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**A New Vision for Policy Development  
in Intergenerational Learning: ASEM  
LLL Hub Research Network 4**

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# **A New Vision for Policy Development in Intergenerational Learning: ASEM LLL Hub Research Network 4**

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"A New Vision for Policy Development in Intergenerational Learning: ASEM LLL Hub Research Network 4" by  
Maria Slowey and Zenaida Reyes with Patrick Holloway and Joni Hendrick, ASEM LLL Hub is in the Public  
Domain

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# 1. A New Vision for Policy Development on Intergenerational Learning

## 1.1 Introduction

Many countries in Asia and Europe are experiencing a combined trend of increasing longevity coupled with declining fertility rates. As a result, people 65 years of age will soon comprise the fastest growing age group globally (UN, 2019). It is estimated that by 2050, one in six people in the world will be over 65 years of age, in contrast to less than 10% in 2019. The situation in Europe is accelerating more quickly, so that by 2050, it is estimated that approximately 25% of people are projected to be in this age group.

From a public policy perspective, such trends are perhaps too often perceived in a rather negative light-- for example, concerns about the challenges of additional pension support and extra demands on health services. However, from a lifelong learning perspective, this demographic trend offers rich opportunities for educational innovation and inclusion, based on deeper engagement and mutual learning between different generations.

In this paper, experts from Asia and Europe reflect on developments in intergenerational learning in their respective countries, highlighting creative developments as well as challenges and barriers. These reflections are included here in alphabetical order: Cyprus (Eleftheria Atta); Germany (Alexandra Ioannidou); Ireland (Trudy Corrigan); New Zealand (Brian Findsen); Philippines (Zenaida Reyes); Taiwan (Hui-Chuan Wei and An-Ti Lin); Thailand (Chusak Prescott and Sumalee Sungsi); and United Kingdom (Tom Schuller).

In working through these papers, four themes relevant to supporting intergenerational learning have been identified, which we believe carry significant implications for lifelong policy development *for all* across the wider ASEM community.

**First:** The importance of history and culture in appreciating the role of older people in our societies.

**Second:** The need to replace traditional linear views of the life course with more flexible, dynamic models with implications for resource distribution.

**Third:** The importance of adopting a proactive stance in promoting greater equality of access to lifelong learning opportunities - particularly for older women and those from poorer backgrounds.

**Fourth:** The need for independent research for strengthening the evidence base in order to support lifelong learning strategies.

These are reflected in the full country papers in this report and are briefly considered in turn below, giving a concise, expert view on intergenerational learning in the ASEM region.

## **1.2 The importance of history and culture in appreciating the role of older people in our societies**

Any policy development for intergenerational learning must take into account the historical and cultural context of the particular society, while also recognising diversity of traditions within subgroups.

The case from Ireland (Trudy Corrigan) exemplifies a common strand when she says that for generations

older people such as grandparents were acknowledged for sharing their wisdom and knowledge. This was considered a valuable role in transferring the values, culture, and uniqueness from the older members of the family and the wider community to the younger members of the family.

Similarly, Zenaida Reyes in discussing the case of the Philippines, points out that the role of the family is recognised in the Constitution as ‘the basic unit of society’ and that

for generations, older people such as grandparents were acknowledged for sharing their wisdom and knowledge. This was considered a valuable role in transferring the values, culture, and uniqueness from the older members of the family and the wider community to the younger members of the family’.

And this connection is often linked to traditional ways in which people worked and lived: for example, in Thailand (Chusak Prescott and Sumalee Sungri) especially in rural areas, where people

often live in extended families. Younger people learn the way of life and occupations from their parents and grandparents. In addition, most of these communities possess local wisdom in various aspects, such as silk weaving, bamboo basket weaving, wood carving, Thai classical music, traditional cooking, etc. These elderlies are usually willing to transfer their expertise and experience to the younger generation residing in their communities.

However, the papers also emphasise that not only do shifts from rural to urban generate significant upheavals in the extent to which different forms of knowledge are valued, but also potentially can reflect, and preserve, more conservative views and values. It is in this area, for example, where intergenerational learning can shift from more passive forms of ‘transmission’ - typically, from older to younger - to the fostering more dynamic flows of knowledge,

Thus, for example, as Alexandra Ioannidou (Germany) points out

A genealogical concept of generation, which focuses on the succession of generations, e.g. in the family or in generations, also promotes a hierarchical and functionally differentiated view of generations. Intergenerational learning then often means enabling a coming generation to take over tasks and functions in a community. Many programs are oriented towards this

concept of generation, while scientific discourses on the concept of generation have long since abandoned hierarchical generational relations in teaching-learning.

And, in the case of Ireland:

This status quo can frequently be transferred by an older generation because ‘it has always been done this way.’ The real strength with the intergenerational transfer of knowledge is, that in a changing world post-World War 2 and now more recently with the current pandemic, there is a need to understand that the younger generation have much to transfer upwards to older generations, for example in the use of information communication.

This point from Ireland is similarly reflected in New Zealand, where:

The primary location for inter-generational learning is the family (or whānau), abundant in everyday practices (Findsen & Formosa, 2011). A stereotypical image is that of a grandchild helping a grandparent to understand and function effectively in an internet environment. Knowledge and skills exchanges are two-way.

### **1.3 The need to replace traditional linear views of the life course with more flexible, dynamic models with implications for resource distribution**

The above discussion lays the ground for a second policy consideration, concerning a persistent, but flawed, linear view of the life course. This is the case, for example, in relation to employment, where, in some ASEM countries an age of mandatory retirement exists, despite the fact that many people - whether by choice or necessity - will either have to, or chose to, work longer into older ages, with associated implications for lifelong learning strategies (Slowey et al. 2020).

