Children, Youth & Environments

Center for Research and Design

Creating Livable Cities for All Ages:
Intergenerational Strategies and Initiatives

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Abstract

High-income countries at present tend to have relatively large and growing aging populations. Conversely, in most low-income countries children and youth account for very large proportions of the population. Notwithstanding these divergent demographic situations, current and projected changes in the composition and distribution of population in high- and low-income countries alike provide opportunities for strengthening weakened social safety nets, promoting economic sustainability, and improving social integration in cities by adopting development strategies that support intergenerational initiatives.

This paper first examines developments related to trends of population aging and discusses patterns and issues associated with youthful populations. It then reviews the emergence of a normative platform for creating child-friendly cities and argues that their characteristics significantly overlap with elder-friendly cities. Drawing from practical examples of intergenerational initiatives and programs from around the world, the paper identifies benefits and challenges of synergistic efforts to create livable cities for all ages. The conclusion suggests strategic steps and a framework for the formulation and implementation of appropriate policies.

DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS: Changes and Challenges

Unprecedented demographic changes, which had their origins in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and are continuing well into the twenty-first century, are transforming the world. Declines in fertility and improvements in health, reinforced by increasing longevity, have produced and will continue to produce extraordinary changes in the structure of all societies, notably the historic reversal in the proportions of young and older persons (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2002; National Institute on Aging 2007). The profound, pervasive and enduring consequences of population aging present enormous opportunities as well as enormous challenges (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2002).

Against the background of the developments sketched in a companion paper by Professor Leithaeuser, complex demographic trends play out on a global scale, interacting with economic, political and cultural changes which have implications for public policies. Urban planning aimed at supporting harmonious cities will need to respond effectively to these changes.

A recent report by the National Institute on Aging (2007) makes the following observations concerning global aging trends:

- **Family structures are changing.** As people live longer and have fewer children, family structures are transformed, leaving older people with fewer options for care.

- **Patterns of work and retirement are shifting.** Shrinking ratios of workers to pensioners and people spending a larger portion of their lives in retirement increasingly strain existing health and pension systems.

- **Social insurance systems are evolving.** As social insurance expenditures escalate, more countries are evaluating the sustainability of these systems.

- **New economic challenges are emerging.** Population aging will have dramatic effects on social entitlement programs, labor supply, trade, and savings around the globe and may demand new fiscal approaches to accommodate a changing world.

Marked differences exist between regions in the number and proportion of older persons. In the more developed regions, almost one-fifth of the population was aged 60 or older in the year 2000; by 2050, this proportion is expected to reach one-third. In the less developed regions, only 8 per cent of the population is currently over the age of 60; however, by 2050 older persons will make up nearly 20 per cent of the population (UN Department of Economic And Social Affairs, Population Division. 2002).

While today's proportions of older people typically are highest in more developed countries, the most rapid increases in older populations are occurring in the less developed world (National Institute on Aging 2007).

Most of the more developed nations have had decades to adjust to this change in age structure (Figure 1). For example, it took more than a century for France's population age 65 and over to increase from 7 to 14 percent of the total population. In contrast, this same demographic aging process will occur in two decades in Brazil (National Institute on Aging 2007).

In response to this "compression of aging," institutions must adapt quickly to accommodate a new age structure. Some less developed nations will be forced to confront issues, such as social support and the allocation of resources across generations, without the accompanying economic growth that characterized the experience of aging societies in the West. In other words, some countries may grow old before they grow rich (National Institute on Aging 2007).
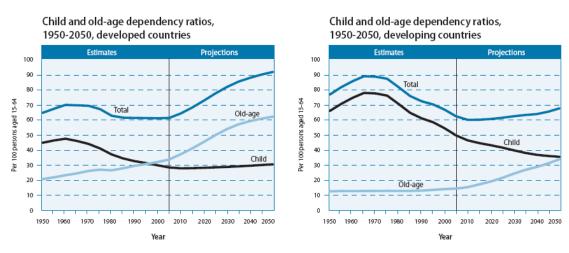
THE SPEED OF POPULATION AGING

Number of years for population age 65+ to increase from 7% to 14%

Developed Countries

Country	Years
France (1865-1980)	115
Sweden (1890-1975)	85
Australia (1938-2011)	73
US (1944-2013)	69
Canada (1944-2009)	65
Hungary (1941-1994)	53
Poland (1966-2013)	47
UK (1930-1975)	45
Spain (1947-1992)	45
Japan (1970-1996)	26

Developing Countries

Country	Years
Azerbaijan (2000-2041)	41
Chile (1998-2025)	27
China (2000-2026)	26
Jamaica (2008-2033)	25
Tunisia (2008-2032)	24
Sri Lanka (2004-2027)	23
Thailand (2003-2025)	22
Brazil (2011-2032)	21
Colombia (2017-2037)	20
Singapore (2000-2019)	19

Source: Kinsella K, Gist Y. *Older Workers, Retirement, and Pensions. A Comparative International Chartbook.* Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. National Institute on Aging, 1995; and U.S. Census Bureau. International Data Base. Available at: http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbnew.html. Accessed January 8, 2007.

As the pace of population aging is much faster in developing countries than in developed countries, developing countries will have less time to adjust to

the consequences of population aging and the associated dependency ratios (Figure 2). Moreover, population aging in the developing countries is taking place at much lower levels of socio-economic development than was the case in the developed countries (UN Department of Economic And Social Affairs, Population Division. 2002).

