

# Addressing Ageism through Intergenerational Collaboration

Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

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By Lilian Wells and Dominic Ventresca

Ontario Association of Councils on Aging



A Community for All Ages

# Outline of Presentation

1. Overview: Ontario Association of Councils on Aging (OACA) and Age-Friendly Niagara Council (ANFC)
2. Context of Ageism and Intergenerational Collaboration
  - Global perspective: United Nations and World Health Organization
  - National and Local perspectives: Age-Friendly Niagara Council
3. Examples of “Intergenerational Practice”
4. Interactive Group Discussion on other current examples and on future potential actions

# Ontario Association of Councils on Aging (OACA)

## **Vision**

An age-friendly Ontario

## **Mission**

Providing leadership, provincially, to enhance quality of life as people age with a focus on the interests, strengths and needs of older adults

## **Purpose**

- Connect the various Councils on Aging located in small and large communities in the Province of Ontario
- Education, advocacy, research and planning directed towards the development and support of “age-friendly” communities

# Ontario Association of Councils on Aging (OACA)

## Communities represented

- Cambridge
- Brant/Brantford
- Greater Arnprior
- Grey Bruce
- Halton
- Hamilton
- Kingston/Frontenac
- Niagara
- Ottawa
- Peel
- Toronto
- Windsor/Essex

# Age-Friendly Niagara Council (ANFC)

## **Vision**

An age-friendly Niagara – a community for all ages

## **Mission**

Foster a caring community that optimizes quality of life as people age

## **Mandate**

Implement the objectives identified in the *Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan* with an ongoing emphasis on an inclusive and intergenerational approach

# Niagara Community

- Includes the Regional Municipality of Niagara as the upper tier order of municipal government, and
- 12 urban and rural local municipalities



# United Nations Perspective

## United Nations Resolution: Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030)

- Adopted by General Assembly December 14, 2020
- Emphasizes “change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing”
- Recognizes “the challenges related to the enjoyment of all human rights that older persons face...bearing in mind the crucial importance of intergenerational solidarity for social development
- Calls upon the World Health Organization to lead the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing

# World Health Organization Perspective

## Global Campaign to Combat Ageism \*

- “Ageism: the stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination directed towards others or oneself on the basis of age”
- “Ageism exists when “age” is used to categorize individuals and create social divisions, with ensuing injustice and harm and lack of solidarity across generations”
- “Combating ageism... [is]... a prerequisite for good public policy on healthy ageing and for improving the day to-day lives of older people”

\* *Connecting Generations: planning and implementing interventions for intergenerational contact 2023*

# WHO Global Report on Ageism\*

- Ageism refers to how we think (stereotypes), feel (prejudice) and act (discrimination) towards others or ourselves based on age
- Ageism is everywhere, affects people of all ages, and exists in our institutions, our relationships and ourselves
- Strategies to address ageism include policy and law, educational activities and intergenerational interventions

\**WHO Global Report on Ageing 2021*

# WHO Global Report on Ageism\*

## Intergenerational Interventions

- Aim to foster interaction between different generations
- Are effective interventions for reducing ageism against older people
- Interventions that combine education and intergenerational contact have a slightly larger effect on attitudes than intergenerational interventions used alone

\* *WHO Global Report on Ageing 2021*

# World Health Organization Perspective

## Intergenerational practice:

- foster interaction among people of different ages to ensure purposeful, mutually beneficial opportunities,
- promote greater generational consciousness and learning, understanding and respect and solidarity among people and
- contribute to building more cohesive communities.

