



BUILDING

BRIDGES

ACROSS

GENERATIONS



**REDEFINING INTERGENERATIONAL
SPACES FOR GIRLS'
EMPOWERMENT**



A few months ago I had the chance to facilitate a workshop on creating intergenerational spaces for a group of women who are considered leaders of work for women's rights in their regions. I also had the honour of co-facilitating with two of my coworkers in an (appropriately) intergenerational facilitation team - I'm in my early twenties, while Karima and Fabienne are in their thirties and fifties, respectively.

Our focus in workshops is always pretty participative, so we had a bunch of exercises worked out that the participants could then take away to use in intergenerational spaces. There was just one slight problem: we weren't sure that the participants themselves would be coming from different generations! Luckily, we ended up having folks from 4 or 5 different decades in the room, and going through the exercises proved not only useful to their work, but also relevant within the workshop. It felt great to hear positive reflections from other generations of people who were in the same field as us, doing the kind of work we're passionate about.

In the workshop, we talked a lot about our relationships with people from other generations, both personal and in the workplace. We also talked about how valuable it is for us to learn the histories of our movements from each other, not just from (hard-to-find) books. Coming out of the workshop, I definitely felt that my understanding of the value of intergenerational work had been hugely reinforced. I had experienced twenty women, between 5 and 40 years older than I, taking the time to listen and learn from me and from each other.

- Intergenerational reflection by Kat Butler, National Project Coordinator,
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GIRLS ACTION FOUNDATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Since **Girls Action Foundation** began in 1995, we have created spaces where girls and women of many generations can interact and support one another. At first, these spaces developed almost without us realizing it. It simply seemed natural to include girls and young women in our national Girls Action Network events, along with the women who facilitated girls' programs. It also happened naturally that adults of many ages were invited to contribute to our youth programs by talking about their unique experiences or sharing skills with the girls.

More recently, we have affirmed the great value of intergenerational programs and exchanges and we have incorporated this into Girls Action events and projects. We believe that the knowledge, experiences, and reflections of all generations are valuable and that these connections can make events and programs more meaningful, creative, and relevant.

Creating intergenerational spaces, based on non-hierarchical and anti-oppression frameworks, allows for the emergence of transformational leadership that draws on the contributions of all generations. By supporting a variety of girls and women across different ages to join in a participatory exchange of knowledge, experiences, and skills, we create spaces that foster unique opportunities for innovative mentorship, learning, and action planning. It is in these spaces that leadership can be nurtured and supported with the goal of learning from the past and reflecting on the present to create a more just and equitable future.

We have compiled the following practices and reflections to share with other groups that are creating intergenerational spaces for social change. We hope that our experience and the expertise we have developed over the last 15 years can contribute to stronger connections between girls and women of all ages who work for a world of peace and justice.

WHY CREATE INTERGENERATIONAL SPACES?

"Intergenerational work is such an inspiration. It is beautiful to hear about other people's realities, ideas and experiences." – National Retreat Participant, 2008

All generations have something amazing and important to bring to the table. When creating moments and spaces for intergenerational exchange and learning, we are building communities that are better positioned to work towards transformative change. We are growing communities and societies that work towards justice and equity for all, and for those to come.

Intergenerational spaces are important for many reasons. They offer:

RICH EXPERIENCES

At Girls Action, we recognize that the large diversity of people in our networks is an important asset to the work that we do; their variety of life experiences enriches learning spaces.

INCLUSIVITY

In order to create inclusive and anti-oppressive spaces and programs, age is just one of many factors that need to be taken into account. Intergenerational spaces can help break stereotypes and prejudices related to age.

COMMUNITY

Intergenerational spaces create opportunities to truly build community based on everyone's contribution and complementary skills and talents. Creating community is especially important in an era that places so much emphasis on the individual.

REACH

Intergenerational spaces can build bridges that result in larger movements for social change. Imagine what is possible if all generations are engaged in an issue!

SUSTAINABILITY

We all want our efforts for social justice to be strong now and in the future. Intergenerational connections increase the sustainability of social movements.

CONTINUITY

The past, present, and future of our movements are connected. Intergenerational spaces help us reflect on the past, look at the present, and plan for the future. Memories, experiences of what has worked well and what has not worked, stories, current and changing needs, new opportunities, emerging trends –every generation has something to learn and offer to the next.

WHAT CAN INTERGENERATIONAL EXCHANGES LOOK LIKE?

