

### Overview

While drafting a UN Human Rights for Older Persons Convention, the UN's Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEGWA) is discussing appropriate norms for older adult access to Education/Lifelong Learning and to the Labor Market. Originally planned as a face-to-face side event during the 11th annual OEGWA Session in New York City, this online workshop brings the two topics together and advocates new norms for Education/Lifelong Learning that will empower older persons seeking Access to the Labor Market to maximize their productivity and economic security.



With public pension systems around the world facing shortfalls, too many older persons are living in fear of living longer rather than celebrating their added longevity. Where is the education to help them build their skills and capacities related to vocational opportunities? Where are the guides to help them find or create paid work that will provide a sense of self-worth as well as financial security?



Ageist expectations that belittle the productivity of older persons are held both by employers and by older persons themselves who have been acculturated by tradition. To make progress, we must reach out and teach all of the stakeholders to be positive ageing advocates who understand the productive capacity of older adults and what's needed to maximize that productivity lifelong.



As stated by Laura Carstensen, director of the Stanford Center on Longevity, "Longer lives present us with an opportunity to redesign the way we live." Rather than accepting the lockstep life-line that schedules education first, then family and work, and finally retirement, she says that many different routes should be available to interweave education, work, leisure and family throughout life.



The good news is that learning and earning throughout the lifespan is a hot topic! There are numerous examples of innovative Lifelong Learning and Earning support programs being developed around the world.

# Lifelong Learning and Earning

Creating Support for Education/Work in the Longevity Economy

OEWGA Online Side Event, Tuesday, April 7, 2020

## Our experts set the stage



**Joann Montepare**, PhD, director of the Fuss Center for Research on Ageing and Intergenerational Studies as well as professor of psychology for Lasell Village, a housing community bordering the university campus for older adults who commit to lifelong learning classes, physical fitness exercises and community service.



**Ramsey Laine Alwin**, is AARP's Thought Leader for Financial Resilience, and is co-leading the global Living, Learning and Earning Longer Collaborative, a World Economic Forum Joint Venture. She has developed many tools to promote the economic security of elders including the Elder Economic Security Index for WOW (Working Opportunities for Women) and the Savvy Seniors benefits assessment for the National Council on Aging (NCOA) where she served as Vice President.



**Elizabeth Isele** is the founder and CEO of the Global Institute for Experienced Entrepreneurship (GIEE). She is Senior Fellow in Social Innovation and Executive in Residence at Babson College. She is an Associate Fellow in Global Economics and Finance, Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs.



**Peter du Toit**, as the founder of Future Work IQ, teaches virtual work skills for the modern workplace. He assists businesses to design "offices in the cloud" and teaches digital literacy fluency, and collaboration skills needed for flexible and remote work.

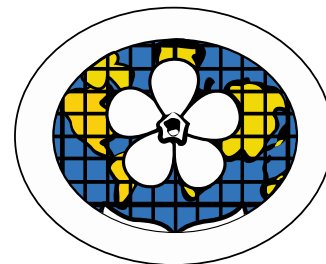
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### Innovations: Group 1. Universities including older learners in their student population



**Age-friendly University**  
Global Network

**Age Friendly University** – AFUs are universities that have committed to develop programs, practices, and partnerships that make educational experiences accessible to older learners. Ten principles (abbreviated below) offer a guiding framework for fulfilling age-friendly goals.

1. Encourage the **participation** of older adults in all university activities.
2. Promote personal and career **development** in the second half of life.
3. Recognize the **range of educational needs** of older adults.
4. Promote **intergenerational learning**.
5. Widen access to **online educational opportunities**.
6. Ensure that the university's **research agenda** is informed by the needs of an aging society.
7. Increase the understanding of students about the **longevity dividend**.
8. Enhance access for older adults to the university's range of **health and cultural** programs.
9. Engage actively with the university's own **retired community**.
10. Ensure regular **dialogue** with organizations representing the interests of the aging population.

To learn more about the AFU global network, visit <https://www.geron.org/afu>



**The 60-Year Curriculum** – Initiated by Harvard University, the 60-year curriculum recognizes that today's and tomorrow's adults will have a 60-year career, and they will need opportunities to gain new skills over those 60 years. Some of the elements of the 60-year model include: micro-credentials or badges (mini-degrees), portable transcripts, degrees and credentials that move with the student rather than stay with the institution, a variety of ways for students to attend classes, more connections between continuing education and a university's undergraduate and graduate programs, and greater support over the long haul through advisers, financial aid and career services. Short courses emphasize job skills, from computer/software use to learning how to engage in difficult conversations, and emphasize real-life problems and case studies. Since the courses, for the most part, are open to all, don't require a long-term commitment, and cost far less per credit than a typical graduate degree, they are more accessible to a wider range of learners. For more info, search for the 60-year curriculum podcast at this site:

<https://www.helixeducation.com/podcast/>.