*\*Connecting Generations: planning and implementing interventions for intergenerational contact 2023*

# Age-Friendly Context (nationally)

Some contemporary scholars/writers in Canada:

- Frame the complex issue of generational relationships in terms of divisive tension and conflict
- Characterize “fairness” in terms of contemporaneous generational financial contributions to society, instead of entire life course generational contributions that extend beyond finances
- Ignore the societal pact for common good and the successes of society that have been achieved through intergenerational collaboration

# Age-Friendly Context (nationally)

Some contemporary scholars/writers in Canada (cont'd):

- Identify a “broken generational system” that appears to target the “wealth” of older people to finance Canada’s need for defence, health care and long-term care
- Fail to acknowledge the diversity of members within all age groups and ascribe stereotypic characteristics to age groups
- Fail to recognize that fair reciprocal contributions are made by generations over the life course and vary over time

# Age-Friendly Context (Locally)

The Age-Friendly Niagara Council:

- Espouses a vision of “a community for all ages”, and values inclusiveness and intergenerational collaboration
- Recognizes the common good and the diversity of individuals within all age groups
- Sees society as stronger when members of all ages collaborate, contribute accordingly, and understand the diversity and shifting needs over the entire life course

# Age-Friendly Context (locally)

The Age-Friendly Niagara Council (cont'd):

- Considers generational fairness and contributions beyond taxes, and includes:
  - Volunteering
  - Making charitable donations
  - Providing unpaid childcare and giving care to others of all ages
  - Providing mentorship and skill sharing to younger individuals
- Recognizes that older adults pay income taxes as many work past traditional “retirement” age, as well as sales and other taxes

# Age-Friendly Context (locally)

The Age-Friendly Niagara Council (cont'd):

- Taxes are paid across generations for collective benefit over the life course for:
  - education and childcare whether one has children or not,
  - transit or roads, whether one uses them or not,
  - health and social services, whether one needs them or not at that time of their life,
  - libraries, parks, arenas, recreation programs and other municipal services whether one directly uses them or not

# Age-Friendly Context (locally)

The Age-Friendly Niagara Council (cont'd):

- Strategy for Intergenerational Collaboration recognizes the opportunities, shared goals, common good and harnesses the strengths of all age groups
- An understanding that today's younger generations will be tomorrow's older generations contributes to the need for intergeneration reciprocity over the life course
- The likelihood of addressing societal challenges is much better when all minds are collaborating for the common good, irrespective of age

# WHO Examples of “Intergenerational Practice”\*

## **Music**

- Sharing music
- Intergenerational choir

## **Environment and Nature**

- Treasure hunt
- Working with animals

## **Food**

- Funny food faces
- Name that food

## **Performing Arts**

- Intergenerational drama
- Shadow puppet show

## **Technology**

- Intergenerational radio show
- Digital pen pals

## **Arts and Crafts**

- Intergenerational patchwork quilt
- Knitting, crocheting together

*\* \*Connecting Generations: planning and implementing interventions for intergenerational contact 2023*

# Niagara Examples of “Intergenerational Practice”

- Multi-generational representation on Age-Friendly Niagara Council Board
- Guest speakers at university/college classes on age-friendly movement
- Partnerships in research involving older adults, professors and students
- Student placements/practicums, mentorship of students with interest in gerontology
- Grandparent/parent/grandchildren swim and movie nights
- Intergenerational bocce tournament and picnic

**Q & A**

# **Facilitated Discussion**

**Current State:**

**What are some examples of what you are currently doing to combat ageism that you would like to share to help others?**

# Facilitated Discussion

## Future State:

**What is the “low hanging fruit” from the presentation and interactive discussion that you can use in the **short term** in your organization/community to combat ageism?**

- Policy and law?
- Educational activities?
- Intergenerational interventions?
- Other?

# Facilitated Discussion

## Future State:

**What other ideas from the presentation and interactive discussion can you use in the **longer term** in your organization/community to combat ageism?**

- Policy and law?
- Educational activities?
- Intergenerational interventions?
- Other?



# Thank You



A Community for All Ages

Ontario Association of Councils on Aging (OACA) – Making Ontario the best age-friendly province

[ontariocouncilsonaging.ca](http://ontariocouncilsonaging.ca)

Age Friendly Niagara – A Community for All Ages

[agefriendlyniagara.com](http://agefriendlyniagara.com)