Intergenerational Programmes
An Introduction and Examples of Practice

Editor
Alan Hatton-Yeo
Foreword

The interest in intergenerational practice has grown incrementally in recent years. In this document we seek to bring together descriptions of just some of the rich diversity of intergenerational programmes that exist across the United Kingdom. The range of case studies is broad, reflecting this diversity, and in editing this book we have strived to reflect this in the articles published and the differing formats used.

We are grateful to all of the authors who have taken the time to produce the richness contained here and we appreciate that for practitioners finding time to write can be difficult and demanding but it does provide the opportunity for us to share and learn from people’s disparate experiences and backgrounds.

The case studies here cover the whole spectrum of intergenerational practice and settings and we are confident you will find them of value. It is our intention to produce a second volume of case studies next year and we hope that if you have projects that you wish to share that you will contact us.

As well as thanking the authors for their hard work and patience I also wish to thank Louise Middleton without whose effort and good humour this guide would never have been finished.

Alan Hatton-Yeo
March 22nd 2006
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Introduction

The Beth Johnson Foundation is based in Stoke-on-Trent in England. The Foundation was established in 1972 to develop new approaches to ageing that link policy, practice and research and can impact on policy and practice across the United Kingdom. During our existence we have been at the forefront of the development of health promotion for older people, advocacy for older people, lifelong learning and the engagement and participation of older people in Civic Society.

1993 was the European Year of Solidarity between the Generations. In Europe there was an increasing recognition of a distance growing between young and old people. At the same time the so called “Demographic Time Bomb” was receiving much interest in the media with increasing concern about people living longer and how we would be able to afford this economically and socially. Some writers speculated about a “Generational War” with the young and old competing for resources. It was this European Year that wakened the Foundation’s interest in Intergenerational Practice. Sadly the initial interest raised by the 1993 activities dwindled but left behind a number of organisations who began to consider the matter in more detail over the following years.

Among these was the Foundation and in 1997 we launched three small scale pilot projects to help us begin to develop our understanding of intergenerational practice and what its potential could be. These projects were:

- Mentoring of young people in schools by older volunteers.
- Community Action Groups of young and old people in rural areas to engage with the local politicians.
- Co-learning by young and old people of IT skills.

In 1998 we achieved our first Government funding to develop a pilot intergenerational mentoring project working with pupils in their first year at High School who had been identified as being at risk of failure as a consequence of the impact of the transition from primary in to secondary education. This pilot demonstrated a significant impact and as a consequence we gained three year funding from the Department of Health to develop the project as a model that could be replicated across the United Kingdom.

During this period we became increasingly involved in International Intergenerational work which has helped to shape our thinking and understanding. We became the UK founder members of the International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes, which the Foundation still hosts, and co-published in 2000 a joint comparative study with UNESCO of International Intergenerational Practice that looked at ten countries, including Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

This period saw a great deal of discussion between ourselves and European partners to begin to develop a European understanding of intergenerational practice as the majority of the literature at this time was from North America and did not translate culturally. Organisations such as NIZW in the Netherlands, Dialog der Generationen in Berlin, the Peace, the Research and Conflict Resolution Centre in Gernika and
infoklick in Switzerland all contributed to a gathering European perspective on intergenerational work as a method of developing community cohesion and strengthening the fabric of society.

As the Foundation continued to develop its own evaluated practical projects and to work with other partners across the UK we became convinced that for Intergenerational Practice to be properly developed we needed to have a Centre of Expertise that could act as an advocacy organisation, gather evidence, develop the conceptual understanding of Intergenerational Practice, produce policy papers, organise training and consultancy support and provide the focal point for future development. It was out of this belief that funding was obtained from our then National Lottery and the Lloyds TSB Foundations for England and Wales to establish the UK Centre for Intergenerational Practice in April 2001.

From the beginning we focused most of our time in to supporting practitioners to help us build the evidence base that would demonstrate to policy makers the potential contribution of intergenerational practice. We currently support an active network of over 850 organisations and practitioners who are involved in projects as diverse as:

- Rural learning projects to ensure people do not lose their heritage.
- Skills exchange between older people and young immigrants to develop language and understanding.
- The use of art and drama to promote understanding and develop programmes to counter drug abuse and fear of crime.
- Mentoring by older people of young people to promote assimilation, confidence and achievement.

Building on the strength of our practitioner voice the Centre for Intergenerational Practice has been able to influence key policy makers. An example of Government involvement in Intergenerational Practice has been in Wales. Following comprehensive consultation the Welsh Assembly published its Strategy for Older People in 2003.

In this strategy the Welsh Assembly recognised the importance of the communities they lived in, the relationships they experienced and their environment to the health and well being of both older people and neighbourhoods they lived in. As a consequence the strategy agreed funding to the Beth Johnson Foundation to develop a Welsh Centre for Intergenerational Practice. This has now been launched at the University of Glamorgan.

Intergenerational Practice has been promoted and developed in the United Kingdom in a variety of ways by many different players. In the second part of this introduction we will look in more detail at what we believe IP to be, why it is important and what it can offer to us and our societies.

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and may contribute to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.
These generations have become progressively disconnected from each other at an individual, family and community level due to a number of circumstances that has meant that the natural relationship between them has been affected. These disconnections include smaller families, increased geographical distance between family members, divorce and single parent households, the different expectations of working women and the impact of migration.

Alongside these changing family patterns has been the development of age-segregated activities and living arrangements that have further distanced the old and young from each other. This has been exacerbated by the way that policies and services are normally around target groups or issues that are by their nature disjointed and discriminatory.

The aim of intergenerational work is to find ways to develop and strengthen these relationships and consequently become an agent of social change with benefits to the whole of society. The middle generation has an important part to play in enabling and supporting this intergenerational exchange to take place.

The intergenerational relationship is significant for a number of reasons:

- It recognises that everyone has the capacity as human beings to learn and grow throughout the whole of the life span.
- It breaks down the structures in society which perpetuate the fact that chronological age, at both ends of the life span, often excludes people from the mainstream activities; in addition the young and old are not seen as contributing to the economy and are therefore commonly described in terms such as burden.
- It promotes a sense of social responsibility as a citizen because older people are able to support and nurture the young, whilst the young recognise that older people can become frail and need care as they age.
- This social responsibility promotes communities that support and value all of its members in a culture of respect and mutual understanding.
- It sees the young and old as active, participating members of their community contributing to the overall well being of those around them and creating more cohesive and healthy communities.
- It acknowledges every human beings need for reciprocity, giving back something to others, at a time when the opportunities for this to occur naturally within families have diminished.
- It demonstrates the mutual benefit that each group gains from the exchange and breaks down the barriers of perceived power between them.
- It creates a synergy which strengthens and supports the young and old and so enables them to make changes which benefit everyone.

This has lead to an increasing recognition of the importance of looking at the issues of ageing through an intergenerational focus, for the following reasons:

- Older people are recognised as having a valuable role in society by serving youth in a way that the middle generation cannot.
• They can receive service from youth which recognises the responsibility of others to support elders when the process of ageing requires care.
• It fills the need of the older generation to nurture the young and to pass on their experience of life to the benefit of future generations.
• It develops an understanding amongst the generations of what it is like to be old and seeks to dispel the myths and fears.
• It leads to greater respect for older people and recognises their contribution in striving towards a better society.
• It removes the fears and prejudices that older people have of the young and builds a safer and more civilised society for all.
• It allows ageing to be recognised as a continuum throughout life with different phases and transitions which are all of equal value.

In summing up I would wish to stress my belief in the importance of protecting and developing productive intergenerational relationships. One only needs to look around the world at the impact of globalisation, migration, HIV/AIDS, the breakdown of families and increasing social tension to realise how important it is to find ways to mend the tears in the fabric of our societies. Intergenerational approaches can provide at least some of the thread we need to work towards this.

Alan Hatton-Yeo
Key Words

The key words given demonstrate the wide range of issues to which intergenerational approaches can apply and the richness of the body of work being done.

A list of key words is given below to offer areas of work that people wish to search for within this document. To search for key words either click on the binocular 'find' button or use 'Ctrl' + F, then type in the word you wish to search for e.g. if you type on 'arts' this will pick up the examples of projects using the arts.

The words intergenerational, older and younger have not been used as key words, as these are assumed as part of the over-arching theme of intergenerational practice.

active ageing  
attitudes  
arts  
cinema  
citizenship  
communication  
community  
community development  
conversation  
cookery  
crafts  
creative writing  
crime  
dance  
drama  
education  
engagement  
environmental  
exercise  
ethnicity  
family  
film  
friendship  
health  

history  
IT/ICT  
learning  
lifelong learning  
media skills  
mentors  
music  
older people  
oral history  
partnership(s)  
photography  
reminiscence  
research  
schools  
sheltered housing  
sport  
storytelling  
sustainability  
theatre  
training  
volunteering  
volunteers  
wellbeing
Active Ageing Programme (Liverpool)

Key words: active ageing, exercise, community, health, schools

The Active Ageing Programme is based in South Liverpool and first originated in the Speke area of Liverpool, which is one of the most deprived wards in the country on all indicators including educational attainment. Speke has high rates of teenage pregnancy, unemployment, crime rates and anti-social behaviour towards older people.

The Older Persons Nurse in Speke developed and implemented a holistic older person assessments tool, which targeted the over 65s in the area, paying particular attention to the housebound and hard to reach. After many months of talking to older people and undertaking assessments in their homes, it became strikingly evident that the older community of Speke had little knowledge and understanding of their own health and of services available to them.

Uptake of services including that of income maximisation was poor, and older people themselves participated in little or no activity whatsoever. Older people also described how they were afraid to go out at times for fear of anti-social behaviour being directed at them from the young people in the area.

Having gathered this information and asking older people what they wanted to see happen for them in the area, the Older Person's Nurse developed the Active Ageing Programme. This has successfully been identified by the Department of Health as an example of good practice in the prevention of falls, and included in a practitioner's tool kit on the Help the Aged website.

The programme has been running for two years with up to 40-50 people in attendance each week. The programme offers presentations from a wide range of health professionals, local agencies and services in order to increase knowledge of health and an uptake of services such as income maximisation, energy efficiency advice, fire and crime prevention, to name but a few. Following a tea break the group participate in an hour’s activity such as Tai-Chi, keep fit and even belly dancing!

Having constantly listened to, and acted upon the needs of, older people the problem of the anti-social behaviour continued to increase. In order to combat this positively the programme was taken to a local high school and used as an intergenerational piece of work, involving some of the school children actively taking part and joining in the sessions and activities alongside older people.

In order to do this effectively the Older Persons Nurse involved partner agencies and local community representation, both young and old in the planning group. This was done in order to make it a community initiative, involving the community in the decision making process and involving partner agencies such as South Liverpool Housing, Safer Schools Partnership, Extended Schools Partnership, and myself representing South Liverpool PCT in joining together in both the planning, financing and weekly running of the programme.
The Intergenerational Active Ageing Programme has been running successfully in the school for two years, much to the delight of the older people who are now beginning to feel valued members of the community again. The programme encourages both generations to engage in discussions related to health, healthy foods and services, and helps to identify older people with skills who wish to pass these on to the young. The youngsters meet and greet the older people, interact with them and help with giving them their tea and coffee at break time. In addition to this every term the youngsters put on a show for the older people, which have been extremely entertaining and professionally delivered.

The outcome of this initiative has been very rewarding. Older people are becoming more confident and vocal towards their needs. They are gaining information regarding health and other services they wouldn’t have access to normally, and are acting on that information by improving their health and physical activity levels and using services that they were previously unaware of. Older people often tell us the good news of their success in gaining income maximisation, heating grants, aids and adaptations, and feeling generally happy with their lives.

The older people are also becoming more socially included in the community and less isolated than in previous years. They are readily engaging in communication with the young people and not afraid to inform the school of youngsters who bother them in the community and in their homes. The presence of a uniformed police officer in the school, employed through the Safer Schools Partnership has been helpful in this process, and the officer engages in the activities involved in the programme in order to be accessible to the older people regarding their problems with the young, if necessary. The added activities included in the programme have encouraged intergenerational working outside of the weekly group meetings. The older people who incidentally wish to be known as “Recycled Teenagers”, now go into schools and other venues and meet with the youngsters, and share their war time memories which the youngsters are learning about in school. This has been a great opportunity in which to generate a better understanding of older people and the issues they face, and for younger people to see them in a more positive light. This really has contributed in bridging the generation gap.

This programme helps in the reduction of falls and empowers older people with the knowledge and skills to improve quality of life and prevent ill-health. It helps to make them feel valued members of the community, and raises awareness of the issues related to younger people, which in turn helps with the process of bridging the generation gap, and making interacting with younger people a more pleasant experience instead of a fearful one.

Due to the high rate of pregnancy in Speke, it is estimated that the average granny is in her 40-50s not in the 60-70 year age bracket; hence the young have little understanding of how to interact with those over 60. Due to this programme the younger people are now seeing older people in a different light. They say they’re fun and more active than they thought they would be and that they are learning lots about the difficulties faced by the older members of the community.
This programme is helping to bring a community together, sharing and participating in knowledge skills, and time and has helped to change views and misconceptions that each generation has of the other. Older people have a wealth of knowledge and skills and this programme helps play a part in passing such knowledge down to the younger generation, which in turn is helping to make the place they live a better place both today and for future generations.

The project has generated interest from the local media and has been covered by the local press and radio. It has featured as cover story for top nursing journal and also as part of a BBC documentary regarding older people and poverty. The programme has also been highly praised in a recent Health Care Commission Inspection, and has been short listed for the NRF Strictly Regeneration Awards under the Creative Communities Category.

Since the ongoing success of this programme, the PCT has funded another two programmes across South Liverpool, which once established will develop into an Intergenerational programme such as the one in Speke. The three Liverpool PCTs are currently undertaking an organisational restructure in preparation of becoming one Liverpool PCT. This reorganisation has enabled the roll out of the Active Ageing Programme across the rest of the city, with a team of 25 staff including trained nurses to carry out the work. The programmes will become intergenerational once well established and will pay particular attention in the prevention of falls in older people and the promotion of health and active ageing.

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Age & Youth – School Based Project

Key Words: schools, community development, learning

Background:
Since its formation in April 1999, Age Concern Kingston-upon-Thames (ACKuT) has been purposefully bringing together the older and younger generations in order to promote greater understanding between them. The establishment of an Age & Youth school-based project at primary level recognises that older people have skills, talents, knowledge and experience which, with appropriate opportunity, could be valued by the young, and provides the ideal opportunity for this expertise to be used in support of young people’s learning.

Aims:
1. To provide benefits for the children by enabling them to share an older person’s skills and experiences and to feel valued and appreciated because of this ‘sharing’ and their liaison with the older generation.

2. To provide benefits for the older people by establishing a positive interaction for them with young people. This, in turn, enriches their lives by enabling them to realise that they have much to offer the younger generation and that their skills are needed in the local community. The initiative also provides the opportunity for older people to learn about the lives of children and their families today.

Activities:
1. Preparation of a leaflet describing the Age & Youth school-based project which was placed in libraries; on church notice boards, etc., and sent to other organisations in the area likely to be interested to recruit volunteers.

2. Preparation of an Information Pack for all prospective volunteers – containing a ‘volunteer job description’; a volunteer application form requesting names and addresses of two referees, and general information concerning Age Concern Kingston-upon-Thames and its policies.

3. A personal meeting and interview for every interested volunteer to give a detailed explanation of the aims and objective of the project.

4. Completion of Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Applications Forms and liaison with the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames to ensure speedy processing.

5. Introduction to the school and class where a volunteer’s help is required, plus a meeting with the Head Teacher in order to talk about school policies, particularly with regards to issues of confidentiality.
6. Feed-back and training sessions for volunteers, these are on-going and cover topics such as Child Protection, Phases & Teaching in Primary School To-day; Autism & Dyslexia.

7. Continuous networking with, and presentations to, local organisations such as the University of The Third Age, Rotary, Probus, Soroptimist International, Associations of Retired People, in order to publicise the project and recruit older volunteers.

Achievements
Through its Age & Youth school-based project at primary level, ACKuT has demonstrated that uniting generations brings about positive results. Older volunteers commit to a weekly session at a school and, by working with individual children or small groups they have been able to offer valuable practical support in literacy, numeracy and science lessons. They not only listen to the children read, but also engage them in discussion often about their own life experiences. Regular weekly meetings help a reliable routine to develop and make the children feel secure.

Volunteers are hugely enthusiastic and tell us that their link with this project with the schools and teachers and also with Age Concern Kingston-upon-Thame, has made them feel ‘more a part of the community than before’.

An unexpected achievement has been the recruitment of male volunteers (15 as at January 2006). Together with female volunteers they provide very positive role models. The children meet older people who are out and about, intelligent, kind, looking for new experiences and challenges.

The success of this project also resulted in a request from The Mount Primary School for the establishment of a Learning Mentor Project to: ‘help identified children in their final term in Year 5 and moving on to Year 6 in September 2005, who have the potential to achieve academically, but who are considered to be at risk of failure or marginalisation ‘overcome any barriers to effective learning’. A pilot project was set up and in May 2005 seven mentors began working with thirteen children. The results were so positive that in December 2005 Stage Two of the project was developed.

Issues and Outcomes
1. The time involved in developing and maintaining a relationship with the Head Teacher and staff at a school and in recruiting, supporting, monitoring and training volunteers is very high.

2. This type of project is difficult for an organisation to set up and then move away from.

3. Within only a few months, the project achieved a considerable amount of publicity and was accorded a great deal of respect in the Borough. As a result of becoming known and respected in Kingston upon Thames, other schools are very keen to participate. This brings issues of funding very much to the fore.
4. The quota of older volunteers per school has been high i.e. teams of six and fourteen. These high numbers are a challenge for the future and difficult to maintain without a great deal of effort.

5. The success of its Age & Youth school-based project means ACKuT are now seeking to obtain additional funding to focus on further development.

Start date of initiative: June 2001 – Ongoing

Partner Organisations:
Mount Primary School, New Malden, Surrey
Knollmead Primary School, Tolworth, Surrey
Tolworth Junior School, Tolworth, Surrey
King Athelstan Primary School, Kingston

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Age Concern Portsmouth Intergenerational Project

**Key words**: attitudes, community, crime, reminiscence, schools

**Aim of the Projects**
To encourage respect, communication and better understanding between the generations, thus preventing stereotyping and reduce the fear of crime.

**Why Did We Do It**
Older people wanted more contact with younger generations so they could share their problems and learn to trust and respect each other.

**What Did We Want To Achieve**
To break down the barriers between generations.
To build trust and respect.
To learn and share experiences together.
To make new friends.
To give additional support to some young people as older people have time to give in one to one situations with support and understanding, which is not always available in the home surroundings.

**Why Was It Intergenerational**
When older people were asked about their fear of crime they asked to be more involved with children and have more contact with them. By getting to know and understand them better it was hoped that this would challenge their fears and make them feel safer as they realised that many of their concerns were not based on fact.

**Project Description**
The social services prevention team in Portsmouth ran an intergenerational trial project for a year with a part time manager that was successful and needed further development. Its success raised the profile of intergenerational work in the city and also helped people to see the potential of intergenerational work to address a number of issues. As a result plans were drawn up to develop a better resourced, more coherent intergenerational programme for the city.

A bid was drafted to the single regeneration board to fund a project for 3 years, including appointing a full time intergenerational manager. The funding covered deprived parts of Portsmouth where there is a high proportion of single parent families. The bid was supported by the Social Services Prevention Team, Lifelong Learning & Age Concern Portsmouth.

The initial project was highly successful and funding was extended for a further 2 years finishing in March 2005.
What Worked and was achieved
- We were involved with 13 schools in the area
- We recruited older people 50+ to go into schools encouraging & listening to children read
- We ran computer classes for 6 older people working alongside 6 school students supported by the IT lead and assistant staff members funded by the project
- We recruited 3 Asian ‘Aunties’ who taught sewing to smaller children in primary schools
- With home economy students (loaned from Social Services) and with part-time sessional workers we promoted healthy eating in schools (promoting 5 fruit a day & making healthy snacks) Recipes were given, followed by a food promotion quiz, which everyone enjoyed.
- The project was very successful and well respected within the City.
- Partnership working with agencies i.e. community libraries, local museums D-Day museum, historic dockyards and the Mary Rose warship. This involved learning and sharing together about the warship using books, internet, photographs and artefacts to stimulate intergenerational learning. Older and younger people worked together to produce a PowerPoint presentation. We were awarded £400 from RAISE (www.renewal.net) and the project was advertised on their website.
- As part of celebrating Adult Learners Week in 2003 organised by HAIRNET, NIACE and City & Guilds, one of our older people was nominated as ‘Silver Surfer of the year 2003’ as a result of learning IT through our computer classes.

What Didn’t Work
- Communication with schools was very difficult. The lack of response from teachers i.e. letters, fax’s & emails made communication very time consuming.
- Collecting supporting evidence for returns for the Single Regeneration Budget fund was a nightmare and very stressful.
- Older people have health and family problems and although committed to the project some were only able to work in schools for a short period as a consequence.
- Getting numbers and statistics from volunteers was time consuming and difficult.
- At times we were let down by schools planning events (cancelled due to lack of communication)
- Computer clubs working with under 12’s (keen just to play games/internet) but we were more successful with secondary schools.

What Has Changed As a Result Of Project
- Many of the volunteers are still in contact with the children they worked with whilst at school by email, Christmas cards, following their careers.
- Local older people if placed in a nearby school know the local children. This has improved respect and understanding.
- Children were proud to introduce volunteers to their parent / guardian.
- More community involvement e.g. children growing vegetables and fruit on allotments and bringing to older members in day care.
• Age Concern elderly invited to Christmas concerts, harvest festivals & shows etc.
• To encourage reminiscence, students at secondary school prepared war time teas and served them at different venues, allowing us to collect over 100 wartime stories.
• Students designing t-shirts for staff doing ‘The Great South Run’.
• Although funding finished in March 2005 we still keep our intergenerational contacts and the project has left a real imprint in the city.
• We were awarded £18,100 from Home Front Recall (one of biggest bids in South East) in 2005 to develop our reminiscence work project, Hang Out Your Stories, and funded an intergenerational trip to the Imperial War Museum, London with Priory School. We met with 50 year 9 history students who asked about their wartime experiences, regarding their families. This was a very moving experience, which the school hopes to repeat.
• We collected 100 wartime stories are presently being published for local libraries, schools & museums for lifelong family learning.
• Older volunteers have made 4 story sacks (1 for visually impaired). These sacks contain a wartime story about what it was like to be a child in Portsmouth during WW2 & are accompanied by puppets/dolls, back drops & artefacts to make stories come ‘alive’.
• We organised a three day professional storyteller interactive event inviting parents, grandparents and great grandparent’s to listen to our stories. This was highly successful and loved by the schools.
• Our 4 completed story sacks have been presented to two community libraries and two to D-Day Museum/City Museum for future family learning.
• Our project ‘Hang out Your Stories’ was nominated for National Lottery award out of 200,000 projects and we made it to the top 4 projects in South East England.
• We were presented with a ‘Blue Plaque’ by one of the Directors from the National Lottery in January 2006 for running a highly successful community project.
• Many volunteers working with us have gone on to full-time employment.
• A number of our volunteers have been made school governors.

How Do You Know
• The success of the project is supported by the press accepting and publishing our articles.
• Involvement by Meridian TV, BBC, and Channel 4.
• Schools asking to be involved in the project
• Older people being recognised and appreciated in schools and the community as worthwhile individuals.
• Being approached by other organisations for partnerships (i.e. libraries, museums, local press etc).
• Being involved/working alongside other organisations (i.e. family learning & other charities).
What Did You Learn

- If you have a committed head teacher for a project they will support you and the project will be successful, if not, it will probably not get off the ground.
- Give yourself a set time for a response and let the school know that if they don’t respond within this time you will go elsewhere.
- Sharing should be two way.
- How can you help the school?
- Take photographs & learn how to do press releases.
- When doing bids build in a training budget and prepare for unseen circumstances i.e. maternity leave.
- Don’t be frightened to broadcast your success & invite local dignitaries.
- Protect your volunteers if media are interested in their story, they can be overpowering.
- Use your contacts.
- Never underestimate the latent skills you possess.
- Network, network, network.

What Would You Do Differently

- Know your own capacity and when to turn opportunities down to avoid stress on you and your volunteers.
- If you can, build administration support into your budget bid. Otherwise train a volunteer as administration is very time consuming.
- Gain as secure funding as possible as it can be very difficult to loose skilled and trained colleagues because of uncertainty.

Resources

A CD/film of our work was produced and further information is available on the website: www.ageconcernportsmouth.org.uk

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Bigger Picture Project

Key words: arts, citizenship, community development

The project was run in partnership with Tower Hamlets Mediation Service and Sir John Cass C of E Redcoat Secondary School. The funders were Ocean New Deal for Communities with Lucas-Tooth Trust, Arts Council England

Aims of organisation
Based in London Borough of Tower Hamlets since its formation in 1989, Magic Me is a specialist provider of intergenerational projects, using creative activities to bring together young and older people for mutual benefit, learning and enjoyment. The organisation works across the Borough, serving around 350 people each year in settings ranging from Pensioner’s Clubs to nursing homes, schools to cultural organisations. Each project has its own aims in relation to community development and individual participant’s personal and skills development.

Aims of project
The Bigger Picture Project’s broad aims were to enable young and older people in the Ocean area, Stepney:

- to gain greater awareness and understanding of one another’s concerns and points of view
- to discover mutual concerns and shared experiences and
- to examine issues and areas of disagreement and difference.

The objectives and proposed programme of work included:

Year 1 July 2003 - March 2004
- To undertake outreach and development work to develop local partnerships, recruit project artists, design and set up a practical project for years 2 and 3.
- To design and run a series of research workshops with secondary school pupils from Years 7 to 11, exploring young people’s attitudes to older people.

Year 2 April 2004 – March 2005
- To run 6 recruitment / preparation workshops, (2 for young people, 4 for older people,) developing project themes, recruiting long-term participants and preparing people to work with the other age group.
- To run an intergenerational project for young people aged 16 + and older people 55+, focusing on participants’ roles as active citizens, exploring their similarities and differences and issues of mutual concern. There were 20 project workshops x 2 hours, for a core mixed group in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and culture.
- To enable these participants to work together using theatre, video, creative writing and other art forms, to explore and express their opinions and concerns and to find ways of presenting these to a wider community audience and / or decision makers.
- To develop the Year 3 programme with a local Secondary School.
Year 3 April 2005 – March 2006

A series of 15 project workshops will be run for the core participants, during which they will be enabled:

- To run 6 workshops x 90 minutes each, for around 25 Secondary School pupils as part of their Citizenship Curriculum. The aim is to work with 6 classes within one Year, challenging a whole peer group on issues to do with older people and their own role as citizens.
- To write a report on the findings of the project.
- To hold a Final Review Day for participants to review the draft report, and consider ways forward for future work locally.
- To hold a seminar / training event to pass on the findings and outcomes of the project to other organisations and individuals working locally with young and older people and with intergenerational issues.

Why did you do it

Ocean New Deal for Communities (ONDC) is a ten year regeneration programme focused on the Ocean estate and surrounding area, in Stepney, East London. The ONDC area includes a population of around 6,500 people, and has an unusual demographic profile, compared to the UK as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young people aged under 16:</th>
<th>Ocean 32%</th>
<th>UK 20%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older people of retirement age:</td>
<td>Ocean 14%</td>
<td>UK 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowded housing:</td>
<td>Ocean 27%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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The ethnicity of residents is:
Bangladeshi 56%, White 26%, Black 5%, Other 13%

During consultation in 1998, prior to the establishment of the ONDC programme in 2001, local residents said that a key problem in the area was tension and lack of positive interaction between people of different generations, and of different cultures. This was particularly true where young and older people were from different ethnicities. 56% of those questioned said that they sometimes felt afraid when alone at home after dark. Increasing people’s sense of Ocean as a place where they felt safe and wanted to live, was therefore a priority when the ONDC programme started.

What did you want to achieve/change

During 2000 Magic Me was invited to join a consortium of six local organisations working in the Ocean area, to be part of the *Standing on Common Ground* project. The project, which ran from 2001 to 2003, aimed to build relationships between young and older residents, through undertaking practical activities together. Magic Me ran a series of creative projects including summer holiday projects for local pensioners and children, visual arts and poetry projects linking junior school pupils with older adults, and a drama project for secondary school pupils and older people. The work enabled groups that would not normally mix to participate in constructive and mutually supportive activities, with the aim of reducing the mistrust, fear and intolerance which local residents had described as existing between people of distant generations and of different cultures.
An appraisal of the achievements of *Standing on Common Ground* in early 2003, found that although there had been much progress, and participants were very positive about the activities to date, there was a need to engage more directly with young people in the 13 to 19 age group. Older people in particular felt threatened by the presence of groups of young people, particularly young men, around the area. 52% of people surveyed by Ocean NDC in 2003, thought that young people hanging around on the streets was a serious problem.

*The Bigger Picture Project* was designed by Magic Me, as a direct response to these issues, particularly the need to create opportunities for concerned individual young and older people to come together to deepen their understanding of one another’s situation.

**Project Description**

**Development phase**

Development work began in July 2003, when Project Manager and lead artist Jan Stirling began to develop more concrete plans from the broad project aims and to promote the project to potential partners. Jan and a second artist, Delroi Williams, who joined the project in October 2003, worked with local community and faith organisations, youth clubs, older people’s groups and local workers e.g. Ocean Neighbourhood Wardens to consider where best to site the project and how to build a support network for participants, who might have needs outside the remit of The Bigger Picture Project.

Other questions and issues included: how to accredit young people’s involvement in a way which aided future job or education applications and thus attracted participants; finding a comfortable, accessible venue suitable for a range of arts activities and available over nine months; recruiting a Young People’s and an Older People’s Support Worker, when it became clear that no partner could guarantee to provide the weekly practical support needed.

A creative workshop for partners and potential partners drew 9 people from 6 local organisations. All except one organisation went on contribute to the project. Tower Hamlets Mediation Service (THMS) and Sir John Cass Secondary School became the key partners. A staff member from THMS offered to contribute her skills and understanding to the group, and became a key part of the delivery team, who went on to co-facilitate many project sessions.

**Research workshops in Sir John Cass School**

In spring 2004 Jan and Delroi ran a series of 5 half-day workshops for a class of pupils in each of the Years 7 to 11 at Sir John Cass Secondary School, a total of 117 pupils. These used drama and discussion to research how young people felt about older people and the relationships they had with older relatives, neighbours and other older people. These workshops gave a useful insight into the different attitudes of younger and older ‘young people’ and also built on our growing relationship with the school.
Recruitment of participants
Through summer 2004 a series of 11 group meetings and 47 individual conversations were held to recruit older people to the project. 12 older people came to one of the two introductory sessions, to meet one another and prepare to work with young people. 10 became regular attendees. They included: three Bangladeshi men, one Pakistani man, two Bangladeshi women, three White women and one West Indian woman.

During the development phase a number of local youth providers had closed or experienced staff turnover, so were unable to partner Magic Me or recruit young people, as they had originally indicated. After much to-ing and fro-ing about eligibility for funding, Ocean NDC agreed in June that the project might recruit through schools in the Ocean area of benefit. Sir John Cass sixth form was the natural choice. It runs an NVQ 1 Health and Social Care course and is the only local mixed gender secondary school serving Ocean. Two introductory workshops invited students to sign up for The Bigger Picture. Seven young people did so, 2 men and 5 women, all Bangladeshi. All signed up as Millennium Volunteers, gaining credits for the hours they spent on the project.

Phase 1 October to December 2004
During this introductory phase the group met weekly for nine sessions for about two hours at a local church hall. The project team (the two artists, young and older people’s support workers, and Tower Hamlets Mediation Service worker) designed and ran a range of creative exercises. These enabled the group to get to know one another and begin to explore key themes and questions about what makes a good community. These included: Me and my community; Who is responsible for building communities?; What are the strengths and challenges of this community?; What needs to change in order for us to become a more creative and effective community?

A range of creative methods and approaches were used during Phase One including: life-story telling, fictional story-making, scene making and performance, tableaux and body sculpting, theatre games, drawing, making symbolic 3D sculptures using objects brought by participants, ‘painting’ with wool, and making decorative objects. Cultural and religious celebrations were incorporated into two sessions, one celebrating Eid and the other Christmas. These sessions featured such things as traditional food, prayer, sharing of stories related to the meaning of Eid and Christmas and the making of seasonal objects such as Christmas Tree decorations. Ongoing reflection and evaluation by participants enabled them to guide the design of future activities and be alert to what they were finding out.

