness of the legislative process (Friedman, 1999; Ingman, Benjamin, & Lusky, 1998/99), preserving local history and strengthening local traditions (Perlstein & Bliss, 1994; Quinlan, 2015), preserving the natural environment (such as increasing recycling efforts, improving water quality, or protecting wildlife habitats) (Ingman et al., 1998/99), developing cost-effective multi-use community centers (Hatton-Yeo & Melville, 2016), facilitating the social integration of ethnic minorities (Penninx, 2002), revitalizing parks and playgrounds (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2013), and reducing crime (Friedman, 1999; Granville, 2002).

In these examples, intergenerational practices are framed to help address community problems and build stronger and more cohesive communities. Multi-generational groups of community residents come together to discuss, evaluate, envision, plan, and work to improve life in their shared community. This approach is consistent with the broader community development goal of building healthy, socially inclusive, and sustainable communities.

¹ There are some different uses of the term “age integration.” For example, Uhlenberg (2000), in a much cited sociological paper stated: “An age-integrated structure may be defined as one that does not use chronological age as a criterion for entrance, exit, or participation (p. 261). As used in this chapter, “age integration” implies intentionality in achieving generational diversity and multi-generational inclusion in the community development process.

6.2.2 *Adopting an (Inter)Generational Orientation Toward Community Participation and Social Inclusion*

At the root of intergenerational programs with community development goals is the concept of active citizenship. These initiatives serve to broaden the circle of community members and other stakeholders engaged in critical dialogue about community issues and in joint efforts to address common concerns. Moody and Disch (1989) describe this function of helping people of all ages to become (and remain) actively engaged and invested in community life as a form of “common citizenship.” They contrast this rationale with more “sentimental” justifications of intergenerational work such as promoting life satisfaction, attitude changes, and good feelings between different generations.

Participatory processes for building consensus for joint community action can be quite intense, involving lengthy rounds of discussion, debate, and negotiation of participants’ respective needs and preferences for community change. This was the case for “Visions of Kaneohe,” a Hawaii Intergenerational Network-sponsored project which brought a small group of Kaneohe youth (8–14 years of age) and older adults together at a community center during afterschool hours to construct a “Kaneohe All Ages Park” model to represent their jointly developed plan for a new local park. Before creating the model, participants laid out their respective recreational needs and engaged each other in a negotiation process. The process, as reflected in the following dialogue, was one of give-and-take: A child asked, “Do you think skateboarding is something you might like to do?” A senior responded, “No.” Another child stated, “What would it take to get you to support a skateboard park-type facility?” (How might this kind of facility be built to offer adults something of interest to them?) Eventually, a skatepark was included in the design, but the compromise involved including additional elements suggested by older adult participants, such as a picnic area, a gardening site, and a shuffleboard court. In this collaborative planning process, participants did more than promote their initial, generation-centric ideas; they listened, negotiated, and worked together to develop an integrated park design for which all parties advocated passionately and effectively at several public community planning meetings (Kaplan, 1997).

More recently and in a different part of the world, Alcock, Camic, Barker, Haridi, and Raven (2011) described an intergenerational community project in an inner-city community in London cast as a social inclusion intervention project. An intergenerational group of residents of a London housing estate, consisting of 18 youth (9–14 years of age) and 13 older adults (65–80 years of age), used digital photography-based activities over the course of 36 sessions (lasting seven months) to explore their community’s past, present, and (possible) future(s). Participants learned that both age groups had a shared sense of “community” – as a place where people know and care for one another, and, as a function of their participation in the project, noted feeling less isolated and more noticed and valued.

In some such initiatives, participants go beyond sharing concerns and formulating recommendations for taking action; they become advocates and agents of

change. The “Youth and Elderly Against Crime” program which was sponsored by the Dade County Public Schools system (in Florida) is an example of an intergenerational advocacy project aimed at reducing crime. Older adult volunteers and older school-aged children worked together to develop antiviolence bills for which they gained political support by presenting them to state legislators (Friedman, 1999).

Fundamental to intergenerational community action projects are values of social inclusion (for members of all generations) and intergenerational cooperation (and even “solidarity,” as noted in Zaidi, Gasior, & Manchin, 2012) that contrast with notions of perpetually conflicting or competing age-based needs, interests, and ideas for community improvement.

This is consistent with how community participation is described in the community development literature. For example, Swisher, Rezola, and Sterns (2009) state the following: “Truly participative development involves diverse stakeholders with varying perceptions, motivations and values. Crafting a sustainable community must therefore begin with the participants asking themselves which values they share and which are central to the community’s cultural identity” (p.1).

6.2.3 *Prioritizing Relationships*

Advocates of an *interactional approach* to understanding community development emphasize the role of connections between residents in building capacity for community change and working toward the creation of a holistic local society (Bridger & Alter, 2008). To be an effective agent of community change (whether an actor, an agency, or an association), one must not only have interpersonal skills but also an orientation for working with diverse groups and individuals with a focus on generating collaborative processes and achievement. From this perspective, developing the community field means increasing linkages across local domains as well as strengthening relationships in local life. Hence, perception of the community field as an “interactional milieu” (Bridger & Alter, 2008, p. 107) is firmly embedded in interactional processes, social relationships, and purposive action (Bessant, 2014).

In building upon an interactional theoretical framework for understanding and building community, we advocate reframing how issues related to age, age diversity, and intergenerational relations are viewed. Rather than focusing on age differences as a catalyst for potential conflict or misunderstanding, the focus shifts toward activating new social connections to bolster a shared sense of civic identity and responsibility, and promote collaborative efforts aimed at making a positive difference in community life.

This sensitivity to intergenerational relationship-building also has implications for constructively addressing other types of community tension and conflict, whether associated with contrasting conceptions and patterns of using public spaces

(Pain, 2005) or racial (Adekunle, 2015), religious and cultural differences (Mercken, 2003; Ohsako, 2002).

Adekunle (2015) describes Generation 3.0, a four-year intergenerational action research project conducted in several large British cities that was conceived by the Runnymede Trust. The project included multi-media arts, community action research, and intergenerational debate and discussion in public forums around issues of race. The approach was effective in uncovering an intergenerational dimension in race relations: Participants in the Birmingham project found out how different conceptions of race and racism had a generational experience component. In many cases, it was the older family members in minority families who were found to be the most hesitant about interracial interaction.

Other intergenerational community organizing initiatives with a robust intercultural component have taken root in London (e.g., “Magic Me,” an intergenerational arts organization, conducts numerous projects with women of multiple faiths and different nationalities), in various cities in the Netherlands (e.g., where tensions in multi-cultural neighborhoods are reduced through activities such as playing games popular with the different ethnic groups, Mercken, 2003), and in Hamburg, Germany (e.g., where German schoolchildren get a chance to meet and go on site visits with Jewish Holocaust survivors, Ohsako, 2002).

6.2.4 Emphasizing Interagency and Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

Professionals engaged in intergenerational practice work across sectors, agencies, and disciplines in a proactive manner. This is due in large part to the connecting, bridging and dynamic nature of their work. This orientation to professional practice involves establishing strategic partnerships and effectively mobilizing community resources. The importance attributed to interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration is reflected not only in individual community-based programs, but also in local, national, and international coalitions and networks formed to promote intergenerational programs, policies, and social service delivery systems (Henkin & Butts, 2002).

There are several aspects of an intergenerational framework to community planning that contribute to the emergence of new types of coalitions. Demographic changes influence the needs and priorities of a community. A deep commitment to widespread civic engagement captures the diverse voices of a community, as does recognition of the interdependence of the generations (Warner, Homsy, & Greenhouse, 2010). The following call to action provided at the end of the 2011 Generations United conference encapsulates this expansive orientation and commitment to collaboration:

“Let’s reconfigure our boundaries of operation and reach across sectors and traditional disciplinary patterns to form new collaborations and alliances” (Larkin & Cooper, with Sánchez & Vander Ven, 2011, p. 5).

When intergenerational programs take on a dimension of community study or change, partnerships widen to include a broader range of local groups and organizations, not just those with primary missions framed to serve children, youth, and older adults like schools, youth groups, senior centers, and retirement communities. Examples include tourism promotion agencies, local history groups, museums, libraries, community planning agencies, economic development agencies, housing projects, parks and recreation authorities, and local gardens and farms (Henkin & Butts, 2002; Kaplan & Sánchez, 2014). For programs that extend their focus beyond issues narrowly associated with age and aging and move into broader (inter)generational issues, the increased breadth of such partnerships should be of no surprise.

6.2.5 Tuning into the Temporal Component of Community Change

The broader the participants' age range in community-focused intergenerational programs, the greater the capacity for providing *living*, personal testimony of how communities have changed over time. This has implications for adding information and perspective to explorations into the past, present, and future of any given community.

Interestingly, many programs framed primarily as investigations into the past end up also focusing on future development possibilities. Conversely, many programs that begin with a primary focus on the future (community visioning programs) also pay attention to community pasts, with participants sharing experiences and insights from their personal and collective life histories.

6.2.5.1 Exploring the Past

The most common intergenerational model for exploring community history is for the younger participants to interview older participants about their personal and community-related experiences, memories, and meanings. Intergenerational oral history and reminiscence projects take many forms, often using drama techniques, festivals and celebration events, exhibits, creative writing projects, artifacts from the past (e.g., old photographs and maps), and online resources to help document and preserve local history (Mercken, 2003; Perlstein & Bliss, 1994). Some programs include family-based reminiscence interviewing activities which help to uncover family histories and add another dimension to understanding the social context of the community. For example, a classroom assignment might ask students to interview adult relatives as extensions of social studies modules focused on a particular historical period or event.

The significance of such explorations into personal and communal history extend beyond the goal of preserving history. Many such projects also function

to draw attention to how history is relevant to deliberations about the present and the future. The following quote from one of the organizers of the Shifnal Living History Reminiscence project, a community arts program conducted in a market town and civil parish in Shropshire, England, makes this point: “Living history is about making something new, creating a new archive and allowing our history to shape our future” (Parker, 2012, p. 9). Moreover, implicit questions being posed in this project after (re-) discovery of the past were: How much of our past should we bring into the future? What are the opportunities for the future” (Parker, 2012)?

Isami Kinoshita, a professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture in Chiba University in Japan, developed a “three generation maps” method to track and study community change and continuity with regard to safe play spaces for children in an urban residential area of Tokyo (Kinoshita, 2009). The “play maps” were developed as part of an action research project that he initiated in 1981 and followed up in 2005. The project generated awareness about how the rapid urbanization of the community had negatively impacted upon where and how local children could play. This awareness proved to be a useful tool for community planning:

“In exploring historical changes in the town that have affected the play of children, we found many unwelcome patterns of change which have the effect of decreasing nature spaces, limiting communication between children, and even decreasing children’s play outdoors. On a positive note, this action research illustrated an effective approach for engaging people of different generations and encouraging them to pay more attention to environmental changes that have an impact upon children’s play and to take actions to improve the neighborhood for and with children” (Kinoshita, 2009, p. 53).

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (2013) report, “Designing sustainable community action for communities of all ages,” provides examples of intergenerational programs designed to preserve traditional practices tied to the local cultural heritage.

- The *Educational Village* (Portela Azimute Association, Portugal) - has “transformed a depopulated village by preserving and passing on the traditional rural skills still practiced by older residents to a younger generation and to urban visitors” (p. 7).
- *Vale do Côa’s Memory Archive* (Friends of Côa, Portugal) – brings students and residents of a nursing home together to “identify and document personal stories and artefacts to preserve the intangible heritage of their village community” (p. 7).
- *The People’s Story* (Age Exchange – The National Centre for Reminiscence Arts, UK) – is an “intergenerational reminiscence arts project designed to enable people of all cultures and ages to explore their family, community heritage and culture” (p. 7).

6.2.5.2 Visioning and Planning the Future

As with programs with a focus on community history, intergenerational community visioning programs use multi-media tools and techniques – such as festivals, maps, models, theatre arts, and interactive websites – to engage residents in reflection and discussion about local quality of life issues. Most of these initiatives begin with some variation of the following four steps to get the conversation started:

- (1) The program facilitator asks a multi-generational group of participants simple questions, such as: “If you can have this community any way you wanted, what would it be like?”
- (2) Participants then record their responses in written, pictorial, theatrical, or any other form.
- (3) Participants then share their respective visions with one another.
- (4) Participants work together to develop an integrated vision for improving their community.

By the last step, ideally, participants will have gained a sense of how their relative generational positions/cohort-related experiences impact their respective views and visions for the community. The creation of an integrated vision is a process that involves negotiating differences and finding and building upon similarities.

One approach for bringing community residents of all ages together to share their visions for the future involves organizing “Futures Festivals.” This model was developed by the Center for Human Environments at the City University of New York Graduate Center in the late 1980’s. There are three stages to conducting a Futures Festival (Kaplan, 2001): *event planning* (2–4 months), which includes publicizing the event and recruiting local groups and organizations to prepare exhibits (such as murals and models depicting residents’ visions for the future); *conducting the event* (1 day), which includes putting up exhibits and conducting performances (such as presentations of song, poetry, and dance to highlight quality of life issues); and *post-event organizing* (4+ weeks), which includes writing news articles (to publicize residents’ ideas and preferences for community development) and follow-up meetings (with local groups to sustain interest and dialogue around community planning-related ideas and issues).

All three stages tend to generate attention not only to the future, but also to the past and the present. In considering possibilities for future community development, local residents are encouraged to consider elements of their collective past that they want to maintain or revitalize, and what elements they feel need to be changed (Kaplan, Higdon, Crago, & Robbins, 2004).

6.3 In Search of “Intergenerational Community”

6.3.1 *Mono-Generational, Multi-Generational, and Intergenerational Conceptions of Community and Community Development*

6.3.1.1 Overview

In this section, we look to define and provide examples of what has been termed “intergenerational communities.” We begin by clarifying distinctions between “mono-generational,” “multi-generational” and intergenerational conceptions of community.

Mono-generational communities, community settings, or community building processes generally allude to single-generational development practices including activities, services, civic engagement practices, and environmental design. One such example is the age-segregated “gated” retirement community with rules and policies that, in effect, limit interaction with children and youth. The residents of retirement communities such as Sun City West in Arizona have organized quite effectively to remove themselves from community affairs and responsibilities, particularly with regard to engaging or addressing issues of concern to local children and youth (Freedman, 1999).

A *multi-generational* community or site is where multiple generations reside. Residents, despite age or generational grouping, have access to community settings and opportunity for involvement in community activity. Quality of life concerns for multiple generations are considered, and community design and intervention strategies tend to be cast in terms of accommodating the physical and psychological needs of people across the age and ability spectrum. Such concepts are woven into calls for “universal design” and “inclusive design” (Carr, Francis, Rivlin, & Stone, 1992; Christensen & O’Brian, 2003). Thang (2015) uses the term “parallel coexistence” in alluding to the non-interactive nature (in terms of inter-generational engagement) in certain multi-generational settings. Thang (2015) uses the term “parallel coexistence” to refer to the lack of *inter-generational* engagement in these multi-generational settings.

When applying an *intergenerational* lens to community building efforts, there is additional consideration of how different generations interact and form relationships. Generations United (2012) uses the term “intergenerational community” to refer to a place that:

- (1) provides adequately for safety, health, education and the basic necessities of life,
- (2) promotes programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between people of different generations, and
- (3) enables all ages to share their talents and resources, and support each other in relationships that benefit both individuals and their community” (p. 2).

The first criteria could be mono-generational or multi-generational in nature; the second and third criteria are intergenerational.

To complicate matters, the distinction between mono-generational, multi-generational and intergenerational notions of community have not always been so clear cut, particularly with regard to uses of the terms “age-friendly” and “youth-friendly” communities. As noted below, many efforts to involve young people and older adults in community development endeavors, including community regeneration programs, often end up being mono- and multi-generational in focus and in process. Even with reference to the goal of reaching out to multiple generations, there is a tendency to treat the age groups separately, with distinct interests, abilities, and needs. However, there is some movement on the part of professionals who look at “age-friendly” and “youth-friendly” cities/communities toward advocating for more age-integrated civic engagement opportunities.

6.3.1.2 Age-Friendly Communities: Partly Multi-Generational, Partly Intergenerational

In recent years, we have seen the emergence of an age-friendly cities/communities movement. It is described by John Feather, CEO of Grantmakers in Aging, as “a fast-growing, interdisciplinary approach to community development that strives to promote aging in place² and make communities great places to grow up and grow old” (Feather, 2013, n.p.).

With funding from major institutions such as WHO, the European Commission, and AARP, there have been extensive efforts to develop, study, and expand the number of age friendly cities and communities (Fitzgerald & Caro, 2014; Moulaert & Garon, 2016). As of 2014, there were 209 member cities and communities from 26 different countries signed up to the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities (Handler, 2014).

Despite language in some of the first documents which calls for age-friendly cities to be “friendly for all ages,” not just “elder-friendly” (e.g., WHO, 2007, p. 72), the predominant emphasis is on addressing the needs and enhancing the quality of life of older adults. The “age-friendly” cities framework is mainly about older people, the way they age, the way others understand how they age, and the way they need to have certain conditions to age better. When attention is paid to other age groups and ways to meet their needs, the context is often more from a multi-generational than an intergenerational framework. This might have something do with the history of the initiative. The initial World Health guidelines and checklist of action points (WHO, 2007) were based upon data from focus groups with older people, caregivers and service providers, hence introducing an inherent bias toward community experience from an older adult perspective (Handler, 2014).

²The concept of *aging in place* calls for vibrant, engaging communities that recognize the needs of seniors *and* their contributions, and provide ways for them to continue living in their communities, if desired.

As Handler (2014) notes:

“The focus is on older people as citizens, where older people sit at the center of decision-making and where notions of respect and social inclusion carry as much meaning as questions of functional mobility, health and understandings of ageing as a condition of mounting dependency and need” (p. 17).

The age-friendly communities approach does have intergenerational elements, however, although they are not particularly robust. The age-friendly cities framework extends to eight dimensions of city life: *Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, Community Support and Health Services*. The dimensions of *social participation* and *respect and social inclusion* have particular intergenerational relevance. *Social participation* includes access to leisure and cultural activities and opportunities for older residents to participate in social and civic engagement with their peers and younger people. *Respect and social inclusion* includes programs to support and promote ethnic and cultural diversity, along with programs to encourage multigenerational interaction and dialogue.

There are some notable examples of intergenerational engagement themes entering into the foreground of discussion and debate about ways to prepare an aging society. In a report sponsored by the International Longevity Center-UK and Age UK and written for the purpose of helping policy makers, journalists, and the public to better understand how to prepare communities for an aging society (Sinclair & Watson, 2014), several recommendations were provided for strengthening intergenerational relationships. One such recommendation was to “Build neighborliness - Find ways of breaking down ‘safeguarding’ barriers that currently prevent generations working together” (p. 12).

