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# **Who Is Needy and Who Should Give Care? Promoting Intergenerational Solidarity**

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## ***Abstract***

Historically, families have taken responsibility for the care of their dependent children, elderly, and other relatives. Given today's economic climate and demographics, we are facing shifting responsibilities for supporting those in need of care. Targeted policies and quality programming can unite different generations in caring for one another with mutual benefit, not only for families but also for the community at-large, and encourage interdependencies that improve the quality of life for all ages. This paper addresses the need for increased intergenerational solidarity, and proposes strategies and instruments for measuring success.

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**Intergenerational Solidarity: Strengthening Economic and Social Ties  
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**Session 3: Overview of existing instruments and policies that affect  
intergenerational solidarity**  
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**Why do we need to promote intergenerational solidarity?**

Regardless of where we live or what our economic circumstances, every generation needs the next, and caring for one another is essential if we are to thrive as a people. When older adults are surrounded by only their own age peers, their relationships inevitably begin to dwindle, and loneliness looms large. When young children do not have caring adults to protect and nurture them, their future appears scary indeed. Moreover, young children need multiple role models to envision their own aging process in a positive light. In today's world, it often takes targeted policies and specialized programming to connect and support people across ages so that they can recognize mutual benefits in caring for each other and continue to live interdependently.

In the United States there are approximately 34 million persons over the age of 65. By 2030, this number will exceed 70 million, with persons 85+ being the fastest growing segment of the population (Federal Interagency Forum, 2000). As we see longer lifespan expectancy and higher quality health care, more and more active adults will be seeking volunteer, employment, and educational opportunities to enhance the quality of life in their later years. Determining how to find a sense of purpose in life after retirement is a major challenge in the U.S. (Larkin, Sadler, and Mahler, 2005). Social service programs that rely heavily on volunteers have begun to recognize the enormous potential in the large pool of untapped older adults that Freedman (1994: i) has called this country's "only increasing natural resource" (In Newman and others, 1997: 149). Rowe and Kahn (1998) suggest that engagement in productive activities and strong social ties are positively correlated with successful aging. Furthermore, the ability to be generative—to pass on care and commitment from one generation to the next -- has been linked to well-being in old age (Erikson, Erikson and Kivnick, 1986; McAdams and de St. Aubin, 1998; Graves and Larkin, 2006).

The poverty rate for older minorities and women is higher than for the rest of the population in the U.S. More than 8.5 million elders need some kind of assistance to remain living in the community (Federal Interagency Forum, 2000). Feelings of loneliness and depression, particularly among those who are geographically separated from their families, or who have limited English speaking abilities, are common. With 77 million baby boomers now facing retirement, communities need to create structures that enable senior adults to continue as contributing and productive members of society. Furthermore, as the caretakers of tomorrow, young people need to understand that aging is a process that begins at birth not at age 65 (Friedman, 1999). Yet, in both families and communities, expectations of one another and obligations across generations are shifting (Reich 1998-1999).

Families today often find themselves in a negotiation crunch, trying to decide who has the right to be needy and who is responsible to meet those needs. Changing patterns of

marriage and divorce are creating new family structures (e.g. kinship care; step-kin care) that can result in unclear caregiver roles and responsibilities. Families then need support from extended family members and the community in which they live to provide care to both the young and the old in lieu of institutionalization.

With more than 72 per cent of mothers in the workforce in the U.S., the need for quality childcare and after-school care is critical (Larkin, 1998-1999). Because of cost and limited availability of quality programs, many families rely on relatives or have latchkey children who arrive home after school to a house empty of adults. Without adult supervision, latchkey children are at greater risk of truancy, substance abuse, and poor academic performance (Morton-Young, 1995). Demanding jobs and long commutes also have a major impact on the amount and quality of time children spend with family members. A Kaiser Family Foundation study (Roberts and Foehr, 2004) found that American children spend an average of five hours and 29 minutes per day unsupervised, using some type of media rather than social interaction to entertain themselves. According to Kagan and Cohen (1996), 80 per cent of children spend up to 50 hours per week in poor or mediocre child care settings. In addition, 35-40 per cent of the settings that care for infants and toddlers are so poor that they can actually jeopardize children's health and safety. Families need quality programs that will not only provide children with a safe place to grow up, but that will also support their optimal development during critical years of development.

