Fostering Affordable Intergenerational Community

CASE STUDY REPORT | PLAN 530

Prepared by: William Canero & Katrina Tarnawsky
April 23, 2021

Photo source: Bridge Meadows
Executive Summary

Intergenerational housing projects are not common in Canada. Other nations, such as the United States, have adopted various models that have proven to be effective in directing affordable housing to equity-seeking groups impacted by racism, colonialism, gender violence, class, and institutionalisation. Furthermore, aspects of intergenerational housing have been used in specific contexts to incentivize activity and socialization in seniors.

Within Canada, we found a handful of examples from First Nations communities that were experimenting with housing interventions that bring together Indigenous people from different generations. We also selected two US examples of the Generations of Hope community model to analyze in minute detail. These cases stand out because of the way they were designed to address the needs of both seniors and families fostering children.

In researching intergenerational housing projects, our research team was interested in answering the following question: What strategies can be used to improve policies that support intergenerational affordable housing models in Canada? We conducted semi-structured interviews with three executive directors of North American intergenerational housing providers and have assessed our findings through a SWOT Analysis of this affordable housing model.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Through integrated services and supports, many existing intergenerational housing projects act as targeted interventions for equity-seeking groups with poor outcomes in their communities.
- Residents need to be screened for a community-oriented mindset, and staff should facilitate ongoing intergenerational programming among tenants.
- Intergenerational affordable housing providers currently lack a network of practitioners to share best practices and resources with.
- Successful affordable intergenerational developments are dependent upon public land disposition and heavy government subsidization at the outset.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Dedicate a funding stream through CMHC to intergenerational housing developments
- Develop policy encouraging Indigenous groups, and kin and foster families as target populations for projects
- Earmark municipal land situated near amenities for intergenerational projects
- Develop a centre of excellence or practitioner network for intergenerational housing in Canada
# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary** ........................................................................................................... 2

**Introduction** ........................................................................................................................ 4
  - Purpose and Scope ........................................................................................................... 5
  - Methodology .................................................................................................................. 5
  - Limitations ..................................................................................................................... 6

**Intergenerational Affordable Housing** .................................................................................. 7
  - Defining Intergenerational Affordable Housing ......................................................... 7
  - Bridging the Gaps: Why Intergenerational Housing is Growing in Popularity .......... 8
  - Context of Intergenerational Housing: Beyond Canada ............................................. 9
    - Europe ....................................................................................................................... 9
    - United States .......................................................................................................... 10
  - Context of Intergenerational Housing: In Canada ..................................................... 11

**Case Studies** .......................................................................................................................... 13
  - Generations of Hope Communities .......................................................................... 13
  - Bridge Meadows ....................................................................................................... 14
  - Genesis ....................................................................................................................... 17
  - Kikéyelc, A Place of Belonging .............................................................................. 20

**Findings and Discussion** ....................................................................................................... 24
  - Strengths ...................................................................................................................... 24
  - Weaknesses ................................................................................................................ 25
  - Opportunities ............................................................................................................. 27
  - Threats ........................................................................................................................ 27

**Recommendations** .................................................................................................................. 28

**Conclusion** ............................................................................................................................. 31

**References** .............................................................................................................................. 32

**Appendix** ................................................................................................................................ 35
Introduction

Canada’s population of 6.8 million seniors aged 65 and older (Statistics Canada, n.d.-b) is a diverse and dynamic cohort that is growing. Their housing needs have been identified as complex, with seniors having a suite of “integrated housing needs” including affordability, adaptability, and accessibility with respect to mobility and other supportive services (Puxty et al., 2019).

Younger members of the Canadian population are also struggling. 36% of non-homeowners under 40 say they will never own a home and 62% of all Canadians surveyed believe the majority of people will be priced out of the market in the next ten years (RBC Royal Bank, 2021).

Furthermore, beyond the category of age, Canada’s National Housing Strategy also identifies a number of other vulnerable Canadian cohorts within their priority action area of “housing for those in greatest need”, including women and children fleeing domestic violence, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and people dealing with mental health and addiction issues (CMHC, n.d.).

The segments of the population who have experienced difficulty in finding and affording housing are therefore broad. Currently, government support for responding to the needs of different groups is parceled out by category and the prioritization of one community often results in fewer funds allocated to others. One solution to this policy division is the creation of intergenerational affordable housing.

Intentional intergenerational housing developments, which allow for individuals of different ages to live together as good neighbours, have a 50-plus year history in European nations such as Denmark, but are a fairly recent phenomenon in North America. By accommodating multiple age categories, they can unite housing support for multiple cohorts in a way that improves social outcomes for a community in a holistic way.

Figure 1. Rendering of intergenerational community at Bridge Meadows Redmond. Source: Green Light Development
Purpose and Scope

Through this project, we will explore the intergenerational housing model as an emerging opportunity for affordable and community housing in Canada. In particular, this research investigates models that were designed to accommodate highly vulnerable populations, namely children and youth in and aging out of foster care, along with senior residents. We will highlight three case studies from the United States and Canada that have adopted this approach, and based on our findings, we will provide recommendations for policy tools and strategies to promote intergenerational developments within our national context.

Methodology

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What policy tools and strategies can be used to support intergenerational affordable housing models in Canada?

Sub questions:
- What are the barriers to development of intergenerational affordable housing?
- What are the impacts of the models in our case studies?
- How might intergenerational affordable housing provide solutions to other social issues in Canada?

We initially completed a literature review on intergenerational housing to identify pertinent examples across the world. Examples of this housing model are very infrequent in Canada, but we were able to find a number of projects in Europe and the United States. From these, we selected two developments from the American Generations of Hope communities model as our initial focus - Bridge Meadows in Oregon and Genesis in Washington D.C. These communities proposed a practical course of action to resolve the ongoing issues of housing insecurity for seniors and youth aging out of care - persistent social issues in Canada as well. They also had significant information about the projects publicly available through their websites, and this ease of access to data also prompted us to highlight these cases.

We identified a third case, Kikéykylec in Kamloops, British Columbia, as a new Canadian development very similar to the Generations of Hope communities in the United States, and have also included it in this study.

We then conducted semi-structured interviews with directors from each housing project to understand the following:
- the make-up of their communities;
- the programming they employ;
- the development and financing process for their units; and
- the impact that their projects have had on housing affordability and other social outcomes.

Each interview took roughly 60 minutes.

Information collected in the interviews was supplemented by qualitative data derived from secondary textual materials dealing the developments, such as impact and annual reports, website content, and online news articles.