"Intergenerational connections can generate an unexpected humour within the discussions." – National Retreat Participant, 2008

"Getting young people to teach elders something is a really interesting approach."
– National Retreat Participant, 2008

Intergenerational exchange can happen in many ways. Here are some of the forms of exchange that Girls Action has used successfully:

INTERGENERATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Workshops can offer an opportunity for women of many ages to explore the gifts of each generation and illustrate the benefits of working collaboratively. Intergenerational workshops are a great way to develop appreciation for the strengths of each generation within social movements. Workshops are also a positive way to address tensions that often come up when working with people of different ages. We have compiled some example workshop activities at the end of this resource. Please adapt them for your purposes!

LARGE-GROUP EVENTS

Girls Action facilitates intergenerational events each year, including the National Network Retreat and regional meetings. These events focus on skill building, action planning, and deepening understanding of issues that face girls and young women. Our large group events bring together 30 to 80 people and include a balance of workshops, discussion of issues, action planning, creativity, and fun. There is a wonderful opportunity in events such as these to shake up the usual division of youth and non-youth: what if all activities at the event were accessible and engaging to all ages? This kind of space can foster intergenerational exchanges both formally and informally, in facilitated sessions and in the relationships that can develop between participants.

PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS ACROSS GENERATIONS

Youth-focused organizations may partner with other organizations, creating an opportunity to implement a project that would not come about without an intergenerational partnership. Together, we can often accomplish more. However, there may also be challenges in working with others who may have different outlooks on the project or different styles of working. It is important to clarify roles and objectives at the beginning, for each of the partners. At Girls Action, we do our best to have clarity at the beginning of new relationships and openly deal with challenges as they arise.

PEER LEARNING AND MENTORSHIP

Women and girls of all ages can learn from each other. Mentorship is not necessarily an older woman transferring knowledge to a younger woman. At Girls Action, we do our best to create opportunities for peer learning and mentorship to happen in many different forms.

Have a look at the workshop activities included in this resource for an example of a peer learning process that works well for intergenerational groups.

“Dance cards” are also an interesting way to introduce and engage participants. At an event, participants sign up for half-hour mentorship sessions on a key issue or skill that would help move their work forward. The women of all ages who offer mentorship are also participants and facilitators at the event. Upon registering, they identify a specific talent or skill that they would be willing to share.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Often youth are sought out to contribute to an advisory committee and provide youth perspectives. This can be beneficial, but it is important to be aware that there is also the potential to tokenize youth participation through this role. It helps to be clear with everyone participating about the objectives, expectations, and roles of the committee. It also helps to acknowledge that one person cannot represent a huge and diverse group, although she can represent herself and her experience.

CONFERENCES

Conferences can be remarkable for the number of people and the amount of collective skill, vision, and energy that is all brought into one place. Most often, conferences follow a traditional template, with presentations by “experts,” panel discussions, and sometimes more interactive workshops. Young people and those with less formal expertise can feel out of place at such conferences. Try re-thinking the traditional conference format. If the objective is to facilitate exchange and develop action among a diversity of people on a key issue, what could be done to increase access, interaction, and engagement from everyone at the conference?

GIRLS' AND YOUNG WOMEN'S GROUPS: CAREER DAYS AND GUEST FACILITATORS

In our programs for girls and young women, we often include many older women who come into the group for a short time to share their experiences or skills. Guest facilitators can lead a workshop on an art form or an issue close to their hearts and those of the girls. Girls can also organize a Career Day, seeking out women who have their “dream job” and inviting them to share how they got to where they are and what their work is like. Women who volunteer often get as much out of the exchange as the girls.

GIRLS ACTION'S APPROACH TO CREATING INTERGENERATIONAL SPACES

As we create intergenerational events and exchanges, there are some key principles that guide our work. These principles are very similar to those that guide our programs for girls and young women. To find out more, please read our foundational principles and approaches at the end of this resource.

At Girls Action, we continue to reflect as we implement projects, identify new learnings, and shift our direction. Reflect, apply, and assess: this is how we have developed our approach to creating intergenerational spaces and this process is on going. By leveraging our unique position as both a youth and adult organization, we share our learnings to help support intergenerational spaces while also encouraging other organizations and initiatives to reflect, apply, and assess for themselves.

KEY APPROACHES TO CREATING INTERGENERATIONAL SPACES

"I learned that people from all walks of life can come together in a safe space to have non-judgmental conversation. Learning is a life-long tool." - National Retreat Participant, 2008

What I like about Intergenerational workshops or exchanges is that they create a moment to reflect on problems that we don't often talk about. - National Retreat Participant, 2008

- Base the program in the experiences, realities, and needs of those we work with in order to make it relevant and interesting.
- Include the experiences, realities, and needs of participants of all ages.
- Acknowledge that regardless of age, each of us is an expert in our own life and of our own experience.
- Share experiences and skills in a non-hierarchical fashion. Learning is not a top- down process - everyone has valuable knowledge to contribute.
- Value different roles across generations: there is a diversity of strengths within each generation and often age is not an accurate indicator of experience.
- Recognize that youth do not have to already know it all and that older generations can still learn new things.
- Appreciate that intergenerational spaces have been used across cultures and communities for centuries and we can be inspired by these successes.
- Build the program on issues that are relevant to the participants and "engage" all generations. Rather than trying to include youth or elders into our work, our work is organized around the needs and experiences of all generations.
- Create a participatory process where women of multiple generations have input at many stages of the process.
- Recognize that there is no such thing as a young or old issue; issues should be approached holistically. There are many links, it is up to you and your group to find them!