Similarly, in the “Manifesto for an Age-Friendly European Union by 2020” (AGE Platform Europe, 2011), there is a vision of an “age-friendly European Union” that merges, mono-, multi- and intergenerational concepts. It suggests that every age and population group will benefit from living in communities that provide:

- “The opportunity to actively participate in volunteering, cultural, sport and recreational activities, thus creating and/or maintaining their social networks, gaining new competences and contributing to their personal fulfillment and wellbeing” (p. 1).
- “Accessible outdoor spaces, buildings and transport as well as adapted housing and physical activity facilities that promote independent living and participation in society for longer, while increasing opportunities for exchange within and across generations” (p. 1).

Ghazaleh, Greenhouse, Homsy, and Warner (2011) note the importance of the concept of intergenerational interdependence in the context of comprehensive planning for communities that are age-friendly, child-family, and “family-friendly.”

“Planners need to craft a common vision that recognizes the interdependence of the generations. Particularly in the preparation of comprehensive and neighborhood plans, planners

can use public meetings and planning documents to draw attention to the connections and help seniors understand that their political power can help shape communities more supportive of children and young parents—and that, in turn, will help them build a quality and comfortable community where they can age in place” (Ghazaleh et al., 2011, p. 8).

6.3.1.3 Child/Youth-Friendly Communities

There is longstanding literature that highlights the importance of providing youth with a *voice* in decisions about what will be built in their communities (Driscoll & Chawla, 2006; Hart, 1997; Tonucci & Rissoto, 2001). Emphasis is placed on how children and youth can make significant contributions to community development efforts, particularly when provided with leadership roles and adequate resources and opportunities (Campbell & Erbstein, 2012; Christensen & O’Brian, 2003; Ward & Fyson, 1973).

This scholarship also suggests the need for more child- and youth-friendly communities and cities. There is a *Child Friendly Cities Initiative* (CFCI)³ which advocates for policies, laws, programs and budgets promoting a realization of the rights of the youngest citizens.

According to the CFCI website (UNICEF, n.d.), a Child Friendly City is committed to fulfilling children’s rights, including their right to: influence decisions about their city; express their opinion on the city they want; participate in family, community and social life; participate in cultural and social events; and be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.

As noted in Van Vliet (2009), a provisional set of criteria for Community Friendly Cities (CFCs), broadly derived from rights articulated in the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child), includes an emphasis on “*methods to involve children* in assessing and improving their own neighborhoods and give them a voice in local decision-making processes” (p. 13–14). There is an emerging research base in support of practices that engage youth in shared decision-making and community action; one label put to these practices is *youth-adult partnerships* (Zeldin, Camino, & Mook, 2005). This thread of literature emphasizes the importance, yet dearth, of community participation pathways for young people (O’Donoghue & Strobel, 2007; Zeldin et al., 2005). It also provides recommendations for constructing and institutionalizing participatory organizational roles for youth.

There has also been attention to the role of adults in community based youth organizations, particularly with regard to contributing to youth civic competence, public efficacy, and social responsibility (O’Donoghue & Strobel, 2007; Zeldin &

³The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) was launched in 1996 to act on the resolution passed during the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). A declaration that emerged from this UN Conference is as follows: *The well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and of good governance.* In 2000, the International Secretariat of CFCI was established at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) in Florence, Italy.

MacNeil, 2006). A major recommendation for adults working with youth is to address, head-on, issues of unequal power and influence. O’Donoghue and Strobel (2007) write:

“Creating authentic youth–adult relationships that facilitate the development of powerful youth activists means establishing new types of intergenerational interactions... While making space for youth, adults have to create balance in their own roles and continually check their sense and use of power” (p. 481).

Despite the attention given to adult roles, the focus on youth civic engagement and activism is still predominantly framed in youth-centric ways. Emphasis is placed on positive adolescent development (e.g., discovering their strengths – including gifts, talents, knowledge, and skills) and issues identified by local youth for study and intervention. However, there are exceptions (e.g., Bodiford, 2013), whereby projects, initially framed as youth activism, end up morphing into community-wide and community-led campaigns with an effort to integrate multiple agendas for addressing quality of life concerns of all generations of residents.

6.3.2 Moving Toward an Age-Integrated, Intergenerational Paradigm for Civic Engagement and Community Development

6.3.2.1 Merging Age-Friendly and Child/Youth Friendly Conceptions of Community

An intergenerational approach is simultaneously “age-friendly” and “youth-friendly,” and it is more than the sum total of both perspectives. This strategic approach begins with a process of identifying respective (multi-generational) priorities for community change and then drawing upon common interests and concerns to frame and create an agenda for joint action. This “intergenerationally-centered” paradigm for community building is more about strengthening the bonds between the generations rather than focusing solely on each generation along disconnected strands of study and action.

Van Vliet (2009) highlights some characteristics of child-friendly cities that overlap with those of elder-friendly cities, and calls for synergistic efforts to create *livable cities for all ages*:

“There is much overlap in how livability issues impact children, youth and elders, particularly those with low incomes and limited support systems. All benefit from neighborhoods that are safe and walkable and housing that is affordable and near shops, neighbors, and services, with easy access to public spaces for social interactions. Likewise, all benefit from the availability of healthy foods at local markets, mercados, and community gardens within neighborhoods. Schools that serve as community centers and senior centers that offer child care and after-school programs can simultaneously provide for the physical and social needs of both elders and children and youth. Similarly, both populations also need reliable, safe and affordable public transportation to support independent mobility and access to the resources of the city” (Van Vliet, p. 21).

Rather than emphasize livability from generation-specific positions, van Vliet and others take a livable communities perspective that transcends age (Warner et al., 2010). The essence of the *intergenerational lens* is that it is not so much a matter of drawing attention to age per se, but rather the relationships between people in different generational positions, and the significance of these relationships for working collaboratively to improve the quality of life in their communities.

From this perspective, a truly sustainable community is seen as one that enables people of all ages and from all generations to live, work, play, plan, and thrive together.

6.3.2.2 Community Capacity Building Conceptions and Actions

Various intergenerational specialists have drawn upon the concept of community capacity building as a framework for their efforts to strengthen community improvement efforts.

Mancini, Bowen, and Martin (2005) provide a framework which broadly characterizes community capacity as “(1) the degree of shared responsibility for community members and (2) the collective competence of the community to meet members’ needs” (Kuehne & Melville, 2014, pp. 324–325). Jarrott et al. (2011), in their study of an intergenerational shared site program emphasized the program’s potential for building social capital and community capacity, as conceptualized by Mancini, Bowen, and Martin (2005). In particular, they (Jarrott et al. 2011) highlighted the emergence of formal and informal network ties, and the sense of reciprocity, trust, and community established among the participants.

Related to the goal of building community capacity is the emphasis placed on interagency and cross-sectoral collaboration. This includes gathering support and garnering partners from different social and professional age “niches.” This is a qualitatively different approach than looking to address social needs from a mono-generational perspective (youth programs, children’s activities, adult education, etc.). Capacity building efforts might include reaching out to multidisciplinary networks of scholars and community activists and educators committed to fostering collaborative, community-based interventions that improve quality of life for community residents across the lifespan.

Intergenerational specialists working in the realm of community planning and development draw upon a wide range of place-based strategies for identifying potential program partners. Here are two that involve the use of maps:

Community asset mapping: Temple University’s CFAA (Communities for All Ages) program, which aims to help communities across the country to cultivate intergenerational strategies for addressing critical issues (of concern to all generations), draws upon a range of effective strategies for developing local alliances across diverse organizations and systems. The target audience at each CFAA site generally includes: administrators, advocates and practitioners in the human service network (particularly organizations and agencies that provide aging and children/youth services); community, family and national foundations; United Ways, community planners, environmental groups, elected officials and policy makers at the local, state and federal levels; and community residents of all ages. One strategy CFAA organizers have found use-

ful for establishing youth-adult partnerships in school settings is *community asset mapping* (Innovation Center for Community & Youth Development, 2003). The process generally begins with reflection and discussion centered on two questions: *Which organizations currently have a connection to the local schools? Are there additional organizations that could potentially be involved?* This leads to the creation of an “assets map” of organizations that currently have connections to the local schools as well as the identification of resources and gaps in organizational involvement.

Intergenerational Options Mapping (IOM): As part of a Penn State University action research project piloted in a CCRC (continuing care retirement community) facility in central Pennsylvania, IOM was developed as a strategy for establishing a multi-pronged, multi-partner intergenerational program based at the retirement community site (Kaplan, Liu, & Hannon, 2006). The model reflects a “capacity-building” approach to finding, establishing relationships, and planning projects with new organizational partners.

The IOM process involves the following four steps:

- (1) Create a list of all local schools, organizations, and centers serving children and youth.
- (2) Collect information on each site, including geographic location, program objectives, and activities/curricula. This can be done via sending out surveys and collecting information from websites and program brochures.
- (3) Insert this information into a database that is accessible to administrators, staff, and participants of the host organization.
- (4) Contact organizations with complementary goals, and with locations that are accessible to members of the organization, and plan meetings to discuss potential intergenerational program collaboration plans and arrangements.

Kaplan et al. (2006) accentuate the link between this partnership-oriented capacity-building process and the ultimate sustainability of this retirement community’s intergenerational program.

“The survival and evolution of the program years after the pilot project and study was completed suggests that the stated goal for the project—to build capacity—was achieved. Capacity implies sustainability—the organization now has the means, resources, know-how, contacts, and determination to keep its multifaceted intergenerational program thriving. It is clear that this initiative is not dependent on any individual partner, including the university partner that helped conceive, plan, and evaluate the pilot project. It has extended beyond a time-limited, single-institution-focused intervention” (p. 421).

6.4 Examples of Intergenerational Community Building

6.4.1 Community-Level Interventions

The following examples illustrate different approaches for building the capacity of a community to address critical issues from an intergenerational, cross-sectoral perspective. These efforts reflect more than a “patchwork” of disconnected programs

and activities. Collectively, they advance setting a broader, more cohesive, multi-pronged intergenerational agenda for community settings.

These initiatives are *place-based* (focus is on a specific geographic area), *cross-age focused* (they promote programs and policies that address issues affecting people of all ages), *strategic* (they foster collaboration across systems and identifies issues of common concern), and *action oriented* (they seek to translate intervention ideas and plans into actual programs and campaigns).

The CFAA (Communities for All Ages) model, noted above for its asset mapping approach, has been a consistent source of innovation in intergenerational community building. The following examples from CFAA sites in Arizona illustrate how the model has the potential to transform community settings:

- *Intergenerational community learning centers*: One of the first CFAA sites in Ajo, Arizona involved renovating several abandoned buildings in the town center to create a campus-like hub of intergenerational activity. The site includes a community learning lab, a micro enterprise center, shared workspace, classrooms, an arts and crafts gallery, a community commercial kitchen, and rooms for a retreat center (CFAA, n.d.).
- *Intergenerational community life centers*: The CFAA team in the Canyon Corridor neighborhood of Phoenix, Arizona created its first “community life center” that “uses an underutilized space in a local church to offer a range of classes, workshops, events and gathering for residents of all ages. [Over time, the local leadership team acquired] additional space from a local market place that has the capacity for a performance space and large community gatherings” (CFAA, n.d., 8–9).

The *Intergenerational Unity Forums* approach, established at the Penn State University in 2006 and later modified by the Beth Johnson Foundation in the UK (Kaplan & Hatton-Yeo, 2008), was conceived as a way to “jump start” a community-wide planning process.

Intergenerational Unity Forums aim to do three things:

- Train a diverse (cross-sectoral and interagency) group of professionals and “community stakeholders” in a specific community to work in *an intergenerational way*. This is done through two half-day workshops which explore intergenerational programming in general and in the context of local concerns and ways to address them.
- Engage Forum participants in a collective planning process aimed at developing an *intergenerational agenda* which reflects shared priorities and concerns for their community. The process involves generating a large list of potential project ideas (through a brainstorming process), narrowing the list down to those of highest priority, and selecting 3–5 project ideas for further development, each with a “champion” willing to take a leadership role to guide the planning process.
- *Translate intervention ideas into concrete plans, programs, and campaigns*. Project teams continue to meet to further develop new intergenerational program plans, ideas, and implementation strategies.

For the Intergenerational Unity Forums conducted in the UK (Kaplan & Hatton-Yeo, 2008), the issues of greatest concern were related to limited opportunities for community participation, safety-related concerns, sense of social exclusion experienced by newcomers, and concerns about unhealthy lifestyles (Kaplan & Hatton-Yeo, 2008).

Another intergenerational approach to community-wide organizing is the *intergenerational community as intervention* (ICI) strategy modeled after the Hope Meadows community in Rantoul, Illinois.⁴ After many years of discussion and effort aimed at replicating the Hope Meadows model (Eheart, Hopping, Power, Mitchell, & Racine, 2009), Hope Meadows director, Brenda Eheart, and colleagues created the Generations of Hope Development Corp to work with other organizations interested in establishing intergenerational communities for other at-risk populations. A *Generations of Hope community* (GHC) is now defined as “an intentionally created, geographically contiguous intergenerational neighborhood, where some of the residents are facing a specific social problem around which the entire community organizes” (Eheart et al., 2009, p. 47).

New GHC communities include: Bastion (in New Orleans) – for wounded war veterans, Hope Lights (in Puget Sound, Washington) – for kinship and adoptive families, and Osprey Village (in Bluffton, South Carolina) – for adults with developmental disabilities (Jones, Sept. 24, 2014). Within these communities, the *intergenerational community as intervention* (ICI) strategy represents a distinctive approach for facilitating and supporting naturally emergent alliances, relationships, and enduring commitments across generational lines.

The term “time banks” refers to a community resource exchange system in which the currency is time spent providing resources or volunteering in service to others. One builds up credit by giving some sort of practical help and support to others; “withdrawals” are made later, when needing some sort of assistance or something done for themselves. Such systems have implications for enhancing the number of people engaged in providing caregiving for others. Program variations of the time bank concept have been implemented in over 30 countries.⁵ Time bank schemes vary in terms of what they are called (in some places, people earn “time dollars” or “service credits”) as well as level of government support, but there is consistency in the idea that community currency based on time could grow social capital and revive norms of interpersonal caring.

Time banks promote intergenerational exchanges in various ways. The following example is provided in a report from the Hawaii Executive Office on Aging (2014).

“One time bank offered college students time credits for familiarizing older adults with the computer software used to log hours; younger members could then use their earned credits to take “how to” classes from older members who benefit from the joy of teaching a skill or sharing their wisdom” (p. 53).

⁴ As noted in Chap. 3, Hope Meadows was created in 1994 for the primary goal of creating a pathway for moving more children out of the foster care system in Illinois. Parents willing to care for 3–4 children in the foster care system received rent-free housing and older adults who volunteered for at least six hours each week received rent-reduced housing.

⁵ A comprehensive directory of time banks is available online at <http://community.timebanks.org>

6.4.2 Larger Scale Interventions

At a larger scale, we see many cities and even some countries (such as the UK) integrating intergenerational components into government efforts aimed at achieving key priorities, such as enhancing social inclusion and cohesion and promoting community participation in neighborhood and public space regeneration and renewal initiatives (Bernard, 2006; Buffel et al., 2014; Pain, 2005).

To obtain a sense of what might happen when an entire city embraces intergenerational perspectives, processes, and policies, we turn the spotlight onto Manchester, a city in the northwest of England with a population of approximately 450,000 residents.

In 2010, Manchester became the first UK city to be accepted into the WHO's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities. The Manchester City Council and a cross-section of city agencies and nonprofit organizations worked together to not only make Manchester "a great place to grow older," but also to create intergenerational spaces and services in parks, libraries, community centers and other community settings (Buffel et al., 2014).

There were many factors that contributed to Manchester's cross-sectoral embrace of an intergenerational framework for city planning. Here are a few:

- An overarching vision for the city, called "*Looking Back, Looking Forward*," which was woven into a key government policy document.
- The appointment of a City Councilor who has the formal title of *intergenerational champion* and a small but growing steering group of administrators from various city agencies.
- A *quarterly electronic publication* that highlights news and updates on intergenerational work both nationally and in Manchester.
- *Training workshops* to help city staff develop a better understanding of intergenerational practice.
- *City-wide showcase events* to highlight elements of the city's intergenerational plan.
- *Tie-ins with other campaigns* run by the city, such as the *Positive Images of Ageing* initiative and the *Shared Places and Spaces* program.
- An intensive evaluation component for each demonstration project.

It is also worth noting the accomplishments of San Diego, California, a county with over three million residents that has made significant strides toward the realization of a county-wide vision of intergenerational living. In 2000, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors established a full time "Intergenerational Coordinator" position at Aging and Independence Services, and this was followed in 2013 by the creation of four additional staff positions. These staff members work with and organize their colleagues across agencies and sectors, including schools, children and youth services, older adult services, community development organizations, and health services.

An intergenerational component is woven into many community-based initiatives throughout San Diego, including food bank gardens, Scouting events, ballroom dancing parties, canned food drives, and mutual visits conducted by student

groups and retirement community residents. The county's slogan of *Live Well, San Diego! A Healthy Community for All Ages* is reflected in creative health promotion traditions and activities such as the annual *Intergenerational Games* (Generations United, 2015). One of the features that has been recognized as a contributor to the sustainability of San Diego's intergenerational initiatives is the county's effective and extensive use of traditional and social media, including Facebook and YouTube (GIA, 2015).

For any type of city-wide intergenerational planning process to succeed, there needs to be a multi-agency effort and an outreach strategy aimed at engaging a broad-based group of stakeholders. This is consistent with Van Vliet's (2009) recommendations for creating livable cities for all ages.

"As a first step towards making cities more livable for people of all ages, we propose a planning process that will bring together key partners and relevant stakeholders to determine needed policies, which may include revising building codes and zoning ordinances, incentivizing multi-site use, and creating cross-sector policy mechanisms" (p. 28).

6.5 Considerations of the Built Environment

6.5.1 Overview

One of the critical issues in the intergenerational studies field is the relative lack of attention to the role of the physical environment in influencing intergenerational engagement. In one attempt to lay out some principles for designing effective intergenerational environments, Kaplan, Haider, Cohen, and Turner (2007) reviewed various initiatives aimed at planning and constructing physical environments that are responsive to intergenerational engagement goals. The identified examples tended to be localized, discipline specific, and site specific and with no direct references to an integrated knowledge base that might provide guidance for future professionals engaged in the design of intergenerational spatial environments. Nevertheless, the authors were able to find some common themes from these examples.