**Alumni Accounts** – Some universities are opening their courses to alumni. For example, the University of Michigan (UM) invites its 600,000+ alumni to take courses offered by Michigan Online at no cost. Michigan Online is U-M's new global learning community that puts digital learning opportunities

all in one place. Programs like this offer an amazing opportunity for alumni to continue to gain knowledge and skills, while expanding their personal and professional network within their alma mater's community of graduates. At the UM, access to online courses is free to all learners, but learners need to pay if they want a certificate of completion. Visit the UM site <https://education.alumni.umich.edu/home> or see if your own alma mater has a similar program.



**University of the Third Age** – This is an international movement whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community—those in their third 'age' of life. It is commonly referred to as **U3A**. There is no universally accepted model for the U3A. It was originally conceived in France as an extramural university activity (Université du Troisième Age), and many European countries

follow this model. It was significantly modified in the UK <https://www.u3a.org.uk/join>, operating outside the traditional university, with an emphasis on peer learning with older adult members who also serve as instructors. The term "Lifelong Learning Institutes" is more commonly used in the US, and many are funded through the Osher Foundation. [http://www.osherfoundation.org/index.php?olli\\_list](http://www.osherfoundation.org/index.php?olli_list) Some of the U3A branches provide learning support for older adults exploring opportunities for paid or unpaid work. China has more than 70,000 government-sponsored groups and over 8 million enrolled students. The fees are minimal, and the courses very popular.

### Innovations: Group 2. Employers/Government/NGO Collaboration for Change

#### LIVING, LEARNING & EARNING LONGER

A COLLABORATION FROM



**Living, Learning and Earning Longer** is a collaborative engaging AARP, the World Economic Forum, OECD and 50 employers in identifying and sharing multigenerational, inclusive workforce practices. As people work longer, healthier lives, many will want or need to work longer. Initiated in January 2019, the collaborative has convened three global roundtables from which it is processing information and recommendations to report at the January 2021 World Economic Forum.

Lifelong learning is essential during the digitization transition, but training should be delivered through many channels to respond to various educational and learning styles and technical abilities. Training should never be delivered to a specific age or life stage group as that will only reinforce stereotypes and biases. To develop essential 5Cskills (curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and change management), companies could create apprenticeships and reverse-mentoring programs for all ages. Employers must maximize the longevity opportunity. <http://AARPInternational.org/initiatives/future-of-work/living-learning-and-earning-longer>



**SkillsFuture** is a national program launched by Singapore in 2014 to provide citizens with opportunities to develop their potential throughout life, regardless of their starting points. It provides every citizen aged 25 and above with an opening credit of \$500 that they may use to attend approved skills-based courses. This credit does not expire and the government will provide periodic top-ups. SkillsFuture also offers work-study programs. Singaporean universities support their graduates in lifelong

learning. Alumni of the National University of Singapore can take selected industry-relevant courses for up to 20 years from the time of matriculation. The Singapore University of Social Sciences also offers credits to alumni to offset fees on courses related to emerging skills. <https://www.skillsfuture.sg>



**Changing the Narrative in Colorado** is a campaign launched in 2018 to change the way people think, talk and act about aging, ageism and older people. In statewide workshops, we heard many stories of older adults being pushed out of the workforce, discriminated against, or dismissed because of age. At the same time, we knew that

Colorado businesses were experiencing workforce shortages. As a result, we launched the Age-Friendly Workplace Initiative in 2019. We make presentations to businesses, chambers, and civic organizations that highlight the benefits of leveraging older worker talent, overcome stereotypes connected to age; and offer steps to improve access to the entire Talent Pipeline, showing how this can improve a company's productivity and profitability. Older Coloradans are working longer and demanding an updated set of tech skills. We've been partnering with workforce development centers and also advocating for policy groups and with the state's Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging to make upskilling and reskilling mature workers part of their policy platforms.

