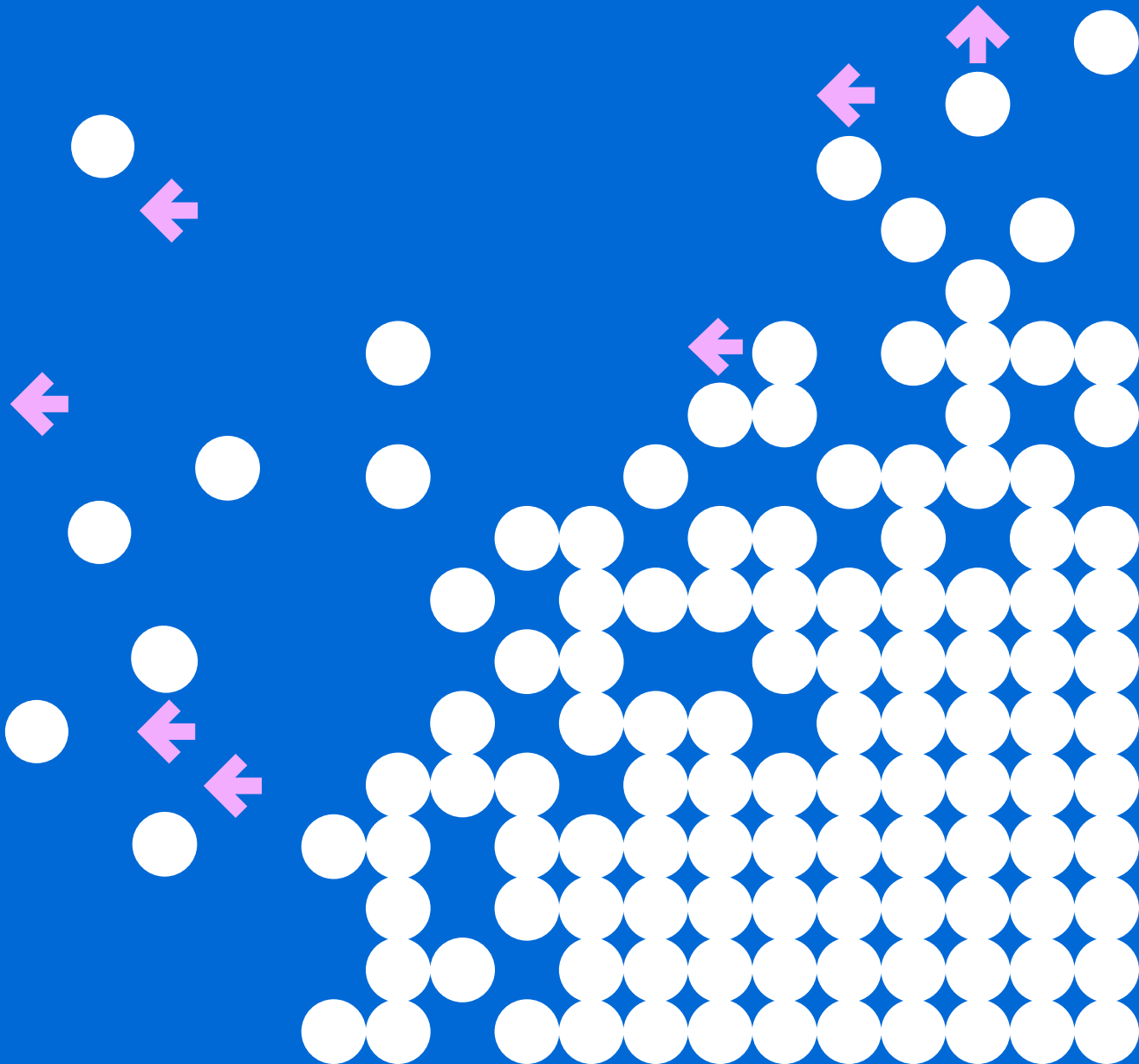


FIND

PATH ONE



Path one

The 20th Century brought about a significant shift in the way generations are separated. To understand why, we draw inspiration from Marc Freedman, founder of CoGenerate, who contextualizes the reasons behind our current lack of intergenerational interaction and why it's crucial to alter this course. As Freedman wisely puts it:

