

## BRIDGING GENERATIONS – LEVERAGING INTERGENERATIONAL INITIATIVES IN CITY MARKETING

Magdalena DASZKIEWICZ

Wroclaw University of Economics and Business; magdalena.daszkievicz@ue.wroc.pl,  
ORCID: 0000-0003-1466-2454

**Purpose:** The article aims to identify the importance of cities' practices in bridging generations and to identify approaches cities can leverage when implementing intergenerational marketing initiatives.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The research was conducted using desk research and a case study using an exploratory qualitative approach. Content analysis of official documents and published materials was used to describe intergenerational initiatives and identify applied marketing approaches.

**Findings:** The research identifies the significance of intergenerational interactions for cities and their communities, explores strategies applicable to intergenerational marketing, and examines approaches cities employ to lead and support intergenerational initiatives.

**Research limitations/implications:** The case study is limited to Barcelona and Wroclaw. The content analyses and information synthesis consider the qualitative data collected in the case studies. Triangulation of methods and data in further research would allow for broadening the research material and deeper analysis.

**Practical implications:** Research indicates the rationale of using multifaceted approaches to intergenerational marketing, combining initiatives based on age-inclusive, pro-ageing, cross-generational and age-agnostic strategies.

**Originality/value:** The research contributes to understanding intergenerational marketing approaches and determining their importance and applicability in cities' practice. Recognising the importance of bridging generations in city communities and exploring possible approaches to implementing intergenerational marketing can foster developing city practices in this area.

**Keywords:** intergenerational marketing, city marketing, intergenerational strategy, age-inclusive marketing, pro-ageing marketing, cross-generational marketing, age-agnostic marketing, age-friendly city, intergenerational city.

**Category of the paper:** research paper.

## 1. Introduction

Population ageing is a global demographic trend that has led to many economic, social, medical and public health challenges (Zhong et al., 2022). A phenomenon accompanying this trend is ageism, which refers to stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against people based on their age. Ageism, which can be institutional, interpersonal or self-directed, has serious and far-reaching consequences for the well-being and quality of life of individuals and entire communities (World Health Organization, 2021). Therefore, multifaceted efforts to bridge generations, enhance mutual understanding, build relationships, strengthen bonds and take joint action are becoming increasingly important. New intergenerational programmes that foster relationships between young people and older adults are constantly developed for the mutual benefit of all age participants (Jarrott, 2019; Jarrott et al., 2021).

European Economic and Social Committee highlights the importance of promoting intergenerational solidarity, which is the key to sustainable development, overcoming ageism and including the perspective of young people in relevant policies and initiatives. The right of representatives of all generations to realise basic values and needs is highly recognised. There are also areas where young and older people's interests are complementary. Therefore European Union Youth Strategy and a new European Strategy for Older Persons (proposed) focus on the needs and contributions of all generations, especially on the unique challenges and opportunities facing older people and youth. Intergenerational dialogue and cooperation can contribute to policies considering trends and future scenarios.

The need for investment and action to promote intergenerational interactions to reduce ageism towards older and younger generations is highlighted by international organisations, including the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2021). The WHO's Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities inspires and supports cities and communities worldwide to become increasingly friendly for all age groups (World Health Organization, n.d.-a). Implementing this vision requires integrating the cities' structures and public policies with the lives of cities' communities (Santana et al., 2022).

The last decade has witnessed increasing initiatives in many cities worldwide to create and support age-friendly and intergenerational communities. They have become an important part of many cities' policies aimed at improving the quality of life for older people and developing an age-friendly environment, affecting the quality of life and creating opportunities for people of different ages (Buffel et al., 2020; Lee, Zhong, 2019; Zhong et al., 2022). Cities also increasingly lead and support programs, services, integrative environments, and marketing initiatives to promote social interactions across generations.

The article aims to identify the significance of cities' practices in bridging generations and to explore approaches cities can leverage when implementing intergenerational marketing initiatives. Based on a literature review and a case study, the considerations address the

following questions: What is the importance of intergenerational interactions for cities and their communities? What marketing approaches may be used in intergenerational initiatives? How do cities lead and support intergenerational initiatives?

The case study concerns Barcelona and Wroclaw, European cities with active intergenerational marketing initiatives and members of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Content analysis of official documents and publicised materials was used to describe intergenerational initiatives developed in each city's communities. As a result of the research procedure used, the following were described: city population and the age structure of inhabitants, strategic policies and organisational support for intergenerational initiatives, intergenerational projects developed or supported by cities' authorities, and grassroots intergenerational initiatives, approaches of intergenerational marketing applied in the cities' practices. The synthesis of information led to conclusions about the role of intergenerational initiatives and the approaches of intergenerational marketing applied in city practices.

The research contributes to the discussion on using intergenerational initiatives in city marketing. Recognising the importance of bridging generations in city communities and exploring possible approaches to implementing intergenerational marketing can foster developing city practices in this area.

