<u>INTRODUCTION</u>

Intergenerational relations have typically centred on sharing knowledge, cultural norms, traditions as well as reciprocal care, support and exchange of resources. Current socio-economic and demographic trends challenge youth parent-grandparents relationships. With rising longevity and declining fertility, the world is aging rapidly. By 2050, the number of people over 60 is projected to increase by 50 per cent in developed countries and triple in developing countries, with global life expectancy increasing to 75 years. While older adults may have more opportunities to share knowledge and resources with younger generations, they are also more likely to depend on the support of younger generations for longer periods of time. Challenges to current social protection systems, especially pension schemes, may put the autonomous future of young people at risk.

On the other hand, with growing unemployment disproportionately affecting youth, young people may need to depend on their parents or grandparents for material support or housing provision longer than before. Although still common in parts of the world, extended families with intergenerational support and reliance are rapidly declining, especially in urban areas. Families are becoming smaller, and young people are postponing marriage, having fewer children and getting divorced in greater numbers. In rural settings, intergenerational patterns of socialization are often disrupted as youth migrate to cities, missing opportunities to benefit from the knowledge and guidance of older family members. Often, growing digital divide separates generations as well.

<u>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</u>

For the purpose of collecting all important data and information required to be processed for establishment of this report content, secondary data collection is chosen to gather all available information regarding intergenerational issues around the world. Different sources from different web sites used to extract and gather all factual information these issues. A similar method used to gather all responses from the various stake holders towards intergenerational issues. The sources are carefully chosen in order to ensure quality of the content, relevance, and ease of comprehension. Reason of choosing secondary data collection is based on a fact that varieties of sources are largely available in electronic network.

LITERATURE AND FACTUAL REVIEW

IMPORTANT GLOBAL FACTS

- Young people are actively engaged at national and global levels in awareness-raising, running educational programmes, planting trees, promoting renewable energy and adopting energy saving practices.

- I n 2007, the General Assembly adopted a supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth that, among other things, proposes action on strengthening families and bolstering intergenerational solidarity.

- The 2009 UN International Experts Group meeting on "Family Policy in a Changing World: Promoting Social Protection and Intergenerational Solidarity" recommended building partnerships and cooperation between youth and older persons organizations.

- Approximately 32%, or 23 million children, are living in a single parent home or without either parent.

- 14.2% middle school students and 38.1% of high school students use tobacco products, over 20% of adolescents drink regularly and over 10% of adolescents smoke marijuana frequently.

- The national high-school dropout rate was 10% in 1998.

- Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death for all persons regardless of age, sex or race; the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 24.

- Elders account for one-fifth of all suicides.

- There has been a significant shift in the number of older adults that live alone. By 2005, 32% of all elderly will live alone, which often results in decreased socialization.

- The size of the older population is projected to double over the next 30 years, growing to 70 million by 2030.

- It is projected that one in five people will be age 65 or older by 2030 due to the aging of the Baby Boom generation.

- 65% of adults over 55 reported that retirement is "a time to begin a new chapter" in life by being active, involved, and setting new goals.

- 83% report that volunteering and community service play or will play a role in their plans for retirement. Volunteering and community service rank second in importance to older adults, only behind travel.

RESPONSES FROM VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

Demographics are changing worldwide. In general, developed countries are growing older and developing countries are trending towards larger youth populations, but in many parts of the developing world populations are growing older at a fast pace. Many factors influence these trends, including fertility patterns, migration trends, gender equality and other issues. Countries need to design proper responses to face these challenges. For example, a region can capitalize on an upcoming youth bulge by investing in education and job training to better prepare a larger, younger population for future contribution to society. A region faced with a growing ageing population can benefit by implementing policies and programmes that call on older adults to continue to be active in communities through paid or volunteer positions. Retirement and pension schemes can also be re-evaluated as demographics shift and lifetimes expand.

North America and Europe

The United States is still in a recession marked by the housing bubble burst, economic downturn and high and extended unemployment. Research indicates that children, parents, and grandparents are coming back together and living in the same home, dependent on each other for financial support and caregiving. These multigenerational households, consisting of three or more generations, have increased to 5.1 million in 2010, a 30 per cent increase from the 3.9 million reported in 2000. In a recent national survey of multigenerational families, 75 per cent said the arrangement made caregiving easier, 82 per cent said living together enhanced family bonds but 78 per cent also acknowledged the multigenerational household can contribute to stress among family members.