“There is a mismatch between the life course that we have inherited, which is, you jam all the education into the first part of life, all the work into the middle, and all the leisure into the end. That model might have worked when life expectancy was 60 or 65 but it’s not designed for the new longer lives people are already living. It’s not financially possible and it’s not psychologically viable. Older people need what we all need, what Freud described as love and work. A sense of connection, of bonds that matter deeply, and a reason to get up in the morning. But for so many decades older people have been consigned to a world that is both isolated and cut off from that sense of purpose. We consciously and systematically separate people by age (...) how do you learn to cooperate with someone of a different age if you don’t even have contact with them?”

Finding people to connect with is a challenge in our age-segregated world, and some of our innovators focus on creating environments that enable deeper connections across generational lines.

How do we accomplish this? ↙

Breaking down age barriers:

Age segregation, where generations remain largely isolated from each other, needs to be dismantled by acknowledging the value of connecting with and learning from individuals of different ages.

Focusing on authenticity:

To connect with people from various generations in a genuine and sincere manner requires identifying common interests and shared experiences that transcend our age differences, fostering an authentic connection.

Creating spaces for intergenerational and collaboration:

We need to rethink and redesign our communities, educational and work institutions, and cities to facilitate encounters between people of all ages. This entails a reimagining of our environments to promote cross-generational friendships and encounters.

Spotlight Organization: Cycling Without Age

Cycling Without Age, founded in Denmark, stands as an example of transcending age boundaries. The initiative pairs volunteers with older individuals for leisurely bike rides with the goal of rekindling the joy of movement and companionship. By providing a tangible means for intergenerational interaction, it not only enriches the lives of older people but also reminds us of the shared laughter and stories that unite us all.

The initiative has grown into a movement operating as chapters around the world. It is based on individuals' motivation and demonstrates how we can challenge age-related stereotypes and redefine the relationships between different generations. The older people who are engaged are often those who live in care homes or are living independently but without much intergenerational connection. Younger volunteers, or pilots, find them through an organized Cycling Without Age chapter, and together they share the simple joy of cycling. Through shared experiences and interactions, it dismantles preconceived notions about the limitations of age and reinforces the idea that each generation has much to offer the other.

What sets Cycling without Age apart is its emphasis on authenticity in intergenerational interactions. The connection between the generations is based on five guiding principles that facilitate authenticity: generosity, slowness, storytelling, relationships, and without age. The act of cycling serves as a common ground where the young and old can connect genuinely. It's not about

superficial or forced connections but rather about finding common interests and fostering relationships based on shared experiences. This authenticity is the foundation upon which lasting bonds are built.

Ole Kassow's initiative also addresses the issue of urban design and how it can either facilitate or hinder intergenerational gatherings. By introducing cycling programs that bring together older people and volunteers, Cycling without Age transforms the public space into a platform for connection. Parks, streets, and cityscapes become the backdrop for intergenerational conversations and shared moments of joy.

“We need to think about how our communities are designed so that people of all ages can connect.”

Ole Kassow

In essence, Cycling without Age embodies the principles of authenticity and creating spaces for intergenerational gatherings. It showcases how a simple, inclusive activity like cycling can become a powerful catalyst for bridging generational divides. This organization serves as an inspiring model for how we can transform our communities and societies by promoting genuine connections and building a future where age is not a barrier to meaningful relationships.

Tool One:

Build a Cycling Without Age Chapter

DIFFICULTY: ●●●○○

FOR: INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Cycling Without Age is a global movement that aims to provide older individuals with the joy of cycling. This guide offers step-by-step instructions, insights, and best practices for initiating and sustaining a Cycling Without Age chapter, enabling community members to facilitate bike rides for older people and promote intergenerational connections.

BASICS:

When: A Cycling Without Age chapter can be started at any time, but thorough planning and community engagement are key.

Time Needed: The time required can vary depending on community size, resources, and engagement, but the planning phase may take several months.