TIPS FOR CREATING INTERGENERATIONAL SPACES AND INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY BUILDING

"I like seeing everyone involved and when [it feels like] every opinion is important."
- National Retreat Participant, 2008

"The appreciation [I experience in the workshops] from other cultures and intercultural exchanges across generations is really rewarding."
- National Retreat Participant, 2008

GENERAL TIPS

- Recognize that issues are not bound by age or generation.
- Take the time to understand how a single issue cuts across generations and has systemic, community, and individual roots. All issues are connected and to take action together is a powerful strategy for change.
- Value the knowledge, experiences, and reflections of all generations.
- Be willing to be challenged, to learn, and to keep an open mind. Intergenerational spaces are wonderful learning opportunities as well as inspiring, rewarding, and fun!

ORGANIZATIONAL TIPS

- Find allies who do intergenerational work.
- Learn from organizations that have experience working with generations that you may not have worked with.
- Gather key learnings from youth-led and intergenerational organizations.
- Collaborate with organizations when possible and where meaningful so that relevant connections can be made.
- Acknowledge that no organization can "do it all." If you wish to work in an intergenerational way, reflect on how this can be modelled in your organization and structure.
- Consider board, staff, volunteers, participants, etc. and how meaningful intergenerational contributions can be made through these connections.
- Ensure the participation and input of people from different ages and identities in all aspects of the program or project: from planning to outreach, design, delivery, and evaluation.

LOGISTICS AND ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

It is important to think through logistics in terms of accessibility. If you wish to engage youth,

consider challenges and barriers that youth face, which may not be consistent with challenges and barriers from your own experience.

Here are some challenges and barriers that young people face and that need to be considered when creating intergenerational spaces and community building:

- Offer extra funds like stipends or honoraria to increase access across generations, as many young people will need financial support in order to participate in an event or project.
- Be aware of different schedules when planning events. For example, school hours, exams, day-care hours, etc. Youth availability does not always align with adult availability!
- Engage in outreach in diverse communities and consider intergenerational dynamics in these communities. For example, is it important to speak with parents to gain their confidence in engaging their children?
- Understand liability issues when working with youth. For example if travel is involved, funding for travel for legal minors should include funding for chaperones.
- Consider whether parents or guardians need to sign waiver forms for youth participation.

To ensure your space is accessible, think about these questions:

- Is the space physically accessible for a diversity of people with a diversity of needs?
- For example, is the space wheelchair and stroller accessible?
- Is translation necessary?
- Is the program financially accessible to all participants?
- Is there a clear procedure regarding the accessibility and consumption of alcohol during the event?
- Has childcare been considered? It can be a barrier for many generations. Offer childcare and promote that it is available.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH TIPS

- Consider inviting people of all ages to your event, from babies to elders, where appropriate and relevant. In our experience, this can transform the space and the experience of everyone involved.
- Try to engage local grassroots organizations that are already doing work with and by young people - this can be especially important for adult-centred organizations.
- Network with youth-through-youth organizations to ensure meaningful and responsible youth engagement that is more than a token involvement.

- Find out where your audiences access information.
- Use the appropriate tone, message, and language. Communications materials should be made accessible and targeted to a wide audience.
- Invite input from young people into promo material and outreach strategies, to ensure they are relevant and accessible.
- Recruit young women for advisory or other committees to support outreach and communication efforts.

PROGRAM DESIGN TIPS

- Ensure your program design appeals to a wide audience.
- Provide a variety of activities to engage everyone. Some creative tips to consider:
 - Use arts based activities like theatre, collage, and 'zine making. Arts based activities can get people out of their head and into their bodies.
 - Make time for play and leisure. This helps build group cohesion and sustain momentum during long group processes.
- Create space for small group discussion.
- Offer space for emerging needs and open topics.
- Design programs that allow for a variety of presentations from a diversity of people and experiences.
- Create space for peer learning and exchanging knowledge across experience, etc.
- Prioritize young women in the front of the room for presentations and to facilitate workshops, etc. when engaging young people in your projects and activities
- Focus on creating asset-based or appreciative inquiry techniques to generate positive reflections on the qualities of different ages and that challenge stereotypes.
- Challenge top-down models of education.
- Acknowledge that everyone is at once an expert and a learner.
- Recognize that thinking and learning can happen outside of panels and presentations, workshops and speeches.
- Take the time to understand how you are a part of issues at systemic, community, and individual levels. Ask yourself how this implication affects your actions.
- Offer anti-oppression workshops that support working across difference.
- Ensure your program design is accessible across differing abilities.