From the interviews, we gleaned common lessons and best practices from the American and Canadian contexts to assess barriers to intergenerational affordable housing.
projects. We then applied these lessons to formulate a set of recommendations for federal, provincial, and municipal government agencies, as well as for the institutional context, towards developing strategies and policy measures that would support intergenerational affordable housing developments.

Limitations

The scope and methods used in this study presented some limitations. We contacted additional housing projects that utilized the Generations of Hope model, as well as the Generations of Hope technical and consulting services, but did not receive responses beyond Bridge Meadows and Genesis. This was likely due to our short timeline for the project, as well as community staff being overwhelmed by the additional care required for senior citizens resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The scope of this study also does not include market-rate intergenerational housing, which is becoming more prevalent in North America, as well as student/senior co-living or co-housing of students with seniors which has been trialed in a number of instances in Canada (for example, McMaster University’s Symbiosis: Students and Seniors Co-Housing Program).

Therefore, this study should not be considered as representative of the full scope of intergenerational housing projects and practices in North America.

Figure 2: Intergenerational family at Bridge Meadows. Source: Bridge Meadows
Defining Intergenerational Affordable Housing

Most Canadians will be familiar with the concept of multigenerational living arrangements. Statistics Canada reports that 2.2 million Canadians were living in households that include at least three generations of the same family as of the 2016 Census (2017). Multigenerational households are also the fastest growing type of household in Canada and are most common in Indigenous and immigrant populations (Statistics Canada, 2017). Its rising popularity can be attributed to a number of reasons including enhanced bonds among family members, facilitation of elder care, improved finances as a result of cost-sharing, and more recently, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Generations United, 2021b).

However, intergenerational housing differs in that they are intentionally developed multi-unit communities that are intended to house more than a single family. Garland (2018) provides a useful definition for the purposes of this study:

"Intergenerational housing

- Enables people of different ages to live side by side as good neighbours, to share their talents and resources, develop meaningful relationships and support each other;
- Fosters programs, policies, and practices that promote engagement, cooperation, interaction, and exchange between residents of different generations;
- Provides adequately for the safety, health, education and basic necessities of life for people of all ages, by taking a partnership or community-led approach to the delivery of services and/or activities;
- Has private spaces and communal areas intended for collective use." (p. 5)

This model of housing, particularly non-market intergenerational communities, is quite new in North America, and is only now starting to be fine-tuned. It remains largely untested (personal interview, Elin Zurbrigg) and the existing examples warrant investigation so that lessons and best-practices can be extracted for interested Canadian housing providers and policy-makers.
Public interest in the intergenerational housing model is growing in Canada, for residents, developers, and government. There are several reasons for this:

1. **The Canadian population is aging.**
The population is aging rapidly. By the mid-2030s, the share of Canada’s population over age 65 will be over 23% (Fuss & Globerman, 2020). Many will be on a limited income and will be looking to “rightsize” their housing. This is balanced by a vast majority (86%) of baby boomers and older adults wishing to age in place (Sotheby’s International Realty Canada, 2020), and reflects the importance seniors place on maintaining social connections to neighbours and other community members (Puxty et al., 2019). Yet, they are a diverse cohort that needs a variety of age-friendly, affordable housing options from mainstream housing, to accessible housing, cohousing, and extended care housing.

2. **Housing is unaffordable for young people.**
Young working professionals and families are struggling to find affordable housing options within the Canadian market. In Canada, average home prices would need to fall $223,000 (about half of the current value) to achieve affordability for someone aged 25-34 by 2030 (Kershaw & Eaves, 2019). 11.6% of Canadian households were in core housing need in 2018 (Statistics Canada, 2020) with racialized families being 4 times as likely to live in poverty (Homeless Hub, n.d.). Young individuals and families are searching for alternative, affordable housing.

3. **Our population is becoming age segregated.**
A 2012 report by the International Federation of Aging stated that the number one emerging issue facing seniors in Canada was keeping older people socially connected and active. The social networks of younger and older people no longer overlap as much as they used to, and almost a quarter of elderly people in Canada now live by themselves (Statistics Canada, n.d.-a). Intergenerational living arrangements benefit individuals of all ages, by reducing ageism, providing a sense of belonging and connection, and improving mental, physical, and cognitive health at each life stage (Generations United, 2021a).

4. **Intergenerational housing developments bring other social benefits.**
Intergenerational projects are also showing very positive outcomes with respect to other social issues, such as supporting vulnerable families and youths who are aging out of the child welfare system. Older generations contribute in meaningful ways and remain integrated with society, while younger generations benefit from the wisdom and support of their elders. These kinds of outcomes have positive tangible and financial implications with respect to social assistance and benefit costs disbursed by government, and will be explored further through our case studies.
Context of Intergenerational Housing: Beyond Canada

As mentioned earlier, there is a much longer history of intergenerational affordable housing development outside of our borders. This section will briefly detail intergenerational housing approaches and their attributes in Europe and the United States, where the most formalized processes can currently be found.

**EUROPE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DENMARK</th>
<th>FRANCE</th>
<th>GERMANY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 50-year history with intergenerational co-housing development</td>
<td>Home-sharing a more common model</td>
<td>Co-housing model (gemeinschaftliches Wohnprojekt) is gaining ground (Labit and Dubost, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprang from collective movement of the late 1960s as a bottom-up process (Falkenstjeme Beck, 2020).</td>
<td>Seniors living alone, but with extra bedrooms in self-owned houses or flats, share their residences with students or young workers (Labit &amp; Dubost, 2016)</td>
<td>Many projects are self-organized, but municipal authorities and landlords are becoming increasingly involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form is typically lowrise-dense-clustered housing</td>
<td>Rent costs lowered in exchange for supporting seniors with daily chores</td>
<td>Developments seen as a way of rebuilding traditional family links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of single unit dwellings and shared facilities (i.e. a common house)</td>
<td>Formalized through operation and supervision of arrangements by associations in major cities</td>
<td>Parallel government-sponsored initiative called the “multigenerational house” or Mehrgenerationenhaus: communal (non-residential) facilities with outdoor green space, and services and activities including day-nurseries, homework help for children, family therapy, social centres for the elderly, “rent-a-granny” service, etc. (Labit and Dubost, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure types may be mixed</td>
<td>Personalised charters created for each set of seniors and young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-housing groups often come together through social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Figure 3:** Intergenerational co-housing at Toustrup Mark, Denmark. Source: Jutland Station

**Figure 4:** Intergenerational house sharing in Lyon. Source: Expat Agency Lyon
Intergenerational housing still not prevalent or well known (Garland, 2018). Available housing only meets the specialist housing needs of about 5% of over 65s (Prasad, 2017). A few notable intergenerational housing projects - Oakfield Homes in Swindon, and Limelight Old Trafford in Greater Manchester. Projects mainly provide market-rate units, but work with housing association providers to offer mortgage assistance through the federal “Help to Buy: Shared Ownership” program.