Materials: Access to bicycles, or trishaws, which are designed for passengers, a pool of volunteer pilots, and support from local organizations or businesses are essential.

Objective: The objective is to establish a local chapter of Cycling Without Age to provide older people and less mobile community members with the opportunity to experience the joy of cycling, enjoy outdoor activities, and foster intergenerational connections.

STEPS:

1. Research and Assessment: Identify the need and interest in your community for such a program. Evaluate potential partners, resources, and support available.

2. Build a Team: Recruit volunteers who are passionate about the cause and willing to commit their time and energy to become “pilots” responsible for cycling with the passengers.

3. Secure Bicycles and Equipment: Acquire suitable bicycles that accommodate the needs of older people comfortably. This may involve fundraising or seeking donations from local businesses.

4. Training: Provide comprehensive training for volunteers, covering cycling safety, communication, and interacting with older people.

5. Engage with Older People: Partner with local senior centers, retirement homes, or organizations to identify and connect with potential people. Build relationships with these individuals and assess their needs.

6. Launch and Promotion: Organize a launch event to introduce Cycling Without Age to the community. Use local media, social media, and community outreach to promote the chapter.

7. Ride Scheduling: Develop a system for scheduling rides and coordinating volunteers and older people. Ensure flexibility to accommodate different needs.

8. Safety and Documentation: Establish safety protocols and keep records of ride participants for accountability and improvement.

9. Funding and Sustainability: Identify funding sources, whether through donations, grants, or community support, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the chapter.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Community Engagement:

Involve local community members, including older people and their families, in the planning and decision-making process. Collaborative processes always take longer than expected—take the time to listen and learn. Indeed, slowness is a core value of Cycling Without Age.

Photo: Nicolaj Malmqvist

Partnerships:

Identify local senior centers, retirement homes, and organizations that support older individuals.

Volunteer Appreciation:

Recognize and appreciate the dedication of volunteers who act as bicycle pilots. Their commitment is essential for the chapter's success.

Safety First:

Prioritize safety during bike rides, and regularly assess and update safety procedures.

Adaptability:

Approach the program knowing that it will be modified based on the feedback and needs of the participants.

By following this guide, you can create a [Cycling Without Age chapter that brings joy, mobility, and intergenerational connections to your community's older residents.](#)

[Source: Cycling Without Age Chapter Building Guide](#)



Tool Two: Tea Parties

DIFFICULTY: ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

FOR: INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Re-Engage UK's Tea Parties combat loneliness among older people by organizing intergenerational social gatherings, connecting volunteers with older people to provide companionship and purpose.

BASICS:

When: Ongoing, with events scheduled consistently.

Time Needed: 2–4 hours.

Materials: Typically include tea, refreshments, and a venue or host home.

Objective: The objective is to address social isolation and loneliness among older individuals, typically aged 75 and above, who live alone and face mobility challenges. The Tea Parties provide a platform for social interaction, connection, and the rediscovery of purpose in the lives of older adults.

STEPS:

1. Event Organization: Volunteers and coordinators plan and organize monthly Tea Parties, either in volunteers' homes or community venues.

2. Participant Outreach: Older adults experiencing loneliness are invited to attend these Tea Parties.

3. Tea Parties: Attendees enjoy tea, refreshments, and conversation with both

volunteers and fellow older adults. Activities may vary and can include games, music, or simply socializing.

4. Intergenerational Connections:

Volunteers of all ages participate in these activities, creating intergenerational bonds and breaking down age barriers.

5. Empowerment: The program empowers volunteers to find purpose in helping combat loneliness and supports older individuals in finding joy and companionship in their later years.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

The most successful tea party groups are those that are able to create a sense of consistency and build a community.

Expect there to be possible conflict. Tea Parties focus on promoting intergenerational relationships as a way to foster understanding and empathy, but the emphasis is on connecting with people in order to sometimes have hard conversations that need resolution in a communal way.

Volunteers also find purpose and fulfillment in connecting with older individuals. The program benefits everyone.

Have flexibility in planning activities and focus on common interests rather than age-related factors.

