



A Guide to Intergenerational Community Partnerships for VIO's



Connecting, Contributing, Caring & Sparking Change



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1. Introduction.

Welcome to the guide on Intergenerational Community Partnerships for Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs).

This document is designed to provide VIOs with comprehensive insights and practical tools to explore and implement intergenerational community partnerships and volunteering initiatives.

This guide is a valuable resource for VIOs looking to enhance their volunteer programs through intergenerational partnerships. By following the steps and utilising the tools provided, organisations can create meaningful, impactful programs that benefit all members of the community.



Aged Care & Volunteering

In Queensland, **52.3%** of residents **aged 65 and over** actively contribute to the community through volunteering^[1]. This equates to **111.1 million hours** annually^[1].

Multigenerational Households

The Queensland Government's household projections indicate a rise in multigenerational households, reflecting broader trends seen across Australia^[3].

Community Engagement

Active community engagement through volunteering is significant in Queensland, with **64.3%** of Queenslanders **aged 15 and over** volunteering between **July 2022 and June 2023**^[5]. This engagement fosters higher community cohesion and reduces antisocial behaviour^[5].

Social Isolation

The Queensland Social Survey (QSS) captures information about social isolation and loneliness among older adults. It highlights that volunteering can address social isolation and loneliness, improving wellbeing through community connection^[2].

Health and Wellbeing

Older Queenslanders are living longer, but face health challenges such as higher rates of hospitalisations for heart disease and diabetes among men, and injuries from falls among women^[4]. Community engagement and volunteering are linked to improved mental health and wellbeing

These statistics provide a snapshot of how Queensland aligns with broader Australian trends in these areas.

Is there anything specific you'd like to explore further?

- [1] State of Volunteering in Queensland 2024 Older People aged...
- [2] People and communities: Social isolation and loneliness | Queensland...
- [3] Household and dwelling projections: Overview | Queensland Government...
- [4] Queensland seniors - a snapshot of older Queenslanders
- [5] SUMMARY REPORT - volunteeringqld.org.au

2. The Practice of Intergenerational Community Partnerships.



The Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland emphasises the importance of intergenerational community partnerships as a way to strengthen social connections and build vibrant communities. These partnerships help reduce loneliness and foster inclusive environments where people of all ages can interact and support each other. COTA Queensland believes that intergenerational activities can bridge the gap between different age groups, promoting mutual understanding and respect.

In an age where generational divides are often accentuated — whether by digital gaps, shifting social values, or differing life experiences — intergenerational volunteering creates shared spaces that break down stereotypes. Volunteers not only work together toward common goals but also learn from one another.

From a strategic standpoint, fostering intergenerational partnerships aligns with the long-term sustainability goals of many VIOs. Engaging young people through purposeful and relational volunteer roles can seed lifelong civic participation, while supporting older adults to remain active, socially connected, and purposeful. By championing intergenerational volunteering, organisations are not just filling roles—they are cultivating communities that are more inclusive, resilient, and prepared for the future.



Intergenerational community partnerships offer Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) a unique opportunity to bolster volunteerism while nurturing stronger, more cohesive communities.

This table contains a high-level look at the benefits and impact intergenerational volunteering & community partnerships provide:



- **Sense of Purpose:** Participation in intergenerational activities revitalises older adults, providing them with motivation and a more active lifestyle.
- **Health Benefits:** Such involvement enhances physical, cognitive, and mental health through activities that stimulate both body and mind.
- **Reduced Isolation:** Regular interaction with younger generations combats loneliness, offering emotional support and a sense of belonging.



- **Skill Development:** Learning from the experiences of older adults enriches younger individuals with practical skills, life lessons, and historical knowledge.
- **Improved Social Skills:** Engaging with older generations enhances empathy, respect, and communication skills.
- **Academic Benefits:** Mentoring from older adults supports educational goals, improving academic outcomes.



- **Social Cohesion:** Intergenerational programmes strengthen community bonds and foster a sense of belonging.
- **Cultural Exchange:** These initiatives help preserve cultural values and traditions, promoting cultural diversity.
- **Community Resilience:** Collaborative efforts on shared projects build strong relationships and a community's capacity to face challenges.