Larkin and Newman (2001) have reported on a national study of older adults working in child care as volunteers or Foster Grandparent aides. Observations, interviews and a rating scale were used to identify the unique contributions of older adults who had not been formally trained as early childhood educators. Findings showed that the nurturing presence of the older adults brought a "familial" dimension to these settings that complemented what younger, professionally trained teachers provide in the classroom. Although their behaviors were not always consistent with professional standards for early childhood educators, they made a significant and unique contribution that enriched all participants. In another example, the Senior Kapuna in the Preschool Program (SKIPP) project in Hawai'i documented older adults in six preschool settings who were paired with disruptive children needing special attention in the classroom (HIN, 2003). The evaluation of the program showed that the senior kapuna had a calming effect on children's behavior, which the teachers appreciated. At the same time, the seniors enjoyed being with the children and partnering with the teachers. Both studies support the idea that the presence of older adults in the lives of young children is "not just nice but necessary" (Generations United slogan). The added attention and familial quality of the older adults' nurturing is especially important for young children who spend long hours in child care programs outside the home.

Historically, families have taken responsibility for supporting their members over the life course. Although this still holds true, many families today are under enormous stress as they try to meet the needs of both younger and older generations. Particularly vulnerable are families where children have special needs and those in which the caregivers are older relatives. According to the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA, 2007), 1.4

million children (ages 8-18) provide care for an adult relative, and 30 per cent of all family caregivers are over the age of 65. The challenges faced in kinship care are many, including physical and emotional problems experienced by children whose parents are ill, incarcerated, or are substance abusers, as well as difficulty obtaining benefits and services because caregivers lack legal custody (Smith & Beltran, 2003; Henkin & Butts, 2002; Wallace, 2001).

The challenge to provide eldercare for American families is as great as that for childcare. Research indicates that most adults will actually spend more time caring for parents than for children (Roszak, 1998). With 13 per cent of the workforce providing care for family members, and 60 per cent of caregivers being women, American businesses can lose as much as \$34 billion (NCFA, 2007). In fact, PBS has recently released a documentary film on how the growing demands of child and elder care for the “sandwich generation” are affecting the workplace (particularly for women), and presents steps Congress is taking to help these families ([www.pbs.org/ttc](http://www.pbs.org/ttc)). Employers are beginning to recognize their responsibilities in supporting elder care in addition to child care now that so many working women provide assistance for their parents or other aging relatives.

In Japan, the mobility of families moving from rural to urban settings has had an impact on cultural norms for caregiving. The family structure has changed from a large, multi-generational household to a nuclear family configuration, with a growing number of the elderly living independently or alone. Young working families tend to live in urban areas of Japan, in many cases leaving the grandparents behind in their rural homes. The geographic mobility caused by economic forces has resulted in a loss of contact between elders and children, placing the childcare burden on young parents and altering the role of the grandparents. As the elder generation is now living longer, often with extended healthcare needs, the cost of their long term care has to be assumed by the younger family members on top of their childcare responsibilities (Newman and Larkin, 2007). Intergenerational programs are being created throughout Japan to serve the needs of young families together with the needs of the aging adult population. To combat social isolation, for example, in Tokyo Obachan-chi (Grandmother’s House) is a neighborhood place where young mothers (most of whose peers are still working) can socialize while older adults play with their babies and enjoy sharing cultural traditions. Here, the older adults find joy in being able to socialize with younger generations and feel that their wisdom and experience can be passed on to others (Watanabe, 2007).

Like Japan, Singapore has become an aging society (Thang, 2007). Both countries face the dilemma of an unprecedented low fertility rate caused by the increasing number of unmarried people and the trend among younger couples to maintain dual incomes rather than start a family. Lower income women may have no choice but to work when spouses, parents, or in-laws view this as the only way to maintain their quality of life given the high cost of living in Singapore. Cultural norms support the idea of caring for the elderly within the family and community, despite a decline in multigenerational co-residence. In addition, grandparents see themselves as the most appropriate caregivers for their grandchildren; because they naturally love them, and can assume the responsibility of transmitting desired values to the younger generation. Many families in Singapore have

maids, and this allows grandparents to assume a nurturing role without taxing their own physical stamina. The premise that grandparents play a vital intergenerational role within the family remains, and they are not regarded as abandoning their family commitments in expressing a desire to pursue their own leisure and autonomy. Thang (2007) recommends that grandparents be encouraged to participate in joint activities in childcare centres so that they can maintain close emotional ties with the children without having to assume the burden of full time caregiving.