FACILITATION TIPS

- Ensure language is accessible and empowering, rather than “dumbing down” the content or potentially alienating people through inaccessible jargon.
- Offer debriefs after the activities in order to learn what worked, what didn’t work, and how to adapt for next time.
- Create a “Group Agreement” to identify group boundaries, as well as what participants need to feel heard, safe, and empowered.

For more information on how to create and facilitate intergenerational spaces please have a look at our Amplify Toolkit: Designing Spaces and Programs for Girls available in our online Resource Centre www.girlsactionfoundation.ca.

Please visit www.girlsactionfoundation.ca for any additional resources.

Creating Intergenerational Spaces: Workshops

INTERGENERATIONAL APPRECIATION TRUST BUILDING ACTIVITY

Objectives & Context

1. Promotes intergenerational sharing.
2. Bridges generations and create space for everyone in our organizing.
3. Creates an effective and grounded strategy for including young women at all levels of movement building.
4. Supports a caring environment where all women feel included.

Duration

40 minutes to 1 hour

Group Size

Works best with large groups where many age groups are represented

*Can be adapted for younger groups

Age Group

12 +

*Can be adapted for younger groups

Skills

Communication, Listening, Sharing, Reflection, Appreciation

Format(s) & Technique(s)

Large group activity and reflective exercise

Materials

Flip chart paper for each group

Markers

Pre “flip charted” questions

Group tables

Facilitation Tips

- In this workshop, participants are separated into age groups that span ten years (for example: twenties, thirties, forties, etc.), with all participants under 20 together. If there are many participants under 20, consider further breaking up this into more groups (15–20 year-olds, under-12, etc.).
- If many generations are not present, impressions can still be shared about other generations by splitting the group into smaller groups, each representing a generation. Each group's discussion would reflect this perspective. All groups would then come together to share.
- The workshop can be adapted to include young participants as well. To do this, consider other means of expression, such as drawing or acting, and assign an older participant or facilitator to the younger group to help write down ideas.
- Allow the groups to self-facilitate, but try to have one facilitator, support person or someone who knows the process per group to help stimulate discussion and answer questions.
- No ideas are wrong, but encourage them to be positive!

Popular Education Prompts

- Why is it important to create intergenerational organizing?
- In what ways have participants already engaged in intergenerational activities/work/organizing?
- What can we do now to work together and create intergenerational spaces?

Leading the Activity: Steps to Take

Preparation:

1. Flip chart sheets, marked up with rows for each “generation” group, along with the following guiding questions:

What are the gifts of this generation?

What do women of this generation contribute to social change?

These sheets will be given to each generational group to fill in.

For example, the flip chart sheets could look like this:

Under-20s Group	
Generation	What are their gifts and contributions to social change?
20s	
30s	
40s	
50s	
60s & Elders	

30s Group	
Generation	What are their gifts and contributions to social change?
Under-20s	
20s	
40s	
50s	
60s & Elders	

2. Flip chart sheet with guiding questions. For example:

What are the gifts of this generation?

What do women of this generation contribute to social change?

Workshop:

1. Explain the context:
There are many women of different ages and generations present. This workshop was created to explore the uniqueness of each age and to bring awareness to what each “generation” contributes to social change.
2. Present the guiding questions (written big and put on the wall).
3. Divide the group according to age. The groupings will depend on the age and number of participants. We typically have four groups: Under-20s, 20s, 30s, and 40s & Elders.
4. Give each group their corresponding flip chart sheet and markers to write with.
5. Ask each group to talk about what the gifts and contributions are from other generations. Ask them to write their responses on the sheets.
6. Share perspectives. When the groups have finished discussing, choose one group to be the first to “receive” appreciation (they will only listen and not respond). For example, begin with appreciating the Under-20s. Ask the 20s to say what they think of the Under-20s. Then ask the 30s, and the 40s and Elders to share what they think of the Under-20s.

7. Invite reactions. When the groups have finished sharing their appreciation, the group being “appreciated” can share their reaction.

For example, ask the Under-20s to share what they think of what the others said about them. Ask them how it feels to receive this feedback.