The general issues are well summarised by Tom Schuller (UK).

We should avoid simplistic linear models of the life course. People do not develop in a two-dimensional staged trajectory or move cleanly from one phase to the next. We need a more colourful palette of models and images in order to capture the complex set of relationships that characterise different generations: their identities, interdependencies, and interactions, and how these change overtime.

The current distribution of resources for learning is heavily weighted towards initial education. It is inevitable that the system should be ‘front-loaded’, i.e., that it will concentrate primarily on equipping young people with the values, competences and attitudes needed to give them the best foundation for life. But the weighting is too strong. So, a first challenge is to lay the basis for agreeing on a sensible and equitable distribution of educational resources across the full life course.

In the case of the UK, for example, it is estimated that 86% of the total resource invested in education goes to the age group 18-24, 12% to those aged 25-50, c1.5% to 50-75, and barely anything to the 75+ age group

This is not an argument against investment in education for younger adults. But it is an argument in favour of increasing equality over the life course by investing more in education overall, with some potential redistribution in proportion to population profile.

It is proposed therefore that ASEM LLL Hub member states should explore the distribution of investment in LLL across all population age cohorts.

## **1.4 The importance of a continuing, proactive stance in relation to equality of access to lifelong learning for all -with a particular focus on older women and those from poorer backgrounds**

The third consideration for policy development across ASEM LLL Hub member states concerns issues of equality within and between age cohorts. The situation of older women, and adult learners



from disadvantaged backgrounds comes to the fore in a number of the case studies considered here.

The discussion on Cyprus (Eleftheria Atta) reflects a common strand in the papers that, equal learning opportunities *to all*, should

explore the extent to which women, across ages, have equal access to lifelong learning and up-skilling opportunities. Particularly, given the pandemic and the fact that some women may have abstained from work due to care responsibilities, it would be interesting to explore whether there are equal opportunities for women across ages for access to LLL bearing in mind that LLL is important for women to be integrated in the labour market.

Specific national socio-economic circumstances are very important here: for example, as is illustrated by the case of the Philippines (ZR).

The poorer sector have difficulty mentoring their children in their home work since they are too busy earning a living. Some of them even go abroad to earn and support their children's education.

There are good examples on which such policies might build. Most countries under consideration in this report highlight innovative attempts to support wider engagement - for example, through targeted outreach activities and dedicated institutions.

For example, in Thailand (Chusak Prescott and Sumalee Sungsi)

In order to extend equal educational opportunity to people who lack an opportunity to attend conventional education institutions, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) was established in 1978 to provide both degree and non-degree courses and education for all age groups employing a mixed media approach.

Similarly, in Taiwan, there is evidence that, for the past decade, importance has been given to providing lifelong learning opportunities to older generations as the population rapidly ages:

universities have been cooperating with the government since 2008 in promoting a community-based lifelong learning-oriented active aging education policy, collectively called Senior Learning (Le-Ling Learning in Mandarin, meaning Active Aging Learning). The program has been implemented for 12 years, and by 2020, 369 senior learning centers have been established in Taiwan.

## **1.5 The need for independent research, to strengthen the evidence base to support lifelong learning strategies**

Each of the short case studies report on interesting developments in the respective countries and many share similar findings. However, in helping to formulate policy for ASEM LLL Hub members, it is also evident that there is a need for more comparative qualitative and quantitative research on three important matters.

**First:** better information on the educational interests and needs of diverse populations of older adults.

**Second:** investigation of the major barriers (organisational, resource, expertise etc.) preventing educational providers from better addressing these interests, and ways in which they might be overcome.

**Third:** exploration of the potential benefits to different age cohorts of the wider promotion of opportunities for intergenerational learning- formal, non-formal and informal.

## 2. Country Case Studies

### 2.1 Cyprus (Eleftheria Atta)

One of the objectives of the National Strategy for LLL in Cyprus is to promote access and participation in LLL for all. This particular objective points to increasing visibility and attractiveness of opportunities for education and training, and offers equal learning opportunities to all. Bearing this in mind, it would be interesting to adopt a **gendered approach** and explore the extent to which women, across ages, have equal access to lifelong learning and up-skilling opportunities. In particular, given the pandemic and the fact that some women may have abstained from work due to care responsibilities, it would be interesting to explore whether there are equal opportunities for women across ages for access to LLL, bearing in mind that LLL is important for women to be integrated into the labour market.

According to the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU goal is for the 15% of the population to participate in at least one educational activity on a 4-week basis (Gender Equality 2019: Work-life balance). Additionally, it seems that the percentage of women participating in non-formal education and training is higher compared to the percentage of women participating in work-related training. On the contrary, employees who occupy high positions have more opportunities to participate in work-related training, for instance, training on transferable skills, which can enhance their chances for promotion. Such a situation implies that there might be fewer incentives for women to participate in work-related training, which would enable them to advance professionally. In light of the aforementioned factors, as well as the fact that technological advancements require workers for upskilling during their careers, several questions have emerged:

1. Are there equal opportunities for women across all ages for access to LL?
2. What are the barriers women encounter? (i.e., in relation to time, work-schedule conflicts, care responsibilities, household duties etc.)
3. What are the implications for work-life balance and career advancement/employment opportunities for women for policy makers to consider?

4. What are the policy goals for better work-life balance policies to accommodate equal access to LL for continuous investment and growth in women's skills and knowledge?