As we promote the involvement of older adults in preschool classrooms, we do not want to see women automatically relegated to the jobs of preparing snacks and sweeping floors. Neither would we want to see older men assigned to the woodworking area simply because it is assumed they will be skilled at using tools. Larkin and Newman (2001) learned that many of the older adult women in this study gravitated to these housekeeping responsibilities because they felt confident in their abilities to be helpful to the teachers by taking care of these things. Thus, it is important to recognize that older women may enjoy being able to express their nurturing instincts through providing nutritious foods and maintaining a tidy environment, although teachers should not expect older volunteers to spend all their time in this housekeeping role. Some volunteers seem to appreciate having a domain where they can function completely autonomously, so it is also important to learn if this is a factor in how older adults feel that they can make a positive contribution. Older adults were observed to be reluctant to set limits on children's behavior or intervene in their disputes. Certainly, when children's safety was at stake, they got involved, but typically, they preferred not to deal with children's outbursts. Furthermore, the teachers explicitly stated that they preferred the older adults defer to their leadership in managing the children's behaviors in school. Below is a comparison of how professional teachers and older adult volunteers enrich the child care environment (Larkin and Newman, 2001: 384):

**Table 1: Complementary Behaviors**

<b>Early Childhood Professionals</b>	<b>Older Adult Volunteers</b>
Have a background in ECE teaching and are certified.	Have a background in caring for others and learned from personal experience.
Are responsible for overseeing the whole classroom, and for responding to the needs of all children.	Are apt to stay at one activity for an extended period of time and focus attention on a few children.
Are concerned with children's cognitive, social/emotional, and physical development. Provide multiple opportunities for children to learn through experience.	Are concerned with children's social/emotional behaviors, and personal hygiene. Model and coach children to use polite, socially appropriate interpersonal behaviors.
Teach independence, and coach children to solve problems and master new skills.	Teach by modeling and doing things for children to imitate.
Develop a comprehensive and integrated curriculum. Help children represent what	Encourage language development. May complete projects for children to ensure

they know in a variety of ways.	successful outcomes.
Help children resolve conflicts through verbal expression of feelings and negotiation.	Stop conflicts with directives. Defer to professional teachers to set limits. May supervise children's play from a distance.
Focus exclusively on the children while teaching.	Focus on both children and other adults while teaching. May volunteer to perform housekeeping tasks.
Interact fairly and equitably with all children.	Bond with a few children and encourage physical gestures of affection.
Typically view teaching as a career.	Typically view teaching as a commitment.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Suncoast, Inc., a one-to-one mentoring program in Sarasota, FL, participated in another research study to investigate why retired older adults might want to volunteer their time to help at-risk youth (Larkin, Mahler, and Sadler, 2005). The study revealed that many older adults who were somewhat bored with leisure activities also did not want to assume major time-consuming responsibilities for mentoring young people. Successful recruitment resulted from a personal request (rather than a broad ad campaign) and the promise of a limited time commitment (one hour per week). Once involved, they discovered many unanticipated benefits such as:

- Replaying successful roles and offering their hard-earned expertise as a role model
- Recapitulating satisfying experiences by telling stories and remembering events from their own youth
- Righting previous mistakes, such as not spending enough time with their own youngsters while they were growing up
- Renewing positive emotions (love, care, curiosity, satisfaction) through laughter, touch, activity, and talk
- Reinforced meaning to life through being appreciated and recognized as a valuable person

As Margaret Mead (1972) said, "It is extraordinarily difficult to love children in the abstract, to devote oneself exclusively to the next generation....It is only through precise, attentive knowledge of particular children that we become – as we must – informed advocates for the needs of all children and passionate defenders of the right of the unconceived to be well born" (Mead, 1972:300). Although she was speaking about her experience of being a grandmother for the first time, her point about the critical importance of bonding with a particular child in order to understand and defend the next generation is applicable to the experience of these mentors. The older adults in the BBBS study wanted to make a contribution to society, and they did it by making a visible difference in one child's life (Larkin, Mahler and Sadler, 2005), because they felt emotionally connected and gratified. They missed having close contact with their own grandchildren, but were rewarded by the relationships they developed with children in need of a mentor in the community.