One major point is how designing intergenerational environments, as in all environmental design, should not be exercised independent of context. This suggests that the task of creating an effective intergenerational setting is not simply a matter of good environmental design, but rather one of aligning environmental design, policy, and programming.

"There is a need for integration between curriculum or program models, organizational policies and objectives, social values, *and* environmental design. In other words, the environment of an intergenerational program should reflect: programmatic, organizational, socio-cultural, political, and economic goals and realities" (Kaplan et al., 2007, p. 89).

Another point of emphasis is on ways in which environmental design (process and product) can function to "empower" people.

"This works in multiple ways, including *how* the environment is designed (participatory design), how facilities are "managed" (meaningful decision-making input from

participants), and how the facility is evaluated (participatory research tools and techniques). It is important to ensure that individuals have control over how much and in what ways they engage others; this includes having opportunities to disengage (and maintain privacy) as well as to engage” (p. 89).

This emphasis on participation and empowerment takes on added significance when working in institutional settings such as some long term care facilities in which program activities and environmental design processes are highly regulated and with limited resident input.

Another relevant theme for creating intergenerational environments is that of flexible design.

“Examples of working to ensure mixed and multiple uses of space include: creating large and small spaces, allowing for planned and unplanned activity, providing opportunities for different levels and types of intergenerational engagement, and designing for the integration of passive and active recreational patterns of use. This adaptability is articulated in Simon Nicholson’s “theory of loose parts,” which states that when there are “loose parts,” people are better able to adapt the environment to meet their needs (Nicholson, 1971).” (Kaplan et al., 2007, p. 89).

More recent publications that highlight the role of the physical environment in creating effective intergenerational settings include: Vanderbeck & Worth’s (2015) edited volume on “intergenerational spaces,” an article from Buffel et al. (2014) on the “shared places and spaces” campaign in the northern England city of Manchester, and a report from the Generations of Hope Development Corporation (GHDC, 2015) which highlights the role of physical design in their “intentional (intergenerational) neighboring” model.” García & Martí’s (2014), in describing several intergenerational shared site facilities in the Spanish city of Alicante, use the term “intergenerational architecture” to frame how architecture could function as a complement to urban regeneration efforts (social action programs) aimed at countering social exclusion.

In the next section, we introduce a conceptual framework that can be useful in identifying critical issues and relevant concepts as they impinge on the design and study of meaningful intergenerational environments. At the core of this framework is the concept of *intergenerational contact zones*, i.e., intentional focus points or nodes for intergenerational interaction.

6.5.2 Intergenerational Contact Zones: Conceptual Framework and Applications

As noted in Kaplan, Thang, Sánchez, and Hoffman (2016), *Intergenerational Contact Zones* (henceforth called ICZs),

“... serve as *spatial focal points* for different generations to meet, interact, build relationships (e.g., trust and friendships), and, if desired, work together to address issues of local concern. They can be found in all types of community settings including schools, parks, taverns, reading rooms, clubhouses, museums, community gardens, environmental education centers, and multi-service community centers.”

However, the ICZ topic is more complex and multifaceted than this definition implies. Beyond drawing needed attention to the physical configuration of a space in which different generations congregate, it also places emphasis on psychological, sociocultural, political, economic, and historical factors that affect how people view, value, and behave at the site.

On the psychological or perceptual side, it is reasonable to expect that people who arrive at an ICZ site will have distinct notions about different generations, and this will likely affect how they perceive and look to engage one another. This includes their degree of interest, trust, curiosity, respect, and patience with one another.

The sociocultural context also has a powerful influence on how ICZ *spaces* may become meaningful *places*. Socially (and culturally) defined norms, traditions, and values, (especially those related to how people understand and use public places,) affect how inhabitants view and behave within any given ICZ setting.

There is also the temporal dimension to consider. How ICZ spaces are used might change over time, with shifting meanings and uses of that particular space. For example, a park space with a playground that is heavily used during the day might be seen as a place to avoid during the evening due to safety concerns. Over a longer time horizon, if there are demographic changes in the community that result in a smaller proportion of children and youth, even daytime use and interest in the playground area might diminish over time.

The ICZ conceptual framework can serve several functions, including as:

- conceptual tool - for studying complex, multi-generational community settings.
- programming tool - for broadening the range of intergenerational activity possibilities.
- design tool - for generating innovative ideas for developing intergenerational meeting spaces.

From a community development perspective, the ICZ concept can draw attention to the potential of viable intergenerational meeting spaces/places for reducing social isolation and creating new modes of community energy and activity. This is consistent with research conducted by Partners for Livable Communities on public perceptions of “community livability;” a key theme in that research places emphasis on the perceived importance of civic gathering places, where people can meet comfortably, and where there is a welcoming environment for newcomers (McNulty & Koff, 2014).

It is also important to consider ways in which conflictual relationships and contested spaces can emerge along generational lines. For example, Buffel and Phillipson (2015) note how the rapid changes in the socioeconomic make-up of a neighborhood can pit new residents against long-time residents due to contrasting visions, use patterns, and psychological sense of comfort associated with various spaces in the neighborhood. They refer to Zukin’s (2010) study of New York neighborhoods as an example of how neighborhood gentrification processes can be particularly threatening to long-time residents’ conceptions of revered local spaces. The generational component is pertinent insofar as the newcomers tend to be from generations younger than the longtimers.

“The Bistros replace bodegas, cocktail bars morph out of old-style saloons, and the neighborhood as a whole creates a different kind of sociability. Against the longtimers’ sense of origins newcomers pose their own new beginnings” (Zukin, 2010, p. 4).

6.5.3 Intergenerational Design Applications

6.5.3.1 Multi-Generational and Intergenerational Parks and Playspaces

Throughout this book, we have emphasized distinctions between mono-generational, multi-generational, and intergenerational programs and practices. These categorical distinctions are also reflected in the design of public spaces.

Consider the park scene pictured in Fig. 6.1 below. It is basically a playground space designed solely with children’s play in mind. In that sense, it’s a mono-generational setting. Technically, however, it can be labeled as a multi-generational playground scene. Even though it is oriented to children and their play, and the adults who are present are outside the realm of the children’s activity flow, the adults are still present, engaged in their own (largely passive, in this case) activities. The setting also allows for clear observation of the children’s activities, which may be a low level of engagement but also supports good supervision.

As far as children’s environments go, the playground in Fig. 6.1 is an adequate one. It provides various opportunities for children to engage and play in that environment, thereby fulfilling a crucial role in child development (Wohlwill & Heft, 1987). Carson (1965) used the phrase “sense of wonder” to describe children’s sense of exploration in their quest to gain a rich understanding of the ecological world around them. Cobb (1977) focused on the role of the child’s active imagination in the way they navigate through their environmental explorations.

The intergenerational scene represented in Fig. 6.2 below adds some design elements that provide opportunities for adults as well as children to be more engaged in

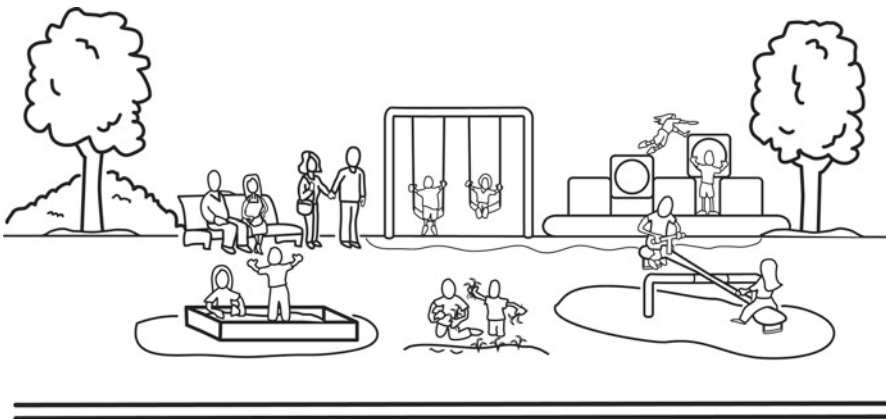


Fig. 6.1 Multi-generational Playground Scene. Illustrator: Thomas Laird

the flow of activities occurring in this setting. Furthermore, all activity hubs are designed with the intent of providing park-goers with multiple options for intergenerational interaction, relationship-building, and play within and across generational lines.

Of both park scenes, it is the one presented in Fig. 6.2 that more readily fulfills the potential of parks and playspaces, alluded to by Kweon, Sullivan, and Wiley (1998), for strengthening community ties for all residents and facilitating a sense of social integration for older adults. This park is designed to make it easier for park users, across generations, to share time, space, and experience.

6.5.3.2 Intergenerational Housing Schemes

We now turn our attention to ways in which housing arrangements can be configured to accommodate plans for intergenerational living. Some forms of intergenerational shared living that are covered include homesharing (and other flat-sharing arrangements), cohousing communities, multi-generational households, and intergenerational housing arrangements in school dorms, retirement communities, and other community settings.

Homeshare schemes generally involve older householders who are willing to share their homes but are at a stage in their lives where they need some support. Younger homesharers give some help in exchange for somewhere to live.

- Viure i Conviure (Live and Live Together) in Barcelona, Spain helps college students find accommodation in the homes of local older adults. One of the distinctive aspects of this homeshare program is that social workers and counselors are integrally involved in all aspects of the program, from making the student-elder matches, to following up with all parties to make sure they are comfortable with their housing and living situations. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of this program demonstrated its capacity to foster the practice of associative

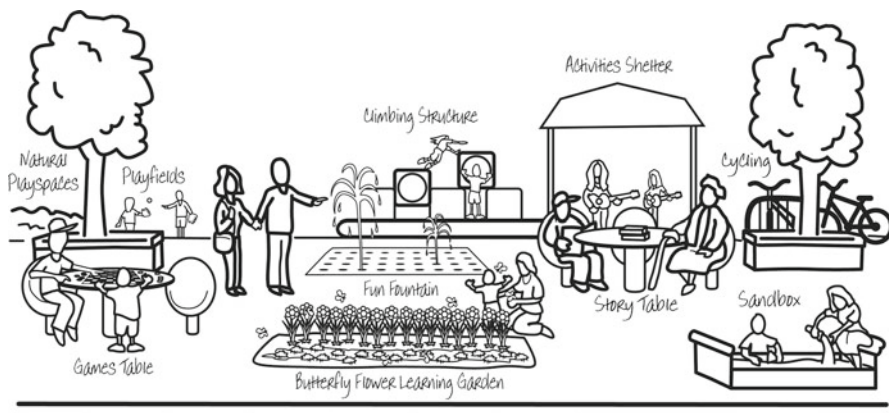


Fig. 6.2 Intergenerational Playground Scene. Illustrator: Thomas Laird

(i.e., contact), affectual (i.e., sentiments), and functional (i.e., mutual support) solidarity. Furthermore, evaluation findings were conclusive:

“Programs like ViC are more than the simple exchange of two services, of company and accommodation. Intergenerational homeshare programs promote some valuable dimensions of intergenerational solidarity among their participants. Therefore, implementation of these programs might constitute a good example of societal response to current European policy challenges in fostering intergenerational solidarity” (Sánchez, García, Díaz, & Duaigües, 2011, p. 385).

- “Kangaroo” housing projects in Belgium, the Netherlands and Scandinavia attempt to match aging individuals who own a house which is too big for them and young couples who are experiencing difficulties in finding reasonably priced accommodation. The aim of these house-share schemes is to prevent the elderly from feeling isolated and to re-establish a sense of intergenerational solidarity for the young adults as well as the older adults. The Molenbeek kangaroo houses (Belgium) are a particularly interesting example, as the intercultural dimension has been added to the intergenerational aspect. In this part of Brussels, more than one resident in two is of foreign extraction. This 20+ year old initiative encourages mutual assistance between young foreign families and older people local to the district (AGE Platform Europe, 2009).

Here are some examples of housing specifically constructed for intergenerational living purposes.

- The Laboure House/St. Vincent de Paul Center in Chicago, Illinois is an intergenerational, congregate living residence for older adults and college students that is housed in a former convent. Sixteen rooms are available for seniors and seven rooms for college students. Each resident has a private bedroom, and the remainder of the space is designed for shared activities like daily meals, watching television and movies, playing board games and card games, and informal and planned intergenerational events and conversations.
- The “Plaza de América” intergenerational building in Alicante, Spain is one of three Alicante housing projects built to provide affordable housing and various community services for low income older adults and young adults. The Plaza de America building consists of 72 intergenerational housing units and a variety of congregation spaces, including a library, television room, information room, laundry room, gym, pool, and outside garden. There are also seminars and workshops (e.g., to offer training and support in using the internet and mobile phones) and service initiatives (e.g., young tenants accompany older tenants on doctor visits and shopping trips (García & Martí, 2014).

Cohousing communities are planned communities where residents own their own homes and collaboratively manage common facilities such as gardens, workshops, guestrooms, laundry, and possibly a “common house” which typically features kitchen and dining spaces. By design and in practice, these communities aim to encourage frequent and regular interactions, as well as support and sharing among neighbors. While there has been increasing interest in elderly-focused “senior cohousing,” the model was originally conceived, and continues to manifest, mostly as intergenerational communities.

According to Zheng (2016), who researched cohousing communities in the U.S., what makes many of these communities function so well as intergenerational living environments is not only the ample provision of age-inclusive communal spaces (e.g., indoor and outdoor lounge areas, playgrounds and gardens), but especially routine social gatherings such as weekly (or more frequent) community meals, retreats, movie nights, clubs and other planned and spontaneous get-togethers. In fact, most cohousing communities feature social structures (such as meal systems, social calendars, and internal web and email systems) that are as elaborate and meticulously managed as their physical structures.

To accommodate adult children or elderly parents needing a place to live, families might redesign or remodel their homes to provide space to take them in. For these multi-generational households to work, family members need to figure many things out, including what is to be “family space” and what is to be “personal space.” Family space is shared, accessible, and stocked with objects that are inviting to family members of all ages. Quality family time might even be derived from the planning, creation, and maintenance of these spaces. Examples of such family activity include painting a mural on the wall of a family recreation room and planting seeds in the family garden. As for protecting “personal space,” separate entrances can be useful. If municipal zoning and regulations permit, families can go so far as to build additions to the house. There are various labels for such additions, including “in-law suites,” “granny flats” and “mother-in-law apartments.”

There is also a cultural component to how values of multi-generational living are operationalized. In Japan, for example, having one’s elderly parents living nearby rather than under the same roof is not necessarily a violation of traditional values of family unity. Hendry (1995) evokes the old saying, “... One needs to be near enough to be able to carry hot soup from one house to the other without having to heat it up again.” (p. 31).

There are examples of intergenerational living in other types of facilities, even in a retirement community. The Humanitas retirement home in Deventer, Netherlands, for example, allows university students to live rent-free alongside the older adult residents (Reed, 2015). In exchange, they spend at least 30 hours/month as “good neighbors.” This entails engaging the older residents in a variety of activities such as watching sports, celebrating birthdays, and offering company.

6.6 Summary

Throughout this chapter, we have noted various ways in which employing an intergenerational lens adds valuable dimensions to community organizing and development.

Areas of added value include:

- Broadened cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships, particularly suited for reaching and serving an age-diverse population

- Increased attention to the positive role of “age” and life-course transitions in community planning
- New ideas and techniques for engaging multi-generational groups in community planning activities
- Enhanced capacity to generate innovative community planning projects because of a larger disposition of diverse people, time frames, languages, and experiences
- Increased sustainability of community development initiatives since a cross-generations engagement process has the potential to facilitate larger and wider buy-in by community stakeholders

An intergenerational perspective could be brought to bear on a wide range of critical issues, even ones that seem generation-specific. Consider, for example, the critical problem of “youth vandalism.” With a greater awareness about how the generations are interdependent, the problem of youth vandalism becomes a community problem, not a youth problem. Hence, it would call for a community-wide response involving strategies such as developing new recreational outlets, job training programs, and mentoring initiatives.

An intergenerational paradigm for civic engagement, community development, and environmental design can have a constructive influence on how residents across the generational spectrum view, experience, create, and sustain community life.

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Chapter 7

Intergenerational Strategies for Establishing Sustainable Work Environments

Abstract Nowadays, attention to intergenerational relationships in the workplace is important due to the increasing multi-generational profile of the workforce in many aging societies. Consequently, we describe some creative strategies for structuring multi-generational workplaces in ways that capitalize on each generation's strengths and address their respective challenges through facilitating intended and planned intergenerational interactions and relationships. We suggest that age-adaptive and age-advantaged strategies must be understood as steps in the quest to build sustainable social relationships across generations in the workplace. The specific focus of this chapter is to draw attention to some of the most promising formats and models of intergenerational programs in the workplace. We place particular emphasis on tools and techniques for promoting intergenerational learning and facilitating relationships in the context of working to create generationally inclusive workplaces. This chapter posits that approaching the workplace through a generational lens means recognizing that generational differences and similarities are a valid, important, and enriching form of diversity whose main feature is their time-bound character. Moreover, it is the fact that generational consciousness may arise (because of chronology and genealogy) that makes the concept of generation an interesting tool in organizational and workplace management.

7.1 Introduction

Why should we be interested in intergenerational strategies for establishing sustainable work environments? Firstly, and to be straightforward, because we are ageing...in the work world too. For instance, according to Eurostat, [from 2001 to 2011, the percentage of workers 55–64 years old in the EU27 increased 9.7%](#). In the U.S., the share of the 55-years-and-older labor force is expected to increase to 25.2% in 2020 –it was just 11.9% in 1990– (Toossi, 2012). It seems that this shift in the composition of the labor force is here to stay. Effects of changes in the age profile of the workforce may be more profound than in the past. For one effect, after a series of cross-country comparisons, Liang, Wang, and Lazear (2014) have concluded that older societies present a low rate of new business formation as well as lower rates of entrepreneurship at every age. However, there is also a positive side. It seems that

older workers' productivity is comparable to that of younger workers (Börsch-Supan & Weiss, 2013), provided that workplaces are age-adaptive.

Secondly, discussions about pros and cons of this workforce's new age profile proliferate as well as do myths and stereotypes about older workers, such as these workers are too ill to be productive and employing older workers for longer will diminish job prospects for the young (Börsch-Supan, 2015; Carnevale, Hanson, & Gulish, 2013). This stereotyping makes work environments less sustainable because it feeds unsupported and pessimistic notions related to intergenerational relationships at the workplace. As Levine notes,

"One of the most persistent and misguided assumptions about the relationship of [younger and older workers](#) is that they are adversaries — competing for the same jobs and incompatible in work habits. This presumption of intergenerational hostility ignores the productive synergy that happens when their skills and work styles mix and energy meets experience, technological fluency meets accumulated people skills, ambition meets not sweating the small stuff." (Levine, 2015, n.p.).