On a national level, as Cyprus has been struggling with the economic crisis since 2013, causing high levels of unemployment, LLL has become an essential condition as it provides individuals with the opportunity to upgrade their skills and be prepared to adapt to an environment that is undergoing many changes. Based on the aforementioned conditions, educational reforms become a necessity. For this reason, the Republic of Cyprus has formed a strategy for LLL for the period of 2014-2020. The strategy identifies the strategic objectives/priorities and specifies the categories of actions concerning the context of Cyprus, such as promoting access and participation in LLL for all, improving the quality and efficiency of education and training, as well as promoting research and development for the support of LLL. Cyprus's vision with regards to LLL was to develop an integrated National Strategy for LLL based on which all citizens have the motivation, support, means, resources and time to engage in learning activities through their lifetime. The National Strategy aims at developing a society in which citizens are skilled enough to deal with any challenges and have the opportunity to engage with any learning settings equally and actively towards strengthening the country's productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. Additionally, the Strategy highlights the promotion of research and development for Lifelong Learning in Cyprus (Euydice, European Commission). Such a strategy would provide learning opportunities for older people in the Cypriot society by offering formal/non-formal adult education as well as vocational training. Furthermore, the strategy is aimed at ensuring that all individuals are motivated, supported and have equal access to participate in learning activities throughout their lifetime, creating a society in which the citizens develop skills and are prepared to cope with any challenges. Such a context would contribute to the attempt at strengthening the country's productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. Consequently, this couples with the broader concept of a lifelong learning society, which supports that each individual should be motivated and equipped to engage in learning throughout life and have access to opportunities of lifelong learning (Hasan, 1999).

National Strategies for Lifelong Learning in ASEM countries and the European Skills agenda become the basis for further exploring intergenerational learning. Based on the European Skills agenda, there will be an emphasis during the next five years (2020-2025) to assist individuals and businesses to develop skills which will enable them to increase competitiveness as well as build resilience to cope with crises and the lessons learnt through the COVID-19 pandemic. The need to improve and adapt skills has become an imperative and, therefore, the European Commission proposed a recovery package for a more resilient and fairer Europe for the next generation. A paradigm-shift in skills has been created and lifelong learning becomes crucial for sustainability and competitiveness through the acquisition of necessary skills.

One of the focal points of the European Skills agenda is to ensure social fairness. This is interrelated with the first principle of the European pillar of Social Rights, which incorporates access to education, training, and lifelong learning for everybody in the EU. Consequently, there is a priority for equal access to additional up-skilling opportunities for all individuals regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation etc.

As mentioned earlier, one of the objectives of the National Strategy for LLL is to promote access and participation in LLL for all. Having in mind this particular objective, which points to increasing visibility and attractiveness of opportunities for education and training and offer equal learning opportunities to all, it would be interesting to adopt a gendered approach and explore the extent to which women, across ages, have equal access to lifelong learning with a focus on up-skilling opportunities.

On a global level, and as stated in the Global Gender Gap Index rankings of 2020, countries worldwide strive for gender parity. In parallel, the World Economic Forum Platform for Shaping the Future of the New Economy and Society's Closing the Gender Gap Country Accelerators has set several objectives towards this, one of which is building parity in emerging high-demand skills and jobs. As it is imperative for each country to work on a national level for changing institutional structures and policies as well as norms and attitudes, it becomes crucial to explore the gender dimension of Intergenerational Learning. It is also crucial to discover whether women have equal access to work-related lifelong learning opportunities to

enhance their skills and be equally considered for professional advancement compared to their male counterparts.

## **2.2 Germany (Alexandra Ioannidou)**

The idea of intergenerational learning can be based on different concepts of generation (see also Franz & Schmidt-Hertha, 2018; Schmidt-Hertha, 2014). A pedagogical concept of generation in the tradition of Schleiermacher (1826/1957) elevates the transmission of knowledge and norms from the older to the younger generation to the central task of pedagogical action. Thus, an unidirectional teaching-learning relationship comes into focus (e.g., Gerzer-Sass 2015). A genealogical concept of generation, which focuses on the succession of generations, e.g., in the family or in generations, also promotes a hierarchical and functionally differentiated view of generations. Intergenerational learning then often means enabling a coming generation to take over tasks and functions in a community. Many programs are oriented towards this concept of generation, while scientific discourses on the concept of generation have long since abandoned hierarchical generational relations in teaching-learning contexts. In contrast, a socio-historical concept of generation based on Karl Mannheim (1928) opens up a different perspective on intergenerational learning when generations are seen as the product of shared experiences due to living through drastic social events in the same phase of life. An understanding of intergenerational learning that follows this generational concept focuses on the equal dialogue of generations with their respective specific patterns of interpretation and world views (cf. Schmidt/Tippelt 2009; Franz 2010).

This then distinguishes intergenerational learning from learning in mixed-age groups, even if this distinction is dissolved in various ways in educational practice (e.g., Moser, 2015). Intergenerational learning in the narrower sense implies that the focus is on the dialogue of different generational perspectives rather than different life phases, with Siebert and Seidel (1990) describing "learning about each other" - i.e., focusing the teaching-learning interaction on getting to know and understand the other generational perspective - as the highest form of intergenerational learning.

If we now look at how different generations are brought together for joint learning in institutional educational work, empirical research allows us to distinguish three ideal-typical learning scenarios (Franz & Schmidt-Hertha, 2018).

- In family-oriented learning arrangements, the focus is on learning processes between children, parents, and grandparents or between children and elders who correspond to this role model, in the sense of a genealogical concept of generation. The starting point is the assumption that younger people learn casually from the experiences and knowledge of older people (cf. Amrhein 2004; Mahne & Motel-Klingenbiel, 2009).

- In community-based learning arrangements, a cross-generational issue of local importance becomes the starting point of intergenerational learning processes. Here, participants bring their generation-specific perspectives into the joint process, thus enabling a multi-perspective treatment of the topic (e.g., Voegen, 2006).