Recognize the unique challenges faced by older people in specific communities, such as LGBTQ+, and create inclusive spaces.

Source: [Re-Engage UK](#)

Tool Three: Café ComVida

DIFFICULTY: ●●○○○

FOR: INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Lab60+'s Café ComVida serves as a gathering for people to engage in discussions about innovative topics and initiatives connected to longevity. Each meeting is overseen by an ambassador tasked with facilitating connections, encouraging interaction among attendees, identifying synergies between projects, and inspiring new ideas.

BASICS:

When: Ongoing, with events scheduled as needed.

Time Needed: 2 hours.

Materials: Shared coffee break (each attendee brings their contribution). Computer and multimedia resources to make the presentations.

Objective: The primary objective is to activate the power we all have at all ages—showing that we all have something to offer and to receive from the network. Another objective is to nurture connections and promote cross-sector collaborations.

It aims to:

- ➔ Bring stakeholders and multipliers together—government, academy, third sector, NGO leaders, startups, companies, health professionals, citizens—people who work with longevity and changing elder perspectives.
- ➔ Create connections between stakeholders that could collaborate or work together.

- ➔ Identify and record ideas, projects, and innovative enterprises in any development stage.
- ➔ Engage people and organizations with Lab60+.

STEPS:

Before the Meeting

- 1. Event publicity:** Promote the event through social media, Lab60+ Ambassadors, and organizations working in the field of longevity.
- 2. Registration:** Request prior registration of attendees and determine interest in the ideas to be presented at the meeting.

The meeting:

1. The meeting starts with an opening ritual; an institutional video is played or there is a reading.
2. A facilitator opens by introducing the purpose, format, and agenda of the meeting.
3. Introductions/ Icebreakers: Attendees share their names and why they are there.
4. Block 1: Three attendees share innovative ideas about longevity, and the facilitator asks for reflections.
5. Block 2: Three more attendees present ideas and there is a reflection session.

6. There is a close of the event and the facilitator encourages participants to engage with the Lab60+ movement and become ambassadors in their territories.

7. Coffee break and networking.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Start promoting the Café ComVida at least one month in advance to get more people interested in joining it.

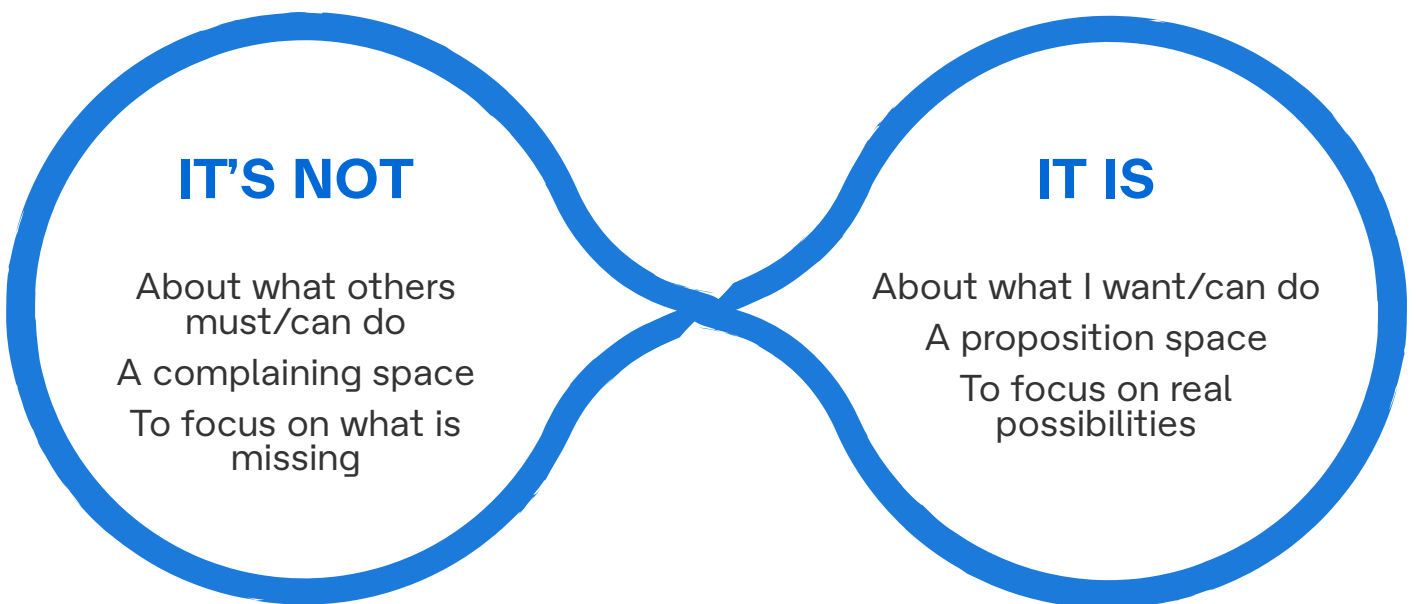
Do not charge for entrance, in order to enable diversity.