United for All Ages think tank has founded an Intergenerational Housing Network (United for All Ages, n.d.). They offer support for strategy development, funding and business planning, multi-agency partnerships, community engagement, etc. Similar organization in Scotland - Generations Working Together.

**SPAIN**
Similar home-sharing programs as in France - a response to chronic shortage of student accommodation (HomeShare International, n.d.)

Programs coordinated by non-profits in collaboration with local governments and public universities

City of Alicante: Municipal Project for Intergenerational Housing and Community Services (2003)

Provides 244 affordable intergenerational housing units on three urban sites (World Habitat, 2012)

Prioritization of those with the greatest socio-economic advantage

**NETHERLANDS**
Approximately 30% of housing stock is owned by housing associations (Boelhouwer, 2019) - large social rental sector

Numerous innovative models, primarily to assist seniors:

- Humanitas, Deventer - students may live rent free in small apartment alongside elderly residents. In return they spend 30 hours helping residents per month (Crites, 2017).

- Beekmos, Houten - the elderly reside in an "assisted living environment" alongside young women, often single mothers on low income (Crites, 2017)

**UNITED KINGDOM**
Intergenerational housing still not prevalent or well known (Garland, 2018)

Available housing only meets the specialist housing needs of about 5% of over 65s (Prasad, 2017)

A few notable intergenerational housing projects - Oakfield Homes in Swindon, and Limelight Old Trafford in Greater Manchester

Projects mainly provide market-rate units, but work with housing association providers to offer mortgage assistance through the federal “Help to Buy: Shared Ownership” program

United for All Ages think tank has founded an Intergenerational Housing Network (United for All Ages, n.d.). They offer support for strategy development, funding and business planning, multi-agency partnerships, community engagement, etc.

Similar organization in Scotland - Generations Working Together
As mentioned above, intergenerational housing developments are not a well-known model in the United States. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had previously shown interest in multigenerational living arrangements, and implemented a Demonstration Program for Elderly Housing for Intergenerational Families from 2007-2008. Funding was made available "to private nonprofit owners of Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly properties to provide assistance for intergenerational dwelling units for intergenerational families" (HUD, n.d.). However, this program was short-lived and only supported individual families, rather than a community of individuals of different age groups.

Intergenerational co-op housing was brought over from Denmark to the US in 1988 by architects Charles Durrett and Kathryn McCamant, and has seen some limited success (Abrahms, 2011). However, formal group living projects at the affordable end of the housing spectrum have been championed by non-profit developers using the Generations of Hope model since the early 1990s. We will explore two of these examples in our case studies.

Even still, the US has only a very limited network of practitioners where non-profits and developers can collaborate, share best practices, and advocate for intergenerational housing. Derenda Schubert, Executive Director of Bridge Meadows, told us that “[t]here is no ‘Hey, you do intergenerational things. Come join our membership organization.’ There’s no such thing as that” (personal interview). The organization, Generations United, has taken the lead on building relationships and developing a practitioners’ network along with the Eisner Foundation, Encore.org, and the Stanford Social Innovation Review. However, Bridge Meadows identifies filling this vacuum as one of its top goals for the next decade.

**Context of Intergenerational Housing: In Canada**

Similar to many of the previously mentioned nations, Canada is a laggard when it comes to intergenerational housing. Previous reports that locate critical housing needs of seniors state that one in four seniors across Canada lives in below-standard housing whether it be an individual suite or a housing arrangement (Puxty et al., 2019). Previously, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Forum of Ministers Responsible for Seniors has encouraged Canadian governments to “develop housing suitable for intergenerational living” in order to further study best practices to combat the various housing-related issues that seniors face (Puxty et al., 2019, p. 3). While only a handful of intergenerational housing developments exist in Canada, we have seen a growing interest in the formula from Indigenous Nations and local governments looking to incentivise innovative solutions to the housing crisis. Some aspects of intergenerational housing have been replicated for various communities across Canada, but intergenerational housing as an intentional model to house elders, youth, and parents from different families is mostly absent from the housing continuum. What is more commonly seen as an alternative to individual living is co-housing developments in the format of affordable seniors’ housing that accommodates solely seniors of varying degrees of ability.
There are a few examples of new developments currently in the process of being created that reflect solely intergenerational housing. For instance, intergenerational housing is not a new concept in Canada when it comes to housing seniors and youth from different families on the same site. Such examples are rooted in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultural practices, and housing developments exist across Canada that incorporate shared, flexible spaces that Indigenous youth and Elders cohabitate together.

Today, there is interest in the creation of intergenerational housing on the part of Indigenous Nations. The Xwemelch’stn Housing Project is being developed by the Squamish Nation and entirely funded by the Province of British Columbia (Xwemelch’stn Housing Project, 2020, p. 1). This housing project is anticipated to begin construction in March 2021 and would mostly provide suites for Elders and the rest for youth and families by May 2022. Other notable projects led by Indigenous People include Kikékyelc, which we will discuss in detail further into this report, and recent projects that were awarded Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative funding. The Samson Cree Nation and Nuxalk Nations recently won funding for their developments that intentionally house Elders and families together with flexible, communal spaces (Impact Canada, n.d.). In the first stages of funding, housing innovators were invited to build on their ideas and received funding to develop them. Currently the innovation fund’s awardees are in the project implementation phase of their iterations and are expected to complete their projects in 2023.

While intentional intergenerational housing is rare across Canada, one notable project is Harbour Landing in Regina, Saskatchewan that uses aspects of the intergenerational model in combination with for-profit care. At Harbour Landing, a children’s “learning centre, located on a floor above the supportive living section” facilitates visits from seniors as part of the daycare schedule (Lough, 2017). This arrangement aims to facilitate active living in both seniors and youth. There are clear benefits to interaction across generations that Harbour Landing is trying to capitalise on in order to improve the lives of their senior residents.
Generations of Hope Communities

Our first two case studies examine affordable intergenerational housing developments that are based on the Generations of Hope model. In essence, the model involves the creation of intentional communities housing members of a vulnerable population along with senior citizens (Generations of Hope, n.d.). The principles underlying this model are:

- "Homes and community are universally designed and are planned to provide neighboring"
- The presence of three or more generations interspersed throughout the village
- The community has a goal to building community capacity
- The community augments social services by shifting care and support from professionals back to the neighborhood
- There is an expectation of volunteering to enhance the community and the development, health and safety of the residents
- Staff work is characterized by consent rather than control" (Generations of Hope, n.d.)

