

YOUR HUNDRED YEAR LIFE:

A FILM ABOUT RETHINKING AGEING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The combination of longer lives and falling birthrates is raising the proportion of older people relative to younger ones in many countries, including Canada. While we know the numbers behind this ageing reality, we know less about its social, health, and economic consequences. This led Dutch entrepreneur, academic, and filmmaker Dr. Theo Kocken to produce a 1-hour international documentary which studies these consequences in a format that offers keen insights and entertains at the same time. The film premiered in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in September 2022 to wide acclaim.



The Canadian Premiere of this film took place February 6, 2023 to a sell-out audience of 240 people, with an additional 340 viewers participating virtually. Its screening, attended by film-maker Theo Kocken, was followed by an expert panel discussion, which was in turn followed by an extended Q&A session with a well-informed, knowledgeable audience. Feedback on the 2.5hr event was universally and enthusiastically positive. This document summarizes the film's key messages, the discussions they sparked, the questions they provoked, and possible future actions we should consider. The event was sponsored by the **National Institute on Ageing (NIA)** and **KPA Advisory Services**, and hosted by the **Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto**.

The film was introduced by Theo Kocken, a Dutch finance expert turned documentary filmmaker. He explained that his motivation was to present stories and images about the health, social, and economic consequences for societies where people live increasingly longer lives, and where, at the same time, birthrates are falling. Because this process unfolds so slowly, taking many decades, its profound consequences are difficult to visualize on a year-by-year basis. The goal of the 1-hour film is to help us come to grips with these profound health, social, and economic consequences and to address them while there is still time. An interesting aspect of the film is that it is neither 'preachy' nor 'prescriptive'. Instead, we meet an interesting cast of characters in countries ranging from Japan, to Germany, to Ghana, to the UK and USA, each dealing in their own way with the very real health, social, and economic consequences of ageing societies. Kocken noted the irony that the countries that seem to be doing the best job on the economics of ageing, don't do as well on the social side....and visa versa.

TURNING THE FILM'S MESSAGES INTO CATALYSTS FOR ACTION

Four Expert Reactions

To get the post-film conversations going, four experts (in health care, habitation, work design, and finance) were invited to share their reactions to the film, and its relevance in a Canadian context. These four short reflections were followed by a series of animated Q&A discussions. The panel was moderated by *NIA* Executive Director Alyssa Brierley:

- Health Care: Renowned geriatrician Dr. Samir Sinha attested to the health care impact of the ageing of Canada's 9 million-strong Boomer Generation. For example, the number of Canadians with dementia diagnoses has reached 0.5 million, and will grow to a million within a decade. Referencing the title of the film, he noted seeing three patients over the age of 100 just last week. Two factors determine the life/experience trajectory of ageing patients with health issues: 1. Financial resources, and 2. Family support. Canada is a relative under-spender on the provision of long-term care services that are not universally covered by Medicare, and that mostly benefit older Canadians, with 2/3rd of the money going to nursing care, and 1/3rd to home care. With home care being far more cost-effective, we should aim to switch those proportions around, as detailed in the *NIA* paper "[Aging in the Right Place](#)". An especially promising initiative in that direction is the NORC project launched by Toronto's *University Health Network (UHN)*.
- Habitation: as Director of Innovation and Design of the *NORC Innovation Centre* at *UHN*, Jen Recknagel was the perfect person to address the NORC opportunity. First, NORC is short for Naturally Occurring Retirement Community, which is defined as a location with a high density of older residents. This reality in turn presents the opportunity to scale up both social interaction opportunities and the cost-effective delivery of health care, as well as other kinds of personal care and habitation maintenance. Thus NORCS are the ideal platform for 'aging in place'. The concept generated considerable interest and even excitement in the post-film conversations. A number of people commented "I live in a NORC but didn't know it!" This is clearly a topic deserving further exposure, exploration, and action, as detailed in the *NIA* paper "[It's Time to Unleash the Power of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in Canada](#)".
- Work Design: this topic was covered by Lisa Taylor, CEO of *Challenge Factory*, a research agency and consultancy focused on the future of work, demographics, careers, and labour markets. She spoke to three themes: 1. Understanding what is happening on both the demand and supply sides of labour markets, 2. Supporting workers through a series of career transitions as they age, and 3. Addressing the root causes of 'ageism'. These themes generated conversations about getting rid of the notion that the standard working career spans ages 18-65, perceptions that 'older' workers deserve less attention than 'younger' workers, and recognizing that 'ageism' is an unhealthy mindset that should be forcefully addressed. Solutions lie in the directions of retiring the word 'retirement', adopting 'life models' that stretch from ages 5 to 95, and of thinking through 'legacy careers' that might span the ages 60-80 range within the new 'life model'. The good news is that in contrast to the post age-76 'Silent Generation', the aged 56-75 'Boomer Generation' is not afraid to make lots of noise, facilitating the needed transition to the new 5-95 'life model'. For it to be successful, that transition will require direct involvement by workers, employers, and policy makers alike.
- Finance: over the course of his 50-year career in pension finance, President of *KPA Advisory Services* Keith Ambachtsheer has watched the 'Boomer Generation' evolve from an outsized cohort of youngsters entering labour market five decades ago...to today, a still-outsized cohort, now leaving it. These exits will make for a continuously-tight Canadian labour market (also in the