Well-planned intergenerational programs can benefit all age groups, families, and communities in any culture. The extra attention, nurturing, and guidance children and youth receive from older adult mentors can improve overall well-being, academic achievement, school attendance, resiliency, and positive attitudes toward older adults (Boström, 2003; Taylor and others, 1999). For older adults, the opportunity to share their skills, knowledge, and experience with future generations and to stay connected to their communities can have a positive impact on life satisfaction, social engagement, and overall health (Kuehne, 1999; Larkin, Sadler, & Mahler, 2005). Families involved in intergenerational programs often experience a decrease in caregiver stress and reduced social isolation when they are able to expand their social networks and receive support services (Power & Maluccio, 1998-99). Communities become stronger and more cohesive when diverse groups work together for the common good (Pennix, 2003). Through collaborative partnerships, new resources become available to enhance the quality of life for all ages.

### **Planning successful intergenerational programs**

It has been argued that the first step in helping younger and older generations relate to each other is to break down stereotypes by educating them about one another (McCrae & Smith 1997; Aday, Sims, McDuffie, & Evans 1996; Maguire 1993). Another common approach is to place one group in a caregiving role where they can offer assistance with tasks and attention to individual needs (AARP 1992; Newman, Larkin, & Smith 1999). A third program plan is to unite different age groups through working together on a common goal, such as organizing a community garden or painting a mural (Kaplan, Higdon, Crago, & Robbins 2004). These are intentional strategies to engineer emotional attachments between people of different generations who would not otherwise be drawn into an interpersonal relationship. It takes skilled guidance to overcome negative attitudes, and to build rewarding interdependencies across generations so that intergenerational programs can be successful.

Although intergenerational programs differ significantly in terms of target populations, goals, and depth of engagement, they do share common elements that can be used as guidelines in developing new initiatives. Larkin and Henkin (in press) have identified the following as components of any successful program:

- Meaningful roles and activities for all participants to give and receive care;
- The intentional development of positive, interdependent relationships between individuals of different ages;
- Recognition that both young people and older adults are valued community resources/assets and have something to give one another;
- Infrastructure for the recruitment, training and support of volunteers and staff.

Intergenerational programs are created to address a particular social problem such as after school child care, English language learning for refugees and immigrants, neighborhood safety, cross-cultural awareness, or support for homebound elders. Often, they involve collaborative partnerships between organizations that serve different age groups. Social

service agencies, educational systems, healthcare providers, and community groups are all structured and funded differently, which necessitates combining expertise and resources for intergenerational programming. Very few organizations in the U.S. are created with an intergenerational mission and supported by a sustained source of income, as our infrastructure is set up to serve segregated age groups in various settings such as schools, nursing homes, housing sub-divisions, recreation areas, and even retail stores. Consequently, institutions effectively isolate different age groups as they cater to their specific needs and desires.

Intergenerational programs are a strategy for crossing these institutional boundaries to bring families and communities together. Challenges abound in terms of reconciling differences in transportation needs, program schedules, staff expertise, available resources, and the cultures of the organizations. The following Table proposes a framework for understanding the current landscape in terms of organizational structure, program mission, and funding sources. Programs can be placed in the grid where the type of program and organizational structure meet. Some programs may cross boundaries because they are partnerships between two different types of institutions. If it is difficult to place a particular program in any one cell, the problem of how organizations are separately funded becomes highlighted, demonstrating the challenge for collaborative intergenerational program partnerships.

**Table 2: Typology of Intergenerational Programs**

<i>501(c)3</i>	<i>Sponsored</i>	<i>For-profit</i>	<i>Gov't.</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Unfunded</i>
<i>S</i>	<i>Pr</i>	<i>Insti</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Su</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>og</i>	<i>tutio</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>ro</i>
<i>t</i>	<i>ra</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>je</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>m</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>ct</i>
			<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	
			<i>y</i>		

*Child/Elder  
Care  
Education &  
Learnin  
g  
Community  
Building  
Health & Legal  
Support  
Family Respite  
Care  
Resource &  
Referral*

Notes:

1. A **501(c)3** site would be an independent not-for-profit organization, governed by a Board of Directors, that offers the intergenerational program.

2. A **Sponsored** program is one operating under the auspices of another umbrella organization such as a university, a hospital, or a corporation.
3. A **For-profit** institution operates the program to generate income.
4. A **Government** agency is funded by local, state or federal monies.
5. A **Grant** project is externally funded for a specific period of time.
6. An **Unfunded** project is typically a collaboration of limited duration.