Whilst all the participants spoke some English some of the Bengali elders found it hard to express complex or subtle ideas in English. A Bengali / English interpreter joined each session enabling communication between group members. Both English and Bengali older people reported that this was the first time that many of them had spoken to an elder from the other culture.
Phase 2  January to March 2005
During this phase three strands of work were achieved. They were: research about local issues and local organisations working with the community to provide services and solutions to problems; further consideration about what makes a community work; and the preparation and presentation of an event to share these findings with a local audience. The Spring term was very short, and there were just eight sessions, before the event on 9th March, followed by a review of how it had gone. Polly Laycock, puppeteer, artist and Magic Me freelancer, joined the creative team for this Phase, bringing further skills to the group.

Small intergenerational groups of three to seven participants made a series of visits to local community organisations and venues. They were: Connexions, Tower Hamlets Mediation Service, Arbour Youth Club run by St Dunstan’s Church, East London Mosque and St Hilda’s East Community Centre. Before their visits the groups considered and agreed a set of interview questions, to use to find out more about the host organisation, its role within the community, and the issues it worked with. Visits took place in addition to the usual Wednesday sessions. The visits were very popular with the participants, generating a lot of interest in community issues and helping relationships grow between individuals who ran interviews together.

The Wednesday sessions continued to focus on key questions and issues about how a community works. The group explored these questions by making artworks, telling stories, creating ‘sculpts’ or tableaux of moments in their lives, writing poetry and through discussion, which became part of the public presentation. Each individual also made choices about what roles they were prepared to take on at the event, for example speaking to an audience, or taking up a pose in a sculpt without words. These were noted and became a benchmark for participants’ progress and building confidence.

The group created an installation, to greet event audience members, a large zigzag screen, highly colourful and decorated with collages of photographs, material and ideas gathered on the community visits. The group invented games and activities for the audience to try: adding to a timeline of events in participants’ lives, interviewing a fellow audience member, feeling in a bowl of raw rice for objects representing the local community.

Around 60 people attended the event, at the local Half Moon Young People’s Theatre, including Oona King, then MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, family members, peers and local professionals. The audience enjoyed the installation, a presentation lasting about 45 minutes. Three of the community visit hosts spoke about the positive impact of the Bigger Picture group’s visits to their workplace.
Phase 3  April to July 2005
Phase 3 began with the group coming to terms with a number of changes and departures. Three group members chose to leave, two because of ill health. Delroi Williams had already told the group he would leave after Easter and Jan Stirling then fell seriously ill and was unable to continue to lead the project. Weekly sessions continued while Magic Me Director Susan Langford worked with the Support Workers and Jo Flanders of TH Mediation Service to support participants and agree a new way forward. As a result Surya Turner a storyteller, trainer and Magic Me freelance artist was recruited to lead the rest of the project.

The group’s work for this term was to design and run a 90 minute workshop on community themes for Year 9 students at Sir John Cass School. The original plan to run the workshop six times was changed to three, because of the changed circumstances already described above. The group chose to focus on drugs and their effects in the community, with the broader theme of: What does it take to be an active citizen and how can you be an active solver of community problems?

The workshop they devised and ran included group games, discussion, and role play. A scene enacted by members of the intergenerational group showing the impact of drug-taking on families, based on the experiences of two older group members, really held the young people’s attention and sparked excellent discussions and engagement. Older and younger group members then worked with small groups of pupils who chose a problem in their community and considered possible solutions.

The first workshop on May 18th, was followed by a review of how it had gone and preparing for the next one. This structure proved effective and was repeated. It enabled participants to rehearse, deliver, evaluate and revise the workshop based on feedback, and gave time for ongoing learning and personal coaching.

The three workshops were praised by the participating pupils and teachers. The intergenerational group were extremely proud of what they had achieved in overcoming their nervousness about leading workshops for this age group and in the positive response they had seen amongst the young people.

The participants met to evaluate the project as a whole and then held a celebration lunch to which everyone who had been involved was invited. 16 participants, almost everyone came. Over the summer the Support Workers met with each participant to evaluate the project and to enable individuals to consider how they might further use their new skills. Some participants came together again at the Magic Me AGM in late September.
What worked
The Bigger Picture was an ambitious project, set up in response to real needs and tensions in the local community. The project structure enabled a culturally diverse group of participants to consciously build their own small community, in order to understand how a community works and the challenges that are involved, and then to use and share their experience through giving a public presentation and through designing and leading workshops for local school students. The project met most of its aims, in spite of losing its leader in April.

The mix of art forms and activities used was broad enough to cater for a group of participants diverse in interests, experience and confidence level. Visual arts and practical making activities enabled participants to work together in non-verbal ways, which was important given the variety of languages spoken, and the hesitation of some participants about speaking in a large group. The public event and the schools workshop challenged participants to find their voices and to stretch themselves, to present to an audience, or facilitate a group activity.

The project attracted much interest and support from other local organisations and has sparked interest for further intergenerational work amongst the visit hosts and other agencies who attended the March event. The installation and photographs of the project have enabled us to promote the project’s achievements to a wider audience.

What didn’t work
Fluctuating attendance was an issue throughout the project and the Support Workers had to work hard to encourage individuals to be present and punctual and to help them sort out practical issues such as transport. The participants have complicated lives and family, work, study and other commitments got in the way of their full participation. Most people agreed that three terms was too long, particularly during the summer when academic pressure on the young people increased. For some of the older people health issues and arranging care or treatment around session times were a struggle.

The nature of this pilot project meant that it did not sit easily in one single teacher’s responsibilities at the school and it sometimes fell between different departments. The different phases were with different year groups, and met different curriculum needs, which meant liaising with a variety of teachers, and continuity was lost. An OFSTED Inspection in February added pressure on staff.

What has changed as a result of the project
The participant group, the school students, and the community organisations with which they worked all gained and changed from the project in a variety of ways. Changes noted included the following (Some are participants own words)
Participants: Attitudes.
The young people changed from initially seeing older people as a group who needed looking after, to knowing them as distinct individuals with many skills, strengths and talents. They also learned how to support and to accept those older people who were physically frailer or went off the point in discussions.

“I never realised that getting involved in activities and participating with older people could be such fun.”

The older people were keen to work with young people, and in a cross-cultural group. Their understanding of one another as older people grew, as did their insight into the realities and pressures of life for young people.

“I learned that the fears and concerns of the young people are the same as the older people and that they, the young, were able to understand and recognise the need for change and had good ideas.”

Group comments on their event programme:
“You can’t think of old without young and young without old.”

Participants: Skills and confidence
Participants measured their confidence and skills in relation to making a community event or running workshops at key points. They identified core skills needed e.g. communicating clearly or leading a group in an activity and everyone rated themselves as much improved on most of these. People, who said they would not speak in front of an audience in February, led a group activity for 30 teenagers in June.

“I never realised that I could have that much confidence to talk in front of a whole lot of people in the school, in front of Year 9 and in the Half Moon Theatre.”

In running the school workshop “I thought we all managed to keep an eye on each other and were ready to help each other.”

Year 9 students (when asked what they learned):
“I have understood that communities have people who depend on each other. Without one person in a community the whole thing breaks down and falls apart. When this happens more crime and bad stuff happens.”
“I think that the workshop is very good and it helps people become very confident and build their self-esteem. I would like to work in the workshop again. The workshop also helps me think about the problems that affect our community.”

“A community is where everyone works together. I liked the role plays from other groups.”

Community partners and hosts:
“It was the first time we were able to bring together groups of older users from different cultural backgrounds. They found common ground, as elders, in how they could relate their experiences and stories to a group that included young people.”
Older People’s Co-ordinator, St Hilda’s Community Centre
“It was wonderful to see young and older people at work, together, in this way. It gives me new inspiration about possibilities for working with these groups in the community and this centre.” Manager, Arbour Youth Centre.
How do you know
The following methods of gathering evidence of progress were used at different times during the project.

- Register of attendance and punctuality
- One to one discussions between participants and team members during the project and at the end
- Ongoing reflection in each session by participants
- Ongoing reflection by team after sessions and each Phase.
- Artworks made, the quotes and comments on the boards, the group event
- Workshop Exercises enabling participants to reflect e.g. what worked or not in the schools workshops / changes to make
- Continuum exercises: what do I feel confident to do? And now?
- Participants grading their own skills at the end of the project
- Question sheet / time line / to start an evaluation discussion
- Tape recording discussions when looking through photos etc.
- Students’ and teachers’ response to schools workshops.
- Final discussion with lead teacher for Citizenship at Sir John Cass School

What did you learn

Working with groups and working bilingually

- The importance of reflection sessions for young and older people separately to focus on their understanding of the other age group and how they can support one another.
- Interpretation and translation of materials enabled the older people to communicate directly and was a key to the good relationships within the group. However verbatim translation doubles the length of an activity and can feel slow and ponderous. Small group work and activities were faster and more spontaneous than group discussions.

Staff team

- The two Support Workers were key in recruiting, supporting and maintaining the involvement of Young and Older People and being advocates for their needs during team planning meetings.
- Practical support e.g. transport, refreshments, interpreter, support to negotiate with teachers or home helps, an arm to lean on, were vital to participation.
- Managing a team of this size is a time consuming and complex task in itself which needs to be included in project plans and budgets from the outset.

Working in partnership

- Discussing clear contracts with potential partners ensured that other organisations only committed what they could deliver and plans were changed accordingly early in the development.
- The skill and time commitment of Tower Hamlets Mediation Service was a real asset and both our organisations are keen to collaborate again.
- Being part of a large publicly funded regeneration programme means working within other people’s systems, decision making processes and administrative systems, which can be time consuming, and frustrating.
What would you do differently in the future
Evaluation of the project included looking at whether it should be repeated and if so what changes should be made. A future project would:

- Focus on designing and running a workshop for Year 9 students only, rather than accomplishing this and a public event. The workshops and the direct access they gave to reach large numbers of young people, though initially daunting, was felt to be the most important and most satisfying phase of the project by participants of all ages.

- Be two terms long. Three was hard for people to sustain and continuing into the summer exam period put too much pressure on the young people. A single focus for the project would mean this was enough time.

- Involve school staff more throughout its design and delivery. Now that the School and Magic Me have experience of the project model it will be easier to design a schedule and support systems that are realistic and which everyone can commit to. The School are keen to run a second project during 2006.

Resource Materials
- Full project report describing what happened, benefits to participants, evaluation and what Magic Me learned which is available via the website

Summary description and photo gallery on our website

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Building Bridges Project (Cardigan Centre)

Key words: conversation, older people, schools

The need for intergenerational work in North West Leeds stems from the breakdown in relationships between young and old, as Hobman (1993, p.101) describes "Our modern way of life seems designed to separate the generations rather than bring them together". Generations Together aims to bring people of different age groups together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities. These activities aim to promote greater understanding and respect between the generations and help to build cohesive communities.

Building Bridges is an intergenerational model of group Circle Time sessions. The Building Bridges Project is managed by Older Active People (OAP) in partnership with Brudenell School, with the main aim being to:

"Break down the barriers that exist between the generations, by engaging them in conversation exercises of mutual benefit."

It brings older and younger people together in a circle on equal footing, and engages them in conversation exercises. It is hoped that the conversations will facilitate a relationship between the younger people that are new to the area, and older people who studies show have lived in the area for over twenty years. As Godfrey (2004, p.218) points out "More than three-quarters of older people in the study have lived in the same locality for 20 years or more."

The intergenerational worker first became aware of Building Bridges Circle Time approach during a meeting of the Leeds Intergenerational Forum. At this meeting he was introduced to the community teacher of Whitkirk School. Whitkirk had been the first in Leeds to use the Building Bridges approach. After a brief discussion the intergenerational worker was invited to attend the Schools next Building Bridges session. The session was very well organised, and impressed the worker enough for him to decide he wanted to introduce Building Bridges into the Generations Together work plan.

After initial training the planning of each Building Bridges project takes two months. This includes meetings with the host school, Brudenell, and the older participants. During the meetings with Brudenell the dates and structure for the sessions are agreed. The groups meet over five sessions with each session lasting forty-minutes. Each group consists of ten children and five older people. The older people involved in the project are members of the Team Generations Together volunteer group. The group are trained in child protection, CRB checked and involved in other intergenerational work. After each session the intergenerational worker and a different participant complete an evaluation.
Evaluation is an integral part of every project, as Dixon (2000, p.47) explains, “In practise evaluation should be a fully integral part of the project”. OAP as an organisation encourages that its staff evaluate every project. The evaluation used for the Building Bridges Circle Time project is the same as used by other members of OAP’s staff. It looks at how the project:

- Met OAP’s proposed outcomes.
- What went well?
- What could have gone better?
- Recommended changes for next time?

The evaluation process also takes into account the views of volunteers, older participants, younger participants and other staff. The process gives the opportunity to improve upon work and share good practice with partner agencies. The evaluation itself will enable the project to grow and help OAP assess how Building Bridges is meeting its aims.

Assessing how Building Bridges has met its aims is a major problem. For most projects the aim is met when there is an end product and a completion certificate is signed and the project handed over. With Building bridges the aim is to “Break down the barriers that exist between the generations, by engaging them in conversation exercises to mutual benefit.” How do you assess whether you have met this aim? By tracking and evaluating the project you can keep records of numbers of people you have worked with, and improve the sessions. This information does not however indicate whether the aim has been met.

One possible way is by assessing both the young and older participants’ views of the other group. By doing this at the beginning and at the end of the project you could be given an idea of how successful the project was. Based on the evidence to date the project is a great success. The children engage with the older participants, and everybody feels equal. The sessions are also a nice way to introduce the children to the older people that will be working with them on other intergenerational projects. As described above the challenge is to develop evaluation tools and frameworks that enable the impact of the project to be assessed whilst not interfering with the process of engagement and exchange.

Reference


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Burbank Court and Brierton School Intergenerational Craft Project

Key Words: community, craft, schools, sheltered housing

Introduction
Anchor Trust Community Development Team work with individuals and groups in Hartlepool who are or cater for people aged 50+. The team encourage and support people to be involved in the community and develop opportunities in which the views of older people can be taken into account when services are planned.

The team have been involved in several Intergenerational Projects, including a creative writing, drama and music project, two fear of crime and safety projects undertaken with a local comprehensive school and a six week project with a local primary school comparing schooldays past and present.

A member of the Community Development Team attends the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and is a member of the Anti-Social Behaviour and Tolerance task group. The impetus for the craft project in the Burbank area of the town originated in the task group and was subsequently adopted by the Publicity and Reassurance Task Group.

The aim of the project was to promote understanding and tolerance between the older people living in a sheltered housing complex and the young people living in the area, helping to combat negative stereotyping. The idea was to create an enjoyable learning environment for the participants in which they could develop their existing skills, learn new skills and discover the individuals behind the stereotypical images that often exist in the views held by the two age groups.

Tenants of Burbank Court Sheltered Housing Scheme had expressed an interest in craft sessions. Brierton Community School, a comprehensive school which takes pupils from the area was approached to take part in the project and initially ten students also expressed an interest in becoming involved in a craft project.

Partners
Anchor Trust Community Development Team, Burbank Community Safety Initiative, Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency and Unite Mediation Service were involved in steering the project Funding was identified through the Burbank Safety Initiative.

It was decided that the project would run for six weeks, the sessions would be one and a half hours long and the activities would be driven by the participants’ interest in various crafts. An experienced craft tutor was engaged and facilitation was to be provided by those steering the project. It was decided to end the project with a display of their work and presentation of certificates to mark their involvement in the project.
Project
Initial preparation sessions were held for the students and the older people before bringing the group together under the guidance of the tutor. During these sessions positive and negative words and images were explored, facilitated by those steering the project. At least one member of the steering group was present on every occasion to support the tutor and promote the interaction between participants.

During the six weeks a variety of crafts were undertaken, beading, cross stitch, painting and card making. One session was devoted to flower arranging at the request of one of the students.

The group worked well together from the outset, even when participants were engaged in different crafts, conversation and co-operation were very much in evidence. Enthusiastic appreciation of each individual and their skills was openly expressed by both generations. The warm encouraging style of the tutor was very much appreciated by those taking part.

Whilst working conversation often turned to the problems that each generation faced and they were surprised to discover that transport, financial restraints and the fear of going out alone were issues for both age groups.

Although several members of each age group unfortunately did not finish the course due to holidays and other commitments, five older people and five students received their certificates. The final session ended with coffee and cakes, a display of all the work produced and an opportunity to say goodbye. A full discussion took place and evaluation forms were completed by those taking part (please see evaluation).

What worked
Using craft as the medium for bringing the two age groups together, they were equal partners in the learning process encouraging and helping each other. The opportunity to discuss the concerns and pressures of the two generations in a supportive environment was interesting to both age groups and led to a greater understanding between them.

What has changed
Whilst some of those taking part had very positive images of the other generation, having interests and concerns in common and discovering a shared sense of humour was a revelation to some members of the group. This became apparent in the evaluation discussions.

What we learned
Using creative mediums are excellent tools for Intergenerational work in promoting discussions in a very natural way.
What we would do differently

- Those taking part would have preferred longer session times
- Difficulties arose because of summer holidays a different time of year may have been preferable.
- It was very useful to have the facilities of the sheltered scheme available to use and this kept the project costs down.
- Those steering the group recognise that the students involved were all very committed to the project. It could have been more difficult with a more challenging group.

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Key words: arts, creative writing, dance, history, reminiscence.

Aims of project/organisation
The project aimed to bring together people from different generations to talk about and share their experience of their lives, with a particular focus on war, World War II and the Iraq war.

We were interested in finding out what people thought about war, what their experiences were and how it affected life now. We were also interested in bringing together old and young as a way of breaching some stereotypical notions that each group have about the other. The young people we worked with on the project are all from Youth Offending Services. The elders were there to talk to them about their lives. During the project we shared time and experiences, took young people to look at exhibitions in the museum, and involved a local archaeologist and his collection from WWII. Young people were encouraged to bring in photos from home and so on.

Why did you do it
We did it to encourage understanding between the young and old, and to give elders the opportunity to tell young people something about their lives. For young people to recognise that elders were part of history and that they had done things that effected our present, and for elders to share their experience of being young.
We also did it because we wanted to find out about war, how young people perceive war and what they feel about the war in Iraq. Older people's life experiences were considered and young people encouraged to ask questions about their war time experiences.

What did you want to achieve/change
Understanding between the two groups and a forum where the two group's ideas about one another were gently challenged.

Project Description

What did you do
We ran workshops in dance, creative writing and visual arts for young and old. We took young people to museums to look at life in the past and we considered war and its effect on life.

We visited the museum with young people, introducing them to the collections from the period, they looked at all sorts of pictures and objects, talking and writing about the objects, how it would to use them, a lot of the sessions enabled young people to try out objects, games, bottles, pens, lights etc. From these sessions young people visited the elders, the objects came too, elders talked about the objects, young people asked questions, and elders told their stories.
With the dance and creative writing sessions, we looked at dances from the period, as well as creating the chance for people to engage in dance; the theory behind the sessions was that movement would get memories moving. Poets ran writing sessions to gage ideas, gather stories etc. from young and old alike.

**What happened as a result**

Young people got the chance to learn about life in the past, via personal experiences and the use of objects/museum visits. History was in effect brought to life. Elders took up the role of storytellers and teachers, imparting information that was special to them, telling stories of their lives and creating an understanding of how life was in their past.

In turn elders got the chance to learn about life now, how young people feel about the Iraq war, what is important to young people and so on. There was a sense of understanding in the joint sessions, stereotypes were challenged, history bought to life and young people listened to and understood.

**What worked**

This project could have been very difficult. Our young people have attitude and were dismissive about older people prior to starting. Many did not have grandparents still living and felt that old people were almost non-entities. For their part the older people were afraid of this age group. What worked was the use of WWII to explore attitudes. The topic of war acted as the common ground. Young people were interested to hear about the experiences of the elders and changed their attitudes because of this.

**What didn’t work**

Getting elders out of their normal environment to visit the museums etc. as they did not want to go, and so we took the museum items to them.

**What has changed as a result of the project**

The attitudes for the young and old to each other, a greater understanding of war and its impact and, for the young people, a better understanding of the role their elders had in shaping today’s society.

**How do you know**

Feedback from both sets of participants; feedback was via questionnaire and interview, both sets of people were asked what they thought, what if anything they had got out of it.

**What did you learn**

That intergenerational work is extremely valuable. That it is an excellent way of getting young people interested. That young people can respect elders if given the right sort of opportunity to do so.

The other outcome was that there was some understanding of the young from elders, the group were the type of young people that in the main elders said they would have been wary of if they passed them in the street. The time together meant that elders saw another side of young people, one of the young people was very upset by the lack of things that elders had, this took everyone by surprise.
What would you do differently in the future
We would make all the sessions intergenerational and give young and old alike more of a say in the shape of the project as a whole. As it was around half of the sessions were mixed and half not, there were twenty five sessions in all.

Resource Materials
Forthcoming - a book of stories and poems from young and old alike and a film which shows young people interviewing elders.

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Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company

Key words: dance, family

Aim
Crossover aims to offer dance performances and workshops by and for intergenerational audiences aged 0 to 100 that are physically demanding, artistically challenging, socially inclusive and fun. We promote the idea that people of different generations can find a common language through dance.

Introduction
Formed by Cecilia Macfarlane¹ in January 2003 as a one-off project, Crossover involved eight unrelated dancers then aged 11 to 60 in developing a dance performance exploring how we understand the world from the perspective of different ages. Our first piece, ‘Future Remembered, Past Imagined’ was such a success that we decided to continue and have since created five different dance projects. The youngest workshop participant to date was 6 months and the oldest was 94. The company was formally constituted in September 2005 and we have performed in theatres, community centres, art galleries, day care centres, an abbey, a university, a church, a hospital, a dance college and a botanic garden.

Background
Crossover is the result of a natural evolution of a dance journey building on 30 years experience of working with dancers of all ages. Since coming to Oxford in 1986 as an independent dance artist, Cecilia Macfarlane’s work in the community has evolved organically. She started two creative contemporary dance classes for children and this led to the creation of Oxford Youth Dance, which offers children and young people of all ages the opportunity to create and perform their own work under the direction of professional dance artists.

In 1992 DugOut Adult Community Dance Company was formed, offering parents and other adults the opportunity to discover and celebrate the dancer in them. This led naturally to projects in which parents and their children could dance together. In 1997-8 Cecilia created and directed ‘That’s What Parents Were Created For’, two projects for fathers and their sons and mothers and their daughters, performed at Pegasus Theatre in Oxford and at the Richard Attenborough Centre in Leicester. Over the last nine years, Cecilia has developed intergenerational dance in many different settings. Crossover grew out of this work.

The Company
Cecilia Macfarlane is a community dance artist and senior lecturer in performing arts at Coventry University. She leads the company but is also one of the eight performers; she was 54 when the company was formed. The other members of the company have all been taught by Cecilia in her child, youth or adult classes. Tom English (11), Bee Evans (11), Eluned Charnley (18) and Roly Carline (21) have been dancing with Cecilia since they were toddlers and have all developed their own

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¹ Cecilia Macfarlane is an independent dance artist, teacher and nationally renowned facilitator of community dance. For more information contact her on 01865 515576/07968073763 ceciliamacfarlane@talk21.com

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particular dance interests (ballet, jazz, contemporary and break dancing). Nadine Barber (36) was a member of Cecilia’s adult class (DugOut) and, when she moved away and had a baby, was replaced by Vicky Fisher (33) who was also a member of DugOut and teaching dance to national diploma and A level at Oxford and Cherwell Valley College. Jeremy Spafford (42) discovered dance through the enthusiasm of his children and after participating in Cecilia’s first ‘fathers and sons’ workshop in 1997. Alan Kenny (60) was leading the disability dance project for Bucks Dance and was a prominent dance and disability activist.

The first project
With Crossover, Cecilia has been able to work with a small group of dancers of widely different ages for a significant and regular amount of time. She wanted to look at the stereotyping that goes with specific ages and particularly research the movement that can accompany these conventions. The eight dancers (four female, four male) rehearsed and performed together for nine months, celebrating their differences and unexpected similarities. They allowed themselves time to listen, to grow, to savour moments, to travel forwards and backwards in their memories and imaginations. The work was developed in four stages, each leading to a work-in-progress performance.

The first stage, presented in Oxford, was based on solo work focussing on what it was like for us to be the age we were. We started by finding a series of moves that represented how we felt being our age. We then developed these into short sequences that involved other members of the company but were still clearly eight autobiographical pieces. They were connected by transition sections involving different combinations of the company and a central moment when we all weaved between each other. This was a tentative start but important in ensuring that we were each taking responsibility for sharing something of ourselves: it meant finding the courage to share our insecurities (shyness, unfitness, confusion) as well as our strengths (energy, confidence, wisdom).

The second stage was performed in Swindon and was structured round two quartets: one male and one female. This process brought home the similarity across the generations and allowed some exploration of gender specific preoccupations around sexuality, appearance and our relationship to work and families.

The third stage was built on four duets – each with a male and female dancer close in age – and was performed in Coventry. The 11 year olds’ duet had something of the playground about it, the 20 year olds’ was infused with the warmth of young lovers, the 30/40 year olds’ had a fiery, over-stretched quarrelsome tone and the 50/60 year olds’ generated acceptance, appreciation and a return to playfulness.

It is important to notice that in none of these stages was the choreography predetermined. We always began by finding a series of moves that somehow expressed our response to questions such as ‘What is it like to be you at your age?’ or ‘What can you remember of being you at that age?’ or ‘How do you think you will be at that age?’ These moves would then be shared and combined with others to create the duets, quartets or series of solos. We would all comment on and advise on each other’s creations and Cecilia or Rosemary Lee (our occasional outside eye)
might add some directorial suggestions but the material was always owned by us as dancers.

Early on, one of the company described the project as ‘...a wonderful experience giving me an insight into all the oppression of ageism and how we struggle to be our real selves.’

The company has never set out to consciously expose ageism. We have arrived at that exposure through celebrating and challenging each other and then realising how rare it is to do that across generations. Later in the process, the same dancer wrote that ‘...it looks like ageism for all generations is similar but laid on us in slightly different ways...All very confusing that’s why we don’t realise we are doing it.’ Other members of the company also noticed that behind the fun and laughter, we were discovering something very significant. One wrote:

'It seems to me that we have created the possibility of digging really deep and I can’t wait to get on with it!'

Over the course of nine months, a following of friends and relatives were beginning to feel involved in the process simply by watching. Many have written their appreciation using very emotional language such as ‘real’, ‘honest’, ‘moving’, ‘wow’, ‘left me in tears’ and ‘amazing’. Somehow the emotional intensity of intergenerational work on stage transferred to the intergenerational audiences and there was a shared sense of how we could be with each other.

‘dancers – all shapes, sizes, ages – growing, flourishing, moving
watchers – all shapes, sizes, ages – glowing, wondering, moved
milestones – strong, lithe, agile boys – muddling, struggling, achieving
performers – connected, earthed, engaging, enjoying, a joy to watch
…and it’s still only February 2003!’

‘Another extraordinary weekend that has touched all of us in extraordinary ways – wonderfully and warmly – right across the community. It’s left me full with lots of stuff but my over-riding feeling is that it makes me smile – just so rich in the possibilities it reflects.’

The final stage brought all the elements together with a specially commissioned score by Ilona Sekacz who had worked alongside the dancers throughout the project and design by Carole Waller; it was premiered at Pegasus Theatre, Oxford², in September 2003. As the original solos from Stage One were revisited after nine months to be incorporated into the final piece, several members of the company wanted to re-work them because we felt we had changed (less shy, less confused). This was partly because young people change quickly and nine months is a long time for an 11-year-old but also because the process of developing the dance had changed how we felt about ourselves (the 42 year old was still unfit but felt more bold

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² Pegasus Theatre has supported Crossover from the outset with funding, rehearsal space, performance promotion and organisational guidance as part of its policy to promote intergenerational work and emerging artists. For more information go to www.pegasustheatre.org.uk

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about describing himself as a dancer). The company then toured venues in England for the next nine months including Chipping Norton Theatre, Coventry University, Warwick Arts Centre, Laban (London) and the Nuffield Hospital in Oxford returning to Pegasus Theatre in June 2004 for a final performance which presented the same piece with more confidence, ownership, depth and humour. ‘Future Remembered, Past Imagined’ was supported by Arts Council England and Pegasus Theatre, Oxford.

Further work
Cecilia Macfarlane’s original motivation was to have the luxury of working with a range of committed dancers to go beyond what is possible in a weekend intergenerational dance workshop to form a company ethos. She also wanted to have the opportunity to dance herself as part of the company. The rest of the group were not clear at first what it was that we were being asked to join and saw it primarily as an opportunity to learn more from Cecilia and have some fun. Indeed we were all surprised to discover that we were to be paid for our work. Over time, the work has deepened in its significance for all those taking part and all the company are committed to developing it further.

Crossover has continued to create work and teach workshops. We performed a new piece in an Art Gallery in Birmingham and also performed small duets in Witney and Chipping Norton as part of a family play project.

In 2005, we ran workshops for dancers aged 75 to 95 which culminated in a performance entitled ‘Dig Where You Stand’ which toured Pegasus Theatre and two day care centres in West Oxfordshire. One of the more poignant moments in the project was when an eighty year old man, who joined the company for this performance and who had never danced or performed on stage before, choreographed a whole sequence based on the frustration of caring for his dying wife for 10 years. The piece included duets between teenagers and elderly dancers and was supported by West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

The company went on to perform five different dances inspired by plant-based themes once a month for five months as part of the Plant Power Festival at The Botanic Garden, commissioned by The University of Oxford. Devising and performing a dance in a single day (outside in all weathers) on themes as diverse as ‘shelter’ and ‘cure’ allowed the company to discover a playfulness and sense of humour which is sometimes missing from contemporary dance. We also discovered a confidence and trust in each other which allowed us to work in different combinations. When we formed, we tended to work in relatively safe groupings (linked by gender or age); now we began to work more comfortably across those boundaries.

Our latest project was a site-specific piece commissioned by the Dorchester Festival and performed in Dorchester Abbey in September 2005. Entitled ‘Triptych’, it was performed with live music composed by Emily Levy and played to full houses and great acclaim. In developing this dance, Crossover produced what some followers of the company described as our best work yet. Individual dance skills had improved, the confidence in and of the group had deepened and the artistic vision had become more sophisticated. For part of the dance, the group divided by age for the first time:
a quintet by the younger, fitter, more lithe dancers and a trio by the older, less supple ones. This split had previously been avoided because it accentuated a difference that the group had wanted to diminish in order to undermine the view that you have to be agile to be a dancer. Now, it seems that the group has matured to the point that it is able to celebrate the beauty of technically skilled, physically athletic young dancers without any of its members valuing it over the comic dance of the three exhausted uncoordinated clowns or the emotional intensity of a single dancer in a wheelchair beginning a solo by dancing with his eyes.

In 2006, the company plans to adapt ‘Triptych’ to other settings and build on its work with older dancers in a project, ‘Sage’, which is being developed in partnership with Ithaca (a charity promoting access to creativity for people with physical, learning and mental health difficulties), Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Company and the NHS Falls Prevention Service. It is supported by Arts Council England and will use dance to explore issues around ageing with eight people over 75 and Crossover dancers of all ages. We will be creating a new dance based on the Fairground in partnership with musicians from Restless Blue which will be premiered in the summer of 2006. We have also recruited two new six-year-old members to the company as our youngest members are now 14 and we value the different perspectives and energy that younger children can bring.

**Company or Family?**

Given the gender and age breakdown of the group it is tempting to see it as a kind of family. Images created by the dancers have parental, sisterly, fraternal and grandparental resonance; indeed Cecilia used family references in the early days to set choreographic tasks. These soon came to feel distracting and unhelpful. Cecilia had demonstrated in earlier work how familial relationships could be powerfully explored through dance but this was different: it was the fact that the dancers were not related that made the experience extraordinary. As the project progressed, it became more and more obvious that intimacy across generations outside of the family is rare and, to some extent, taboo. Indeed, although a deep affection developed between the dancers, it has remained relatively difficult (and to some extent undesirable) to try and replicate this outside the dance studio. A 14 year old is unlikely to want to invite a 40 year old to their birthday party and is unlikely to want to join an adult dinner party (and vice versa) and yet, within the safety of the group, there can be physical and emotional closeness. This is not a family: it is a group of friends of different ages respectful of (and often amused by) that difference.