other developed economies, now even including China). There are two offsets to these ongoing inflationary pressures: 1. Longer working lives (already discussed), and 2. High-productivity capital formation, which can be facilitated through expanding the size and effectiveness of Canada's retirement income system. We already have globally-recognized effective universal (i.e., OAS/CPP/QPP) and public sector workplace parts, the latter covering 4 million public sector workers with accumulated assets of \$2 trillion. It is known as the *Canadian Pension Model*. In contrast, the private sector workplace part covering 13 million private sector workers is not so effective. Its accumulated assets are also \$2 trillion, its saving rates are lower, its operating costs are higher, it does not produce lifetime income streams, and its savings-to-capital transformation processes are inefficient. Canada could materially raise its capital productivity performance and its retirement income production performance if it could get its private sector retirement income 'system' to also adopt the *Canadian Pension Model's* principles and practices. Can this be done? In short, the answer is 'yes'....and discussions are underway to that end.

The film and the panel discussion that followed prompted 53 audience comments and questions, many of which were addressed during the Q&A period. The 'upvote' column indicates the number of participants who agreed with/supported the comment or question.

53 Audience Comments and Questions

Question	Upvotes
Loved the film! What countries are doing the best job at at this issue? Any examples Canada should look to?	19
Retired folks are sometimes the best and most involved volunteers where they find purpose. How can we better harness and incentivize retirees to support important social and cultural causes?	16
How do we change attitudes about the value of older workers?	11
I wonder if one of the reason some people are so keen to retire is because they didn't find their worklife particularly satisfying or rewarding? ("Take this job and shove it...".)A larger problem, perhaps?	10
Thank you for this wonderful film. If you had the power to implement three specific game-changing modifications to Canada's pension system and/or our national policies on aging, what would they be?	10
How can we make the communication on demographics less scary? I worry that the doom and gloom can backfire and increase ageist attitudes and behaviours.	9
Dr. Sinha what is the biggest health challenge you see in aging patients and what advice would you give those to stay healthy in the later years in life?	9
A lot of the precarity surrounding pensions seems to be regarding issues around employment/labour participation. Is it possible a guaranteed basic income scheme could work to effectively replace pensions considering these labour issues?	8

Perhaps we could talk about age friendly environments rather than NORCs. We have thousands of AFC programs in Canada +	8
This film illustrates many ways to harness citizen energy, talents and resources creatively. How can governments reward and incentivize citizen leadership on innovative solutions like the NORC model, or co-housing/intentional communities?	7
How can we create our own solutions that can support our financial needs without depending on government for everything?	6
Canada invests about a tenth of what Denmark does in retraining? How do we close the gap?	5
How effective are Canadian policies in helping people manage old age financially, physically and socially?	4
The film has reflected multiple issues of aging. It portrays aging problematic and scary, while aging is a biological natural process for all. How can we portrait aging positively that people start planning retirement early in advance	4
Please comment on the value of publicly-funded home care to support older adults in maintaining purposeful lives—whether at work or other activities-while “aging in place” in their own homes or in NORCS, vs building more institutions.	4
Should the Western medical system in Canada and the US start investing more in holistic and preventative care so that our seniors can lead healthier lives and reduce their likelihoods of developing various illnesses in old age?	3
Should our governments invest more in developing partnerships between health care institutions and seniors in order to promote NORCs and what are some of innovations that we can introduce to promote better living for seniors in NORCs?	3
The health benefits of social interaction and engagement in caring and contributing emphasise the value of community initiatives over national or provincial policy initiatives. Do you have examples of these community boomer led initiatives?	3
As service providers for seniors, what sort innovative programs that we can do now to change the landscape? Something like what Denmark - eldercare model is doing?	3
Alyssa - What role can higher education play in normalizing the multi-stage life? Are there any universities/colleges developing true multigenerational skills and degree programs, not just traditional adult education classes	3
Are there areas that pension or insurance operators would be interested in investing in to support some of the changes needed? What are the win-win opportunities for public-private partnership?	2
How can key stakeholders be incentivized to collaborate effectively, working beyond their traditional siloed mandates to take a multidisciplinary approach (financial, health, housing, social etc) to improve the aging experience?	2
This is a question for Theo - what kind of feedback have you been getting on the film internationally? Have there been any important topics & insights that you wished that you had included that you did not?	2