- In difference-oriented learning arrangements, the focus is on didactically enabling experiences of difference and alterity. The topics of the events are used here to bring generation-specific perspectives to the surface through reflection exercises. In this way, experiences of strangeness and difference are stimulated and changes of perspective between generations are initiated (Siebert & Seidel 1990).

In the concrete didactic design of such learning scenarios, some basic didactic principles become relevant (cf. Franz 2014; Antz et al., 2009), with the help of which the participating generations are encouraged to learn from, with, and about each other. In terms of second-order observation, a reflection orientation is about making generation-specific perspectives and differences visible and tangible. By linking it to biographical principles, it becomes possible to relate biographical and generation-specific perspectives to each other and to distinguish them from each other. Didactic orientations towards interaction and participation should ensure that learners can enter into conversation with each other and become involved in the concrete shaping of the topics. Finally, a social space orientation is about using the concrete lifeworld of the generations involved specifically as a resource for shaping learning processes.



## **2.3 Ireland (Trudy Corrigan)**

For centuries, in both traditional and modern cultures, intergenerational learning has been the informal vehicle within families for “systematic transfer of knowledge, skills, competencies, norms and values between generations – and is as old as mankind” (Hoff, 2007). For generations, older people such as grandparents were acknowledged for sharing their wisdom and knowledge. This was considered a valuable role in transferring the values, culture and uniqueness from the older members of the family and the wider community to the younger members of the family. Hatton Yeo and Newman (2008) state that familial intergenerational learning is informal and involves multi-generational interaction. However, they also confirm that in modern, more complex societies, intergenerational learning is no longer knowledge exchanged by the family alone. This is increasingly occurring outside the family. Hatton Yeo and Newman explain that while traditional families may continue to value the role of the older family members as transmitters of cultural lore, preparing younger individuals for life in the modern, more complex world has become a function of wider social groups that are non-familial. This they name as a new model that is “extrafamilial”. In their work they highlight how it is important to evaluate how contemporary society has required the creation of a new intergenerational learning paradigm and its future implications.

There has been a long-held belief that intergenerational learning is the transfer of knowledge usually in a downward spiral from elder to younger generations. While this transfer of knowledge has been valuable, in many ways it has also provided its own barriers in imagining a future beneficial for both older and younger people. For example, the transfer of knowledge that upholds cultural norms and traditions specific to both the global north and the global south can frequently uphold values and a culture that suppresses sectors of the population, such as the dismissal of women and their right to equal rights in the workplace, or the demonization of people in some cultures because of their sexuality. This status quo can frequently be transferred by an older generation because ‘it has always been done this way.’ The real strength with the intergenerational transfer of knowledge is that in a changing world, post-World War 2 and now more recently with the current pandemic, there is a need to understand that the younger generation have much to transfer upwards to older generations, for example in the use of information communication technology and in understanding new norms and values associated with society today. This is to

embrace and understand the composition of multicultural societies which are now more widespread across the world, the gender balance debate in the home and in the workplace and the rights of people to live freely regardless of their sexuality preference.

Intergenerational dialogue and engagement creates a space for both older and younger people to meet together in both formal and informal teaching and learning opportunities to learn from each other. This is an authentic space which allows both generations to speak openly and freely to each other and which welcomes and embraces differences as well as similarities between generations. It is a very important part of adult education and lifelong learning because when older and younger people meet, what is frequently acknowledged is how little they know about each other and how similar both generations can be in many ways. This is evident particularly in their understanding of social justice and in their need to make the world a better and more just place for all. The learning is real, meaningful and authentic because many older people acknowledge that learning in collaboration with younger people is beyond accreditation and degrees.

Many older people are beyond the stage in their life where they need to be competitive in the workplace and this opens up an authentic voice for them to share their knowledge from life, from their shared interests or from learning gleaned from familial experiences. This shared knowledge has reciprocal benefits for both older and younger people teaching and learning together. Creating the opportunities for both to learn from each other opens a fountain of knowledge that is valuable, meaningful, authentic and beneficial for both generations. The current pandemic has highlighted how older people needed to be apart for health reasons but it has also highlighted that in our contemporary world this creates a sense of isolation or loneliness that is not beneficial for both older and younger people. Now more than ever there is a need to create and open up more teaching and learning spaces where older and younger people can meet in their community, in their schools, in colleges and in tertiary education.

**What works and does not work:**

What works is when the Intergenerational programmes are well organised and with the older and younger participant voice engaged in the design, development and implementation of the programme. Examples of good practice:

- Linking Generations Northern Ireland
- DCU Intergenerational Learning Programme (DCUILP)
- Together Old and Young (TOY Project) Technological University Dublin

**What does not work:**

- Projects that patronise older people.
- Projects that do not value the opinions and comments of older people.
- Projects that do not embrace the voice of both the older and younger person.
- Projects that are not sustainable because of lack of funding (there is a need for intergenerational programmes and projects to be sustainable and to be adequately funded)

Projects that have a school or college or community interest in having them developed and to be integrated on a regular basis in the school or college curriculum and activities are more likely to succeed than projects that do not have this interest or engagement. These projects usually originate in nursing homes but a top down school approach is needed if these programmes are to be embedded and sustainable within mainstream education (in both the formal and informal context of learning). A partnership approach between organisations that represent positive ageing and the needs of older people, together with local schools and colleges, are more likely to be successful if the intergenerational learning takes place in partnership together.

This usually requires planning in the design, development and implementation of the intergenerational learning activities together. For example, a project that embraces the creativity of both older and younger people through a well organised drama or art programme can support the creativity of both the older and younger people. Another example is the development of an intergenerational programme which supports the literacy skills of younger children. This can be developed in schools if older people are invited to volunteer, read and share storytelling together. These initiatives have reciprocal benefits for both older and younger people. The younger students get to develop their literacy skills while many older people state that the enjoyment and the sense of feeling valued is the benefit for them.