Asia

One of the much discussed topics in Asia today is its rapid pace of ageing as Asian countries experience a fast rise in life expectancy, accompanied by a sharp fall in the total fertility rate. Nonetheless, as a large continent with diverse levels of socioeconomic developments and cultural characteristics, the extent and pace of the trend toward ageing differ among Asia's societies, as does their impact on families and intergenerational relations. While countries in East Asia such as Japan which boasts the world's highest life expectancy, South Korea, Singapore and China are facing a rapid rate of ageing and extremely low birth rate, other countries and South and Southeast Asia, such as India, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand, although experiencing a rapid increase in the number of older persons, have a relatively high birth rate in comparison with East Asian societies. Intergenerational relationships may be said to remain more stable and 'traditional' – where mutual support of the old and young is strong in the familial context in the less developed and less urban areas of Asia. Moreover, the expectations of children to provide for their parents expressed in concepts such as filial piety in Chinese culture still remain a culturally perceived ideal in many Asian societies at large. Reliance on the family instead of the state to care for older persons in Asian countries is often regarded as the essence of Asian values which lay the foundation of not only the family, but also state policies on aged care.

Africa

In Africa, the concept of Ubuntu, originally a Zulu term meaning unity, is fundamental to understanding intergenerational solidarity. It basically states that I am a person because you are a person. We are all related, interconnected and responsible for each other. Archbishop Desmond Tutu further explained Ubuntu in 2008. "One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity." Yet the changes threatening solidarity in other countries are affecting Africa as well.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean have a history of intergenerational solidarity among family members but this tradition is threatened by several demographic changes taking place in the midst of low GDP and high social and income inequalities. The changes result from a combination of lower child mortality, higher life expectancy at birth, wider adoption of

contraception practices and out migration. In 2010, 27.3 per cent of the population was under the age of 14 and 8.3 per cent was 65 or older. By 2040 17.8 per cent of the population is expected to be under the age of 14 and 19 per cent is projected to be 65 or older.

GOVERNMENTS RESPONSES

- At a national level, ensure there is an entity, such as a Ministry, charged with the accountability for reviewing national policies to ensure that they provide adequate assistance to families and take into account the needs of all their members and ensure that people of all generations are viewed and engaged as resources within their families and communities.

- Review existing policies from an intergenerational perspective to ensure that they support family-based approaches and do not isolate individual members such as children or the growing population of older adults.

- Acknowledge the family as the foundation of society taking into consideration each generation and commit to using an all generations approach when developing family policy. This means addressing the needs and potential of all family members and not just parents and their children. The definition of family policy should be broadened to encompass ageing policy and integrate not only the needs but also the strengths of each generation. At the same time, ageing policy must be expanded to include family and family supports. One way of doing this could be to develop and use generational impact statements that use an intergenerational lens when considering new policies. In public policies, governments can look to existing impact analysis to develop criteria such as Bhutan's measurement of Gross National Happiness and the US Environmental Impact Statements.

- Consider developing Gross Generational Interdependence Product (GGIP) which would create a set of measures to monitor and evaluate intergenerational solidarity. The GGIP could provide a framework for releasing a regularly scheduled report on the state of intergenerational understanding and interdependence in a country or a region. An annual release of this report could be timed to coincide with a national family, intergenerational solidarity or bonding day.

PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSES

In developed countries, government social policies must move beyond reliance on "traditional" family ideals and models (which some do not acknowledge as having ever existed in many societies) and start integrating provisions aimed at helping family members support each other, at connecting the worlds of work and family, and at breaking down the barriers between what is considered public and private.36 For instance, policy discussions might address community care for all ages rather than focusing separately on the issues of care for children, care for older persons, and care for those with disabilities. The same is true for all policy issues that apply to multiple age groups.

Further attention should also be given to the essential structural components of an intergenerational approach; more specifically, action should be taken to ensure the availability of disaggregated information and statistics, and to mainstream social group perspectives, issues and needs into overall policy-making. More specific and accurate data on the situation of youth and older persons, particularly with regard to poverty, would help ensure that policy makers are not blind to the circumstances of those groups. Disaggregated information could provide a better understanding of how youth and older people experience poverty, and indicate whether their experience is different from that of other groups and from what policy makers assume. The failure to recognize and assign value to the particular situations and experiences of specific group is likely to lead to the development and implementation of inappropriate policies and programmes. A focus on the intergenerational nature of policies also provides a "side door" to mainstreaming, as it increases recognition that all generations are affected by all policies, not only those directed towards them; younger and older persons are no exception.

NGO RESPONSES

- AGE PLATFORM EUROPE
  - ➢ AGE Platform Europe is a European network of around 150 organisations of people aged 50+ representing directly over 28 million older people in Europe. AGE aims to voice and promote the interests of the 150 million inhabitants aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most. AGE aims to give a voice to older and retired people in the EU policy debates through the active participation of their representative organisations at EU, national, regional and local levels so as to inform EU policy development.

- AEIP, THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF PARTNERSHIP INSTITUTIONS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION
  - ➢ AEIP, the European Association of Partnership Institutions of Social Protection promotes the partisan management of social protection at EU-level: "partnership management" means joint management of the social partners, 50% by employers' and 50% of employees' representatives. The AEIP was established in 1996 and teams now 38 member institutions in 19 European countries.