**Equity**

The group has formed well partly because we share a common dance language and individual enthusiasm for experimentation. The strength of the group also lies in equity. Although the company was created by Cecilia and remains, to this day, dependent upon her energy, artistic vision, leadership and contacts, it is also fundamentally democratic. All members get paid the same and all members have an equal say in how the company develops, what themes the company explores and how the artistic vision is realised. Much of the coordination of the company falls to two of the older members (including Cecilia, of course) but the big decisions are taken collectively. Business decisions are made round a dinner table at someone’s home or during a weekend away together in the country at a borrowed house. Everyone makes sure they get there (which means travelling from Brighton, Oxford,
Marlow and Birmingham) and the unspoken determination of the group not to replicate school and work based culture means that all business meetings include good food (prepared together) and games or dancing. Artistic decisions are taken collectively in the studio;

Cecilia will occasionally assert her right to direct or organise when short timescales make it necessary but there is a genuine sense of shared ownership of the process. This is achieved through difference rather than similarity. Each member of the company is vital, not just for what they bring in terms of their personal skills and insights but, crucially, in terms of what they represent: there is only one man in his twenties so nobody else can gainsay his perspective as a man in his twenties. This gives each of us an unchallengeable and equal function. In addition, as the group has developed, company members have understood each other’s strengths and weaknesses (some of which are to do with age and reflect both reality and stereotypes). Some of us can drive and tend to deal with transport and usually have more cash and can pay for things up front. Some can be better at thinking ahead, writing a case study for an intergenerational guide, planning future projects and coming up with ways of attracting funds. Others often wait to be told what the next idea for a project is and to be given instructions about where they need to be and when but will produce home made cake at just the right moment.

Once in the dance studio the dynamic can shift dramatically. Different members come to the fore with ideas for games and warm-ups and then produce ideas for choreography, music and design. Others will stay quiet but then take charge when it is time to learn a complex sequence – patiently helping the older, creakier members find something approaching unison. Sometimes, we have found ourselves taking on tasks we have never done before: one member organised an entire project involving a specially created dance for an art gallery without any previous experience of event organisation; another created a duet with someone seventy years older than them and then had to perform it without their partner (who was in hospital) demonstrating very effectively where his partner was as he danced with the space she had occupied and demonstrating her impact on his movement.

**Impact**

Crossover has had an enormous impact on the members of the company. It has been artistically and physically stretching but, most of all, has taken the individuals in the group on an emotional journey into new kinds of relationships based on celebrating difference rather than seeking the comfort of similarity. In the rest of our lives, we live the traditional age-stratified lives that have become the norm but, when together, all those expectations and taboos fall away and deep friendships are able to blossom between people of different generations. Despite the seductions and attractions of new possibilities opening up, especially for the younger members, all remain committed to continuing to develop the work and are now planning to attract funding to secure the work of the company into the future.

The impact on followers of the company has been significant, especially for the parents and other relatives of the dancers. Others watching the performances (and occasionally joining in) have also commented that Crossover performances are accessible because they can see themselves reflected on the stage regardless of age, shape or disability. They also see the possibility of intimacy, challenge, respect
and irreverence between young and old, disabled and non-disabled, male and female.

‘I always feel a bit illiterate or as if I am listening to a foreign language when I watch dance but I loved the energy and humour of your piece and could see how intensely you had worked together.’

‘I saw Crossover alongside two other dance performances. I haven’t seen live dance before…and of the other two performances I would say they were kind of what I expected – athletic young people doing interesting energetic things with their bodies. Whilst I enjoyed those performances I wasn’t especially moved and wouldn’t rush back to see dance of that type. With Crossover however, the interest/energy was still there, but not just of the youthful athletic type – the nature of the troupe meant that the expression seemed far more expansive – due to the fact that your troupe contains people of a variety of ages and different abilities. It made the other performances seem limited – as if they were musical instruments with less notes available, whereas Crossover expresses a more diverse range of humanity and human experience. I found that very beautiful, real and inspiring. There must be so much more you can do with such a lovely set of notes like that!’

‘I found the whole evening truly inspiring…Your wonderful piece showed how neither age nor disability is a barrier to creating and performing an interesting and thought provoking and well balanced piece. I say balanced because everyone was able to show their true talents and for those talents to be used sensitively without patronising.’

‘I found it so uplifting – it took us through emotions and feelings, eliciting a range of positive responses. In fact I was so moved with the young girl and her declaration that she would be dancing as an old lady and how she was caught/ held/ supported/ sustained/ uplifted by her dance colleagues that I found tears in my eyes! I don’t find dance easy to get close to – shape and movement doesn’t necessarily work for me – but with Crossover’s performance I really didn’t want it to end; it spoke to me and had such resonance. It spoke to me of working together, of finding areas that are of common interest and making things collectively and how there is so much strength and joy in this; this is important and vital to us as human beings.’

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Generations United Charitable Concert December 2005,
Birmingham Cathedral Church of St Philip

Key Words: arts, music, creative writing, partnership

Aims of Project/organisation
1. To acquire funding for arts initiatives, in particular inter-generational work.
2. To offer mutual support and reduce isolation amongst volunteer leaders, part-time workers working with older people, elderly, and disabled adults.
3. To share good practice within the Network and surrounding areas.
4. A constituted network of older people’s groups in Selly Oak, Edgbaston & Northfield Districts, South Birmingham.

Why did we do it
Community Development Workers, and volunteer leaders were invited to attend a meeting to discuss the development of a network in 2001 and it has ‘blossomed’ since then into an effective partnership between statutory services and the voluntary sector.

What did we want to achieve/change
Bring older people together, bring leaders working in a locality together who may not otherwise have met and to break down barriers between young and older people. People with disabilities are stereotyped, and through this Network we could ‘challenge’ people’s perceptions.

The Project has organised inter-generational storytelling exchanges, dance exchanges, volunteer leader events, intergenerational variety shows, ‘stomp workshops’ (using recycled materials), and more recently an Intergenerational Concert in aid of charity at Birmingham Cathedral Church of St Philip on 6.12.05.

Project Description
The ‘Generations United’ Charitable Concert was organised on the 6th December 2005 involving 3 primary schools, a secondary school, a gospel choir, classical singer, jazz player, guitar player, French horn, tabla and dhol, students, an older people’s group and poetry readers came together to raise funds for the (former) Bishop of Birmingham’s appeal for Malawi.

An older people’s group worked in a junior & infant school the preceding month, making recycled instruments, creating a story and learning to recite a poem to perform at the Concert. The children and adults recited the poem ‘off by heart’ in the first part of the concert and then in the second part performed with the musical instruments.

Children from another school performed guitar, viola and a soloist on the Tenor Horn. The third school performed with the guitarist & poet. Two young people (from a secondary school) stepped in at the last moment to compére (one had been excluded!) but they were both excellent.
The oldest person at the concert was 88, the Jazz player. The Concert took place in the presence of the Lord Mayor’s deputy. It was also attended by the Canon Peter Howell Jones who is trying to establish in Birmingham a civil link with Malawi, there is a 40 year relationship between the Diocese & Malawi.

We raised over £700 towards the building of a community centre in Malawi. The Concert over ran its time despite planning! But it was a phenomenal success in raising children & young people’s awareness about different types of music, bringing communities together from across South Birmingham, children and older people performing simultaneously, raising awareness about ‘Making Poverty History’ campaign, and how life is so different for children in Malawi.

Relationships with schools have been further established, and partnership working has taken place, children have worked with older adults in a positive environment that has benefited both ages. Verbal & written feedback has been inspiring:

'It was a real pleasure and honour to be part of the event' 'Truly inspirational and great experience for all the young participants' - Pritam Singh

'I thought the event was excellent & extremely enjoyable. The performances were great. I'm delighted so much money was raised for the MalawiAppeal' - Ruth Stockdale, Oxfam, Make Poverty History Campaign.

'I really enjoyed the multicultural and intergenerational involvement' - member of the audience

'Very high standards of performance from children’ - member of the audience

'Worthwhile project - 10 out of 10 score' - member of the audience

'I really liked the jazz' - six year old pupil

The project supports the following policies:

- 'Every Child Matters' - 'enjoy & achieve' 'make a positive contribution' - Government policy
- Birmingham City Council’s separate District Community Plans in Selly Oak/Hall Green and Edgbaston & Northfield Districts including for example, 'promoting community cohesion, increasing activities for children and young people, promoting neighbourliness, raising environmental awareness'
- Bournville Village Trust Youth Strategy

We learnt that by working in partnership you can achieve something that you thought was impossible, individuals inspire you with their wishes, teachers are really flexible, adoptive and creative, older people get a lot of pleasure working with children, top performing artists have shown their commitment to raising funds for charity, bringing people together from across different communities is so important. We did not expect to raise a lot of funds with selling tickets at £1.00/£2.00 but the audience were so supportive, people are generous.
The Network will continue to seek funding for other intergenerational projects. We have no dedicated worker for the Network, all members of the Network would be pleased to talk to interested parties about previous projects undertaken, a short report summarising the previous work is available from one of the organisers:

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A CD rom/video of the Concert will be available.

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‘Hear Me!’ 2001 – 2004, Arts and Reminiscence Project

Key words: arts, dance, reminiscence, research, wellbeing

Why did we do it and what did we want to achieve
Since 1996 Music and Dance Education (MaDE) has been developing its intergenerational arts and reminiscence work across Cornwall. There has been a lack of large scale funding opportunities to complete this sort of work and when Kerrier Healthy Living Centre (KHLC) was being established in 2000 MaDE was invited to tender a project. There were only two projects within KHLC, which were aimed at older people and ‘Hear Me!’ was one of them. It enabled MaDE to strategically develop this work across a geographical area of Cornwall and it enabled KHLC to reach key milestones with older people within its remit.

MaDE was keen to carry out action research where the arts would be used to stimulate activity with older people with memory problems in particular. The artists were also keen to look at the social benefits young people would gain by working with older people. Previous work by MaDE with older people had indicated that working ‘intergenerationally’ has a number of very positive outcomes:

- Older people are more inclined to participate if they feel they are contributing to the learning of younger people.
- Previous skills often come to the foreground when older people are invited to work with younger people.
- Older people feel more invigorated when supported by younger people in activities.
- Younger people gain valuable insights into the worlds of older people where they begin to value past memories and experiences.
- Young and old are less likely to make assumptions about each other when they have worked co-operatively.

To assess the impact of this action research approach three evaluation aims were agreed between KHLC and MaDE:

1. To evaluate the impact of arts and reminiscence work on older people and particularly participants with dementia related issues.
2. To monitor the relationships and communication between the younger people and the older people as they interacted in the art forms.
3. To assess the role of carers in the process

In relation to the above aims three objectives were agreed:

To monitor and document:

1. The responses of the older participants
2. The interaction between the young and the old
3. The involvement of the carers in the settings

As a result of the agreed aims and objectives some targets were set:
To amass evidence in the form of:
1. Participating numbers
2. Written comments / reports / wellbeing indicators
3. Video and / or audio recordings of parts of the process
4. Photographic evidence
5. Facilitator notebooks

**What did MaDE want to achieve / change**
MaDE was seeking to:
- Alter perceptions and question ‘why’ and ‘how’ fear and biases emerge.
- Find a special ‘space’ where generations could come together for a short time and experience something positive together.
- Create creative frameworks for regular carers to sustain.
- To challenge the perceived ‘inactivity’ of older people in care settings.

**Why was it intergenerational**
The core focus of the project was upon the relationships between young and older people. It was central to the ‘action research’ and an intrinsic part of the project.

**Project description:**

**What did we do**
MaDE led nine small projects across Kerrier throughout the three year period. Each project entailed:
- Pre-project meetings with potential partners to establish the intergenerational groups (e.g. primary school and residential care home, FE students and residents associations, social services clients and younger musicians and dancers)
- Workshops with younger people exploring old age, dementia and memory failure.
- Workshops with young people exploring art forms and their potential.
- Workshops with older people exploring their interests and consulting with them about younger people.
- Workshops with older people exploring art forms and their potential.
- Intergenerational workshops where selected themes were explored in and through the arts and reminiscence based activities were introduced.
- Exhibitions of work and performances involving all participants.
- The collation of evidence through photographs, video footage, comment books, and the use of the Bradford Wellbeing Indicators.

**What happened as a result**
Each of the nine projects took on a life of its own depending upon the interests of the participants and the carers. The projects ranged from; ‘Keep Young and Beautiful’ - a rejuvenating music and movement project with a residents association and FE students; ‘Side by Side’ - a collaborative arts project celebrating the Golden Jubilee and bringing together a primary school with a residential care home; and ‘The Music Group’ - where social services clients, accompanied by occupational therapists, would meet with music and dance artists and recreate music and dance from many eras or create their own works for recording.
Some important conclusions:
- The impact of the arts with older people was significant.
- Collaborative artwork was extremely powerful and engaged people at different levels.
- The intergenerational aspect played a significant part in the feeling of wellbeing in the older people.
- Settings with effective support mechanisms (family, carers and teachers) were essential in the successful management of the intergenerational aspects.
- Shared planning and evaluation enabled greater understanding and commitment.

Some identified weaknesses were:
- Pressure on time in settings was considerable.
- Where individuals and/or settings had ‘guided’ outcomes the processes were less exciting and less ‘authentic’.
- Roles and responsibilities were not always negotiated very carefully from the outset.
- Lead-in and setting up time was crucial if projects were to succeed.

What has changed as a result of the project
- MaDE is now firmly committed to the development of ‘effective’ intergenerational practice across all generations from ‘womb to tomb’.
- Individuals and settings who have been involved in the ‘Hear Me!’ project are still extremely interested in developing this sort of work.
- A vast number of relationships between individuals and settings have emerged and are ongoing.
- MaDE now has a bank of artists experienced in this field of work.

How do you know
- The evidence MaDE has collated throughout the three years has been analysed and three evaluation reports have been written, which are being used to disseminate the work and findings.
- Colleagues in settings have supported further applications for funding for developmental projects.
- Individuals are still in touch as a result of their participation.
- MaDE is gaining a reputation for intergenerational arts and reminiscence work.

What did we learn
- A local/regional infrastructure aimed at intergenerational work would enable strategic development.
- Advocacy is critical in raising the profile of this valuable area of work.
- Arts and health organisations need to put intergenerational practice on their agendas in order to affect future policy, practice and funding.
- Longitudinal research would provide organisations with ‘hard’ evidence to secure future funding and opportunities.
- MaDE would like to develop an intergenerational arts training and research centre here in Cornwall, where the older population is ever increasing.
As a result of this project MaDE would seek to carry out the following in future projects:

- Devise an ‘action research’ model, which would provide both qualitative and quantitative data and refer to medical models as appropriate. MaDE would need to seek professional medical advice in this area.
- Create a training model aimed at family, carers and staff to enable them to stay ‘in tune and in step’ as the project unfolds.
- Provide a ‘setting up / lead in’ resource, which will effectively take all the partners in the project through a negotiation process covering issues such as; roles and responsibilities, planning evaluation, practical matters, confidentiality, working intergenerationally etc…
- Allow sufficient time to set the project up and manage it effectively!

Resource Materials
MaDE has three evaluation reports relating to each of the three years of the project which are not currently available on line. Contact MaDE for further information.

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Lancashire World War II Intergenerational Reminiscence Project

Key Words: schools, reminiscence, history, community

Introduction
This was our second intergenerational reminiscence project. Our first was a joint venture with the Lancashire Museums Service at St Stephen’s Primary School, exploring the textile industry in Burnley with the help of 6 volunteers. As this was primarily a Museum’s Service initiative and part of a much bigger project, we have not yet been involved in a formal evaluation, but informally we have noted lessons learnt from this and tried to include these in our planning for the Springfield School project.

Background to project proposal

Topic
During 2005 there has been a great deal of activity and publicity about World War II because it is the 60th anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day. In particular the BBC has launched its ‘People’s War’ website and alongside this, local support has been made available.

World War II is also an element of the Primary School National Curriculum. The topic was likely to be of interest to people aged over 70, an age range to which Trans Age Action holds limited appeal as they feel the regular volunteering commitment would be too demanding for them.

School
Springfield Primary School had just settled in to its new Burnley Wood site, and had recently had a very positive Ofsted inspection and so was relatively free from major conflicting commitments. The school is also experiencing recruitment problems because of demolition of housing in the neighbourhood. It is trying to raise its profile and establish community links and consequently the head teacher welcomed the idea. Trans Age Action had already established a good working relationship with the school.

Group
We needed to work with children for whom the topic was relevant, and who were mature enough to be interested.

The Year 5 group were not involved in SATs and so were able to cope with some disruption of their normal routine.

Partners
Besides the older people and the school, we also attracted the interest of Mike Townend, Keeper of History at Towneley Hall. He was in the process of setting up a touring exhibition for November 2005, ‘Their Past – Your Future’ and had, seen collecting memorabilia and stories from local veterans to run alongside this. Mike was very keen to work with local schools.
The BBC in the North West, and Radio Lancashire in particular, were very interested in supporting us, with a view to obtaining local contributions to the People’s War website. They offered the use of a mobile unit to record stories, or a trip to their Blackburn base, which has had a World War II theme all Spring and Summer. In the event neither offer could be taken up because of time constraints.

**Recruitment of volunteers**
The main focus of recruitment was the Home Front. This was because the majority of people still alive and active in the target age range were likely to be women. Also, those men who had been involved in fighting abroad were considered to be less likely to be willing to talk openly about their experiences.

We issued a press release and had publicity in the Burnley Express and on local radio. We also circulated posters and fliers to churches and community venues in the area around the school. Community groups and community activists were contacted, as were the Royal British Legion and various working men’s clubs, retirement groups and social clubs. Local housing associations circulated fliers and wrote to potentially interested residents. Accent Housing not only found us three volunteers but paid for their transport to and from various meetings. Mike Townend at Towneley Hall wrote to several of his contacts on our behalf. Age Concern Lancashire’s Burnley Insurance Office staff also mentioned the project to any potentially interested clients.

**Outcome**
We recruited eighteen volunteers, most of whom were free to attend all the meetings. Surprisingly, we attracted 7 men, though only one had seen active service abroad. With one much younger exception the volunteer ages ranged from 68 to 91 several already knew each other so offered peer support to attend the first meeting.

Some other respondents did not want to participate directly in the reminiscence sessions but contributed photos, books and other memorabilia, which were later donated to Mike Townend’s collection.

**Project Structure**

**Initial meeting of volunteers**

**Purpose:**
- To enable volunteers to meet each other and to interact. This was encourage them to come along to further sessions because of the social contact, as well as offering mutual support to any less confident volunteers.
- To trigger memories via a range of memorabilia.
- To give an overview of the project – what’s going to happen, when and where.
- To get to know individual volunteer’s backgrounds so that they could be matched appropriately with interested children.
- To explore attitudes to children and concerns about working with them.
- To address any transport or mobility problems.
Outcome
The volunteers enjoyed the meeting, especially meeting up with old acquaintances and sharing common memories. Mike Townend and the volunteers brought along a good range of memorabilia, which certainly helped trigger reminiscences. In addition, volunteers would tell a story which would then be picked up and developed by another.

By the end of the session all were clear about the nature of the project and what was expected of them. They went away feeling positive and committed, anxieties allayed. Steve Cadney, the class teacher from the school, was able to spend a little time with them. They found what he had to say reassuring, and he was able to ‘size up’ the volunteers in order to prepare the children.

We were also able to interview each volunteer individually, to obtain some background details about their wartime experiences. This helped to make them feel valued and important. We were then able to categorise the types of wartime experience – e.g. childhood / teenage / adulthood in Burnley; service overseas. We were also able to identify particularly interesting anecdotes and areas of experience, for the children to ask about later. In addition we noted any transport needs for the next meeting.

As a side-benefit, volunteers were impressed with the One Stop Shop and the range of facilities it offered. Mike was also able to publicise what Towneley Hall had to offer, and what he needed from the veterans. The volunteers went away invigorated and rejuvenated. Even the one meeting seemed a surprisingly effective morale booster.

Learning Points
• At least two facilitators were needed, to meet and greet, dish out refreshments and conduct interviews. One person to manage the session and one to back up with ‘domestics’.
• Use as large a room as possible. We were a little cramped and it impeded free circulation. It would have been better to have memorabilia on tables around the sides of the room rather than the large table in the middle.
• It would have been helpful to give each person a card with our contact information and details about the day, date, time and venue for the next session. (It would still be advisable to ring each participant the day before to remind them!).

Initial meeting with the children

Purpose
• To explore their attitudes to older people and concerns about working with them.
• To generate questions for small groups to ask individual volunteers
• To outline the process and agree an outcome.
Outcome
The children proved to be polite, friendly, interested and well-informed. They were also aware of how some of their behaviour outside the school might irritate others. They were used to older people (an older volunteer already works regularly with the class) and aware of some of the problems they might encounter and ways of coping with these such as the need to speak clearly and one at a time, for example, if their volunteer had hearing difficulties. It was also agreed that adult chairs would be provided for volunteers.

The children worked hard, in groups of two or three, to generate questions they wanted to ask the volunteers. In order to share best practice and to get maximum benefit from the exercise, the coordinator collected the questions and organised them into sets appropriate to different volunteers. They were typed up and sent back to the class for a final check.

Learning Point
- Email is very useful for rapid feedback and update.

Meeting of children and older people at the school

Purpose
- To enable children and older people to enjoy each other’s company and appreciate what each generation has to offer.
- To illustrate the bare facts about World War II using examples from the older people’s lives.
- To generate some positive publicity for the school via the older people’s experience of the visit, and via media publicity.
- To introduce other resources that might interest both groups (Towneley Hall Museum and BBC website).

Outcome
The school had organised the children to meet the volunteers as they arrived, and to escort them to the classroom where adult chairs were available. When one volunteer arrived exhausted because of a mistake in locating the venue, he was offered a seat in the reception area and a drink of water until he recovered from his long walk. The children’s politeness and consideration were really appreciated.

The volunteers were very impressed by the modern facilities in the school and by the bright, cheerful displays of work.

After an initial briefing by Mr Cadney he assigned two or three children to each volunteer according to the children’s particular areas of interest. Two classrooms were available, which allowed plenty of space between the groups, minimising background noise interference. The discussions were intense and enjoyable, as can be seen from the photographs, and continued for an hour.

The session was videoed and photographed. David Saville from Radio Lancashire interviewed two volunteers and the Burnley Express sent along a photographer. Finally the groups reassembled in the main classroom and Mike Townend gave a
short talk to wind up the session. The volunteers were then offered tea and biscuits in the staffroom. They had all enjoyed themselves very much and were not overtired.

**Learning Points**
- Again, the need for extra staff, to circulate and ensure groups are working effectively as well as to record the session.
- The need for plenty of space for the small-group activity. The use of two classrooms was a great advantage.
- Encouragement for the volunteers to bring along their memorabilia to stimulate discussion; and having a central ‘pool’ of items to trigger memories.

**‘Wrap’ party**

**Purpose**
- To thank the older people for their time and memories
- To provide another opportunity for the older and younger generations to enjoy each other’s company in an informal setting.
- To show the video and still photos of the previous meeting
- To show off the school’s new interactive technology

**Outcome**
The participants seemed to enjoy the ‘tea party’ – a chance to chat more informally. The children were very polite, and their good behaviour and social skills were appreciated by the older people.

The video and still photos revived memories of the event, and gave everyone a chance to share the reminiscences of one or two interviewees. Sadly, the gathering was marred by the disruptive behaviour of one of the older people, who seemed to be taking a delight in diverting the attention of the children around him. After the event, he said he thought he was just ‘mixing in’ and was sorry for any disturbance. Evidently, though, he is known as a disruptive influence but the people who recruited him for the project never thought to warn us!

**Learning Points**
To check more carefully on referrals and perhaps be more selective about including all volunteers (if we have enough to choose from).

**BBC interviews**

**Purpose**
- To collect the older people’s stories for the ‘People’s War’ website
- To provide another opportunity for the older people to meet formally
- To evaluate the project.

**Outcome**
Two people came from BBC Radio Lancashire to interview participants, but this took time, and so the Coordinator also interviewed some participants in order to speed up the process.
While waiting, participants chatted to each other, discovering and sharing common memories and renewing old acquaintanceships. In addition the Coordinator interviewed them to elicit comments for project evaluation.

This seemed to help bring the project to a natural close, with time for reflection. The inclusion of their stories on the People’s War website will be an added benefit and bring kudos to the older people, as well as providing a resource for future reference.

**Learning Points**
The continued interest and enthusiasm of the older participants has been surprising. They obviously gained from the experience as much as they gave, and appeared invigorated by it. Most have offered to participate in any future similar initiatives.

**Conclusions**
Thanks to guidance from various experts on managing reminiscence projects, and to the learning gained from our textiles project, this initiative seems to have been very successful and can be repeated with few modifications.

We have now built up a pool of volunteers willing to talk about their wartime experience so future recruitment for this or a similar topic should be easier. The exercise has also enabled us to bring into the Trans Age Action project a group of volunteers older than the age range we normally attract.

One of the aims of the exercise was to recruit local volunteers for longer term work with their local school. So far this has not happened, largely because these older people do not feel able to make a long term regular commitment. However, we live in hope that should the right opportunity arise, we can persuade individuals to join us, for their benefit as well as ours.

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Learning Links

Key words: arts, community development, cookery, crafts, exercise, ethnicity, health, learning, mentors, schools, wellbeing.

Introduction
The aims of the Learning Links project were:
to demonstrate to the community in Newport the contribution older people could make to positive change in disadvantaged and declining communities.
to reawaken in older people their potential for the new and to develop their existing knowledge and life-skills to enable them to pass on those skills to younger people from disadvantaged groups.
The project formed a major part of Charter’s approach to working with older people and their communities. We own a number of sheltered housing schemes in which residents can be extremely isolated from the rest of the community and which are becoming increasingly unpopular as places to live. We wanted the schemes to become a resource and location for activities within the community and for residents to be seen as a source of knowledge and experience. We also sought to break down age related barriers and promote a better understanding between generations. The project involved setting up activities for older people to act as mentors to younger people in a variety of different contexts. All participants, both young and old, enjoyed sharing skills and ideas, learning from and about each other, and reported an improved understanding and respect for one another.

Objectives
To build our senior tenants self-esteem by increasing awareness of their capabilities and making them feel useful.
To challenge the perceptions of older people among themselves and others.
To increase the awareness of the contribution older people can make to regeneration.
To develop knowledge and life-skills amongst older people, including the use of new technologies
To establish processes to transfer knowledge to others that increase opportunities for employment among disadvantaged groups.
To establish mutually beneficial relationships which break down barriers and build respect within generations
To show the value of and market the benefits of sheltered housing within the community
The key objectives focused on the benefits to older people in terms of building self esteem and encouraging learning, and also the wider benefits to community regeneration; the creation of a more inclusive and confident community in which everyone plays a part.
Project Description

St Alban’s School/Pantycelyn
Pantycelyn seniors passed on knitting, sewing, and craft skills to younger people during a series of fortnightly meetings at Pantycelyn Sheltered scheme. They also passed on their expertise about the world of work. They held mock job interviews, (which were recorded and used for GCSE oral English exams) and helped build youngsters self-esteem. The two groups have worked together to make items for sale to raise money for terminally ill children.

The project has brought out the best in both groups. The seniors are less likely now to view young people as a problem. Some have said that before the project they had a poor perception of teenagers (a pain in the butt) whereas now they are more likely to see them as individuals. The pupils’ teacher has remarked that she sees a totally different side to the children when they visit Pantycelyn. Several of the children have severe behavioural problems at school and in an ordinary state school would be in danger of being excluded, but all were well behaved, polite and helpful when with the seniors and have built up good relationships with them.

The young people’s perception of older people has changed positively. They too say they see older people in a more kindly light. Both groups have experienced and reported an increase in their sense of personal value. The seniors involved in this project know they are making a valuable contribution to the lives of the young people they are meeting. They have received tremendously positive feedback from the school to this effect. Members of teaching staff see Charter’s sheltered housing complexes as a great asset and will pass this on to other professionals.

Outputs
51 young people have participated in the project. 10 Charter seniors have been involved. Young people have acquired new skills including, knitting, sewing, craft, computer skills and oral English. Seniors have improved computer skills and craft skills.

Outcomes
Increased self-confidence and self-esteem among seniors and young people. Breakdown of inter-generational barriers. Improved image of sheltered housing amongst tenants and also the community at large.

What Are The Criteria For This Model Being A Success?
Pantycelyn is a large scheme with three spacious lounges. It has 54 units and therefore a large number of tenants potentially able to be involved. It is a sheltered housing scheme with good social cohesion, and a number of tenants who have previous experience of volunteering within their communities. The partnership with St Alban’s has been blessed with an extremely enthusiastic teacher with substantial energy, drive and commitment to the project. The scheme co-coordinator has taken the project on board, been enthusiastic and has helped to encourage tenant participation.
How transferable is this project
With a similarly committed partner (i.e. an enthusiastic teacher) this project could easily be rolled out to other sheltered housing schemes. The essential ingredients are an enthusiastic teacher/ youth worker, committed sheltered housing scheme manager and a core of volunteers. The bigger the scheme the better and a reasonable sized communal lounge is required.

Jim Mannay’s Bicycle Project
Jim had a great deal to offer as a mentor. Though somewhat physically frail his genuine love of people of all ages, and desire to communicate, meant he was always going to be an asset. But then we discovered his great skill with mending and maintaining bikes, and the asylum seekers’ bike project was born.
Newport City Council was looking for ways to engage the sudden influx of young Iraqi men prior to the Iraq war. These young asylum seekers had little to fill in their time, very little money and needed support and reassurance in their new surroundings.
Between Learning Links and the council they were provided with weekly bike building sessions where, aided by Jim, a fluent Arabic speaker, they could build their own cycle from bits of old bikes, which they then kept to use as a way of getting round they city.

The project achieved many positive outcomes. The young Iraqis were able to be busy and active in a friendly environment, and then gained a mode of transport. They felt at ease with Jim, who was able to indulge his love of chatting and share his enthusiasm for bikes. One asylum seeker, who has since achieved refugee status, still uses his bicycle daily to travel to and from college.

Outputs
One senior volunteer involved with11 asylum seekers. The 11 asylum seekers ended up with bicycles to use as a mode of transport.

Outcomes
Improved mental health and well being of asylum seekers. Unable to work they have little to occupy themselves. Many have mental health issues having suffered considerable trauma in their home countries and need activities to occupy mind and body. Providing asylum seekers with the feeling of being welcomed into the city of Newport. Improved health and well being of volunteer, giving him the opportunity of feeling useful and using his skills.

What are the criteria for this model being a success and is it transferable?
An enthusiastic cyclist with an understanding of cycle maintenance, premises to store bikes and to work in and a small budget for essential parts. This project is simple and straightforward to set up. There is a wealth of bike parts available and when we advertised for bikes we had an excellent response. The essential criteria for this project’s success are someone like Jim, with a love of bikes and people! Volunteers however do not necessarily need to be experts in cycle maintenance. Bikes are not complicated machines and we soon found that the beneficiaries themselves were great at helping one another with problems. You do need a small budget to buy tools, new brakes, cables, helmets etc, plus a building to store bikes and to work in.
Ta’aleem Alnyssa
Working with the Newport based ethnic minority women’s group Ta’aleem Alnyssa, the group offers education and training for women from ethnic minorities in a safe and friendly environment. The project’s volunteers have helped members of Ta’aleem Alnyssa practice for their driving theory exam, a particularly daunting exam for those who don’t have English as a first language. One volunteer was even brave enough to give a young Somali woman driving practice. They have also held literacy sessions for women who want to improve their written and spoken English.

Outputs
Four senior volunteers have been involved in working with Ta’aleem Alnyssa and 42 ethnic minority women have taken part in projects including a sewing class, driving theory classes, desktop publishing classes, and literacy classes. Since our volunteers involvement with Ta’aleem Alnyssa one woman has passed her driving theory exam and another has passed with distinction a written English exam, which will greatly assist in her ambition to teach.

Outcomes
The partnership with this group has grown from strength to strength. Ta’aleem Alnyssa now has its base in a converted bed-sit at on of our sheltered housing scheme in Pill. We hold weekly desktop publishing courses for members of the group, where much fun is had producing cards, posters, flyers and even story books. There are also plans to produce language tuition books to support a local children’s Arabic class.

A weekly sewing class takes place in the lounge at Kirby Daniel containing women from nine different ethnic backgrounds. We have learned much of the enterprise culture from this eclectic mix of nations. Many of the women are keen to be self-employed whether as seamstresses, graphic designers or taxi drivers. Members of the group find the scheme, Kirby Daniel a safe and friendly environment. They are sometimes discouraged for cultural reasons for venturing out to community classes in public centres, but coming to a sheltered housing complex is an ideal halfway house for them.

Kirby Daniel, too, has been given a new lease of life by this community activity. It has gone from being an anonymous pile of bricks from an outsider’s viewpoint to being a real asset. A community arts and craft class has been held there and exercise classes are also underway. Tenants and the sheltered housing scheme manager, now see themselves as very much part of the fabric of community life. In turn sheltered housing has received a boost to its somewhat dusty image. Kirby Daniel’s visitors view the complex very fondly and see it as a positive future housing option.

What are the criteria for this model to be a success and is this project transferable? The relationship between Ta’aleem Alnyssa and the project has developed over a period of time and have been based on mutual trust and understanding. Parts of what we have achieved are easy to transfer in terms of the one to one or small group tuition, which can take place at the sheltered housing scheme or elsewhere, and require the support of a small number of tenants. Getting everyone on board to support opening up a community base or having a group from outside meeting in the
lounge has been more of a challenge, and requires a good deal of patience and
tolerance on all sides. We are still working at integrating tenants and members of the
group.

