Intergenerational and Age-Friendly Living Ecosystem (AFLE)

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VCC 1

What is an intergenerationa Age-Friendly Living Ecosystem?

VCC 2

First steps towards cocreating an Age-Friendly Living Ecosystem

VCC 3

Researching intergenerational Age-Friendly Living Ecosystems

VCC 4

Developing an intergenerational Age-Friendly Living Ecosystem

VCC 5 Exploring opertunities for tergenerational

VCC 6

Knowledge translation and pathways towards impact

INTRODUCTION

The proposed project, in collaboration with the Scottish Intergenerational National Network (INN), co-created research ideas, policy, and practice solutions toward developing an intergenerational, age-friendly community ecosystem. This builds on Kaplan et al.'s (2017) suggestion that strong intergenerational relationships are not only at the root of healthy and productive ageing — they are also an important component of sustainable and liveable societies. By bringing together different generations in purposeful, equitable, and participatory activities we can generate space for positive intergenerational connectedness where identities are reformed, and mindsets changed.

Driven by Scottish universities and communities, the anticipated research, policy, and outputs of our project aim to contribute to the achievement of SDG 3 ("ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" (United Nations, n.d.) and SDG 11 (making "cities inclusive and human settlements, inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable") (United Nations, n.d.).

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aim, our objectives were to:

- i. Understand Scotland's particular context; and learn from other countries the current status of community and social hubs for older people, how they work, for whom and in what context, as well as what they fail to deliver.
- ii. Bring together a multi-generational group of people from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, health sciences, urban studies gerontology and technology, education, together with cross-sectoral partners in health and social care, architecture and design, city planning, welfare, housing, voluntary and community sector and public sector organisations, industry, and business to engage in knowledge co-creation.
- iii. Promote an international, translatable community of practice to sustain the living ecosystem idea beyond the remit of the project.
- iv. Develop an intergenerational AFLE model by connecting across generations and geographies using creative, accessible methods for enabling participation from people of different ages, skills, and abilities as well as from different nations.

WHAT WE DID

A community-based participatory, people-centred multimethod approach was used to emphasise: 1) communal learning and collective knowledge co-creation; 2) development of collective efficacy through mutual affirmation; 3) the need to foster intergenerational leadership; and 4) working jointly across disciplines and sectors — transcending ideational boundaries (Evans, 2014). The principles of CBPR were promoted through the reciprocal transfer of knowledge and expertise; inclusive participation; power sharing and equity; and data ownership across all partners (see Jagosh et al., 2015).

Six face-to-face interlinked Co-creation Camps (CCs) were planned, each with an intended aim, outcome, and output held monthly across six months. CCs stem from the camp model of creative-working where participants are tasked to work intensely within multidisciplinary groups to generate ideas and/or propose innovative concepts and solutions (Bager, 2011). Just as the CCs were about to commence, the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and social distancing measures caused the redesign of the CCs which were subsequently delivered as online Virtual Co-creation Camps (VCCs).

METHOD

Over the course of six virtual workshops (VCCs), this project created translational opportunities for intergenerational place-making towards developing an intergenerational and age-friendly community ecosystem

FINDINGS

The findings suggest that when developing an intergenerational age-friendly living ecosystems, we need to:

- Embed through design
- Create familiarity and safety
- Facilitate community development
- Ensure feeling and emotion are starting points for physical design
- Remain flexible for intergenerational use and change in circumstances
- Change narratives about younger and older people
- Centre connection and learning
- Centre culture and relationships
- Produce a roadmap that can be used across cultural contexts
- Innovate the use of outdoor spaces
- Focus on universal benefits of mutligenerational use of spaces
- Address intersectionality and inequality
- Explore interconnectedness
- Understand the importance of involvement at different levels
- Consider the role of technology
- Highlight the heterogeneity of older adults
- Provide opportunities for storytelling
- Think about time considerations
- Build ground up, community-led initiatives
- Raise awareness and mainstream
- Actively have fun
- Build confidence in relationships & process
- Value involvement in knowledge translation and implementation
- Understand community
- Invest in well-being

THE AFLE ROAD MAP

Taking together the findings from the six AFLE VCCs, an AFLE Road Map was developed (see below). The road map identifies the following policy and planning directions towards developing an intergenerational and AFLE, applicable across diverse geographical locations and contexts.













CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

An intergenerational age-friendly environment involves physical, social and psychological design that embeds and facilitates opportunities for people of different ages to connect on a regular basis through shared purpose and experiences and to develop cross generational relationships of mutual benefit. Implications for policy and practice are: 1) challenge and avoid ageist mindsets in policy and design and 2) address diverse needs, interests and leisure opportunities alongside design that attends to i) sensory experience of places, ii) the way in which socio-physical environments promote or generate feelings and emotions (bringing ambient environment into focus), iii) a sense of safety and belonging, and iv) enjoyment of activities such as eating, playing, and learning for and between all ages.