- AIM THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES (ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MUTUALITÉ, AIM)
  - ➢ AIM The International Association of Mutual Benefit t Societies (Association Internationale de la Mutualité, AIM), created in 1950, and brings together 41 national federations of autonomous health insurance and social protection bodies in 27 countries worldwide, all operating according to the principles of solidarity and not for-profit t orientation.

- CECODHAS - HOUSING EUROPE

➢ CECODHAS - HOUSING EUROPE is the European Committee for social and cooperatives housing, a network of national and regional social housing federations gathering public, voluntary and cooperatives housing organisations.

➕ COFACE

➢ COFACE - Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union is a pluralistic organisation, at the heart of civil society, which aims at promoting family policy, solidarity between generations and the interests of children within the European Union.

MEDIA RESPONSES

➕ Provide basic necessities to support a decent life standard and good health throughout the life course including access to age appropriate health care, clean water, nutritious food, exercise and safe housing.

➕ Promote national and international research on the patterns of intergenerational transfers, both public and private, focusing on the implications of these transfers 34 for individuals, families and societies and using this analysis in the design of national development plans.

➕ Build new alliances between ageing, children and youth sectors to support intergenerational solidarity in families and communities and to promote integrated, efficient and responsive support and opportunities for all.

➕ Positive action should be taken to encourage and enable existing experienced international expert organisations (such as Generations United and the Beth Johnson Foundation) to collaborate in sharing learning, resources and expertise as part of a UN coordinated approach to building an international evidence and resource base to support future development in the promotion of intergenerational solidarity.

YOUTH RESPONSES

Where young people are supporting older people, it is important to use activities that young people are familiar with and comfortable in sharing their knowledge of them. Age Concern and Trans-IT volunteers both use technology as a basis for providing support, including computers, photography and other digital mediums. For joint programmes, using themes that both generations can relate to helps stimulate discussion and highlight similarities. BCYE's focus on World War II enabled young people to understand issues faced by older people and, likewise, helped older people understand how the same issues can impact on young people. Meanwhile, Magic ME's focus on women's issues helps the two generations come together by exploring issues that resonate with all. Projects that include young and old from a diverse mix of backgrounds have the capacity to build cross-cultural relationships within and between generations.

For members of both groups this opens up opportunities to bring them into contact with people from other cultural/ethnic groups within the community that they might not otherwise meet. Whether a conscious effort is made to explore these differences as part of the programme or whether they emerge as an aside as the work unfolds, common misconceptions based on ethnic stereotypes may be broken down by bringing groups together in such a way. Magic ME's Heartfelt programme demonstrates how people with very different beliefs often discover shared experiences and a sense of connection when faced with subject matters that arouses strong feelings. Finally, the role of staff supporting work of this nature is often integral to its success. Young and old have very different support needs and the most vulnerable often require specialist help to build confidence and relationships and facilitate their participation.

Regardless of the nature of activities taking place, developing understanding of different needs is an essential part of project planning and preparation. This might include supporting groups separately to allow them to explore any fears and apprehension (Magic Me), or to ensure a good match between young and older people's interests and expertise (Trans-IT).

CONCLUSION

Families are the foundation of our communities and our global society. Governments, civil societies and other stakeholders need to build and support stronger connections across generations in order to improve the well-being and quality of life of all generations. Three fundamental notions about intergenerational relations have been identified and offer useful principles as each sector of civil society examines the role it can play in supporting families. Firstly, intergenerational solidarity and exchange continue to be the primary foundation for personal and social security as well as human bonding. Secondly, social networks of care develop when policies and programmes reinforce the interconnectivity of the generations. Thirdly, societies need to facilitate human contact and interactions in order to expand intergenerational solidarity. Supporting the relationships between and among generations in families and societies becomes even more important as global populations and economies shift. Most families wish to take on their responsibilities, but they cannot fulfil that role alone. They need support through integrated, holistic and sustainable family policies based on the three main elements that all families need - resources, time, and services.

Family policies ought to support all generations: children, youth, parents and older persons, taking due account of the gender dimension and specific role that women play within families. They should also specifically support families of persons with disabilities. Public authorities at all levels should design and implement family-friendly policies and programmes that recognize the changing nature and diversity of family structures and forms, and geographical distances that prevent families from providing care and support to their dependent relatives. Better measures enabling reconciliation of work life and family life are crucial, in an

integrated approach combining accessible, affordable, high quality child and elder care services and fully-paid and non-transferable family care leave. Policymakers and other leaders can better support families by viewing policies and decisions through an intergenerational interdependency lens that promotes and enhances intergenerational relations.

Recommendation

Responses of World Assembly of Youth

The organisation organises programmes based on an intergenerational approach to promote an essential interdependence among generations and recognize that all members of society have contributions to make and needs to fulfil. With intergenerational relations also encompassing cultural trends, World Assembly of Youth also helps young people to recognize their identity in their transitional period, adapting to different cultures and adapting them to the society they encounter around them.

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