Figure 2 – Child and old-age dependency ratios, 1950-2050, in developed and developing countries

Source: UN/DESA.
Note: Child and old-age dependency ratios refer to the populations aged 0-14 and 65 years or over, respectively, as ratios of the working-age population aged 15-64 years. The total dependency ratio is the sum of the two.

Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007a).

Most older people today have children, and many have grandchildren and siblings. However, in countries with very low birth rates, future generations will have few if any siblings. As a result of this trend and the global trend toward having fewer children, people will have less familial care and support as they age (National Institute on Aging 2007, p. 16).

Changes in household structures occurring in the face of large numbers of AIDS deaths in parts of Africa and Asia may leave many orphans living with and supported by grandparents (e.g., Oduaran 2003; Cook and White 2006; Nyesigomwe 2006). There also are broader concerns related to young adult migration to urban areas, levels of intrafamily remittances, and return

migration of adults after extended periods of employment in other countries (National Institute on Aging, 2007, p. 17).

In addition, traditional patterns of filial care are changing (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2005; for Africa, see also Aboderin 2006 and Kamete 2007; for Asia, see also Martin 1990, Van Eewijk 2006, Keng-mun Lee 2004, and Croll 2006). Post-nuptial co-residence of children with parents has been steadily declining owing to rural-urban migration of younger generations, modern housing constraints, and rises in labor force participation by women.[2] In Japan, such living arrangements have been decreasing by about one percent annually, dropping from 86.8 percent in 1960 to 49.5% in 2000 (Yamato 2006). In Korea, the proportion of elderly living with any child decreased from 80.5 percent in 1980 to 68.2 percent in 1990 and 49.1 percent in 2000 (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific 2007).

The potential support ratio or PSR expresses a relationship between the number of persons aged 15-64 years per one person aged 65 years or older.[3] The impact of demographic aging is visible in the PSR, which between 1950 and 2000 fell from 12 to 9 people in the working ages per each person 65 years or older. By mid-century, the PSR is projected to fall to 4 working-age persons for each person 65 years or older (Figure 3). Potential support ratios have important implications for social security schemes, particularly traditional systems in which current workers pay for the benefits of current retirees (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2002). The costs of public welfare policies also present great challenges for

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[2] In the U.S. and several other western nations, there has been a countervailing trend as difficult employment prospects are leading young people to defer leaving the parental home to form new households. It seems reasonable to assume that this recent development will reverse itself once economic circumstances improve.

[3] The term "dependency burden" is often used to denote implications of this relationship for potential workers. It is not used here because the meanings associated with it are not consistent with the interest in harmonious intergenerational relationships in this paper.

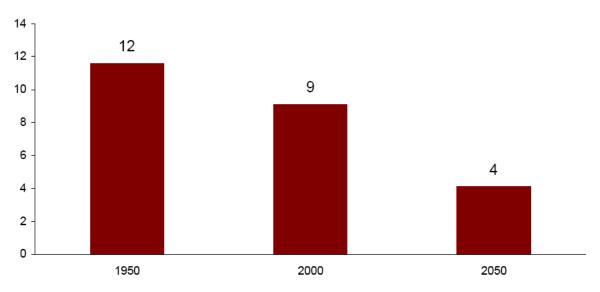societies that have traditionally relied on filial care arrangements (see, e.g., Yamato 2006; Aboderin 2006).

Figure 3 - Potential support ratio (PSR): world, 1950-2050

Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2002.

In some countries the share of gross domestic product devoted to social insurance for older people is expected to more than double in upcoming years. Countries, therefore, may have only a few years to intensify efforts before demographic effects come to bear (National Institute on Aging 2007).

While the preceding discussion focused on the economic and human service aspects of current demographic trends, concerns elsewhere have focused on security issues related to geopolitical considerations (e.g., Jackson and Howe 2008). Of greater interest in the present context are the implications for urban planning and urban development policy. Research has clearly shown the preferences of elders for "aging-in-place," so they can grow older in their own homes and without disruption of long established social support networks in their local community (Partners for Livable Communities 2008;

see also the toolkit in Ball, n.d.). The AdvantAge Initiative in the US is an example of a coordinated effort to help counties, cities, and towns prepare for the growing number of older adults who are "aging-in-place" while creating livable communities for people of all ages.[4] Aging-in-place also makes good economic sense for governments, as it is a less costly alternative to institutional care. Consistent with this thinking, there has been growing interest in establishing criteria for elder-friendly communities (e.g., AARP 2005; Blue Moon 2006; National Association of Area Agencies for Aging 2007). As we shall see next, this development parallels the emergence of an international movement to create child-friendly cities (e.g., Riggio 2002; Woolcock and Steele 2008).

TOWARDS CHILD-FRIENDLY CITIES

There are more young people today than ever before. Almost half of the global population is under the age of 24; 1.2 billion people are younger than 15. Within developing regions, it is the least-developed countries that remain younger than the rest of the world: in 2005, the global median age was 28 years, but in 10 least-developed African countries, the median age was 16 or younger (UN Habitat 2006).