Assign responsibilities—facilitation, welcoming people, attendance list, time schedule, photography and video, register, etc.

Pictures, videos, and testimonies are very important to increase Café ComVida's potential and to engage more people.

It is helpful to have a structured script and timetable in place. But also be flexible in adapting to the audience and the context.

[Source: Lab60+](#)



Amplify Change: Livability



Intergenerational disconnect stems from designing communities and cities around car dependence. This approach has limited walking opportunities; reducing the presence of people in our neighborhoods, especially those with limited mobility, and diminishing our sense of interconnectedness. Car-centric living has led to sprawling urban environments, wide roads, and disconnected neighborhoods, discouraging spontaneous encounters and intergenerational interactions. This disconnect between generations and the loss of community identity underscores the need for more walkable, people-centered urban designs that promote connection across age groups.

HOW CAN WE BUILD LIVABLE ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL AGES?

One solution to this issue is embracing the “15-Minute City” movement, which advocates for urban planning that prioritizes livability, reorienting our living spaces towards human scale. This approach encourages local access to essential services, work, and leisure within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from one’s home.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE 15-MINUTE CITY:

Local accessibility:

In a 15-Minute City, essential services such as healthcare, education, and grocery stores are within easy reach. This accessibility can bridge intergenerational gaps by enabling older generations to access necessary services without relying on private and/or public transportation, while also providing safe, walkable environments for children and young adults to explore their communities independently.

Community engagement:

The 15-Minute City encourages people to interact with their local communities more frequently. This interaction fosters a sense of belonging and can create opportunities for intergenerational connections. Grandparents, for example, can engage with local schools or community centers more readily, contributing their wisdom and experiences to younger generations.

Active transportation:

By prioritizing walking and cycling, the 15-Minute City promotes physical activity and reduces dependence on private and/or public transportation. This not only benefits the health of all generations but also creates environments where older individuals can maintain their mobility and independence, reducing the burden of caregiving on younger family members.

Green spaces:

Intergenerational relationships often thrive in green and recreational spaces. The 15-Minute City emphasizes the creation of parks and communal areas, providing places where grandparents can bond with their grandchildren, families can gather, and neighbors can connect, enhancing social cohesion across generations.

Reduced environmental impact:

Car dependence contributes to environmental issues that disproportionately affect future generations. The 15-Minute City’s emphasis on sustainable urban planning and reduced car use aligns with the goal of leaving a healthier planet for our descendants.

WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?

Several challenges hinder the implementation of the 15-Minute City vision, including resistance to change from entrenched car-centric planning, political obstacles, and the need for substantial investments in infrastructure and public transportation.

HOW CAN YOU GET ENGAGED?

You can contribute to this transformative change by raising awareness about the benefits of the 15-Minute City vision within your community and advocating for local

governments to prioritize human-scale urban planning. Participate in civic engagement, support policies that reduce car dependence, and work toward creating inclusive, walkable, and connected neighborhoods that bridge generational divides. Another possibility is the City of Children, an Italian-based organization that encourages cities to include young people in decision-making to ensure that cities are also safe for play. Ultimately, the vision is inclusive and connected communities that benefit people of all ages.

[Source: World Economic Forum](#)