The populations who are best served by the model are:

- seniors looking for more fulfillment and purpose in their daily lives
- seniors who do not necessarily need to move to assisted living facilities yet still require a basic level of support
- foster children in need of adoptive homes
- youth leaving juvenile justice systems
- parents re-entering the community after drug treatment or prison
- military families and disabled veterans.

There are clear benefits to residents from all age brackets who share spaces together. "Parents get a support network to help with babysitting and mentorship. Children get access to after school programs and a team of surrogate grandparents. Seniors — called 'elders' in the community — get stable housing and a sense of purpose" (Swindler, 2019).

The model focuses on engaging with the vulnerable, builds intergenerational relationships, encourages diversity, and promotes sustainability.
Bridge Meadows
PORTLAND, BEAVERTON, AND REDMOND, OREGON

"...children who have experienced foster care will have a beautiful, safe place to live with their forever families, and parents will have support from other adoptive families. Elders in our future communities will find meaning and purpose as they become a part of the kids’ lives, too."

- Derenda Schubert, Executive Director, Bridge Meadows (Georgiadis, 2020)

Fast Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Populations</th>
<th>Number &amp; Distribution of Units</th>
<th>Land Parcel Source</th>
<th>Project Cost (approx.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive families (in process of adopting or fostering youth)</td>
<td>Bridge Meadows (North Portland): 9 family units, 27 elder units</td>
<td>Bridge Meadows (North Portland): land lease from Portland for $1/year for 99 years</td>
<td>Bridge Meadows (North Portland): $11.4 million (USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults (must be 55+ and income restricted)</td>
<td>Beaverton: 9 family units, 32 elder units</td>
<td>Beaverton: parking lot purchased at below-market rate from local church</td>
<td>Beaverton: $15.2 million (USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redmond: 10 family units, 26 affordable elder units, 8 market-rate units</td>
<td>Redmond: parcel purchased at below-market rate from developer</td>
<td>Redmond: $18.3 million (USD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Beaverton Bridge Meadows Source: Bridge Meadows
PROJECT DESIGN

Bridge Meadows was first developed in Portland, Oregon and is now celebrating its 10th anniversary. It was designed as an intentional intergenerational community for youth formerly in foster care, their adoptive parents (often their grandparents), and elders with limited means. The success of the Generations of Hope model is evident in the rapid expansion of Bridge Meadows to new sites - Beaverton, New Meadows at the Dorothy Lemelson House, and Redmond (Bridge Meadows 2021). Seniors are at the heart of this model as two thirds of each Bridge Meadows development is populated solely by seniors. (This is in part due to the fact that the Older Americans Act specifies that only 20% of seniors’ housing can be available to under-55s.) Units are only available to families who have agreed to adopt children and youth from the foster care system, as well as to adults over 55 who qualify for housing subsidies.

LAND ACQUISITION

For the first Bridge Meadows development, the City of Portland offered them the construction site via a land lease for $1 per year for 99 years. Before development could commence, they needed to secure a land variance in order to permit group living within a multi-family zone.

Subsequently, the organization has purchased land for their communities in other municipalities. In Beaverton, they purchased land zoned for multi-family residences from a local church at a below-market rate. More recently in Redmond, they were invited to purchase land cheaply from a subdivision developer who was required by an inclusionary zoning policy to develop affordable rental units.

FINANCING

The Portland project utilized financial support from various private partners and government institutions. Sources of funds included:

Federal
- 9% low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC)
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)
- Tax Credit Assistance Program (TCAP) (now defunct)

State
- Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program
- Oregon Housing Development Grant Program

Local
- Cash-flow-dependent loan
- Equity gap loan

Private
- Foundations (via capital campaigns) (HUD, 2014)

Bridge Meadows was not permitted to take on private debt to finance their first development, but subsequent projects in Beaverton and Redmond also utilized private loans from JPMorgan Chase and Umpqua banks (HUD, 2018; Bridge Meadows, n.d.-a).

Operating funds are mainly sourced through fundraising and through rents. Bridge Meadows North Portland caps rent at 26.5% of income for families, and offers units at 30%, 50%, and 60% Area Median Income for elders (HUD, 2014).
physical design

The multi-family development is designed to be inclusive and friendly to all ages. Family homes are 3- and 4-bedrooms, as foster families are required to adopt at least 3 siblings to qualify for residence. For elders, a portion of their 27 units have been designed to meet accessibility standards with one unit also designed for the hearing impaired. Indoors, there is a shared computer room, library, room for exercise classes and play, and a kitchen for weekly community dinners. The outdoor common space is a landscaped courtyard where children can play, and the space accommodates programming including a community garden.

The development further saves costs by producing its own green energy on-site through solar hot water panels.

intergenerational programming

Bridge Meadows has clinical staff on-site who deliver resident services and enhance community bonds. Bridge Meadows holds weekly "Happiness Hours" for all residents, therapeutic Group Circles (both separate and mixed age groups), and resident-produced programs (i.e. art classes). They also provide specialized training to elders through the Oregon Department of Human Services for meeting the needs of adoptive children and families.

Intergenerational community bonds are further enhanced by a volunteerism requirement. All elders sign a lease addendum agreeing to volunteer with the community’s children at least 100 hours per quarter. This gives the elders a purposeful role with families, and helps them feel more socially connected, while at the same time providing youth with supportive adults and reducing parents’ stress.

impact on residents

Bridge Meadows states that its model improves quality of life for all (Bridge Meadows, n.d.). Highlights from their annual reports and website include:

- Each child who finds a permanent family and lives at Bridge Meadows saves human services $439,000 (USD) annually in foster care payments
- Youth report an average score of 97% on the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (measures children’s ability to overcome adversity and continue normal development (Resilience Research Centre, n.d.))
- Parents save $18,925 annually in child care costs
- Elders report an average score of 81% on the NovoPsych Flourishing Scale (measures self-perceived success in areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism (NovoPsych, n.d.))
Genesis
WASHINGTON D.C.

Figure 10: Genesis Development, Washington, DC. Source: Genesis

“We were intrigued by the intentional neighboring model after reading about Generations of Hope because we have observed over many years of experience the immense capacity for residents of buildings to come together around a common purpose and create cooperative and supportive networks”

- Elin Zurbrigg, Deputy Director, Mi Casa (Swerdlow, 2016)

Fast Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Populations</th>
<th>Number &amp; Distribution of Units</th>
<th>Project Cost (approx.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seniors (income restricted)</td>
<td>15 senior units</td>
<td>$7.6 million (USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with a young mother who has aged out of foster care</td>
<td>8 units for families from foster care</td>
<td>Washington D.C. land surplus and disposition agreement (20-50% of land reserved for affordable units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 general family units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17
LAND ACQUISITION

Genesis was a development built, owned, and operated by Mi Casa Inc., a nonprofit affordable housing developer that provides housing to low- and moderate-income households. As part of Washington D.C.’s Disposition of District Land for Affordable Housing Amendment Act, Mi Casa was able to acquire their lot from city agencies that purchase land for public disposition. Within this process, they participated in a competitive bid process with other developers for the land at below-market rates, and were ultimately chosen as the successful candidate.