**Cookery Project**
In developing our skills audit it became clear that many of our senior volunteers had
oodles to offer simply from having run a home, brought up children, cooked, cleaned,
and budgeted. We soon found partners in the shape of Newport Social Services
after care team who were keen to make good use of that expertise. Young people
who’ve been brought up in care leave care at sixteen or seventeen with very few of
these skills, not having had a parent around to learn from. Weekly cookery sessions
were set up at a local community centre that involved Charter seniors demonstrating
how to cook a simple, cheap and nutritious meal.

The sessions were held for a group of teenagers who, having left care, were
struggling on their own in bed-sits with little support and a great deal of psychological
baggage. During the sessions everyone would muck in with the preparation and then
sit down together to eat around a table. Poor diet and ignorance over nutritional
values were much in evidence at the start, with chips being described as a vegetable.
Two one off day events were also held where a dozen different dishes were cooked
up by the seniors in a local community hall and young people came to watch, eat and
chat.

**Outputs**
10 senior volunteers were involved in the project with 63 beneficiaries taking part,
five of the senior volunteers obtained health and hygiene certificates.

**Outcomes**
Increase in domestic science know-how and better understanding of health and
nutrition issues by the beneficiaries. Better knowledge of budgeting and how meals
can be planned to stretch for more than one day. Again an increase in social skills
and confidence was reported. For one of the teenagers the cookery sessions were
the only place he felt confident to go to, also there was a considerable confidence
boost for the volunteers who were absolutely in their element passing on their
favourite recipe ideas, cookery and money-saving tips.

**What are the criteria for this model to be a success and is this project
transferable?**
A group of seniors interested in cookery, a sheltered housing scheme with its own
lounge and adequately sized kitchen, or a local community centre. An enthusiastic
partner such as social services to provide the link to beneficiaries, and share the
workload and the planning is also necessary. This project can be very labour
intensive. It could become less so if the relationship between the seniors and the
young people involved developed to the extent that they could go shopping together
and shop for the ingredients. This might happen over a period of time but initially
staff representing both groups need to be close at hand.

**Seniors Exercise Class**
This project has involved young people taking part in a sports coaching scheme for
disaffected teenagers coming weekly to a sheltered housing complex and holding an
exercise class. The class has been an obvious health benefit to seniors and given invaluable work experience and a confidence boost to the youngsters involved.

**Outputs**
Six young people with little previous academic or working success in their lives have been given paid work and vital work experience to enable them to achieve qualifications in sports skills coaching. 12 seniors have benefited from a regular gentle exercise class.

**Outcomes**
More breaking down of intergenerational barriers. Because the young people are only 16 or 17 these are the very age range that older people tend to be most suspicious of, but in this project they’ve been able to see them in a far more positive light.

**What are the criteria for making this model a success and is this project transferable?**
A communal lounge or room big enough for the class to take place. Many seniors are keen to take part in a regular exercise routine if it’s offered on the doorstep. There has to be a willingness on the part of the seniors to give the younger people a chance but that hasn’t proven to be an obstacle. Again an enthusiastic partner who can see the positive benefits of the two groups working together.

**What Elements Need To Be In Place For Projects To Work Effectively?**
**The Commitment and Enthusiasm of the Scheme Staff**
The role of scheme co-ordinator is vital to the success of a project that is based at a scheme and often for projects outside too. Tenants see their scheme co-ordinator daily and build up a relationship of trust. They tend to feel safer if that person is at hand. For example the St Alban’s School and Pantycelyn project has been strongly supported by an enthusiastic scheme co-ordinator. This has meant that out of all of the projects this will be the easiest to sustain, as it has been completely owned by the residents and staff.

**An Enthusiastic Pro-Active Partner**
The projects that have flourished most have been those where the partners involved have been a strong driving force. Partners must have an equal desire for the project to work because they are the vital link with the beneficiaries. They of course need to see the positive effects on their client group in order to justify their input.

**Participants Fully Engaged**
Volunteers and beneficiaries need to enjoy the activities they are involved in and feel confident in their ability to pass on skills. For example the cookery project relies heavily on the senior volunteer’s love of cooking and household skills. They enjoy passing on tips and favourite culinary recipes, and are extremely enthusiastic to become involved. Whereas attempts to involve seniors in areas where they don’t feel so much at ease haven’t been successful. One senior tried helping ethnic minority women practise for their driving theory exam and didn’t feel she could contribute enough, yet was very happy to be involved in the cookery project.
An Existing Sense Of Community Within The Sheltered Housing Scheme.
Where a sense of community is already present it is far easier to recruit volunteers. If they are already meeting up regularly and know each other well they will encourage each other to take part in activities. They tend to have more confidence while working together, and lack confidence on their own. Most Learning Links volunteers came from schemes, which already enjoyed a thriving communal life.

An Existing Relationship With Tenants.
It is hard to go in cold and ask for volunteers unless a relationship has already been built up with tenants. If there is an existing feeling of trust with potential participants it helps a great deal.

Summary
This is a project that involves and empowers one group of vulnerable people to build the skills, knowledge and self esteem of other equally vulnerable groups. It has truly awakened in older people a sense of confidence and feeling of being valued once more within their community. They have led this project bringing in ideas and sensitivity to their community. It has contributed enormously to community cohesion by beginning to break down barriers between an older white generation and a newer and frequently younger ethnic minority population within the community.

The project has given the partner agencies and ourselves an insight into what an amazing resource older people can be as volunteers. It has also given many of the agencies a perspective on their own client group of which they were unaware. In addition it has found a model of working that can be replicated in a range of situations, adapting to the particular needs and aptitudes of both volunteers and beneficiaries. Our sheltered housing schemes are now more lively places to live where people look outward and forward.

Resource Materials
There is a 24 page evaluation report, a two page project description colour leaflet and a 12 minute DVD available. Details of the project are also included in the Chartered Institute of Housing Good Practice Guide to Sheltered and Retirement Housing written by Imogen Parry and Lyn Thompson, and in the Novatura Equal Partnership Best practice Manual published by the Centre for Sheltered Housing Studies together with its three European partners, EURO, FILON, and ISU. The project, along with six other pilot projects, was evaluated by the University of Surrey in their report ‘Lifelong Learning and Active Ageing’.

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Mobile Phone Training for Older People

Key words: community, ICT, training

Aims
The project – To support delivery of the National Service Framework’s standards six (falls prevention) and eight (Active Ageing) in deprived communities.

The organisation – To improve the quality of life of older people in Liverpool

Why did you do it?
In January 2005 the project commissioned research into the needs and aspirations of older people in two deprived Liverpool Wards. The initial purpose of the research was to bring a user/needs-led approach to setting objectives for the final year of the project, which Age Concern Liverpool had been asked to deliver by the North Liverpool Primary Care Trust. The funding body, NRF, saw sufficient merit in the research to increase the scope to six deprived wards and in June 2005 the full research was published. The research is available in a number of different formats, please use the contact details above should you require a copy.

The research revealed that there was a demand from older people for more diverse activities and services that helped them to keep pace with modern life. It also highlighted that older people believed that teenagers were behind most of the trouble that happened in these neighbourhoods and as a result had a detrimental effect on their attitude towards younger people. This perception was not supported by local crime figures.

Previous work with older people had highlighted a desire from them to be able to use their mobile phones more effectively.

What did you want to achieve/change?
We wanted to help older people to gain new skills that would help them to be more independent, to use new technology safely and I wanted to find a way of bringing older and younger people together in a way that would help to break down stereotypical perceptions and negative attitudes through a better understanding of some of the issues which affect both groups.

Why was it intergenerational?
The project brings together older and younger people in an environment that fosters a better understanding of the issues that affect the two groups.
Project Description

What did you do?
In July and August 2005 we wrote and developed a training course that aimed to teach older people how to better understand mobile phones and use them more safely. The first part of the course is a group session where information is passed on about how phones work; different types of phones, tariff and networks; mobile phones and health; mobile phones and the law relating to driving; using mobile phones safely i.e. target hardening; using mobile phones to support independence.

In the second part of the course practical skills are passed on to older people on a two pupil to one tutor ratio. The tutors are 12-15 year olds recruited from a local youth club. Their participation in this project counts as evidence towards the citizenship part of their Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The tutors find out what existing skills their pupils possess, find out what they would like to achieve and then work with them to teach them new skills. They then practice their new skills with each other to reinforce the learning process.

The pupils are issued with a manual that has been developed to support the course. The manual contains everything that is discussed in the group sessions plus information from the British Medical Association about health issues and the Department of Transport regarding the use of mobile phones when driving. These have been obtained with Crown Copyright. There is also a detailed glossary of terminology associated with the industry as well as some guidance to help people understand text-language. To add value to the service, the pupils are also issued an information pack about Age Concern Liverpool and how to access Age Concern, Statutory and Community & Voluntary organisations services.

What happened as a result?
Eleven volunteers were recruited to act as tutors and a training session was held to help them to understand the training process as well as to give them some guidance about some of the issues they might face in a senior adult learning environment. A programme of training courses was run from the Youth Club in September and October this year following which a tutors meeting was convened to gather feedback from the younger people involved in the project and pupils that had attended training courses were contacted individually via a customer care call in which feedback was gathered.

What worked?
Almost everything! The courses have run smoothly, there has been a constant demand for more courses and all the feedback has been positive from both tutors and pupils. Some pupils asked to come back for a second week because they felt that they needed more help and they were placed on subsequent courses.
What didn’t work?
Because the tutors attend school, it is impractical to run this as a daytime weekday activity and some older people were reluctant to leave their home or to travel in the evening. The funding stream is specific to two political wards and some people were unable to attend courses because they lived too far away. To overcome these difficulties the project initially funded some transport by taxi where distance or vulnerability were acting as barriers to participation. In November, I took the courses out of the Youth Club into community centres to better engage harder to reach older people. We are currently trialling a two-part course that revisits groups after a week to better reinforce the learning process.

Some older people had inherited phones from relatives that were not entirely suitable because of issues around small numbers on the keypad, small displays and difficulty of operation in some of the more obscure brands. Where pupils still had difficulty at the end of the course, impartial guidance was given about what may best be a suitable replacement for the handset should the pupils choose to replace them in the future.

What has changed as a result of the project?
There has been a demonstrable shift in attitudes away from stereotypical perceptions held by both older and younger people who have engaged in the process. The experience of learning and passing on new skills has been an enjoyable process and most of the older people who have been trained are using their new skills now.

How do you know?
Feedback has been formally gathered from both older and younger people as part of an interim report that I wrote for the Youth Services. Feedback continues to be gathered and a more formal evaluation tool is being developed. In terms of evaluating how much has been learned by the pupils, a short quiz with a prize now takes place at the end of the two-part course, the results of which highlight any areas that individuals or the group did not fully understand as well as gathering further evidence of attitudinal change. The following quotes form anecdotal evidence to back-up findings of the interim report –

Older people
“I was very apprehensive at first, the centre was noisy with lots of kids running around, I nearly didn’t come in. I’m glad I did though, the tutors were lovely with us, not at all what I’d expected from teenagers and now I can use the phonebook to store numbers instead of bits of paper and I’ve amazed my niece by texting her!”

Agnes – Old Swan

“I was very frustrated with my phone and had ended up not using it because I couldn’t hear the ringtone. I think everyone in my family has tried to fix the problem but they couldn’t. When I came to the training they sorted it out by working through the manual and they said that the phone I’ve got is difficult to use and even they had problems with it. My wife has the same phone as me and I’ve been able to fix hers too now and I’m using mine all the time”

John – Norris Green
“What a fantastic idea! I read about this in the Echo (local newspaper) and since I’ve been trained by the young ones I’m a lot better (with the phone) than I was. The course was very relaxed and I got to spend a lot of time one-on-one with the tutors who were extremely patient with me. I feel a lot safer and more confident about using my phone now.”

Irene – Clubmoor

“My grandchildren have tried to show me how to text but they just go so fast. They put all the numbers in the phone for me but it was no use because I didn’t have a clue how to get them back up again. When I came on the course I felt like I understood a lot more about the phones and the girls went through everything nice and slowly, allowed me time to write things down and made sure I had a few goes by myself. It really seems to have sunk in and now I’m thinking of buying a new phone with a bigger display and bigger keys. It was nice to be with group of younger people. Have my opinions changed about younger people? I think they have, I see teenagers in a different light now.”

Maureen – Old Swan

Tutors

“It’s been great to see so many different older people, there’s never two the same”

“It’s good to be the teacher for a change; it’s more difficult than you’d think though”

“I thought that they’d all be useless but some of them have been really good to begin with and didn’t need much help to do what they wanted”

“I didn’t realise that older people could have so much difficulty with there hands and their eyes. It must be horrible not being able to see small things or be able to press the right buttons; does everyone go like that when they’re old?”

“This one lady I trained had beautiful teeth, I don’t know if they were real but I want to look as good as her when I get to her age”

“They learn different to us, some of them have to write everything down to make sure they remember”

“The first time we did this it was really hard and I felt embarrassed, but now I’ve seen how useful this is for the older ones and how important it is for them to be able to use their phones safely, it feels really worthwhile”
What did you learn?
I learnt that younger people and older people have an amazing capacity to be able to work together in the right environment. I learnt a lot about youth work and the Youth Services and that despite being at almost diametrically opposite ends of the age spectrum, that partnership work in this area is key to the success of a project like this.

What would you do different in the future?
If we were to start a project like this from scratch again, we would look to secure funding which was less geographically restrictive. We now have interest from commercial sponsors and will be working with them to ensure sustainability of this project after funding runs out in March 2006.

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Philosophy for Children (P4C): Case Study

Key words: community, learning, schools, volunteers.

Aims
LifeLink is an intergenerational project. Created originally to tackle fear of crime, it has now, thanks to different funding streams, adopted a wider remit of promoting social cohesion through various mixed age group activities, incorporating fun as well as learning elements. The specific aims of setting up a course of Philosophy for Children (P4C) were:

- To introduce the concept to a number of schools; to run a series of intergenerational sessions in which older people could help pupils to enhance their self esteem and raise their educational achievements
- In the longer term, to build up expertise within various schools and to establish a core of local older volunteers so that schools could run their own (inter-generational) sessions

Why do it
The author was impressed by research into the educational benefits of P4C and interested to see if it was possible to replicate the success claimed by Age Concern Barrow’s inter-generational initiative. The author was personally interested in philosophy and interested in the challenge of introducing something innovative in to schools in North Tyneside. The programme was also attractive as it required minimal funding and was capable of speedy promotion to achieve outputs

What did we want to achieve
- To promote a project with demonstrable social and educational value
- To work with some schools not worked with before
- To work towards some self-sustaining projects by:
  - Model P4C facilitation so teachers might be able to run their own sessions
  - Inspire and train some longer term P4C volunteers

Why was it intergenerational
Barrow’s anecdotal evidence indicated that P4C was particularly suitable for intergenerational interaction, with clear and positive roles for older people. Although there is no formal research to back this up, I surmised that older people could add even greater value to the well-documented educational benefits of P4C. P4C seemed to offer similar benefits to a successful inter-generational storytelling project I ran three years ago.
Project Description

What we did

Preparation for facilitator (August-October 2004)

The author attended a level 1 course qualifying them as a P4C facilitator (£150 for 3 days). Using contacts thus gained, they tapped into sources of expertise e.g. by observing two primary school P4C sessions in Newcastle, attending a couple of conferences and training (with some volunteers), contacting experienced teachers by phone and email, talking to schools advisers and attending P4C network meetings in Newcastle.

The author also read extensively on the theory of P4C, and bought some specialist materials with the help of a grant from the community chest. Two sessions were run with older people to gain experience as a facilitator. Once confident in the approach a simultaneous 2 pronged approach was adopted to recruit volunteers and identify suitable schools.

Recruitment of volunteers (Oct-Dec 2004 phase 1, Feb- April 2005 phase 2, March-May 2005 phase 2)

An article in Age Concern’s volunteers’ newsletter attracted a handful of volunteers; we also approached a number of existing inter-generational volunteers. Despite the inevitable mismatch between volunteer availability and project timing, we got an initial commitment from half a dozen people, including one recently retired person who was recruited through word of mouth from a philosophy discussion group.

For the second primary school, we concentrated on local recruitment by talking to the attendees of the lunch club run at the school, the vicar and members of the congregation who’d set it up, another local vicar and tenants of sheltered housing. For the secondary school, we simply used a mixture of volunteers from the previous two projects as we failed to recruit anyone new at this stage.


Barrow had been invited from within the local Learning Partnership to join existing P4C classes, whereas we had the challenge of explaining and promoting P4C itself, not just the inter-generational aspect. The author was initially contacted by a teacher who had read our volunteer newsletter. A number of meetings fell through, and I wasn’t prepared to defer meeting till the following term as she suggested, as I had targets to meet and keen volunteers by this time.

We, therefore, approached the head of a school where I had a good relationship and where we were already running a weekly craft class. His words were: “I don’t know what it’s all about but we’ll try anything, particularly if it involves community links”. We agreed to work with year 5 and met the teacher, who was part-time (2 days a week but by good fortune two days that were good for our volunteers). She was a little anxious about the effect on the curriculum of losing 7-8 weeks but was reassured of the benefits by the head and the author. We agreed that the class of 28 pupils would be split in two, and alternate each week between philosophy with us and games with another teacher as timetabled. We were assigned the community room to work in. Even while the project with the first school was running, we had started identifying
possible schools for the following term. We had heard about a school where the local church had set up a lunch club and although the area was unfamiliar, we had worked with the vicar in his previous parish. It was therefore relatively easy to work through him to bring the school on board and to recruit some of his parishioners.

The school offered a combined class of eighteen year 4s and 5s – (the entire school only numbers 100 pupils), a delightful community room downstairs and a Tuesday afternoon after the lunch club which meant more chance of involving older people already on the premises. A last minute glitch occurred when it was discovered that the current head was leaving and we had to wait until the beginning of the summer term for the incoming head’s agreement. This was expedited through the church, which was already embedded in the school structure.

Through regular attendance at the extended schools network, we were invited by the deputy head to run sessions in his secondary school. We decided on a year 9 science class for 5 weeks after summer exams. Exam pressures meant that the meeting with the science teacher concerned, also attended by a volunteer, only took place a few days before half term with the project due to start straight afterwards. We inspected the classroom, and discussed suitable subject matter in relation to the syllabus. Additionally, we consulted a schools science adviser and telephoned a secondary science teacher in Newcastle who was a level 2 P4C facilitator. The latter told me that he’d found running P4C in his own secondary school was too difficult and he only did it in his feeder primary schools!

No extra CRBs were carried out as we don’t necessarily do this for short term group projects. This policy is discussed with schools and stated in our school’s protocol. Some of our regular volunteers had already undergone enhanced CRBs and references with our Volunteering Department. One new recruit had just undergone a CRB through another agency the previous month but Age Concern insists we must also carry out our own checks. Our Volunteer Co-ordinator only agreed that I could accept his existing clearance because this was acceptable to the school. None of the schools thought checks were necessary. (In the case of one primary school, it would have been an anomaly as many of the older people were already mingling with the pupils at the lunch club)

**What happened**

We ran 7 sessions in the first primary school January-March 2005 (32 pupils) 10 sessions in the second primary school April-June 2005 (18 pupils) and 6 sessions in the secondary school May-June 2005 (28 students). The author acted as facilitator throughout. We followed the standard P4C format in both primary schools. In the secondary school, we used material with an obviously scientific slant. Owing to time pressures and the challenges of working with this age group we sometimes did not stick to the classical P4C format.

Fifteen older people and one vicar were involved overall. Of these, one left after one session because of other commitments, and three were forced to retire part way through ill health. Questionnaires were completed at the end by all participants (old and young) and teachers in the primary schools, and teacher and volunteers in the secondary school. At the teacher’s suggestion, we conducted a post project discussion with a selected number of students in the secondary school.
What worked
Mostly everything in the primary schools
  • Diving straight in together: Having no time for separate preparatory sessions, we decided to make it an explicit feature of the project that we were all (including the author as a brand new facilitator) learning together. The decision to do this (against advice from the Newcastle facilitator) was vindicated. The children’s feedback noted how they appreciated having adults learning alongside them and the volunteers were all very happy with the level of support.
  • Educational and social benefits. Feedback from the children and teachers indicated increasing participation from the shyer and more silent ones, greater confidence, and specific learning.
  • Volunteer involvement and satisfaction: Unable to set up even one introductory session for the volunteers because of time pressures after Christmas and an early Easter, we invited all the phase one volunteers an hour early to the first session, (with lunch provided) to meet each other and to learn more about P4C and their role within it. Thereafter, most volunteers came early so we could set up the room, then plan together; some also stayed behind for a short review afterwards. In evaluation, the volunteers said they thought this was invaluable. P4C has evoked exceptionally positive volunteer feedback compared with any other project we have been involved with and this degree of involvement appears to have been a significant factor.
  • Using an outside facilitator: This worked well in the primary schools as it was possible to undertake far more preparation time than any teacher, thus being able to seek out more unusual stories and put a lot of thought into material. A teacher would also not have been able to support the older participants in the same way as an experienced external facilitator.
  • Games and icebreakers. The children particularly remembered our first getting to know you session, making alternative name badges for each other, such as “posh Peggy” or “perfect Peter” (he must be because he’s a vicar!). In fact, anything that made them laugh was memorable, and having fun with the visitors was quoted several times in the evaluation. The author and vicar’s knowledge of individual volunteers helped to recruit people well suited to this kind of project.
  • Acting out stories: Getting the stories over in an imaginative way rather than just reading them worked well. In one story we used some of the older people for the dialogue, in another we had visitors and children acting out the roles.
  • Timing: an hour and a quarter after lunch for both primary schools worked well.
  • Volunteer numbers: The Newcastle facilitator said he aspired to run inter-generational sessions with a 50-50 ratio but our feeling (confirmed by experience) was that this was unnecessary and indeed might overwhelm the young people. We had a ratio of around 20-30% of older people, which meant each older person could facilitate a small group of 3-5 children/young people. However, that probably means starting with a higher number, as we did, since there may be some drop out (from ill health) from each set of sessions and few volunteers can attend absolutely every session.
  • Transport: Some volunteers drove their own cars or came on the bus but we organised taxis for some because of mobility problems, eyesight difficulties or distance from the school.
• **Venue and ambience:** These are both important. In every school, we were made very welcome at reception. The community rooms in both primary schools were excellent with comfortable seating and accessible toilets. One school provided us with tea and coffee making facilities. Using a room other than a classroom conferred an extra sense of “specialness”. Comfortable seating for pupils made them less fidgety and at one school, they all vied to sit on the settee with one of their favourite volunteers (“grand-dad Tom” was a regular volunteer at the school)

• **Pupil preparation:** In the primary schools, the pupils had been primed for our arrival and there was a sense of pleasurable anticipation

• **Small group work:** P4C incorporates a lot of small group work which encourages participation from shyer pupils, this helps to build inter-generational rapport and gives the older people a useful role. This was even more so in the secondary school where peer group pressures inhibited interaction in the large group.

• **Teacher participation:** One teacher and one student teacher were excellent in encouraging the pupils, sorting out problem behaviour and generally helping the facilitator with scribing the groups’ questions, recording the large group discussion and so forth.

**What didn’t work**

• **Time and timing:** We should probably not have attempted to run the secondary project in a single period but we did learn some valuable lessons from this pilot. We were offered a double period but it fell on a day when the volunteers and facilitator were unavailable. The actual timing was also unfortunate. The lesson was just before lunch and the pupils said they were distracted by hunger.

• **Venue:** The classroom assigned in the secondary school (different from the one we had been shown) proved unworkable. There was none of the promised provision for the older people – high stools are not suitable. The fallback provision (the 6th form common room made available at short notice) had some excellent features. We were able to go in and set it up beforehand, and the seating was good. However, the 6th formers had moved to a room above connected by an open staircase in the corner. This meant a lack of privacy and some noise from upstairs. At one point, a mobile phone was thrown over the balcony which distracted our students for a good 5 minutes. It also inhibited openness from volunteers in the review sessions afterwards. The students said they found it very distracting and unsatisfactory and would have preferred the classroom.

• **Pupil preparation.** The secondary school students hadn’t been told we were coming which we only realised after we’d joined the class. This meant: we lost half the lesson through arranging the room. The students didn’t accommodate the older people or understand why they were rearranging the room or what we were doing, and they never fully grasped the purpose of the project. The students were also much more uncomfortable with an unfamiliar facilitator than had been the case in the primary schools. They said they would have preferred to meet beforehand.
• Numbers: Large groups don’t work well. Large group discussions with 28 secondary students were uncomfortable and halting. Consequently, the older people were tempted to fill the silences, which then sometimes felt as if they were interrogating or lecturing the young. In the primary schools, where by contrast, a lot of children were vying to contribute, the older people tended to hang back more until they felt they could lift the discussion with a useful insight. Splitting the class and alternating weeks as in the first primary school wasn’t a particularly good strategy either. First, it meant that the children only experienced P4C for three or four weeks in total, there was no continuity and it is unclear how much grounding they got in philosophical thinking. There was little chance for volunteers to get to know the pupils properly and the teacher kept forgetting to ensure pupils had their name badges, which made facilitation and interaction difficult. On some occasions, some pupils sneaked into the wrong group and had already heard the material so they skewed the discussions. The system actually broke down on the very first lesson when snow prevented the other half of the class from playing football and it was necessary to improvise and accommodate the whole class.

• Teacher Participation: this was not as high as we’d hoped in one school because the teacher kept getting unexpectedly pulled off to other commitments. As a result, she didn’t really learn about P4C first hand and the teaching assistant didn’t join in or help much with minor disciplinary issues.

• Disruptive behaviour from a handful of secondary pupils was a problem and there were obvious peer group pressures inhibiting people’s involvement. Some pupils seemed to lack interest completely.

• Small group work: Students and some volunteers wanted more emphasis on this and suggested that the same volunteers worked each time with the same students. The problem is that, unless one had several volunteers to assign to each grouping, one cannot rely on volunteers to be available every week. It also presumes that volunteers are equally skilled and comfortable (not all were) and that all groups are equally easy to work with (they weren’t so some volunteers ended up with a harder task). As one volunteer pointed out, some groups worked at a faster pace or were less interested (or volunteers in other groups facilitated at a different pace) so needed extra tasks to occupy them. Strategies to split up negative groupings were not always easy to enforce in the secondary environment.

• Volunteer recruitment: The most effective source of recruitment was word of mouth through existing volunteers. Although we talked to those attending the lunch club at one school, the only ones who joined the project were those who were also closely tied into the church. We would have preferred to make one public announcement seeking volunteers but the helpers said that we should go round and ask people individually. We were later told that someone had complained about feeling pressured.

• There is still a question mark about how suitable this approach is for some secondary school pupils. Some of them said they preferred active styles of learning which would have been a distortion of the quiet reflective process.
What has changed

- It was serendipity that, just after we completed the first phase, schools in Educational Action Zones across the North East were invited to a half day event marketing P4C. All three schools I was working with happened to be in an EAZ. Two of the heads, lacking time to go, invited the facilitator and a volunteer to represent them at the meeting. We thus had the opportunity to network with 6 schools attending from the borough, to advertise the fact we were already running P4C and to meet a key schools adviser. There is now more knowledge about P4C in North Tyneside and some schools sent their teachers for level 1 training this summer. Some of these schools are potentially interested in an inter-generational approach.

- All three schools where we worked are interested in more P4C. One of the primary schools wants to continue it in partnership with the local church and some support from us. Even the secondary school where we experienced most difficulties has given a very positive response and wants us to run two sessions next year rather than one.

- We have more contacts with schools and within the educational system

- We have made excellent contacts in a new geographical area, which enhances future prospects for longer-term community development.

- Some new people have been brought into volunteering with young people for the first time or some have returned after a break. Volunteers have learnt new skills and had their contribution valued by the community

- Some young people have learned to regard older people in a more positive light

- Some young people (self and teacher reported) have made significant gains in self confidence, and skills such as better listening, questioning, debating and others.

How do we know

Written feedback from participant evaluations, observation, discussion with teachers, educational specialists and volunteers, and continuing feedback and interaction with volunteers throughout the project.

What would we do differently

We have already agreed with the Deputy Head of the secondary school that we will work differently next year, i.e.:

- Meet in November to plan for next May
- Build in time for a proper introduction to the pupils, more involvement from them in preparation and mutual negotiation of ground rules, including management of inappropriate behaviour
- Allocate a double lesson at a more appropriate time
- Agree a better venue
- Work across the year groups with about 16 selected pupils, supported by a learning mentor, thereby releasing the teacher to teach the other students
- Use the P4C leaflet which we have produced to help community workers recruit to the project
- In terms of the primary school work with no more than 16 pupils at a time.
Resource Materials
A wealth of information about P4C is available from: www.sapere.net. This includes details of courses, approved materials, history of the approach and research into its effectiveness (the recent results of a study from Clackmannanshire in Scotland are particularly worth reading), and back copies of newsletters (one of the articles was co-written by an intergenerational worker at Age Concern Barrow). The author of this case study is able to provide full details of the evaluations, feedback from participants and would welcome people contacting her to discuss the project in more detail by telephone or email.

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Playing Field for all Generations

Key words: community development, community safety, communication, engagement.

Background
Neighbourhood Fora were set up in five regeneration wards in Crewe from 2003 onwards. One aim was to overcome the difference in the delivery of public and voluntary services in the most deprived areas of Crewe and more affluent neighbourhoods.

Coppenhall Neighbourhood Forum has been established by a planning for real style community consultation in different ward venues in February 2003. Perceived anti-social behaviour played only a minor role in the “Your Neighbourhood, Your Say” consultation but residents wanted to see more opportunities for children and teenagers and better leisure facilities for all generations. (1)

These findings were contradicted when members of a residents association attended the first forum meeting and made perceived anti-social behaviour by young people and related community safety issues the dominant theme for future forum meetings. Youth nuisance issues evolved into open hostility towards the police, other statutory agencies and young people in general. Consequently young people were demonised as being responsible for the decline of the neighbourhood.

Working through the issues led slowly to the recognition that young people have needs and rights as well. Some residents even wondered why no young people attended the forum meeting and various suggestions to improve the area for young people were made.

In order to recognise the needs and aspirations of young people, the forum joined forces with the Cheshire County Council’s Youth Service Citizenship team and organised an Intergenerational U-Matter event. This successful event was followed up by a Community Christmas Disco. Both events were one off events and as such insufficient to address the issues of younger and older residents in Coppenhall.

Crewe & Nantwich Youth Congress is designed to build the capacity and opportunities to give young people a say in their community. Young people are often ignored, misinterpreted or even not trusted to have an opinion so Congress is hoping to offer a mature and considered view of issues that are important to them. They can be consulted and will endeavour to canvas their peers so as to be able to respond with a cross-section view which may not necessarily be their own personal one.
Process
The U -matter event and the Community Christmas Disco led to the wish by some forum members to explore young people’s needs and aspirations in more detail. “It is no good for us to discuss what young people need, the young people have to tell us because they are the future” was one of the opinions voiced by forum members. While one part of the neighbourhood forum demanded a process orientated joined up approach, those members who demonised young people lost interest. In retrospect this may be understandable as the difference between Community Development and Community Policing, between a constructive collective of people where residents and agencies are working as ONE team and a complaints meeting is not always clear to the public. The task of the neighbourhood forum is to work with partners in order to search for positive solutions and to engage in consensus decision making processes. It is not the task of a neighbourhood forum to enhance adversarial relationships between different societal groups.

The author contacted the Youth Voice team manager Paul Boskett who allocated Graeme Bell to work with the neighbourhood forum. Concurrently the HUB team leader Andy Ridgway was recruiting and training a new intake for the Crewe & Nantwich Youth Congress while Graeme was organising Youth Parliament UK elections. The neighbourhood fora, youth congress and youth parliament had not worked in partnership previously.

The aim was that we use the good will and interest of active forum members to build youth engagement skills. Those skills are essential to support young and not so young people to find solutions. Furthermore we envisaged that this training could enable active forum members to engage with the public during the wards consultation (neighbour to neighbour approach).

This approach would only be successful if it were based on the values of Mutuality, equality and respect.

This means that the adult community development and youth work processes had to mirror each other.