**Lessons to be learned regards transferability for the future:**

- Intergenerational Learning can take place outside of the familial context where there is a willingness and determination to make this happen.
- It can prove very beneficial for children in early learning centres to promote play and social engagement for example through regular visits to the local residential home.
- It is very beneficial for younger students in primary and secondary schools when older people are invited to share stories, read stories, and discuss their career choices (very relevant for career guidance) with younger students.

At university level, this can be very beneficial in the transfer of knowledge to third level students when retired academic staff and professionals are invited to share their knowledge of experience of the workplace. All older people can be invited to speak to third level students, as even older people who did not attend university (usually because that opportunity was not present in their earlier years) have much to share with third level students either through personal or professional lived experiences.

For older people there are many benefits to intergenerational learning. These include:

- Keeping the mind active
- Remaining socially engaged
- Feeling valued
- Enjoyment in meeting with and engaging with younger people.

It is important to adhere to health and safety guidelines as promoted either within schools or in the university to promote the effective engagement of intergenerational learning and intergenerational learning programmes. What is missing from the current educational climate is government policy to promote and disseminate the wider practice of intergenerational learning in communities, in schools and in third level colleges. This needs to be urgently addressed. There are many benefits for both older and younger people that have as yet to be tapped into by engaging older people as a very valuable educational resource in our education system, and also by giving back to them

valuable experiences that enable them to remain healthy and active post retirement from the workplace. This is a right that older people need to experience and, in doing so, intergenerational learning assists in breaking down ageist attitudes. It celebrates what is what is common between generations rather than what separates them.

## 2.4 New Zealand (Brian Findsen)

The concept of inter-generational learning usually entails learning through interactions of individuals and groups from different generations. Such interactions are consistent with a lifelong and life wide learning perspective promulgated by most governments, including that of Aotearoa, New Zealand. The location of this learning is in informal and non-formal contexts. Inter-generational education, however, consists of planned learning where curriculum and instruction are explicit and specific learning outcomes are expected. It more commonly receives funding support.

While social policies on LLL and active ageing are discernible via official websites of relevant government departments, intergenerational learning is less visible as an intended outcome. Its character is contextualised in diverse cultural, economic and social environments. While most New Zealanders are still from European heritage (Pākehā), the indigenous Māori, and more recently-arrived Pasifika and Asian (primarily Chinese) peoples, constitute increasingly prevalent ethnic groups where different forms of inter-generational learning are evident. For example, the notion of lifelong learning has been traditionally embedded in Māori culture long before colonization occurred, and is sustained today. The *marae* (community living area where local *iwi* – tribes - assemble) young children, the middle generations and elders exchange knowledge and skills in this non-formal context. The greater communitarian approach to life from ethnic groups outside the Pākehā mainstream (where individualistic norms tend to prevail) results in inter-generational learning linked to family and community values, norms and practices (Findsen, 2019).

In formal education contexts (early childhood centres; schools; polytechnics; universities) there are occasional instances of inter-generational education opportunities but nothing really systematic apart from young children/elders exchanges in school or retirement locations. The middle generation(s) tend to go missing in such enterprises as they are deemed more important members of the economy. Again, in a Māori context, *kohanga reo* (language nests) are sites where the government's education system provides paid *kaimahi* (workers), often older women, to socialize and care for *tamariki* (children) and instil basic literacy, primarily in *te reo* (Māori language).

The workplace is an expected location for inter-generational education to occur. More astute employers will deliberately engineer young and older employees to work in teams; and in trades

(e.g. carpentry) apprenticeships are based on the passing on of knowledge, usually from experienced to novice (Rothwell et. al, 2008). Communities of practice encourage inter-generational learning as both formal and informal culture is shared. In professional occupations, mentoring is the basis for novice and experienced colleagues to establish and sustain social capital necessary for success.

Within the Education system, Adult and Community Education (ACE) has long been a Cinderella sector but is a vital component of LLL. Examples such as Rural Education Activities Programmes (REAPs), funded by government and men's sheds (dependent on community support) are two of many locations where informal learning across age groups abounds. Another exemplar within civil society of a creative development is the implementation by selected local Councils (e.g. Hamilton City Council) of the *age friendly city* notion. While most practices tend to focus on the learning needs of older adults, changes tend to allow for greater fluidity across generational exchanges as in recreational sites.

The primary location for inter-generational learning is the family (or whānau), abundant in everyday practices (Findsen & Formosa, 2011). A stereotypical image is that of a grandchild helping a grandparent to understand and function effectively in an internet environment. Knowledge and skills exchanges are two way. In addition, family to family exchanges are possible in the less formal aspects of migrant settlement as hosts provide essential local knowledge but also learn new values and practices from new immigrants. In truth, inter-generational learning is almost all-pervasive via self-directedness, but inter-generational education is more constrained as it normally requires governmental and/or institutional direction and resources.

That being said, what are some barriers to the greater implementation of inter-generational education? Lack of coherent policy in its own name is a major feature. Given that inter-generational education is a supplement to, or subset of, lifelong education, it suffers from limited visibility. The concept has also been aligned to older adult education, and the New Zealand Government has never perceived this part of education as important (and therefore, it remains virtually unfunded). Ageism abounds in wider society and in education circles. While passing governmental support in rhetoric can be given to ventures of inter-generational education, neither the Ministry of Education nor Tertiary Education Commission is cognizant of its potentiality. Further, as most older adult education is linked to expressive forms of learning (recreation; leisure)

it can be readily trivialized and accordingly should operate on a user's-pay model. We also look in vain for leadership from further/higher education institutions as adult and community education has been marginalized (for instance, centres for continuing education closed in universities). In brief, inter-generational education is not a priority.