FINANCING

Financing for 20 units falls under Section 8 HUD Housing Choice Voucher. This means residents pay one third of their income towards housing with minimum payments capped at $25 a month. Under this program HUD pays "rental assistance directly to the landlord... [and] participants pay 30% of the householders’ adjusted income" (Dodge County Housing Authority 2021). The remaining units are offered at 50-80% AMI. While the Section 8 subsidies cover a portion of rent, maintenance and daily operations, Genesis still relies on private loans and fundraising for ongoing operations.

The project was too small to receive a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) however, as a non-profit, Mi Casa was eligible to receive moneys from various public and private grant sources. These sources include the federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), the local Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF), a rent subsidy contract with the local government, and private loans. They also received grant

PROJECT DESIGN

Genesis is an intergenerational community of low-income seniors, low-income families, and parents aged out of foster care with children. It is based on the idea of intentional neighbouring, community volunteerism, and creating supportive culture. More than 80% of participating families are female-headed households and 97% are families of color (personal communication [Email attachment], Corinne Murphy). The DC Child and Family Services Agency, DC Office on Aging, and DC Department of Housing and Community Development were all partnered in the creation of this project and still have a hand in the ongoing operations today (Global Engineering Services, n.d.).

Initially, this housing development had a mandate requiring residents to volunteer their time interacting with other members of the community. It has since evolved into a more informal process to incentivise residents to support each other in ways that develop:

- a sense of security;
- a sense of social network; and
- the means of achieving life goals such as finding a job, supporting children in their education, and child care support.

Genesis designed these outputs to alleviate the physical and psychological burdens of housing instability (personal communication [Email attachment], Corinne Murphy).

There are 27 units within the development; 15 for seniors, 8 for young mothers with children, and 4 for other families (Genesis n.d.). Residents were initially selected using a matrix that evaluated the strength of their desire for living in an intergenerational community in addition to their low-income status.
funding from the Child and Family Services Agency who offered two years of operating support for the project. Finally, the building itself doesn’t generate enough income for staffing, so Mi Casa participated in a solar incentive program, thereby receiving grant funding to fund staffing costs.

**PHYSICAL DESIGN**

The development is 25,892 ft² over five storeys, and consists of mainly 2- and 3-bedroom units for both seniors and families (Global Engineering Solutions, n.d.). There is a community kitchen as well as a flexible meeting room for small and large gatherings. Residents also share a library, fitness room, a computer lab, and children’s play areas. There are also shared outdoor spaces – an outdoor patio and community garden.

**INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

Genesis has an onsite program coordinator who plans and coordinates resident community engagement activities. Age-specific programs, such as the "Pathways to Homeownership" series are offered alongside intergenerational activities. These include:

- A Garden Club partnered with a local urban farm
- "Read to Me" for young moms and teen volunteers with young children
- "Walk With Me" for seniors to take regular walks with community volunteers
- Spanish language classes offered by a senior and a mother to different ages (personal communication [Email attachment], Corinne Murphy).

Senior residents were initially required to volunteer 100 hours per quarter, and the other adults had a requirement of 50 hours per quarter. This was found to be too onerous for individuals in the workforce, so the community convened to create a “Good Neighboring Initiative.” This transformed the previous hours-based system to a task-based system, allowing residents to contribute in more diverse and accessible ways (including grocery runs and outdoor events).

**IMPACT ON RESIDENTS**

Genesis has also proven to be a very successful housing initiative, and they highlight a number of statistics regarding social cohesion in their community, as well as improved outcomes for their most vulnerable residents.

- 100% of the Genesis residents surveyed state that they have a good connection with their neighbors
- 7 out of 8 Genesis mothers who have aged out of foster care are gainfully employed, in a job training program, and/or in school
- 100% of the mothers who have aged out of foster care families and their children have stayed intact—no children have returned to foster care.

(Email attachment), Corinne Murphy)
“Our local Métis Elders challenged us by asking what, as a Métis service provider, we were doing differently to break the cycle of lost generations. Kikékyelc is an example of one of our many efforts to do something different.”

– Colleen Lucier, Executive Director, Lií Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services (CMHC, 2020)

**Fast Facts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Populations</th>
<th>Number &amp; Distribution of Units</th>
<th>Land Parcel Source</th>
<th>Project Cost (approx.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FNMI Elders</td>
<td>5 units for Elders</td>
<td>$1 land lease from Kamloops for 60 years</td>
<td>$4.7 million (CAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNMI youth leaving the welfare system (16–27)</td>
<td>26 units for youth</td>
<td>Land was specifically set aside for an Indigenous development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECT DESIGN

Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family & Community Services (LMO), with the support of the City of Kamloops and M’akola Development Services developed a 31 unit residential building to house First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth aging out of care, along with local Elders. This project is a rare Canadian example in a nation in which only a handful of intergenerational housing developments exist. The idea of Kikékyelc was first explored in 2016, and opened its doors in September of 2020. The development houses First Nation youth and Elders together so that elders may serve as culturally appropriate mentors to children, youth, and families as a reclamation of traditional ways of life of Indigenous communities.

LMO began as a child protection agency and entered affordable housing as an extension of its work to improve outcomes for youth aging out of care. Indigenous youth who are already connected to the child protection system across Canada are directly referred to the project. Both youth and Elders must be low-income to remain on the site, with annual income tests conducted by administrators. While this means that youth who attain meaningful work cannot stay on site, administrators provide a number of services to assist them in finding housing once they no longer meet low-income status.

Help is also offered to residents who struggle with internal rules. Though they may be required to leave the community, compassionate enforcement of the rules is essential. When rules are broken, Elders participate on an applicant review panel. If an evicted resident can demonstrate that they have turned a corner, they will be accepted back.

LAND ACQUISITION

Land negotiations with the City of Kamloops were facilitated by M’akola Development Services. As a professional Indigenous housing consulting firm, M’akola performs housing research, planning, and development services for clients interested in constructing Indigenous and non-Indigenous housing developments.

The result was an affordable land lease with the City of Kamloops for 60 years for a parcel of land the City had previously dedicated for Indigenous housing. While the community in which the development was to be built was not fully supportive of the project at first, several open houses helped to allay their concerns and resulted in numerous donations by Kamloops citizens.