Graeme Bell, Sue Tarplee and I developed the following process:

1. The second part of the first Forum Meeting was designed as Towards Engaging with Young People training facilitated by Graeme.
2. Concurrently Graeme worked with young people and teachers in Coppenhall, Victoria and King’s Grove High Schools to recruit young people who live in the Coppenhall area. The young people joined the Youth Congress Crewe & Nantwich training and activities and participated in the Youth Parliament UK elections process.
3. Additional to the training available to all Youth Congress members, the young people from the Coppenhall area worked with Graeme, Sue and myself to prepare themselves for a dialogue meeting with Coppenhall Neighbourhood Forum.
4. Active Coppenhall Neighbourhood Forum members participated in a training event to prepare them for the meeting. This was a mirror of the training opportunity for young people.
5. The March forum was designed as a Youth Shelter/McLaren Street Consultation dialogue meeting between the neighbourhood forum and the youth congress

“Playing field for everyone”

6. If young people and older people decided to place the teen shelter on the McLaren street Playing Field those members who participated in the preparation of the dialogue meeting would be able to act as co-facilitators during the whole ward consultation. It was envisaged to pair a younger and an older person to work with local residents. This meant a person coming to the event would be approached/engaged by a younger and an older person.

7. They were able to engage:
   a. with each other
   b. with the Young People
   c. with older residents

8. The Consultation day would not only consult about the teen shelter but also about code of conduct, how to minimise the impact for the neighbourhood, police-warden involvement (because everyone has a right to be safe including young people’s safety). There were clear implications for detached youth work in the area.

9. The mainly older residents have developed from a hostile towards a caring but also pater/maternatistic approach towards young people. They are very concerned that the needs of young people are met, they worry for and are advocating on behalf of young people. It is hoped that older people will be able to articulate their own needs during the intergenerational encounter and that young people can become allies of older people. During the dialogue meeting young and older people decided unanimously not to place the teen shelter in Coppenhall ward. Younger and older people became equal partners and friends during the dialogue process. Their attitude and understanding shifted from “should we place a teen shelter on the playing field” to “Why would we like to place a teen shelter on the playing field”, from position to interest statement.
Playing Field for all – dialogue meeting summary 9th March  
(Coppenhall Neighbourhood Forum – Youth Congress Crewe-Nantwich)

The author and Graeme Bell facilitated the Forum. Forum and Youth Congress members then took part in various workshops and presentation.

- What do we have in common? (Ice Breaker)
- Workshop – What do you expect from tonight
- Workshop – What stops Older and Younger people engaging with each other? What are the Barriers and Benefits in Communication? (Appendix 2)
- Youth Congress Presentation on what Facilities they want in the Coppenhall Ward
- Coppenhall Neighbourhood Forum presentations
- Andreas outlined that there was a proposal to place a teen shelter on the McLaren Street Play area. This was available now for forum and congress to make a joint decision on whether to take the placing on McLaren street to further ward consultation especially with neighbours effected by the youth shelter

Summary of Issues – Older People
- Need for facilities for young people in Coppenhall ward was emphasised
- Young people need to be listened to too because they are the future
- Football Posts on Fields (The football posts had already been placed earlier in the week)
- Better Policing in area
- Outreach Youth worker
- Building for where young people can go during bad weather
- Parents involvement (only young people and grand parent’s were present at the meeting, the middle generations)

Summary of Issues – Younger Peoples Proposals
- Under 5’s Play equipment
- Skate Park
- Places to go with Adult supervision
- Outreach youth worker
- Cyber Café
- Youth Clubs
- Graffiti Wall
Debate on the placing of Teen Shelter on McLaren Street play area

Older and younger residents took part in a dialogue around the pro’s and cons of siting the teen shelter.

- Summary of Issues firm ground
- Needs to have own Lighting
- Needs to be visible from Roadside
- Outreach youth worker to be working with users of shelter
- Concern over numbers who would use shelter
- Concerns over gangs using shelter
- Territory
- Area needs to be kept litter free
- Area needs to be kept clean of dog fouling
- Youth work support must be available to make it work
- Direct Services support must be available to keep it safe and clean

The Youth Officer (Cheshire County Council) pointed out that no funds were available to provide out-reach youth workers to the shelter.

The Community Engagement Manager for the LSP pointed out that it was only a teen shelter that was on offer, that lighting, an information/notice board/wall, placed on firm ground and youth work support were not available at this time.

The young people present were asked to consider these points and answer the question:

**Do they want a teen shelter on McLaren Street playing field?**
The young people retired to consider the question.

**Young Peoples Summary**
Following discussions on the proposed placing of teen shelter on McLaren Street the young people’s response was:

- That a teen shelter without sighting on Hard Core, no lighting, no youth work support was not wanted at this time
- A teen shelter with the facilities outlined above would be welcomed in the future but the size needs to be bigger

Furthermore the young people suggested the following:

- An existing building could be used for youth activities
- A temporary shelter should be erected for trial sessions
Decision
The forum thanked the young people for their work and recognised that there was much work that they could do together in the future to help them achieve their proposals:

- Places to go with Adult supervision
- Outreach youth worker
- Cyber Café
- Youth Clubs
- Graffiti Wall

Evaluation of Dialogue Meeting by participants and agencies.
An evaluation tree was placed on a wall in the hall and the following comments / suggestions were placed on it.

What have you achieved / learned from this evening?
- Built up confidence
- A better understanding of their fears
- Young People have the same fears as older people
- To communicate with adults
- I have achieved a better understanding on how things work
- We all want to understand each other
- The need to discuss a subject in depth
- The need for financial support
- Better communication
- A learning curve between groups

What would you change about the evening?
- Worked very well and look forward to the next meeting
- Enjoyed evening very much, learned a lot
- To have more time
- Adults keep interrupting, needs to change

How useful was tonight meeting?
- Enlightening
- A good learning curve
- We did not get the shelter but we understand the reasons

What is your recommendation for the future?
- Working hard to get more locals involved with teenagers
- Consider writing up for the local press
- Consultation is the only successful way forward
Evaluation of the Intergenerational Process

Community Development Evaluation
In order to evaluate the intergenerational process from a community development perspective it is essential to divide the process into

- Dialogue Process
- Neighbourhood Forum Process
- Democratic Process

Dialogue Process:
Gamet and Kayser define the aim of dialogue as follows: “The goal of dialogue is understanding. Participants share and hear each other’s perspective in order to gain a better understanding of the other’s view.” They recommend the Dialogue is used:

- To discuss conflictual issues
- To prepare for consensual decision making
- To create a safe space for all voices to be acknowledged
- To find common area/interests to work from

Members of the neighbourhood forum and the youth congress who participated in the dialogue process understood each other from early on. While preparing for the meeting the two generations thought how best to present their interest to their dialogue partner. What made the process so successful was that the two groups had already moved from position statement (placing a youth shelter) to the underlying interest (What do young people need to grow up into adults?) before they faced each other in the dialogue meeting.

The youth shelter became the vehicle to explore the underlying issues. As neighbourhood forum and youth congress members have had no direct (face to face) contact previously, none of the dialogue participants were aware which interests were conflictual.

Furthermore the involvement of stakeholders in the process was beneficial as front line workers engaged as equal partners. It was interesting to see how borough councillors across the political spectrum became involved in the process and were actively searching for a consensus.

During the process, all participants have achieved their goals:

- To understand each other
- Having their interests acknowledged in a safe environment
- Reaching a consensual decision.
Neighbourhood Forum Process:
In order to evaluate the neighbourhood forum process it is essential to divide the neighbourhood forum into the following sub groups:
- Those residents who participated in the dialogue process
- Those residents who did not participate in the dialogue process

Those residents who participated in the dialogue process:
In order to evaluate the neighbourhood forum process the evaluation has been based on the following indicators from “A Framework for Asset –Based Community Building”
- A shared vision
  Means that in order to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood
  - Common purpose and commitment
    Means that forum members need to be involved in collaboration with different organisations working in their neighbourhood
    - Personal efficacy
      Means that forum members recognise their own capacity and power to contribute to young people’s development and community life
    - Collective efficiency
      Means that neighbourhood forum members act upon their shared strength and capacity to work together towards a common goal
    - Public Will
      Means that forum members invest collectively and individually in young people lives and the development of their neighbourhood for all generations.
    - Social Trust
      Means that neighbourhood forum members are in relationships with others, recognise commonalities and mutual respect even in the midst of ideological, cultural, economic and generational differences.

Reflecting on the different indicators it became clear that the participants of the intergenerational process were able to develop a shared vision, and collaborate with the youth congress and youth service. They understood their own capacity and contributed fully to the process, acted on their shared strength and worked with young people and stakeholders towards the common goal. Furthermore they invested time and effort to support young people and develop social trust. The forum member developed from: we need to place a youth shelter in order to deflect anti social behaviour to - we need to listen to what young people want and need to grow into responsible adults.

But, the participants were a self selected group of seven forum members.

Those residents who did not participate in the dialogue process:
The intergenerational process widened the gap between those forum members who chose to participate in the dialogue process and those who did not. Forum members who were most vocal about the anti-social behaviour of young people and demanded that something should be done about it did not participate in the process. Many forum members are still of the opinion that the neighbourhood forum is a complaints forum and that agencies should act on their behalf.
Democratic Process
The intergenerational dialogue and the neighbourhood process are part of a larger democratic process which has to be evaluated by itself in order to locate the issues at the level they occur.

In deciding where to place this report we are faced with the issue that the broader democratic structures are unclear. At present there is no set framework of protocols and procedures for residents and young people to engage with the LSP structures. It is not clear when, where, how and to whom in the LSP structure Coppenhall Neighbourhood Forum and Crewe & Nantwich Youth Congress members present their findings and recommendations.

The author understands his role to support the forum and congress members to present their findings and recommendations to the powers that be and not to act as their advocate in official meetings. While engaging with each other, listening, working together, considering each other’s opinions and searching for a mutual solution, younger and older people have gained the competence to engage in the democratic process as equal partners.

Youth Service Evaluation
When approached the Youth Congress considered this to be exactly the sort of issue that interested them so they selected the members who had knowledge of the Coppenhall area to represent the group.

Throughout the consultation process the small group reported back to the full Congress on a weekly basis. They were mature enough to take an objective view and not let personal preferences cloud their judgement. They also felt confident enough to engage with the adults on equal terms and in an unthreatened manner which is a credit to the adults as much as to the professional guidance present.

Their conclusions were considered and responsible. It would have been easy to just grab what was on offer with no regard to the future or the consequences. These recommendations should be respected and considered at depth by the adults, not least those responsible for facilities.

The young people did not say they did not want a shelter, they did say that an offer of a shelter should be fully supported with adequate support and safety measures. The package was not right and if the offer was made with a genuine desire to satisfy young peoples needs maybe we will see a revised offer soon!

It is to be hoped that this exercise will be the start of more consultation with young people and their views can be heard and considered. They are really quite intelligent and have good ideas. It is up to the adults to listen to them, treat them with genuine respect, encourage them and work with them.
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Points of View

Key words: arts, citizenship, community development, photography, media skills

The project was run in partnership with Oaklands School and The Sundial Centre. It was funded by Learning and Skills Council London East.

Aims
Based in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets since its formation in 1989, Magic Me is a specialist provider of intergenerational projects, using creative activities to bring together young and older people for mutual benefit, learning and enjoyment. The organisation works across the Borough, serving around 350 people each year in settings ranging from Pensioner’s Clubs to nursing homes, schools to cultural organisations. Each project has its own aims in relation to community development and individual participant’s personal and skills development.

Aims and objectives of project
Points of View aimed to bring together young and older people:

- to explore their local area and its community past, present and future;
- to record what they discovered using photography, video, audio tape and the written word and
- to present their findings to a wider community audience through an exhibition or presentation.

The emphasis of the project was on motivating participants to want to learn by focusing on their lives, interests and opinions and on enabling them to use and value their existing skills and knowledge.

Key aims of the project were:

Young people
- All students will work towards Assessment Objectives within the GCSE Citizenship syllabus. This will include keeping a personal weekly journal on their experience and completing two pieces of coursework.

Older people
- Older learners will be invited to work towards the GCSE Citizenship Qualification
- All the older people will learn new skills whilst working as active citizens on the project.
Young and older people will:

- Learn skills in photography, video and audio media including creative, technical and critical skills.
- Learn skills in IT, using computers to create written and visual presentations.
- Develop their communication and social skills and confidence, in relation to their peers, the other age group and the wider community and in relation to people with sensory impairments or disabled people.
- Develop skills in self-assessment, reflection and evaluation; team building, group work and collaboration.

Background to the Project

Bethnal Green, is one of the most deprived wards in the UK. 40% of local people over 65 live alone. Retired older residents can feel de-skilled and devalued with no clear role in their community. Fear of crime and isolation often leads to mistrust and suspicion of young people, especially where the older and younger people are from different ethnicities. In fact young and older people are equally prone to suffer from social exclusion through limited income, lack of access to transport, crime and being overlooked by political and social structures. Points of View aimed to bring together learners of different ages as equals, with a shared purpose; voicing their feelings and opinions about their local neighbourhood. For many this would be a new experience. Through its arts and creative activities, the project provided a safe place in which to explore similarities and differences.

Points of View was developed in early 2003 by Magic Me’s Director Susan Langford working with Janice Fuller, Deputy Head teacher at Oaklands School and Denis Kane, of Peabody Trust who was then Development Manager at the Sundial Centre. The two venues are about half a mile apart and both serve the immediate community. Many Sundial members and Oaklands students therefore live in the same streets and use the same local shops and market.

The school and centre had previously worked separately with Magic Me on intergenerational projects and were now keen to develop a new project together. Older members of the Sundial Centre, having worked with primary school pupils, had expressed interest in now getting to know older, secondary age pupils, whom they saw around the streets locally, sometimes acting in what were seen as anti-social ways, but with whom they had no real contact. The School was keen to develop a project for students who were, for a variety of reasons, struggling with school, had low self-confidence and self-esteem and found communicating with adults and their peers difficult. Ms Fuller felt that the attention of the older people, and the practical nature of the project would benefit this less academic group.

The School also needed a project to meet some curriculum targets to justify students coming ‘off timetable’ over an extended period. The project was therefore designed to fit the requirements of the GCSE Citizenship one year short course, for which each student must undertake a community based activity and write this up in a journal and then as an essay, as part of their coursework. Working with the older people at Sundial on a community focused project would meet this target for the young people.
Consulting the older people about this idea, we found they were keen to support the young people to gain a qualification, but asked what they would themselves receive to credit them for their contribution. Many of the potential participants had left school at 14, and had no formal qualifications. It was agreed that the older people would therefore have the opportunity to study for the GCSE, completing the project with the young people and working with a Support Worker to complete a second essay and prepare for the exam. This would be an option and participants were also welcome to join in only the regular weekly activities. The School was already registered as an exam centre for local people, so was used to registering non students as candidates.

Project Description

Summary
The Points of View project brought together a culturally diverse group of young and older people, through a series of creative arts activities on the theme of citizenship. Meeting weekly from January to July 2004, for sessions of about 90 minutes, the 19 participants focused on what it means to be a member of the local community. They worked with artists from Magic Me to create a large photographic collage and soundtrack giving their own diverse points of view, a song greeting newcomers to LB Tower Hamlets and poetry that described different aspects of life in the Borough.

The 10 young participants were all taking GCSE Citizenship and kept a weekly journal documenting their involvement in the project, as part of their coursework. The older people were invited and supported to take the GCSE alongside their young partners and 4 of the nine chose to do so. They completed the coursework, sat the exam in the school hall in May and proudly picked up their results in August.

Recruitment and preparation
The project was announced in a Year 10 Assembly at the School and then students in the target group were invited by the Deputy Headteacher to attend an introductory workshop in school, led by the two main project artists. Students were then invited to sign up and 13 chose to do so. Three dropped out within the first two weeks. The 10 students who participated over 7 months included: 4 Bengali girls, 3 Bengali boys, 1 white boy, 1 white girl and 1 girl of white and African Caribbean heritage. Each student had a one-to-one session with the artists during which they identified their skill levels and interests in relevant areas e.g. the confidence to talk in a large or small group, or in taking photographs.

Older people were recruited through the Sundial Centre newsletter, members’ forum, at Centre events and through direct approaches to isolated individuals considered likely to be interested. Two workshops were held to introduce the project theme, structure and way of working to potential participants. 9 people signed up and stayed throughout the project, though one had very poor health in the second term and was often absent. The 9 included: 3 white women, 4 white men (one Irish and one French / British) 1 Somali man and 1 Indian man. 3 people used the Sundial Day Centre, others were resource centre members.
The Structure of the Sessions
The weekly sessions lasted around 90 minutes and followed a basic structure. They usually included:
- A focus exercise for the whole group seated in a circle.
- A session outline, followed by a preliminary exercise, and then incremental development of the themes working in various groupings:
  - pairs of one young and one older person
  - intergenerational groups of three to six people
  - single gender and peer groups; and the full circle.
- A concluding reflection exercise.
- All young students, the adults taking part in the citizenship exam, and any others who wanted to, wrote a journal as part of their coursework.

The Activities
The weekly activities were designed and run by a team of Magic Me artists. Susan Langford, a visual artist and designer, was the project manager and co-led the weekly sessions with Delroi Williams, a poet and live arts practitioner. Three freelance sessional artists joined them bringing other arts skills to the group: Anthony Lam, photographer; JB Rose, singer and writer; Julian West, musician. Sarah Hervey, an artist with a background in education for special needs, was recruited as Older People’s Support Worker, a role which included supporting less able people during the sessions, practical help with transport and refreshments and organising a series of study support sessions for the adults taking the GCSE. A Teaching Assistant from the School supported the young people, and liaised with other school staff. She also chose to study and take the GCSE exam.

From January the first term’s work focussed on participants getting to know each other, being introduced to various art forms and creative practices, and forming some sense of being a group. Early work included making a group contract, creating a timeline and mapping out local, national and global connections. The group wrote poetry about aspects of local life they considered important. A role play exercise, asked participants to form fictional community groups who bid to an elected panel of ‘councillors’ for grants to address local community problems, and other exercises enabled participants to discover the many active roles they had each taken on within their community throughout their lives.

Towards, and after, Easter there was a concentration on themes to do with the exam curriculum, and more outward looking activities. These included going out as groups to take photographs in the area around Sundial Centre, and over the Easter break, individuals using ‘throwaway cameras’ to take portraits of their local ‘heroes’ and places with particular significance to people. From April onwards new art forms and artists were introduced, including singing and song writing, and the younger participants were actively encouraged to both develop their artwork and strengthen relationships with the older participants.

Coursework for the exam had to be submitted in late April. All candidates completed two essays, one on their project experience, and the other on a controversial subject of their choice. The four older people chose to research and write about the issue of exclusion of young people from school, which linked closely to their new understanding of pressures facing their younger partners. The Deputy Head Teacher
came to Sundial Centre to coach the adults in essay writing and exam techniques. In May the four older people and Teaching Assistant joined 120 students in the school gym for the 90 minute exam; at the next session there was a post-exam celebration and strong sense of relief.

In the last half term the group produced a series of artworks and a presentation, to share their work with an invited audience. They created individual photographic A4 collages, working with prints and photocopies to draft ideas and then with the photographer to make digital collages on computer. These were then placed within a much larger group collage, about 2 by 4 metres. The collages included photos taken during the project and copies of people’s photos brought in from home. Participants interviewed one another about their images and stories, and an interview was taped with each person, based on a chosen image, creating a soundtrack for the large artwork, which documented the local area and its people, in the past, present and future.

The group had a day trip together, going up the Thames on a riverboat, and visiting the Royal Festival Hall and National Portrait Gallery. They also rehearsed their song, wrote and practised presentations telling the story of the project and drew up invitations and a guest list for their celebratory event in mid July. This event attracted an audience of peers, family members and school staff, and comprised a series of presentations and an exhibition of work. Students demonstrated some of the exercises they’d done, for people to try themselves.

The group met again, at the School in August to pick up their GCSE results, in the full glare of TV cameras and local press, then again at Magic Me’s AGM when 12 participants presented their achievements to a new audience. In late 2004 the older people nominated Oaklands School for a Help the Aged Living Legends Award, for the best intergenerational initiative involving a school in the UK. Seven of the group attended the Awards ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel in April 2005, when they won both the school’s Award and another, as the best in all categories that year.

What worked
This was an ambitious project which brought together a culturally diverse group of individual young and older people over 7 months to create artworks together and prepare for a GCSE exam. 10 young and 9 older people sustained regular committed attendance and involvement in the project, with all the young and four of the older group passing the exam.

Using a range of creative activities worked as a way to bring the generations together and as tools to discover and record the local community, past, present and future. Having a range of activities catered for different tastes and abilities, and the universal themes enabled participants to contribute their own stories and experiences. The project was able to meet the needs of a very diverse group, including a man with increasing dementia, a man with limited English, and young people who at first would not speak at all in the group.

Having Points of View as a title, encouraged people to see that they did not have to all agree on everything; we assumed that there would be differences. The citizenship theme enabled the group to have discussions about the different cultures to which
people belonged, and particularly for the adults, to gain more understanding of their neighbours, the reason why they had joined the project.

What didn’t work
The structure and timing of the project meant that the weekly 90 minute sessions felt too short and the fact that the project continued into the summer term meant a clash with exams in other subjects and a drop in attendance during June. A follow-up project (2005/06) has required students to sign up to stay on an extra 30 minutes until 4pm, and runs from October to April.

GCSE Citizenship is a new exam and the school has only one year’s experience of teaching it. Lack of clarity about what was required of students caused some tension and confusion for the artists, who needed to design activities which worked well as community development tools, and supported the participants to learn for this specific curriculum purpose. The need to decide after only a few months, whether to take the exam or not, put pressure on the older people; a longer lead time would have allowed them to be more informed and confident in making this choice.

The project was funded, generously, by the Learning and Skills Council London East from a new fund ‘The Improved Citizenship Initiative’ specifically for intergenerational projects targeting “13-19 year old disaffected learners and elderly citizens.” However once the bid had been approved and negotiation of the specific contract terms began we discovered LSCLE would not fund people aged over 65 because of their focus on employment related skills. Recruitment was already underway at this stage, Magic Me negotiated hard and the funds were forthcoming, however we were specifically told that in spite of the clear and public success of the project, LSCLE would not fund any future work with over 65’s, an upper age limit we and Sundial Centre could not agree to.

What has changed as a result of the project
Changes happened during the project, on its completion and afterwards.

Confidence and communication
The young people were chosen for the project because they experienced low levels of self-confidence and were mostly under achieving in school as a result. The majority grew in confidence, some very notably, and most became able to converse with adults, and stand up to speak or sing in front of an audience. One girl noted that she now had the courage to ask for help in class, which she had never done before. Two boys continued to struggle with speaking to adults until the end, although they were always the first to arrive at sessions, helping the artists to move furniture and set up the room.

One boy, who had almost not been included in the project, (because he was so shy and virtually silent, it felt like this might be too much pressure for him) had made remarkable progress. Taken under the wing of an older partner he began to engage and make eye contact, then to speak and joke with this man, to the point where he amazed a teacher when he volunteered to read aloud in class and did so loud enough to be heard. A girl who was also silent at the start of the project, merely smiling at anyone who spoke to her, grew in stature as the project developed, and revealed herself as very confident underneath. She modelled a corset on a visit to
the Geffrye Museum, and actually got into trouble for being cheeky to a teacher at School, which felt like a real result!

The older people had a variety of experiences of bringing up children and being with teenagers, and differed in their approaches to supporting the young group. They grew in confidence about how to best do this, learning from one another.

“Got A. to write ten lines about the River Thames for me. Because I told him I could not write and I needed his help, so he made the effort to help me.”

The adults were less used than the young people to working in a group, and it took some time to enable everyone to have a voice in group discussions, with more confident members dominating.

**The exam**
All those who sat the exam passed it, including the four older people, for whom studying was unusual. One man, then 77, had left school aged 12 and never sat an exam in his life before.

“It was great, a challenge. It was daunting for someone of my age.”

“It was a bit of excitement. I enjoyed it, but I wouldn’t want to go through it again.”

Having the adults choose to take the exam, when they didn’t have to, made a big impact on the young students:

“Seeing them (in the exam hall) made me happy and really confident. I used to shake and not fully concentrate. This time it was okay because they were there.”

“They affected the way I studied. I actually studied more for some reason.”

Positive Impact on other school work, creative and voluntary work
Though no explicit links were made to other curriculum areas, as this felt too complicated and ‘objective heavy’, students reported gains beyond Citizenship.

“I used to think that I was not real good at drawing, but after (doing the project) I put my mind to it, saying I have to do it (and) it comes out quite good. So I think if I’m open it will work better than me just shutting down.”

The adults who chose to study for the exam gained new skills in using computers. Two subsequently joined the Sundial Centre newsletter editorial team, writing or editing articles and interviewing members. The project gave the Centre the impetus to set up a computer with internet access in the coffee bar, for members use.

**Attitudes to young and older people**
People in the participant generations shifted in their stated attitudes to the other age group and moved from generalisations to talking about individuals. The young people were most vocal about their changes:

“I feel like I can talk to older people and understand what they’re going through (now) Before I thought they were just people that didn’t have much. But now I can really sit and talk to them and understand where they’re coming from.”
“Before, I used to think the way I act, the way my brain works, that older people won’t commit to it, but after I done this it looks like the older people do commit to what children actually do and how their mind works. We got to know how their mind works. We got to know how they feel and they got to know how we feel about it.”

One older woman wrote in her journal:
“On reflection what I’m liking more and more about this programme is how the students are more relaxed with us and want to be in our company.”

The adults who sat the exam expressed new understanding of the pressures on young people, particularly the less academic who might have chosen more practical jobs or apprenticeships in past times.

The older people were special guests at the young people’s Leaving Ceremony at the School in May 2005. They proudly watched ‘our’ students receive their certificates and were highly impressed by the whole student body, the level of family support and the quality of the staff and their relationships with students. They left the event as strong ambassadors for the School, a real shift for those who had started with negative perceptions of young people ‘hanging around.’

The School staff had to adjust to having older people as visitors, as students and as exam takers. Many were more used to seeing older people as recipients of community initiatives, than equal participants, and the project had a big impact by bringing active, able, older learners as role models into the School.

**How do you know**
A range of methods were used to monitor the progress of the project and to evaluate how it went. Led by the Magic Me core artists these included:

**With participants**
- Individual reviews with young people at the start, midway point and end of the project. They completed a questionnaire and interview with the core project artists at the start of the project, and set individual aims for themselves. An interview at the end of the project recorded changes in their skills, attitudes and confidence levels and how they felt about the experience.
- Individual reviews with older people at the start and the end of the project, to ascertain their interests, skills and confidence levels and informal individual discussions with the Older People’s Support Worker. End of project discussions covered what support, if any, people needed to go on to further learning.
- Weekly reflection on progress by participants, as part of the regular workshop sessions.
- Individual’s comments to artists and staff team at other times.
- Participants’ project journals and coursework essays described their experience of the project.
• The project activities themselves including discussions, group activities and the artworks created by individuals and the group. These documented progress within an art form, and participants’ attitudes and relationships to one another and to their community.
• Other creative work by group members including: articles written by older people for the Sundial Centre monthly newsletter; poetry written by one man about his experience of being part of the group.
• Discussions by a group of young and a group of older people, transcribed to complete the funders’ monitoring form, mid-way through the project.
• Intergenerational group evaluation session on last day.
• Older people’s group evaluation discussion after project ended.

With partners
• Weekly discussions by artists and other staff team members on individual participants’ and the group’s progress.
• Feedback from school and Sundial Centre staff on their observations of students and older people outside the project times.
• Observation and noting of individual’s progress during sessions by staff team, including visits by senior school staff.
• Keeping a register of attendance of participants.
• Final evaluation discussion with school and centre staff.

With others
• GCSE results and examiners report to the school.

What did you learn
What would you do differently in the future

Setting up the project
• It was important that Centre staff visited the School to help prepare the young people to work with older people, to provide information and to be a friendly known face to greet the young people on their first visit.
• Both venues had to think carefully about how they would host their visitors from a different age group, from the moment they came in the front door and brief any staff, students or members with whom they would come into contact.
• The Support Worker was not appointed early enough to help develop the programme and play much of a role in recruitment. This would be helpful in future.
Project activities

- The older men were more willing to accept the non-verbal communication of the boys, which some of the older women found frustrating. Dividing into male and female only groups for some activities, led by the two core artists, brought the young and older people together in a different way and was useful in generating more intimacy and greater contributions from the young people.
- It was difficult to design activities which suited the needs of the exam curriculum, the group of people and the plan to make creative work to share with an audience. This was achieved and worked well most of the time, but it put pressure on the artists and the participants.
- Participants requested more action and less talking in a future project, and wanted a clear end goal from the outset. One older woman is a Governor of the local nursery school and proposed the idea of an intergenerational group making toys for the children there. With her support this idea was developed and funding found.

Future plans

- Playing with Possibilities runs from October 05 to April 06 with students again using the project towards their GCSE, but less emphasis on this in the sessions. Three older people, with a GCSE, have joined this project, sharing their experience with their peers, and engaging with a new group of students.

School staff have been much keener to propose students for this project given the progress they witnessed in the first pilot project.

Resource Materials

Available on Magic Me website: short summary report and photographs
Report on the project and its evaluation. Website: www.magicme.co.uk

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Reminiscence Work Involving Drama and Theatre

Key words: arts, drama, grandparents, reminiscence, schools, theatre

Working across the generations
Making a play about any subject is one of the best ways to learn about it, and this is particularly true when one is talking about a piece of theatre growing out of an intergenerational exchange. The young performers need to gather as much information as possible in order to be able to re-present the past effectively. They also need to empathise with the feeling of the story-teller and imagine themselves in the particular situation they are performing, so they can make the audience believe it is really happening. They will probably require more than one meeting with their sources, because they will find there are gaps in their knowledge as they start to improvise and write their plays. In this way, a more on-going relationship can be created between young and old and the older people will be more engaged in the process and more keen to see the outcome in performance. Working on a play based on their memories can also be a pleasurable experience for older people. They will probably have a chance to meet other older people whom they may not previously have known, and to hear new stories similar to their own experience, or maybe very contrasting and different.

Age Exchange Theatre Trust, from which I have recently retired after 23 years as Artistic Director, grew out of an inter-generational theatre experiment. Working as Education Office for Task Force, a voluntary organisation supporting older people in London, I had encountered reminiscence sessions in sheltered housing units and been delighted by listening to the old people’s stories of the days when they were young. I invited a group of ‘A’ Level Theatre Arts students from a local school to work with a group of 85-90 year old residents on a play based on these stories. Both groups derived so much satisfaction from the process, and the audience to whom they eventually performed enjoyed the product so much, that I decided to set up a separated organisation to develop reminiscence theatre and called it Age Exchange to honour the origins of the project.

Professional reminiscence shows
The professional actors recruited to the company rehearsed and performed shows based on the memories of older people around topics of general interest and social-historical importance, such as health, housing, love, work and leisure. The older people were interviewed individually and in groups, and the actual words recorded in these interviews formed the basis of the scripts for the shows. The young performers, mostly aged 20-40, represented the older people when young, and the audiences experienced the shows as a somewhat rejuvenating mirror of their own lives, awakening many long-forgotten memories. The actors always joined in the post-show discussions with the older people who then shared many more memories which had been triggered by the performance. This form of inter-generational exchange has underpinned all thirty of the professional productions I have been involved with over the years.
Theatre-in Education with professional actors, older people and school children

For some years prior to starting work with older people, I had been involved with Theatre in Education and I was keen to see if this approach could be used fruitfully in inter-generational reminiscence. In TIE, the actors take on roles and present a dramatic situation to a class of school children and the latter participate in the action, usually taking a group role and interacting with the characters. The children learn by listening, by doing and by encountering differing points of view which they help to resolve. Historical subjects, social issues and even ethical or moral questions had been aired in classrooms through this method, which supported children’s learning in a novel, creative and often profound way.

TIE companies often prepared special scenery in the classroom and this helped the children to feel they were in a different time of place. I had recently set up the Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre which was a small museum of everyday life in the 1930s and 40s, with a separate studio area which could house different exhibitions, performances and events. This was kitted out as a complete 1930s classroom with desks, 1930s teaching aids and giant ticking clock for a newly devised TIE show about schooling in the past. The two actors played a fierce teacher and a clever pupil whose education is limited by problems over money and prejudice against working class girls with academic ambitions. The children played the class of pupils who spent a whole morning being educated 1930s style and observing the difficulties faced by the teacher who is ambitious for her star pupil and the girl who is thwarted by her situation. The children learned a lot about how different schooling was, but also about issues of social class and educational opportunities. They got involved in discussion with the characters and shared their dilemmas.

The older people, who gave their stories for this play, then joined the class and shared their experience with the pupils. They worked in small groups, each group preparing a scene around the experience of the older person, and these scenes were then shown to the whole group, so that everyone heard all the stories. The older people greatly enjoyed this way of working with the children, and further productions followed where they even took on dramatic roles within the TIE framework.

Goodnight Children Everywhere

The theme was the wartime evacuation of London’s children in September 1939. The programme was mounted exactly fifty years later when the subject was highly topical all over again. The whole project, including the creation of a three-dimensional exhibition and an accompanying publication of stories and images was supported by the local education authority. The title of the project “Goodnight Children Everywhere” was a signature phrase from the children’s radio programme of the time, and also a well-known song recorded by Vera Lynn and others, which caught the spirit of children missing parents and vice-versa.

