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Review Article

The Making of Age-Friendly Universities: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: The age-friendly university (AFU) initiative embodies the collaborative efforts of promoting age inclusivity and diversity in higher education, embracing lifelong learning and civic participation in older people. This scoping review aims to explore the conceptualization of AFU, the experiences, and the strategies used in operationalizing the AFU principles of participating universities in becoming members of the age-friendly university network.
Research Design and Methods: A search of peer-reviewed papers published from 2012 to July 2021, conducted in nine databases using JBI scoping review methodology, found 1,752 articles. Of these, 13 papers were eligible for inclusion.
Results: Three themes were identified as key to becoming an AFU: (a) interdisciplinary collaboration within the university; (b) strong partnership with the community; and (c) alignment with global priorities and initiatives. Furthermore, identifying barriers to physical access in universities, such as signage, walkways, and transportation, addressing the less tangible issues of ageism and promoting intergenerational learning were essential to promote engagement of older people.
Discussion and Implications: This review underscores the need for a multidisciplinary approach within the university, the reciprocal benefits of authentic university–community collaborations, and the advantages of harnessing international resources and global influence to becoming an AFU. Although the principles of the AFU remain aspirational, the ideals championed by the pioneering universities in the AFU network brought the mutual benefits of intergenerational learning, the challenges and support required for older learners to the fore, propelling the AFU agenda forward.

Keywords: Age diverse, Age inclusive, Education, Intergenerational, Lifelong learning

Global efforts toward promoting age-friendliness in universities and higher education institutions are important steps in responding to a call to action of creating communities that are appropriate places for older citizens to thrive. The Age-Friendly Universities (AFU) Network was formed in 2015 following a combined commitment of three universities, Dublin City University (DCU) in Ireland, Strathclyde University (SU) in Glasgow, and Arizona State University (ASU) in the United States (Mark, 2018; Talmage et al., 2016). Since the inception, there has been increasing interest among other higher education institutions to be part of the age-friendly network, and to also implement age-friendly approaches in their own university. The member universities are guided by the AFU network pillars and principles (Montepare, 2019), anchored on inclusivity, and geared toward harnessing available resources, to create infrastructures for older learners to participate and be supported in higher education settings.

As the global population is aging rapidly, an increasing number of older adults have opted to delay retirement (Fisher et al., 2016), which is reflected in the growing number of age-diverse workplaces (Mendryk, 2017). This shift from the customary work–retirement transition has motivated older people to seek further education in universities, not only to pursue their personal interests but also to upskill and gain new knowledge that would be beneficial in their current jobs or in forging new career paths (Heckhausen et al., 2019). As this shift is projected to continue, the observable change in student profiles is reflected in universities, with a significant number of mature and older students (Morrow-Howell et al., 2020). The progressively age-diverse student population requires places of learning to review traditional recruitment approaches, explore opportunities to support older learners, and at the same time address potential and emerging challenges.

The age-friendly initiatives in the higher education sector have been reported to positively affect the health and well-being of older adults through meaningful social activities, pursuing professional interests and cognitive stimulation (Morrow-Howell et al., 2020; Sánchez & Kaplan, 2014). For younger age groups and institutions, one of the many remarkable impacts for universities is providing opportunities for genuine intergenerational interaction through exchange of knowledge and life experiences (Rupčić, 2018). Furthermore, as part of an expanding model of education delivery, the entry of students from older age groups increased enrollments and demands for the development of new programs not only for undergraduate degrees but also for postgraduate courses.

Since the inception of the AFU network, several universities across the globe have adopted and embraced the AFU concept (Morrow-Howell et al., 2020). Nevertheless, due to the inherent uniqueness of institutions and universities, the adoption and operationalization of the AFU concepts and principles vary widely among participating universities. Many member universities demonstrated using a variety of intramural and extramural activities in meeting and evaluating the goals and outcomes of the AFU. Despite these, in many cases, proponents admitted that achieving the whole 10 principles of the AFU remained aspirational (Montepare et al., 2020). It is therefore timely to undertake a comprehensive review of the literature on age-friendly universities and map evidence on the methods of implementation common outcomes in applying the 10 AFU network principles to bring about institutional and societal change.

