

Intergenerational Partnerships in Law & Policy for Children's Rights: International Insights

Intergenerational partnerships refer to relationships and alliances across all generations. They are fluid over time, and exist across the micro, meso, and macro systems surrounding a young person.



What if intergenerational could refer to future generations?

The Future Generations Tribunal aims to recognize future generations as rights-bearing subjects.

...[young people's] participation not only changes structures, it also changes people. The committees have become a space for growth, dialogue, construction, democracy, and participation, where the voice of every child and adolescent is invaluable.

Messi Condori Mamanillo
Children and Adolescents Committee of Potosí, Bolivia

Law and policy that support young people's participation and intergenerational partnerships (3 examples):

- Children and Adolescents Code 548, Bolivia (2014)
- UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act (2024)
- Future Generations Tribunal, International



[As adults] we think we know what children need and want. ...actually, we were all children in different times, in different places.

Vicky Johnson
Centre for Living Sustainability, UHI Inverness, Scotland

Are children and adults on equal footing in these intergenerational relationships and alliances? Who holds the power? ...It is great if we can push the climate issue, with children moving the piece, but it's obviously not enough. We need more people on board, and we also need to make sure that all these processes are available for children and young people to use, even when they want to defend other types of rights.

Mona Paré
University of Ottawa, Canada

Challenges to intergenerational partnerships

This work is highly relational, but building trust and partnership across generations is not easy. There is high turnover among authorities, bureaucrats, and staff who engage with young people, and limited capacity to support meaningful participation across generations. Often, resources are lacking to overcome physical and geographic barriers.



Adultism, the bias or prejudice against children and young people as a group, is a barrier.

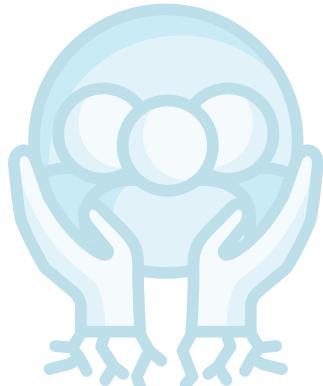


Be careful not to reproduce current power structures by privileging the participation of the most privileged young people.

Fighting against adultism is a lot about personal transformation. ...when you create dialogue between authorities, teachers, principals, parents, that's where the change happens, because that's where not only children are experiencing self-development, but also the adults.

Maria Belen Paz Aguilar
Learning for Well-being Foundation, Bolivia

Strategies for supporting intergenerational partnerships



- Engage collaboratively - find your allies and expand partnerships
- Increase visibility of young people in decision-making
- Build people's capacity to engage across generations
- Intentionally confront adultism - recognize that young people and every participant are experts in their own context
- Support the empowerment of everyone involved
- Localizing rights and realities to centre adults and young people in communities
- Embrace radical participation and co-construction through creative participatory methods
- Be innovative and take risks

Sometimes we tend to exaggerate how complicated children's rights are. You don't need a training to take a young person seriously. At some point, it's just about treating them as the human beings they are with needs specific to their realities. It's just about considering each other's humanity and intelligence, and just bridging each other's contexts.

- Albert Lalonde
Future Generations Tribunal