3. How Communication Differs Across Generations.





Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)

- **Preferred Methods:** Face-to-face communication, phone calls, and written correspondence.
- **Style:** Formal, valuing directness and clarity.
- **Considerations:** Appreciate personal interaction and traditional communication forms.
- **Examples:** Sending a handwritten thank-you note after a meeting or scheduling a face-to-face catch-up over coffee.
- **Adapting Messaging:** Use clear and direct language, and make an effort to engage in personal interactions. For example, *"I would love to discuss this further in person. Can we schedule a meeting next week?"*



Generation X (born 1965-1980)

- **Preferred Methods:** Emails, phone calls, and in-person meetings.
- **Style:** Practical and straightforward.
- **Considerations:** Comfortable with both traditional and digital communication.
- **Examples:** Sending a detailed email with bullet points or having a quick phone call to discuss project updates.
- **Adapting Messaging:** Be concise and to the point. For example, *"Here are the key points we need to cover in our next meeting. Please review and let me know if you have any questions."*



Millennials (born 1981-1996)

- **Preferred Methods:** Text messages, social media, and instant messaging.
- **Style:** Informal and collaborative.
- **Considerations:** Favour digital communication and participatory decision-making.
- **Examples:** Using a group chat for team collaboration or sharing updates via social media.
- **Adapting Messaging:** Keep the tone casual and encourage collaboration. For example, *"Hey team, let's brainstorm some ideas for our next project. Feel free to share your thoughts in the group chat!"*



Generation Z (born after 1997)

- **Preferred Methods:** Social media, instant messaging, and video calls.
- **Style:** Fast-paced and visual.
- **Considerations:** Expect rapid responses and use multiple platforms.
- **Examples:** Using Instagram stories for quick updates or hosting a video call for a team meeting.
- **Adapting Messaging:** Be quick and visually engaging. For example, *"Check out this quick video update on our project. Let me know your thoughts in the comments!"*

4. Steps to Develop & Implement Intergenerational Programs



Thinking of Developing and Implementing Intergenerational Programs in Your Organisation?

As a Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIO), you are always striving to enhance the impact and reach of your programs and volunteering opportunities. the exploration of including intergenerational volunteering and programs can open up exciting new avenues for engagement and learning.

To support organisations in considering this opportunity it is important to understand best practice standards for implementing intergenerational volunteering and programs. These standards were developed by a team of experts and introduced in February 2025 on the Australian institute for Intergenerational Practice website.



Outlined below are the ten key standards they have designed to ensure consistency, quality assurance, and effectiveness across intergenerational programs.

| Standard | Description |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Promote Reciprocal Learning |
| 2 | Enhance Social Cohesion |
| 3 | Prevent Age Discrimination |
| 4 | Build Sustainable Relationships |
| 5 | Ensure Good Program Management |
| 6 | Commit to Evaluation |
| 7 | Create Inclusive Spaces |
| 8 | Foster Leadership |
| 9 | Support Continuous Improvement |
| 10 | Facilitate Community Engagement |

Where to start

1. Review Current Programs and Opportunities

- **Conduct a Program Audit:** Using the Organisational Readiness Checklist for Intergenerational Volunteering (Appendix 1) - conduct a thorough audit of your existing programs and volunteering opportunities and identify where intergenerational elements can be added.

- **Gather Feedback:** Collect feedback from current participants, volunteers, and stakeholders to understand their experiences and gather suggestions for improvement.

- **Identify Gaps & Opportunities:** Look for gaps in your current offerings where intergenerational programs could fill a need.

2. Identify the Needs of Different Generations

- **Unique Needs & Interests:** Understand what each generation hopes to gain from participation. Older adults may seek companionship and opportunities to share their wisdom, while younger generations might look for mentorship and life skills development.

- **Gather Insights:** Conduct surveys or focus groups to gather valuable insights into the needs and interests of different age groups.



3. Research Existing Intergenerational Programs

- **Learn from Others:**
Look at best practices and innovative approaches from other intergenerational programs.
- **Tailor Programs:**
Use this research to tailor your programs to meet the unique needs of your community.

4. Develop Clear Goals and Objectives

- **Set Specific Goals:**
Define what you want to achieve with your inter generational programs, such as reducing loneliness among seniors or improving social skills in youth.

5. Create Engaging Activities

- **Design Inclusive Activities (Examples in Appendix 2):**
Develop activities that are engaging and accessible for all age groups.
- **Encourage Collaboration:**
Foster activities that promote collaboration and mutual respect between generations.

6. Build Partnerships and Collaborations

- **Engage Stakeholders:**
Partner with local schools, community centres, and senior organisations to expand the reach and impact of your programs.
- **Leverage Resources:**
Utilise the resources and expertise of your partners to enhance your programs.



5. Organisational Readiness Checklist for Intergenerational Volunteering. (Appendix 1)

For VIO's to effectively promote and support intergenerational volunteering, we have provided a comprehensive checklist.

This checklist covers various aspects, that help to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for volunteers of all ages.