Thirdly, in many geographies we are moving from 'lifetime employment' to 'lifetime employability', as the OECD Secretary-General has remarked (Gurría, 2011). In the framework of the new workforce's age profile, our long-term employability will be enhanced if we are competent to work in a multi-generational environment. Intergenerational awareness, skills, and strategies are now components of competency.

We are attracted by the possibility that an increase in the proportion of older workers in the workplace —because of a longer working life— may accentuate the multi-generational makeup of work environments. The need to accommodate up to four generations in the workplace is a realistic expectation (North & Fiske, 2015). In such an environment, intergenerational interactions may become a key means for transmitting and sharing skills, knowledge, experiences, and resources attached to specific generations among all types of workers. In terms of providing our societies with sustainable work environments, we see a clear pathway: moving from *age-blind* to *age-adaptive* and then to *age-advantaged* workplaces. Furthermore, and in line with the overall rationale behind the book, we suggest that terms like age-adaptive and age-advantaged must be understood as steps in the quest to build sustainable social relationships across generations in the workplace. The latter is the real goal at stake.

We have several interests connected to that goal. First, we are interested in identifying effective ways to enhance older people's opportunities to work and to extend their work life (should they wish to). Second, our main purpose reaches beyond age management in the workplace —even if we acknowledge that age management may contribute to better accommodate older workers. Third, and most important, we intend to amplify and harness the relational potential nested in multi-generational work environments as the powerful opportunity for building more sustainable organizations and societies that we believe it is.

To some extent, our perspective matches a recent inquiry geared toward helping managers move beyond generational misconceptions in the workplace. The author of the analysis conceptualizes intergenerational interactions as "communication, learning or behavior exchanges between and through individuals of different generation cohorts in the workplace that can have mutual or reciprocal

influences” (Flipping, 2015, p. 36), and recommends “embracing the richness of the [intergenerational] interactions that can benefit all the individuals and the organization” (p. 37).

7.2 The Agenda Ahead

In this chapter, we describe some creative strategies for structuring multi-generational workplaces in ways that capitalize on each generation’s strengths and address their respective challenges through facilitating intended and planned inter-generational interactions and relationships. Examples of issues in the agenda to manage and leverage multi-generational work environments abound:

- (1) Getting ready to be involved in a multi-generational workforce: Intergenerational initiatives designed to foster entrepreneurship among high school and college students may boost their capacity to engage with co-workers from other generations. Any action to prepare future workforce members to be generationally sensitive would be relevant. For instance, in the U.S. Generations United (2015, p. 10) introduces the following example of an “age-advantaged” solution:

“The Workforce Academy for Youth (WAY) in San Diego, California is a job training program that helps foster youth transition to self-sufficiency by offering them a six-month paid internship. Along with monthly group training, each intern receives individual mentoring support and a life skills coach. The Life Skills Coaches are adults ages 50 and older who serve as positive role models, encouraging their interns to perform well on the job and to continue their education.”

- (2) Managing a multi-generational workforce (to capitalize on the experiences and perspectives of each generation) includes: intergenerational learning at the workplace; sustainable management of knowledge in organizations (e.g., knowledge transfer through cross-generational training, intergenerational tutorship/reverse tutorship programs, intergenerational executive coaching); work-to-work transitions in multigenerational work settings; the abundance of rewarding and stimulating professional development experiences for workers from different generations; and the intentional creation of intergenerational teams and programs.

A SENIORENGAGE PROJECT¹ with organizations from Spain, Hungary, Austria, Finland, and United Kingdom (2010–12) is involved in establishing an online community through which retired and near retirement professionals shared their knowledge with young professionals. Three main benefits were underscored by SENIORENGAGE developers: (i) senior professionals continue to feel engaged in a professional community, (ii) young professionals are able to find a retired professional to mentor them through the challenges of their career, and (iii) older professionals are able to exchange expertise and knowledge with the rest of the community.

¹http://seniorengage.eu/?page_id=9

- (3) Dealing with job transitions and employability issues: There are benefits to taking an intergenerational stance when considering ways to assist older adults and younger adults in dealing with certain types of job seeking and job change challenges. In Belgium, ‘Duo for a job’ carries out intergenerational and intercultural mentoring to enhance support available to younger immigrants when seeking a job in the Brussels area. In this country the employment rate among the 55–64 population is the lowest in the European Union (some 41 %), whereas the difference between the youth employment rate among Belgian youngsters and that of young immigrants is the highest in Europe (D’Ottreppe, 2014). Over a six-month period, trained older mentors meet weekly with their younger mentees to plan efficient employment strategies. Migrating to another country may alter seriously the life-course pathways guiding an individual’s life-cycle. Thanks to initiatives such as ‘Duo for a job’, life trajectories and transitions of young immigrants can be reoriented successfully. Succession planning (to avoid “brain drain” that comes with large-scale retirements) is another interesting area. For instance, British Telecom assigned its systems engineers an apprentice who would gradually take over all the duties of older colleagues (Mahon & Millar, 2014). In the context of a study of Kentucky employers’ preparedness for the aging workforce, a bank executive gave the following example illustrating why succession plans are critical to combat loss of institutional knowledge:

“There was an employee who came to us and said, ‘I’m 65, and I’d like to scale down a bit, but I still love working here. Can I begin to phase into retirement and work three days a week?’ And our CEO said, ‘No, can’t do that.’ I told the executive, ‘You’re crazy! You’re letting somebody good walk out the door!’ And now he’s at another bank that is willing to let him set his own hours and we lost a great person” (Wells-Lepley, Swanberg, Williams, Nakai, & Grosch, 2013, p. 264).

The existence of intergenerational models in the workplace is not new: apprenticeship is probably the best example of a traditional model. However, many other formats of intergenerational practice in organizational and production settings still remain invisible or untapped. Hence, the specific focus of this chapter is to draw attention to some of the most promising formats and models of intergenerational programs contributing to the sustainability of workplaces. We place particular emphasis on tools and techniques for promoting intergenerational learning and facilitating relationships in the context of working to create generationally inclusive workplaces.

As a note of caution, we do not suggest that all approaches described in this chapter will transfer to any countries and cultures other than those where they occur. Therefore, any attempt to replicate should first give careful consideration to specific local circumstances, including social structures, institutional policies, level of economic vibrancy, legal infrastructure, and cultural mores with regard to work and work-family balance.

7.3 Importance of Intergenerational Relationships in the Workplace

The three following vignettes that we are borrowing from Joshi, Dencker, Franz, and Martocchi (2010, p. 392) help to explain why paying attention to intergenerational relationships in the workplace is important:

- Vignette #1: “In a medium-size chemical company, the employee population, like many of its intra industry competitors, is composed of two sets of engineers: some who have gained expertise in the field after many years working with the same product lines, and others who are recent college graduates. While the first set of employees views these products as “sacred,” the second group of employees is more concerned about the products’ adverse environmental impact. Senior management believes that a generational divide is creating a lack of trust between the two employee groups, which, in turn, has led to high turnover rates among newer entrants. As a response, a Human Resource (HR) generalist is given the task of “figuring out this young generation” by creating a “Millennial Toolkit” so that managers can have a reference guide to deal with the quirks and peculiarities of this “often demanding” and “entitled” cohort of Millennial workers.”
- Vignette #2: “As employees at a large manufacturing site brace for an imminent wave of layoffs, many of the older employees begin talking about the effects previous economic downturns have had on their lives, the company, and the community. While acknowledging the gravity of the current situation, these veterans also offer perspective to the younger workers who are facing this for the first time, reassuring them that while this seems disastrous and insurmountable (both at the individual and company level), as in the past, the company and the economy will rebound, and even those who are laid off will likely be reinstated in the near future.”
- Vignette #3: “In a large accounting firm, after recognizing the tension that existed during times of leadership transition, the Vice-President of HR instituted a program wherein each year, after the annual succession planning review, every member of the top management team collaborates with potential successors, giving them the opportunity to act as the current executive in charge of real-time challenges. The incumbent executive serves as a consultant only, assessing, critiquing, and enhancing the plan of the potential successors in a way that fosters innovation, creativity, and real solutions. Not only does this give even more insight into the individuals best suited for the new job, but it also creates a level of familiarity between incumbents and successors that eases transition and fosters cooperation during a process that had previously been defined by competition and reluctant interaction.”

Hopefully, these three cases in the workplace have made clear that learning and support between the generations is certainly worthy of consideration in terms of reducing the potential for interpersonal conflict and in promoting organizational sustainability and profitability. Intergenerational learning may contribute, with added value, to the range of learning and strategic planning processes going on at the workplace. According to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2012):

“The value of a mixed-age workforce is increasingly recognised and evident in efforts to ensure intergenerational cohesion and knowledge transfer within companies. These ‘soft’ changes are addressed in part to current company needs but are also a form of adaptation to a future where demographic ageing may result in potential labour and skills shortages and will result in an older workforce.”

Some reflections as to why intergenerational practices are important in the workplace are the following (Gellert & Schalk, 2012):

- Age-related attitudes (intergenerational cooperation, perception of older and younger colleagues’ capabilities) play an important role in organizations and work teams.
- Intergenerational cooperation is positively related to employee performance.
- When older employees have a more positive view toward intergenerational cooperation, they tend to be more satisfied at work.
- Cooperation is related to the way communication takes place among employees. If intergenerational communication is difficult, less cooperation is to be expected.
- In multi-generational teams, for members to reach high performance, there needs to be a high level of intergenerational cooperation throughout the team.

Bharti Airtel, a big corporation in India seemed to have understood the value of intergenerational initiatives when in 2008 it introduced reverse mentoring:

“[in Bharti Airtel] leaders across the country, including the Airtel Management Board (AMB), and the function heads are mentored mostly by our young managers, hired from the top B-schools of the country, and into their second or third year in the organization. The topics the seniors are educated on include brand activation opportunities, downloading apps, fashion trends, latest gadgets or what young people do in their free time. It’s not always soft stuff; even hard business strategies get discussed and sometimes adopted by the company” (Kumar, n.d.).

Kumar’s study on this Indian case confirmed that this type of mentoring can (i) re-energize older employees, (ii) keep younger workers engaged, (iii) and –something crucial in the context of this book– improve relationships between the different generations in the workplace. Certainly, intergenerational management of the workforce reaches beyond age management because it is essentially management of relationships.

7.4 Generations in the Workplace: More Than Age Management

Approaching the workplace through a generational lens means recognizing that generational differences and similarities are a valid, important, and enriching form of diversity whose main feature is their time-bound character. “What makes ‘generations’ organizationally relevant entities?” Joshi, Dencker, and Franz (2011) pose this question and suggest that chronology (unique location in time) and genealogy (link through transmission/descent of ideas/values/skills/knowledge) are two distinct elements of generations in organizational settings.

Since temporality in organizations seems to be the key to understanding why generations are important to be considered in the workplace, it is worth asking which aspects of temporality actually have a stronger impact. Joshi et al. (2011) highlight the following three:

- Organizational entry: Successive entry into an organization.
- Passage through organizational roles or positions: Successive passage through organizational roles/positions.
- Temporality based on discrete organizational events: ‘Before and after’ generations linked to relevant organizational events such as layoffs, takeovers, mergers, and so on.

Behind this account is a strong belief about the uniqueness of generational positions in organizations:

“The unique location of a generation in a chronological order gives each generation access to a set of skills, knowledge, experiences, and resources that can potentially be passed on to or exchanged with the succeeding generation” (Joshi, Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2010, p. 393).

Chronology and genealogy are two central dimensions to consider when thinking about generations within the workplace organization. Consequently, we should approach generations as much more than just age groups. Actually, it is the fact that generational consciousness may arise (because of chronology and genealogy) that makes the concept of generation an interesting tool in organizational and workplace management.

Chronological age identity is a personal attribute that no one can change since it depends on birth dates. However, generational identity links age to broader personal and social biography in terms of cohort, historical time, and trajectory. From this point of view, someone working in an organization not only has a certain age, but also has reached that age through a specific path (including organizational entry), accompanied by specific coevals (including organizational co-workers), in a certain historical period (including particular history of the organization), and through specific transitions (including passage through organizational positions). Thus, generational identity connects personal, social, and organizational life through an emphasis on genealogy, cohort, and historical time, clearly much more than just a question of chronological age.

7.5 Generational Identities in Organizations

Joshi et al. (2010) have identified three typical types of generational identities in organizations:

- Cohort-based identity: individuals entering an organization during the same time interval undergo similar training and socialization experiences and enter into similar employment contracts.

- Age-based identity: an age group that shares collective memories developed during the formative years of life.
- Incumbency-based identity: individuals or groups who occupy successive and interdependent roles in organizations.

Cohort-based and incumbency-based identities may be considered organization-based, whereas age-based generational identity is mainly linked to experiences outside the organization (Fig. 7.1).

In summary, the interest is not with attaching a specific set of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to people according to their generational affiliation, but to determine why, when, and how aspects of a certain (dynamic and relational) generational identity and position may be primed based on situational cues provided at the workplace.

Intergenerational programs can be instruments for such priming. Therefore, it is important to explore the potential for intergenerational programs to contribute towards a richer and more productive workplace environment:

“From an intergenerational perspective, a great deal more could be done to tap the reservoirs of experience and knowledge that older people hold to help integrate young workers into the labour force. Mentoring and coaching schemes could fill the gap between the skills young workers have and the skills employers seek. Frameworks to enable such knowledge transfers should be explored and developed” (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living & Working Conditions, 2012, p. 21).

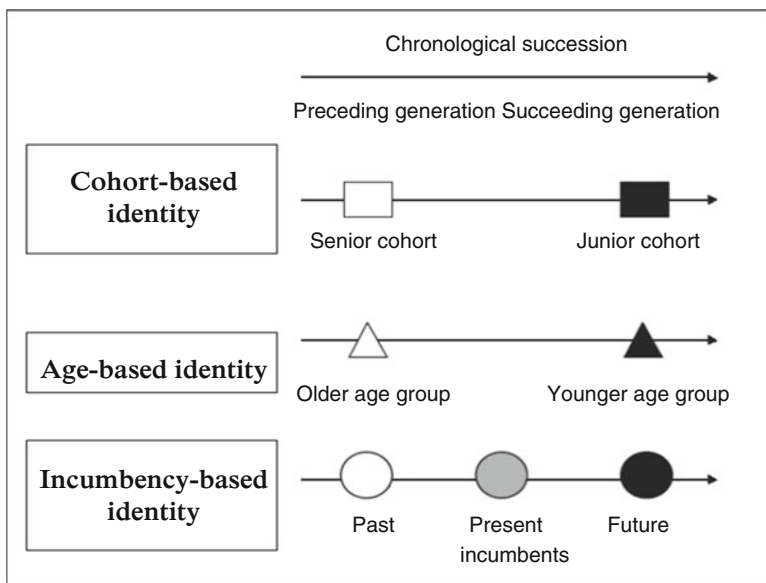


Fig. 7.1 Three facets of generational identity. Source: Joshi et al. (2010). Adapted from the authors’ “Multiple Facets of Generational Identity” figure (p. 395)

7.6 Generations in the Workplace: More Than Tagging

A list of generational tags (i.e. generational labels or identifiers) is finding its way across occupational sectors. Furthermore, the number of generational tags is continuously expanding over time: ‘Traditionalists’, ‘Silent Generation’, ‘Baby Boomers’, ‘Gen X’, ‘Gen Y’, ‘Millennial’, and so on. Those who rely on such generational group distinctions to describe work style tendencies and preferences imply simplistic predictions about future workplace behaviors and relations. This approach may lead to a belief that all we must do is adapt workplaces to be responsive to claims and expectations with regard to these pre-set generational tags or labels.

However, such preconceptions have not been fully validated:

“Current managerial research on this topic is based on popular notions of generations that have not been empirically validated and that reinforce simplistic if not stereotypic views of generations (e.g., Millennials are entitled,’ ‘Baby Boomers are politically liberal’)” (Joshi et al., 2010, p. 408).

Furthermore, essentialist and fixed understandings of generational groups –i.e. assuming that some individuals must have the same features based on a particular categorization of birth years– conceal the socially constructed nature of both age and generations at work (Pritchard & Whiting, 2014). “Managers need to be careful to not enforce generational categories too rigidly, or else they risk unfairly over-categorizing individuals” (North & Fiske, 2015, p. 163).

Consequently, we posit that many popular and media approaches to generations in the workplace remain grossly inadequate. Instead of placing an emphasis on *generational labelling* (i.e., thinking Generation X will behave this way whereas Generation Y will do it differently) to anticipate how two given generations may or may not get along well, we consider that intergenerational interactions in the workplace –as is the case with human relations– are mostly contingent and variable, that is, not fully foreseeable and not strictly dependent on pre-constructed generational profiles:

“Age doesn’t mean the same thing to everyone. Workers of the same chronological age may identify with very different age groups depending on their appearance, their life stage, their career stage, their health, etc. Leaders should take care not to ‘lump’ people together in terms of what they expect of people of the same chronological age” (Truxillo, Zaniboni, Fraccaroli, Rineer, n.d., p. 12).

It is our belief that outcomes from intergenerational relationships at the workplace cannot be fully anticipated. Why? First of all, generational groups are not homogenous units with predictable behavior; particular generations as well as generational differences in the work environment are mixed and contradictory (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010). Generationally aware human resources managers have no option but to learn about generations –as diverse as they can be– in situ as they try to facilitate workforce intergenerational relationships. Second, similarities

between generations in the workplace may be as pronounced as differences, yet receive less attention:

“Large-scale studies using random samples and validated measures have found only slight differences in the job attitudes and values of Millennials and members of older generations. (...) It’s essential for managers to understand and respond to the similarities among the generations currently in the workforce.” (Valcour, 2013).

“We further argue that propagating generation-based differences can actually be harmful to organization and to individuals. This does not mean there is not a place for generation-based differences research in the industrial–organizational literature, but there needs to be more theoretical and methodological advancement in order to demonstrate its value.” (Cadiz, Truxillo, & Fraccaroli, 2015).

Another reason why it is problematic to make predictions about relationships at work has to do with the risk of becoming obsolete once intergenerational interaction takes place, since this process includes learning and, therefore, change.

Echoing recent work by Sánchez and Kaplan (2014), the key interest for consideration of multigenerational workplaces is not just about the ‘meeting’ or ‘union’ of differently-aged workers at the same premises, but how age and generational similarities and differences combined can be framed in ways that contribute to content- and interaction-rich intergenerational relational processes.

7.7 Key Challenges in Facilitating Intergenerational Relationships in the Workplace

Typically, we live in multi-generational communities and workplaces; we routinely come into contact with people belonging to different generations. However, when generations have limited exposure to other generations, there are additional factors to consider before a first meeting is planned. For instance, there may be pre-conceived ideas or assumptions about each other, as well as different expectations and styles in the ways generations communicate with each other, which could influence the encounter. Hence, potential barriers to establishing intergenerational practice at workplaces can exist within organizations and partnerships, as well as among individuals.

