

Preface

This book is a story of meetings. A meeting of a young postdoc researcher discovering a new application of the ‘active ageing’ concept in Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (AFCC) and of an experienced researcher in community social work exploring ageing as a new fieldwork. A meeting of European ways of thinking on “active ageing” and of Canadian and North American ways of promoting this concept through practices. A meeting of researchers, public policy experts and older people from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, United Kingdom, United States and Switzerland. Based on a selection of chapters, this international meeting necessarily reveals some of the challenges for the global AFCC perspective, the absence of Africa and the focus on developed countries being a frequent result of such an exercise.

This book is written to give an in-depth and empirically based knowledge of AFCC, which is a global discussion of new avenues for research and practice joining ageing and environment in the same track. The insistence on the role of the World Health Organization supporting this perspective since 2005 recalls some facts; however, the discussions around it in Part I, the variety of international local practices in Part II and the common challenges beyond its scope in Part III are the cement of a deep research-oriented direction of this book. In so doing, AFCC is probably, at the moment, the most internationally discussed meeting point for anyone interested in innovative public policies on ageing trying to adapt to global demographic changes and global urbanization. Next to researchers, policy makers, experts and stakeholders in ageing, this book will also interest master’s students searching the emerging field of knowledge and of practice. Similarly, anyone wishing to better know the AFCC “in practice” will be happy to read these pages and discover the variety of experiences.

Avoiding the isolated academic position, this book prefers to share academic expertise with the knowledge of practitioners and experts who are dealing with AFCC in their history (past, present or future). This is the reason that we select chapters both from established scholars (and give special attention to the voices of some emerging scholars too) and chapters written by or with practitioners

confronted with AFCC in their daily routine. In each of the three parts, this focus has been maintained: in Part I, through a balance between scholar A. Walker and international expert on AFCC, Dr. A. Kalache; in Part II, through experiences from all over the world (from neighbour level to national and transnational levels) written by scholars and experts; and in Part III, by comprehensive open questions suggested by A. Scharlach.

This book is the result of teamwork. Beyond authors' generous contributions, it received the help of a series of colleagues who accepted to anonymously revise chapters: Catherine Bigonnesse, Tine Buffel, Kathleen Brasher, Nathalie Burnay, Linda Castagnola, John L. Lewis, Louise Plouffe, Samuèle Rémillard-Boilard, Thomas Scharf and Enrique Vega Garcia.

Writing an international book is also an opportunity to improve transnational mutual understanding. For some chapters, this was not possible without the inestimable help of our expert translator Claudia Delli-Colli from the University of Sherbrooke.

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Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in International
Comparison

Political Lessons, Scientific Avenues, and Democratic
Issues

Moulaert, T.; Garon, S. (Eds.)

2016, XV, 337 p. 14 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-24029-9