Method

The concept of AFU is relatively new in higher education. Hence, there is a need to summarize the strategies that were employed, resources that were invested to implement the AFU principles, and gain insights into the lessons learned from the experiences of those who had endorsed the principles of the AFU and thus acknowledged as an AFU. To this end, a scoping review was deemed appropriate to explore and map out the challenges and opportunities in the process of becoming an AFU. Furthermore, scoping reviews are not encumbered by a focus on the quality of research that provides the advantage of flexibility of including a broader range of literature. Prior to commencing this review, a preliminary search of PROSPERO and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews was carried out to ensure that no current or undergoing review was being undertaken.

This scoping review followed the methodological framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), which included five components: identifying the research question, searching and selecting relevant studies, charting the data, collating, and synthesizing the key issues and themes and reporting of the results. Furthermore, reporting the study was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) reporting guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018).

Identifying the Research Question

Primary aim of the review was to map out the approaches of the different AFUs and to examine their enabling support structure and resources. This was achieved by focusing on three main concepts: (a) age-friendly; (b) university; and (c) older people, to ensure that the review included the peer-reviewed literature that has been published related to AFU principles developed by DCU in 2012.

Identifying Relevant Literature and Study Selection

Prior to starting the search, the university librarian was consulted, and initial search terms developed and piloted. Following testing, these search terms were expanded, modified, and refined. Inclusion criteria were broadly set as (a) studies that refer to the age-friendly university and the 10 guiding principles of AFU, including approach and strategies used to adapt to these principles; (b) written in English; and (c) published from the conceptualization of AFU in 2012 to July 2021. A total of nine electronic databases were searched covering broad health-related disciplines, including Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), MEDLINE, SCOPUS, and PsychINFO); education-focused databases, including Academic Search Complete, Education Collection via ProQuest, Education Research Complete, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and a general database, INFORMIT, with 14 informational resources and collections. Search terms were tailored according to the indexing terms appropriate for each database, taking into consideration variations in spelling and terminologies and judiciously using Boolean operators and truncation. Search terms included keywords derived from the three main concepts that were age-friendly, age-inclusive,

intergenerational education, university, tertiary education, colleges, polytechnic, older adult, mature aged, late-life, middle aged, and students. In addition, forward and backward searches of included articles were carried out to ensure comprehensiveness.

Search Results, Collating, Summarizing, and Reporting

The initial literature search was undertaken between October 2021 and November 2021 and was repeated in January 2022, which yielded a total of 1,752 papers. Screening against the inclusion criteria was independently conducted by D. Maneze and J. Montayre. Noncongruence was discussed within the team and settled by a third and senior reviewer, Y. Salamonson. Studies that did not specifically refer to "age-friendly university" or the 10 principles in the title or abstract were excluded to ensure that studies included focused on the relevant concepts of AFU developed by DCU, SU, and ASU in 2012. A total of 19 papers were initially included; however, six were excluded after full text review as they did not specifically discuss the strategies in becoming an AFU. The remaining 13 papers were included in the final review.

Content analysis was conducted by two team members (J. D. L. Tan and D. Maneze) and reviewed by the other members of the team (J. Montayre and Y. Salamonson). A summary table was developed with a priori categories for each article including year published, country and context of the study, AFU principles addressed, approach strategies in initiating and implementation of the AFU principles, findings, and limitations. Simultaneously, themes common in each article were synthesized and collated, focusing on the challenges, drivers, facilitators, support provided, and lessons learned from the integration of the AFU philosophy into the university mission and agenda. Results of the data synthesis were carefully reviewed by two other team members (J. Montayre and Y. Salamonson). Summary of findings was reported following the PRISMA-ScR guidelines (Figure 1).

Results

Data Characteristics

Of the 13 included papers, 10 were from the United States (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Clark & Leedahl, 2019; Filinson & Raimondo, 2019; Luz & Baldwin, 2019; Montepare et al., 2019, 2020; Pstross et al., 2017; Silverstein et al., 2019; Stanley et al., 2019; Talmage et al., 2016), two were written by the same author in Canada (Chesser & Porter, 2019; Chesser et al., 2020), and one from Ireland (Mark, 2018). Of these, nine were discussion papers (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Chesser & Porter, 2019; Clark & Leedahl, 2019; Filinson & Raimondo, 2019; Luz & Baldwin, 2019; Mark, 2018; Montepare et al., 2019,