8. Repeat the process for each of the other age groups.

Debrief

This can be a very powerful workshop. It is important to debrief to close the session and make sure that everyone is feeling okay with moving on. The debrief does not need to be intensive, if there are many people, a physical debrief/closing (like a connections map) might work for your group. If there are fewer people or if you have extra time, a longer go-around might work. It depends on your time frame and the rest of your program. You will definitely want to give a short break to your group afterwards to gather their thoughts before moving on.

Physical Debrief Ideas:

▶ Connections Map

- Ask people to move to the person they connected with during the day and put their right hand on their shoulder.
- Give everyone a second to see this.
- Next, ask them to leave their hand on that person’s shoulder, while at the same time placing their left hand on the shoulder of someone they would like to learn more from.
- Pause here for a moment so that everyone can absorb this image.
- Talk about how this is a reflection of our connections. How it was here already before today, but that we were able to build it stronger together.

▶ Walk in the woods

- Offers a space to see what is resonating with people from the workshop, bring out questions and “Ah ha!” moments.
- Ask participants to walk around the space as if they are walking through a park. Encourage them to think about what has come up for them throughout the day. Give them a minute or so to do this on their own.
- As they cross paths with others, ask them to touch their index fingers together and share what they put their finger on (“Ah ha!” moment) during the day. Allow another minute for this.

- As they cross paths, ask them to share what question remains with them from the day. Allow 1 minute.
- Come back into a circle and share the questions people are comfortable saying. Record the questions as they form the basis for next steps.

Success Indicators

- Participants have a chance to reflect on their own generation and their roles.
- Participants share their impressions of the positive qualities that other generations have.
- There is a greater understanding of each generation and how they can work together.
- Everyone is laughing and there is a strong connection felt between participants.

POWERFUL WOMEN: SHARING STORIES TRUST BUILDING ACTIVITY

Objectives & Context

1. Reflects and honours the women in our lives.
2. Identifies patterns in strong women's stories so that others can learn.
3. Encourages meaningful connections across generations through sharing and honouring different generations.

Duration

1 hour and 30 minutes

Group Size

9 +

Age Group

12 +

Skills

Sharing, Communication, Reflection, Listening

Format(s) & Technique(s)

Small and large group discussions

Materials

If you want to take notes (not required):

Flip chart, blackboard, or eraser board

Markers or chalk

Facilitation Tips

- At least a few hours (or a few days) before the workshop, identify three women in your program from different generations. Ask these women and young women if they would be comfortable sharing a story from their lives that describes how they overcame a challenge or a moment when they felt most powerful. If so, invite them to share their stories.
- Consider recording the common themes and patterns that arise in the shared stories on a flip chart.

- Participants may need a moment if stories are shared about women who are no longer with us.

Popular Education Prompts

- Stories are grounded in the experiences of the participants.
- Is there a way to identify patterns in the shared stories?
- Do these patterns reveal factors that enable or act as barriers?
- How can the group support each other to have more moments of feeling strong and empowered?
- How can the group take action in their communities for more women to learn from each other's strengths?
- How can the group take action to support more women in their communities to feel strong and empowered?

Leading the Activity: Steps to Take

Preparation:

1. Identify and invite three women from different generations to share their story in the workshop.
2. If using a flip chart, have it set up with markers for writing.

Workshop:

1. Divide the group into small groups of three to allow for intimate sharing.
2. Each person tells her group about a powerful woman who has inspired her. Allow 10 minutes per group member (for a total of 30 minutes) for small groups to share their stories amongst themselves.
3. Bring everyone together again as a large group.
4. In the large group, ask if participants noticed any patterns in the stories. What kind of power did these women possess? Allow 20 minutes for large group sharing.
5. Ask the three women from different generations to share a story from their lives that describes how they overcame a challenge or a moment when they felt most powerful. Ensure that each speaker has 10 minutes to share her story.
6. Ask the whole group if they see any more patterns in these stories? Ask what the group takes away from this discussion?

Debrief

Questions

- How did the workshop make participants feel?
- Will these stories have an impact on their work? How?

-Do participants need extra support or counselling if the stories have triggered strong responses?

Success Indicators

- Participants talk about strong women in their lives and listen to one another.
- Participants are able to identify patterns in the shared stories.
- The group is warm, friendly, and supportive of each other.
- Connections are made across generations.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES

ICE BREAKER ACTIVITY

This workshop has been adapted from a Movement Project workshop entitled “Generational Shifts in Leadership.”

Objectives & Context

1. Breaks down stereotypes related to age and experience.
2. Provides an opportunity to get to know the experiences, successes, challenges, and needs of your group as it relates to social change movements.
3. Builds on past successes and values work that others have done.
4. Fosters intergenerational exchanges.
5. Identifies how other people (of various ages) have supported your work.
6. Values that advice comes from different places.
7. Emphasizes the importance of intergenerational connections and acknowledges knowledge across generations.