## **2. Importance of intergenerational interactions for cities and their communities**

The importance of intergenerational interactions is increasingly recognised in the well-being of individuals and entire communities. Due to demographic changes and ageing populations, the benefits of intergenerational interaction are most often referred to the situation of seniors. Developing age-friendly cities and communities become important to many cities' policies, which often focuses on improving the quality of life for older people (Buffel et al., 2020). In this context, age-friendly cities create accessible, affordable, usable, and inclusive environments for older adults, enhancing their mobility and well-being. Emphasis is also placed on the importance of urban projects, structures and services supporting active ageing and reducing the isolation of older members of city communities (Garrocho, Vilchis Mata, 2021).

Lee & Zhong (2019) highlight the importance of community environments encouraging intergenerational interactions, which are essential for diverse members of communities and cities. Building intergenerational and age-friendly communities is based on social and physical environments that support social interaction, exchange and cooperation between different generations (Zhong et al., 2020). Simultaneously, fostering intergenerational interactions influences the creation of dynamic environments where common experiences, values and

perspectives can be shared, shaping and strengthening the identity and cohesion of city communities. A strong sense of belonging and togetherness can influence residents' contact quality and increase their engagement in joint city initiatives.

Intergenerational interactions contribute to social capital and influence the development of inclusive environments, promoting equity and solidarity in diverse communities (Andina, Corvino, 2023; Mega, 2013). Considering the perceived barriers to integration due to generational differences and other sociocultural factors, intergenerational interventions and initiatives are essential to foster meaningful connections and social cohesion (Lau, 2024). Creating age-friendly communities stimulates positive social interaction between generations (Lee, Zhong, 2019) and reduces intergenerational conflicts (Zhong et al., 2022).

Intergenerational interactions enrich city communities by fostering mutual learning (Manchester, Facer, 2017), which is facilitated by supporting intergenerational training and mentoring initiatives in cities (Somers, 2024). As the research shows, intergenerational learning benefits both younger and older people, increasing their knowledge and skills, improving their learning experience, strengthening relationships and fostering social contribution (Qianhexin, 2023).

Developing conditions that bridge diverse age groups in city environments enhances intergenerational understanding, community engagement and collaboration (Somers, 2024). Promoting inclusiveness and reducing age exclusion is linked to increasing the capacity to utilise the potential of all members of urban communities (Mega, 2013). Therefore, creating inclusive public spaces fostering cross-generational relationships that meet youth and older adults' needs and developing initiatives that support and create intergenerational cooperation is important.

### 3. Essence and strategies of intergenerational marketing

Intergenerational marketing applies to marketing strategies and initiatives based on the shared values and experiences of representatives of different generations. The intergenerational approach involves promoting and ensuring equal opportunities, fostering a sense of belonging and recognising the value of people of different ages, and combating prejudice, exclusion or age discrimination (Marabini, Henkens, 2023; Oxford Review, 2024). Bridging generations implies creating conditions that encourage people of different ages to engage in dialogue, seek mutual understanding and undertake joint intergenerational initiatives.

Based on observing different marketing practices, it is possible to distinguish strategies used by both commercial and non-commercial entities. A considerable part of activities in line with the idea of intergenerational marketing are those based on **age-inclusive strategies**. They support age-inclusivity by targeting age-diverse audiences, multi-generational offerings

meeting the needs of various ages, supporting positive attitudes and respect for people of various ages, running projects involving different generations, and running projects to challenge and combat age-related exclusions.

Intergenerational marketing practices also incorporate **pro-ageing strategies**, which may be labelled **age-positive** or **age-friendly**. They focus on encouraging self-acceptance and celebrating self-beauty at any age. Although a pro-ageing strategy, in broad terms, can apply to people of different ages, in marketing practice, it is most often related to promoting a positive image of people who, because of their age, belong to the category of seniors. Marketing practices of this kind are usually aimed at seniors, influencing their positive self-perception and self-esteem and encouraging them to get involved in various activities. However, such marketing activities can also be directed at other community members to influence positive attitudes towards and respect for older people.

**Cross-generational strategies** can also be applied in marketing activities that bridge generations. Leveraging this strategy fosters intergenerational connections by emphasising shared values, interests and experiences. Marketing efforts can also focus on helping to repair and strengthen ties between younger and older generations. Intergenerational connectivity is promoted by creating platforms for experience sharing and intergenerational cooperation, which can lead to synergies and greater value creation. Bringing generations together can also be about shared entertainment and leisure activities.

The following is worth considering in your marketing efforts: transferring knowledge and exchanging experience in intergenerational contacts is multidirectional. Seniors can act as so-called gran-influencers when their image is linked to wisdom and life experience (Guillén, 2023). Young people can be guides and assist older people in discovering and exploiting opportunities arising from the development of technology and social media communication. Marketing activities can benefit from older people's knowledge and experience and the younger generations' technological skills. Further, in marketing practice, we can increasingly observe cross-generational influencers who run joint projects and channels in social media.