Many of the volunteers in the Reminiscence Centre had stories to tell and many older people responded to the invitation in the local press to come and record their stories. In addition to a series of group interviews, eighty individuals recorded their memories of being evacuated and, for almost all of these people; the project was the first opportunity they had had to do so. For many, the recall process was quite an emotional one, reviving the pain of parting from parents, often at a very young age,
settling with new foster-families, coping with hostility from locals and at the end of the war coming back to a very different London and a greatly changed home. “Once an evacuee, always an evacuee” was a phrase several people used to show how deeply the experience had marked their lives, regardless of how welcoming their new families had been. For those who found more love in their wartime homes than with their own families, and there were quite a number of them, the return to London was sometimes more traumatic than the departure, and many people had retained close contact with their billet-families all through their lives.  

The theatrical version of this material for children would need to take them through this emotional journey, without overwhelming them. Most children were evacuated with their schools, so the group role of an evacuee class would work well for the children in our programme. An obvious key role to be taken by one of the professional actors was that of teacher, usually the only adult known to the children on their journey to their new life. Andy Andrews, a very experienced performer who co-wrote this production with me, took on this role and steered the children through the day.  

The play started in a room laid out as a 1939 classroom, but without the full paraphernalia of separate desks that we had used in the earlier theatre project. The purpose of this space was to enable the children to learn about the coming war as though they themselves were about to be caught up in its consequences. This preparation included hearing a very simple explanation from the teacher as to why Britain was now at war, moving to a cramped improvised darkened underground shelter where they learned to identify air-raid warnings and all-clear signals and then, back in the 1939 classroom, practising drills for their own safety. This somewhat frightening experience was designed to help the children recognise the danger of staying in London and the desirability of seeking safety in the countryside.

At this point, a second actor entered the classroom, playing a parent who refused to let his child be evacuated. He shared his anxieties about the children leaving their families for the unknown and articulated the frequently expressed fatalistic attitude, “If we’re going to go, we’ll all go together”. The teacher obviously put the case for the children’s safety and potential danger of bombing faced particularly by London and its inhabitants, but his attitude to evacuation did give the children a sense that the unknown countryside might also have its dangers.

The children then made their final preparations for evacuation and were marched to the exhibition space in the Reminiscence Centre. On one wall was a mural painted from a 1939 photograph of a trainload of evacuees. The children, with eyes closed, were talked through the long journey from London to the countryside, including farewells, limited provisions meant to last the whole journey running out in the first hour, uncertainty about the destination and endless delays as priority on the rails was given to moving munitions and men. At the end of their imaginary journey, the children were told that they had arrived, tired and late at their destination, the Village  

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3 The stories and photos collected during this project are found in “Goodnight Children Everywhere” by Pam Schweitzer, pub. Age Exchange 1990
4 Andy Andrews subsequently wrote a one-man show entitled “Dear Mum”, based on the letters and testimony we had collected from evacuees, and this was performed by Andy in older people’s centres across London and in Copenhagen.
Hall in a country area, where they were awaited by the families who were going to take them into their homes. They were greeted by the third actor, the Billeting Officer, who represented all the prejudices encountered by the evacuees in the countryside, giving them a sense of being an unwelcome burden and unwholesome mob. She lined the children up to meet the ‘billet-parents’. The country people were represented by the older real-life evacuees, who played out their own remembered experience of this situation. They chose their evacuees quite aggressively, which was how they remembered it: “We need a strong boy to work on the farm. Let’s feel your muscles” or “We want two girls. Boys are just trouble.” The children were examined for nits and, if they were holding hands with their classmates, they were ruthlessly separated. For the original evacuees, leaving siblings and friends to go to separate homes on arriving at their first destination had been as traumatic as leaving parents behind in London and we wanted to evoke this for the children of today. Of course the children knew that this was a played-out scene, but this process did bring the underlying reality home to them very strongly and a few tears were shed as they were led them away by the older people from their friends. A group of older participants commented on what they had observed as the children participated in these scenes:

Dorothy: If the children act out the story themselves, I think it gives them a good idea as to what the child, say it was an evacuee, what the child must have felt at the time, being taken away from home. It gives them more of an insight into what that child’s mind had felt than if they just read it.

Margaret: They’ve actually got tears in their eyes, oh they were upset.

Joyce: They were choked …Especially when they parted friends or split brother and sister up…….

Lil Murrell: They actually lived those parts, those children, especially the ones who were left behind in the billeting centre, the ones no-one picked. They really felt ……. what it was like.  

In the lunch break, the children met the real evacuees again, this time out of their billet-parents role, and they were shown the original letters these older people had written home to their parents when they were children, and photos taken of them in the country.

For the afternoon session, the class returned to the original space, now refurbished as a country classroom. All these moves to and from different parts of the building throughout the day were intended to give the children direct experience of disruption and of not knowing where they were going next. In order to enter into the feelings of children living far from home the children wrote letters home as though they were far away and this focused their minds on the things they would miss most if they were to be evacuated in this way. The Billeting Officer visited them to complain of their unruly behaviour, to read them a string of complaints from their country hosts and to instil in them the country code. This critical character became a target for the children’s sense of unfairness, so that they were able to empathise with

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5 Age Exchanges Pam Schweitzer pub Age Exchange 1993 p. 54
and express the feelings experienced by London evacuees at the time, but which those 1939 children could never have risked saying. In order to reassert the 1939 reality, the teacher in role insisted that they temper their comments and listen politely to the Billeting Officer’s criticisms.

In the final session the children worked in depth with the older evacuees. Each group listened to the memories of one of the older people and then worked closely with that person for maybe half an hour dramatising their story. Because the children had to perform that older person’s memories, they needed all the bits of information and detail their source could provide. They strongly identified with “their” old person, taking responsibility for the performance of his or her story, knowing that it was true. The scenes were shared with the rest of the class, so everyone heard all the stories and the older people finished the afternoon by answering the children’s questions in an open forum.

Before the children came to the Centre to participate in the project, we had held workshops for the teachers, discussing how they might maximise the project in cross-curricular work. Every school received a copy of the book of stories and photographs as a source for classroom work. The children’s level of understanding, both cognitive and emotional, was reflected in the high quality of follow-up work produced with teachers back in the classroom. After the project was over, this work from all the schools who had participated in the project formed a delightful display in the Centre for all the real evacuees and the general public to see, and this was a ‘giving back’ to the older people of what the children had learned on every level.

The children had learned by being and doing, as well as watching, on the basis of the old Chinese proverb: “I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand.” This method of bringing history to life for children by performance and participatory re-enactment is now quite commonly found in museums and greatly compliments the traditional museum school visit with its ‘spotting’ tasks and tick-sheets. What the reminiscence-based TIE provided additionally was the presence of the older people to reinforce the personal meaning of events in recent history and the experiential adventure in a rich purpose-designed three-dimensional environment through which the children could relive those events and imbue them with their own personal meaning.

For the older people, in addition to the opportunity to record their stories, there was a renewal of the reality of their own experience. Working with children of the age they had been when they were evacuated and seeing their reactions brought back sharp memories of themselves when young. They were put back in contact with the small person who was still inside them, recapturing not only the long-forgotten detailed facts of their evacuation experience, but also the long-buried emotions they had to cope with at the time. Playing the billet-folk, some of whom had been so frightening for them at the time, was a chance to exorcise that memory, which had left a surprising number of them with feelings of rejection on the basis that they were the last to be chosen. Above all having the chance to transmit their real childhood experience in an enjoyable way to today’s children and to join them in acting out their story with a small group for the rest of the class, made the older people feel purposeful, useful and creative. They enjoyed directing and, in some cases, performing their stories with the children. There was never a shortage of ex-
evacuees to participate and there were nearly always at least five volunteers every day willing to join in.

One might think that one production of a TIE show like “Goodnight Children Everywhere”, which had thirty performances to different school classes, might exhaust the supply of ‘real evacuees’. In fact, this show, which is so relevant to children’s understanding of recent history, has been revived three times at Age Exchange and every time new evacuees have come forward. It is important to remember that there are always people who are sharing their stories for the first time. The older people who have the chance to record and work through their memories in this way are a tiny minority of those who could do so and extending that opportunity more widely is a very good reason to repeat projects of this kind regularly down the years.

For children, the theme of war and its impact on families will unfortunately always be important and relevant. It is noteworthy that the 1990s revival of the “Goodnight Children Everywhere” project had special power for a new generation of young refugees from war-torn Somalia, many of who were in the local schools, and whose follow-up work, both drawing and writing, reflected much of their own experience.

**Intergenerational Youth Theatre**

Many towns have their own Youth Theatre of drama group meeting at weekends or after school to work on productions, but surprisingly few directors of such groups think of bringing local elders into their projects. This is a pity since they can provide stories from their own lives which are relevant to the local area, which would give the young people a stronger sense of what their community was like in the past, and which would make good material for a new play.

When deciding on the subject for reminiscence play to be performed by young people, it is very important that that they can relate to the topic and connect it with their own lived experience. This might mean choosing stories about the older people’s childhood experience, but it does not have to be so restricted. Once the theme of the play has been decided, a good way to start work is to invite a small group of perhaps four older people to be a panel of experts to tell of their experience of a particular time or place or event. The young people can then be divided into small groups to work with just one older person whose story they have found interesting, hearing about it in more depth and then making a short scene about it under the direction of the older person, and maybe including that person as a character, as him or herself, or as a narrator. When the older people see what the young people have made of their stories, they often remember more detail or take the chance to clarify what really happened if it clear that this has not been understood. They may also say more about their remembered feeling at the time to help the young people engage with the spirit of their stories. The process of telling a story and then seeing it played back by the young people can be very fascinating, but sometime a little unnerving for the older people. They may be quite surprised by the interpretations the children put on their stories.

In the weeks leading up to a production, the young people can discuss with their group leader and one another which stories they want to include in the play and maybe ask their own older relatives for additional stories around the agreed topic.
They must work out a way to link the different stories into a coherent whole so that it sustains the interest of their audience. They may well want to refer back to the elders over production matters like the scenery or the costumes to make sure they are appropriate for the period in which the stories are set. All those who have helped with the play, whether by telling their stories or by loaning objects of photos or costumes for the production, must have a sense their input has been valued. They should be invited to see the show and the young people should acknowledge their elders’ contribution to every performance.

I shall now give some examples of plays made by the Youth Theatre group at Age Exchange when I was Artistic Director there.

“In Service”
This was a play performed by young people aged eleven to fifteen and it was based on the stories of two older women. They had both been sent as fourteen year olds to work in domestic service, but their experience of this situation had been very different. Margaret had had to give up her schooling and all ambitions and felt humiliated by the experience. Laura was pleased to have a safe place to start her working life and loved her employers. The children were shocked to think of starting work so young and to hear that parents needed the extras bit of money so badly that they had to send their children away to places where they would work very long hours for very little reward. Laura saying she remembered her mother saying “It’s one less mouth to feed” really took them by surprise. They were really quite upset when both women told them that they had come across money left under the carpet for them to find as a test of their honesty.

The Youth Theatre members divided into two groups and each worked with one of the women, who attended rehearsals and improvised with them. This was especially helpful in correcting misunderstandings and avoiding anachronisms. The young people sometimes found it hard to understand why the older people had not rebelled and why they had accepted the class and money divide. The older people explained that they needed to keep their jobs or their mothers would have been disappointed in them so they kept their thoughts to themselves. However, we did introduce some scenes where one person said the lines which were publicly spoken and another spoke her thoughts and feeling. The young people learned quite a lot about living conditions and daily life for young people in the past.

Margaret reflected afterwards on the process of rehearsing and performing her story. She told me that she had been moved by what the children had played back to her and she had had to confront her painful feelings on this subject. She also said that the children’s work had enabled her to distance herself from the experience enough to come to terms with it and that it had been a therapeutic process. The children identified with her feelings and played her story with considerable empathy, helped by the fact that they were the same age as she had been when all this happened.

“Blitz”
This was another show by the Youth Theatre group prepared from older people’s memories in 1991, fifty years after the London Blitz. There was no shortage of memories for the young people to work on, but the cast numbers were very small and the group were worried about whether they could fill the big space which had been
booked for their opening performance. We decided to invite the older people to participate, some of them reading their memories as an introduction to a scene, and others who were willing to actually perform alongside the children.

Initially the two groups worked separately and the older people developed their own scenes through improvisation. They very much enjoyed doing this, especially the initial improvisations where they were remembering the events as they played them out and reminding one another spontaneously of what had happened. It was more difficult to remember the sequence of dialogue when they repeated the scenes and at first they were all speaking at once and getting frustrated. However, when we roughly scripted the lines, they did manage to get them in sequence and found the whole activity very stimulating. The young people polished their own scenes, including some based on stories from their own grandparents and then we put the two groups together to prepare some crowd scenes. One was especially effective when everyone was gathered in the air-raid shelter, all generations together, which is of course just as it would have been at the time of the Blitz. The joint scenes involving the children and older people were very lively and realistic. The audience found it very pleasing to watch the old and young playing the scenes together and singing together. A book of the older people’s stories was published to coincide with the opening performance and the whole project won the Age Resource award for 1991.

“Grandmother’s Footsteps”
The model described above was further developed in this inter-generational reminiscence show produced in 1994. Here the old people played their grandparents and the children, aged ten to eighteen, played the older people when they were young. In the first version of this show, the older people also played the children’s grandparents, basing their performances on the children’s descriptions of their grandparents, but this part of the play was dropped thereafter as both generations felt less confident about these up to date stories, especially as so many grandparents would be coming to see the eventual performance.

In devising the show, each older person worked with a small group of children creating short scenes about their own grandparents and the kind of things they did with them and what they learned from them. The children needed to learn a lot more about what the older person was like as a child in order to represent that in their scenes. It was intriguing for the children to have to think about these old people once being young like them, and even being quite naughty, but living in a very different world. We were going back seventy years and the photos of grandparents produced for the young people to look at showed them in the clothes they wore early in the twentieth century. Some scenes were modelled on these photographs, especially at the opening of the play, where each child introduced ‘their’ older person, dressed as the grandparent and standing very still:

“This is Olive’s grandmother. She was a dumpy lady with a big tummy and she always wore a white apron over it” or

“This is Bill’s grandfather. He always had a pipe that he smoked in one hand and a pint of beer in the other,” or

“This is Margaret’s grandmother; she always wore gloves and a hat to go out.”
Although we did not use full costume for the production, the older people wore long black skirts and white blouses with additional special items such as shawls, gloves, hats, aprons and pipes, which they associated with their grandparents. The young people wore simple blouses and skirts or trousers, also in black and white. This helped to place the play back sixty or seventy years to when the old people were children. Throughout the process of making the play, the young people really enjoyed working with these stories of vivid characters from another time. The show travelled to several countries in Europe, which was a major undertaking considering that the group included people of eight to eighty years old. There were some ups and downs, but on the whole it was a tremendously positive experience for both generations, and some very close relationships developed between young and old. Most of the people the group played to in Austria, Germany, France and Belgium had not seen old and young performing together and the audiences found the idea very appealing.

Again a book of the older people’s stories and photos was published to coincide with the opening of the “Grandmother’s Footsteps” production, so that those fascinating memories of people who were born in the nineteenth century were preserved for the future.

Making Theatre with Children and Older People in Classrooms
Where classroom teachers have had the opportunity to develop intergenerational drama projects in classroom time, there have been some very rich learning experiences for old and young alike. It is often very helpful to have an outside director to co-ordinate such a project, but this is not absolutely necessary if the classroom teacher has enough flexibility and backup to be able to liaise with the older people and organise their work with the young people in the classroom or hall. Both groups need to be properly prepared for their work together. The older people need to undertake some preliminary reminiscence work themselves so they can be thinking about stories they would like to share with the young people. They need to understand also that classroom procedures and atmospheres have changed a great deal since they were at school and they are likely to encounter a much freer and more relaxed environment. They will not be expected to teach the children, but rather to share their experience with them and help them with re-enacting their stories.

It is increasingly important to reflect the experience of ethnic minority elders in intergenerational theatre projects, especially in London and other urban areas, where school classes are made up of children from many cultures and backgrounds. Inviting ethnic minority elders to share stories about their countries of origin and their life journeys can provide children from those minorities with very positive role models. Giving weight to their histories, recognising their countries’ long-standing links with Britain and acknowledging the existing connections the elders still have with their countries of origin gives a sense of value to the minority experience.

A detailed case study of reminiscence drama work between African elders and ten-year olds in Wingfield Primary School, South-East London:
The following Case Study shows work with primary school children, several of them African, and a group of African elders belonging to the recently-formed Ajoda organisation (Ajoda meaning together). The Nigerian elders were keen to share their experience of growing up in and African village with the class of nine and ten year olds at Wingfield School, situated on a huge estate in south east London which is in
the process of demolition. The class teacher of the Year Five class in question was also Nigerian and very enthusiastic about this link. She could see how the benefits for the children would extend beyond mainstream curriculum areas of English, Geography, History, Religious Studies and Citizenship into social skills, personal development, tolerance and self-esteem. Jennifer Lunn, the director working on the project with the children and the elders, had weekly sessions with the class over ten weeks and several of these were in the presence of, and with the active participation of, the elders. Jen was supported by Raul Vilar Heras, a Spanish graduate placement working with me for one year to study reminiscence theatre, one of many students from overseas attached to Age Exchange over the years.

Over the weeks, the children made scenes with the elders taken from their memories of growing up in an African village, including their chores, their school day, and their punishments, attitudes to their elders, customs, festival and the fabric of village life. The children then worked in small groups to narrate and act out the stories of the elder’s journeys to London and the beginnings of their lives here. The piece was rounded off by the elders talking about the things they missed about Africa. Their play was finally presented to parents and a general public too much acclaim, with the elders in their full African costumes full of colour and style. The inclusion of song was a vital part of this piece and really drove the piece forward with an infectious energy.

Here Jennifer Lunn describes the aims of the project and the session by session form it took.

**The aims of the project:**

- To improve intergenerational and intercultural understanding in the young people and group members.
- To produce a piece of quality theatre for performance to the local community.
- To allow both group members and young people an opportunity to work with professional artists in a professional venue.
- To provide African students with a strong sense of their cultural heritage and identity.

**Session reports and evaluations:**

*Session 1:*

Raul and I took and Nick’s Memory Boxes to show to the children today. These were large wooden ammunition boxes which had been converted by artists into life story boxes produced with individual elders. Twenty-five were produced at the Reminiscence Centre, many by older people and artists from ethnic minorities, and we were interested to see what the children would make of the visual display of photos, artefacts and memorabilia displayed in some African boxes. We discussed the boxes and what the children thought they could learn about the men from their boxes. The children worked in groups to write stories about some of the photos in the boxes.

- It was very exciting to see the children so interested in Nick and Tony
- The children are very creative which is great
- There are several children recently arrived from Africa which will be very interesting to explore
- The session went well and the children seem excited about the project
Session 2:
The Ajoda members came to school today. They introduced themselves, sang and talked about growing up in an African village. The children sang the elders a Nigerian song they learnt from their teacher. The children and elders then worked together to create scenes from village life.

- It was lovely to see the more recently arrived African children make an instant connection with the elders. Neneh physically grew in herself when she started talking about where she came from.
- The elders were very impressed by the children knowing the song, which I think is important because the elders now have a little more respect for the children and perhaps the playing field is levelled a little.
- It is clear that the songs will form a major part of our piece as the children are very good and singing really centres and focuses them. It is great that it is such a common form of expression and the elders and children really come together in that.

Session 3:
We worked on creating a moving tableau and sound-scape of an African village. It is brilliant. The children were incredibly focussed and it will make a fantastic opening to the performance. It was also a good way to work on concentration and discipline.

- It strikes me that this piece is going to be fairly non-naturalistic as the children took much more to today’s worked than the improvising of scenes last week.

Session 4:
We did an exercise with the children exploring ideas of what it would be like to leave your home and move to Nigeria and only be able to take a few things. We talked about what they'd miss and what they'd take with them.

- It was very interesting that for some children, going to Nigeria would be “going home” and that for them it would be very different experience.
- The exercise developed in the children awareness that there are people in the class for whom this isn’t necessarily their home.
- Some lovely response from some children about what they’d take etc. Some silly responses but the children seemed to grow into the exercise.

Session 5:
The children and elders worked together to build up the entire opening sequence using songs, the tableau/soundscape, narration and a short school scene.

- It was quite difficult to work with them all in this way as the elders are quite demanding as are the children but we managed to work through it all.
- The result was lovely and it is a great sequence although I’m not sure how much the elders are taking in.
Session 6:
The children and elders performed for the rest of KS1 and 2 at the school. The performance was lovely and the children had made a fabulous backdrop of an African village scene. The audience seemed to love it and the head teacher was really lovely to the kids and the elders.

- We need to work on volume for Blackheath Halls
- We need to work in scenes about the elders journeys here.
- Gloria had added in an introduction to “Assemble” the piece a little-I think I’m going to steal a few bits of that as it worked very nicely.

Session 7:
We ran through the pieces again and the children talked to the elders about their journeys to Britain. The children then wrote short narrations and worked in groups to create short acted out sequences.

- The children are great at guided physical work and so this worked much better than them trying to create scenes, which they struggle with.
- It was nice for the elders to talk about and see acted out some of their adult life as they tend to focus on village life a lot when speaking to the children. It is really good for the children to start to see them as adults with lives and jobs rather than as funny characters!
- This section will give the piece more depth and we really feel we have got to know these people.

Session 8:
We rehearsed the entire piece with just the children as I needed time to be able to go over and over the messy bits which is impossible to do with the elders there as you cannot ask them to keep standing and sitting etc.

- The kids are so keen and excited but sometimes a little unfocussed. I know they can do it but I worry whether they will on Wednesday.

Performance:
The kids were fabulous. They did the piece beautifully and all looked so excited. The elders looked very proud, beautifully dressed in traditional African costume, and, of course, loved all the attention. The audience seemed to really enjoy the piece.

An evaluation of the project:
The children and the elders built very strong relationships based on developed understanding of each other. The African children were really able to develop a connection with their culture and to have their confidence improved by that. It was wonderful to see students, recently arrived from Africa, growing in confidence when able to talk about their home and speak in their native language.

The children and elders collaborated to create a 20 minute piece of theatre including scripted scenes, mime, song, dance and storytelling which was performed as part of a festival and European symposium to an audience of two hundred and fifty. The performance was of a high standard and very well received. The performance
involved projections of artwork by the children. The children also created a piece of art which acted as a backdrop for the piece. Both the children and the elders were able to work with professional theatre director, film maker and technical team and were given the experience of working in a professional environment at Blackheath Halls.

The children and elders also performed their piece to the rest of their school in a full school assembly.

The elders and the project leader returned to the rest of their school in a full school assembly.

The elders and the project leader returned to the school and presented assemblies and workshops for other classes addressing issues surrounding refugee week. The children’s evaluation with the children asking them whether they enjoyed the project and whether they thought they had learnt anything from the project?

- All the children said they had enjoyed the project and would like to do something like it again in the future.
- All the children said they had learned something from the project.
- Things they had learned included: songs, information about village life, about the elders, how to do drama, how to use a chewing stick…
- The majority of the children said that they thought they felt differently about the elders than they had before the project because they knew them better.

Further developments:
Ajoda has already returned to the school to present Assemblies for Key stages 1 and 2 as part of Refugee week. I hope to see this relationship continue in the future with further visits to the school.

Ajoda also visited a selection of other Greenwich schools as part of Refugee Week activities which led to a presentation on June 21st and the production of a book by the young people involved.

It is clear from the report above that classroom-based reminiscence work compliments many areas of the curriculum and that when theatre is the main means of expression it is a way of bringing young and old into close relationships based on creativity, fun and affection. The project enhanced the position of older people in the children’s eyes. The African elders had told them: “It takes a whole village to raise a child” and that when there is a problem in the village it is traditionally the elders who resolve it. By marginalizing older people and limiting their interaction with the young in our ‘advanced’ western society today, we are missing out on their potential. Fortunately, there is now a growing understanding that intergenerational work, whether in school time or in community based leisure and cultural projects, has an important part to play in building a healthier and more cohesive society.
Sources and references:

“Age Exchanges” by Pam Schweitzer (1993, London, Age Exchange Publications) for ideas on cross-curricular opportunities (pp8-9)
See chapter 3 of “Age Exchanges” by Pam Schweitzer, (pub Age Exchange 1993) for an indication of rewards for both age groups (pp 4-5).
*Living Through The Blitz* edited by Pam Schweitzer, pub exchange 1991

*Grandmother’s Footsteps* edited by Pam Schweitzer, pub Age Exchange 1994


“Goodnight Children Everywhere” by Pam Schweitzer, pub Age Exchange 1989

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Screen Dreams

Key words: arts, citizenship, community development, photography, media skills

“The most valuable bit in the project was speaking to the volunteers.”
Vanessa, teacher, London

Introduction:
The British Film Institute Education Development Unit (now bfi Education UK-wide but referred to herein as bfi Education) developed this project over the period 2001-2004. The project came out of a desire to continue work started by the education team at the bfi’s Museum of the Moving Image (closed in 1999). Using museum exhibits and sometimes the actors’ company, relevant workshops included London on film, the importance of film during the war period, the social context of cinema-going particularly during the 1930s-40s and a school’s drama-led project Entertaining the Nation aimed at KS2 pupils studying Britain since the 1930s.

bfi Education sought advice and training from a number of sources on the use of film within reminiscence work and set up a partnership with Age Exchange, SE London. Prior to this collaboration, Age Exchange had occasionally held film screenings. With bfi Education input, these became regular introduced screenings of films chosen by the attendees which were followed by informal discussion over tea/cakes and more formal reminiscence based discussions around the film and issues raised by it.

Based on this initial work, bfi Education successfully applied to the Adult and Community Learning Fund (ACLF) to further develop ways of working with older people and film. The aims of this project were:

- to enable people aged over 60 to realise the potential of their personal memories and experiences of cinema-going
- to begin to record and archive these for future generations
- to encourage and inform lively debate around cinema-going past and present
- to encourage inter-generational and cross-cultural debate
- to encourage participation in discussion by creating friendly and secure environments
- to nurture and broaden understanding, interest and study of film culture

The ACLF 2 year funding of the project enabled bfi Education to extend the notion of cineclubs for over 60’s within a range of venues (i.e. sheltered housing schemes, cinemas, adult education), develop good practice models, pilot intergenerational work and produce a free web resource aimed at KS2 teachers.

It was important to create an intergenerational aspect to the project to ensure that these memories and experiences were not only collected but also enjoyed by others of a different generation in a very positive way and to reinforce to participants the value of their contributions. bfi Education have a wealth of experience of working with and creating resources for film and TV media within the formal curriculum; intergenerational work not only brought together two of our important audiences but also signalled a completely new approach to working with those audiences.
Project Description:
The whole Screen Dreams project operated in a number of phases as set out below, sections 4-5 relate specifically to the intergenerational aspect:

- **Phase 1:** Training of facilitators to run film clubs on a regular or ad hoc basis took place at Age Exchange; these were identified through bfi Education and Age Exchange contacts and recruited for their experience in teaching film and/or working within a reminiscence context with older people. The more successful tutors turned out to be those with the most film knowledge as they required less time to research the films and acquired the necessary reminiscence skills through the training and practice.

  We also set up a steering group comprising people from film venues across the UK to advise on the project and to encourage the establishment of similar cineclubs across the UK.

- **Phase 2:** The funding allowed us to establish 5 film clubs in the London area: the Ritzy cinema, Brixton; 2 sheltered housing schemes in Ealing and Maida Vale; the Central Club (ex-YMCA) in central London; and continue the pilot set up at Age Exchange. For ease of managing the different clubs and because the project manager was only part-time, it was decided to keep all the cineclubs in the London region during this pilot phase.

- **Phase 3:** We produced an exhibition on Cinema-going in South-East London 1920-60 at Age Exchange based on people’s memories and including historical and current photos and donated artifacts, such as magazines, badges, diaries, etc. Film club participants from all of the clubs were encouraged to be interviewed (individually or in groups) and their memories recorded for inclusion in the exhibition. Elements of this exhibition were retained for use in other reminiscence sessions and for inclusion in reminiscence boxes for use in schools and other venues.

- **Phase 4:** With additional support and funding from North Southwark Education Action Zone, bfi Education piloted an intergenerational project with three local primary schools. This comprised:
  - A training session for Age Exchange volunteers, introducing them to reminiscence activities and interview techniques which the children would be using as part of their visit to the exhibition. This gave the volunteers a chance to understand the context of the education work, to prepare themselves for interviews and to explore the kind of personal memories which they could share with the children.
  - An INSET training session for teachers, introducing the project and offering written and visual resource materials to prepare their children for Screen Dreams exhibition visit and linking the project to curriculum based work.
• A half day visit to the Screen Dreams exhibition, with an interactive session led by bfi Education staff and interviews with older volunteers focusing on their memories of cinemas and cinema-going before, during and after the Second World War.
• Work in schools lead by the teachers, following up the class visits to Screen Dreams exhibition, including work on their own cinema reminiscence boxes and memories.
• A follow up visit from bfi Education staff to the schools, recording the children’s experiences and thoughts on the project.
• A visit to the National Film Theatre on London’s South Bank, for all pupils, parents and all volunteers who had taken part. The event took the form of a Saturday morning at the pictures, hosted by a volunteer in role as a cinema commissionaire and an actor in role as a 1940s cinema usherette. The morning began with a video compilation of interviews with the children and volunteers, after which the audience was treated to a selection of archive films, cartoons and extracts from favourites such as Flash Gordon and The Lone Ranger. There was a Film Star quiz and competition and children shared examples of the work they had done in school.

• Phase 5: As the bfi’s remit is UK-wide, bfi Education ran a second intergenerational pilot this time working with Warwickshire Arts Zone and Age Concern, Rugby. The aim of this was to ensure that the teaching materials that had been refined following feedback from the first pilot would work equally well without access to the exhibition. The resource (now available on the bfi website – see below) includes a brief history of cinema-going across the UK, visual materials, written testimonies and classroom activities. bfi Education also supplied a reminiscence box comprising elements from the exhibition. Otherwise, the general format was the same as the London project with preparatory training sessions for teachers and volunteers, visits to schools and a final Saturday morning at the pictures event at Warwick Arts Centre.
  o Six weekly film sessions were set up at Age Concern on different aspects of film and cinema-going (e.g. escapism, the war, comedy). From a regular group of about 25 people, only 3 people put themselves forward to work with the three local primary schools. However, following a final film session at which the volunteers fed back their experiences to the group and a group trip to Warwick Arts Centre to see what the children had produced several other people came forward to say they would like to be involved next time.
  o This time the children researched the local history of Rugby (with the help of a local project manager and local libraries), made visits to the sites of former cinemas, produced artwork, poems and short silent films. A dance project running in tandem with the film project inspired children’s dances on the themes of Horror movies, the 1930s dance specticals of Busby Berkeley and the musical Singin’ in the Rain, the latter performed in the foyer of Warwick Arts Centre at the start of our Children’s Matinee.
Outcomes:
The funding allowed bfi Education to allocate one part-time staff member fully to the project and to appoint an external evaluator who evaluated the project throughout by observation and informal discussion at a number of cineclub events, observation of participants attending a reminiscence session in the Screen Dreams exhibition, in-depth interviews with the project manager and two tutors, a review of tutor self-completed evaluation questions, a review of key project workers’ (i.e., those organising cineclubs or intergeneration events) observation notes and a review of all resources and documentation. Video interviews and informal discussions were also conducted in schools with the pupils and older volunteers taking part in the intergenerational project.

- Four of the five cineclubs are continuing following completion of the pilot phases. Both sheltered housing schemes successfully applied for funding through Awards for All to allow them to buy their own equipment (i.e. DVD/video projector and speakers). As both schemes have a number of residential and sheltered houses they are now able to use the equipment and run similar sessions in their other venues. One of the schemes has also received funding from Home Front Recall to run a local WW2 intergenerational project during 2005/6 and bfi Education will be supporting this by recommending tutors, helping during planning stages and providing resources. Unfortunately, due to staff changes and management pressure at the Ritzy Cinema the club was abandoned once bfi funding ceased. However, the new staff recently contacted the bfi for advice on how to re-establish the screenings.