Duration

30-45 minutes, depending on the group size (larger groups will take more time)

Group Size

Works best with groups between 10-30 participants

Discussion is more fruitful when a diverse age range is present

Age Group

10 +

*Can be adapted for different age groups

Skills

Sharing, Communication, Listening, Appreciation, Reflection

Format(s) & Technique(s)

Large group activity and reflective discussion with small and large groups

Materials

Flip chart, blackboard, or eraser board

Markers or chalk

Facilitation Tips

- Ensure groups are diverse by pairing up participants that have different levels of experience, different backgrounds, or ages.
- Facilitation should emphasize where we seek and receive useful advice and tips, not necessarily the advice and tips themselves. This exercise can help challenge stereotypes related to age and experience.
- For groups with less experience of social change work, try reframing the question to relate to working on projects, building something, or making something as a team. For groups with more experience of social change work, try soliciting more detailed responses based on their experiences. For example, what kind of advice was it? Did it relate to general organizing, planning, logistics, facilitation, etc.

Popular Education Prompts

- Recognize and identify the experience and knowledge that participants carry across generations.
- Identify the advice or tips that participants require to move forward.
- Brainstorm where and who they can ask to get the advice they need from different generations.
- Ask how this workshop could lead to collective action that values experience across generations.

Leading the Activity: Steps to Take

Preparation:

1. If using a flip chart, have it set up with markers for writing.
2. To ensure groups are diverse, know a little about the different levels of experience, different backgrounds, and ages of each of the participants.

Workshop:

1. Pair up the participants.
2. Have each pair reflect and prepare an answer to the following questions:
 - In what ways have other people contributed to your social change work or projects?
 - What helpful advice or tips have you received from people with more experience?
 - In what ways have you helped other people in social change work or in their projects?
 - What advice or tips would you give to someone with less experience?
3. Give participants about 10 minutes to discuss these questions and prepare their answers.
4. Allocate a short amount of time for each group to present their answers.

5. Write down their answers on the flip chart.
6. Invite the large group to reflect and discuss the answers from the small groups using the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - Who were the people giving advice or offering useful support?
Consider age and experience.
 - Are people with valuable experience always older than us?
 - When has someone younger than you taught you something important for your social change work?
 - How can you seek advice across generations?
 - What are the benefits of seeking advice and tips from across generations?
 - What advice or support would you want to receive, but did not get? Who can you ask for this advice?
7. Record the discussion on the flip chart.

Debrief

Questions

- What new insights about other generations has this workshop brought forward for participants?
- How can new intergenerational connections affect their social change work or projects?
- Where are they going to go now to seek the new knowledge that they need to move forward? Do the participants need a follow-up workshop to fill this need?

Success Indicators

- Participants have a chance to reflect on their own strengths and the strengths of other generations in social change work or other projects.
- There is a greater understanding of each generation and how they can work together.
- Participants discuss in pairs and within a large group.

WHAT DO THEY THINK OF ME?

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING ACTIVITY

This workshop has been adapted from a Movement Project workshop entitled “Generational Shifts in Leadership.”

Objectives & Context

1. Addresses stereotypes related to different ages and generations.
2. Promotes intergenerational sharing.
3. Bridges generations and creates space for everyone while organizing.

Duration

45-60 minutes

Group Size

10 +

Age Group

12 +

Skills

Sharing, Communication, Listening

Format(s) & Technique(s)

Small and large group discussions, brainstorming, writing

Materials

Flip chart paper

Markers

Tape

Facilitation Tips

- This workshop is best used as an Ice Breaker before an asset-based (positive-oriented) intergenerational workshop.
- Frame the workshop as a fun way to challenge stereotypes and create intergenerational dialogue.

- It is possible that potentially harmful and loaded stereotypes will be listed in groups' answers. It is important to ensure that a discussion and understanding around what stereotypes are, as well as an attempt to understand where they come from, so that these stereotypes are challenged together as a group. It is the job of the facilitator to support the participants in challenging stereotypes, rather than reinforcing them. This means that the facilitator may need to bring new information to the group to help explain and challenge certain stereotypes related to different age groups. For example, if the teen group answers that other age groups think they are lazy, consider bringing in information about youth-led initiatives or organizations, as well as addressing some of the barriers that prevent youth engagement.
- Reinforce the positive statements that are made about other generations.

Popular Education Prompts

- Bring in new information (like research, statistics, pamphlets, testimonials, etc.) when needed to help dispel stereotypes related to age. Give statistics if they are interesting, and/or overviews of the social and economic challenges faced by each generation. This can give an "objective," big-picture perspective to the issues that arise during the workshop. It can remind people of the contexts in which people older or younger than them came of age, and the constraints or advantages they may now face.
- How can we take action against stereotypes related to age?
- How can we address the barriers that affect different age groups?