The effects of these demographic trends must be seen in the context of migratory patterns. It is typically youthful populations that leave rural areas for urban destinations in search of jobs, adding to already large numbers of youth living in cities in the low-income countries. Those who leave their home country, for economic and other reasons, are also predominantly young people (McKenzie 2007). A consequence of these migration flows are impoverished communities of origin where those who remain behind, mostly older people, find themselves with diminished or no supports during a time in their lives when they tend to become more dependent on assistance (for example, for Africa, see Aboderin 2006; see Kreager 2006 for a study of three Indonesian communities; see Round 2006 for Russia). This becomes

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[4] See http://www.vnsny.org/advantage/index.html .

especially problematic when government programs are absent or insufficient. At the same time, young people in cities find themselves without the social support networks that were traditionally provided by older adults and that are especially important in coping with poverty.

Estimates suggest that 60 percent of the world's population will live in cities by 2030 and that as many as 60 percent of urban dwellers will be under the age of 18. Most urbanization will occur in cities in the low-income countries, where already 30 percent of the population lives below official poverty lines (Ruble et al. 2003, p. 1). Many urban dwellers have limited or no access to basic services, employment, and adequate housing. The challenges arising from this urban growth exceed the capacity of most cities to meet even the most basic needs of large proportions of the urban population (see UN-HABITAT 2003, 2004; Jack n.d.). For this reason, investing in urban children and youth is not only a question of human rights and social justice. It is also about potential economic benefits and increasing citizen security, as young people are supported to become integrated members of society (Ruble et al. 2003). Indeed, much of the literature on the implications of the so called "youth bulge" focuses on economic consequences and opportunities, national and international security concerns, and the purported relationship between them (e.g., Chaaban 2008; Lam 2007).

In addition to these policy perspectives, there are also aspects of planning that affect the experience of growing up in cities and access of the younger generation to opportunities for healthy development. These considerations have spurred interest in the creation of child-friendly cities. Such cities are different from most contemporary cities the planning and development of which has supported first and foremost the production and consumption of goods and services. A further goal has traditionally been efficient operation of auxiliary systems such as transportation, communication, and utility infrastructure. The primary beneficiaries of this approach are the chief producers and consumers: paid adult workers and the organizations that

employ them. The needs of other groups usually take a back seat. This is especially so in market-based societies where access to goods and services is based on ability to pay a price that guarantees suppliers a profit. Those who cannot translate their needs into a market demand are largely left out. They include people with low disposable incomes ("the urban poor"), people with disabilities, many elders, and children. Among these disadvantaged groups, children deserve special attention because they, more than others, lack political and economic power.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the General Assembly in 1989[5], created a basis to address this lack of representation. It spells out many rights of children, including the right "to have their voices heard in all matters affecting them." State governments have a mandate to support implementation of CRC principles at the local level. Although most city governments have been slow to establish participatory processes with children and youth, there is a growing interest in many countries to promote "child-friendly cities" (CFCs). Following the Habitat II Summit in Istanbul in 1996, UNICEF established a CFC Secretariat as part of its Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy. Although its operations were discontinued in December 2005 owing to a re-prioritization of funding, its web site remains and a CFC network in Europe now organizes an annual conference. Similar networks exist in Canada and Australia. Recent years have seen CFC declarations and aspirations from London to San Salvador and from St. Petersburg to Amman, and exciting CFC initiatives and programs are underway in many Latin American, African, and Asian countries.

The next section outlines normative frameworks that have recently made a focus on children and youth into a higher priority for urban policy. These policies increasingly call for programs that support the exercise of agency by young people, enabling and empowering them to act as productive participants in the development of their communities.

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[5] See: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm.

New normative frameworks

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the international community began to reconceptualize security more in terms of people, and less of states. Forefronting people engendered a slow and contested process to articulate and implement new normative policy frameworks around human rights. The World Summit for Children in 1990 was the first of a series of global conferences driven by a growing awareness of a single world that shared common problems requiring non-confrontational, cooperative approaches. It adopted a Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action for implementing the Declaration, which followed the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) one year earlier. The CRC, since ratified by all but two countries, recognizes, *inter alia*, the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for development and the right to have their voices heard on all matters that affect them. It stipulates non-negotiable standards and obligations and declares that states shall provide material assistance and support programs.

The U.N. Habitat Agenda, adopted at the City Summit of Istanbul in 1996, maintains this concern with the well-being of children, but brings into focus the significance of the larger urban context, providing that:

> *"Governments at all levels, including local authorities, should continue to identify and disseminate best practices, and should develop and apply shelter and human settlements development indicators, including those that reflect the rights and wellbeing of children."[6]*

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[6] Ibid.

It further states that:

> "...the wellbeing of children is a critical indicator
> of a healthy society.[7]"

In the wake of the Habitat Agenda, UNICEF established the Child-Friendly Cities secretariat, which stimulated work around the world to make cities more supportive of children's needs. These efforts led to the creation of a set of assessment criteria that have not, however, so far been systematically used in evaluation research.[8]

In 2001, the UN Secretary General reported in "*We the Children*" on progress made since the World Summit of 1990. His report also noted where there was still room for improvement, or "unfinished business."

In a follow-up to that summit, at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, held in 2002, children from 154 countries for the first time played an official role in a General Assembly session, serving as delegates from governments and NGOs and producing the statement, "*A World Fit for Us.*"[9] This Special Session also resulted in a global agenda, "*A World Fit for Children*,"[10] that laid out a plan to bridge the gap between "the great promises" and the "modest achievements" of the 1990s, which was assessed in a mid-decade review in December 2007. The Millennium Development Goals, approved by world leaders in 2002, specify various targets related specifically to children, including a reduction in child mortality and achievement of universal primary education, to be attained by 2015.