How might a less bleak picture emerge? Recognition of its societal importance at multiple levels (government; institutions) is required. Hence, more consciousness-raising needs to happen. One strategy might be to continue to highlight the positive outcomes of inter-generational learning and transfer these benefits to the wider society, including the varied cultural contexts mentioned above. Another method would be to highlight the successes of inter-generational education to stakeholders and broader society so instances of “good practice” can be adopted/modified elsewhere. In vocational education, wherein the current government is instigating structural reforms, there is greater scope to emphasize inter-generational education in the workplace as it is more overtly linked to the mainstream economy.



## 2.5 Philippines (Zenaida Reyes)

The Philippines does not have a blueprint for LLL, however, there are a number of provisions in the Philippine Constitution that emphasize the need to address the education and training of the Filipino citizens from basic education, tertiary education and adult learning (Macaranas, 2007). The country is also committed to fulfilling the indicators of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in which a number of the indicators integrate LLL as a strategy or part of the goals. In fact, the government has created an SDG Watch Philippines program to keep track of its accomplishments (<https://psa.gov.ph/sdg/Philippines/baselinedata/4%20Quality%20Education>, 2019). Furthermore, education and LLL is also one of the goals of the national government.

The biggest dream of every Filipino family is for their children to finish formal education and have stable jobs to sustain their families. To achieve this dream, the Philippine government, through its Vision 2040, targets that at least 73% of all young Filipinos should be college educated by 2040 (<http://2040.neda.gov.ph>). In addition, Vision 2040 also addresses the training and continuing education of human resources in various sectors of the economy. These targets are clearly done in the formal and nonformal education sector.

Intergenerational learning refers to practices where members of different generations learn from each other and may be facilitated by a mentor or a tutor (Thomas, 2009) (in Findsen B., Formosa M, 2011). However, in this paper, intergenerational learning focuses on how younger generations of Filipino families learn from older generations. The Filipino family is the basic unit of society (Philippine Constitution, 1987) and it is the most valuable social institution among Filipinos where they derive their value of respect and deference towards the older generation (Medina, B., 2001) (in Alampay, L. P. & Garcia, A. S., 2019) unity, and interdependence, and protection of every member of the family.

While children are learning from their teachers, parents show their involvement in the education of their young children in different ways. For instance, children's acquisition of reading skills varies and depend on the education of their parents (Dulay, K.M. & Sum, K.C., 2019). Parental involvement in the academic performance of children (Blair. S, 2014) implies that children learn academic skills not only from teachers but also from parents (Bartolome, M., et al, 2017). Besides

literacy skills, children learn various life skills and values from parents. Household practices such as storytelling, housework, and other activities, are ways for children to learn Science concepts, healthcare, and other skills including literacy skills (Suatengco, R. T. & Florida, J. S., 2018). This is learning within the cultural and economic context (Garcia, S. & De Guzman, M., 2020). Other parents are also active in school activities resulting in the development of self-confidence of children (Cepada, C.M. & Grepon, B. G., 2020).

Children from poor families do not necessarily receive direct support in learning educational skills. However, their parents work hard so that they have food to eat, school supplies among other necessities that they need from their schools (Jabar, M.A., 2019). A number of them work abroad (Alampay, L. P. & Garcia, A. S., 2019). In a way, children acquire the value of education indirectly from these practices.

In general, children learn values and skills from their parents who are involved in their studies, school programs and projects. Parents act as mentors and facilitators in their children's studies, as volunteers in schools, and as participants in school activities. In addition, children acquire the family's value of education when parents endeavour to provide them with food, school fees, and other educational needs and support (Alampay, L. P. & Garcia, A. S., 2019; Sapungan, G. & Sapungan, R.)

Local knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems are also passed on from older generations. For example, in Mindanao, a southern island in the Philippines, local knowledge in sustainable agroforestry practices among locals came from their older generations (Galang E., et al, 2020). Similarly, the indigenous people in the Philippines assert that they have to determine their own development based on their culture and identity (Corpuz, V.T., 2010); Fiag-oy, G.L., 2010).

In fishing and farming communities, children learn their skills and cultural knowledge primarily from their parents and grandparents. However, elder siblings or other relatives from different generations are also sources of knowledge. In cases where children acquire education in agriculture and related areas, learning takes place from the younger generation to the older generation or even across generations.

Similarly, families who own businesses pass on their business skills and cultural beliefs to the next generation or across generations. Owners of family businesses generally install their sons or daughters in major positions in the company such as president, chief executive officers and other major positions. They socialize and prepare their children for the business through family activities and traditions including sending the young generation to good schools.

Cultural transmission is evident when the tradition about the business is handed down to the next generation. For instance, among people of Pampanga, a province north of the Philippines, the young were socialized about the food culture of families. Pampanga is famous in the Philippines for its culinary culture and people were prepared to become good cooks (Leuterio, P. & Vargas, D., n.d.).

### **Issues**

- Women are always involved in intergenerational learning
- IPs as marginalized and not well educated have less involvement in their children's school tasks and activities.
- The poorer sector have difficulty mentoring their children in their homework since they are too busy earning a living. Some of them even go abroad to earn and support their children's education.

## **2.6 Taiwan (Hui-Chuan Wei and An-Ti Lin)**

The wave of an aging population has swept across the entire world, and Taiwan is no exception. Taiwan turned into an aging society in 1993, becoming an aged society in 2018. It is estimated that Taiwan will turn into a super-aged society in 2025. In 2020, Taiwan's population above 85 years-old accounted for 10.3% of the senior population, and as the super-aging continues, it is estimated to rise to 27.4% by 2070 (National Development Council, 2020). The aging society is an irreversible trend in the 21st century, causing major impacts on both social systems and lifestyles. The acceleration of aging has become one of the most important challenges to Taiwan's future social structures. The early stage of Taiwan's aging policies was focused on social welfare and that elders are a disadvantaged group that needed to be cared for. It was not until the implementation of the Active Aging Learning Program that Taiwan's aging policy shifted from a welfare perspective to an educational perspective.