Intergenerational marketing can also leverage **age-agnostic strategies** focusing on creating offers and experiences that appeal to consumers regardless of age (Walker, 2011). They can also be described as age-neutral, ageless and age-independent marketing because they are based on the assumption that age characteristics should not determine the marketing strategy adopted, as they do not define attitudes, interests, or behaviour (Guillén, 2024). Implementing age-neutral approaches challenges marketers to explore and understand characteristics beyond demographics - values and interests among them (Stroud, 2005). However, with the increasing usage of real-time data and personalisation, consumer insights are moving beyond demographics and are based on detailed data about consumer preferences and online behaviour. Focusing on consumer relationships allows for the building of richer customer profiles, more precise insights and the creation of well-tailored marketing activities (Rawat, 2024; Robbins, 2022).

## 4. Intergenerational initiatives in city marketing – case studies

### 4.1. Research methodology

The research was conducted using a case study with an exploratory qualitative approach. The case study is one of the frequently used and valuable methods in the field of marketing that allows for an understanding of phenomena by presenting them in a concrete and real-life context (Alsayel et al., 2022; Bonoma, 1985; Gustafsson, 2017; Yin, 2014).

The case study concerns two European cities, Barcelona and Wrocław, and their intergenerational initiatives conducted or supported by the municipal authorities and institutions operating in the cities. These are cities located in different countries, varying in population and international standing. The cities' policies and marketing activities have been in line with the ideas of age-inclusiveness and age-friendliness in recent years. Barcelona and Wrocław are members of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities.

The research examined how Barcelona and Wrocław incorporate and support intergenerational initiatives into the city marketing practice. The case study used desk research based on public sources and the content analysis of official documents and publicised materials on intergenerational initiatives. In each case, the following were identified:

- Brief information about the population and the age structure of inhabitants.
- Strategic policies and organisational support for intergenerational initiatives.
- Intergenerational projects developed or supported by cities' authorities, and grassroots intergenerational initiatives.
- Approaches to intergenerational marketing - synthesis of case studies.

The synthesis of information led to conclusions about the approaches of intergenerational marketing applied in the cities' practices. Research synthesis applies to summarise, integrate, combine, and compare the findings of different studies on specific issues. The synthesis of case studies considers the flexible nature of the case studies and the qualitative characteristics of the data (Cruzes et al., 2011).

### 4.2. Barcelona

#### *4.2.1. Brief information about the city population and the age structure of inhabitants*

Barcelona is a Spanish city with a population of nearly 1.7 million people registered as living in Barcelona in 2023, according to the data from the Municipal Data Office (Barcelona City Council, 2024b). The urban agglomeration's population, including Barcelona's population and adjacent suburban areas, is estimated at more than 5.7 million in 2024, making it one of the most populous metropolitan areas in the European Union (World Population Review, 2024a).

The average age of people in the city is 44.4, which remains largely unchanged compared to previous years (Barcelona City Council, 2024b). The ageing population is one of the main challenges facing Barcelona society. In 2023, inhabitants 65 and over in Barcelona represented

27.1% of the city population (City Population, 2023a). According to forecasts, by 2030, almost one in three residents in Barcelona will be 60 years old or older. Notably, in Barcelona, two out of three residents aged 80 or over are women (ESPON, 2020). In addition, nearly a third. Barcelona's homes are occupied by people living alone (Barcelona City Council, 2024b). Therefore, the challenges of an ageing society will also be linked to the problem of loneliness.

**Table 1.**

*Age distribution and percentage share in the city population of Barcelona [as of 2023]*

Age Group	Population	Percentage Share (%)
0-9 years	124,007	7.48
10-19 years	144,086	8.69
20-29 years	208,395	12.58
30-39 years	255,330	15.41
40-49 years	251,861	15.20
50-59 years	223,320	13.48
60-69 years	183,111	11.05
70-79 years	148,334	8.96
80+ years	117,512	7.09
Total	1,655,956	100

Source: Adapted from (City Population, 2023a).

Demographic data from 2023 (Table 1) shows that, overall, the largest age groups in Barcelona are between 30-39 and 40-49 years old (respectively 15,41% and 15,20%). There is also a significant proportion of young people, fed in recent years by immigrants, which increases the population in the 20-29 age group (12,58%). Collectively, the younger population (0-29 years) accounts for approximately 28.75%, while the older population (60+ years) represents about 27.10%. Barcelona's age structure significantly affects the challenges of intergenerational activities in the city. Due to its age-diverse population, Barcelona implements various initiatives to meet the needs and encourage cooperation and mutual support among various age groups. By implementing intergenerational programs, Barcelona can bridge the generational divide, fostering a more cohesive, inclusive and resilient community.