<https://changingthenarrativeco.org/age-friendly-intergenerational-workplaces/>



**Caregivers Education.** "Home care is the future," says Ai Jen Poo, director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance and co-director of Caring Across Generations. This fits with the fact that 90% of older persons in the U.S. want to stay in their homes and stay integrated in their communities as long as possible. Home care is the fastest-growing workforce in the country. Advocacy for standards for caregiver training and certification of personal care aides from employee organizations such as the Domestic Workers Alliance has resulted in generated positive results such as the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Direct

Service Workforce Core Competencies road map. The American Caregivers Association now offers low-cost certification education programs for Caregivers. There should be a clear path for older persons who have been family caregivers to become certified seniors helping seniors. [www.americancaregiverassociation.org](http://www.americancaregiverassociation.org)



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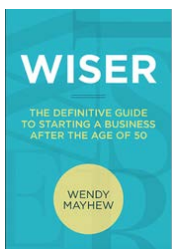
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## Innovations: Group 3. Education Empowering Entrepreneurship

Global Institute for Experienced Entrepreneurship (GIEE). Building upon Francis Bacon's theory that "Knowledge is Power," **GIEE's Experience Incubator®** recognizes that the dynamic process of learning is even more powerful. The Experience Incubator® is part collaborative community, tech incubator and interactive adult learning workshop (on-site and online) designed to harness the power of entrepreneurial thought and action to translate seniors' experience into the skills and mindset needed to develop a business. The curriculum, specifically designed for the adult learner, helps demystify entrepreneurship and understand how - even though they may have never self-identified as entrepreneurs - they have been thinking and acting entrepreneurially all their lives, be it managing a home, balancing family and career, running a farm, etc. The most popular session and biggest confidence builder is "Decoding Your Entrepreneurial History Decade by Decade". [www.experieneurship.com](http://www.experieneurship.com)



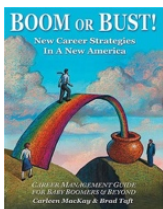
**Encore.org** bridges divides and collaborates across generations to create a better future together. To realize the longevity dividend in our more-old-than-young society, we spent our first 20 years working to change cultural expectations for the years beyond 50. Today, we support older adult self-empowerment through [Encore Fellowships](#), stipended placements matching seasoned professional with social service organizations; empower innovators of all ages using generational connections to solve social problems; elevate diverse voices on the power of connection through the Encore [Public Voices Fellowship](#); and celebrate [higher education programs](#) that foster self-empowerment for this new life stage, through learning and intergenerational community. [www.Encore.org](http://www.Encore.org)



Older persons have a different set of challenges than young entrepreneurs who are starting a business for the first time. WISER takes the new entrepreneur step-by-step through the process, assisting them to get their business up and running quicker than trying to figure everything out on their own. This type of guide is supplemented in many areas around the world by business associations offering mentoring for small business start-ups. For further information about WISER, e-mail [wendy@launchitright.com](mailto:wendy@launchitright.com)

### Guides to Develop an Entrepreneurial Mindset.

There are many benefits offered by new ways to work from home or from across the world, building on past experience in entrepreneurial ways.



One excellent resource is Carleen MacKay in Hawaii, [carleenmackayhi@gmail.com](mailto:carleenmackayhi@gmail.com) who has compiled Career Playbooks illustrating new ways to work. Freelancers comprise the fastest growing segment of the workforce.



Top Sixty Over Sixty is a social enterprise that advocates for older adults in the workplace and as entrepreneurs. The T60 team offers evidence-based programs to build the entrepreneurial mindset in older adults and works across sectors and businesses to improve age diversity and inclusiveness. We train in skill development, unconscious age bias and the benefits of a multi-generational workforce. [www.topsixtyoversixty.com](http://www.topsixtyoversixty.com)

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## Innovations: Group 4. Online Learning



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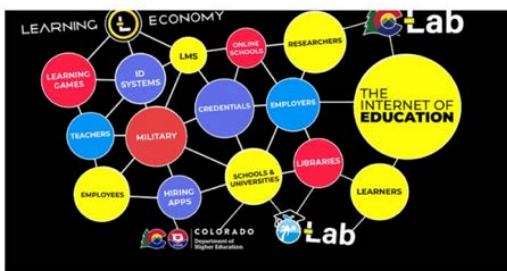
Technology is having a profound impact on the way we work. At FutureWork IQ, Peter du Toit spends his time helping businesses to design “offices in the cloud” and reduce the need for physical offices. In addition to advising on the choice of technology, a big part of his work is providing guidance on the culture that must be in place to have a team that can efficiently and effectively work from anywhere. Virtual work skills, what he named digital literacy, also need constant updating so that everyone is at ease in these environments, especially in multigenerational workplaces. [www.futureworkiq.com](http://www.futureworkiq.com)



**OATS: Senior Planet.** Founded in 2004 in New York City, OATS (Older Adult Technology Services, Inc.) is an award-winning social impact organization that harnesses technology to change the way we

age. Senior Planet, OATS’ award-winning flagship program, transforms the experience of aging by combining technology, high-quality learning opportunities, and inviting physical and virtual spaces in a nationwide membership experience that has expanded the horizons of over 30,000 future-oriented older adults. OATS has become an international leader at the intersection of the longevity and technology revolutions, designing sustainable new systems that address the vital health, social, financial, civic, and creative needs of older adults and engineering innovative solutions for partners who share its mission. [www.oats.org](http://www.oats.org) | [www.seniorplanet.org](http://www.seniorplanet.org)