2020; Talmage et al., 2016), two were qualitative (Pstross et al., 2017; Silverstein et al., 2019), two were mixed methods (Chesser et al., 2020; Stanley et al., 2019), and one used a citizen science collaboration method employing a photovoice approach (Chesser et al., 2020). The majority of papers (*n* = 8) discussed the AFU strategies and programs in public universities (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Chesser & Porter, 2019; Chesser et al., 2020; Clark & Leedahl, 2019; Filinson & Raimondo, 2019; Luz & Baldwin, 2019; Silverstein et al., 2019; Stanley et al., 2019); two, by the same author, examined the AFU approach of a private university (Montepare et al., 2019, 2020); whereas the remaining three reviewed the experiences of the three pioneering universities, namely, DCU, ASU, and SU (Mark, 2018; Pstross et al., 2017; Talmage et al., 2016). All papers included described the 10 principles of the AFU as the guiding framework for AFU membership; however, not all principles were adopted during the initial phase. Only one paper described the integration of each of the 10 AFU principles into study programs of the university (Luz & Baldwin, 2019). A summary of included papers is presented in Table 1 and Supplementary Table 1.

Main Findings

Three major themes were identified from the review of practices among AFUs globally. The findings encompassed approaches these universities utilized to implement AFU principles and, at the same time, discussed the key internal and external structures, strategies, and resources that facilitated age-friendly practice within each university. The three themes are as follows:

Theme 1: Interdisciplinary collaboration within the university

Several universities included in this review commented on the importance of gaining support from the university's highest level of administration as the AFU initiative was meant to be a campus-wide approach (Montepare et al., 2020). Adapting the age-friendly principles and incorporating them within the university culture was facilitated by building a coalition among established networks within the university. A bottom-up strategy where the strength of existing organizations with a focus on older people was harnessed as a resource in moving the agenda of age-friendliness forward (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Clark & Leedahl, 2019; Montepare et al., 2019, 2020). For example, at the University of Rhode Island, the existing Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, established 20 years ago, together with the Gerontology Department and Alumni Association became the nuclei, advocating for the adoption of the AFU principles and membership to the AFU network (Clark & Leedahl, 2019). Recognizing that each discipline could contribute toward the AFU principles is important to achieve coherence in drafting the proposal to be recognized as an AFU. This was exemplified in the business school at
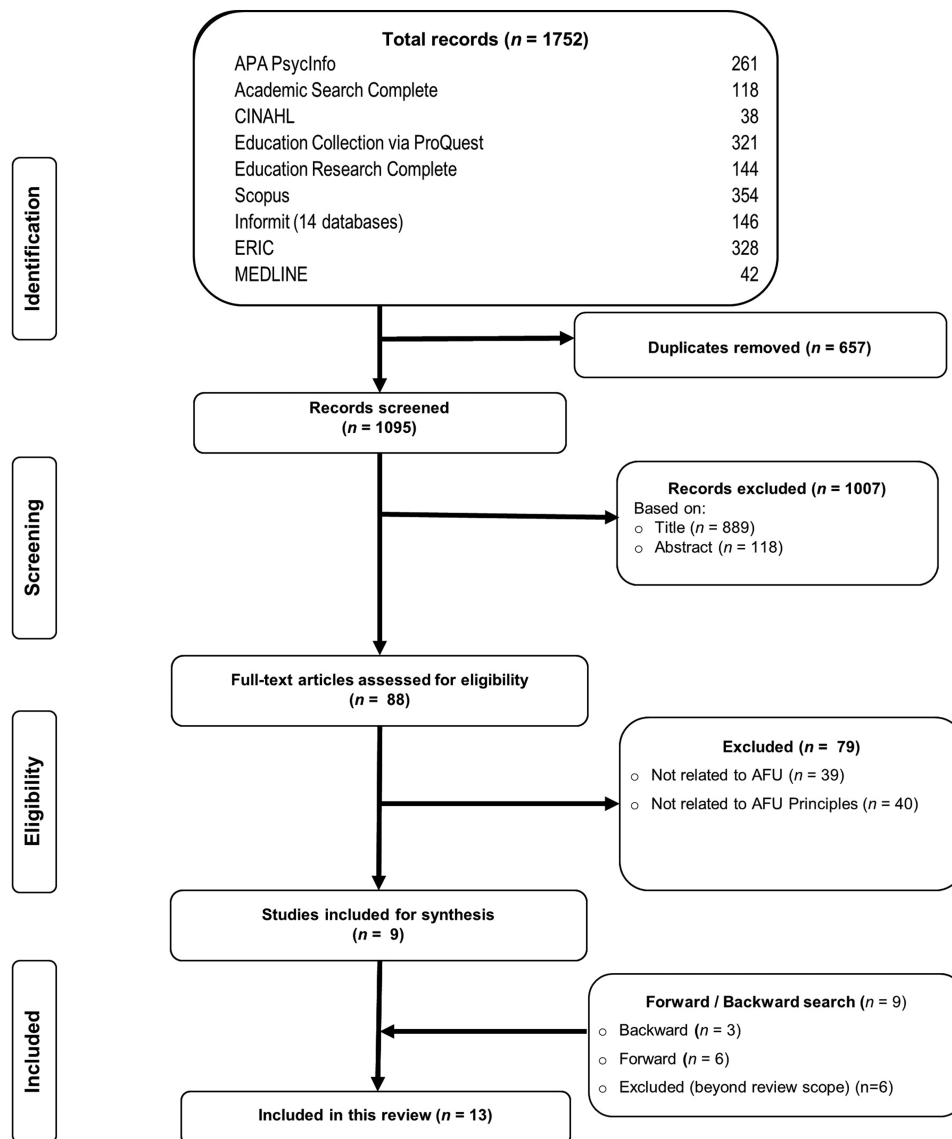
Figure 1. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines AFU = age-friendly university.