FINANCING

Kikékyelc’s $4.7 million development was made possible through several partnerships and negotiations conducted by M’akola. Initially, a $3.7 million grant from BC Housing allowed for a fast tracked and simplified construction phase. In addition, a construction grant from RBC allowed for an
all-Indigenous construction crew to be housed and trained on the job (RBC Royal Bank, 2021). Furthermore, CMHC’s mortgage payment grant opportunity through the National Housing Co-Investment Fund has allowed the site to keep rents affordable for seniors and youth. Additional funding came from a donation by the Stollery Foundation, a private donor, and municipal waivers.

At Kikékyelc, rents for a studio or 1 bedroom suite range between $400-435/month. While money made from rent is put back into the building for maintenance and operations, the Aboriginal Housing Management Association also contributes funding support. In addition, Community Living British Columbia and the provincial government support 5 full-time staff positions at the site through grants.

PHYSICAL DESIGN

The space features several amenities for residents including shared seating areas, a basketball court, a gazebo, and a communal garden. Indigenous architecture is also featured in the design of these spaces including a communal space modeled after a *kukuli* (or pit house) which contains a kitchen and fire pit. While each suite features their own kitchen, most gather in the communal spaces in seeking a sense of belonging.

INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Kikékyelc model is intentionally designed to foster reciprocal benefits to both Elders and youth living on site. Elders play a significant role in all aspects of the project, including the ongoing social programs. An Elder’s Council works with social and support workers to ensure youth are provided all the support they need. Most programming happens organically, meaning services are provided whenever individuals need it rather than scheduled formal events.

LMO also provides various Elder-specific events at Kikékyelc that include the broader community and incorporate the requests of the Elder. The most recent program involved an Elder’s lunch in which 80 seniors from the community outside the site were invited to eat and socialise.

Today there is also a Youth Council that directs where grant funds will be used for internal programming such as peer support and suicide prevention programs.
IMPACT ON RESIDENTS

While Kikékyelc is only in their first year of operation, they are already assessing the impacts they are achieving within their community. In our interview, Colleen Lucier expressed that there has been substantial qualitative evidence of increased engagement, social participation, and peer support by the youth residents who are facing extraordinarily challenging circumstances (personal interview). LMO’s ultimate goal for the site is for it to simply become an Elders’ residence. She stated the following:

“But our hope within 20 years, Kikékyelc, A Place of Belonging will be known as an apartment for Elders because we’re not going to have our young people aging out of care. Our desire now to build a Métis family supportive housing development aligns with that vision. So we want to build affordable, culturally safe and supportive housing for our Métis families, so that their children aren’t being removed from them.” (personal interview, Colleen Lucier)
The following analysis consolidates the structured interviews conducted with directors of the intergenerational housing developments with the array of literature discussing intergenerational housing. In thematically linking these cases we recognize that the policy contexts differ between the US and Canada and that a success in one aspect of our findings might differ between contexts. Thus, localised approaches are necessary prior to adopting an intergenerational model.

**Strengths**

**EQUITY-SEEKING COMMUNITIES**

Most intergenerational affordable housing developments in North America currently address the needs of specialized groups. Our case studies pair low-income seniors with foster families, young, vulnerable mothers, and youths leaving the Canadian child welfare system. We have highlighted some of the exceptional results so far, from increases in resilience, mental and physical health, and social engagement, to concrete financial benefits to the child welfare system.

When government funds are deployed towards affordable intergenerational housing projects targeted for vulnerable groups, we see that they address numerous priority areas concerning social welfare at the same time. This results in significant savings to taxpayers through decreased social services expenditures such as disability payments and child welfare.

Whether intergenerational affordable housing would be equally successful for a broader cross section of the Canadian public remains an area for future exploration and experimentation.

**IMPROVED ELDER OUTCOMES**

Isolation impacts one third to one half of the elderly population and has a negative impact on their physical and mental health (Landeiro et al. 2016, p. 1). It also has social, public health, and safety costs to our society. Social costs to communities include a lack of cohesion and loss in the wealth of experience that older adults bring to communities.

Seniors who participate in communal living experience an increase in quality and quantity of social interaction, live more active lives as part of the community, and retain their independence. Programming at the housing providers interviewed showed the use of both formal programming and informal interaction to decrease social isolation. This is further ensured through screening programs for seniors who are intentionally seeking to be part of a community and thus need little administrative support to generate relationships with community members.
YOUNG FAMILIES GAIN SUPPORT

In intergenerational housing projects, younger families gain the benefit of having seniors in the community who are willing to volunteer their time through community service. One of the most essential aspects of the intergenerational housing model is a reduction or elimination of child care expenses for parents. This can take the form of various programs such as on-site child care, child-friendly activities with older adults, or amenities for children in which kids can play with seniors or peers in a safe environment near or on the development.

The housing developments we looked at were similar in that they were all intentionally designed as low-income affordable housing for young families and seniors. In families with single mothers with varying work schedules, children spend more time in care outside their home due to sporadic or inconsistent shift schedules (Hepburn, 2018, p. 1205). The continuity of care, whether it be at home or at a centre, is essential in a child’s development. The availability of seniors in the community who are willing to take care of children as part of a formal or informal program can greatly impact a child’s development. Moreover, this reduction in childcare costs allows for families to build long-term financial goals that provide the opportunity for the family to move beyond low-income housing or invest in a child’s education.

COMBATTING AGEISM

Ageism is the denial of basic human rights of older persons and can take the form of workplace discrimination, health care discrimination, and discrimination in nursing homes. “In the United States, it is estimated that 1-3 million adults age 65 and over have been injured, exploited, or otherwise mistreated by someone on whom they depend for care, protection, and love” (Gutman & Spencer, 2010, p. 1). A study analysing community interventions in children and adolescents that directly target ageism showed positive results when presenting children with positive examples of older people in order to intentionally deconstruct negative stereotypes towards elders (Marques et al., 2015, p. 745). A child’s positive interactions with an elder in the community go a long way toward combating ageism in society.

Weaknesses

LACK OF NETWORK FOR PRACTITIONERS

Our American interviewees mentioned that there is no network and shared best practices for intergenerational housing providers in North America. This has meant that housing providers are operating with limited tools, best practices, and data to inform their programs, services, and ongoing operations. This greatly limits the scope of what intergenerational housing providers can look to for changes and improvements to their facilities.