#### *4.2.2. Strategic policies and organisational support for intergenerational initiatives*

In broad terms, an important document guiding the city's inclusive activities is the Barcelona Interculturality Plan 2021-2030. The policy aims to promote interaction and social cohesion between the different groups and individuals that make up the city's community. It includes strategic actions to ensure that all city policies take into account an intercultural perspective, the starting point of which is a commitment to the defence of human rights and needs and equal treatment and equal rights for all, regardless of cultural background and other key factors of inequality such as age, gender, gender identity, social class. The plan emphasises the importance of equity, recognition of diversity and positive interactions (Barcelona City Council, 2021).

In response to the challenges of making Barcelona a truly senior citizen-friendly city, the plan ‘Barcelona: a senior citizen-friendly city 2022-2030’ was developed. The plan focuses on accessibility, autonomy, and reducing loneliness among older citizens. It includes 26 initiatives addressing the following areas (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2023):

- empowerment, respect and good treatment,
- combating loneliness,
- intergenerational relations,
- civic and social participation,
- spaces, facilities and services.

Strategic policies highlight Barcelona's commitment to addressing intergenerational challenges and supporting a more inclusive and resilient community. The city involves residents of all ages in decision-making processes related to city planning and community development. This participatory approach ensures that the voices and needs of different age groups are considered in planning and implementing the city's policies (Barcelona City Council, 2021). For many years, Barcelona City Council has encouraged the active participation and engagement of older people. Such involvement is important for the healthy ageing of older people and for improving the well-being of those older people who are vulnerable due to dependency, isolation or very low income levels (Barcelona City Council, 2011).

Participatory city planning is conducted using the Decidim Barcelona platform, which enables citizens to co-design local solutions, including policies that support intergenerational integration (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2024a). The city incorporates the needs and experiences of older residents in its planning, integrating their voices through the Barcelona Elderly Advisory Council (Barcelona City Council, 2024a). Initiatives such as the ‘Voices of Barcelona's Elderly’ convenings bring together different groups to share input and support inclusive urban policies (Barcelona City Council, 2023).

In 2009, the Barcelona City Council began the Barcelona Age-Friendly City project, an initiative that the World Health Organisation (WHO) promoted in the Age-Friendly Cities programme. In 2011, when the World Health Organisation awarded Barcelona accreditation recognising it as a member of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities, which stems from its commitment to improve by continuing to build a city for all ages, enabling greater participation and a better quality of life for older people (Barcelona City Council, 2011).

#### *4.2.3. Intergenerational projects developed or supported by cities' authorities, and grassroots intergenerational initiatives*

Intergenerational marketing to improve the city's accessibility and promote Barcelona as an age-friendly and welcoming place for all ages is part of wider city initiatives. Barcelona is implementing various initiatives to address the needs of different age groups. The city has developed many intergenerational programs encouraging collaboration between younger and older residents. These programs include urban and community projects, educational workshops, and social events to promote mutual understanding and support.

An important part of age-friendly initiatives concerns the promotion of social inclusion of older residents and covers urban accessibility, housing and mobility. Efforts focus on practical improvements such as better public transport systems, accessible public spaces and programs to support intergenerational links. Barcelona introduces and promotes a range of products that allow seniors to be more active. An example is the Pink Card (Targeta Rosa) associated with the City Council's subsidy programme, aimed at people over 60 and people with disabilities who have limited resources. The card provides access to the city's public transport network and offers free entry or reduced rates at city facilities, establishments and associations (Ajuntament de Barcelona, n.d.-b).

Because of low age-related self-esteem, people often put restrictions on themselves and fail to recognise their skills, values, and development opportunities. Besides, positive-aging attitudes are linked to commitment and citizenship, which can be one of the conditions for ensuring respect among the community (Barcelona City Council, 2011). Therefore, the city supports initiatives and offers online resources to improve senior residents' mental and emotional health. The reference website 'El Cabàs emocional' has been created to support this, bringing together activities and online resources to improve citizens' mental and emotional health (Ajuntament de Barcelona, n.d.-a). Barcelona also supports Lifelong learning programmes that offer a broad range of courses to study. Older people are also encouraged to participate in various activities (courses, lectures, walks and memory training workshops) organised in the senior citizens' centres and city facilities (Barcelona City Council, 2024a). The initiatives described are promoted on the city council's official website, dedicated websites and social media.

Barcelona supports intergenerational initiatives, creating programmes and spaces that foster mutual understanding and cooperation between residents. An important part of intergenerational initiatives is city projects focusing on bridging the digital divide between generations. The marketing campaigns that support them emphasise solidarity and knowledge sharing between generations. An example of such a project is 'Barcelona Metròpolis', which concerns the development of digital competencies. Intergenerational learning fosters the digital and social inclusion of older people and promotes better communication, support, understanding and intergenerational solidarity. Therefore, the benefits of such initiatives come not only from digital training and knowledge but also from strengthening relationships between young and old, breaking down barriers and dispelling negative stereotypes between generations (Barcelona City Council, 2022).