Partnerships require identifying a shared mission and articulating an agreement to commit resources out of each organization's regular budget to deliver the intergenerational program. Partnerships also require a systematic plan for sharing professional expertise across institutional boundaries in order to serve mixed-age groups. As an alternative to working in partnership, some organizations have independently made their entire mission intergenerational in nature, and provided staff development opportunities to augment their existing expertise. These kinds of programs are easier to sustain, because they are more apt to be embraced at all levels of the organization. Their challenge becomes demonstrating the success of the intergenerational mission in order to sustain funding and recruitment.

High standards of professionalism are needed in intergenerational programs so that vulnerable populations (older and younger participants) are protected and nurtured in the best possible environment, and the goals are met to everyone's satisfaction. Intergenerational practice is interdisciplinary in nature because it not only brings together people of different ages, but also combines different professional background knowledge depending on the program or project. Although there is no formal credential, the question of what expertise is needed by an intergenerational specialist was taken up by Larkin and Rosebrook (2002) in their proposed *Standards and Guidelines for Intergenerational Practice* ([www.sarasota.usf.edu/COE/larkin/guidelines.htm](http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/COE/larkin/guidelines.htm)). These broad competencies were developed for a Master's degree program at the University of Findlay in Ohio to guide students in identifying knowledge, skills and dispositions that would prepare them for intergenerational work in direct service roles, administrative capacities, or the supervision and training of others. In addition to evaluating the practice of intergenerational specialists so that programs can demonstrate consistent care and professionalism in their services to families, the documentation provides "measurable outcomes" that reassure funders and policy makers who invest in intergenerational initiatives.

What kinds of skills do intergenerational program coordinators need? Although there is no clearly defined understanding of best practices, Larkin and Kaplan (in press) propose that intergenerational specialists should have the ability to:

- Demonstrate readiness to allow the participants to figure out the best ways to share their knowledge and insights, and to engage one another;
- Promote asking questions (formal and informal) that encourage an exploration of similarities and differences among participants;
- Help participants translate discovery about others into discovery about self;

- Use a sense of humor and playfulness to bring people together and experience a shared sense of well-being.

There is still limited demand for a workforce that has an intergenerational degree or certificate. Most educators and human service practitioners interested in developing intergenerational programs learn how to do so by attending workshops, reviewing manuals and videos of successful programs, or receiving technical assistance from consultants with expertise in specific types of intergenerational programming. The Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning, for example, recently created a national training and technical assistance network to help organizations integrate intergenerational approaches into their existing programs and services, and published a guidebook, *Intergenerational Program Tool Kit* (Bressler, Henkin & Adler, 2005). The University of Pittsburgh now offers an online course in Intergenerational Practice, and Generations United maintains a website that is rich in information and resources for practitioners.

### **The importance of evaluation in intergenerational practice**

Evaluation is critical to shaping the evolving identity of the intergenerational field, and to understanding the growing effectiveness of intergenerational programming as a strategy for social change. Without empirical data to support claims of success, practitioners, funders, and policy makers face an uphill battle to convince others that this is the right approach. Evaluation requires thoughtful, systematic review of program outcomes as well as of the professional expertise of “intergenerational specialists” who help to facilitate positive relationships among participants. Evaluation need not be formal, but in taking a researcher’s objective point of view, program outcomes and professional performance can be systematically documented to demonstrate what is actually happening in order to assess how well goals are being met and what changes need to be implemented to improve the intergenerational experience. From this informed position, planners and policy-makers can provide true leadership rather than simply reacting to pressures arising from the growing social problems of an aging society.

Newman and Larkin (2007) recommend developing an evaluation strategy early in the program development and planning stage. The following basic questions can help begin the process of framing the evaluation plan:

- What outcomes (desired results) can the program realistically expect to achieve?
- What are the anticipated benefits for learning, social interaction and overall well-being of the participants?
- How else might the program be making a difference (e.g., unanticipated benefits such as impact on the broader community)?
- What is the best time to gather information about whether the program is achieving its goals and objectives?
- How will we find out if the participants, their families, and community residents are satisfied with the intergenerational experience?

- How and by whom will the evaluation results be used?

There are various approaches to evaluation, ranging from having informal conversations with participants and staff to employing outside professional evaluators to develop formal measures and procedures. Following are examples of evaluation models that are useful resources:

- The Program Logic Model (Hatry, van Houten, Plantz, & Greenway, 1996)
- Approved Provider Standard (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2005)
- Intergenerational Program Evaluation Standards (Gamez, 2006).
- Program Management Evaluation Model (Generations Together, 2004).

