



# Project # C0024 'iGAP' INTERGENERATIONAL (IG) ACTION PROJECT

## Summary

- Many seniors experience isolation and loneliness, which can cause them to feel unwanted or purposeless, which can negatively impact their health. Intergenerational (IG) connections between youth and older adults can reduce these feelings and improve emotional and social health for participants of all ages.
- The Intergenerational Action Project (iGAP) aimed to bring these benefits to New Brunswick (NB) by teaching IG relationship skills to community members via an interactive virtual workshop series. During these workshops, seniors, youth, and children learned about IG respect by engaging in collaborative activities.
  - iGAP adapted the existing Best Promising IG Practise training resources to be accessible in a virtual learning environment and applicable for school and community settings.
  - There were 14 English and 5 French workshops, 60 – 90 minutes each. English workshops were offered 2 – 3 times per month, while French were held 1 – 2 times per month.
  - Webinars offered general IG knowledge and were later tailored to meet participants' needs.
- 64 participants were recruited by telephone, email, and/or virtual networking within communities. They attended virtual webinars and responded to surveys. Participant demographics are unclear.

### HSPP Focus Area

Improving social and built environments to foster healthy aging

### Project Start & End Date

October 21, 2019 – July 31, 2022

### Organization/Agency

i2i Intergenerational Society

### Location

New Brunswick (virtual)

Indicator	Impact / Outcome / Result	Quote
Development of positive attitudes about age and aging	Overall, survey responses showed that participants felt workshops could help shift ageist attitudes and build mutual understanding (76 "very helpful," 39 "helpful," 6 "somewhat helpful," and 0 "not helpful" responses).	<i>"I was able to encourage the Seniors that were not sure if they should get involved or not and were not sure if they would fit in. They are now very happy that they did get involved and bring a lot to the table when we meet. The Youths are very inspiring, and this was one way of finding out that youth and seniors have a lot in common, I am convinced that this is the best way to combat ageism."</i>
Level of social participation	There was not enough evidence to show that workshop participation increased engagement in leadership roles (planning or assisting) for IG events. However, some participants reported having done so.	<i>"At Easter, our class made signs, birdfeeders, and spring hats. We hung the bird feeders outside the care home windows."</i>
Trainees developed IG skills	Across four surveys, participants agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They gained IG skills from iGAP (99 "yes" and 16 "no" responses); and</li> <li>• They would recommend iGAP workshops to their friends or colleagues (115 "yes" and 7 "no" responses).</li> </ul>	<i>"Here in my city, we have two IG groups that are ongoing. I believe that it has made me realize that Seniors and youth have much more in common than we all think. I believe that it has improved communication skills because of a better understanding between the 2 groups. It has also helped improve my listening skills."</i>

## Methods and Comparison

Participants completed the same 12-question survey after the initial iGAP workshop and after 2, 6, and 10 weeks of the iGAP workshop series to evaluate perceived usefulness of the training package for shifting ageist attitudes, building IG understanding, IG skill development, awareness of IG activities, and participant engagement in leadership roles for IG events. 47 participants completed the initial survey, while the 2-, 6-, and 10-week follow-up surveys were completed by 34, 36, and 18 participants, respectively.

The project team held three focus groups 30, 60, and 90 days following the start of iGAP webinars. There were 5, 13, and 7 participants in each respective focus group. Participants discussed 11 questions that sought to understand the challenges and achievements associated with applying the skills learned in workshops at IG events.

## Conclusions and Lessons Learned

- Overall, participants gained IG skills and awareness from the workshops and felt equipped to support IG activities within the community.
- Participants felt storytelling was an effective tool for building IG understanding, which could help shift ageist attitudes.
- The project originally intended to host in-person workshops but shifted to a virtual format due to COVID-19 restrictions. The virtual format permitted a larger pool of participants, and the flexibility to add sessions for questions and support.
- Webinar participants initiated or supported 95 IG projects and activities from January 2021 – June 2022
  - Although activity evaluation was beyond the scope of this project, this suggests iGAP can have an impact on the community.

## Recommendations

- iGAP training should be provided regularly to both seniors and young people to encourage safe, respectful, and meaningful IG activity development and participation.
- Social labs (e.g., NouLab, New Brunswick Social and Public Innovation Lab) should charter co-construction projects that include seniors and youth.
- Feature iGAP training and resource packages on the Government of New Brunswick website.
- Relevant organizations should promote IG activities, including IG Day.
- Create an iGAP resource app with a youth-centric design to increase youth engagement in IG training.

## Next Steps

The project team has not applied for further funding. The project has no formal scale-up plans but will continue to operate on a volunteer basis. An active network of IG participants continues to expand its activities throughout the province. i2i IG Society remains eager to be involved in future iGAP initiatives.

## Disclaimer

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