NEW REPORT FROM GRANTMAKERS IN AGING EXPLORES HOW 25 COUNTRIES SUPPORT AGING IN COMMUNITY

“Age-friendly housing” can involve supportive services, sharing, building or retrofitting, volunteer and intergenerational programs, technology, and creative incentives

Washington, DC – (July 1, 2019) -- The desire to remain in our homes and communities as we age is nearly universal, and good ideas have no borders. As the world’s population gets permanently older, there is a growing need for safe, supportive housing and housing-related services and arrangements to promote health, prevent injury, delay the need for institutional care, reduce social isolation, and build intergenerational connection and stronger families and communities.

In its latest report, *Innovation@Home: Approaches to Successful Aging in Community from 25 Countries: An Introduction for Funders*, Grantmakers In Aging (GIA), a national membership organization of philanthropies, presents a host of promising approaches to aging in community from around the world intended to provide inspiration and replicable ideas for philanthropies, governments, communities, social service organizations, and industry.

Download the full paper here.

Many Possibilities and a Challenge to Philanthropy

One key finding is that ideas do not have to be brand new or complicated to be effective. “We often hear about the large-scale construction of custom facilities, but it’s also important for those of us in philanthropy to remember that undertaking smaller efforts, or putting into practice ideas that are already working elsewhere may ultimately be more cost-effective and help more people,” says John Feather, CEO of Grantmakers In Aging (GIA).

The *Innovation@Home* guide is part of GIA’s larger *Innovation@Home initiative*, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), which also featured a contest, co-sponsored by the WHO, to gather international examples of aging in community. Almost all contest entries became part of the WHO’s *Database of Global Age-friendly Practices* and several are profiled in the report.

“From age-friendly doormen in Brazil to intergenerational family loans in Belgium, we have a lot we can learn from the ideas captured in this report,” said Susan Mende, senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “We hope these efforts from around the world will inspire similar approaches in the US that keep older adults in their own communities as they age and create more inclusive communities for all.”

The many different models, pilots, and grassroots efforts that are sometimes short-handed as
“age-friendly housing” are explored according to six themes:

- The many ways of sharing housing;
- Approaches for retrofitting existing homes;
- Approaches to building new structures;
- Policies and practices for supporting people so they can live at home;
- Monitoring and other technology-based approaches; and
- Incentivizing positive behaviors through zoning, policy, and funding.

No single model will work everywhere, and some are closely tied to local policies or funding options. Many successful approaches focus on involving volunteers, increasing community engagement, and improving coordination and availability of services in entire neighborhoods, not just individuals’ homes.

The report includes insight from international thought leaders but also stresses the importance of listening and respecting the strengths and preferences of older adults.

Finally, bricks and mortar are only part of the story: the broader goal is to find programs and strategies to help ensure that we can all avoid social and physical isolation as we get older and remain engaged and involved with our families and communities.

About Grantmakers In Aging
Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) is an inclusive and responsive membership organization comprised of all types of philanthropies with a common dedication to improving the experience of aging. GIA members have a shared recognition that a society that is better for older adults is better for people of all ages. For more information, please visit GIAging.org.

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