In response to a rapidly aging population, universities have been cooperating with the government since 2008 in promoting a community-based LLL oriented active aging education policy, collectively called Senior Learning (Le-Ling Learning in Mandarin, meaning Active Aging Learning). The program has been implemented for 12 years, and by 2020, 369 senior learning centers were established in Taiwan. There were learning activities for senior people across communities in Taiwan before this project was launched, but these earlier activities were not sufficiently based in theory and were mostly held just for fun because old age and senior citizens often were associated with negative bias (Huang 1991; Wei 2008). Meanwhile, these activities were not resonating with the aging baby boomers, as they tended to have participated more in higher education, have better self-autonomy, and paid increased attention to quality. With the Active Aging Learning Program (under the establishment of the policy white paper, the Active Aging Learning Center Implementation Plan) conducted by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2008), an emerging trend of LLL swept over Taiwan, as older adults generally embrace learning even though they are growing older.

The Active Aging Learning movement has yielded rich results after 12 years of practice, whether it is about curriculum development, staff training, instructional design, industry connectivity, or

learning outcomes (Lin and Chang, 2017; Wei, 2012). Under the holistic planning and implementation by the principal investigator of the Active Aging Learning Program, which has been funded and conducted by the Ministry of Education, this program has created a unique developmental model across Taiwan (Wei, 2012). Active Aging Learning is an effort that raises the awareness of middle-aged and older adults about some vital facts of an aged society from a prospective perspective. These facts are: an aged society is not a society merely for senior citizens, but one in which the number of older people has been increasing and this demographic profile definitely affects society as a whole; every individual is expected to adjust his or her life plans in a society where the percentage of people over age 65 is on the rise. Now is the time to prepare for an aging society and take some action.

## **2.7 Thailand (Chusak Prescott and Sumalee Sungri)**

As for the Kingdom of Thailand, the Office of National Education Council (2016) released its finding indicating that, in 2015, 100 % of children were able to receive elementary education, 88.3 % entered lower secondary school education, 72.7 % were enrolled in higher secondary school education, and 56 % of these high school graduates were admitted at the tertiary education level. Since 1999, the National Education Plan 2017-2036 and the educational system has been structured so that quality LLL is made available to all citizens. As such, various government agencies have been established throughout the country to offer various kinds of educational services to children and adults. The Department of Non-Formal Education plays a significant role in offering these services. Open universities make it possible for interested individuals to seek college education without having to attend classes.

In Thailand, especially in rural areas, people live in extended families. Younger people learn the ways of life and occupations from their parents and grandparents. In addition, most of these communities possess local wisdom in various aspects such as silk weaving, bamboo basket weaving, wood carving, Thai classical music, traditional cooking, etc. These elders are usually willing to transfer their expertise and experience to the younger generation residing in their communities. (Sungri, S., 2021). However, a major obstacle is found in that the activities are still in small groups of people who are interested in local wisdom. That being said, to fill the gap, it is necessary to encourage all educational institutions and related agencies to invite local wisdom to transfer their knowledge and experience in the form of formal, non-formal and informal educational activities. In order to extend equal educational opportunities to people who lack the opportunity to attend conventional education institutions, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) was established in 1978 to provide both degree and non-degree courses for all age groups employing a mixed media approach. The challenge facing Thailand now is how best educational institutions can develop their graduates so that they are equipped with desirable knowledge and skills demanded by the society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Certain types of courses have been cited as examples to add to students' repertoires to enrich their development. These include Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Productivity, Social Responsibilities, Collaborating with Others, Leadership, Thai Pride, Technology/Digital Competence, Lifelong Learners, Cultural Competency, Entrepreneur and Work Skills. (Tadawattanawith, S., 2018)

## 2.8 United Kingdom (Tom Schuller)

Our debts and responsibilities to past and future generations are a fertile source for philosophical debate and psychological turmoil. This applies to education as to many other areas. In relation to education, it can, at least in principle, be a powerful vehicle for improving intergenerational understanding, as well as raising difficult questions about different generations' access to resources and support.

### Resources across the life course

The current distribution of resources for learning is heavily weighted towards initial education. It is inevitable that the system should be 'front-loaded,' i.e., that it will concentrate primarily on equipping young people with the values, competences and attitudes needed to give them the best foundation for life. But the weighting is too heavy. So, a first challenge is to lay the basis for agreeing on a sensible and equitable distribution of educational resources across the full life course.

In *Learning Through Life*<sup>1</sup>, the final report of the UK's National Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning, David Watson and I suggested a framework for calculating the relative allocations of public and private resources to different generations. The report was published over 10 years ago and the data in it is, naturally, out-dated. However, the framework is not only still valid but also valuable as a basis for discussion in different contexts and countries.

In said report, we proposed dividing adult life into four age-groups: 18-25, 25-50, 50-75 and 75+. This division may seem simplistic, even crude, but arguably it is a better way of recognising long running and new trends: demographic, labour market and social. We argued that this new approach to defining the life course would:

- enable society to treat each age group more coherently and more equitably, strongly promoting policy coordination (a paradigmatic example is reviewing the learning needs of young offenders and full time HE undergraduates in the same frame);
- remove definitively some fundamental barriers, e.g. 60/65 as the line which defines 'dependency', allowing a due recognition of the diversity of exits from the labour market;

- enable coherent debate on the balance of resource allocation over the life-course, notably in recognising the implications of demographic change;
- encourage curriculum development which is appropriate – i.e. that recognises the way learning needs change with age, but without corralling people into age groups; including the educational implications of transitions between stages; and recognising intergenerational learning.

