

Generations United Revised Theory of Change – Approved by Board of Directors 1/15

Problems

Segregation: As the country's demographics dramatically change, older white people are separated from younger populations of color because of outdated age-based policies, institutions, housing and services.

Segmentation: Opposite generations are pitted against one another for resources & maligned with negative images.

Serious challenges: In the aftermath of the Great Recession, older & younger people face increasingly complex challenges.

Squandered assets: Human capital assets are left dormant.

Assumptions

Resources are more wisely used when they *connect the generations* rather than separate them. Every generation is part of the future. Intergenerational collaboration is an *economic and social necessity*. Intergenerational practices are fiscally sound and save dollars while making sense. *Every person, younger and older, has been and can continue to be a human capital asset to our country.* Public policy should *meet the needs of all generations*.

Discrimination in any form *limits a person's potential* to contribute to the development of their community. *Grandfamilies* provide an invaluable service.

Influential factors

America is experiencing a *demographic transformation*.

People are living longer and healthier lives. By 2043, one in five residents will be age 65 or older. At the same time, the youth population is growing dramatically. We are more racially and ethnically diverse. By 2042, more than half of the nation will be people of color. We face a growing racial generation gap. Today, more than half of Americans under the age of five are people of color compared to less than one in five Americans over 65.

These trends may *exacerbate negative attitudes* about children, youth, and older people.

Systems designed to address the problem – such as public policy frameworks, legislative committees, public agencies, and multiservice organizations -- *treat older and younger generations separately. This divide is fixable. The need for action is urgent.*

Strategies

Build the community: Connect leaders, practitioners, policymakers, and funders who believe we can only be successful in the face of our complex future if generational diversity is regarded as a national asset and fully leveraged.

Expose problems and promote policy solutions: Conduct research, analysis, and advocacy

Enlighten attitudes: Promote positive public views. Shift conversation from burden to benefit. Mixing it up is the new cool.

Advance practice: Provide technical assistance, training, awards and recognition. Identify, develop and spread inspiring models and practices across the US and internationally

Share knowledge: Spread what we know through technology, partnerships, convenings, writing, and speaking

Catalyze the opportunities for all generations.

Assets

Our demographic diversity-in both age and race-is our country's greatest asset. Increased awareness of intergenerational practices & families provides a base on which to build additional intergenerational efforts. Past efforts demonstrate that partnerships, policy promotion, technical assistance and pilot programs can break through barriers. With the full engagement of Generations United's partners, members, and board, and increased staff and technological capacity, we can have an even greater impact.

Results

Untapped energy of all ages is unleashed to master our complex future together.

Lives of children, youth, older people & families are improved.

Social capital grows as intergenerational practices lead to stronger communities & caring & understanding is increased across generations.

All generations are valued in change from competition to cooperation.

Mixing it up is the new cool.