Leading the Activity: Steps to Take

Preparation:

1. Tape pieces of flip chart paper to the wall in different parts of the room. Groups will be assigned to different areas with the paper to brainstorm and write down their answers.

Workshop:

1. Divide groups according to age/generation. Use the following divisions or make up one that suits the group:
 - Teens
 - 20s
 - 30s
 - 40s
 - 50s
 - 60s & Elders
2. Each group takes about 10–15 minutes to brainstorm a short list of what they believe other generations think of their own generation. For example, the teens could answer the following questions:

- What do the folks in their 20's think of us?
 - What do the folks in their 30's think of us?
3. Repeat for each age group
 4. Each group writes their answers on the flip chart paper taped on the wall.
 5. After the brainstorming is completed, bring the whole group together to look at the answers from one of the age groups. Ask someone from the selected age group to read these answers aloud. Ask for clarification when needed. Engage other members of the group in explaining their responses.
 6. Once the group has finished presenting and explaining their answers, ask the group at large: "Is this true, is this what other age groups think of this age group?"
 7. Ask the group who presented their answers to respond to the generalizations and stereotypes they have written down about themselves: "Is this true, is this what your generation is like?"
 8. Repeat steps 4-6 for each age group.

Debrief

- Ask participants how different stages of the workshop made them feel.
- If needed, go over the definition of "stereotype."
- Check whether participants need to spend more time deconstructing a particular assumption or stereotype.
- Ensure that you promptly follow-up the workshop with any necessary resources to help support future action planning or knowledge building.
- Follow-up with an asset-based (positive-oriented) intergenerational workshop.

Success Indicators

- Participants share together in small groups.
- Participants generate their lists in a light-hearted way.
- The large group actively tries to challenge stereotypes.
- Participants express that they have gained new knowledge or a new perspective.
- Participants are communicating across generations.

PEER LEARNING KNOWLEDGE BUILDING ACTIVITY

Objectives & Context

1. Encourages learning from the experiences and success of peers doing similar work.
2. Builds networks and makes meaningful connections.
3. Brings concrete challenges or issues to the table and gets feedback.
4. Supports the pooling of ideas and experiences to brainstorm ways to move forward on challenges.

This activity encourages peer learning. Peers can be those who are engaged in similar work and who share common goals. Peers do not have to be the same age or have the same level of experience.

Duration

30-45 minutes for each presenter (there may be more than one presenter if time allows)

Group Size

6 +

Age Group

Any age of people who are undertaking projects or who are organizing

Skills

Sharing, Reflection, Communication, New approaches to work

Format(s) & Technique(s)

Small and large group discussions, reflection, sharing, peer-learning process

Materials

Meeting space

Places to sit

Facilitation Tips

- This activity requires prep work on behalf of the participants. Allow participants at least one day to prepare the issues, challenges, and questions related to their work.

- The facilitator may need to assist when setting up the groups.
- The facilitator is required to keep time. It is important to respect the timing because it keeps the flow of the activity moving along.
- If necessary, make sure that the small groups are as diverse as possible. Different ages and experiences will enrich the experience.
- Remember that finding “solutions” to the challenges brought up by participants is not the only rewarding aspect of this activity. It is possible that “solutions” may come as a result of the peer learning activity or that no “solutions” can be found. The activity is most successful when the sharing of experiences allows for new ways of moving forward to emerge organically over time. Hearing about new experiences from peers doing similar work or sharing similar goals can “shake up” old views or old ways of working and leave room for new approaches that may emerge over time.

Popular Education Prompts

- Everyone has some expertise, even if they don't think so! This exercise is very useful for encouraging all participants to share their experience and ideas to address the challenges brought by the presenter. It is powerful to see the diverse ways that different people approach different challenges. It is also powerful to see the new options that can open for the presenter (and possibly for others in the group).
- Are there are common experiences or patterns in the issues or challenges facing the work of the group?
- Do the participants need follow-up to this activity, such as additional information and resources or another workshop to support participants in their work?
- Is there interest to take further action to address challenges raised? To share resources? To work together in the future?

Leading the Activity: Steps to Take

Preparation:

The day before the workshop, ask participants to prepare a challenge that they are currently facing in their work. The challenge can be related to funding, programming, internal organizational issues, an issue in the community... it can be anything!

Workshop:

1. Help the large group divide into many smaller groups. Diversity in the groups is the most fruitful (age, experience, sector). Smaller groups should have at least 3-4 people in them.
2. While in small groups, ask one person (the presenter) to present her challenge:
 - Ask her to describe the situation to the group, including the context surrounding the situation.
 - Allow 8 minutes to share the challenge.
3. The group then asks questions for clarification and to deepen their understanding of the context. This can take up to 6 minutes.
4. The presenter turns her chair so that her back faces the group.

