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**Authors:** Mariano Sánchez (director), Donna M. Butts, Alan Hatton-Yeo, Nancy A. Henkin, Shannon E. Jarrot, Matthew S. Kaplan, Antonio Martínez, Sally Newman, Sacramento Pinazo, Juan Sáez and Aaron P.C. Weintraub.

Intergenerational programmes provide opportunities for the older and younger generations to relate to each other. In those societies where person-to-person contact between young people and the elderly is often difficult, these programmes increase intergenerational support and social cohesion and facilitate the inclusion of all generations in social activities.

Nevertheless, it has been shown that the benefits available from intergenerational programmes are not obtained simply by ensuring that the various generations meet each other. These programmes must meet the real needs of people and communities. They must be well designed, managed and planned and should involve group work that is able to connect various bodies and resources.

In keeping with the United Nations international call for building a *society for all ages*, this study by "la Caixa" Community Programmes looks at the characteristics such programmes should embody. It also examines the intergenerational policies that aspire to making our society a place where people are not discriminated against because they belong to one age group or another and where ageing is not considered a threat but rather a process that contributes to well-being and socio-economic development.

Dr. Alexandre Sidorenko, Senior Social Affairs Officer in the Ageing Unit of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, welcomes the publication of this book as an important substantive contribution to the global process of implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.