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[7] UN Habitat Agenda: Goals and Principles, Commitments and the Global Plan of Action (1996).
[8] See UNICEF (2004).
[9] UNICEF (2002). Available at http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/docs_new/documents/wffc-en.pdf.
[10] Ibid.

The emergence of these new normative frameworks, briefly reviewed here, put forth rights-based policy platforms that set the stage for an increasing emphasis on children living in poverty as a priority in urban development policies.[11]

Criteria

The creation of CFCs must be placed in the context of a policy and planning broader framework that is captured by a provisional set of criteria, proposed to evaluate how well cities meet children's needs and to inform CFC policies and programs.[12] According to these criteria, broadly derived from rights articulated in the CRC, a CFC includes:

- **Physical environments** that respond to the particular needs and concerns of children – for instance, safe crossing zones on the way to school; safe play spaces; toilets that are child-friendly. Aspects of hospitals, schools, transport systems, traffic management, parks, common space, water supply, waste removal, and the like, that help to make cities more child friendly.

- **Information, communication and social mobilization** to promote the concept of CFCs and raise awareness of children's requirements with regard to the physical environment.

- **Methods to involve children** in assessing and improving their own neighborhoods and give them a voice in local decision-making processes.

- **Plans of action** with and without the participation of children that aim at improving children's physical environments

- **Training packages/ methodologies** for different target groups (decision makers, planners, schoolteachers, parents, children, etc) focused on making improvements of children's physical environments

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[11] Age criteria to define "children" and youth" overlap, but the focus in this report is specifically on children, referenced here as those under 18 years of age. There exist additional agreements and policy documents that concern themselves with youth, which are not included in this review.
[12] Unpublished document, 2003, Eliana Riggio Chaudhuri and Eva Clarhäll, Rädda Barnen/CFC Secretariat, Innocenti Research Centre, UNICEF, Florence, Italy.

- **Laws, rules, regulations and planning norms** that take children's needs and views into account.
- **Municipal-level institutions focused on children's rights** (a special child unit or person within a municipality such as a children's ombudsman).
- **Monitoring systems** to assess the quality of the environment for children
- **Planning and impact indicators** to evaluate impacts of municipal or community actions on children.

CONVERGENCE OF CHILD-, YOUTH- AND ELDER-FRIENDLY CITIES: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Benefits of Integration

In the Tokiwadaira district, on the outskirts of Tokyo, a landlord visited his tenant only to discover a skeleton inside the apartment. The tenant had died three years before. None of the neighbors had noticed the man was missing. His bank kept on making rent payments until his account was empty and a rent check finally bounced, prompting the landlord's visit and the gruesome discovery (Hideyuki 2007).

Situations of such isolation are inconceivable in socially integrated communities with mutually supportive relationships across the generations. Aside from relatively rare, but not unique, cases as just mentioned, what are the benefits of intergenerational integration and harmonious cities for people of all ages? Positive outcomes can be organized into the following interrelated categories.

- **Resources**. Savings in resources will result from three factors, with pragmatic and substantive aspects. First, economically and socially elders represent tremendous underused resources. Their greater involvement in the lives of children and youth will free up this potential

with very little investment of public resources. A good example is ExperienceCorps in the USA, in which seniors tutor elementary school children (Carlson et al. 2004; Glass et al. 2004). RespectAbility, a similar program of the U.S. National Council on Aging, operates with a broader focus on nonprofits. Programs can also take advantage of internet technology, enabling elders to tutor students more flexibly without barriers to spatial mobility (Middlemiss and Meyer 2004). In one study of an informal science education initiative, co-learning by 1,568 children aged 5-13 and 1,471 seniors resulted in significant social and cognitive gains (Morgan et al. 2007). A randomized controlled trial in Brazil found that structured intergenerational activities had positive effects on some aspects of social capital for both adolescents and elderly people (De Souza and Grundy 2007). Denver Public Schools has a GrandPals intergenerational program, while Full Circle Inter-Generational has been organizing several health- and education-related programs that bring together youth and elders with benefits to both. Health-related intergenerational initiatives are also becoming increasingly important in Africa as communities struggle with the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on parental care (e.g., Oduaran 2006; Nyesigomwe 2006). Hope Meadows, a neighborhood in Illinois, US, in which elders receive housing benefits in return for mentorship of foster children, is another excellent example of advantages of elders as resources in intergenerational arrangements (Smith 2001; see also Kuehne 2005).

Second, the reverse is also true; children and youth are valuable community resources, typically unrecognized. Their greater involvement through volunteer activity and service-learning can greatly benefit elders. Wonderful examples of such efforts already exist. For instance, GenerationLink is a classroom-based initiative that enlists high-school students to teach seniors how to use the Internet. Intergenerational Innovations in Seattle, Washington, has similarly

established a "Computer Training Corps" (Kaplan 2002). However, there has been no systematic facilitation of such efforts. Importantly, capitalizing on youth and elders as resources for each other and for the community at large shifts attention away from common misperceptions of these populations as burdens on society and instead offers the much more positive view that youth and elders represent untapped assets with valuable contributions to make (see, e.g., Seedsman 2006).