The important initiative is the "Vincles BCN" project designed to combat social isolation and encourage intergenerational connections through digital tools. The project's expected outcomes are to strengthen the social bonds of older people experiencing loneliness and improve their wellbeing through new technologies. The 'Vincles BCN' project has introduced an accessible and highly intuitive application that allows users to communicate via calls and video or voice messages, designed specifically for older people. Users can interact with two

groups: friends and family, and the ‘Vincles’ user group, which connects with other older people in their area who share their interests. Other initiatives such as the ‘Open Neighbourhood Network’ and ‘Connectem Barcelona’ are linked to the project (Barcelona City Council, n.d.).

In response to the problem of loneliness in Barcelona, the idea is to foster co-housing communities where flats are shared by families, single people, and senior citizens. They share spaces such as kitchens and gardens, which promote mutual help and bonding. The idea of cooperative housing is for families, single people, and senior citizens to share spaces (such as kitchens and gardens). Promoting communal forms of coexistence contributes to mutual support and enhances the interrelationship between the people who live in buildings and neighbourhoods (Sostre Cívica, n.d.).

An example of a wider initiative with an intergenerational context is the Superblocks project, aimed at improving the quality of life for residents by reducing car traffic and increasing space for pedestrians and cyclists. The streets are thus safer for older residents, and the younger generations have more space for physical and social activities. These are traffic-calmed streets, with priority for pedestrians, with more greenery, and spaces for interaction, play and recreation. The superblocks are at the heart of a sustainable mobility concept, serving other social objectives, responding to the needs of different generations and creating spaces for intergenerational integration (Barcelona City Council, 2020; Eggimann, 2022).

Barcelona is a hub for grassroots initiatives, particularly in intergenerational collaboration and community-building, selected examples of which will be presented in the paper. Barcelona boosts community allotments under the Municipal Allotment Network of over 360 urban gardens, including those dedicated to elderly residents. The functioning of these gardens promotes ecological farming and serves as spaces for intergenerational interaction (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2024b). The initiative promotes intergenerational exchange and enhances social cohesion, as representatives of younger generations often join the initiative to learn sustainable practices from older residents.

Barcelona also fosters the development of intergenerational communities by promoting bottom-up cohousing projects that bring together people of different ages to co-manage shared living spaces. These intergenerational initiatives combat isolation among seniors while providing affordable housing for younger participants and opportunities for knowledge exchange and integration (Ribbons, 2023).

The intergenerational programs in Barcelona foster collaboration and mutual support across age groups. The city's initiatives and support for grassroots efforts can develop inclusive and sustainable communities by encouraging intergenerational dialogue and cooperation. Barcelona also organises campaigns, events, workshops and community forums to engage residents of all ages in creating solutions and undertaking age-friendly initiatives. Such marketing initiatives promote awareness of ageing issues and support wider participation in the planning and development of the city.

The city's intergenerational initiatives are actively highlighted through marketing activities, Barcelona's official websites and social media platforms, promotional materials from various institutions and organisations, media outlets and events.

### 4.3. Wrocław

#### 4.3.1. Brief information about the city population and the age structure of inhabitants

Wrocław is the capital of the Lower Silesian Voivodship and one of the largest Polish cities. According to data from the Statistical Office in Wrocław published in 2023, the city has over 674 thousand inhabitants (Statistical Office in Wrocław. Dolnośląski Centre for Regional Surveys, 2023). According to the latest version of the UN World Urbanisation Prospects, which includes population estimates and projections, the population of Wrocław in 2024 is assessed at 642,357 (World Population Review, 2024b). The census data do not consider immigrants or people who are not registered, therefore, according to a study commissioned by the Municipal Council by a team of researchers from the University of Wrocław, the estimated real number of inhabitants of Wrocław is more than 893 thousand (Wrocław University, 2023).

For several years, the population of the capital of Lower Silesia has been increasing, mainly due to the positive balance of migration. According to the Central Statistical Office, the number of inhabitants of Wrocław will slowly but steadily decline over the next several years, and in 2060, there will be about 623 thousand people (Statistics Poland, 2023).

Demographic changes in the age structure of the city population mean that the average age of the inhabitants of Wrocław grows. It reached an average of 43.2 years in 2023 and will probably continue to grow (Portal samorządowy, 2023). In 2023, inhabitants 60 and over in Wrocław represented 25,25 % of the city population (City Population, 2023b). Data on the age structure of the city population is presented in Table 2. According to demographic forecasts, in 2050, seniors aged 60+ may account for around one-third of the population of Wrocław (Sutryk, 2018). The ageing of city society is a challenge that will deepen over time and requires planned and multidimensional efforts.