We took data on both participation rates in adult learning and adjusted these for time use –i.e., to understand not just what *proportions* of the age groups took part in some learning, but *how much time* on average they spent on learning. We aggregated all forms of expenditure on lifelong learning -- by the state, by employers and by individuals – and then calculated their allocations across the four age groups.

The report compared the allocations, together with projections for 10 years ahead.

The essential distributional figures are these:

- 86% of the total resource goes to the age group 18-25;
- 12% to those aged 25-50;
- 1.5% to 50-75, and
- barely anything to the 75+.

If anything, the concentration on the younger age groups will have become more pronounced in the intervening years, given the destruction of adult education and the disappearance of part-time degrees.

It is important to distinguish between generation, cohort, and age. The current generation of young people may feel that they have not had the same opportunities and benefits as preceding generations, yet they still have the lion's share of educational resources. Conversely, older people, especially poorer ones, have limited access to education – but many of them, especially the better off, have already benefited extensively in their youth.



*One significant agenda item is to update this analysis*, so that we have an accurate sense of the distribution of resources across the age groups. This is especially true in an ageing society such as the UK.

### **The promotion of intergenerational learning**

Three brief propositions on why intergenerational learning should move to a central position:

a) evidence is mounting on *the benefits of diversity* in many workplace contexts, including at board levels<sup>2</sup>. A group that varies on different dimensions will make better decisions. One of these dimensions is age. In most contexts, mixed-age groups will function more effectively than age-homogeneous groups as generations learn from each other.

b) digital access is now seen as a basic part of any citizen's membership of society. The growing interest in Universal Basic Services - now encapsulated in the notion of a Social Guarantee [website – to come] – has digital access as a central component. Getting full digital literacy fully embedded in all parts of society is a challenge, and although some provision will need to be tailored to the specific needs of different ages and competences, there is obvious scope for learning across generations to achieve this. In their new book on *Youth Prospects in the Digital Society*, John Bynner and Walter Heinz write about 'smart families', where traditional teacher-learner roles are reversed.

c) for reasons of social solidarity, we need a revival and expansion of those physical institutions where different generations can meet, and colleges and institutes of adult education are perfectly placed. The incidental informal learning about each other which takes place in such institutions – almost irrespective of the content of what is being taught and learnt – is a vital social glue.

### **A new model of the life course**

We should avoid simplistic linear models of the life course. People do not develop in a two-dimensional staged trajectory or move cleanly from one phase to the next. We need a more colourful palette of models and images in order to capture the complex set of relationships that characterise different generations: their identities, interdependencies, and interactions, and how these change overtime.

When asked to depict the life course some people think of circles or staircases, with steps up and then down. Many stage theories, especially in the psychological field, show diagrams of linear progression up and across the page. (The LTL model shown above conforms to that linear approach, with the limitations of chronological age-banding.) But we need images and models which show how people's development moves variably across different dimensions – the physiological, the psychological and the socio-cultural. As they age, people will move at different paces along these different strands, sometimes twisting backwards and sideways. Learning how to anticipate, prepare for and manage these variegated episodes is central to lifelong learning. It is also something on which generations have much to learn from each other.

### **3. Conclusion**

Intergenerational learning, and the tangible and intangible benefits, is not a new phenomenon. The importance of this kind of teaching and learning has always been present in the history of education and culture. This not only has helped foster an appreciation for the role of older people in various societies but has aided in creating educational bonds between the young and the old. Through the case studies of this paper, it is evident to see that history and culture are at the backbone of intergenerational learning. By understanding and connecting with these shared stories, the methods of learning between the old and the young become more widespread and effective. This then emphasizes further the importance of intergenerational learning when it comes to policy making—both the historical and cultural context of a region must be taken into account, while too focusing on the diversity of traditions and customs of subgroups.

Furthermore, through analysing and appreciating history and culture, it becomes clear that linear views of the life course are not only ineffective but can be detrimental to teaching, learning and work. If a simplistic linear view on the life course is still used in relation to decisions and policy making, not only will older people suffer in terms of jobs and opportunities, but also in terms of resources and education. ASEM countries and policy makers should keep this at the forefront of decision making in order to establish a fairer distribution of resources and to strengthen the role of older people in society, especially in relation to intergenerational learning, and working life.

Policy developments across ASEM countries should also aim to establish a fairer, more balanced approach to equality of access to LLL for all. Throughout the case studies presented, inequality for older women, and older people from poorer backgrounds, was a common theme in relation to opportunities for LLL. Although there are many outreach programs with the aim to counterbalance this inequality, policy development and decision making must confront these inequalities and the negative effects they have for intergenerational learning, and for the transition out of learning and into the workplace.

This paper has brought together case studies and research that when read in the context of these four themes, show very important developments, policies, and programmes, but they also highlight

the importance and need for more comparative and qualitative research on each theme in order to aid in the formulation of policies for ASEM LLL Hub members. Although following research can take many paths, the gathering of better information on the educational interests and needs of diverse populations of older adults is paramount. This can be done through surveys within institutions, independent research, or the gathering of already published information across the ASEM countries. By answering these questions, the barriers that prevent educational providers from approaching ways to find solutions, will be overcome, and this will result in a wider range of reaching targets when it comes to intergenerational learning.

This paper, then, should act as a springboard for further research into intergenerational learning, with the hope that findings will work together in order to bring about positive action in policy development and decision making—actions that take into account, try to understand, and aim to help everyone involved in intergenerational learning.

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