The traditional rationale for intergenerational initiatives has been grounded in human development theory. Goals are set based on younger participants' need for nurturance, positive role models, a secure value system, cultural recognition and a sense of place in history, together with older adults' need to nurture others, have a sense of purpose, and to recognize their continuing worth. Most studies of intergenerational programs tend to focus on the interaction itself and on the psychosocial and educational benefits afforded the older and younger participants. The significance of intergenerational programming, however, often goes beyond benefits to the participants themselves to have consequences for the community at-large (Kaplan, 2007).

Whether it is through raising awareness of local assets and resources for all ages, giving joint service to others in need, organizing around an issue of common concern, or providing input into community planning, some intergenerational approaches have been found to contribute to desirable changes in the community that affect everyone, such as increased safety, healthier environments, and improved recreational facilities. One successful community development model is in Hendersonville, NC (Bors and others, 2004). In 1999, the Partnership for Health convened a task force of residents to assess the environment so that plans could be made to improve the quality of life and promote active living for all ages. Volunteers conducted an audit of the environment, and then advocated for policy changes that would support active living. The partnership involved city planners, recreation managers, landscapers, engineers, social service professionals, and others to create a "walkable community" that is accessible by public transportation. Affordable housing was built near shopping and services for older adults. Parks and recreational facilities were constructed using universal design principles to provide environments that were attractive to all age groups. Guided by the leadership of the Partnership for Health, community members found satisfaction in being able to make a difference and live a more active lifestyle.

The intergenerational lens helps individuals redefine their responsibilities as family and community members so that we can become an age-integrated society that supports everyone as we move through the life course. Intergenerational initiatives are proving to be an effective strategy for civic engagement to enact change at the community level. Demonstrating the effectiveness of these programs is challenging, because of the numerous variables that might be affecting change. Consequently, systematic data

collection must take place at more than one level to capture the full picture of what is happening. The following table is a framework for how an evaluation process could be structured for a community-wide initiative. It was developed for an initiative in Sarasota, FL, but was never tested (Larkin, 2004: 181). The comprehensive plan would be implemented in stages, and it involves four streams of systematic documentation:

**Table 3: Evaluation of Community-wide Intergenerational Initiatives**

<b>Organizational Innovation</b>	<b>Changes in Roles, &amp; Organizational Structure</b>	<b>Indicators of Best Practices</b>	<b>Desired Outcomes for All Ages</b>
Count # of new IG partnerships	Modifications to leadership vision & responsibilities	Evidence of IG activities achieving goals (testimonials, sustained interest, etc.)	Evidence of changed attitudes (reduced age and/or cultural bias)
Track growth in # of participants	New roles created for IG activities	Evidence of sustained IG relationships	Evidence of healthier public environments
Document meetings held (identify issues and decisions made)	New organizational mission that integrates IG perspective	Evidence of thriving collaborations (cross-training, shared resources...)	Evidence of civic engagement among all age groups
Photograph events held to celebrate programs	Budget projections that support IG program and staff development	Evidence of professional skill among facilitators	Evidence of increased generational equity (e.g. in services and funding)
Collect public relations outputs (newspaper articles; announcements...)	Increased outreach efforts include all age groups	Recognition of the value of IG interdependency	Evidence of age-integrated policies
Collect annual reports of agencies (funding / staffing commitments)			

Different organizations and participants can identify their own categories and the indicators that they want to track systematically as they add to the documentation process over a specified period of time. Evidence will include what happens at the program level, at the organization level, and at the government policy level. Once it is all collected, it should be organized chronologically to tell the story of how the intergenerational initiative has been making an impact on the whole community. Used in a formative way, the information gathered can inform planners and policy-makers to make adjustments or

changes that will improve the outcomes. When barriers to success are identified and recognized along the way, they can be addressed in a timely manner.

## **Recommendations for Intergenerational Policies and Practices**

- Reinvent the role of grandparents, so that there is widespread recognition of the importance of elders in passing along cultural traditions and values.
- Develop interdisciplinary professional preparation courses, grounded in lifespan development, that would prepare staff to work with all ages groups and across service delivery settings (Vander Ven, 2004).
- Create funding sources for intergenerational research and practice.
- Build public spaces that are safe and accommodate a range of physical capabilities.
- Promote age-integration of schools, housing, and recreation areas.

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