For the housing schemes, the introduction of a cineclub proved most beneficial:
  - “The social aspect of the club is important – people have tea and cakes after the films and stay and chat to each other, sharing their opinions and memories about the film they have seen. As a result there is definitely an increased feeling of sociability amongst tenants in the scheme.”
  - Alison, Arts Organiser, Central & Cecil Housing Trust
  - “For one tenant who has undergone major surgery the club has been the first event she felt confident enough to attend and it has helped her resume her normal life again.”
  - Birgit, Manager, O’Grady Court sheltered housing scheme
  - “Most people don’t say much in the group conversations during the first session they attend but contribute more the more sessions they come to. Some people that don’t talk during the session talk to Marysia [project manager] or the other session leader individually at the end of the session.”
  - Alison, Arts Organiser, Central & Cecil Housing Trust
• The older volunteers who took part in the intergeneration project found the experience very rewarding in terms of increased confidence, positive contact with younger people, cross-generational understanding and having fun. A few have remained in touch with the schools and been invited back for events or other classroom sessions. Most have asked to be included in any future projects with bfi Education.
  o “One of the schools is literally on my doorstep and some of the kids I’ve met now speak to me – I’m very recognisable with my eye patch.”
    Peter, volunteer, Rugby
  o “I think the session was really socially beneficial to the children – just to have come to another place and to talk with an older person other than their grandparent; we tend to ignore older people in our society, don’t we?”
    Miriam, volunteer (and ex-teacher), London
  o “It’s so important for the children to meet older people and find out about their character and hear their language.”
    Annie, teacher, London

• All the schools involved with the project found it a valuable experience and felt the subject matter allowed for great scope for cross-curricular work. In the resource pack the emphasis is on English (literacy) and History (and local history) but the teachers found that the project generated work within art, drama, IT and Citizenship as well. Teachers prepared the pupils in different ways and selected different aspects of the resources to suit their needs. All the pupils were well prepared to meet the older volunteers and had written down their questions in advance either based on sample questions in the bfi resource or by formulating their own. All the pupils had a chance to interact with an older volunteer.
  o “Pupils chose names of film stars, wrote profiles, chose outfits and accessories, took still shots, acted to the camera, surveyed other classes and adults about their favourite films, wrote reviews and did a lot of work around interviewing.”
    Vanessa, teacher, London
  o “Because it was not in their space it made a difference to how they behaved, but if different people were in the classroom it would be the same; it’s given us some great resources and ideas.”
    Annie, teacher, London
  o “Objects in a reminiscence box would be vital and it will be important for the kids to make their own from their own histories. It would make most impact if the older people bring in their own objects and use them to start the discussion – what is this? Why do you think it’s important to me?”
    Dylan, teacher, London
The pupils found the interaction with the older people and the personal items or photographs that they brought with them fascinating. The teachers recognized that the process of asking questions and sharing memories was not only an important experience but a valuable skill to learn.

- “I really enjoyed the trip. My favourite part was the questioning. When I questioned you about the sad things you did not really get mad.”
  
  Esi, pupil, London

- “It just amazed me because it is so different in the past. Also I learned facts. The first one is that the usherette goes backwards when she is holding the tray with the food. The second one is that Snow White was the first Disney film.”
  
  Mary, pupil, London

- “It was strange asking questions because usually it’s grown ups asking you questions.”
  
  Pupil, London

- “I really enjoyed working with you because you shared your lovely memories about going to the cinema with us, and you let us share ours with you as well.”
  
  Yasmin, pupil, Rugby

- “I got the applause of strangers for my hard work.”
  
  Pupil, Rugby

Lessons learnt:

- Relevant partnerships are crucial to the smooth running of any project. bfi Education has worked with a number of organisations, including the Cabinet War Rooms, Westminster Archives, Warwickshire Arts Zone, North Southwark EAZ, Lambeth Arts, Age Exchange, Age Concern, Rugby, Cecil & Central Housing Trust, Picturehouse Cinemas, in developing this project. Some partnerships have worked better than others and it is important to establish from the outset each partner’s role and input and to recognise when a partnership has served its usefulness to both parties.

- It is essential to build in sufficient planning time and to budget adequately for teacher and volunteer needs e.g. transportation, cover, refreshments etc.

- It is important to work individually with all active parties to make sure that everyone is aware of their specific role within the project before bringing them together. The teachers and volunteers found it very useful to meet with each other prior to meeting the pupils; teachers who were new to intergenerational work said the importance of the volunteers only became clear once they’d met them.
When working with schools it is important to ensure that curricula needs are met. The Screen Dreams resource suggests curricula areas that can be achieved but most teachers found it most useful within History. One teacher in London explained that most of her pupils’ grandparents are African or Bangladeshi and that “it was good for the children to see what London would have been like” and felt that “the children have learnt much more about the history of London”. Another teacher felt that ‘speaking and listening’ skills are important within English and History and that the “experience of talking to older people was amazing”. Several teachers commented on the extended learning benefits of the social interaction and behaviour with visitors and the kudos gained from the rest of school by report backs in assembly and involving other classes in, for e.g., surveys of cinema-going or favourite films.

Responding to feedback from the pilots and building in some flexibility to allow for individual requirements and focus has enabled the Screen Dreams project to reach more people e.g. during 2005 and to coincide with the 60th Anniversary celebrations, bfi Education has developed Screen Dreams as a Film, War and Memory intergenerational project looking at the important role of film during WW2

Because of the multi-racial mix of schools and of our society in general, it is important to try to encourage older volunteers with a range of backgrounds to take part in intergenerational work who may reflect the experiences of the children or their parents or grandparents e.g. during 2005 working with Lambeth Arts, Screen Dreams has had invaluable contributions from WW2 serviceman from the Caribbean.

The interaction between the age groups has helped to some degree overcome stereotypes around age and culture. Links made with a few of the schools have continued with some of the older volunteers going back to talk about other topic areas e.g. school life.

The Future

bfi Education are aiming to build on this project by establishing a network of cineclubs for older people across the UK and by making available resources for intergenerational projects. We are currently looking for partners and funders to enable us to carry out this work and reach as wide an audience as possible.

An off-shoot of the Screen Dreams project is a partnership with the Schools of Education & Training and of Humanities at the University of Greenwich. Funding is being sought from the AHRC to enable more dedicated research into film and memory and the establishment of a national archive of cinema-going memories. The cineclubs would play a crucial role in providing the starting point for firsthand research with older filmgoers. The initial bid to the AHRC was given a ‘Re-Submit’ status by the board; the re-submission will be entered in June 2006.
Resource Materials:

- A FREE downloadable resource is available at: http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/teaching/screeendreams/
- A 10mins VHS/DVD is available from bfi Education that encapsulates the whole project.
- The bfi website also contains other useful information, links and resources on film for all levels. http://www.bfi.org.uk/ http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/coursesevents/mim/

“I learned much more from you than I would from a book.”
Pupil, Rugby

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Shoebox Theatre

Key words: drama, schools, storytelling, theatre

Aims of organisation
Shoebox Theatre is a funded, not-for-profit unincorporated community theatre group which works to expand horizons and break down barriers. The aim of our intergenerational workshops is to achieve this with older and younger generations (people over 60 with primary age children) by bringing them together in shared drama activities. We work through the medium of theatre games, storytelling, drama scenarios and improvised role-play.

Aims of schools project
For the older participants, to:
- offer them a challenging activity which would expand their horizons
- show them that today’s children are interested in their life experiences
- enhance their sense of personal well-being, self confidence and enjoyment
- extend their personal skills in communication and performance.

For the children, to:
- enhance their learning of school topics by hearing first-hand accounts of life experiences from a wide age range of older storytellers
- aid their understanding of events through role-play and drama
- enjoy the mutual exchange of question and answer sessions and shared games
- to appreciate the individuality of older people.

In working towards the achievement of these aims we wanted to show the different age groups, including school staff, that each has something to give the other; that a living resource can add to knowledge gained by other means, and that each participant is of value in a joint enterprise.

Project description
Over 2005 we worked with five Staffordshire LEA primary schools in and around Tamworth on variety of workshops on both curricular and extra-curricular themes.

These were:
Make Poverty History
Looking at Wildlife*
Water
World War II – Evacuation
V.E.Day
Seaside Holidays
We worked with classes of different year groups, and in the case of extra-curricular activities* with a mixed age group in an after school drama club in support of the Wildlife Trust. Some of the workshops culminated in performances by the intergenerational participants for the rest of the school and invited parents, others to a wider public. Most workshops were an end in themselves.

Having been contacted by Shoebox Theatre about what we had to offer them, the schools came back to us, saying what it was they wanted to achieve and what the specific topic would be. The content of each workshop, and the time-scale was then planned in email exchanges with the class teacher. Sometimes we might work over a whole morning or afternoon session with the same children. The older volunteers, with the help of Shoebox’s two theatre practitioners, practised their storytelling and other presentation and communication skills in a series of preparatory workshops.

Personal stories about the topic of the workshop were agreed. In school, the workshops were led by Shoebox Theatre’s actor/teacher, supported by her colleague. The volunteers joined in the warm-up activities when they were able to. Within the session, each volunteer interacted with a small group of children in a question and answer session, and told their stories when the opportunity arose. They took on roles in the improvised drama scenarios. Teachers and support staff also participated in the workshops.

It became clear in the early workshops what worked and what didn’t. Storytelling to the whole class was time consuming and did not give every child who wanted to time to ask their questions, nor allow the volunteers to make a close rapport with the children. Teachers asked for longer Q & A sessions. We quickly changed the format to allow for the more personal exchanges outlined above. What worked every time were the games, drama scenarios and role-play improvisations. Where it was appropriate – a charabanc trip to the seaside, in the air-raid shelter, or the street party, both adults and children loved to share in an unaccompanied sing-song as the workshop finale.

The after-school drama club sessions took a little time to get off the ground because we had to get used to working with a wide age range of children. What definitely didn’t work was the demonstration workshop we held in the open air as part of a wildlife open day. The children were overcome by the setting, and however often we corrected them, the organisers and MC repeatedly announced that we would be presenting a play. We will rethink the way in which we will be involved in that particular scheme next year.

One particular group of workshops for a school’s celebration of VE Day was especially rewarding because it worked so well for everyone – older and younger participants, school audience and staff. We were requested to prepare two classes of children for a performance for a whole school assembly. This we did using the older volunteers as storytellers – each narrating a story about VE Day while the children enacted it. Everyone in each class had a participating role. In all the two classes rehearsed and presented six short scenes.
In the assembly, the audience of children and adults was wholly focused on the performance and clearly absorbed by the stories. Afterwards each class from the whole school spent time with the volunteers asking questions. Perhaps because the children had just seen the performance and were full of questions, these larger Q & A sessions worked very well. There was a great buzz of excitement to the whole morning. We learnt later from the school that these activities, recorded in photos, videos, children’s follow-up work etc., were highly praised by the inspector during a school evaluation.

We evaluated the school workshops which made up this intergenerational project in several ways: observation; feedback from practitioners, volunteers, teachers and children – some orally, other written. We have continually changed procedures where this has been deemed beneficial, and then sought feedback on the changes. We would hope to run a similar intergenerational project next year and be ready to change and adjust as seems preferable.

**Resource Material**
Some photographs from our workshops are online at our website, together with a list of topics we have to offer [http://www.shoeboxtheatre.co.uk](http://www.shoeboxtheatre.co.uk)

Copies of evaluations sent to us by two of the participating schools are available to download from the Centre for Intergenerational Practice website page for this guide.

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Sixty Plus Intergenerational Project

Key words: community, drama, education, IT, learning, volunteering

Aims:
- To support older people’s independence by creating partnerships of mutual benefit between older and younger people.
- To break down barriers and prejudices between the generations, promoting social cohesion and sensitivity to each other’s needs.
- To increase older people’s confidence in their communities.
- To provide a positive first-time volunteering experience for young people so that they will remain interested in contributing to their communities in the future.

The Project began with a scheme to design an Intergenerational Mosaic at a local supermarket in 1996. After the success of this we began to seek new and sustainable ways to run intergenerational projects that would address the needs of our service users. We found that assigning volunteers straightforward practical tasks helped them ‘break the ice’ and feel their volunteering was directly useful.

The Intergenerational Reading Project aims to fill the gap in statutory services for older people with a visual impairment, sending a young person once a week to visit them for an hour to offer administrative help reading mail, sorting papers or reading a book or newspaper. Carers and neighbours seldom have time for these simple tasks and older people find it hard to adapt to assistive living aids or Braille to stay in touch.

The Intergenerational Computer Project grew from the Reading Project when we realised new technologies were not reaching older people, and that in fact many felt increasingly excluded from a modern technological society. A survey found that 42% of 172 respondents wanted to learn IT from a young person. Although there are many community classes in the area for jobseekers, some of the most disabled and elderly people who would most benefit from the new technologies were not able to access them or found classroom environments too difficult, so home-based lessons seemed the best solution. As on the Reading Project, volunteers visit for one hour a week to provide IT coaching.

The Intergenerational Language Project was developed after several people approached us about their elderly parents who were speakers of other languages. With 100 languages spoken in Kensington and Chelsea, many people arriving in the country remained in their ethnic communities without learning English. As they become older, however, and their need to access services increases, they become heavily dependent on these communities for help with translating with doctors etc. Providing an opportunity to learn English as a second language informally in their homes helps develop their confidence in English-speaking environments and keeps housebound people mentally stimulated and challenged.
Sixty Plus already had considerable experience of working with volunteers to provide ad-hoc practical help, escorting, shopping and gardening for older people. We realised that young people, particularly in the sixth form, were increasingly seeking supported volunteering opportunities as part of citizenship courses, Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards, Millenium Volunteers schemes etc, and sending them once a week to visit one person both provided a safe learning environment for volunteers and offered a stable service to our older members. Of course, intergenerational work has its own ‘added value’.

Despite its reputation for affluence, Kensington and Chelsea contains two of the UK’s 10 poorest wards, and many of its residents are isolated and disenfranchised; younger and older people face many of the same problems, often lacking a voice, financial means and a sense of integration. In the face of negative media stereotyping, which dictates that the two groups cannot possibly live alongside in a city environment, we found that intergenerational work builds the confidence of both younger and older people. Older people are surprised and heartened to find that young people care and want to help, and are also able to provide a valuable sense of perspective for their young helpers. The young volunteers are surprised to find themselves so appreciated, and feel that the work is its own reward.

**Project Description**

The Reading Project began in 1997 and has been a great success which provides a lifeline to many. Referrals come from Social Services and charities for visually impaired people and around 45 older people receive the service every year. Action for Blind People kindly provide a visual impairment awareness training for free for the volunteers.

The Computer Project emerged in around 1999, with incremental success as older people’s awareness of new technologies has soared. There is an extremely high demand from older learners, and the project also appeals to volunteers as it provides an opportunity to consolidate and develop their own IT skills – the only limitation has been management capacity, with one project worker for all three projects! Around 60 people take part in regular lessons, troubleshooting or tasters each year. In 2005 we were chosen by the National Institute of Continuing Adult Education to receive an Opening Doors to Adult Learners Award for this project.

The Language Project operates on a much smaller scale with around 10 learners each year. In some ways it is the most challenging project and requires highly motivated volunteers who form close bonds with their older learners. Training and support from a local ESOL teacher helps keep the volunteers full of ideas.

Refining the recruitment, training and support of the volunteers has been a long-running challenge. All older people are visited before volunteers are assigned, ensuring their homes are a safe environment for young people. Volunteers, who are usually in the lower sixth and aged around 17, are accompanied on their first visit to the older person. This is followed with check-up phone calls to volunteer and user, and termly support sessions at the volunteers’ schools. Although an increasing number of schools have expressed interest in the project, not many are able to offer sufficient support from an assigned member of staff who can help chase up students, publicise training and support sessions, offer a point of call if there are any queries or
concerns and provide recognition of the students’ achievements in a school setting. We have found this to be essential for the successful working of the project.

In the summer of 2005 we took advantage of the summer break to run our first arts event since the start of the Intergenerational Project – a three-week drama project on community safety titled ‘Acting Up’. A community theatre group helped older and younger people aged 12-14 explore their perceptions of each other, their own sense of identity and their common values. The project was hugely successful and there were calls from both groups of participants for a follow-up. We are currently seeking funding for a part-time Intergenerational Arts Worker to help develop similar activities.

Young people from the Sixty Plus Intergenerational Project won a prestigious award for outstanding achievement in their community. Sir Trevor McDonald presented the Philip Lawrence Awards in a ceremony at The Bloomsbury Theatre, London on Tuesday 6 December 2005. The group also won £1,000 prize money to invest in their community project.

**Resource Materials**
- [www.sixtyplus.org.uk](http://www.sixtyplus.org.uk)
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4576557.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4576557.stm) - article on NIACE award
- Philip Lawrence Awards website - [www.4children.org.uk/pla/information/show/ref/2](http://www.4children.org.uk/pla/information/show/ref/2)
- Photos sent by email, as are quotes from young volunteers
- Other materials such as AGM reports, newsletters etc are available on request

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Streets Ahead

Key words: arts, community, creative writing, crime, drama, digital photography, ICT

What was the Streets Ahead Project
The Streets Ahead Intergenerational Project was a four month multi-media arts-based project which ran during January to April 2005 involving approximately fifty older and young people from the Castlehaven and Gospel Oak area of Camden who would otherwise probably not have met each other. The young people were mainly Year 7 pupils (11-12yrs old). The older people ranged in age from mid-60s to late-80s. The central theme of the project was an exploration of issues around street life, neighbourhood and community, addressing some of the community safety concerns about the area.

The project included the following inter-related strands:

- Debate and exchange of ideas
- Poetry
- Drama & Video
- Digital Photography

Profile of the Gospel Oak & Castlehaven area
Gospel Oak is a multi-cultural inner London neighbourhood situated between Camden Town and Hampstead. The area is dominated by densely populated council housing although there is a significant proportion of expensive owner occupied terraced homes. The social and economic problems of the area are seen to be concentrated on the estates. There is little employment within Gospel Oak and the main retail centre within the area is around Queens Crescent.

The Streets Ahead Partners and Associates
The Streets Ahead Intergenerational Project was organised by a core partnership of six organisations:

- Haverstock Secondary School
  Haverstock is a Secondary School and Sixth Form College with Business & Enterprise status. The school caters for 1040 boys and girls aged 11-19.

- Charlie Ratchford Resource Centre for Older People
  A local authority run resource centre for older people providing day care, arts and crafts activities, advisory services and a busy lunch canteen.

- Castlehaven Community Association
  A local community managed charity which runs a community centre, youth inclusion project, older people’s “HELPS” project, a play project and manages a local sports pitch.
Well & Wise Healthy Living Network for Older People in Camden
Well & Wise encourages, supports & promotes healthy living initiatives through information sharing, healthy living and healthy eating projects, intergenerational development and engaging older people in their communities.

Gospel Oak Neighbourhood Network
The GO Neighbourhood Network is one of a number of “Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Schemes” co-ordinated and funded by the Government Neighbourhood Renewal Unit to promote social inclusion and local area renewal.

Promoting Independence Team, London Borough of Camden
The Promoting Independence Group was created in 2002 to improve the quality of life and services for older people in the Borough, comprising employees from both social services and housing departments.

Also, Brian Rutter, an active member of the Charlie Ratchford Centre, attended some of the partner liaison meetings as an older people’s representative.

During the project, specialist expertise and resources were also provided by two key associate organisations:

South Camden City Learning Centre
South Camden City Learning Centre is an award winning ICT centre open to schools and local community groups in Camden. The centre offers opportunities to use new ICT technologies, gain qualifications and share good practice and actively promotes learning for everyone.

Central School of Speech & Drama
CSSD is a government funded higher education college providing courses in art, acting, circus, design, performance, drama education and technical theatre.

Vital financial support for Streets Ahead was provided by “Older Voices in Renewal” (OVIR), part of the Promoting Independence Team at Camden Housing Department.

Formal consultation with target groups was not integrated into the planning of the Streets Ahead project because consultation had already been done. People had indicated that they wanted intergenerational activities. Concerns about street safety had been voiced strongly, and this determined the choice of core theme for the project.
Project Description

Streets Ahead Events Diary
22-9-04 Partners meet for the first planning meeting.
20-1-05 Get Streetwise – Let’s Talk Intergenerational Debate
21-1-05 Digital photo project started (8 weekly sessions)
26-1-05 Intergenerational poetry workshop with Jacob Sam-La Rose
09-2-05 Intergenerational Poetry Workshop with Michael Andrew
10-2-05 Closing date for entries for the Poetry Competition
21-2-05 Drama Student 4-week placement starts
18-3-05 Drama student placement ends
22-3-05 Poetry & Performance Event at Haverstock School
26-4-05 Streets Ahead Finale Celebration Event
June-Dec. 05 Streets Ahead Exhibition on display at various Venues.

Event Details

An Intergenerational Debate: “Get Streetwise – Let’s Talk”
Seventeen older people & fourteen young people participated in a structured discussion with the focus on young and older people talking to each other. Two police officers from “Operation Safer Neighbourhoods”, Kentish Town Sector Office and the News Editor of the Camden New Journal were invited to attend. The police gave factual information about the incidence of crime in the Camden area. Dan Carrier spoke about the role of a local newspaper in reporting crime and the difficulties of presenting a balanced picture of crime levels in the community. Older people were surprised to find out that many young people share their fear of walking past groups of teenage “hoodies” hanging around on street corners. Some young people expressed surprise and concern that they might frighten older people just by wearing their hoods up. Although the debate was a great success, there were practical problems – an upstairs room, a downstairs toilet and a broken lift made access difficult for some participants with mobility limitations. Poor acoustics in the room made it difficult for some people to hear everything that was said.

We noticed that when they came into the room, the older and young people naturally gravitated to opposite sides of the room. There was a slight tension between young people from Haverstock School, who came straight from school & were wearing uniform, and young people from the Haven Youth Project who were in ordinary clothes - Could we have prevented these groups polarising by telling people where to sit or spending more time introducing people to each other?

Some quotations from young participants:
"I learned that not all teenagers who wear hoods are not all as frightening as they look"
"When you are walking past big men don't make yourself look scared"

Some quotations from older participants:
“Young people are not as bad as they seem to be.”
“Kids with hoods are not necessarily menacing”
“I learned that all age groups have their fears”
“Here’s Looking At Us”—Digital Photo Project Strand
A series of eight sessions on Fridays 10-30am-12:30pm at the South Camden City Learning Centre. Six older people and eight Year-7 (11-12 year old) young people participated in the sessions.

The group started by taking portrait photos of each other with digital cameras. In subsequent sessions they learned the basics of how to alter, merge and manipulate photographs using Adobe Photoshop software. The technical content of the sessions was taught by Gillian Ingram, a skilled IT tutor and Manager of the South Camden City Learning Centre who used a large digital projection-screen to demonstrate how to open files and manipulate photos.

Some of the older participants had experience of using PCs to send email and use writing software such as Microsoft Word. All of the young participants had basic computer literacy. However, none of the participants, old or young, had used Photoshop before.

Older and younger people were paired with each other and got to know each other while they worked Concentrating on a shared-learning activity broke the ice fast. By tea-time, mid-session, the participants were chatting, laughing and singing songs. It was a feature of these weekly two-hour sessions that the participants did not want to leave at the end.

Some of the images produced did explore and reflect on the ageing process. Pasting half of the face of an older person with half of the face of a young person produced some startling and thought provoking results

“We took photos of the old person and the young person and joined them together to see the differences in the faces. We learned about how old people react against young people on the streets and which behaviours they don’t respect from children”
Kerry Drew, 12

This strand of the Streets Ahead project is a pioneering venture in that we do not know of another project which has brought young and older people together to explore their feelings about each other and about their communities through digital image manipulation. We would definitely like to replicate and develop this line of intergenerational work in the future.

The Poetry Project Strand
As part of “Streets Ahead”, we held a number of intergenerational poetry workshops and local older people were invited to enter poems for a new “Older Voices” section in the annual Haverstock & North Camden Schools Poetry Competition. Poet Michael Rosen awarded the prizes. Vivian Milroy and George Wilkinson, both in their eighties, went on stage to perform their poems live in front of a large and enthusiastic audience at the “Poetry in Performance” Evening at Haverstock School and the winning poems were published in the Anthology “Shout Out Loud, You Have A Voice”.

© Beth Johnson Foundation – March 2006
The Streets Ahead Project has been an experiment in creating creative, thoughtful and constructive spaces where older and younger people can meet, share activities and begin a constructive dialogue together. If people of different generations are to truly understand each other, they need to share their most personal feelings - their memories, hopes and dreams - as well as their opinions and ideas.

Whereas the debate strand of Streets Ahead brought people together to discuss ideas and share opinions, the poetry strand seemed to tap into a deeper level of empathy, shared feelings, fears and aspirations in a way that was a surprise and a huge pleasure for all of us involved and which appears to forge intergenerational understanding on a profound personal level which may well be life-changing for participants.

From the Winning Poem “Crabbed Age & Youth” by Vivian Milroy:

Next came Valdrin, the boy from Kosovo,
Another mighty player on the keys
And surgical with it!
With his digital scalpel
He sliced through our faces
And stuck two halves together.
My left half, his right
Or vice versa. It’s hard when
You’ve only one eye looking back at you
And the other one’s Valdrin!

Drama/ Video Project Strand
Young people who do not have grandparents living nearby often have little contact with older people & may have little idea what older people think and feel. The aim of the drama strand of the project was to work with a group of older people to explore how they feel about their relationship with young people, the streets and local area where they live & safety in the street.

The material generated by the workshops formed the core content of a short video programme intended to be used as a basis for discussion between young and older people or to raise issues about communities and street safety for young people’s groups including school groups studying Citizenship within the National Curriculum.

The student, Elena Stephenson, from the Central School of Speech & Drama “Drama, Applied Theatre & Education” degree course joined the Streets Ahead project on a four week professional work placement. During her placement Elena ran two 2-hour drama workshops each week. Elena used poetry, creative writing, reminiscence, storytelling and drama improvisation to generate short sequences of drama, performance and personal narrative.

The Video “Over the Years”
Video producer Anne Robinson was commissioned by Streets Ahead to work with Elena to shape and finalise the drama, opinions and reminiscence material generated in the workshops and other strands of Streets Ahead for inclusion in the video programme.
The presence of a video camera (albeit a very small digital one!) filming during the sessions was intrusive and may have inhibited some of the shyer participants.

On the positive side, producing a video is an excellent way for participants to express their opinions and contribute to a creative production. People seemed pleased and proud to be in a video programme and eager to dispel perceived stereotypes which young people have of older people.

The 29 minute video “Over the Years” captures the opinions, humour and exuberance of the performers and poses useful questions aimed at a young audience. All participants received a VHS copy.

**Streets Ahead Finale Event**

About 40 people attended and we showed the video “Over the Years” on large-screen TV, the “Older Voices” Poetry Winners performed their poetry and Steve Reading spoke about the project’s aims and achievements.

**The Monitoring & Evaluation Process**

Monitoring of gender, age and ethnicity of participants was carried out for each of the Streets Ahead project strands. The majority of participants did not return forms, and the forms returned were often incomplete.

The ages of staff and participants involved in Streets Ahead ranged from eleven years old to late eighties. Equal numbers of girls and boys took part, but among the older participants, as one would expect in this age group, there was a majority of women.

The activities of the Streets Ahead Project have been documented throughout using digital cameras, videotape and through a report.

**Funding**

The Streets Ahead Project would not have been the success that it has been without the late injection of £3K funding from “Older Voices in Renewal” from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

The following is a rough breakdown of how the OVIR funding was spent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>£ 874.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Over the Years” video production</td>
<td>£ 1250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering for Streetwise &amp; Finale events</td>
<td>£ 411.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to printing Poetry Anthology</td>
<td>£ 300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Competition prizes</td>
<td>£ 35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of “Over the Years” video</td>
<td>£ 97.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra poetry workshop</td>
<td>£ 40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlehaven admin &amp; publicity</td>
<td>£ 120.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL £ 3127.25
Nearly half of the OVIR funding was spent on transport and catering additional to the routine transport and refreshments provided by partners hosting Streets Ahead events. Except for one extra poetry workshop, all the human resource costs for Streets Ahead were contributed in kind by the partner organisations. Also, all the venue, administration and most of the materials costs were provided in kind. This breakdown demonstrates very clearly that where there is good will and a generally good level of resources among partner-organisations, it is possible to make ambitious intergenerational initiatives work without large amounts of additional funding. However, it also demonstrates clearly that some additional funding is vital for very basic additional things – notably food and transport - if intergenerational project work is to succeed safely and creatively.

Some of our project strands tapped into activities which the partner organisations are already routinely engaged in. The Haverstock Poetry Competition, “Poetry & Performance” event and anthology, for example, are established events in the North Camden Schools calendar. A small additional expense was necessary, less that £500, to arrange an extra poetry workshop, fund the “Older Voices” prizes, make a contribution to the publication of the anthology and pay for a taxi to take the prize winners to and from the evening event.

The cost of running the digital photography workshops – venue, tuition, equipment and materials - was borne by the South Camden City Learning Centre. Streets Ahead only funded transportation of participants to and from the Centre. The high-quality printing of artwork produced in the digital sessions was funded by Well & Wise intergenerational budget. The South Camden City Learning Centre was able to contribute because they have a community outreach and social inclusion brief which fitted with the aims and objectives of the Streets Ahead project, and an enthusiasm to try to do new things in new ways!

Activities which are a departure from the usual timetable of the partner organisations or held in non-routine venues, or need the input of specialist staff or tutors, are bound to need a higher level of funding.

**Transport & Access**

The Charlie Ratchford Centre and Haverstock School are in adjacent streets. Castlehaven Community Centre and the Haven Youth Project are a quarter of a mile away. The South Camden City Learning Centre is 1.5 miles away.

However, it was necessary to spend a large percentage of the funding contributed by “Older Voices in Renewal” on transportation for participants in the Streets Ahead events. It is true to say that without this additional transport, the Digital Photo project and the Streetwise Debate would not have been possible.

We foresaw the need to organise transport for the older people. In practice, we realised that unless we also organised transport to take the children to the 10.30am - 12.30pm digital photography sessions and back as well, they would miss their earlier lesson and arrive back at school with barely enough time to have lunch before afternoon lessons. So, in practice we arranged transport for everyone.
Shockingly, the quotation from the Brent Community Transport Scheme for mini-bus transport to and from the digital photo workshops would have cost 50% more than using commercial cabs. It is to be regretted that Camden does not at present have a Community Transport Scheme of its own which can be accessed for non-regular projects such as Streets Ahead. We used commercial couriers.

One older digital workshop participant from the Charlie Ratchford Centre was unable to climb into the high-floored “people-carrier” style vehicles supplied by Addison-Lee couriers. This was distressing for her and the staff member on duty. As a consequence we changed to a company which would send ordinary-style cars.

In spite of the cost of transport and the large amount of work co-ordinating cabs and bookings, the City Learning Centre turned out to be a successful setting for the digital project strand:

Sophie Martin, (OVIR, Promoting Independence Team, LB. Camden) points out: “Being able to use a variety of venues has given the project a real community feel and the range of partners has opened up opportunities for further involvement and to introduce people to different opportunities in the neighbourhood.”

Certainly, members of young and older groups taking part in the digital sessions commented that they liked travelling to a “new place” to take part in the project, that it made them feel “special”. This feeling was probably enhanced by the impressive high-tech IT facilities at the South Camden City Learning Centre.

There is also a strong equalising advantage in holding workshop sessions on “neutral territory” which does not “belong” to either group - a group “at home” in the venue naturally feels more at ease and the visiting group feel less ownership of the project.

Overall, access to buildings was not a major problem during Streets Ahead, with the exception of the broken lift at the Haven Youth Project, venue for the Streetwise Debate. George Wilkinson, second prize winner in the Older Voices Poetry Competition did however remark that climbing the three steps onto the stage was more scary than reading out his poem in front of the large audience at the Haverstock Poetry & Performance Event!

Press coverage & documentation
The Streets Ahead project had no trouble attracting press coverage through regular press releases. At times, the amount of photographing and video filming going on during some of the workshops was inhibiting and distracting for the participants. In retrospect, maybe we should have arranged separate photo opportunity sessions and tried to confine filming and interviews to times outside the workshop sessions.

Time scheduling
Once under way, the whole project was planned in less than four months and the events took place over four months.

This tight schedule was a product of circumstances rather than a choice. In December 2004 a source of much-needed funding was identified – a NRF under spend - for Streets Ahead. £3K was made available for the project with the proviso
that the money must be spent and accounted for by the end of March 2005! It was
do it or lose it so, in the absence of any other source of funds, we did it…fast.

This time of year – January to March - is traditionally not the best time of year for
intergenerational project work. Daylight is gone by 4pm. Older people do not like to
walk home after dark. Children do not leave school until 3.30pm. In practice, taxis
had to be provided to take some older people home after the late-afternoon
Streetwise event and the “Poetry and Performance” evening. The clocks had gone
forward before the April Finale Event, although some older people did leave before
the 5pm end.

Otherwise, early darkness was not a problem, mainly because Haverstock School
linked the other activities into the school timetable as part of Year 7 study of
intergenerational themes as part of school curriculum work on Citizenship, and so all
the activities were scheduled to take place in late morning or early afternoon
weekdays.