Checklist:



| Standard | Description | Yes/No |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------|
| Organisational Culture & Commitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our organisation values age diversity and promotes intergenerational connection. Leadership supports and champions intergenerational volunteering. We include age-inclusive language and imagery in our communications and promotional materials. We have policies or strategic goals that reference intergenerational engagement. | |
| Program Design & Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have identified opportunities for collaboration between different age groups. We co-design volunteering roles or programs with input from multiple generations. Our volunteering roles can be adapted for different physical, digital, or social capabilities. We accommodate varied availability (e.g., school schedules, retirees' routines). | |
| Accessibility & Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our spaces (physical or virtual) are welcoming and accessible to people of all ages. We consider sensory, mobility, and digital access needs across age groups. We have strategies in place to reduce barriers to participation (e.g., transport, technology, language). | |
| Recruitment & Promotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We use multiple channels (online, print, word of mouth, schools, community groups) to reach all age groups. We tailor messaging to resonate with different generations' values and motivations. We make volunteering seem inviting and relevant to both older and younger people. | |

Intergenerational Program Planning Template (Appendix 2)

| Standard | Description |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Objective: | Describe the main goal of your intergenerational program. What do you hope to achieve? |
| Target Demographics: | Identify the age groups and specific populations you aim to involve in the program. |
| Activities: | List the activities you plan to include in the program. Ensure they are engaging and accessible for all age groups. |

| Standard | Description |
|--|-------------|
| Resources Needed: Detail the resources required to implement the program, such as materials, funding, and personnel. | |
| Evaluation Methods: Explain how you will measure the success of the program. Include methods like surveys, focus groups, and attendance records. | |

6. Examples of Intergenerational Activities.

(Appendix 3)



Intergenerational Programs

Intergenerational programs can take many forms, from collaborative community projects to mentoring and educational initiatives. The following are some examples of successful intergenerational programs from Queensland that highlight the diverse ways in which different generations can come together and benefit from each other's unique perspectives and talents:

Who Do We Think We Are? Mackay

An inter-generational program for exploring your family history. Where grandparents bring along a grandchild, or some younger member of your family and walk together through the family tree.

Little Scholars' 'Grandfriends' Program

This program connects young children with seniors through fortnightly visits to local aged care homes.

It aims to improve the mental and social development of children while alleviating isolation and dementia challenges for seniors

[Intergenerational Childcare Program | Little Scholars](#)

Intergenerational Playgrounds In Residential Aged Care

Playgroups, trialled in various aged care services, to promote social inclusion by creating opportunities for interaction between generations.

[All ages play: Intergenerational playgroups in residential aged care | Australian Institute of Family Studies](#)

Other Program Ideas

- **Mentoring Programmes:** Older adults guide youth in skills and life experiences.
- **Community Gardens:** Joint gardening projects promoting environmental stewardship.
- **Cultural Projects:** Initiatives fostering cultural exchange and understanding.
- **Cooking or Baking:** Share family recipes and bake together.
- **Arts and Crafts:** Conduct workshops and DIY projects.
- **Music and Dance:** Share music and dances from different eras.
- **Volunteering:** Engage in community service and charity events.
- **Fitness Activities:** Join walking groups or try Tai Chi.
- **Technology Workshops:** Teach digital literacy to seniors.
- **Outdoor Adventures:** Plan hikes or picnics.
- **Board Games and Puzzles:** Organize game nights.
- **Reading Together:** Form book clubs or host story hours.
- **Pen Pal Initiatives:** Intergenerational pen pal initiatives are a great way to connect seniors with younger generations



7. Where to Find Help



Further Information

The following resources are a valuable collection of articles, case studies, and best practices designed to support Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) in developing and implementing intergenerational programs.

References

- [\[1\] The Power of Intergenerational Volunteer Programs](#)
- [\[2\] Volunteering to connect generations: Why and how can I take part?](#)
- [\[3\] Intergenerational Programs - Fun, Connection & Shared Experiences](#)
- [\[4\] All ages play: Intergenerational playgroups in residential aged care - AIFS](#)
- [\[5\] Intergenerational Childcare Program - Little Scholars](#)
- [\[6\] FACT SHEET: intergenerational programs benefit everyone](#)

How VQ Can Help



If your organisation is interested in exploring intergenerational volunteering and programs, the **VQ Seniors Volunteering Project Team** is here to help. They offer free sessions to support your organisation in exploring how to engage seniors in volunteering within your organisation.

These sessions can provide valuable insights, resources, and guidance tailored to your specific needs.

Contact Information:

Email: info@seniors.org.au

Reach out to the **VQ Seniors Volunteering Project Team** today to request a free session and start building stronger, more connected communities through intergenerational volunteering.



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