Third, intergenerational integration of urban livability initiatives will result in more efficient use of physical facilities and funding sources. For example, schools can be used for meal services that cater to elders and can also serve as sites for the delivery of social and other programs targeting elders during after-school hours. There are good examples of such multifunctional use of schools throughout the day. Similarly, senior centers can be set up to include child-care and after-school programs for children and youth. Such shared usage sites allow local government and school districts to respond more flexibly to demographic shifts, obviating the need for demolition and construction of specialized facilities designed narrowly to accommodate a single age group. The resulting flexibility reduces the costs of developing appropriate physical infrastructure. It also fosters intergenerational interactions that help create social capital and strengthen community. Good examples are the more than 500 "Mehrgenerationenhaeuser" in Germany. After five-year start-up funding from the Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth, these multigenerational centers are expected to be self-sustaining through entrepreneurial activity such as running a café, renting costumes, and offering creative and educational programs.

A further benefit of integration will come from economies of scale created by streamlining staff and eliminating duplicative processes.

Examples of intergenerational learning centers and similar multi-use sites include Denver's Elder Place at Brown Elementary School, for instance, which is a Medicaid-certified older adult day program co-located in a public elementary school that intergenerational programs in music and movement designed to increase "brain power" for both elders and children. Cases such as this provide a valuable foundation for more systematic policies that support integration across the lifespan (see also Whitehouse et al. 2000).

- **Policy Formulation and Implementation.** Aside from more efficient use of human, physical and financial resources, integration will facilitate the formulation and implementation of policies and programs. Rather than having to compare and weigh competing alternatives, trading off one population group against another in a zero sum game, policy makers will have a more integrated picture, showing overlaps and connections that are mutually reinforcing and supportive.[13]

- **Political Mobilization.** Intergenerational integration will enable representative organizations of child, youth and elder interests to join forces in pursuing a unified policy agenda. Their pooled resources and coordinated advocacy will be more effective, and their media coverage will be more sustained. No longer perceived as special interest groups, but seen as representative of a broad spectrum of the population, the issues they champion will find more electoral support. This will be especially the case at the local level, where civic engagement and political awareness tends to be precede and be greater than at the national level.

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[13] Cost savings may induce policy makers to make decisions that only on the face of it create intergenerational situations (e.g., co-location of a school and senior services), because other factors (for example, establishing intergenerational programs, training staff, and embracing families) remain absent. In other words, physical change in itself will usually be insufficient.

Sustained Community Development. This is the web of support woven into a community when people know one another and begin, often in very small ways, to take responsibility for making their community a better place. Making Connections, a program of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, fosters this dynamic in disadvantaged neighborhoods in cities across the US. Policies to develop a shared vision of livability in urban communities can lead to new programs that make neighborhoods safer. At the same time, neighbors of all ages may begin to watch out for one another and join forces to reduce risk factors for crime and violence, helping create the "fertile soil" in which good policy needs to be planted. Such approaches contrast with deficit-based perspectives that focus narrowly on problems, seeking instead to build on the developmental assets of children and youth and the communities in which they live (Scales et al. 2001). "Communities for all Ages" is another example of an asset-based, community-wide, multi-agency effort (Henkin et al., 2005).

Challenges to Intergenerational Integration
Attaining the benefits just described will not be easy. Integration of the child/youth- and elder-oriented initiatives faces two types of challenges, related to, respectively, characteristics of the key stakeholders and the populations they serve. Both sets of factors lead organizations to focus inward and operate in silos.

- First, stakeholders typically have **organizational missions and mandates** that are age-specific. For example, the federally mandated Area Agencies on Aging in the US have missions to ensure coordinated, accessible services for persons aged 60 and over to live independent, meaningful and dignified lives. In contrast, Boys & Girls clubs are youth guidance organizations dedicated to promoting the educational, vocational, social and character development of girls and boys ages 7 to 18. Organizations representing the interests of aging populations may offer providing home-help services, whereas youth-

serving organizations may focus on skill development programs. A broader and more cost effective view would allow organizations to support initiatives that combine these goals, such that elders could share their experiences and expertise to benefit youth, while youth could reciprocate by performing household chores or running errands for elders with mobility constraints.

- Stakeholder organizations also have **separate funding streams** earmarked for the age groups they serve (Henkin and Butts 2002). Often funds are allocated to organizations for specific activities and target populations. Even if they are inclined towards collaborating across age groups, organizations may be restricted from doing so by their financial statutes and contractual obligations.

- Further, children and youth, as well as elders, may be in situations of disadvantage. Particularly those of low incomes and minority backgrounds are often in the social and economic margins. One practical implication of this fact is that they are restricted in their mobility, making the **logistics of social interactions and participation** more difficult, a problem compounded by the constraints of school schedules. Most recently, skyrocketing fuel prices have raised transportation costs with the effect of severely curtailing services and activities for impacted youth and elder populations (e.g., Leland 2008).

- In addition, **mutual misperceptions are not uncommon.**

    "I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words. When I was a boy, we were taught to be discrete and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly disrespectful and impatient of restraint."