the Central Connecticut University, when students in a gerontology study program explored the goods and services needs of the older people in the community (Andreoletti & June, 2019). A collective vision of a whole university approach is crucial for university funders to be convinced of the benefits of becoming an AFU network member, to make the AFU principles a shared endeavor, and promote its sustainability (Andreoletti & June, 2019). One paper also included a residential retirement community intentionally built to be integrated into the university, which would also provide opportunities for residents to be involved in intergenerational learning (Montepare et al., 2019). Another program created through the coalition of the gerontology faculty members, retirees, lay people, and students interested in responding to the aging shift germinated the ideology of AFU through assessment, planning, and resource development (Luz & Baldwin, 2019).

In addition to partnering with different faculties, core AFU proponents applying for AFU membership mapped out current resources and programs in the university that were already age-inclusive (Chesser et al., 2020). This mapping exercise emphasized to management that the resources and efforts needed to operationalize the AFU ideology within the university was attainable (Chesser & Porter, 2019; Clark & Leedahl, 2019).

Bringing together students across age groups in intergenerational projects and classrooms was an important strategy that aligns with Principle 4 of the AFU and used by several universities to address ageism within universities (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Clark & Leedahl, 2019; Filinson & Raimondo, 2019; Luz & Baldwin, 2019; Montepare et al., 2020; Pstross et al., 2017; Silverstein et al., 2019; Stanley et al., 2019; Talmage et al., 2016).

Table 1. Summaries of Included Studies

Study	Setting: institution, country	Aim	Methods	AFU principle(s) addressed
Andreoletti & June (2019)	Central Connecticut State University (CCSU; regional public university), USA	To discuss how CCSU joined the AFU global network	Discussion paper	1, 4, 7, 10
Chesser & Porter (2019)[a]	University of Manitoba (UM), Canada	To describe how the UM adopted the AFU network and the strategies being used to evaluate and encourage age-friendliness	Discussion paper	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9
Chesser et al. (2020)[a]	UM, Canada	To describe UM's approach to AFU research using collaborative citizen science to identify supports and barriers to age-friendliness in UM	Collaborative citizen science	6, 9
Clark & Leedahl (2019)	University of Rhode Island (medium-sized state institution), USA	To describe a conceptual framework used to implement change to progress to becoming an AFU	Discussion paper	4, 6
Filinson & Raimondo (2019)	Rhode Island College (RIC), USA	To describe RIC's approach to promoting age-friendliness through both campus and community-based initiatives	Discussion paper	6, 7, 10 Additional principle that the paper did not link to an approach: 4
Luz & Baldwin (2019)	Michigan State University (MSU), USA	To describe the process in establishing the AgeAlive program (which meets the AFU principles) in MSU	Discussion paper	1–10
Mark (2018)[a]	Dublin City University (DCU), Ireland; and University of Strathclyde, UK	To discuss how two universities are integrating the AFU principles and mission	Discussion paper	University of Strathclyde: 1,2,4,6 DCU: 1, 4, 5, 6, 8
Montepare et al. (2019)	Lasell College (LC) and Lasell Village (university-based retirement community), USA	To describe LC's adoption of the AFU concept through the partnership with Lasell Village	Discussion paper	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Montepare et al. (2020)	University of Strathclyde, UK; UM, Canada; and Lasell University, Washington University, CCSU, MSU, University of Southern California, University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB), USA	To use Hirschhorn and May's campaign approach to change in higher education to show how AFUs are making the campuses more age-friendly	Discussion paper	1, 4, 6
Pstross et al. (2017)	Arizona State University (ASU) and Salvation Army Laura Danieli Senior Activity Center, USA and DCU, Ireland	To explore the benefits of intergenerational learning (principle 4) in higher education through two AFU programs	Qualitative	4 Additional principles that the paper did not link to an approach: ASU: 10 DCU: 1, 5
Silverstein et al. (2019)	UMB, USA	To audit UMB's level of age-friendliness	Action-research method	2, 4, 7
Stanley et al. (2019)	University of Akron, Soprema Senior Center and the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities	To assess the effectiveness of the Tech Connect Pilot Program in increasing community engagement and comfort with technology	Interview and interview after the intervention	1, 4, 6, 9, 10
Talmage et al. (2016)[a]	DCU, Ireland; ASU, USA; and University of Strathclyde, UK	To outline the approach of the Age-Friendly University in the development of later life learning and give the example of three institutions	Discussion paper	DCU: 1, 4, 5, 6, 8 ASU: 1, 3, 4, 6, 9 University of Strathclyde: 1, 2, 4, 6

