

### What do you think of when you see or hear the word innovation? The rapid pace of technological change? Creativity?

Innovation, of course, happens all around us, across the globe and throughout all facets and stages of life. With fundamental demographic shifts happening around the world — specifically the aging of the population globally — we are seeing greater innovation, and it is coming from everywhere: government, individuals, communities, and business. Technologies and other solutions of various kinds are already addressing challenges, thereby creating opportunities — both for, say, a company creating a beneficial technology and for the individuals who benefit from such solutions.

As a powerful trend, the rapidly aging population globally gives rise to innovation in so many aspects of life. Fueling that drive toward innovation is the belief that we can create solutions to challenges, creating value for all members of society, and enabling each of us to live healthier, fuller lives.

*The Journal* seeks to be a catalyst in this exciting, yet sometimes daunting, dynamic. Through *The Journal*, which has come to be known for showcasing thought leadership around the globe concerning all issues related to aging, AARP sparks global conversations on aging, while challenging outdated notions of how we can live our lives. It is here to share promising ideas so that others might be inspired and even build off them. As AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins expresses in her article, people share many of the same wants and needs as they grow older, no matter where they live. That is why *The Journal* seeks to spread promising solutions and valuable information from around the globe — so that others can benefit in solving challenges that inevitably are common to many countries and localities.

Within these pages we share stories from around the world on what it means to grow older. We share how people, communities, and nations are tackling the challenges related to an aging population, and how challenges are being turned into opportunities. Here in *The Journal* you will find ideas and solutions from every corner of the globe that may be relevant to any given community, person, or business.

We are pleased to take you to the Netherlands for this edition's special feature on global aging. As our Chief Public Policy Officer Debra Whitman describes in her article, a team from AARP traveled to this small but innovative nation to conduct a learning tour, meet with people on the ground, and see their age-friendly approaches and solutions in practice.

We bring you a wealth of stories from our tour: an intergenerational care facility bending the rules to improve lives; a senior apprentice learning new skills in a traditional craft industry; an organization giving older adults access to museums across the country; and a volunteer tour guide redefining her retirement years. These stories, among many more, offer a personal perspective on what it is like to age in the Netherlands — and provide concrete examples of Dutch innovation, specifically in the areas of community and social engagement, health and vitality, technology and science, and the embracing of older workers.

In a prologue, Hugo de Jonge, the Netherlands' Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health, Welfare, and Sport, discusses how aging in place, nursing care, and social isolation are all linked, and shares how the government empowers civil society, social enterprise, and companies to work together to improve care and support to seniors.

Beyond the Netherlands, we look at examples from other countries — Australia, France, Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States — that highlight innovative collaborations between national and local government and business. Sharing the experience of those countries, we examine such topics as human-centered design, and leveraging innovations and technologies across disciplines. We highlight pioneering public services that span all levels of government: national-level policy in France to transform a society into one more inclusive of older persons, the “Take a Seat” project in the UK cities of Manchester and Nottingham that foster age friendly practices on public transit, and landmark laws in various US states to support proper training for caregivers.

Other countries we highlight, meanwhile, are understanding the “opportunity” piece of the aging trend. Australia has shown an understanding of the value of older workers via strong policy that affirms their rights and fosters their economic contribution. On the

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other side of the equation — that is, older individuals as consumers — in Germany an effort is underway to encourage more start-ups to value this market segment, while the UK Industrial Strategy includes a focus on producing products and services for older individuals. And across the Atlantic in the United States, Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts highlights how he wants his state to become an epicenter for companies creating cutting-edge technology and services for older persons. Notably — and appropriately — older persons were involved in developing many of the policy, technology, and service innovations highlighted in this issue.

This year’s issue of *The Journal* also delves down to the individual level. We explore the value of play and travel throughout one’s life, as well as the cumulative impact of disparities across a lifetime. Regarding such disparities, one article points out how we are well on our way to sending humans to Mars — yet at current rates of improvement, we are still two centuries away from closing the gender pay gap.

We also highlight the power of cross-pollination in innovation and progress. In the area of health and medical advances, the Dementia Discovery Fund is the first ever venture capital fund to focus on the creation of meaningful new medicines for dementia. The fund, in which AARP has invested \$60 million, is showing true innovation by taking lessons from how cancer research has evolved over the years in order to accelerate advances in the study and treatment of dementia. A key lesson learned from cancer: focusing on incremental progress rather than panaceas or breakthroughs, just might be the more effective strategy to achieving true and valuable progress on diseases that result in dementia.

Whatever you think of when you hear the word innovation, you’re likely to find it throughout this issue of *The Journal* because it shows up in many forms here. I know you will find this latest issue of *The Journal* to be informative, thought-provoking, and inspiring. In these pages, you can look forward to discovering many compelling ideas, solutions and people-focused stories. With continued international dialogue and by sharing ideas for tackling the challenges of an aging population, we can all drive and accelerate innovation. In doing so, we can create opportunities for all stakeholders — including, most importantly, older individuals. ♦



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