Some of the barriers can include workers feeling that intergenerational pathways are not for them, the use of jargon and terminology like ‘intergenerational practice’, time appropriateness (initiatives may be competing with other things which may take priority), language and cultural differences with preconceived negativity (stereotypes and social prejudices).

Joshi et al. (2010) talk about a *continuum of intergenerational interactions* in organizations going from *resistive* interactions to *transmittive* interactions. This typology emerges when preceding and succeeding generations interact with each other. Interactions are associated with specific generational identities (cohort-based,

age-based, incumbency-based), organizational structures (from mechanistic to organic), and context strength (strong or weak).

Resistive intergenerational interactions are characterized by attitudes such as mistrust or bias, and behaviors like exclusiveness or competition. Sometimes this type of interaction comes side by side with in-group favoritism and out-group bias.

Transmittive intergenerational interactions involve successful transfer of knowledge, skills, and/or resources. In this case, attitudes like trust, empathy, and mutual respect are the rule. Reciprocity, cooperation, altruism, and beneficence with respect to sharing knowledge, skills, and resources unique to each generation are typical behaviors.

Generationally aware managers try to accentuate *transmittive* interactions and minimize *resistive* ones. How does this happen? One way is through incentivizing appropriate collaborative efforts between generations. Social identity theory has taught us another way: involving workers in much broader and complex cross-generational tasks (e.g., greater contact between individuals representing different generational groups, and shared membership in a challenging project team) may erode categorization-based processes leading to resistance to intergenerational interaction (Iweins, Desmette, Yzerbyt, & Stinglhamber, 2013; Wegge, Roth, Neuback, Schmidt, & Kanfer, 2008). Other practical tips to foster *transmittive* intergenerational interactions are the following:

- Providing opportunities for generations to meet and get to know one another.
- Re-balancing and compensating specific weakness of each generational group.
- Trying to meet expectations from each generational group:

“Managers and employees should be aware of both the expectations and experiences of their workers, old or young, in order for positive relationships to flourish and organizational values and knowledge to be shared across generations in the workplace” (Urick, Hollensbe, Masterson, & Lyons, 2016, p. 16).
- Improving understanding between age groups, cohort-based groups, and incumbency-based groups.
- Fostering intergenerational cooperation through teamwork at work.
- Providing opportunities for generativity –in the case of adult and older workers– and opportunities for development among younger workers. Meeting such generation-specific needs helps to set the stage for improvements in the quality of contact between older and younger workers (Henry, Zacher, & Desmette, 2015).

Let us go over a few international examples illustrating what we have just presented. For instance, in the U.S., the Older Mentors for Newer Workers intervention –focused on life satisfaction of older workers– sampled 22 culturally diverse workers, ages 55–75, who were employed full-time at a nonprofit community service organization. These workers were then matched on a one-to-one basis with newer agency workers and asked to mentor –listen and provide support– the latter during a 6-month period (Stevens-Roseman, 2009). This opportunity for generations to meet and relate brought about increased life satisfaction for older workers and support for newer agency workers.

Of course, for different generations to meet at the workplace, we would need to widen the generation diversity of workforces. This was a major goal of the UK coach operator National Express:

“The National Express scheme aims to recruit people for whom age and extended career breaks can pose a barrier to finding employment, including the over-50s, women returning to work after raising children, the long-term unemployed and full-time carers.

“We place a high value on a diverse workforce because it reflects our broad customer base and we believe our business is strengthened by a wide range of skills and experience,” says Tom Stables, managing director for the company’s UK coach division.” (Groom, 2016, June 7).

Originally a French company, international outsourcer Sodexo –with some 420,000 employees in 80 countries– is supporting its four generations of workers to work together and share experiences and creativity. Here are some examples of their efforts in this regard.

In Belgium, we established a task force that includes front-line staff, trade union representatives, and human resources to develop a long-term approach to encouraging generations in the workplace.

In Argentina, we developed *Youth Together*, a training program to promote employment among disadvantaged young people. Through the program, the employee who acts as the primary contact for new team members receives diversity training, while other employees can attend diversity awareness sessions.

In France, Sodexo works with FACE to support older workers. In this program, five Sodexo employees mentor individuals who are 50-years-old or above and have been unemployed for more than a year. Sodexo employees help these workers cope with challenges in the job market, provide support to better define their professional aspirations, redesign their resume and launch the next chapter of their career.

In France, Sodexo signed an agreement with the French government in 2009 that includes commitments to recruit 300 young people, 90 apprentices, and 30 trainees from disadvantaged neighborhoods over the next three years.” (Sodexo, n.d.).

Moreover, in the UK and Ireland, Sodexo also launched in 2014 the GenERations employee network “Champions Generational Diversity” via the ‘Gen Match’ board game –an instrument encouraging the participants to think about and identify generational differences and similarities. The Gen Match board game, which is distributed to Sodexo client site managers, helps employees become aware and appreciate the diversity of the workforce that makes up their organizations.

7.8 Undermining Negative Stereotypes and Social Prejudices

It has been argued that over the last few decades society has become increasingly segregated by age. Children attend age-segregated schools, adults work in environments without children and senior citizens, and many elderly people live in age-segregated housing.

As a result of this isolation, some older adults are not able to initiate or maintain relationships with young people and many younger people do not understand the

aging process. The myths and stereotypes that result from separating the generations, in combination with competition for shrinking resources, fosters tension between the generations. North and Fiske (2015) have identified three types of intergenerational tensions in workplaces and workforces: (i) active tensions over enviable resources and influence, (ii) passive tension over shared resources, and (iii) symbolic tensions over figurative resources, at individual, interpersonal, institutional, and international level. Even if intergenerational tensions can sometimes also lead to positive responses such as collaborating or increasing visibility (Urlick et al., 2016, pp. 15–16), organization-specific interventions have been suggested to manage such tensions (North & Fiske, 2015):

- Changing employer mindsets about older workers through recognizing realities about older workers, diversity training for employers, emphasizing superordinate (i.e., above the generational group) organization-focused goals and identities;
- Changing older employee mindsets about themselves by overcoming stereotype threat in the workplace, and fostering positive aging self-perceptions;
- Cultivating productive intergenerational dynamics by de-emphasizing generational competition and priming a sense of legacy that does not leave behind a burden for future generations.

What the interventions noted above have in common is that they serve to dispel generational myths, either through direct intergenerational contact or training experiences that stimulate self-reflection regarding stereotypical thinking and related actions. The risk is that with inappropriate facilitation an essential environment of trust will not be created and the negative views may be reinforced rather than dispelled.

7.9 The Process of Planning an Intergenerational Program in the Workplace

There is no “perfect formula” to produce a successful intergenerational program. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each professional to be a part of the reflective planning process. That said, we present below some steps to start up an intergenerational program at the workplace. To propose these steps, we have been inspired mainly by the MATES (*Mainstreaming Intergenerational Solidarity*)² and the SILVER (*Successful Intergenerational Learning through Validation, Education and Research*)³ European projects. We frame this process as a series of questions and directions that a facilitator might use to engage participants in a training initiative.

²<https://projectotio.wordpress.com/mates/>

³<http://www.intergenerationallearning.eu/project-silver/>

7.9.1 Do You Need to Start an Intergenerational Program at your Workplace?

Identify some reasons to start an intergenerational program so that intergenerational practice is not an end in itself but a vehicle to reach specific objectives. For instance, as learned from the SILVER project, it is helpful to choose an overarching purpose that directly relates to one or more of the following: (1) knowledge retention, (2) competence development, and (3) improved innovation. Whether it is one of these purposes or another type of objective, you will have to reach a clear understanding of why the intergenerational program is needed.

Consider yourself a catalyst, but don't proceed alone. Because intergenerational programs are about bridging generations, organizational changes may be implicit. Therefore, spend time educating your organization's workforce and raise generational awareness. Please, don't forget that while individual passion is valuable, support granted to the initiative by the organization's leadership is also key.

In the SILVER toolkit, the following four steps to developing an intergenerational awareness program are suggested:

- Defining goals
- Identifying stakeholders and their level of awareness
- Selecting the appropriate tool and its implementation
- Evaluating the awareness program/deciding next steps

Likewise, the SILVER toolkit includes the following list of success factors and barriers to such awareness programs, both at macro and micro levels:

- Macro level:
 - Success factors: urgent need for measures; pre-existing interest and knowledge of intergenerational learning; personalized contact and networking; age spectrum scan of employees; informal learning already established; highly motivated CEO and management; pre-existing company policy on diversity.
 - Barriers: problem not acknowledge (or not-existent); problems with business environment; fear of layoffs; no long-term vision; hierarchically bound, no personal decision-making; resource shortages; strong individualistic organizational culture.
- Micro level:
 - Success factors: workshops tailored to situation; expertise of trainer; willingness of employees.
 - Barriers: no time allotted for workshop participation; employees don't experience problem; no long-term vision.

Mapping out generational encounters in the workplace may involve the implementation of actions such as those suggested by Biggs and Lowenstein (2011, p. 16–17):

- Identifying which generational groups and positions are tacitly or explicitly involved
- Discovering or creating facilitative spaces for intergenerational communication and decision-making
- Clarifying generational priorities
- Analyzing functions and problems with intergenerational insight
- Enhancing intergenerational understanding

Finally, learning to cope with *transmittive* (i.e., cooperative), *resistive* (i.e., conflictive), and *ambivalent* (i.e., oscillation between cooperation and conflict) intergenerational interactions can be seen as one of the distinctive features of intergenerational practitioners in the workplace.

7.9.2 Where Are You Starting from? The Baseline Situation

Assessing your organization in terms of its current features as an intergenerational system might be a good idea. How to do it? In 2009, the MetLife Mature Market Institute and Generations United produced two questionnaires (one for policy assessment and one for operations assessment) which may help you. This document also provides information on how to interpret results from these questionnaires.

Another interesting tool is the Workplace Intergenerational Atmosphere Scale (King, 2010). This instrument includes five subscales: (1) workplace intergenerational retention; (2) positive affect; (3) workplace generational inclusiveness; (4) lack of stereotypes; and (5) intergenerational contact. Again, this scale might be helpful in gaining awareness about the intergenerational status quo in your work organization.

Alternatively, the SILVER project recommends running a broad organizational scan on barriers for intergenerational learning within the teams of the organization. This scan includes a questionnaire to measure intergenerational cooperation as well as other characteristics of the working teams.

On a similar vein, Generations United and the MetLife Mature Market Institute (2009) recommend using the following four questions to help workers operationalize what it means to use an intergenerational lens in their particular work settings:

- How will the proposed policy/decision affect each generation?
- How will the proposed policy/decision be perceived by each generation?
- Does the policy/decision ignore or exacerbate existing generational differences or tensions?
- Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed in the policy/decision in order for it to be more age-inclusive?

7.9.3 *What Type of Intergenerational Program Should You Choose?*

There are many ways to organize and structure an intergenerational program, but whatever the type of program, its core component will remain the same: taking advantage of value stemming from the combination of similarities and differences of generational identities in the workplace. Furthermore, W.S. Smith (2008) contends that there are 3 R's & 3 C's that none should forget: no matter their generational position, people want to be Respected, Recognized, Remembered, Coached, Consulted and Connected.

The SILVER project refers to four types of intergenerational programs in the context of the workplace:

- Intergenerational and reverse mentoring, i.e. whenever an older worker mentors a younger one, and the contrary: when the younger worker is the mentor.
- Intergenerational teams are explicitly created in order to gather a diversity of knowledge, skills, and experience.
- Intergenerational knowledge capturing: a tested method used for codifying expert knowledge in such a way that it can be easily transferred and understood by others.
- Intergenerational training and workshops to stimulate learning among and between the generations.

The following SILVER project table summarizes key features in terms of use and investment needed for each one of these types of intergenerational program (each one emphasizes a different type of intergenerational learning):

We highly recommend visiting the SILVER project website for a detailed account of each of these types of intergenerational program. For each one, the SILVER project toolkit posits several strategies and resources (Fig. 7.2).

The IGLOO project⁴ describes the following six forms of learning in organizations around which intergenerational programs might be articulated:

- Apprenticeships: matching someone who is proficient in a skill, usually an adult, with someone who is interested in learning that skill, usually an adolescent.
- Dialogic mentoring: helps novice professionals take their relational position in a work community by encouraging exploration, experimentation and risk taking.
- Constructive communication: positive framing, inspiring questions, and active listening can help create intergenerational relationships that avoid stereotypes, judgments, and fear.
- Improving intergenerational interaction through building a strong, age diverse intergenerational workforce.

⁴IGLOO stands for Intergenerational Learning in Organizations, a multilateral European project implemented from 2007 to 2009 and involving partner organizations from Austria, Germany, Italy, Latvia, and Spain. This project set out to develop a model to support and facilitate intergenerational learning and exchange in companies and organizations.

Type of IGL	Problem it helps solve	Investment needed
Intergenerational and reverse mentoring	Prevent knowledge and competence loss; stimulate knowledge creation and innovation	Moderate to high
Intergenerational teams		
Intergenerational knowledge capturing	Prevent knowledge loss	Low
Training and workshops	Prevent knowledge and competence loss; stimulate knowledge creation and innovation	Low

Fig. 7.2 Framework for developing intergenerational learning programs at workplaces. Adopted with permission from the Grundtvig SILVER (Successful Intergenerational Learning through Validation, Education and Research) project

- Challenging the model of learning hierarchies: through changing the focus from age to skills, more egalitarian and mutually enriching intergenerational learning processes are possible.
- Dialogue and learning through shared sensory-emotional experiences, instead of just talking about prior experiences, should be fostered.

7.9.4 How Can I Involve Participants Belonging to Different Generations?

The MATES guide is straightforward: Start small! It is a good way to begin. In some activities, and depending on workers' expectations, a previous meeting with separate preparation of the different generations might be necessary before gathering them together. However, the way in which the program is designed should involve participants from the earliest stages of planning, deciding about tasks, activities, themes and all sorts of details.

7.9.5 How Do I Know If I'm in the Right Path?

Evaluation is the key to establishing a continual program improvement process. The MATES guide provides the following advice to bring evaluation to the forefront of the planning process: Before you start, plan your intergenerational program in line with the following dimensions of quality: empowerment, mainstreaming,

adaptability, utility, sustainability and cost/benefit ratio. A few questions addressed to participants, at the end of each activity, are enough to evaluate their satisfaction and improve your program in the future: What went well? What did not go so well? How could the program be improved? At an institutional level, a more in-depth assessment is recommended, one that is done cyclically and focused in each phase of the intergenerational program (Almeida et al., 2009).

7.9.6 Overall, Act with “generational awareness”

Preformatted generational toolkits with how-to-do-it steps are not the only kind of resource that one needs to orient workers and managers in the workplace. Intergenerational practitioners in the workplace must be helped not only to grasp features of anticipated generational profiles (i.e., Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, or Generation Y) that may coexist, but also to gain a generational self-awareness, a capacity for intergenerational empathy, and an ability to act in a generationally aware manner. With this in mind, the following four steps (from Biggs & Lowenstein, 2011, pp. 14–15) can be used to enhance the ability of people (workforce members in our case) to act knowingly within a multi-generational context:

- Exploring one’s own generational identity and awareness: “to locate oneself within generational space and to identify different contributory factors that are expressed through generational identity.”
- Understanding the relationship between generational positions: “to identify the key generational actors in any one situation and develop a generationally sensitized perspective, thus making intergenerational relationships explicit.”
- Taking a value stance towards generational positions: “the task would be to critically assess the relations that tacitly and explicitly underpin intergenerational behavior.”
- Not just thinking but also acting in a manner that is generationally aware.

7.9.7 Nurture Multi-age Perspectives

Research indicates that fostering an organizational multi-age perspective is linked both to positive perceptions toward older workers and to a reduction of intentions to quit (Iweins et al., 2013). For instance, perceptions of high competence and high sociability among older workers were linked to more admiration and facilitation behaviors (e.g., help, cooperation) in a favorable intergenerational context (high quality of intergenerational contact and organizational multi-age perspective). Therefore, we should try to promote dual identities among workforce generational groups and members.

The dual identity model posits that simultaneously maintaining the ingroup–outgroup distinction and building a superordinate identity in a cooperative encounter is

conducive to more harmonious group relations. If we interpret this recommendation in terms of generational groups in the workplace, we have a potential strategy to promote intergenerational cooperation and learning.

7.10 More Recommendations for Practice

In 2008, the SPReW project (Generational Approach to the Social Patterns of Relation to Work), which involved partners from Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Portugal, published a guide for practice including pathways and recommendations for better management of age and intergenerational relations in the area of work and related fields:

- age-diversity management: approaching different age related attitudes and competencies as resources; facilitating mutual understanding among different age groups.
- knowledge management: assessment, valorization and exchange of skills and experience regarding old and young workers, and knowledge transmission in both directions.
- recognition of the experience of old workers, also involving them in mentoring projects.
- designing new training systems and career paths according to heterogeneous needs in different life cycle phases.
- enhancing job satisfaction, especially addressing young people’s expectation of autonomy, mid generation’s needs for flexible working, older generation’s needs to avoid too heavy and demanding jobs.

Generations United and the MetLife Mature Market Institute (2009) offer some additional guidance for practice:

- Always take generational perspectives into account when developing employee benefits, policies, and procedures.
- Appreciate and honor the perspectives of all employees.
- Develop a system to effectively transfer skills and knowledge.
- Turn Multi-Generational teams into Intergenerational collaboration to move forward.
- Develop ways to maximize all employees’ capabilities and strengths.

7.11 Conclusion

“It is time for Human Resources and talent management professionals to stop looking at what divides us among the generations and start with what keeps us together—our desire for our organizations to succeed, our need for good leaders, finding success in our careers, and recognizing that we all face aging and uncertainty in our future” (White, 2011, p. 6).

This quotation from the *Rethinking Generation Gaps in the Workplace: Focus on Shared Values* report captures some of the key ideas presented along this chapter: combined emphasis on generational similarities and divides, the need for intergenerational interaction and collaboration, the omnipresence of aging in today's organizational and workplace environments, and the uncertain and contingent work careers ahead of us.

Against this backdrop of increasing multigenerational work environments, this chapter makes the case for more and better intergenerational strategies. Along with Iweins et al. (2013, p. 14) we believe that "high-quality intergenerational contact and the fostering of an organizational multi-age perspective are favorable both for the employees (more intergroup harmony within the organization) and the organization (more positive attitudes at work)."