Notes: AFU = age-friendly university. Detailed approaches, strategies, and/or evidence in proposing/initiating AFU changes to the university and approaches in implementing AFU principles can be found in Supplementary Table 1.
[a]Study does not explicitly link approaches to AFU principles.

Specific mechanisms identified that supported successful outcomes for age-friendly universities can be attributed to the existing activities and infrastructure that were available prior to formal affiliation to the AFU Network. These included (a) collaboration with other disciplines and existing university organizations across the university, including members of alumni organizations and local retirement communities; (b) support from the academic management and financial departments within the university; and (c) collaboration with student body and older learners to ensure the active voice of key players in the project.

Theme 2: Establishing a strong partnership with the community

One of the common strategies described in all identified papers was a strong partnership with older people and community organizations sharing mutual interest in aging and older people's rights (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Chesser & Porter, 2019; Chesser et al., 2020; Filinson & Raimondo, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019). This was achieved through the following processes: (a) ongoing community collaborations, enhancing age-friendly communities, "town to gown" efforts (Filinson & Raimondo, 2019) and (b) focusing on service learning—learning through active participation helping students to integrate classroom knowledge into relevant community service and addressing real-life issues (Filinson & Raimondo, 2019; Luz & Baldwin, 2019). The papers that appraised the three pioneer universities confirmed the importance of university–community partnership in learning program development and intergenerational learning in determining program success (Mark, 2018; Pstross et al., 2017; Talmage et al., 2016).

An advantage of a university–community partnership was emphasized by Andreoletti (2019) and Pstross (2017), highlighting that community organization with similar interests in older people could contribute to resources that support AFU efforts. However, this support was conditional on gaining the trust of community stakeholders (Pstross et al., 2017) and building relationships over time (Luz & Baldwin, 2019). One example of a community partnership initiative that had a strong potential to facilitate age-friendliness in universities was explicitly outlined by Montepare (2019), which included integration of community organizations such as retirement homes or facilities with student learning promoting social interaction between generations. Hence, AFU principles have the potential of shifting the traditional paradigm—from older people as recipients of care services to active community contributors through volunteering and caregiving provision.

Hosting community events within and external to the university was advocated by several authors (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Luz & Baldwin, 2019; Montepare et al., 2020; Silverstein et al., 2019; Stanley et al., 2019) to showcase the principles of the AFU ideology and enhance partnerships with community organizations. Several universities created a theme to inform the initiative, plan for programs, and reflect the principles of the age-friendly initiative. An example of such events was the *Tech Connect program* that was an intergenerational learning initiative in the University of Akron (Stanley et al., 2019). Older people from the community were paired with persons with developmental disabilities (PDD) who provided education on the use of technological device, whereas older people shared social interaction opportunities with PDD, to their mutual benefit. Another example of an external university to community program was the ASU and Salvation Army partnership (Pstross et al., 2017), which brought together students and older people accessing the Salvation Army center for intergenerational learning both formal and informal. Older people benefited from the program through improved mental health and technology knowledge, while younger people gained deeper and positive insight into aging and older people.