**Table 2.**

*Age distribution and percentage share in the city population of Wrocław [as of 2023]*

Age Group	Population	Percentage Share (%)
0-9 years	63852	9.48
10-19 years	52943	7.86
20-29 years	79096	11.74
30-39 years	133225	19.77
40-49 years	109275	16.22
50-59 years	65233	9.68
60-69 years	73752	10.95
70-79 years	63473	9.42
80+ years	32894	4.88
Total	799743	100.0

Source: Adapted from (City Population, 2023b).

Statistical data on the demographic structure of Wrocław's population presented in Table 2 provides information on the age distribution in the city. The largest age group is the 30-39 age group, accounting for 19.77% of the total population, followed by the 40-49 age group with 16.22%. The younger population (0-29 years) accounts for around 29.08%, while the older population (60+ years) accounts for around 25.25%.

Given this diverse age structure, it is imperative for Wrocław to implement intergenerational initiatives that promote cooperation and mutual support between different age groups. Such activities will increase social cohesion and ensure that all age groups' needs and contributions are recognised and valued. Intergenerational initiatives can bridge the gap between young and old, promoting a more inclusive and resilient community.

#### *4.3.2. Strategic policies and organisational support for intergenerational initiatives*

The key document addressing intergenerational challenges and goals is the Wrocław Strategy 2030. The idea of integration is expressed in the city's mission statement: "Wrocław as a meeting place - a city that unites". The document addresses social inclusion and building a city that is friendly to all age groups in its specific objectives. This includes supporting and promoting initiatives that unite younger and older generations, emphasising the importance of transferring knowledge, experience and culture. The strategy emphasises the importance of interpersonal ties, including intergenerational relations, in creating a city's social capital based on mutual trust, cooperation and solidarity. Therefore, the priorities of the city's strategy include support for initiatives to strengthen intergenerational solidarity and search for opportunities for cooperation, partnerships and integrated projects (Wydział Partycypacji Społecznej, 2021).

The Wrocław Senior Policy aims to include older people in the city through activation and intergenerational cooperation programmes, such as 'Local Activity Centres' and educational workshops run jointly by senior citizens and young people. Organisational support is provided by the operation of the Wrocław Senior Citizens' Centre, Wrocław Council of Senior Citizens, Wrocław Senior Ombudsman and Guardian and the Wrocław Senior Fund (Polityka Senioralna, 2021; Wrocławskie Centrum Seniora, n.d.).

The city strategic policies addressing intergenerational challenges also include Wrocław's Mobility Policy, Wrocław's Educational Strategy, Cycling Policy of Wrocław Strategy of Recreation in Wrocław, Principles of Ecological Policy of Wrocław (World Health Organization, n.d.-b).

From 2018, Wrocław has been a member of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities. The network member city should implement planning procedures in which participatory mechanisms should be established to involve residents, especially older citizens, throughout the process. Plans should include a comprehensive 'age-friendliness' assessment. Network member cities are subject to a progress evaluation, which includes submitting a report to WHO on achieving the goals set out in the planning phase. Network membership requires prior demonstration of improvement and continued commitment (Membership to the Global Network - Age-Friendly World, n.d.).

Wroclaw implements intergenerational projects within the framework of government grants through public institutions, NGOs, associations, informal urban movements and senior citizens' organisations (World Health Organization, n.d.-b). Particularly apparent age-friendly initiatives are projects focusing on improvements and support for older people.

#### *4.3.3. Intergenerational projects developed or supported by cities' authorities and grassroots intergenerational initiatives*

In Wroclaw, intergenerational projects are initiated by the city authorities or are grass-roots initiatives. Many initiatives are carried out in collaboration with multiple stakeholders - city authorities, institutions, service providers, community members, and their organisations.

The Wroclaw Senior Centre coordinates many Wroclaw projects aimed at senior citizens. One of the initiatives is Senior Cards, which has a special service and recreational offer divided into individual age groups of seniors. The Senior Cards, issued at several points in the city, offer free entry to cultural, educational and intergenerational events, discounts on sports and recreational activities, rehabilitation holidays, excursion programmes and field trips. The wide range of discounts also includes the products of participating partners, offering discounts on special products in shops and health-promoting services and medical consultations (Wrocławskie Centrum Seniora, n.d.-a).

Wroclaw also launches projects to increase the activity and mobility of senior citizens. From 2022, senior citizens aged 65 and over can use Wroclaw's public transport free of charge. In other cities in Poland, free public transport is provided from the age of 70, so Wrocław is a pioneer in Poland here. Wroclaw also introduced the TAXI75+ programme, under which the cardholder is entitled to two free rides twice a month to offices, hospitals and clinics (Darmowa taksówka dla seniora!, 2024). In Wroclaw, the Senior Travel Fund operates, which, through the support of senior NGOs and Neighbourhood Councils, made it possible to organise and finance trips and excursions for seniors (Wrocławskie Osiedla, 2024).