However, enhancing work environments' sustainability requires more than just intergenerational interactions and activities. Above all, we need to foster generational awareness so that the existence and potential of a diversity of generations at the workplace may be garnered as sets of dynamic constellations articulated around time-bound cohort-based, age-based, and incumbency-based identities and positions. This type of awareness –we posit– may equip us with the right intergenerational lens to meet the challenge of building sustainable social relationships in the workplace. Implementation of intergenerational programs focused on enhancing the relational nature of multigenerational workplaces, instead of accentuating the potential threats associated with intergenerational conflicts and tensions, can be an efficient pathway towards more sustainable societies.

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Chapter 8

Intergenerational Strategies for Preserving and Appreciating the Natural Environment

Abstract This chapter explores several pathways through which intergenerational programs and practices can help to sustain and preserve the natural environment. At the root of these initiatives is a three-part rationale. From an environmental protection perspective, inclusion of an intergenerational component helps to broaden the pool of people who care and are knowledgeable about the natural environment, and who have the skills to take effective action to sustain it. Second, the intergenerational component can be structured in ways that infuse more information, discussion, reflection, and sense of relevance into the environmental learning experience. In addition, the more participants share their views, experiences, and knowledge with regard to the natural environment, the more they gain insights into one another's lives and recognize common interests in preserving and caring for the environment. When young and old stand together as environmental stewards and activists, all generations benefit, including those yet to be born. Hence, the environment can be seen as the perennial intergenerational issue.

8.1 Introduction

In 1994, George Walters, a 90+ year old senior volunteer in an intergenerational school-based program in Hawaii, shared the following example of a community working together to protect the environment (and his home town) from devastation.

“I distinctly remember that when I was a young lad, there was an intergenerational venture in my home town. You see, it was raining for many days and the waters at the bank of a local lake were rising. Everyone was afraid that the dam walls would not be strong enough to stop the swelling waters from flooding the town. So, everyone worked together for days to fill up bags with sand and put them at places along the dam that were about to give way. It worked, we prevented a water flooding disaster. We did it, everyone together!!”

Of course, we could debate whether the actions of Mr. Walter's home town should be considered a formal “program” (which might be a losing argument since his scenario includes many of the elements of such programs, such as a planned intervention, with multiple generations in a common enterprise), or whether we should now consider the “first” intergenerational program to have taken place in the

1910–1920 period. However, both responses would be missing the point and the power of his story.

Beyond “reminding” us not to get hung up with labels, e.g., what deserves the label of being “intergenerational” and what deserves to be called the “first” of anything, Mr. Walters was making a deeper and more incisive point about societal sustainability. How we understand, treat, respect, and work together to protect our natural environment has a profound impact on our quality of life, even to the extent of influencing whether there is life at all.

Other intergenerational environmental action initiatives discussed in this chapter may not sound as dramatic as the one from Mr. Walters’ childhood, however, they too have survival connotations. This includes intergenerational programs in which participants learn to grow their own food, test for pollutants in water and soil, and adopt healthier lifestyles by being active in natural settings.

Mr. Walters’ story also emphasizes the primacy of intergenerational relationships. In other words, it is not the fact that different generations are involved, but rather the meaningful relationships between them that is at the root of significance of intergenerational practice. In Mr. Walter’s experience, efforts to keep his childhood community afloat (literally as well as figuratively) reflected, and further strengthened, the deep relationships among neighbors.

In this chapter, we use the phrase “intergenerational environmental education” to refer to environmental projects that are both action-oriented as well as education-oriented, and that focus on a wide range of environmental issues, including: environmental health, monitoring, appreciation, and restoration; pollution prevention; and energy conservation. Reference to the “natural environment,” as noted by Wright, Caserta, and Lund (2003), “includes not only wilderness areas, but also the biotic (e.g., flora and fauna) and abiotic (e.g., topography, geology, geography, climate) landscape ecology or bioregion in which humans are considered a part of the ecological community” (p. 154).

We present a wide range of program examples and highlight features of effective programs. This chapter ends with a discussion of some areas of intersection between sustainability concepts derived from how people embrace the natural world and how they embrace one another across generations.

8.2 Intergenerational Environmental Education Programs and Activities

The environment is more than trees, land, and rivers. Elements of the natural environment are also incorporated into the built environment, such as in community gardens, greenspaces, farmer’s markets, and wilderness areas in urban and suburban parks. Our contacts with nature include what we breathe, the foods we consume, how we grow our food, and any toxins to which we are exposed throughout our lives.

There are some notable examples in which connections are drawn between the goals of developing and promoting healthy environments and supporting measures aimed at strengthening intergenerational relationships. A case in point is the “Healthy Environments Across Generations” meeting that took place at the New York Academy of Medicine in 2012. The meeting was attended by 150 professionals working in health care, urban planning, scientific research, environmental health, business, the arts, food and nutrition, aging, intergenerational studies, environmental justice, and the natural world. The convergence of such a diverse group of individuals “reflected common interests in searching for new ways of approaching our health challenges” (Valenti & Miller, 2012, p. 17).

In taking an ecological or systems approach to health in this meeting, one stream of attention was the role of intergenerational institutions and activities for fostering healthier physical and psychosocial environments. One initiative that drew a lot of attention was The Intergenerational School in Cleveland, Ohio (U.S.), which we highlighted in Chap. 5 as an exemplary intergenerational model in the field of education. Valenti and Miller (2012) emphasized its relevance in the area of (environmental) health:

[The Intergenerational School in Cleveland, Ohio (U.S.)] “is a model of how to successfully integrate multiple level and types of healthy environments to form a ‘sense of community, sense of purpose, sense of legacy.’ Intergenerational relationships are nourished, organic food is planted and harvested, toxic chemicals are banished, learning is exciting and play is encouraged.” The result? An award winning school for kids, a restorative environment for elders, and a model of multiple environments interacting to foster health and resilience” (p. 15).

8.2.1 Program Themes and Characteristics

In this section, we note some promising strategies for bringing generations together as partners to discuss, explore, study, and work to improve the natural environment. These programs and practices are implemented in diverse settings, including schools, parks, gardens, farms, and community and environmental centers.

Here are some themes that cut across many intergenerational environmental education programs (some of these themes are described further in Kaplan & Liu, 2004):

- Learning is “information rich,” “experience rich” and “reflection rich:” The age diversity of the groups of participants contributes to the depth and diversity of the information and issues presented for discussion and debate. When participants share their personal histories of experience with natural sites they are also building a sense of collective history and a shared commitment to these sites.
- Makes the environment seem more relevant: Participants’ learning about the natural environment is anchored in *real people’s lives*. For example, a child might see and get to know somebody who suffers from an ailment caused by cumulative exposure to the same environmental toxins to which the child is

exposed. In such a case, the concepts of environmental health, environmental justice, and environmental action might seem less abstract.

- Exposure to values related to preserving and caring for the natural environment: This includes values related to “environmental stewardship” and community service.
- Learning how environments change over time: The physical environment changes over time; so does the way people interact with the environment. Such changes are difficult to see during a short term program, unless there are participants who have lived through landscape changes and they are called upon to bear witness to such changes. Older adult participants might talk about the landscapes of their childhood, including their emotional connections to these past and present landscapes.
- Use of multi-media methods: Participants are encouraged to engage and explore the natural environment through diverse activities, including: nature hikes, water testing, recycling, eco-friendly gardening, scavenger hunts, photography, videography, puppetry, storytelling, poetry, theatrical skits, and town hall meetings.
- New pathways for community members of all ages to become actively engaged and invested in efforts to improve the local environment: Intergenerational environmental education programs expose more people to the outdoors and to nature, and this is beneficial to the well-being of all generations. It is also a conduit to gaining knowledge about actions that can be taken to preserve the natural environment.

Intergenerational environmental education programs also vary in many ways, including: the roles taken by older adult participants (possible roles include: educator, co-learner, role model, mentor, and program coordinator); the environmental/community issues that are addressed; the types of organizations that partner on these initiatives; and how program-related decisions are made. Decision-making processes could be youth-centered, senior-centered, or all participant-centered. There is also a wide range of social and environmental policy drivers that influence the formation of intergenerational environmental education programs. These initiatives can be framed in the context of policies and practices tied to senior volunteerism, community organizing and advocacy, environmental preservation, school-community partnerships, participatory community design, and even tourism.

8.2.2 Examples of Programs and Activities

The *Intergenerational Outdoor School* [Pennsylvania, U.S.]: The Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center in Central Pennsylvania has a 50+ year history of conducting residential, outdoor-based education programs for students in nearby school districts. In 2003, as part of her dissertation research, Shih-Tsen (Nike) Liu designed, implemented, and evaluated a modified, intergenerational outdoor school program at the Center. A group of older adult volunteers joined the Center staff, youth counselors (mostly local college students), and primary and secondary school

students – as co-learners and co-facilitators. Activities included nature walks, observations of local animals and natural resources, a visit to a local cultural heritage site, and a mock community planning meeting. Following each activity, the students and older adult volunteers were asked *discussion stimulator questions* designed to reinforce their learning and stimulate intergenerational sharing of views, experience, and knowledge related to the natural environment.¹

Results from Liu’s research indicate that the youth who participated in the program were more appreciative of natural resources, expressed more determination to care for the environment, and gained more information (e.g., on plants, animals, and historical events) than those who participated in the Center’s traditional outdoor school format (i.e., without the involvement of older adult volunteers). The volunteers also benefited in terms of developing more positive views about children and youth, having an increased sense of self-worth associated with being able to share life skills and professional talents, and being more effective as community leaders (Liu, 2004; Liu & Kaplan, 2006).

The *Habitat Intergenerational Program* [Massachusetts, U.S.]: The HIP program, based at Habitat, an Audubon Sanctuary in Belmont, Massachusetts (U.S.), has been promoting awareness and conservation of the natural environment since 1997. Intergenerational education and service projects, which take place within the 84 acre Sanctuary as well as in local schools, senior centers, and in surrounding communities, include: removing invasive species, rejuvenating a pond and the area around it, restoring walking trails, building blue bird boxes, developing an herb garden, certifying a vernal pool, and creating a courtyard garden utilizing only native plants. Other intergenerational activities include: nature story tours, fall trail days (to plant native wildflowers, chip trails, and spruce up on-site gardens), bird walks, herbal study groups, and “pulling partners” to control the spread of invasive plants (Kaplan & Liu, 2004).²

Garden Mosaics [New York State, U.S.]: Garden Mosaics is a science education and community action program developed by Cornell University (Ithaca, NY) for youth of ages 10–18 to learn about plants and planting practices from older adult gardeners and from university-based horticultural science researchers and educators. Through interviewing elder gardeners, youth learn about the mosaic of plants, planting practices, and cultures in community gardens. Youth participants balance what they learn from elders with learning from web-based “Science Pages” developed at Cornell, which explain key science principles behind the practices they observe in the gardens. Intergenerational teams also conduct action projects geared toward benefiting gardens and the communities that surround them, such as building raised beds, designing new gardens, and organizing educational events (Fig. 8.1).

¹ See the *Generations United for Environmental Education and Action* guidebook (Kaplan & Liu, 2004, pp. 50–51) for examples of *discussion stimulator* questions. The guidebook is available online at: <http://extension.psu.edu/youth/intergenerational/program-areas/environmental-education/generations-united/generations-united-for-environmental-awareness-and-action>

² For more information about the Habitat Intergenerational Program (HIP), see: <http://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/habitat/get-involved/hip-program>

Intergenerational Landed Learning [British Columbia, Canada]: This model demonstrates how urban farms can function as productive spaces for environmental education. The approach involves bringing together a group of students and community elders who are retired farmers to explore values of environmental concern and care for the land, and engage in an intergenerational learning process. The pilot program involved a class of seventh-grade students in an urban school in Vancouver, BC, Canada visiting a nearby farm at the edge of the University of British Columbia campus to meet and work with a group of retired farmers over a six month period. Students interviewed their “farm friends” about their lives as farmers and about the history and challenges of farming. Together, they worked on various agricultural activities such as planning, cultivating, planting, and maintaining plants in raised beds at the farm. The program had a positive impact on students’ environmental knowledge, environmental concern, and decision-making, critical thinking and reasoning skills (Peterat & Mayer-Smith, 2006).

Recycling electronics [Prescott, Arizona]: E-Cycling: A group of young people from the Youth Count program in Prescott, Arizona recognized the need for a recycling center for electronics in their community, so they started an *e-cycling* business. With the help of retired business leaders they built an environmentally and financially sustainable and successful business. Over a period of 4 years, over 70,000 lb of computers, monitors, and other electronic waste have been recycled instead of entering landfills (Steinig & Butts, 2009–10).



Fig. 8.1 The Garden Mosaics program in action. Students from Abraham House in the Bronx, New York City interviewing an elderly gardener about plants and growing practices in a community garden. Photo credit: Alex Russ

Intergenerational appreciation of chrysanthemums, fireflies, and miniature biosphere environments in Japan [Kobe City and Tokyo, Japan]:

Japan is home to a wide range of intergenerational programs focused on the natural environment. Japan's much-loved chrysanthemum flowers³ are often used as a focal point for such intergenerational endeavors. For example, when the Nishiochiai Junior High School Gardening Class (Suma Ward, Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture) is visited by Kaminotani Senior Adults Club horticulturists, they work together to grow chrysanthemums which are later planted in the school yard (Kobe-shi Rojin Clubu Rengo-kai, 1991). Also, for the Setagaya Annual Chrysanthemum Show (Setagaya Ward, Tokyo), chrysanthemum blooms raised by Setagaya residents of all ages (including elementary school children and senior citizens) are displayed.

As a result of concerns about preserving certain aspects of the natural environment, community organizations such as "Hotaru no Sato" ("a habitat for fireflies") have emerged. This organization, which is based in the city of Mitaka (in the western part of the Tokyo metropolis),⁴ seeks to involve children and community adults in breeding, creating a habitat for, and celebrating fireflies. The focus on fireflies symbolizes the need to take action to protect the area's cultural traditions and natural environment. Moreover, the efforts of this organization promote a sense of cultural continuity. They are helping to revive firefly folklore, which has been a part of Japanese traditional culture since the Heian period (Japan Studies Program, 1993).

A very different type of intergenerational environmental education initiative in Japan involves building miniature biosphere environments and submitting them in national competitions. In Itabashi (another part of Tokyo), a group of adult volunteers joined a team of local students to create an exhibit for the 2001 *School Biotope Contest* run by the Ecosystem Conservation Society of Japan. After they won 2nd place, community-wide interest and participation in various "recovery of nature" activities at the school and in the broader community grew. This activity had a positive impact on public awareness and appreciation of the natural environment (Tanaka, 2007).

Intergenerational Biodiversity Contests [India]: Chand and Shukla (2003) describe an intergenerational biodiversity contest held in various regions of India which is designed to enhance local learning about plants, and promote values of conservation and respect for traditional ecological knowledge. The contest also serves to accelerate the knowledge transfer from older to younger generations and integrate aspects of indigenous knowledge about indigenous plants into the formal school curriculum. The biodiversity contests program was developed by SRISTI (Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutes), a nongovernmental organization based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

³The chrysanthemum is significant in Japanese society in various ways. This flower is in the crest (stamp) of the royal family and also has some symbolism in regard to the seasons.

⁴Mitaka was once a farming community but is now considered by many to have become a "bedroom town." [A "bedroom town" is the name given to an area which is widely known for providing for the residential needs of city workers.]

On the surface, the contests seem focused solely on finding and recognizing those children who are the most knowledgeable in terms of the identification and uses of the plants found in their environment. Children are asked to bring samples of plants they know about on an appointed day. They are quizzed about the uses of the plants, and other nature-related aspects. However, upon closer examination of how these contests function as well as their intended and unintended consequences (as noted by Chand & Shukla, 2003), they also serve to reinforce cultural traditions of active grandparental roles in transmitting plant diversity knowledge to their grandchildren. Grandparents who are knowledgeable about natural resources from local forests typically choose a grandchild (usually a boy) whom they mentor through ongoing conversations, intensive (two-way) question and answer sessions, field visits and herb collection trips to natural sites that have the rich land ecology where indigenous plants thrive.

The contests also have an indirect impact on some schools, with teachers learning to see the curricular relevance of the traditional (indigenous) knowledge that children acquire through their interactions with family and community members.⁵ Some teachers find encouragement for taking additional environmental education actions, such as organizing forest walks, establishing medicinal plant gardens, and starting ecology clubs.

The Rachel Carson “Sense of Wonder” Intergenerational Photography, Essay, and Poetry contest [based in Silver Spring, Maryland, but global in scope]: This contest is inspired by Rachel Carson’s writings, particularly her book, *The Sense of Wonder*, in which she shared her own appreciation for nature and her belief that all people can draw inspiration from the beauty of nature through sharing their love of nature with those around them. The contest which originated with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is now sponsored by the Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance (RCLA).⁶

Each contest entry is required to be from an intergenerational team, representing the combined effort of at least two contestants from two different generations (the contestants can be related or not related). Contestants express their appreciation for nature through one of six categories: essay, poem, photo, art work, song/dance, or mixed media. One award winning team (in the “mixed media” division – for the 2015 Contest) consisted of an older adult resident at an assisted living facility in New Jersey and six preschool children who participate in intergenerational activities at the facility. Their submission consisted of a photograph, entitled “Smelling the Coneflowers” and poem, “The Honey Bee” (both are presented below Fig. 8.2).

⁵This is important since children’s knowledge about local plant diversity is largely unrecognized insofar as there is little overt connection to the competencies measured through the formal schooling system.

⁶For more information on the Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance, the Rachel Carson House site, and the Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder contest, see: <http://rachelcarsonlandmarkalliance.org/>



The Honey Bee

Honey bees fly in trees,
And they land on the leaves.

There are many different types~
But most have yellow and black stripes.

Bees make very good honey,
That's yummy in our tummy.

There's a Queen Bee, but not a King,
Be careful ~ because she can sting!

They make a buzzing sound,
And can be found all around.

Fig. 8.2 Smelling the Coneflowers. Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Intergenerational Contest (mixed media division) winner. 2015. Team members: Barbara, Anika, Atara, Porter, Noa, Ann and Laura. Photo Credit: Barbara Ashendorf

More information about this submission is posted on the Rachel Carson Alliance website:

This combination of a poem, “The Honey Bee,” and a photograph, “Smelling the Coneflowers” make up the prize winning 3-generation entry in the mixed media category. Both originated from Parker at Stonegate (an assisted living facility for seniors) during and after a story time session for a class of preschoolers who regularly visit the residence as part of a joint program. The mixed media project began with the “grandmas,” reading the children stories about insects-to overcome negative attitudes about insects. The children selected the honey bee as a favorite insect, and a poem and nature walk followed. The pho-

tograph captures a moment of shared delight experienced by a grandmotherly senior and a tiny child as their nature walk brought them to a cluster of coneflowers. The children learned that insects can be valuable and that bees can make honey. The poem and photo were a team effort by the pre-schoolers, the “grandmas” and a younger adult.