5. Peers brainstorm on possible solutions or approaches to the challenge.
 - The presenter only listens and does not participate in the brainstorming.
 - Allow about 10-15 minutes for this step.
6. The presenter faces the group.
 - Ask her to describe her experience of listening to the discussion and what she found helpful.
 - Allow about 6 minutes.
7. If time allows, another person presents her challenge to the group. Repeat steps 2-6.
8. Bring all the smaller groups together to debrief as a larger group. Facilitate discussion by asking questions: "What did the everyone get out of this activity? What was applicable in their own work?"
9. Ask all participants to briefly summarize what they got out of this activity. Allow at least 10 minutes for this last step.

Debrief

- Reassure the participants that it is okay if concrete solutions did not result from the activity. Remind them that it is the process that is important.
- Encourage the group to reflect over the learnings that came out of this activity over the weeks that follow. Ask participants to be aware of how the session opened up their thinking, approaches, and ways of working.
- Thank the presenters for preparing their challenges and sharing these with the group.
- Were any of the participants' questions left unanswered? Is there a way to find support to answer these remaining questions?
- Check whether participants need resources to continue their learning? Is there a way to provide these resources? Is it possible to bring in a volunteer or speaker with new knowledge to share with the group?

Success Indicators

- Participants have prepared a challenge.
- Small groups actively listen to the presenter.
- Small groups are eager to brainstorm, share solutions and experiences, and make connections.
- Large group listens to smaller groups.
- Presenters and others in the group have gained new knowledge or perspectives to apply in their work.

GIRLS ACTION'S PRINCIPLES AND FRAMEWORKS

Our unique approach is based on five overarching principles.

1. Popular Education/Critical Education

Popular education is a model that begins with a personal experience and moves towards collective action. Contrary to traditional hierarchal education where experts hold the knowledge, this model is grounded in the belief that everyone is an expert, and argues that learning is not a top-down process.

For Girls Action, keeping the focus on girls' experiences in our programs allows girls to recognize that they are important as individuals and that together, they can have an impact on their reality. We favour grassroots and critical education approaches that are designed to recognize girls' knowledge, and we invite them to be experts in their own lives. This popular education model validates girls' experiential knowledge and actively engages and empowers individuals to move towards collective change.

2. Integrated Feminist Analysis

At Girls Action we recognize that the girls in our programs are diverse in terms of their race, socio-economic status, ability, sexuality, gender identity, religion, culture, Aboriginal, refugee, immigrant or other status, and much more. We also recognize that in order to build support networks and community among girls, we must recognize and take into account the multiple and intersecting nature of these diverse identities.

We do this by incorporating and working from an integrated feminist analysis framework. Through this framework, we focus on understanding structures of power and systemic issues and how these factors interact with girls' lives. This framework recognizes that policies and practices have varying impacts on different groups of girls' according to the power or lack of power they experience in their lives. By recognizing and addressing how power affects girls in their different social locations and wide-ranging histories, Girls Action strives to empower girls in all their diversity and to build communities to encourage girls to mobilize together for transformational change.

3. Transformational Change

We believe that both individual and collective action is needed in order to create a socially just world free of discrimination and oppression. Social justice requires change on multiple levels: the individual, the community, and the systemic. This means that we support girls to take action in their own lives, in their own communities, and in their own initiatives - to influence policy, the educational system, laws, and so on.

4. Critically Asset-Based

Working from a positive-oriented lens that emphasizes the capacities and assets of girls' personal realities and experiences, the Girls Action approach builds on girls' strengths and community resources. Rather than positioning girls as passive recipients, we see girls as

agents of social change. We work with and for girls, encouraging them to develop knowledge as a political process, which in turn inspires them to take collective action in their communities. This is an asset-based approach that embraces social, political and economic reflection and critical perspective while acknowledging that girls face certain structural barriers (including institutionalized racism, poverty, homophobia, ablism, and other forms of structural and personal violence).

5. Organic

The Girls Action approach is continuously shaped and reshaped by young women's input and feedback. An ongoing process of learning, reflecting, researching, acting, and evaluating informs our work on both the organizational and programming levels. We are committed to remaining adaptable and relevant to the changing realities of girls' and young women's lives.

GIRLS ACTION FOUNDATION is a national charitable organization. We lead and seed girls' programs across Canada. We build girl's and young women's skills and confidence and inspire action to change the world. Through our innovative programs, research, and support to a network of over 200 partnering organizations and projects, Girls Action reaches over 60,000 girls and young women.



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