Encouraging seniors to become active in the form of volunteering in NGOs in the Municipality of Wroclaw is carried out as part of the 'Professional Senior - Volunteer in a Non-Governmental Organisation' project. It aims to improve the organisation's selection process to find volunteers with unique competencies that can enhance the efficiency of NGOs. The Academy of Active Senior Volunteers also pursues keeping seniors active and preventing social exclusion. Related to it is the 'Active Seniors' Foundation, which offers seniors various educational and sporting activities. These projects have developed a volunteer base that creates and participates in new NGO initiatives (World Health Organization, n.d.-b).

Many of Wroclaw's projects aim to improve the quality of life of the elderly, and they have an intergenerational character. A good example is "City of Generations", a social education programme on older people and the ageing process implemented by the Wroclaw Social Development Centre - Wroclaw Senior Citizens' Centre. Pedagogues of educational institutions, in cooperation with senior citizens, undertake educational activities focused on

changing the attitudes of children and adolescents towards seniors and the perception of old age by the younger generation as a natural phase of life (Wrocławskie et al., n.d.-b).

The important city program is the School of Leaders, coordinated by the Wrocław Senior Citizens' Centre, which was created to encourage senior citizens to participate in citizenship. The idea was to train people who want to act for seniors in local communities: senior citizens' clubs, Third Age Universities, community activity centres, etc. The initiative has an intergenerational character, as the leaders act together - younger people with older ones. Younger people have skills in preparing documentation and handling computers and the Internet, while seniors 65+ have better contacts and interpersonal competencies within the senior citizens' organisations and communities. In subsequent editions of this project, marketing activities have focused on supporting young people who are active or intend to lead initiatives for senior citizens (Wrocławskie Centrum Seniora, n.d.-c, 2024).

Wrocław has projects focused on sports and recreational activities for senior citizens. These include the Wrocław Senior Coach programme, launched in 2020. Qualified coaches conduct sports and recreational activities with Wrocław's senior citizens as part of the project. An extension of this initiative is organising additional activities such as excursions, festivals, or outdoor picnics (Wrocław.pl, 2020). The 'Wrocław Senior Coach' social media profile provides the project's marketing support, presenting the offer and reporting on activities (Wrocławski Trener Senioralny, n.d.).

The Toys and Play Laboratory is another initiative that aims to prevent alienation and isolation among senior citizens and bring generations together. As part of the project, senior citizens tell children about the games they remember from childhood and bring various objects from their youth. This initiative enables intergenerational dialogue and consolidating the collective memory of that part of personal life and individual experience that is being forgotten. The programme was implemented in the real world and virtual space (Polityka Senioralna, 2021).

Wrocław also performs initiatives to strengthen existing grassroots organisations, including support for Senior Citizens' Clubs and Spaces for the Third Age (Polityka Senioralna, 2021). Intergenerational initiatives are implemented by the city's social welfare centres, such as the "Pogodna connects generations" project. This initiative aims to strengthen intergenerational bonds by organising joint activities in art, cooking, music, relaxation, theatre, etc. Participants include senior citizens from the Day Care Centre, preschool and school children, and students from the cooperating educational institutions (MOPS we Wrocławiu, n.d.).

Through public and grassroots initiatives and co-creation, neighbourhood meeting places are being created in Wrocław's housing estates. Such projects are particularly important from the point of view of activating and improving the quality of life of senior citizens. However, they also have an integrating effect on representatives of different age groups. According to research carried out in the context of one such Wrocław project, increased public participation

and involvement in the co-creation process is achieved by ensuring that the process includes options for multiple and flexible participation (Miśniakiewicz, 2024).

Numerous organisations in Wrocław base their activities on the idea of intergenerationalism. One example is the Future of Generations Foundation, which cooperates with leading business, science and politics representatives to propose and implement concrete solutions. It organises training and information campaigns that educate and activate the public, carries out analyses and expert reports, and runs support programmes such as the Digital Consultation Point and the Legal Aid Point free of charge (Fundacja Przyszłość Pokoleń, n.d.).

Many intergenerational initiatives are implemented as part of the Wrocław Civic Budget, allowing residents to directly influence the selection of projects supporting intergenerational solidarity (Wrocławski Budżet Obywatelski, 2024). Projects include the creation or upgrading of intergenerational centres (places that can act as integration centres, offering space for developing interests and passions, workshops, physical activities and meetings), intergenerational recreation areas (playgrounds with elements of outdoor gyms, sensory paths or gazebos that serve children, young people and seniors alike) and garden social spaces (where residents of different age groups can grow plants together, relax or hold workshops).