Theme 3: Aligning with global initiatives and advocacy on aging issues

Participating universities highlighted the benefits of being part of a global movement and the prestige of being a member of the AFU network. The alignment of universities' vision to international campaigns such as addressing ageism and advocating for the rights of older people provided opportunities not only within the tenets of scholarship but also in making good business sense for the university sector (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Clark & Leedahl, 2019). This convinced university authorities about the advantages of joining the AFU movement particularly as a pioneer in their State (Andreoletti & June, 2019). In addition, being a member of professional organizations such as the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) improved access to the latest trends and resources that validated AFU membership aspiration. Furthermore, building on the distinction of AFU membership was reported to strengthen collaboration and networking within the international academic arena and expand influence in fostering age-inclusive communities. This was particularly beneficial for universities with limited resources. Participating in AFU global initiatives and maximizing the influence of international organizations such as the AGHE affirmed the current gerontology-centered trend in higher education, thus normalizing the changes in university programs to adapt to the needs of older learners (Clark & Leedahl, 2019; Filinson & Raimondo, 2019; Pstross et al., 2017). This promoted a sense of "*jumping onto the bandwagon*" for university authorities that helped harness support in the undertaking.

Moreover, involvement in gerontology-focused research, particularly those with global applications in the field of intergenerational learning, was an important tool that helped catapult the ideologies and benefits of AFU for the university, increasing the attractiveness of the change processes (Chesser et al., 2020; Luz & Baldwin, 2019; Mark, 2018; Silverstein et al., 2019; Talmage et al., 2016). Central to

this approach was encouraging older people to be involved in research including faculty Emeriti, alumni, and retired communities optimizing the existing knowledge and skill pool (Luz & Baldwin, 2019; Montepare et al., 2019; Pstross et al., 2017).

Discussion

This scoping review aimed to identify and map evidence on age-friendly practices and on how AFU principles were operationalized and reported in the literature. Our findings confirmed that the AFU principles are indeed "aspirational" and were introduced to provide guidance to member institutions. Due to the contextual differences among member institutions, it is expected that the delivery and implementation of these principles vary in operational strategies and applications. For example, in teaching-intensive universities, AFU principles were implemented and evident in teaching innovation and curriculum development, embedding an aging focus. In more research-intensive universities, AFU principles were incorporated in key research goals and activities, with and for older people. Despite these differences, the review clearly demonstrated the high level of commitment of each university to upholding AFU principles (Andreoletti & June, 2019; Clark & Leedahl, 2019; Filinson & Raimondo, 2019; Montepare et al., 2020).

One important finding from this review was the identification of barriers and facilitators for older people to engage in the university environment. Identifying the factors that enhanced participation of older people in university assisted in developing strategies to participate in the AFU initiative. Several studies identified the barriers expressed by older people in enrolling or re-enrolling in university. This included personal and academic barriers. Personal barriers such as physical constraints, family caregiving roles, stigma, loneliness, feeling excluded, and ageism (Silverstein et al., 2019; Simon et al., 2020; Stanley et al., 2019) were prominently demonstrated in the primary studies reviewed. However, factors within the academic environment were also mentioned as significant hindrance for older people. These included physical barriers, such as lack of signages that were well placed and legible to older people (Chesser et al., 2020; Silverstein et al., 2019), lack of facilities to support older students such as benches along walkways, ramps, safety rails, or classroom seating with aids (Chesser et al., 2020), and accessibility barriers, such as inadequate transport (Chesser & Porter, 2019; Silverstein et al., 2019; Simon et al., 2020; Stanley et al., 2019) and challenges in internet navigation (Silverstein et al., 2019; Simon et al., 2020; Stanley et al., 2019). Nevertheless, having rapport with professors closer to their age, feeling valued about their life experiences and being able to impart this knowledge in intergenerational interactions were seen as facilitators (Simon et al., 2020).