Should governments provide more incentives for young people to have children because of the large decline in birth rates in countries all over the world which is leading to less money for pensions?	1
As a society, we view "ageing" as a period of decline. So, if we are truly going to extend our "health spans" and not just our "life spans", should we support the idea of "longevity" as a period of exploration, adventure and purpose?	1
How can we get the word out that the model of pensions in Canada can be used as a best practice on this issue.. what steps would we need to implement Keith recommendations on the Canadian system.	1
The increasing amount of solo aging doesn't seem to be on Canada's radar, yet it is in the USA. Any comments re health & housing for this group in Canada?	1
A very successful model of providing support in NORCs is being provided by the Community Support Sector. Fully funded, 24/7 for both scheduled and unscheduled visits. How do we convince the funders to expand access?	1
The film mentioned independent workers and the challenge for them to catch up to public sector and private sector pensioned workers. What are the solutions to this challenge and to avoid leaving a large sector of society in poverty?	1
Lifespan is increasing, but health span is actually in decline. More individuals are entering their 60's with at least two or more chronic diseases. What do we need to do as a nation to reverse this so we can work into our 80's.	1
How can technology help with some of the challenges portrayed in the film?	1
Are we trying to encourage people to work into their 70s and 80s, or are we trying to prevent people from voluntarily retiring in their 60s?	
Should auto-enrolment be a law in Canada like in other countries?	
Systemic inertia seems to be the biggest problem. Radical hyper local demonstrations of a powerful new way to organise ourselves can break through the centralised inertia. What examples are you aware of?	
The poster of movie says "living, and living" but there was very little living in the film. Mostly focus on finance, pensions. Shouldn't we focus on living older, healthier, happier? Increasing all that can be free, rec, culture... 1/3 life	
We've been talking about the baby boom and its implications for retirement since I was a kid (I'm 65 now). It shouldn't be such a surprise now for our policy makers. But here we are and the question is: What to do?	
As a woman, I feel that at a certain age, when I am visually seen as older, I will be seen as having 'peaked' and be devalued in the workforce, which will encourage me to retire sooner. Any thoughts on how to change this?	
Seems for us to thrive in a new iteration of ourselves as a society we will need to embrace a different set of values and mindset. Can you describe how you see us developing and adopting these values?	
I'd like to retire early while I have energy to do all my bucket list stuff then return to work later in life to live a fruitful partial retirement. Is this a good plan?	

Found the negative aspect of aging shown in the film to highlight ageism far too much for my liking. Would have been nice to here about countries who are thinking ahead. As we know there are some.	
There was one example of a style of cooperative supported living. How can we incent developers and builders to start bringing this style of living to market?	
What is the impact of automation on the demand side of the labour market? I worry about the fact that the logic of the market system is to reduce labour costs long term. How do we create an economy where people actually matter?	
It is interesting that the woman in the film was eventually hired because her boss was unaware of her age. Is “blind hiring” a viable practice for avoiding ageism when recruiting potential employees?	
how do we advance the starting point related to aging from 65 plus to a conversation about all of us who are aging?	
NORC benefits are an impactful and practical solution to many variations of challenges that exist for aging in place. What could a potential NORC model look like in rural and remote communities where high density housing is less prevalent?	
This is a question for Theo - what kind of feedback have you been getting on the film internationally? Have there been any important topics & insights that you wished that you had included that you did not?	
Will the video and conversation be available to share in the community?	
How will the film be more broadly shared or distributed?	
I'm assuming that the private pension would be funded by a mandatory contribution & if so how would it be administered?	
As a woman, I feel that at a certain age, when I am visually seen as older, I will be seen as having 'peaked' and be disvalued in the workforce, which will encourage me to retire sooner. Any thoughts on how to change this?	
Keith, what are your thoughts about introducing a new insurance scheme for seniors to provide for old age?	
Can we say that ageism applies to young people too?	
Can this film be delivered universally to high schools across Canada and lead a discussion, ideation, group project, etc that builds awareness and encourages them to think of future-oriented solutions to these issues?	
Can you send some wine to my place?	

The four separate but related panel discussion topics, plus the 53 audience comments and questions it provoked, suggest three possible follow-on action steps.