### Universal Learner Wallet



The goal of the Washington DC-based non-profit Learning Economy is to build a way to securely share data about our learning patterns, skills, education and work history from kindergarten to retirement using blockchain, the technology behind bitcoin. The founders believe the system could eventually support a global economy where skills are the new currency and students are paid to learn in exchange for their data. The Colorado Department of Higher Education and Broward County Public Schools in Florida are already experimenting with the Learning Economy <https://www.learningeconomy.io/clab>

### The Connected World: Education for all



The first 20 years of this century have seen phenomenal growth in Internet penetration enabling smart phones and access to education. Africa has experienced the greatest leap forward with 11 000% growth, for example, Nigeria went from 200 000 users to 27 million over the period, while South Africa’s surfers grew from 2,4 million to 21 million. WhatsApp and Facebook are enabling millions to access education. Solar-powered battery smart phones open up a new world for learning.

### Virtual Reality Learning



EON Reality Education is a non-profit arm of EON Reality, working to understand the cognitive benefits of augmented virtual reality (AVR). The *Silicon Review* underlines that after World War II knowledge was doubling every 25 years and people acquired learning that lasted a career. Today the doubling is annual and requires continual learning. Dan Lejerskar, founder of EON, believes education is a basic human right and sees AVR as a way of making education available, accessible, affordable to all

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## How can we make the right to Learn and Earn a reality for older persons?

Here are policies/practices suggested by Learning and Earning Workshop Participants

**Diversity is a key issue** for economic/workforce innovation and for being competitive. Older persons must be included in requirements and plans for diversity and inclusion. We need to stress age diversity and inclusion as well as lifelong learning in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Employers should embrace age as a facet of their diversity and inclusion policies. Age is often overlooked in higher education diversity statements. This is a starting place for colleges and universities to begin the age-friendly conversation.

**Protection against age discrimination requires legislation** or Constitutional protection. We need to scrap compulsory retirement in every country. We should strengthen age discrimination laws, including adoption of POWADA (Protecting Older Workers against Discrimination Act) in the U.S., and deliberately include and tailor programs for people age 50+ in institutions that are charged with workforce development and lifelong learners – e.g., workforce centers and community colleges. The voice of unions and other employee representatives must be protected.

**Combat ageism!** In every country, we need to shift the narrative on ageing to stress the potential/experience/value of older persons. A change in mindset is required to shift from a focus on health to a focus on wealth! We need to move beyond individual ageing and talk about societal ageing. All policies should be tailored to the full life course, not just to the end of it. We should talk about helping with transitions between phases of life – and eradicate the word “retirement.” Ageism affects the young as well as the old. It needs to be addressed at the elementary school level and made part of the curriculum.

**Intergenerational dialogue is valuable**, whether in a classroom, in the workplace, or in community activities. There are intergenerational public elementary schools connected to universities – with older persons connected via narrative, relationship, and experience-based projects. We need to fund more intergenerational programs through the federal government.

**Accessibility and affordability of education are critical.** Accessible technology is essential to reach the nearly one billion people with disabilities. We need to advocate for better internet connections across the developing world. Regarding affordability, many public 2 and 4 year colleges in the U.S. have tuition waiver policies for prospective students over the age of 60. Are older people willing and/or able to pay for “higher education”? Who should pay?

**Entrepreneurship motivates innovation.** Elders have a lot of energy which must be directed at the future of our species which is threatened by climate change and related matters. Kids are the future. In developed countries, engaging an institution's retirees in encore roles, whether on campus or in schools through an employer's community outreach programs, is beneficial for everyone. The reality in developing countries, however, is that a large portion of the older adult population has not had access to formal education but would benefit from entrepreneurial projects which will support economic development for all. Similarly, in developed countries, policy change is needed to make tools/resources that are currently available for young entrepreneurs equally accessible to older persons.

**Collaboration is essential** -- engaging government, education, employers, and community organizations in planning for productivity. Professional education should be provided through a country's unemployment system to aid upskilling and reskilling and job placement to meet workforce needs. Employers and government should create free tuition and stipends for later life learners in fast-track programs connected to workforce needs. Every country should encourage a process for funneling older persons to learning/working resources that address their needs. One need is for tax advantages for online contract workers that provide access to lifelong income. Innovation Hubs bring together the business community, educators, and diverse age entrepreneurs. These hubs provide incentives for employers who are hiring, and stir up entrepreneurial energy by encouraging networking.



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## The Pass It On Network Team



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