Intergenerational initiatives implemented in Wrocław are promoted in marketing campaigns, the city's official websites and social media profiles, communication channels and promotional materials of institutions and organisations, and other media publications and special events.

#### **4.4. Approaches to intergenerational marketing - synthesis of case studies**

Despite the contextual differences and specificities of the individual initiatives, common aspects can be observed in the approaches of both cities. Both cities present strategic alignment in their intergenerational approaches, developing comprehensive policies that combine intergenerational goals with city planning. As members of the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities, both cities exemplify how their policies can integrate intergenerational dimensions into broader city development goals. The participation of stakeholders and members of the city community in both the planning and implementation of intergenerational activities is worth emphasising.

Barcelona and Wrocław implement intergenerational marketing, combining different approaches and initiatives. A large part of the age-inclusive initiatives of both cities relates to supporting the activity and mobility of senior citizens. These initiatives are often initiated by municipal authorities and supported by funds linked to broader programs addressing social challenges arising from an ageing society. Some of these initiatives are based on an age-inclusive strategy. Increasing the inclusivity of seniors is facilitated by the cities' programmes to increase the mobility and activity of seniors, including the cards introduced by both cities offering a range of age-group-specific benefits. The initiatives of both cities increase

accessibility to social programmes and encourage seniors to participate in cultural events and recreational activities.

However, senior citizenship policy's objectives are increasingly combined with a cross-generational approach, incorporating integration, cooperation and intergenerational exchange. As part of city initiatives, age-inclusive public spaces and spaces for intergenerational cooperation emerge and are promoted. Cities' authorities initiate and support efforts to transform urban environments to promote accessibility and interaction among age groups.

The cities also implement initiatives based on a pro-ageing strategy, referring to positive ageing. They aim to ensure that age-related self-esteem does not restrict people from being active by underestimating their skills, values and potential for development. In addition, by fostering engagement and citizenship, these programs can ensure respect for people of different ages in the community. Both cities have programs for mental health support, self-acceptance, and a positive mindset, as well as support opportunities for self-development and self-education through life-long learning.

Efforts leveraging cross-generational strategies bring generations together using common interests and cooperative initiatives. To connect the generations and bridge the generation gap, cities use intergenerational learning and experience exchange. One platform for this exchange is technology, with digital competence programs as implementation examples. In cross-generational programs, younger and older people share their experiences, interests and passions, which provides a basis for mutual understanding and respect. Therefore, transferring knowledge and exchanging experience in intergenerational contacts is multidirectional. Both cities also create cultural and recreational opportunities for bridging generations, developing and supporting projects of cross-generational exchange and bringing generations together.

Given the need to meet cities' strategic objectives of proactive measures for older people, intergenerational well-being, integration and social cohesion, age-agnostic approaches can arguably have lower communication exposure within cities' marketing initiatives. However, this does not diminish their importance in achieving intergenerational goals. The city authorities of Barcelona and Wrocław recognise the value of age-neutral initiatives, developing urban projects (recreational areas, garden spaces etc.) and cultural and leisure projects for all ages, addressing the needs of the population and collective involvement regardless of age. Such urban spaces, platforms and programs serve as neutral grounds for interaction, fostering collaborative community environments.

Barcelona and Wrocław represent multi-faceted approaches to intergenerational marketing that combine initiatives based on age-inclusive, pro-ageing, cross-generational and age-agnostic strategies. In the marketing communication of intergenerational initiatives, the objectives of support for older people and age-positivity are often emphasised. Beyond the specific aims and scope of the efforts conducted, marketing messages are more often based on positive messages than negative ones, highlighting the fight against social and age exclusions.

## 5. Conclusions

Research findings highlight the importance of using intergenerational marketing approaches to strengthen social capital and foster inclusive, cohesive and integrated communities. Based on case studies, it is possible to identify guidelines for other cities to replicate or follow their intergenerational practices. The cities' intergenerational initiatives are based on clear pathways within city policies and insist on cooperation between city authorities, institutions, organisations and community members.

The cities represent multi-faceted approaches to intergenerational marketing, combining initiatives based on age-inclusive, pro-ageing, cross-generational, and age-agnostic strategies. Leveraging these diverse and intergenerational approaches strategically aligns these efforts with broader city development and social goals. By combining diverse intergenerational strategies, cities demonstrate a comprehensive approach to intergenerational well-being, integration, and social cohesion.

However, responding to the challenges of an ageing population, ageism, loneliness, and other related issues does not mean basing marketing on negative messages. Therefore, intergenerational marketing often focuses on age-positive ideas, positive motivations and values that can unite the generations and provide a platform for mutual understanding, respect and cooperation.

Moreover, intergenerational initiatives also have marketing value because of their potential to create the image of cities. Through positive messages and descriptions of the cities' activities, they foster marketing content generation and dissemination through formal and informal communication.

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