Attributed variously to Plato, to Socrates, to Aristotle, to Cicero, to Hesiod, to 'an old monk', to an Assyrian cuneiform tablet, and to an ancient Egyptian papyrus, regardless of its authenticity, this quote well illustrates denigrating views of youth common among adults. A recent British survey found that 71% of press articles concerning young people had a negative tone.[14] Likewise, according to federal research in the US, the media portray young people as alcoholics and drug abusers, criminals, bludgers, lazy, complaining and aggressive.[15] Conversely, research has also found evidence of stereotypical images of elders in widely different cultures from Nigeria to the U.S. to China (Okoye 2005; Okoye and Obikeze 2005; Boduroglu et al. 2006). Elimination of "ageism" across the lifespan is necessary so that those who engage in development of their communities do so on equal footing and on the basis of mutual respect (Pain 2005).

- Another potential issue is that children/youth and elders typically have **different levels of skill, knowledge and experience** that can hinder joint activities. Young people often need training and practice to learn how to be effective when talking in public, conducting meetings, collecting and analyzing data, and preparing and presenting recommendations. These different levels of preparation must be considered by local authorities planning to start intergenerational initiatives.

- Finally, children, youth and elders are populations where frequent **life transitions undermine the sustainability** of relationships and processes. Youth may move away to attend another school or look for a job elsewhere, and when they become young adults they do not always transfer their experience to the next cohort. Elders may

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[14] Published in the magazine *Young People Now* (13-19 October 2004). See
http://www.greenbelt.org.uk/index.php?p=549
[15] See http://www.kqed.org/w/ymc/empowered/stereotypes.html

become too frail to be able to continue their engagement. Other threats to sustainability are organizational in nature, having to do with staffing structures, staff training policies, administrative buy-in, etc. All of these and other challenges are real but can be addressed through supportive policies and planning.

AREAS OF OVERLAP

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.

The long term-outcomes contributing to a livable city for children and youth are the same long-term outcomes that will create a livable city for elders. A livable city for all ages requires a supportive:

- **physical environment**, incl. land use mix, transportation network, housing, and community facilities;
- **social and economic environment**, incl. the local network of individuals, institutions and community organizations, and opportunities for employment;
- **services system**, incl. retail and commercial services, homecare providers, community and public agencies, and medical service providers; and

- **system of governance and civic engagement**, incl. participation in political processes, empowerment, and opportunities for community involvement.

Working collaboratively within this broad framework (see Figure 4) while drawing on existing strengths in local communities, synergy will be significant in the following priority areas for policy:

- **Appropriate regulations**. Local authorities must remove regulatory barriers that hinder community livability and multi-use sites, while establishing regulations for good community design and housing for healthy living, transportation, and social interactions. These recommended changes are based on experiences with universal design (e.g., Preiser and Ostroff 2001; Dumbaugh 2008) and shared facilities serving multiple community functions.[16] Other government interventions relate to tax relief for grandparent caregivers and incentives for housing schemes supporting intergenerational relationships (e.g., Beltran and Smith 2003; Thang and Mehta 2006).

- **Safe and accessible environments**. Local authorities need to create safe pedestrian-friendly streets, parks and other public spaces, crosswalks, traffic-calming designs, sidewalks. Examples of the benefits of such interventions come from the planning and neighborhood planning and design principles behind the Dutch "woonerf" (Karsten and Van Vliet- 2006) and the British home zone (Gill 2006) and cyclovia experiences which spread from Colombia to Peru, France, Italy, the U.S. and elsewhere.[17]

- **Governance and civic engagement**. Local governments must include youth and elders as part of decision-making processes and to

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[16] See guidebook, fact sheet and video by Generations United on http://www.gu.org/IG_Sh8191325.asp
[17] See http://www.cyclovia.org/.

increase social capital among generations. This work can build on ongoing efforts to promote participation in local government and community processes. Civic engagement and empowerment of children and youth is becoming more accepted and appropriate methods have been developed (e.g., Commonwealth Youth Programme 2007; Driskell 2002; Gallagher 2004; UN HABITAT 2004; UNFPA 2007; Woollcombe 2006, 2007). UN Habitat's support for these efforts has been expressed by Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of its Human Settlements Programme:

> *"...youth are a resource, in fact the most important and strategic resource a country can have. Youth are agents of social change; they take on a very active role in addressing the issues that affect them. We have examples of many youth led processes that are working and making a difference in society even with minimal resources. What is required is to provide these initiatives with an enabling environment that will facilitate their replication".[18]*

The empowerment of elders and acknowledgement of their agency in urban development is also slowly gaining currency but still contending with oft prevailing, mistaken notions of predominant dependence (see, e.g., Boermel 2006; Vera-Sanso 2006). Of special interest in the context of cities for all ages are participatory intergenerational community building initiatives (see Kaplan et al. 2004 and Lawrence-Jacobsen 2006 for examples).

- **Innovative food assistance/nutrition programs**. Governments must encourage local food production, support small scale local

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[18] Commonwealth Youth Forum Opening ceremony: Statement by Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations. Entebbe, Uganda, 14 November 2007. Available at http://hq.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=5454&catid=14&typeid=8&subMenuId=0

agriculture, and expand use of existing meal sites to multiple generations. This work can build on existing programs and practices around community gardens, nutrition, active living and obesity reduction (e.g., Doyle 2002; Liddicoat et al. 2007; Lautenschlager and Smith 2007; Bryant 2008). Related efforts focus on environmental education and the preservation of natural resources in urban areas (Mayer-Smith and Peterat 2006).