8.3 At the Intersection Between Ecological Sustainability and Intergenerational Sustainability

Sustainability can be framed as an intergenerational concept. According to Meadows, Meadows, and Randers (1993), as quoted in Ingman, Benjamin, and Lusky (1998/1999, 69), a “sustainable society is one that can persist over generations; one that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social system of support.” When considering how natural resources are used/misused over time, and in developing strategies to preserve and enhance the environment, it is important to engage in long-term thinking and longer term strategic policy making (Environment Canada 2010). Intergenerational dialogue can be readily structured to nurture such a long-term perspective of the environment (see Wright & Lund, 2000, for further discussion.)

Intergenerational themes have loomed large in discussion and debate centered on environmental protection and sustainable development. In the Brundtland Commission report, “Our Common Future” (WCED, 1987), “sustainable development” is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p. 41). In this context, the report highlights the importance of the principle of “intergenerational equity,” which is framed as a call to “conserve and use the environment and natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations” (p. 286).

We posit that this emphasis on the coexistence and mutual respect among generations is more in the realm of multi-generational than intergenerational intervention. The intergenerational dimension comes in when there is some sort of connection in learning (joint learning or co-construction of knowledge) and consequent action. This might take the form of younger and older people standing together as environmental stewards and activists. Intergenerational environmental education practices create new avenues for citizen participation and sustained, collective effort aimed at protecting the natural environment.

The ultimate goal, which is to sustain natural environments over time, is approached from a lifespan perspective. Rather than focus solely on the environmental hazards that pose health risks for certain age groups in the population, e.g., how air pollution can trigger children’s asthma, a lifespan perspective draws attention to environmental health risks across the age continuum, and identifies similarities and differences between generations. This includes learning that human exposure to some toxic chemicals can have lifelong and even intergenerational effects on human reproduction and development (as noted by Schettler, Solomon, Valenti, and Huddle, 1999).

The aging society demographic trend that has fueled increased interest in intergenerational programs (as noted in Chaps. 1 and 2) also has implications for invigorating environmental education and intervention. Moody (2009–10) describes the “Eco-Elders” prototype as a model of older adults who embody the virtues of courage, indomitable spirit, and a deep belief in the importance of fighting for a sustainable world for all generations. Some older adults channel this passion and commitment into environmental advocacy work which, for some, takes the form of volunteering in intergenerational environmental education programs, such as the ones described by Krasny, Crestol, Tidball, and Stedman (2014) and Warburton and Gooch (2007). At the same time as helping to address environmental issues, older adult participants in such programs gain opportunities to stay active, civically engaged, and contribute to young people’s learning and appreciation of the natural environment (Liu & Kaplan, 2006).

People of all ages connect best on issues they have in common. The environment is a perennial intergenerational issue: We all breathe the same air, whether filled with the scent of flower blossoms or tainted with toxic fumes. All generations have shared vulnerability to environmental health hazards (especially for those with medical problems), and, as we know from intergenerational programs with an environmental action theme, they are natural allies as protectors/stewards of the environment.

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Chapter 9

Conclusion

Abstract The intergenerational programs and practices highlighted in this book set a positive tone and an empowering prescription for how modern societies can navigate opportunity in challenging demographic and social changes. We introduce the term “intergenerational sustainability,” both as a conceptual tool and as a call for action for addressing vital community and social issues. It is a distinct, value-driven orientation for helping people to live healthier, more socially engaged, more productive and meaningful lives. It also has implications for transforming and sustaining programs, policies, and places that are conducive to intergenerational modes of learning, work, and play. This chapter addresses some of the challenges, strategic directions and recommendations for sustaining, “scaling up,” and integrating successful intergenerational models into everyday multigenerational practices in existing institutions for learning, education, recreation, housing, health care, and employment.

9.1 From Pilot Project to Pathway

Our goal of providing a sense of the breadth and depth of the rapidly growing intergenerational field and its international parameters seemed large, yet straightforward and manageable. What was more challenging, however, were the tasks of laying out theoretical frameworks, highlighting program outcomes, and exploring quality of life implications of intergenerational practice in various realms, including healthy human development, family life, lifelong learning and education, community development, opportunities and experiences at work, and human interactions with the built and natural environment. And even more challenging was our quest to articulate a multifaceted understanding of how intergenerational practice contributes to the overarching goal of attaining a more sustainable society.

In approaching all of these goals, it is important to first clarify some of the many ways that intergenerational programs vary in scale, structure, objectives, funding support, and sustainability. In this section, we focus on variation in scale and implications for program impact and sustainability.

Small scale programs tend to begin as pilot projects developed to test the feasibility of a specific intergenerational model or approach for addressing local issues. It is not until programmatic efforts are “scaled up” into larger initiatives that program effectiveness in achieving intended objectives can be more substantively determined. Mid-sized programs are larger, often multi-site initiatives, developed to achieve more ambitious program objectives and with more resources to allocate to program evaluation, modification, and further dissemination. “Large” programs are further down the evolution scale. They emerge when there is already proof of concept (beyond showing great “promise”), a track record of program success, and a solid funding stream with enough resources to hire professional staff to facilitate and coordinate program planning, implementation, evaluation, and expansion functions. In other words, large programs tend to meet typical conditions for program sustainability.¹

Whereas we emphasize the benefits and processes of “scaling up” in the sections below, we also acknowledge how smaller and mid-sized programs provide crucial building blocks for growing the intergenerational programming “movement.” These engines of innovation and human connection reflect a micro-level approach to community innovation and service, focusing on the utilization of local assets and skills to shape self-help strategies at the local level. This is an important component to what we are advocating throughout this book, that smaller programs provide the seeds that often grow into larger scale, evidence-based, initiatives.

9.1.1 Strengthening and Sustaining Individual Programs

Historically, the intergenerational programming literature has not paid enough attention to what happens to intergenerational programs after they are planned and implemented. Sustainability, a catchword in intergenerational programming circles, tends to be a problem. Even when there is great excitement at the onset of a new program, too many do not last for more than 1–2 years (Gigliotti, Morris, Smock, Jarrott, & Graham, 2005).

Intergenerational practitioners need to know about more than just the mechanics and processes for developing effective programs. They also need to have an awareness of the role of public policies, institutional practices, and funding systems in facilitating and sustaining intergenerational programs and practices. This broader understanding of intergenerational practice extends beyond a *get-the-program-up-and-running-quickly* orientation. It includes an ability to engage in comprehensive planning.

In a project undertaken by the Alma Unit for Research on Ageing (AURA) at Victoria University (in Melbourne, Australia), 70 community-based intergenerational programs across Australia were examined in terms of sponsoring agencies’

¹For instance, see the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool, an instrument developed by the Center for Public Health Systems Science at Washington University, St. Louis, MO: <https://sustaintool.org>

priorities, available resources, as well as the administrative, structural and cultural settings in which the programs were delivered. The researchers concluded,

“The programs that displayed the strongest evidence of sustainability were those that embedded their initial and ongoing efforts within a planning framework that included: support from key stakeholders; well established network systems; succession planning; marketing of program activities; information sharing and documentation that ensured the recording and storage of community and institutional memory; and evaluation of program activities, processes and outcomes to support future strategic decision making” (Seedsman, Feldman, & Dench, 2002, p. 5).

When it comes to sustaining even the most successful intergenerational endeavors, there are additional challenges. Henkin and Butts (2002) note that there are many barriers to the systematic growth and development of intergenerational programs, including age-segregated public and private funding streams, lack of systematic collaboration among funding sources at the local, state, and national levels, lack of integration of programs into existing service systems or large scale initiatives, and limited mechanisms for identifying and sharing best practices.

In establishing a vision for the future of the intergenerational practice on a global scale, the conversation must go beyond focusing on single programs or even an amalgamation of programs. That is, there needs to be more consideration of ways to “build capacity” across service delivery systems and community development processes. This capacity would be an asset towards more sustainable social systems and societies.

9.1.2 *Scaling Up*

9.1.2.1 Working toward “collective impact”

Kania and Kramer (2011) provide a framework for differentiating between human service and community intervention programs that generate “collective” versus “isolated” impact. They note that small scale projects, which tend to be rooted in single organizations, lead to “isolated impact.” The tendency is for these organizations to seek to invent independent solutions to major social problems. Considering the scale and complexity of many of the societal problems noted throughout this book, it is prudent to focus on ways to generate collective approaches to intervention, where the efforts of single organizations are amplified, pooled, and coordinated.

Kania and Kramer (2011) define “collective impact” as “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem” (p. 36). They further state, “Collective impact initiatives involve a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants” (p. 38).

When looking at the intergenerational field as it stands today, this is quite a tall order.

Many of the examples noted in this book are demonstration projects and have not been fully integrated into human service, education, and community development institutions. Becoming aware that our societies are more multi-generational than ever takes time, generational sensitivity, and organizational collaboration and teamwork. However, getting to know how to approach our linked lives and social systems so that all generations become connected takes reflection, expert knowledge and capacity building.

There are also several intergenerational initiatives highlighted in this book that have fully embraced the challenge, and have made progress, in working toward “collective impact.” Some examples include Oasis CATCH Healthy Habits (Holtgrave, Norrick, Teufel, & Gilbert, 2014), Communities for all Ages (Henkin, Brown, & Leiderman, 2012), Experience Corps (Tan et al., 2014), and the Hope Meadows planned community model (Eheart, Hopping, Power, Mitchell, & Racine, 2009).

Some of the strategies used by the sponsoring organizations to grow these programs are consistent with the effective practice strategies noted throughout this book:

- *A deep commitment to evaluation:* Experience Corps, a school volunteer program that is one of the most studied intergenerational initiatives in the U.S., has established academia–community partnerships as a research and development incubator that has contributed to the program’s expansion opportunities (Tan et al., 2014).
- *Strategic partnerships:* The Communities for All Ages (CFAA) model, which in certain ways demonstrates the concept of working for collective impact, places emphasis on establishing ambitious, cross-sectoral strategic partnerships in participating communities. Henkin et al. (2012) describe the CFAA multi-level approach as one that seeks out “organizational partners who understand the value of collective impact and are open to engaging diverse residents in meaningful roles to achieve sustainable community change” (p. 23).

Close collaboration among strong partners is a central feature of CFAA’s goals and approach:

“[These collaborations reflect] long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Their actions are supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, and ongoing communication, and are staffed by an independent backbone organization” (Henkin et al., 2012, p. 22).

- *Proactive efforts aimed at recruiting and engaging volunteers:* The OASIS CATCH Healthy Habits program has had a national impact on the physical activity and nutrition knowledge and behaviors of children, youth, and older adults in the U.S. (Holtgrave et al., 2014). One of the keys to its expansion, e.g., from 10 to 19 U.S. cities over a 3-year period, is its proactive and strategic away of recruiting, training, placing, and evaluating older adult volunteers who complement paid program staff. Volunteers are described as “action multipliers”

(p. 193) and are seen as the key for building capacity for program impact by performing functions such as marketing and publicizing program activities, recruiting and training other volunteers, and collecting and entering evaluation data. Whereas Holtgrave et al. (2014) describe this strategy as building community and social capital, Kania and Kramer (2011) might refer to it as cultivating potential for “collective impact.”

- *Strong institutions, with strong leaders:* An important ingredient for success is “the right kind of institutional anchor,” which the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (2013) defines as “an organization with a track record of delivering large social/community projects” (p. 4). Another key ingredient for success—in terms of program growth and sustainability—is strong leadership. Generations of Hope uses the term “transformational leadership” in referring to one of the five “core components” of the template they developed to assist groups attempting to replicate their “Intergenerational Neighboring” approach for supporting vulnerable populations. Transformational leaders are “people who empower residents, including those who often are stigmatized because of their challenges, to become active partners in working to accomplish the neighborhood’s mission” (Generations of Hope, n.d.).

9.1.2.2 The Role of Intergenerational Networks

Behind each successful intergenerational program, policy, or place (setting) is a team of professionals who have learned valuable lessons about what worked and what did not work. Intergenerational meetings and events often provide important opportunities to meet and learn from these professionals. *Intergenerational networks* aim to bring intergenerational practitioners and advocates together to share information and insights, plan collaborative projects, and form strategic partnerships aimed at establishing new and/or improved intergenerational initiatives.

By way of definition, the word “networking” generally refers to the process of sharing information between agencies; a “network” functions as a clearinghouse for information. Technically, it is more appropriate to use the phrase “coalition” to describe formal efforts that go beyond inter-agency sharing of information and enter into the realm of establishing formal structures for achieving common purpose (Hogue, 1994). However, the network-coalition distinction is blurry, and there are varying perspectives when it comes to the intergenerational field of inquiry and practice.² Even when a group first sees itself as a traditional “network” (as defined above), as members become more aware of the need and many opportunities for

²Scannell and Roberts (1995) distinguish between intergenerational coalitions and networks as follows: “A coalition is a group that seeks to unify and strengthen public policy efforts at some or all levels of government. Central to coalition goals and priorities is a commitment to affecting political and social change for the issues that it supports. A network is a group of individual members and agencies who work together to pool resources, share information and referral, provide support, and create and maintain programs” (p. 1).

collaborative action, it is common to see efforts to infuse an action agenda into a network's vision, objectives, and plans. The evolving organization may start to focus on affecting political and social change.

Whether at the community, regional, national, or international level, we see intergenerational networks (and coalitions) as vision "enablers." They enable intergenerational professionals to affect social, organizational, and political change on a more ambitious level than they could when operating on their own. When intergenerational practitioners/specialists/advocates come together and share lessons learned, they are more likely to see the need to build "systems" for supporting intergenerational programs and policies and influencing social institutions. Intergenerational networks provide the means for such dialogue and collaborative activity.

As an example, various organizations in Scotland, involved in the fields of aging and intergenerational programming, worked with the Scottish Government's One Scotland campaign to develop an initiative called "See the person, not the age" that was focused on age equality. One component of this campaign was an award winning commercial on ageism produced by the Scottish Government in 2011.³ It is unlikely that any of these groups, on their own, could have managed to develop and conduct such a large scale media campaign aimed at encouraging people to rethink stereotypical portrayals of aging, old age, and intergenerational relationships.

Here are some of the collective strategies used by regional, national, and international intergenerational networks (with which the authors have been affiliated) to develop and implement their intergenerational action agendas:

- *The Database of an organization with intergenerational programs*: A good database is invaluable. It typically includes information on program objectives, program/curriculum, organizational partners, staffing, and whom to contact for more information.
- *Conferences*: A well designed conference can address most of the network functions noted above. Intergenerational practitioners, researchers, and advocates get to meet, share ideas and experiences, learn more about what works and what does not, and collaboratively plan new initiatives.
- *Demonstration projects*: Under the organizational rubric of an intergenerational network, representatives from multiple organizations can be brought together to plan, implement, and evaluate new intergenerational models. These programs are generally designed to demonstrate new and creative ways to meet local needs. The demonstration project strategy can be an effective tool for obtaining media coverage for the network and its intergenerational agenda, and for raising funds.
- *Signature projects*: A signature project can be a special event, celebration, or campaign that is closely associated with the network. Signature projects can be tied to annual markers such as Grandparents Day.

³A video clip of this 40-s commercial can be viewed online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdTqhBKO1eg>

- *Training workshops*: Technical assistance on various facets of program development and evaluation can be delivered through carefully designed training workshops.
- *Community forums and speaking engagements*: There are various presentation opportunities to engage and stimulate the public to reflect on intergenerational issues; a small group of network members can create a “speakers bureau.”
- *Awards Program*: Many intergenerational specialists work in organizations that do not value or even acknowledge their efforts. When another organization (such as an intergenerational network) singles out an initiative for recognition and an award, this adds a sense of legitimacy to that effort and often encourages administrators to be more supportive of their “award winner.”
- *An “Occasional Paper” series*: Guest authors (including network members, of course) can be enlisted to write short, thematic papers that highlight innovative practice and/or research results. This can be an effective outreach tool for educating the public, the media, and policymakers.
- *Website*: A well-designed website can be an effective tool for communicating to a diverse audience the network’s message, accomplishments, and opportunities for professionals and members of the public to become involved.
- *Newsletter*: Whether short (1–2 pages) or long, frequent or infrequent, a regular newsletter is an effective tool for keeping network members informed and involved.
- *Legislative Action Committee*: Developing a legislative action platform for the network is a task that requires a specialized, intensive, and ongoing effort. Many networks have members and outside collaborators who are willing to join and provide leadership for a committee that focuses on intergenerational legislative and policy issues.

Thus far we have been speaking about the strengths and potential strengths of intergenerational networks. We would be remiss if we didn’t also note some of the difficulties in starting and sustaining intergenerational networks. For example, if we look at the 20 statewide intergenerational coalitions and networks in the U.S. highlighted in the Generations United survey that Scannell and Roberts (1995) carried out, we would find that most of these entities no longer exist in viable form.⁴

Hence the growth and survival of intergenerational networks should not be taken for granted. Beyond paying close attention to funding and operational matters, two questions need to be asked on a continual basis—*Are there enough people at the table?*—and—*Are the right people at the table?*

Our orientation for answering these questions (which we feel have a bearing on the sustainability of an intergenerational network) is to “cast a wide net” when looking for people to join and take leadership roles. Not only is it important to obtain a critical mass of people interested in forming and sustaining the organization, but it

⁴There are also various accounts of intergenerational networks that lose their momentum and eventually disband when their originators move (e.g., Larkin, 2004), when foundations and sponsoring agencies develop other funding priorities (e.g., the Spanish Intergenerational Network, and the Projektbüro “Dialog der Generationen” in Germany).

is important to include people who represent different types of organizations (e.g., government agencies, non-profit organizations, consultancy groups), who bring in different types of skills (program planning, policy, evaluation), contribute perspectives garnered from different disciplines, work with different client groups, who have access to different funding streams, and, depending on the nature of the organizing tasks at hand, people from across age groups.

The tendency to think in binary terms—focused solely on organizations that serve young people and those that serve older people—should be avoided. There are many other organizations that also have a stake in the quality of intergenerational relations in families, in schools, in the workplace, and in various other community settings. Intergenerational networks should be reaching out to organizations with intersecting goals and objectives, such as: strengthening families, facilitating civic/community involvement, teaching history, promoting the arts, enhancing awareness of cultural diversity, teaching literacy skills, designing appealing public spaces, etc.