Our review also demonstrated that to promote an age-friendly university, a university-wide, multidisciplinary effort is required. Therefore, it is important to identify common denominators among stakeholders and disciplines in tertiary learning and education, and to justify why becoming and maintaining an age-friendly university is beneficial. Intergenerational learning as an AFU pillar is one of the strongest and a common ground for AFUs from the studies we have reviewed (Pstross et al., 2017; Stanley et al., 2019), showing evidence of the value of supporting diverse students coming from different age groups, life experiences, and skill sets. Intergenerational interactions have been recognized to create positive well-being outcomes between older people and preschool children (grandchildren; Giraudeau & Bailly, 2019). However, AFUs offer a unique opportunity to expand intergenerational interactions between older and young people (beyond school-aged children) in a more cognitively stimulating interactions. The benefits from intergenerational interactions are multiplied when all stakeholders create support structures to bring the views and ideas of different generations to the table. This fosters respect and inclusiveness that resonated with age-friendly experts' claim that "an environment that is age-friendly is friendly to all ages" (Fitzgerald & Caro, 2014).

In terms of creating age-friendly environments, universities are uniquely positioned not only as "a place for education" and as a social infrastructure that serves the community but also as a mechanism to promote aging-in-place within the context of workplace environment (Silverstein et al., 2022). Therefore, it is reasonable that university education should be accessible to the communities, where they are physically and conceptually located. In aging communities, universities have a lot to offer when integrated into the lives of older people and could effectively exercise its role in providing solutions to real-world issues. On the other hand, older people living around university campuses, either in their own homes or in nearby institutionalized settings, have several ways to contribute to the university through sharing life experiences and acquired skills. AFU members' implementation of the principles surrounding civic engagement and community partnership has the potential to be creative and innovative and even with non-AFU network members, these partnerships have been documented to be synergistic. For example, an Australian university in a rural region has partnered with older residents in the areas to teach nursing students and be involved in learning activities such as interviewing older people during health assessments (Hughes et al., 2019). This example of community partnership introduced a practical and realistic way for students to learn, and for older people, it provided meaningful social interactions while actively contributing to university student learning.

Finally, our review has clearly mapped the aligned efforts between AFU and the global call to tackle important issues affecting older people such as ageism and social inequities. The principles of AFU are responsive to reducing

age segregation and addressing ageist views in our society. In countries such as New Zealand, where universities are the "critic and conscience of society," the moral obligations of educational institutions to fight against social injustice and violation of human rights are highlighted (Grace, 2010). There are innumerable ways to demonstrate the influence and role of universities to ensure older people are respected and treated fairly. The advocacy campaigns and research programs spearheaded by universities to improve the quality of life of older people, learning more about diseases and treatment and improving social determinants of health and well-being, continuing contribution of older workforce (longevity dividend), and addressing social issues such as ageism are examples of the many things that universities can do. Age-friendly universities are part of the whole age-friendly ecosystem as it brings a powerful influence on change and ensuring that equity in an aging society prevails (Fulmer et al., 2020). However, it is crucial to consider physical, cultural, and social determinants of age-friendliness.

Limitations

Our scoping review was limited to papers published in peer-reviewed journals. Due to the limited empirical papers published on age-friendly universities, we decided to include discursive papers published in academic journals. Although scoping reviews allowed inclusion of gray literature, we made a methodological decision that because several discussion and expert opinion papers were published in the academic literature, the information in gray literature will not add further value to the review. Furthermore, the review did not provide information regarding the diversity, equity, and inclusion component as the included articles in the review did not include these data. Finally, the papers in this review were limited to English language publications, although attempts were made in retrieving English versions of papers published in other languages. Despite the limitations, the review has critically mapped and identified available evidence on the topic and the robust process of our search was confirmed and reflected on the primary authors of papers included in the review, which included the early proponents of the AFU movement.

Conclusion

The AFU initiative clearly outlines and articulates the pillars and guiding principles to its members (current and prospective) and interested parties. The AFU network member universities have shown a high level of commitment in implementing and demonstrating the principles within and external to the wider university community, in consideration of the organization's current resources and capabilities. Although not all universities are AFU network members, the initiative has sparked interest in several universities to seek membership, and most importantly, for

some organizations, it paved the way to better understand the implementation of age-friendly approaches in practice regardless of membership status. Among all the AFU network principles, intergenerational exchange is the common ground that is powerful enough to benefit all generations of learners and at the same time address and reduce negative stereotypes about aging and older people. However, the lack of attention in the AFU principles to the aging-focused needs and interests of campus constituents, such as faculty and staff, could be an area that may need more emphasis in the future. Becoming an age-friendly university should not be an isolated endeavor, as it requires input from a range of stakeholders at different levels, funding support, and partnership across different disciplines within and outside the university. Future work should consider broader diversity connections and links to age-inclusive AFU efforts.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary data are available at *The Gerontologist* online.

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