COMMUNITY MINDSET

A drawback to intentional intergenerational communities is that they only work for specific individuals or families who want to and are able to live in the community. “It seems that residents need professional help in order to create genuine solidarity and truly live together” (Labit and Dubost, 2016). Conflicts between residents can be due to several realities of living in close proximity to each other. For one thing, relationships can
potentially be a source of conflict due to wide differences in customs, tastes, and pace of life, as well as prejudices that exist between two groups or individuals. For example, children running through corridors in a shared residence or elders experiencing ageism can be a point of conflict that requires a communal mindset and understanding between all parties in order to resolve tensions.

Creating and fostering a community is difficult and cultivating a sense of belonging requires individuals to be willing to be active community participants in the first place. There is a clear demand for the model, as shown by full occupancy at the intergenerational housing sites we profiled, despite being relatively new developments. Therefore, the need to incentivise interaction between residents should be an underlying consideration throughout all formal and informal programming.

**FORMAL VS. INFORMAL COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Volunteering schedules and commitments were built into how some of our case study communities were operated. There are clear benefits to volunteering, for example, “seniors benefit from volunteering and participating in their communities due to a sense of satisfaction and efficacy, and communities benefit from the services and social capital seniors are providing” (National Seniors Council, 2014, p. 7). However, the ways in which volunteering or community interaction can be incentivised in order to develop a sense of belonging in the community often require fine-tuning.

In some cases, volunteer requirements might be overly onerous. A concrete time commitment of volunteer hours to the community had the potential to negatively impact residents’ other obligations. Seniors who retained full- or part-time work might be adversely impacted by an hourly-based tracking of volunteering versus a task-based tracking method.

**COMMUNAL SPACE**

Setting aside space for communal areas can be a trade-off for affordability for residents. Investment in shared space means a reduction in unit density and thus a lost opportunity to collect rent from a larger resident base to support ongoing operations and maintenance (Swerdlow, 2016). While a reduction in rents is not a massive decrease in monthly income, this puts pressure on housing providers to search for grants that can make up for the lost revenue.

**LAND SCARCITY**

The cases we looked at were similar in that they all took place in or near urban centres. There were limited examples of intergenerational housing developments that took place in rural parts of North America. This has meant that the supply of land for developers of the model are dependent on negotiations with levels of government to attain below-market-price land or to lease the land at negligible rates. Without such support, developers must attempt to achieve affordability for residents through other avenues such as competitive grants or fundraising. The price of land and the taxation of its transfer can have a large impact on the affordability for renters, however, the fierce demand for prime land in urban centres often leads municipalities to prioritize other developments that are able to pay market rates.
Opportunities

**LAND DISPOSITION IS KEY**

Each project we looked at was made possible initially by disposition of land by the local government—whether by grants or leases that cost marginally what it would have at market rate. These financial gains have allowed intergenerational housing providers to trickle down affordability to residents in the form of rents and amenities that would have otherwise cost significantly more for tenants in the adjacent communities.

**INTEGRATED SERVICES**

Each development studied is exceptional in that they have the ability to provide integrated services onsite. Some of those services include but aren’t limited to: childcare, health, and therapy (mental and physical). These services are unique in that residents do not have to travel far to reach amenities. “Gender has been one of the most researched areas in transport” regarding how inequalities are reproduced from women’s transit to and from responsibilities (Beyazit & Sungur, 2019, p.148). The proximity of intergenerational sites to other amenities in the community, including schools and grocers, means that single mothers caring for their children do not have to transit far in order to reach their intended destination. We have seen that intergenerational developments are regularly located adjacent to amenities for residents of all age brackets as an intentional consideration at the land purchase or leasing phases of a project.

Threats

**FINANCIALLY VULNERABILITY IN INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECTS**

All of our interviewees mentioned that their funding is piecemeal and not reliable, resulting in financial precarity for organizations. To support intergenerational projects, changes in funding policies must occur with support from various levels of government. This would mean intentionally providing revenue streams to projects by creating new government funds or carving out money from housing funds and dedicating them solely to intergenerational housing projects.

Housing providers who offer services to vulnerable populations have more often than not been organised as nonprofits. While this has allowed for flexibility in competition for grants and decreased the tax burden, as nonprofits, these organisations are vulnerable to even small changes in funding. If funding were to be pulled by any one granting organisation or if a major private donor were to be lost, the impact would result in a loss of staff or reduction in available programs, and could negatively impact the lives of seniors and families within intergenerational housing models.
5 Recommendations

The following are a number of recommendations we have outlined for supporting intergenerational affordable housing models in Canada, based on our findings and discussion.

**Recommendation 1: Dedicate a funding stream through CMHC to intergenerational housing developments**

Criteria for intergenerational development specifically, the CMHC could alleviate significant administrative burden on housing agencies who are struggling to secure construction financing and operational funding.

**Recommendation 2: Develop policy encouraging Indigenous groups, and kin and foster families as target populations for projects**

We have established through our case studies that the outcomes seen for vulnerable populations who have a history with the foster care (US) or child welfare (Canada) system have been very promising in intergenerational affordable housing communities. And for Canada’s Indigenous peoples, intergenerational models can be adopted as a culturally appropriate form of housing.

Furthermore, with respect to Indigenous children, they are more likely than non-Indigenous children to already be living with grandparents due to cultural and financial reasons (Galloway, Bascaramurty, & Maki...)

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Funding and policy for housing is often siloed for children, families, and seniors separately. In our interview with Bridge Meadows, the challenge was explained like this:

“I wish there was an intergenerational either preference or bucket of money...When some projects like us compete, we have to choose which population we are going to shine out. And it’s often senior housing” (personal interview, Derenda Schubert).

This parcelling of generations means that housing providers are constantly trying to piece together multiple grants and donations in order to ensure sustainability of their projects. By developing a "Housing Innovation Fund" or "Priority Development Fund" with

**FEDERAL & PROVINCIAL PARTNERSHIP**

We have established through our case studies that the outcomes seen for vulnerable populations who have a history with the foster care (US) or child welfare (Canada) system have been very promising in intergenerational affordable housing communities. And for Canada’s Indigenous peoples, intergenerational models can be adopted as a culturally appropriate form of housing.

Furthermore, with respect to Indigenous children, they are more likely than non-Indigenous children to already be living with grandparents due to cultural and financial reasons (Galloway, Bascaramurty, & Maki...)

28
Identifying publicly owned sites in accessible, high-value areas
Co-locating sites with public facilities - for intergenerational projects, this should include health care and daycare facilities, schools, and public transit
Adopting minimum affordability expectations that protect suitable sites
Empowering a local agency to lead a regular, cross-agency assessment of opportunities for developing affordable intergenerational housing on public land (Hickey & Sturtevant, 2015).