- **Culture change**. Local governments must engage in social marketing so residents and decision makers will think of cities foremost in terms of their livability for all people, irrespective of age of ability, enacting choices guided by commensurate values. This work can build on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging of 2002 and is consistent with growing international endorsement of the mission of InterGeneration Day.[19] For example, in Canada, the Finding Home™: Belonging, Meaning and Dialogue Program is a neighborhood-based intergenerational initiative the mandate of which is to build residents' capacity for fostering a sense of belonging. Through train-the-trainer methodology, participants in the program develop skills in cross-cultural competencies, community engagement, asset mapping, dialogue and a values-based approach to address personal, community and global challenges. Unique to the Finding Home™ initiative, it engages youth and seniors from diverse sectors such as local Indigenous; newcomer; lesbian, gay, transgendered & bisexual (LGTB); and people with disability communities, resulting in the production of community guides, art and a neighborhood intergenerational dialogue about finding and creating a sense of home together.[20]

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[19] See http://www.intergenerationday.org/index.html
[20] For more information see the Justice Institute of British Columbia's Community and Social Justice Division at: www.jibc.ca/dialogue.

Process Towards Integration

Logic Model for Planning and Evaluation. The process towards achieving harmonious cities for all ages can be described by a logic model, which makes it possible to work back from its overall goal of creating a livable city for all age groups to the increasing specificity of long-term, mid-term, and short term outcomes, and more immediate "SMART" objectives the attainment of which links current actions to resource requirements.

By systematically integrating child/youth- and elder-oriented objectives and outcomes, it is possible to elaborate and refine such a logic model in order to guide convergence of local policies and programmatic activities in areas of overlap (Figures 4A-B). For example, a livable city for all ages requires a supportive physical environment, which may include safe and walkable environments with a mix of land uses, shared multi-purpose community facilities and adaptable housing, all of which support aging-in-place and intergenerational relationships. Likewise, a livable city for all also requires supportive governance and civic engagement processes, which may include part-time positions for youth and elders in city agencies and representation on city committees through a job placement program linked to intergenerational mentoring and skill-building.

The sequenced outcomes in Figures 4A-B serve as examples only and do not show the many overlaps and connections that exist between outcomes and actions. This kind of model is not intended as a rigid plan, but as a guide to action with continuous feedback loops to enable monitoring and evaluation of ongoing processes and intermediate outcomes, informing adjustments of interventions that are not effective or produce unintended results. Indeed, research must be a critical component of intergenerational policies and practices. Cities will need to develop indicators that measure the number, content, and quality of intergenerational practices and their impact on intergenerational cohesion and community integration more broadly (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2007c). The Intergenerational

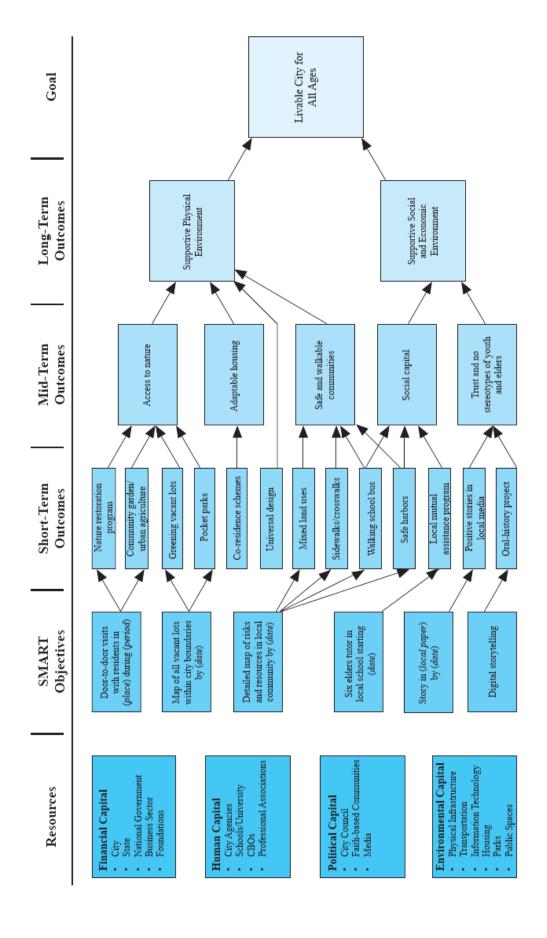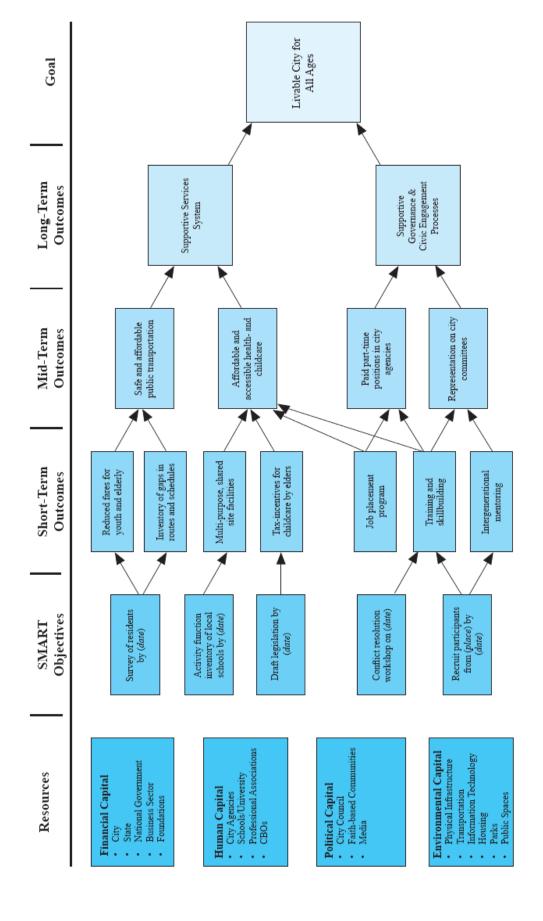**Figure 4A - Logic model for a livable city for all ages**