9.1.2.3 Working to Influence Policy

In many countries, the growing interest in intergenerational programs and practices is evolving beyond the implementation of innovative but disconnected demonstration projects. Increasingly, we see government agencies establish policies that call for intergenerational approaches for structuring and delivering services for children, youth, older adults, families, and communities. In the U.S., for example, in 2007 a provision was added to the Older Americans Act that authorizes demonstration grants to non-profit organizations to carry out multi-generational and community engagement activities in child care, afterschool care, libraries and schools. In Singapore, the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports has established a task force on Grandparenting and Intergenerational Bonding (2002–2006) that has played a significant role in promoting the intergenerational concept and funding innovative programs throughout the country (Thang, 2007). In Japan, recent policies of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology such as the Period of Integrated Study introduced in 2002 have created new opportunities for older adults to contribute to school-based curricula and take part in afterschool activities (Kuraoka, 2007).

In more recent years, we see more efforts to align intergenerational practices with wider policy agendas, such as those dealing with issues of social inclusion and exclusion, and that intersect with movements that have broad community development implications such as age-friendly cities (Bernard & Rowles, 2013). In Spain, the “Action Framework for Older Persons” passed by the central Government 2015 (de Sanidad & Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2015) asserted, “It would be timely, in order to avoid labor age discrimination to study the possibility of promoting intergenerational exchange programs among organizations’ staff” (p. 21). Furthermore, regarding senior centers, this policy document recommended “boosting the participation of the youngest generations in the activities of these centers, aiming to promote intergenerational solidarity” (p. 38).

The European Parliament (2005), in its July 2015 report on the European Year of Active Aging and Solidarity between Generations pointed out, “As average life expectancy grows longer and longer, intergenerational relations are becoming increasingly important; whereas the economy and society need the life experience, commitment and ideas of all generations if they are to achieve their goals” (n.p.).

Generations United recognizes public policy as intergenerational when it either incorporates an intergenerational approach to addressing an issue, or has an impact across the generations. As noted in its public policy agenda statement for the 113th session of the U.S. Congress, Generations United (2013) recommends that policy-makers and advocates use the following four principles as a guide against which legislation can be measured to determine if policies are truly intergenerational:

- Make lifetime well-being for all the highest priority.
- Consider the impact of every action on each generation.
- Unite rather than divide the generations for the greatest social and financial impact.
- Recognize and support every generation’s ability to contribute to the well-being of their families and communities.

van Vliet (2011) calls for a unified policy agenda:

“Intergenerational integration will enable representative organizations of child, youth, and elder interests to join forces in pursuing a more unified policy agenda, such as create more walkable and safer communities. Their pooled resources and coordinated advocacy will be more effective and their media coverage will be more sustained” (p. 351).

9.1.2.4 Moving the Intergenerational Field Forward

Fortunately, the field of intergenerational practice, both nationally and internationally, is evolving beyond an emphasis on individual *programs* of intervention. More attention is being paid to government policies and environmental design practices that contribute to the growth and development of a generationally integrated society.

Here are several strategic directions and recommendations for further consolidating and building the intergenerational field:

- Establishing closer ties between theory, empirical research, and intergenerational practice.
- Establishing new mechanisms for identifying and sharing best practices across disciplines and geographical regions.
- Focusing less on singular (“one off”) activities and short-term programs and more on sustainable strategies for promoting intergenerational understanding, communication, and cooperation. [Here, we recommend paying more attention to all three of the “P’s” of sustainable intergenerational practice: *policies* and *places* (including environmental design) as well as *programs*.]

- Increasing efforts to integrate intergenerational engagement components into existing service systems or large scale initiatives,
- Establishing new strategies for age-integrated public and private funding streams.

9.2 The Search for a Sustainable Society: Tying It All Together with “CIRCLES”

In this section, we summarize some of the parallel lines and integration points between the topics of intergenerational engagement and societal sustainability. We do this by drawing on the word “circles.” It turns out that as a metaphor, “circles” works quite well as a way to reinforce key themes related to sustainable living across generations. In fact, without planning or intending it, we realized that the word “circle” appears a dozen times up to this point in the book.

We talk about circles in the context of health and well-being (as in “circle of life” and living), caregiving (“circle of care”), community service (“virtuous circles of volunteering”),⁵ and in community planning and citizen participation as in “broadening the circle” of community residents and other stakeholders engaged in critical dialogue about community issues.

Circle of care: On the caregiving front, references to the *circle of care* concept underscore how, throughout our lives, there are many times and ways in which we provide and receive care. Even for intergenerational programs designed to support vulnerable and marginalized populations, there is some sense of reciprocity. Who serves whom is not the most important point here; rather, it is the thickening of threads of mutual social support and community integration and inclusion that is emphasized.

Circle of Care is the name of a program model for supporting South African communities affected by HIV and AIDS (Cook & White, 2006). Basically, the approach is one of establishing a community support system to supplement the care that families can provide in support of the most vulnerable individuals, which includes children, youth, women and older adults. The fundamental concept of the program is that “local governance, in partnership with Communities, forms **an invisible circle of care** around their most vulnerable citizens” [emphasis added] (Cook & White, 2006, p. 68).

Vozak, Hopping, Eheart, and Power (2007) used the term “completing the circle of care” as a title for a paper about Hope Meadows, an intentional community established in Rantoul, Illinois (U.S.) in 1994 for the primary purpose of moving more children out of the foster care system in Illinois. The links in this circle are children, adoptive parents, and older adult volunteers—all residents of this community. Vozak et al. (2007) frame their argument for expanding senior housing alternatives at Hope Meadows as a way to help older adults in this planned com-

⁵Jopling (2015) uses the term “virtuous circles of volunteering” to describe the extensive system of recruiting and employing older adult volunteers for the “LinkAge Bristol” initiative in the UK.

munity “to age in community, continuing to sustain and be sustained by meaningful intergenerational relationships until the end of life, keeping the circle of care unbroken” (p. 2).

Proximity circles: In the context of reaching out to isolated older adults in Barcelona (Spain), the Vincles BCN project (launched by the City Council’s Area of Quality of Life, Equality and Sport) is developing technology-enhanced (using i-Pads) community care networks, “proximity circles,” and “trust networks.” As noted on a website describing the program,⁶ “the digital platform helps users to get in touch with a circle of people they trust and a network of careers.”

Circle of life: This term has been used in the “Wiser Together” campaign⁷ to emphasize the notion that a critical component of the bond between the generations is a shared responsibility for planning the local and global future. In a Wiser Together publication, entitled “Shifting the Paradigm: New Perspectives on the Generations” (Wiser Together, n.d.), the following juxtaposition of a “prevailing view” versus an “emerging view” of intergenerational relations uses the “circle of life” phrase to great effect.

[The *prevailing view*:] “The next generation will have to solve our current local and global challenges. We had our day. Now it’s up to them.”

[The *emerging view*:] “Our challenges cannot be solved by the younger generations alone. We need to evolve a culture of shared responsibility and investment for our common future as long as any of us are part of the **circle of life**. The future of our species and this planet depends of all of us working in partnership across traditional boundaries of age and stage.”

Circle gatherings: Last but not least, we also draw upon a literal use of the word “circle.” When a group mobilizes around a common goal, vision, activity, or support system, they tend to arrange themselves in a circle. One example can be witnessed at one of the family-like meals that is commonplace at cohousing communities:

Inside the common house dining room—the Great Room as it’s called here—neighbors gather in a circle while the menu is described (although most diners already know this when signed up for the meal) and cooks and assistants are acknowledged. Hosts introduce any visiting family or friends, and other neighbors with important announcements take their turns. This is often the time when neighbors remind each other of upcoming events—both in the community and beyond, when birthdays, anniversaries or other significant family dates are announced, and when teenagers in the community unveil yet another school fundraiser—for track or band or the library—and promise to “come around the tables” later to collect donations. (Not surprisingly, the children of the community are champion fundraisers among their peers at school.) With this quick round of announcements over, everyone scatters to their tables, already set up with “family style” dishes and platters. Each table seats six to eight and there is always a rush to reserve seats at desired tables in

⁶For more information, see: <http://smartcity.bcn.cat/en/vincles-bcn.html>

⁷The “Wiser Together” campaign was launched by the World Cafe after its “Multi-Generational Collaboration for the Common Good” pilot in 2004. As noted on the Wiser Together website (<http://www.wiser-together.com/about/>), the campaign has generated a series of “dialogues hosted at key conferences and other settings around the globe” with the goal of “generating excitement and a sense of possibility for evolving a new paradigm that fosters catalytic engagement and collaborative action across generations.”

the minutes preceding a meal. The dining room hums with chatter as the dishes and platters are passed around. Everyone quickly settles down to eat, and the food goes quickly. There are usually seconds available but popular tables—some accommodating an extra friend or family member—often run short and have to send out “scavengers” who circulate among others tables looking to appropriate leftovers. The whole affair lasts no more than 30 minutes before the kitchen is bustling again with cleanup activities. Diners clear their own plates and help wipe down their tables. Cleared plates and utensils are passed to the dish crew in the kitchen and the dining room is quickly swept and restored to order.

[Fieldnotes as part of Lisia Zheng’s dissertation research on cohousing communities in the U.S. (Zheng, 2016, n.p.). Emphasis added.]

In terms of building sustainable intergenerational relationships, we find concepts such as the “circle of care” concept to be compelling, particularly when placed in the broader context of what Kingson, Hirshorn, and Cornman (1986) describe as a “social compact,” referencing our common stake, even across generations, to contribute to the public good (including one another’s welfare). This also relates to the sense of mutual obligation that different generations have to one another over time. It is also at the root of a sentiment that has been termed “intergenerational solidarity” (Sánchez, Sáez, & Pinazo, 2010). Sánchez (2009) echoes the report from the UN Second World Assembly on Ageing when noting that society-wide implications of intergenerational solidarity at all levels—in families, communities and nations—“is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages” (p. 4).

In closing this section, we would like to say a few words in defense of the idea of using “circles” to highlight some key themes about “intergenerational sustainability.” The shape of a circle, in and of itself, has no beginning and no end, and it reflects continuity and balance. A circle replenishes itself, never running out of places to go. Each point on the circle “belongs” and is needed to complete and maintain the whole. Hence, it is no surprise that it works as a nice metaphor for talking about family, community, and societal systems that are holistic, dependable, and self-sustaining.

9.3 A Question of Values

Although we are quite partial to the “circles” metaphor, it does not quite capture the full essence of what we are proposing in this book. What is missing is a targeted question about values: *What values do we want to guide us as we seek to set the course for our collective (societal) future?*

Throughout the book we have built a multi-pronged case that intergenerational programs and practices provide important avenues for protecting societies’ most cherished values. These values are tied to: how we can lead healthy, meaningful, caring, civically engaged, productive lives. Such values are at the core of how we frame and operationalize the connections between an intergenerational perspective and the quest for building a sustainable, livable society.

9.3.1 Values Associated with How We Relate to People of Other Generations

Here we look at values related to intergenerational relationships; this is a fundamental thread that runs through all of the value domains noted above. Two underlying questions arise. First, do we want to engage one another across generations? If the answer is “Yes,” then the second question follows: How do we want to do this?

In setting the stage for addressing the first question, our position is simple: Those who choose to have deeper connections with people from other generations should have ample opportunity. Herein lies part of the justification for developing programs and practices, i.e., to provide choice and opportunity for intergenerational contact and relationship formation. With multiple pathways available for intergenerational engagement, people can more readily find meaning and challenge in their own lives through access to roles in which they can contribute meaningfully to the lives of others.

When considering ways to strengthen and support families, a solid beginning point is to build on foundational and culturally appropriate values of honoring, protecting, and strengthening family ties and norms of mutual support and care.

9.3.1.1 A Commitment to Younger Generations

There are many ways in which adults contribute to the development of young people. They do this by telling their stories, sharing their experiences, teaching cultural values and folklore, and by embracing young people in a culture of caring and trustworthiness. Further, children and youth learn valuable life lessons such as how it is possible to survive through adversity, and, that the decisions they make in regard to their own actions have an impact on others. They also gain a sense of what it means to become—and continue to be—contributing members of their respective societies.

This socialization process, ideally, entails gaining historical perspective, which is particularly valuable for better understanding current tensions between diverse groups and elements in a society, and seeing possibilities for transcending differences and promoting cooperation and, as we cover below, a sense of interdependency.

9.3.1.2 A Commitment to Older People

As noted in the first few chapters of this book, the groundwork is being set for reframing public discourse and understanding what it means to be an “older” adult. The intergenerational field contributes to this shift in terms of deemphasizing narratives of passivity and illness, and placing more emphasis on the many contributions older adults make to their families and communities. Some of the terms noted in this book reflect more positive views and terminology related to aging and retirement, for example:

- “active aging”
- “productive aging”
- “successful aging”
- “lifelong learning and education”
- “reinventing retirement”
- “senior volunteerism”

In this light, values that reflect an interest in contributing to the quality of life of older adults would extend beyond those cast solely from a caregiving orientation. This might include a commitment to creating more opportunities for interdependent (not just independent) living, with an emphasis on establishing/maintaining multi-faceted social ties.

It is also a matter of accepting the rights of individuals to redefine and reinvent meanings of “retirement.” This reinvention is not just for self or one’s experience, but also learning new relationships between self and society.

9.3.2 Values Related to Community and Environment

The quest for building a sustainable community, from an intergenerational perspective as well as from a community development perspective, entails a commitment to strengthening civic and social ties across ages and generational groups.

This involves nurturing a shared sense of the community and a commitment to creating a place where people know and care for one another and have opportunities to work together for the betterment of the community. It also involves a willingness to reach out to stakeholders with diverse perceptions, motivations and values, and challenging them to find those values they share which are central to the community’s cultural identity (Swisher, Rezola, & Sterns, 2009).

A premium is placed on values of social inclusion for members of all generations and intergenerational cooperation; this contrasts with notions of perpetually conflicting or competing age-based needs, interests, and ideas for community improvement.

Intergenerational approaches to environmental education and action are inherently value-driven. Emphasis is placed on foundational values related to preserving and caring for the natural environment: This includes values related to “environmental stewardship” and community service. It is also important to consider ways in which cultures can honor and pass on indigenous knowledge and practices that nurture conservation-oriented values and contribute to ecological sustainability.

9.3.3 Values Related to Lifelong Learning and Education

The fact that lifelong learning and education can be approached intergenerationally stresses the value of togetherness and cooperative living from a time-bound and historic perspective. Whereas any other type of social project may take advantage

of membership in ethnic, social, or gender groups, lifelong learning and education intergenerational programs make use of inter-individual and inter-group similarities and differences in terms of their *timeliness*, that is, their position in the life cycle (itinerary and developmental stages from birth to death) and life-course (intersection between own life cycle and social arrangements organizing the way we must live our lives). These latter programs facilitate the breaking and reconstruction of life transitions and pathways. Briefly put, intergenerational lifelong learning and education programs are opportunities for us to become aware of our longer lives and to learn how to live them better.

“Caring strangers” was the title of a 1989 book by Dale J. Jaffe on the sociology of intergenerational homesharing. Who are strangers for us in societies with that type of more complex generational profile? Intergenerational pathways may facilitate growth of trust among generationally-estranged individuals. Trust goes hand-in-hand with social capital. Bridging social capital (i.e., social connections between socially heterogeneous groups) is especially appropriate in multi-generational societies. Intergenerational education settings such as schools may be contexts of trust for different generations, hence for generating social capital.

As we have argued in this book, intergenerational learning and education enhance our degree of *intergenerational literacy* through mentoring, coaching, or service learning and may therefore open up pathways for sustainable and livable societies. Examples of such intergenerational learning and education initiatives include:

- Intergenerational initiatives for memory retrieving and archiving through processes of reciprocal learning and education (Mannion, 2012);
- Intergenerational activities focused on valuing experience and respecting indigenous values (and giving “indigenous knowledge” legitimacy and a place in the formal learning process in educational institutions); and
- Intergenerational attempts to learn and be educated about how different layers of diversity (such as ethnicity, gender identity, and educational level) are connected and overlap.

Intergenerational literacy/intelligence have indeed been demonstrated to be a powerful means to struggle against oblivion of the past, misunderstanding of the present, and lack of vision about a better future.

9.3.4 Values Related to Workplace Environments

Much of our daily time throughout the life-course is work time, and thousands of unemployed people dream of getting a decent job to make a decent living. Similar to what happens with learning and education, many people seem to have centered their lives around their jobs. The multi-generational demographic profile is permeating the work environment too. Hence, the increasing interest on the management of generational diversity in the workplace. We need inclusive workplace environments not only from a gender, ethnicity, and social class point of view, but also from an age/generation perspective.

Which are some of the main values-related themes tied to how the intergenerational dimension unfolds at work? Firstly, there is the value of knowledge retention (against “brain drain”) because expansion of opportunities for learning and knowledge transfer. If expert knowledge is a key form of capital in organizations, intergenerational pathways to bridge knowledge do contribute to sustaining organizational mission and development. Secondly, successful management of intergenerational communication and learning may impact competence development and innovation. Thirdly, intergenerational pathways in the workplace may foster the capacity for successful knowledge co-production and sharing across generational positions, expand the possibility of planning and implementing generative projects, and deepen the undermining of negative age stereotypes and social prejudices. Overall, there is a clear emphasis on generational inclusiveness through an appreciation of both differences and similarities combined.

Finally, a higher intergenerational relations quality in the workplace affects quality of life positively. The principle of linked lives invites us to consider sustainability not only across generations but also across life realms. From this perspective, intergenerational awareness and practices at work may benefit intergenerational relationships in the family and in the community. For instance, if well-integrated multi-age groups reach a higher level of productivity, workers may be able to enjoy more time for play, civic engagement and leadership. In the end, the relational character of intergenerational pathways functions as a network, reaching out to any relationship-centered place in society.

9.4 Last Word

Throughout this book we have touched on many dimensions of sustainability in the context of working toward an intergenerational way of life.

To fully articulate what this might mean for improving our lives and creating a more livable society, we have sought to integrate perspectives, empirical research, new practices, and insights tied to two distinct areas of inquiry and practice: *intergenerational engagement* and *sustainable ways of living*.

We organized the chapters so that we could focus on approaches and implications related to one intergenerational domain at a time. This includes efforts to promote individual health and well-being, support vulnerable or fragmented families, create new lifelong learning opportunities, develop more responsive, caring communities, engender positive work environments, and preserve the natural environment.

Our intent is for all of these parts to be viewed as integral, adding up to a broader paradigm and vision for a sustainable future.

The intergenerational pathways we discuss include, but go beyond programs, policies, and places that bring different generations together. We see the “intergenerational perspective” as one which requires a change in our thinking as well as in our institutions. This new relational mindset will, we hope, help us better under-

stand how our daily lives (in the present) are dynamically and strongly connected across time (past and future), space (rooted in the physical environment), culture (ways of living as individuals, families and communities pursuing well-being), and generational experience.

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