Best practices for public land disposition policies include:
- Identifying publicly owned sites in accessible, high-value areas
- Co-locating sites with public facilities - for intergenerational projects, this should include health care and daycare facilities, schools, and public transit
- Adopting minimum affordability expectations that protect suitable sites
- Empowering a local agency to lead a regular, cross-agency assessment of opportunities for developing affordable intergenerational housing on public land (Hickey & Sturtevant, 2015)

Recommendation 3: Earmark municipal land situated near amenities for intergenerational projects

Local Government

Because land must be affordable for long periods of time in order to ensure stability for families within intergenerational communities, our case studies typically relied on long-term $1 leases or the opportunity to purchase land outright at a discounted cost. This is particularly important in urban areas where high land costs can make affordable housing developing very challenging. Local governments can adopt policies of allocating public land for intergenerational affordable housing projects as a way to promote these kinds of developments, and reduce their need for public subsidy (Hickey & Sturtevant, 2015). (One such example that may provide guidance to policymakers is Washington D.C.’s Disposition of District Land for Affordable Housing Amendment Act, which made the Genesis project possible.)

Indigenous youth also make up half of the individuals involved in child protection services, and this involvement correlates strongly with the likelihood of homelessness (with homeless youth being 193 times more likely to have been involved with the child welfare system) (Homeless Hub, 2017).

The populations encompassed within intergenerational projects fall under varying government jurisdictions. Child protection is overseen by provincial agencies, while seniors’ services are shared, with provincial jurisdiction over health and some financial assistance, and federal jurisdiction over pensions, old age security, and other income supplements. The federal government is also responsible for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. A policy for intergenerational affordable housing designed for these specific target groups would need to be a collaborative effort between federal and provincial governments. Such a partnership could also produce braided funding that is needed to support Recommendation 1.

This last point is especially important, as without a meaningful incentive, municipal agencies not focused on housing are not likely to complete thoughtful and thorough inventories of their property holdings to determine suitability for disposition (Hickey & Sturtevant, 2015). However, as we previously established, there is currently no authority on intergenerational best practices in Canada, and such a local agency would be operating unaided and likely with inadequate support. This leads us to our final recommendation.
Recommendation 4: Develop a centre of excellence or practitioner network for intergenerational housing in Canada

RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

There is little yet known about the strengths and weaknesses of the affordable intergenerational housing model in our country, resulting in interested non-profit organizations and developers working in isolation. Not only is there a limited tradition of the model, but it is also quite difficult to find current information about the few affordable intergenerational projects that do exist in Canada.

Although there are a fair amount of intergenerational programs promoted in Canada, with provinces such as British Columbia sharing toolkits for schools, care facilities, and community groups (British Columbia, n.d.), and non-profit organizations such as Toronto Intergenerational Partnerships and LINKages assisting with after-school and community-based initiatives, little exists in the way of housing research and practice. So, in order to be more effective and efficient in delivering intergenerational communities, providers need technical assistance, model policies and protocols, and capacity building opportunities that a centre of excellence or formal practitioner network could provide.

A network of support could be established through an academic institute, via a “think tank” such as we see in the UK, or a coalition such as Generations United in the US. Establishing a Canadian national network that generates solutions tailored to the Canadian legal and tax system, and that is supportive of our National Housing Strategy, would go a long way in providing support and credibility to this model.

Figure 15: Child community member at Bridge Meadows. Source: Bridge Meadows
In our analysis of existing case studies of affordable intergenerational housing communities in the US and Canada, we believe that uptake of this model is both an appropriate and necessary strategy for meeting housing needs in this country. The model has a proven track record of success for many of the same vulnerable populations that Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos identified in his minister’s message for Canada’s National Housing Strategy: “[W]omen and children fleeing family violence, seniors, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, those dealing with mental health and addiction issues, veterans and young adults” (Government of Canada, 2017).

Intergenerational housing models present benefits for all ages, improve social cohesion in our communities, and save our society money through reduced social assistance spending. And although our case studies show how intergenerational communities assisted those facing serious social and affordability challenges, we believe that this model can be successful for a much broader segment of the population who want to lead less isolated and more fulfilling community-based lives.

During the course of our research, we became aware of one such initiative taking place through the efforts of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association (FCSNA) in Vancouver, BC. The association, through their RePlan Committee, aims to develop an “Intergenerational Hub” that integrates assisted and independent living for seniors with affordable workforce housing. Two challenges they identified within their planning process were the crucial need to reestablish a negligible land lease with the City of Vancouver for the proposed site, as well as the lack of knowledge and support regarding construction of intergenerational developments. These concerns mirror those we heard from Bridge Meadows, Genesis, and Kikéyelc, and we have presented solutions to both of these issues within our recommendations. We hope that with time and increased societal awareness of the intergenerational affordable housing model, our recommendations will provide a set of initial guideposts that help organizations such as FCSNA launch and fund their communities with greater support and understanding from policymakers.

“Bridge Meadows has a big, hairy, audacious goal, and that goal is to create and influence intergenerational solutions across the nation. 10,000 lives in 10 years. And so it is our dream that there are intergenerational communities with purpose around our nation and beyond. We just really just want the idea of engaging intergenerational relationships and living to be normal. Common. Not a ‘cute idea’.”

– Derenda Schubert, Executive Director, Bridge Meadows (personal interview)


Appendix

Semi-structured Interview Guide

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Tell us about the housing model used at the [Name] community and your key outcomes.
2. What are the benefits to different equity-seeking individuals within your communities? (adopted/fostered youth, adoptive parents, seniors)

OPERATIONS

1. How do your residents qualify? Can you share the income levels accepted?
2. Do you have any other demographic information you could share?
3. What is the average rent?
4. What is done to foster relationships and bonds between community members? Do facilitators actively “check-in” with residents to ensure a quality community?

PLANNING AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

1. What are the land use policy mechanisms at play to allow for something like this to exist in the communities you’ve selected?
   a. What were aspects of the development that had to be weighed and considered? (For example, financial or tax incentives, government programming or grants, zoning or housing policies at the state or municipal level.)
   b. What development challenges did the [Name] project face? What development opportunities have you taken advantage of?
   c. How does the leadership at [Name] determine which locations are ideal for creating these communities/developments? Is there an evaluative framework?
2. What is your business or nonprofit structure?
   a. Could you describe your funding model – for both development, construction and ongoing operations?
   b. If a private partnership - What makes this private partnership more flexible/ inflexible in comparison to a public model?
3. What other funding or governmental support would you find useful?

IMPACT

1. How would you assess the impact that the [Name] development has had on the community residents (a) in terms of housing affordability, and (b) in terms of other social outcomes?
   a. Are there broader impacts within housing affordability and social outcomes within your area or state?
2. What are your organization’s goals for the future? What do you hope to achieve in 5 years? Further into the future?