Figure 4B – Logic model for a livable city for all ages

Resources	SMART Objectives	Short-Term Outcomes	Mid-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes	Goal

Financial Capital
- City
- State
- National Government
- Business Sector
- Foundations

Human Capital
- City Agencies
- Schools/University
- Professional Associations
- CBOs

Political Capital
- City Council
- Faith-based Communities
- Media

Environmental Capital
- Physical Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Information Technology
- Housing
- Parks
- Public Spaces

SMART Objectives:
- Survey of residents by (date)
- Activity function inventory of local schools by (date)
- Draft legislation by (date)
- Conflict resolution workshop on (date)
- Recruit participants from (place) by (date)

Short-Term Outcomes:
- Reduced fares for youth and elderly
- Inventory of gaps in routes and schedules
- Multi-purpose, shared site facilities
- Tax-incentives for childcare by elders
- Job placement program
- Training and skillbuilding
- Intergenerational mentoring

Mid-Term Outcomes:
- Safe and affordable public transportation
- Affordable and accessible health- and childcare
- Paid part-time positions in city agencies
- Representation on city committees

Long-Term Outcomes:
- Supportive Services System
- Supportive Governance & Civic Engagement Processes

Goal:
- Livable City for All Ages

Solidarity Model (Bengtson and Roberts 1991) and the Depth of Intergenerational Engagement Scale (Kaplan 2002) are useful starting points for the development of locally appropriate research tools.

As well, it is important not to lose sight of each population group's unique requirements. Policies must take advantage of areas of overlap, but they must also acknowledge distinct needs of each population group.

CONCLUSION

Urban development plans offer useful scaffolding for tying community voices of youth, elders and others to issues in the five policy priority areas described above, with policy implications for the four environments identified as being key to a livable city for all ages. Relevant as well is the participation of intergovernmental organizations and their working relationship with local authorities. Another framework for policy integration comes from UNICEF's work on child-friendly cities and selected sources listed at the end of this paper. There now also exist organizations that offer valuable resources for intergenerational initiatives, including concrete examples from a variety of areas.[21] The *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* also provides research articles and field reports on programs and policies from around the world.

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. From this process a proposal may emerge for a pilot in a few local areas, selected because of their high numbers of youth and elders and their potential for mobilizing resources

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[21] See, for example, the International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes <http://www.icip.info/>; Generations United < http://www.gu.org/>; European Approaches to Inter-Generational Lifelong Learning < http://www.eagle-project.eu/welcome-to-eagle>; the Beth Johnson Foundation Centre for Intergenerational Practice < http://www.centreforip.org.uk/>; and PSU Intergenerational Programs and Aging < http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Global.html>

(e.g., local presence of possible partner organizations and prospects for creating support networks). Organizationally, there may be an Advisory Committee that will include youth and elders from the participating partners. Resources will be needed to move forward with planning for such an integrated effort. A key element will be a facilitator to coordinate work, with adequate staff and operations support.

A recent expert group meeting on strengthening economic and social ties through intergenerational solidarity emphasized building on existing social networks, noting that it does not require major public sector interventions (UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs 2007c). Nonetheless, governments remain crucial partners in more broad-based arrangements that include also the community, family and private sector. This is so in general but particularly in cultures where values of filial care have been changing, as is the case in many African and East Asian countries, prompting a reinterpretation of resource flows within families and a reconsideration of the role of government in modernization processes (see Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific 2007; Aboderin 2006; Croll 2006; Yamato 2006). Local government is especially important in regards to aspects of urban planning and community development, which cannot be left to either private market forces, or a complementary economy created by volunteers.

Present circumstances position cities uniquely to become national models for intergenerational approaches to building strong supportive networks in communities with high populations of children, youth and elders in greatest need. Urban policy makers across many countries are facing similar challenges related to perceptions that aging populations (the so called "silver tsunami") inevitably set up resource competition across age groups in an era of fiscal constraints. The need for cost-effective solutions is often magnified by concerns about anticipated cuts or capped growth in health and social service programs and benefits.

However, a review of the literature and observations on the ground enable us to develop a keen appreciation for the complexity and interlocking nature of community issues and the importance of responding to these issues in the connected ways in which residents experience them. Rather than a "silver tsunami," there is a "golden wave of opportunity." Urban livability policies are not necessarily a zero-sum game. Programs and actions that benefit one population group are not inevitably at the cost of another population group. Synergistic approaches, where the sum of collaborative work is greater than the total of disparate efforts, will produce more cost-effective solutions and create more harmonious communities. We must open up opportunities for thinking differently and acting differently to ensure the long-term well-being of the world's urban residents. Organizationally and politically, cities are well poised to develop the kinds of innovative policies that are needed to address the pressing challenges of changing demographics confronting governments around the world.

Acknowledgement

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