



LAUSANNE GENERATIONS CONVERSATION TAKEAWAYS

Gathering Date: 31 May - 3 June 2023
Biola University, La Mirada, California

OVERVIEW

As part of the Lausanne 4 journey, LGC23 was a unique on-site gathering of 106 Christian leaders from across generations (ages 18–81), geographies (41 countries), and missional interests. Conversations at LGC23 explored insights, models, and best practices for intentional intergenerational connecting, convening, communities, and collaboration for global mission throughout the Movement in the coming decades.

LGC23 CORE VALUES



The following 'pitfalls', 'principles', 'postures', and 'practices' are a direct synthesis of the participant and table group reflections from LGC23.



Pitfalls in Intergenerational Collaboration

1. *Viewing differences as barriers* to relationship (e.g., age, gender, marital status, nationality, culture, language, worldview, personality, power distance, energy levels, pace of activity or expression, etc.)
2. *Pride* (assuming that another doesn't have anything to offer; talking too much or giving advice too quickly; self-focused)
3. *Insecurity/Fear* (apprehensive about being "too old" or "too young", leads to not initiating, not sharing; fear of saying the wrong thing or offending; hesitancy in relating or sharing; fear of rejection; fear of conflict)
4. *Assumptions/Prejudice* (blindspots, lack of awareness or openness to another's perspective; inflexibility, over-rigidity; viewing older leaders as outdated or younger leaders as immature)
5. *Low value on relationship* (insufficient time for establishing trust; moving to task before building relationship; lack of energy for engagement)

Principles for Connecting Across Generations

1. Missional friendships are both side-by-side and outward: intentionally developing relationships and engaging common interests for common goals.
2. Mutuality is made possible when there is trust, humility, respect, empathy, and reconciliation.
3. Leaders recognize gifts in others and make space for their development by delegating responsibility with corresponding authority.
4. Experienced leaders can bless emerging leaders through encouraging, empowering, and opening doors for them.
5. Appreciating what different generations have to offer strengthens collaboration.



Postures that Help or Hinder Intergenerational Friendship and Collaboration

Help*	Hinder**
<p><i>Humility</i> (approaching others with a willingness to learn or receive; accepting that your way is not necessarily the right/best way; holding own culture with an open-hand rather than superiority)</p>	<p><i>Pride</i> (self-centered, assuming you don't need anything from a person of a different age; focus on accomplishments or titles; talking too much about self; "imperial style"; desire to teach or lecture)</p>
<p><i>Openness</i> (to relationship; to sharing your story; to different perspectives; to learning; to receiving feedback; empathy)</p>	<p><i>Assumptions and Stereotypes</i> (disregarding someone based on perceived difference; not making room for another's opinion; disregarding another's perspective; distrust)</p>
<p><i>Curiosity</i> (about another's experience; showing genuine interest; desire to learn)</p>	<p><i>Disengagement</i> (lack of listening; ceding in conversation, not speaking; inattentive; distracted by phone or work; unavailable; unapproachable; monologues)</p>
<p><i>Viewing another as an image bearer</i> (a unique individual with value; respect regardless of differences; looking for the best in others)</p>	<p><i>Focus on what another can give</i> (not genuinely interested in relationship; driving towards goal or task without awareness of others needs or desires)</p>
<p><i>Love</i> (relating to an individual with the desire to bless them and to be connected; genuine concern and interest; kindness; encouragement)</p>	<p><i>Apathy</i> (uninterested; unwilling to put in effort or relate with someone different)</p>
<p><i>Reciprocity</i> (approach relationship and partnership with assumption that both sides will give and receive; mutual learning and appreciation)</p>	<p><i>Self-sufficiency</i> (independent, overly focused on own needs on agenda; talking only with friends or peers)</p>

*Help: listed in priority of frequency mentioned in the reflection sheets

**Hinder: matched rather than prioritized.



Postures that Help or Hinder Intergenerational Friendship and Collaboration (Cont.)

Help*	Hinder**
<i>Inclusiveness</i> (welcoming, friendliness, hospitality, making room for others in a conversation, smiling)	<i>Exclusiveness</i> (overly focused on previous relationships; staying with own age or cultural group)
<i>Patience</i> (in interactions; recognizing that intergenerational relating may take time before payoff)	<i>Impatience</i> (writing someone off prematurely because of difference or mistake)
<i>Willingness to risk</i> (making mistakes, discomfort, dissonance, conflict, etc.)	<i>Insecurity</i> (concern that you don't have anything to offer or won't be received; hesitancy; being cautious to share or disagree)

Practices for Intergenerational Relating, Gatherings, and Leadership

Relationships

- Making time for building relationships before focusing on task; cultivate trust
- Express interest in another's experience and perspective (ask with an openness to learn; create space to hear)
- Find common ground (interests, experiences, goals, etc.)
- Express interest in another's experience and perspective (ask with an openness to learn; create space to hear)
- Take initiative (being welcoming and friendly; inviting others to join in; starting conversations)
- Be generous with your attention (show genuine interest)
- Extend affirmation, encouragement, and honor
- Demonstrate hospitality and generosity
- Look for opportunities to extend kindness
- Be slow to take offense (ask clarifying questions; giving second chances; apologizing; forgiving; stay engaged when experiencing dissonance; respond politely)



Practices for Intergenerational Relating, Gatherings, and Leadership (Cont.)

Communication

- Model and encourage active listening - listening with the intent of understanding and connecting (engaged, demonstrating interest in hearing another's perspective, body language, eye-contact, responsiveness, not interrupting, follow-up questions, undivided attention, not talking over another, etc.)
- Ask probing and open ended questions (especially about meaningful topics such as life, ministry, dreams, and failures; not assuming based on stereotype)
- Thoughtful responses (responding to the heart of sharing rather than peripheral details)
- Be aware when jargon or slang is used and provide explanation
- Clarify meaning and communication when there seems to be miscommunication or lack of understanding

Meeting Design

- In programme design of events, make space for relationship building (meals, venue, activities, maximize table group time)
- Praying for one another
- Intentionality in creating intergenerational teams
- When using technology, be aware of different comfort levels and provide training
- Not assume awareness of an area
- Create a non-competitive and non-threatening atmosphere
- Not overly focused on summaries of generational difference
- Accommodate different methods of communication
- Because intergenerational relating is harder when tired, build rest into schedule and pay attention to energy levels



Practices for Intergenerational Relating, Gatherings, and Leadership (Cont.)

Facilitation of Groups

- Model sharing openly (especially personal stories; from the heart; with transparency; vulnerability)
- Letting a younger person lead portions
- Cultivate humor and fun (light-hearted stories, activities, opportunities for playfulness)
- Facilitation that enables all to share and engage (draw in those who share less, curtail monologues, etc.)
- Active awareness of group dynamic
- Maintain a “I can be mistaken” approach
- Create space for disagreement
- Attentiveness to cross-cultural dynamics

Miscellaneous

- Elders speak honestly about failure and mistakes
- Older leaders calling out gifts in younger leaders (making a younger leader feel seen, valued, and that they have something to contribute)
- Quality of delegation (sufficient discussion and clarity, meaningful assignments, authority and responsibility, appropriate oversight, no micromanaging)

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Our prayer is that the Lausanne Generations Conversation will be the first of many 'Generations Conversations' that will connect influencers and ideas across generations for global mission so that the world may know Christ.