Three Possible Follow-On Action Steps

1. Organize an In-Depth Workshop on Accelerating the UHN NORC design project
2. Organize an In-Depth Workshop on Transitioning Workers, Employers, and Policy Makers to the Age 5-95 'Life Model'
3. Organize an In-Depth Workshop on Transitioning Canada's Private Sector Retirement Income 'System' to the Much-Admired Canadian Pension Model

SPEAKER BIOS (in order of panel appearance)

Alyssa Brierley is Executive Director of the [National Institute on Ageing](#). She is a lawyer with expertise in human rights, governance, labour and corporate law. Prior to joining *NIA*, Alyssa was Executive Director and General Counsel of the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights. She has also been a policy advisor to Ontario's Treasury Board and its Department of Economic Development, Employment, and Infrastructure.

Theo Kocken is Professor, Pension and Risk Management, VU University, Amsterdam, and NWU University, South Africa, Founder - [Cardano](#), an Anglo-Dutch pension and risk management firm, Chair - *Cardano Development Foundation*. He has authored multiple books and articles on pensions and financial markets, and has recently expanded into the film medium. His 2015 film "Boom Bust Boom" studied the dynamics of financial instability, and his new film "Your 100 Year Life" studies the world-wide aspects of ageing.

Dr. Samir Sinha is the Director of Geriatrics at [Sinai Health](#) and University Health Network, Director of Health Policy Research at the [National Institute on Ageing](#), Professor of Health Policy and Management, University of Toronto and Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. He is globally recognized as a passionate and respected advocate for the needs of older adults. In that capacity he has advised governments not only in Canada, but also in the USA, Europe and Asia.

Jen Recknagel is Director of Innovation and Design at the [NORC Innovation Centre](#) at University Health Network. A NORC is a "Naturally Occurring Retirement Community" with a high density of older residents, creating opportunities to scale up social interaction and the delivery of care to these residents. Her career has focused on finding effective solutions to human, social, and business challenges.

Lisa Taylor is CEO of [Challenge Factory](#), a certified B-Corp research agency and consultancy focused on the Future of Work. She has [written 5 books](#) on topics related to work and careers, and was recently named one of Canada's Most Powerful Women by WXN Top 100 Awards. Lisa is an Associate Fellow at that National Institute on Ageing and her expertise related to demographics, careers, and labour markets has been recognized by multiple organizations, including the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy, the Urban Land Institute, and the Labour Market Information Council.

Keith Ambachtsheer is Executive in Residence, Rotman School of Management, Senior Fellow, National Institute on Ageing, President, [KPA Advisory Services](#), Director Emeritus - International Centre for Pension Management. He has written 4 books on the design and management of pension systems, and is recognized globally for his expertise in converting pension and investment theory into effective practice.

EVENT SPONSORS/HOST

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is a Toronto Metropolitan University think tank focused on the realities of Canada's ageing population. Through our work, our mission is to enhance successful ageing across the life course and to make Canada the best place to grow up and to grow old. We work at the intersection of healthcare, financial security, and social well-being.

KPA Advisory Services has been providing strategic advice to organizations around the globe involved in the design, management, and delivery of retirement income services since 1985. Its strength is to provide unique insights through integrative analysis across the disciplines of demography, economics, finance, organization design, governance, and investment management. Organizationally, it has been involved in the creation of such internationally recognized entities as the Canadian Pension Model, CEM Benchmarking, and the International Centre for Pension Management.

Rotman School of Management – Events and Speaker Series hosts over 100 talks by international best-selling authors, top management executives, and other influential thought-leaders. The Series provides unparalleled access to these thought-leaders. Brett Hendrie is Director of the Program.

RESOURCES

YOUR HUNDRED YEAR LIFE film and Panel Discussion: For access please contact:

Theo Kocken t.kocken@cardano.com or Keith Ambachtsheer keith@kpa-advisory.com

NIA Report: Ageing in the Right Place: Supporting Older Canadians to Live Where They Want:

<https://www.nia-ryerson.ca/airp>

NIA Report: It's Time to Unleash the Power of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in Canada:

<https://www.nia-ryerson.ca/norc>

Benefits Canada article: [“Converting private sector pension plans into the public sector model would yield lifetime income for retirees: expert”](#)

UHN article: [“NORC Innovation Centre launches at UHN with bold mission to design the future of ageing in place”](#)

[NORC Do It Yourself Guide](#): A step-by step guide to help you start, implement and sustain an aging in place group in your own community.

Don Ezra's blog: “YOUR HUNDRED YEAR LIFE: An outstanding documentary film.”

<https://donezra.com/179-your-hundred-year-life-an-outstanding-documentary-film/>

HOUSE CALLS, another very relevant documentary film on ageing, by Ian McLeod:

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/house-calls/>