Interlinked Project Strands
The first event, the debate introduced participants to each other and to the local
street safety theme. The project strands did interlock in that ideas aired in one strand
often resurfaced in another. The obvious example is the poem “Crabbed Age and
Youth”, a product of the poetry workshop, which reflects on the experience of taking
part in the digital photo strand. Only one participant (interestingly, one of the oldest)
took part in all strands of the project but a core group of participants – old and young
- took part in the debate, the poetry workshops and the digital workshops.

Sophie Martin of OVIR comments:
“I think the success of this project has been the variety of opportunities and events
for people to get involved in. Activities and opportunities have appealed to different
interests and abilities. People have been able to commit to as little or much as they
like.”

Involvement of Families and Friends
Although Streets Ahead worked well in engaging the young and older participants,
the project could perhaps have worked harder to involve family and friends of
participants in events. To our knowledge, friends and relatives of the older people
did not attend Streets Ahead events except for one instance – Vivian Milroy did
attend the “Poetry & Performance” evening at Haverstock School with his daughter
and two adult granddaughters, who said that they really enjoyed the evening.

No parents or siblings of the young people attended the Finale event. Most of the
young people themselves came straight from school accompanied by teachers.
Their families were obviously aware that their children were involved in the project
because parental permission had been given. Could we have made it clearer that
they were welcome? Could we have found other ways to involve and integrate them
into the project?
Attitude change

It is notoriously difficult to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of intergenerational initiatives in changing attitudes of older and younger people to each other, and in building a sense of community ownership and involvement.

In the short term, the written feedback from participants and partners suggests that the project did powerfully alter attitudes and disrupt stereotypes:

Some evaluation comments from young participants:
“Older people are fun”     “Older people are more wise”
“Older people are really kind and funny”
“I learned that we are not different”   “It was fantastic!!”

Some evaluation comments from older participants:

“Nice to talk to teenagers, think they are great people – had a good laugh. Makes everyone feel better that they do something useful.”
“I have learned more tolerance and humour”
“It has opened my eyes to realise you can speak to youngsters without being insulted and some are really kind and helpful and also we can help them when they ask.”
“I learned greater understanding of young people and remembering my own youth, its fears and hopes – it’s only years between young and old.”

Some Conclusions

A Demonstration Project demonstrating what?
The Streets Ahead project was a Demonstration project. It was intended to demonstrate “…that a secondary school can work proactively with a range of partners to contribute to establishing an enriched retirement-friendly neighbourhood” - 2004 Camden Best Value Performance Plan.

The implication was that the project would be a demonstration of intergenerational good practice that could be used as a template for future projects in Camden. However, like any project, Streets Ahead had successes and failures. The failures are as illuminating as the successes, so we have tried to be honest about what worked and what we could have done better.

The Streets Ahead Intergenerational Project has been a successful time-limited arts-based local intergenerational initiative. It has achieved its aims as a demonstration project, demonstrating good practice and also highlighting some classic mistakes. Written feedback from partners and participants indicates that the project has had a significant (albeit maybe short-term) effect on the attitudes of older and younger participants to each other and on the self-confidence of individuals in both groups.
Streets Ahead has shown that:

- A project can be designed to build intergenerational activities and events into what partner organisations already do as well as to broaden the range of activities on offer.
- A project can be simply constructed with a number of inter-related activity strands focused around a core theme.
- A local partnership project can be run successfully with small but realistic amounts of additional funding.
- When you bring young and older people together in a safe and creative environment to share common interests or activities together, they generally have a really, really good time! It is that simple! Getting them all there together is usually the tricky bit.
- The process of intergenerational interaction rather than any creative product should be the focus of an intergenerational project and focus of any evaluation exercise. Even if the product turns out to be great, the success of the project should not be judged on this.

Changing the World
The London Borough of Camden has shown itself committed to building intergenerational communities in sponsoring and supporting a range of initiatives with intergenerational content.

Although Streets Ahead demonstrates some of what is possible, it must be viewed and evaluated in a wider context. Some young and older people met each other and learned new things and had a great time. They may well join together for shared activities in the future as the partner organisations have indicated a strong desire to work together again. Young and older people were surprised and delighted by each other. We cannot tell whether these experiences will be life-changing. Streets Ahead has been a blip in the “age-apartheid” which is our everyday experience. It has probably not changed the world.

It must be acknowledged that intergenerational projects like this will not effect widespread change of attitudes or practices until the whole “climate” in which they take place undergoes radical change.

The ideal would be to build communities, buildings and environments in which young and older people naturally meet, socialise, get to know each other and share common interests. Streets Ahead has shown that it is relatively easy for young and older people to be routinely brought together to share activities when their school is next door to the older people’s resource centre – as in the case of Haverstock School and the Charlie Ratchford Resource Centre. The logistical problems of getting young and old together are usually trickier than social problems which occur when they do meet.

For most of the individuals from partner organisations involved in Streets Ahead – with the exception of the Well & Wise Intergenerational Development Worker and Haverstock School’s Extended Learning Co-ordinator - the planning and organising of project events was additional to the core duties of their job rather than integral.
This is commonly the case with intergenerational work. The genesis and the success of projects frequently depend on the good will and strong personal input of staff, well beyond the call of duty. In other words, people frequently exploit themselves and each other in a good cause.

In a better world, intergenerational working should be written into the missions statements of organisations, into the job descriptions of staff and integrated into staff training from shop-floor to managerial and policy making level so that all activities and resource decisions would be scrutinised as a matter of routine to see if they could be made intergenerational. Youth workers, teachers, sheltered housing managers, resource centre workers, care staff, landscape architects and urban planners – to name a few – need intergenerational development duties to be a core part of their job description.

Radical change is needed in planning and policy-making at strategic levels in Local and National Government to begin to bring about such change.

We've only just started.

**Resource Materials**
For further information or to request an e-copy of the full report, contact:
Vanda Carter, Intergenerational Development Worker,
Well & Wise Healthy Living Network for Older People

An appendix to the Streets Ahead Project Report is also available. This contains examples of monitoring & evaluation forms, permissions forms, contributors release forms and Well & Wise’s intergenerational good practice guidelines used during the project.

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Tri Golf in Durham County

Key Words: schools, community, sport, sustainability

Introduction
Age Concern Durham County’s mission statement is ‘to promote the well being of all older people and to help make later life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience’. The aim of the Intergenerational Programme is to challenge generational divides and promote social inclusion, by bringing together older and younger people in a wide range of mutually interesting projects and activities. We pilot different intergenerational projects to disseminate as examples of good practice via conferences, newsletters and workshops and we recruit and train volunteers to lead school based activities.

Tri Golf Project Description
We were approached by Crook Golf Club in 2003, as they wanted to do some intergenerational work to encourage more young people to take up golf and to forge stronger links between the Club and the local community. In their experience the main barriers to participation were the elitist image of the sport, the cost of equipment and the fact that young people are rarely introduced to golf at school. They also felt that the lack of affordable coaching meant that young people who did join the Club quickly became disillusioned with the game if they did not have a relative or friend who was able or prepared to help them.

We held a consultation meeting with members of the Golf Club, to establish the best way to proceed. Several people did not want young people ‘dropping litter and making a nuisance of themselves on the course’ whilst others pointed out that as the average age of a member was 65, ‘new blood’ would ensure the survival of the Club. It was agreed that young people would be introduced to the Club in small numbers and as well as being taught the rudiments of the game they would also be taught about Club rules, etiquette and safety.

Following on from the initial meetings seven senior members agreed to become volunteer golf coaches, so we researched the best training options for them. As well as undergoing an enhanced CRB check they did First Aid training with St. John’s Ambulance and Good Practice and Child Protection Training with Sport Coach UK. They also underwent Junior Leader training with the Golf Foundation, which taught them to deliver up to level 2 of the Junior Passport. This is an accredited training programme for young people. The programme includes a variety of games and activities to promote learning and engagement in a fun and stimulating way. We also purchased Tri Golf equipment, which is made up of specially designed colourful and safe teaching aids, such as pop up targets and chipping nets.

During the time that the volunteers were undergoing training and induction, we liaised with staff from Parkside School in Willington. They were keen for their pupils to have the opportunity to try golf. We decided that an after school club would be the best way forward, and to pilot the scheme for one hour per week during an academic term with a group of ten Year 7 pupils. They would use the playing field in fine weather, but have access to the Sports Hall if they could not get outside.
We launched the project at the Golf Club, by introducing the pupils to their new golf coaches and giving them a tour of the course. They all got to hit a few balls on the practice area as well, which gave them a taste of what was to come. The following week the course began in earnest and continued for the full term. At the end of the ten weeks we held a presentation day at the Golf Club and invited parents to come along and see how much their children had achieved. A year’s free junior membership was awarded to the most dedicated student and the Club Captain presented everyone with a certificate and their Passport.

As a result of this pilot project eight members of the group completed the course and seven went on to join the Club’s junior section. They all now play regularly and spend most of their weekends and holiday time at the Golf Club. The volunteers have since delivered the course to four more groups of young people, and the after school Tri Golf club is now a firm favourite in the school’s Curriculum Enrichment Programme.

The Golf Club really feels that this project introduces young people to the Club in the best possible way. They are taught enough of the game to be able to cope on the course without hindering other members and the interaction with the volunteers gives them the confidence to spend time in a predominantly adult environment. Because the volunteers have taught them the protocol of the sport, positive images of young people are promoted to other members of the Club, who had previously been sceptical about encouraging youth participation.

The biggest difficulty was in recruiting girls to the course, but three have now successfully completed levels 1 and 2 of the Passport with the help of Barbara, our female golf coach and we hope that more will follow suit.

**Key outcomes**

- 7 volunteers have been trained in junior leadership, Child Protection and First Aid.
- As the project developed 3 volunteers really took the lead and the other 4 now act as reserve coaches. In 2005 they passed PGA level 1 which is an intensive coaching qualification and now hold a professional licence to teach. They intend to progress to level 2, which is a huge achievement for volunteers. They also received Year of the Volunteer medals for their work.
- 35 young people have successfully completed levels 1 and 2 of the Golf Foundation’s Junior Passport.
- 13 young people have joined Crook Golf Club’s Junior Section.
- The volunteers were short-listed in the Northern Echo’s Local Heroes Awards, in the Spirit of Sport Section.
- The Club now offers coaching for young people at a greatly reduced cost every Monday and they have developed a loan system for equipment.
- A sustainable link now exists between Parkside School and Crook Golf Club.
- Some parents have now taken up the game, so the Club’s aim of forging stronger links with the community is starting to be realized.
Comments from participants and partners

‘We are extremely proud of our volunteers, the work they are putting in is tremendous….this is an excellent example of people working together for the benefit of the local community, we are proud to play out part.’

   Alan Race – Chairman, Crook Golf Club

‘Many of our pupils have been given an opportunity which they would not normally have, and I know they have thoroughly enjoyed working with the volunteers’.

   Catherine Taylor – Head of Curriculum Enrichment, Parkside School

‘The volunteers were helpful and taught us a lot, they had a brilliant sense of humour’

   Course graduate 2004 – Parkside School

‘We really enjoy working with the kids, we wouldn’t do it if we didn’t’

   Dave Atess – Volunteer Golf Coach

Key lessons

We have learnt that sustainable projects can be created through investment in equipment and volunteer training. This project now effectively runs itself. We have also seen how, with the right opportunities, people can excel in areas which they never thought possible. We are incredibly proud of our volunteers and we have successfully used this project as a model for training other volunteers to deliver Tai Chi and New Age Kurling in schools.

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Typology for the Description and Analysis of Interactive Intergenerational Learning

Key words: learning, lifelong learning, research, schools

Introduction
The International Baccalaureate Organization is an international not-for-profit curriculum, assessment and professional development organization established in 1968. It aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. The IBO offers three programmes to a wide ‘variety’ of schools:

- Primary Years Programme (PYP), for students aged 3 to 12;
- Middle Years Programme (MYP), for students aged 11 to 16;
- Diploma Programme (DP), a leaving and university entrance qualification for students in the final two years of school.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

The programmes of the IBO can be used to create a context for the development of good intergenerational practice (IP). Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) is a core component of the IB Diploma Programme. According to the Diploma Programme guide, an aim of CAS is to create ‘a framework for experiential learning, designed to involve students in new roles’ (IBO, 2005). It has been found that many schools use IP as a context for CAS activities. Brown and Ohsako (2003: 164) report the ‘rich and deep impact of IP on the sustainable and integrated dimensions of learning among students, elderly and school personnel’.

Following on from a previous collaboration between the IBO and UNESCO (Brown, 2001), the aims of the Interactive Intergenerational Learning (IIL) Project were:

- to determine the extent of IP conducted in CAS in IB World Schools in the United Kingdom; and,
- to develop a framework to assist in evaluating claims made for student learning as a result of participation in CAS activities.

It is intended that this pilot research will be extended to international and cross-cultural contexts in the future.

Project description

Structure of the enquiry
The Interactive Intergenerational Learning Project was an enquiry into learning in the IB Diploma Programme that concentrated on reports by schools of the interactions between ‘non-adjacent’ generations (i.e. school students and older adults) that
included re-conceptualisation of intergenerational practice in the context of CAS. It was a pilot project, running from May 2003 to December 2004 that comprised of a number of phases. First, a framework, which will be discussed below, was developed to describe and analyse learning in the context of intergenerational activity. This framework informed the construction of the data collection instruments. Next, contact was made by telephone with CAS coordinators working at IB World Schools in the UK to identify:

- a link person in each school;
- examples of CAS activities taking place in each school;
- whether IP formed a component of CAS activities in each school; and
- whether further collaborative work between the school and IBRU would be possible.

A 'short list' of four schools was then drawn up. This comprised of a variety of types of schools and colleges including private and state sector institutions, those offering either residential or day facilities, and single sex and coeducational institutions. These schools and colleges were then visited by members of the research team, and face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Powney and Watts, 1987) were conducted with students and teaching staff. Schools and colleges were also invited to share written texts, such as students' reflective CAS journals, for analysis. There were several reasons for this. For example, texts of reflective journals could be used for methods triangulation (Bryman, 2004) between oral accounts of intergenerational activities and written accounts by students, at least where the texts belonged to the students interviewed. Another reason was that written data sources would possibly provide a longitudinal insight: the project life span was not sufficient to test this and the face-to-face interviews with the students only occurred once. A further reason was to test whether the proposed three-dimensional theoretical model could be applied to a textual analysis of students' reflective journals.

**Typology of intergenerational learning**

It is proposed that a framework for the description and analysis of intergenerational learning should comprise of at least three dimensions that specify:

- the *type* of intergenerational relationship forming the context for learning;
- what is learned as an outcome of the intergenerational interaction; and,
- how the learning is accomplished.

The type of intergenerational relationship forming the context for learning should specify the direction of the interaction. Kaplan (2001) proposes a typology of intergenerational interactions in four nominal categories consisting of:

- older adults serving/mentoring/tutoring children and youth [type 1];
- children and youth serving/teaching older adults [type 2];
- children, youth and older adults serving the community/learning together within the context of a shared task or subject [type 3]; and
- children, youth and older adults engaged in informal leisure/unintentional learning activities [type 4].
A variety of taxonomies of learning are available in the literature of learning and curriculum development. For the purposes of this enquiry, a well-known taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom et al., 1956) was used to describe and analyse what was learned because it addressed concisely a range of learning outcomes, including knowledge (cognitive domain), skills (psychomotor domain) and attitudes (affective domain). However, it would be interesting to enquire into how other typologies (e.g. Gagné, 1985) could also be applied to the description and analysis of intergenerational learning.

Having specified the type of interaction and the learning outcome, the framework should also specify how learning is accomplished. It may be argued that interactive intergenerational learning is a form of experiential learning because it takes place informally, through interaction between the participants. As was pointed out above, CAS is intended as a context for experiential learning. Consequently, approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of such learning should take into account learning theories addressing experiential learning. Kolb (1984) proposes a model of experiential learning for adults that may be adapted for this context. This model analyzes experiential learning in terms of a sequence of different stages comprising:

- concrete experience (CE);
- reflective observation (RO);
- abstract conceptualisation (AC); and
- active experimentation (AE).

These stages may be arranged in a cycle with iterations. This model has been criticised as being an idealist construct that may or may not have psychometric validity or reliability (Friedman et al., 2002) and, as a framework concentrating on learning in adults, its application to learning in schoolchildren may be contested. Nonetheless, Kolb’s typology may be useful in research into interactive intergenerational learning if it assists in conceptualising the type of learning that may be investigated.

A specification of interactive intergenerational learning may therefore comprise:

- the type of intergenerational interaction (Kaplan, 2001);
- the domain(s) in which learning is taking place (Bloom et al., 1956); and
- the stage in the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).
Placed orthogonally, these specifications form a framework in three dimensions (Figure 1). It is proposed that this framework has the potential to be used inductively or deductively. That is, it may be used to describe and analyze learning observed in intergenerational interactions or it may be used as a theoretical framework to inform the search for particular examples of intergenerational learning. Using this framework, it is possible to conceptualize a variety of intergenerational interactions that result in experiential learning at different stages in different domains. Consider, for example, the following learning experiences specified in terms of the framework:

- the educational experience of an older adult learning how to control a mouse in an ICT context under instruction from a young person may be specified in terms of a ‘type 2’ intergenerational relationship, involving concrete experience in the psychomotor domain;
- mother-tongue language instruction between an older person and a young child may be specified in terms of a ‘type 1’ intergenerational relationship involving active experimentation in the cognitive domain; and,
- a tea party organized by young people for elderly adults may involve a variety of contacts including ‘type 4’ intergenerational interaction—informal leisure or unintentional learning activities—resulting in reflective observation in the affective domain as the children think about what they have learned about how to communicate with older people and how they can address their needs.

**Figure 1: A framework for description and analysis of interactive intergenerational learning**
The framework, as will be argued elsewhere (Cambridge and Simandiraki, in press), has the potential not only to provide a language for CAS coordinators in which to discuss service education with students, but also to assist students to critically reflect on their CAS experiences. It has been presented for discussion at a number of conferences and practitioner feedback has been very encouraging.

**Ethical standards**
The IBO publishes a statement of ethical standards for IBO-supported research project (IBO, 2005) and this project was designed to meet these standards. One ethical consideration concerning the data collection phase of the project was whether participation by students (e.g. by sharing CAS journals) would affect the assessment of their progress and the final grade they would be awarded in the IB Diploma. IBRU informed schools at various stages in data collection that there would be no link between the outcomes of research by IBRU into intergenerational activities in CAS in general, and assessment of particular students. Students were reminded at the start of each interview that the information they shared with IBRU would have no impact on their course final assessment. Finally, in this report, as well as in future publications that may arise from it, the students’ anonymity has been maintained.

**Outcomes of telephone survey**
Of the 46 schools and colleges in the United Kingdom offering the IB Diploma Programme at the time of the survey, 34 (74%) responded to our request for information. Of these, 28 schools and colleges (82% of the subset) reported that IP formed part of their CAS activities.

**Outcomes of school visits**
Four schools and colleges in England and Wales were visited. Members of the research team interviewed students participating in CAS and the member of staff responsible for coordination of CAS activities.

In terms of Kaplan’s typology of intergenerational relationships, respondents described examples of ‘type 1’ relations in which the older adults gave service to the young by treating students to refreshments, and by offering friendship and providing advice. Examples of ‘type 2’ relations in which the young gave service to older adults included occasions when students read to the older adult, helped to serve drinks and food at homes and centres for older adults, entertained them, lifted heavy items, performed practical DIY tasks, and gave lessons in the use of computers and mobile telephones. ‘Type 3’ relations included activities in which both parties engaged in arts and crafts at a home for older adults, went shopping together, and participated in running a charity shop. ‘Type 4’ relations included informal occasions when both parties engaged in extensive conversations, or played a variety of games together.

In terms of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives, students reported that their knowledge and understanding of older adults developed as a result of their CAS activities. They had learned how to behave with and treat older adults, and about their reactions to them. They reported that they had learned from the older adults’ experiences and personal histories. Students learned where to draw personal boundaries in communication and still be polite with a person of a different generation. They reported the acquisition of a variety of skills, including psychomotor skills, as a result of participation in CAS. These included improved communication
skills, language skills (in cases in which their first language was not English) and improved self-discipline and restraint. Some students also reported the acquisition of practical skills in a formal context (e.g. a wheelchair handling training course). Students reported that their attitudes had changed as a consequence of participation in intergenerational CAS activities. They realised that many older adults experienced loneliness, had a different worldview, and sometimes needed help. Students were made to think of the future when they would be older themselves. The experience changed their stereotypical views of ‘boring’ elders. They referred to qualities such as patience, tolerance, confidence, adapting to different types of people and different reactions, better empathising, better understanding and respect.

In terms of Kolb’s experiential learning cycle, it may be argued that all types of intergenerational activity included concrete experience. Examples of reflective observation could be found in students’ accounts of how they thought about their relationship with an older adult, how they worked to manage the relationship, and how they used the older adult’s life as an example for thinking about their own future selves. Trying to understand the older adult’s psychology, talking to friends and fellow students about experiences with older adults, and trying to find explanations and solutions to problematic situations were identified as examples of abstract conceptualisation. Examples of active experimentation by students included trying to adjust their behaviour to the situation, trying to realise their explanations and solutions to problematic situations, and treating older adults as they themselves would like to be treated.

**Textual analysis of students’ CAS journals**

Students at some schools were encouraged to maintain reflective journals describing their CAS experiences. There are a number of problems associated with the validity and reliability of such journals, particularly in terms of the writing skills of particular students. Nonetheless, in examples in which journal entries by the same student written at different times in the Diploma Programme (i.e. a longitudinal research design) were obtained, the application of the framework to textual analysis revealed development and increasing sophistication in the thinking of the student, particularly in terms of Bloom’s affective domain and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle. In the latter, students early in the programme wrote about their concrete experiences of IP and developed their reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation skills as time went on. The validity of this conclusion may be contested on the grounds that the students had matured and their journal writing skills improved generally. Nonetheless, this suggests a direction for future enquiry.

**Conclusions**

Furlong and Oancea (2005) propose criteria for assessing quality in applied and practice-based educational research. They propose dimensions of quality that include an epistemic dimension that addresses scientific (methodological, theoretical) robustness as well as dimensions that address social and economic robustness. We propose that the framework discussed here displays methodological and theoretical robustness that warrants claims for its application in research into IB programmes.

Intergenerational practice in IB World schools in UK, although not very extensive, was varied and the participants quite enthusiastic, especially after being involved with older adults. Several issues emerged in our research, such as ethical
considerations, the instrumentality of students’ CAS journals, and the nature, extent and impact of volunteerism. Few differences were identified among the opinions of the students. The general feeling was that, even though they felt pressured by the amount and demands of the Diploma Programme, most students enjoyed their interactions with older adults beyond the CAS requirements. It is interesting to observe that most students had reservations about IP when starting the activities, and often conceded that they were prejudiced in their ideas about older adults. Most had opted for IP as an instrumental choice in order to gain CAS ‘hours’. It became clear that this situation was in almost all cases reversed during the activities so that, by the end of the CAS requirement, students continued having contact with the older adults and realised that the point of the experience was beyond the requirements of academic certification.

**Future directions for research**

This research has led to the formation of a number of questions about intergenerational activities. These are numerous and varied. Do boarding and non-residential schools have contrasting approaches to intergenerational activities? How should intergenerational activities be organized—as the personal projects of individual students or as whole-school-based projects continuing from year to year? Are intergenerational activities ‘gendered’? What strategies may be employed to address gender imbalances among participating students? What child and vulnerable person protection issues may be pertinent to these activities? What ‘exit strategies’ are in place to plan for the time when the intergenerational relationship terminates, for example when a student leaves school? How do students report and reflect upon their experiences? How are the guiding questions suggested in the CAS guide implemented? Do intergenerational activities vary between different phases of education (that is the IB Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma Programmes)? What do intergenerational relationships look like in different cultural contexts? What are the dynamics of intergenerational relationships when the young and older partners in the relationship come from different cultures? What is the role of language in the development of intergenerational relationships? It is hoped that these and other questions will be addressed in a further round of inquiry, and that the project may become internationalized to address research questions involving intergenerational activities in schools beyond the pilot area in the United Kingdom.

**References**


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Viewing Points

Key words: arts, creative writing, drama, oral history, school

Aims of project/organisation
Studio 3 Arts promote and deliver quality participatory arts to empower local communities and address today’s social issues. We offer an extensive range of projects throughout the North East London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest through tailor-made arts activity for all the community with a focus on socially excluded groups and people living in areas of poor arts provision.

We have been undertaking intergenerational work for the last 8 years – the project we are highlighting here is the Brady Primary/ Brights Avenue project as it is very typical of the work. The aim was to bring the two groups together in arts activity that would feed into a larger presentation of work at the Queens Theatre in Hornchurch

Why did you do it
To reach out to a socially excluded group and to bring them into contact with young people, in order to break down barriers between the two groups

What did you want to achieve/change
For the young people to learn about the elders, learn some oral history from their stories, gain confidence in speaking to adults, gain skills in communicating especially active listening and recording, and to use this to build poems and creative writing and drama

To help the adults to remember their past and bring it into a contemporary context. For the adults to feel useful, through helping the children and providing the stories, thus having a sense of a life well lived. For them to feel part of a larger event despite not being able to visit the Queens Theatre themselves

Why was it intergenerational
So that both parties could learn from each other and support each other because the sum is greater than the parts

Project Description
We visited the elders at the Age Concern centre over a period of weeks to build up their confidence in us. We introduced them to the idea of the project and chatted to them to gather stories that we told them the children would love to hear. Meanwhile we met the children and ran a preparation session with them around meeting the elders, to build their confidence and give them skills they could fall back on when they finally met them. This included imagining what the room would look like, what the adults did at the centre, and what they would be like, as well as how best to talk to someone potentially hard of hearing and any issues around mobility, dexterity etc that they would have to work around, stressing how these things were what anyone would want when meeting someone for the first time.
We also talked to the teacher about what she wanted the children to get out of the project, and how it would link to the national curriculum. They had been looking at myths, legends and storytelling, so we examined the scheme of work so that we could bring in things that we would thereby know they would be able to reference. The teacher got the children to record their questions and answers in their English books and then write up their poems and stories there too.

On the day the groups finally met, we went along to check the adults were fine and expecting us, reminding them of stories they had told us that they could convey to the children. We then did a half hour revision session with the children to help them to remember the skills they had practised. We walked down to the centre and the children were introduced to adults in pairs. As we had some previous knowledge of the adults we were able to pair children with adults they might have something in common with and introduce them with some information about each other.

As a group we played a name game which the children had practiced before so they could help any adults. The groups of 3 then worked together on icebreakers, and the children started asking the adults questions that they had prepared in advance. Writer Julie Garton worked with the group to create poems about each other, and to take some oral history and turn it into a story. All of these were displayed at the Queens theatre in the foyer. We returned to the school to use some of the material to create a little performance that was shown at the Queens in a performance of intergenerational work for various projects

**What happened as a result**
The group really bonded well. Both children and adults said that they had expected there to be problems, and though they were a bit nervous they were both pleasantly surprised. The children are better at listening skills, and got better at doing supportive work with each other, because we were unable to get the adults to attend the Queens, we took the performance to the centre.

**What worked**
Taking the performance to the centre was great. It made sure that any adults and staff that had not taken part in the project got to see what the others had been up to. Because it was very intimate we were able to check that the adults recognised their own stories being enacted, which meant that an evaluation session happened immediately in a very enthusiastic and natural way. We changed all the furniture around at the centre, which was new for the children too, and it created a great atmosphere

**What didn’t work**
The time-scale at the centre was always tight which meant that there was little time for reflecting at the end of the session. We were not able to get the adults to go to the Queens event.

This project went smoothly; on another project that was part of the same programme the adults would not let the young people visit them in the housing complex and the intergenerational work had to take place remotely
What has changed as a result of the project
Both school and centre are very willing to do similar projects in the future; the school has embraced the value of intergenerational work

What did you learn
How to embed the work into the curriculum: though this was a fringe benefit, it did however get us access to the school and made us feel that the ‘lessons’ learnt were being taken very seriously; also to visit the centre several times in advance to prepare the elders

What would you do differently in the future
Use the books the children wrote in more to get them to reflect on how they felt each week

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Wigan Over 50s Forum

**Key words**: creative writing, education, oral history, schools

**Introduction**
The Forum was constituted in August 2001 with core objectives which include ‘lobbying against age discrimination’, ‘being a voice for the older people of the borough’, and as a direct result of the intergenerational involvement described below, ‘to encourage understanding and communication between younger and older people’.

At present, membership is hovering at around 400, predominantly aged over 70, though with an emerging younger section of people aged 50 – 65. In 2002, the Forum decided on a programme of work that would take the key Forum messages out to the ten Townships which make up the borough. Initially this was seen as a means of attracting new members and consulting with local older people about the good and bad points of their own Township. At the beginning of this programme, involving young people was not a priority, but it soon proved to be one of its greatest successes!

Local anecdotal evidence indicated that the two groups – teenagers and older people, were polarised and entrenched in their opinions of each other. Teenagers thought older people ‘lived too long’, were ‘boring old farts’ and ‘did nothing except knit and play bingo’! Yet when asked whether their grandparents fitted into this perception, teenagers were adamant that their grandparents were different! Unsurprisingly, the evidence was similar when older people were asked about their opinion of teenagers in general. Teenagers were perceived as ‘always swearing and drinking’, ‘being disrespectful’ and ‘always hanging around in groups at bus stops and corner shops. However their grandchildren were different!

This indicated clearly that it was the unknown ‘otherness’ that most strongly contributed to the stereotypical assumptions that each generation was prepared to make about the other.

The Forum decided that low key, informal opportunities to meet together, in a mutually non-threatening environment would be a beginning step. Members felt that this would encourage individual communication and this was most likely to lead to individuals reconsidering their perceptions and assumptions.

Consequently, throughout the three year period it took to complete the series of Township Roadshows, there developed two distinct strands of intergenerational involvement, which were repeated, modified by lessons learned from previous events, at each Roadshow event.

**Project Description**

**Primary school involvement – ‘Valuing Older People’ Competition**
All primary schools in the Township were written to as soon as the Forum had decided on a date for the Roadshow.
The e-mails were sent from the author’s office i.e. on Social Services headed paper. This helped to give weight to the request contained in the letter, as most schools had not previously heard of the Over 50s Forum.

The request was for schools to submit paper-based entries to a competition entitled ‘Valuing Older People’, which would be displayed and judged during the afternoon of the Roadshow event. It was left to the each school to decide what form their entries would take. This was vital in getting the school on board because they could make it fit what was going on in school that term. Examples included:

- Creative writing – write a letter to an isolated older person showing understanding.
- Art work – anything from nursery class entries about ‘I love my Nan because ……………’
- Fashion plates on ‘Christmas outfit designs for active Over 50s’, through to drawings and descriptions of ‘An Older Person I admire’, ‘An Older Person who helps me.’
- Written pieces about the children’s expectations of what it was like to be an older person now, what it might be like when they themselves became pensioners, how they could show respect for, kindness to and appreciation of older people with whom they came into contact.

**Key points**

- Social Services involvement was important to ‘sell the idea’ of involvement in such a project. Some school staff took reference to ‘Over 50s’ personally and were prepared to delete the e-mail without further consideration!
- Be clear about explaining how involvement will fit with Head Teacher’s target areas – things such as citizenship in key stage 2.
- If possible identify and link into one enthusiastic staff member in each school.
- Stress that there is no extra work for staff – show how it fits within the term’s plan.
- Give as much notice as possible – most heads said half a term was best. Timing Township events anywhere near SATS, during the summer term or too close to Christmas would be a disaster.
- Limit entries per school – we soon learned that about 40 pieces of work per school was as much as we could handle.
- The child’s name being printed clearly on the reverse of each piece made producing certificates much easier.
- Be clear that every entry will be recognised – we gave certificates to every child and about £20 in gift and book token prizes divided between the winners in each school.
- Make it as easy as possible to participate e.g. offer to collect the work from school, saving staff having to deliver them to the event.

Having collected entries from an average of 4 schools per Roadshow, they were displayed on boards at the Roadshow venue. This was time consuming, but there was never any shortage of older volunteers to do this job. There was always a genuine eagerness to see what the children had written!
Attendance at the Roadshow was drawn from members of the older people’s groups local to that area e.g. luncheon clubs, over 60s groups, church fellowships, women’s institutes, Probus and Rotary clubs, sheltered housing schemes, sequence dancing groups. Attendance was usually around 50 people, with some attracting as many as 100. On arrival, everyone was given a number of sticky dots – usually 6 or 8. During the course of the afternoon event, there were two periods of time set aside to get a fresh cup of tea, piece of homemade cake and to look at the competition entries on display. People were encouraged to ‘vote’ for the pieces they felt best reflected the title of the competition by using their sticky dots.

This proved to be an excellent method of judging the work. Some people voted for the most colourful piece, some for the child that appeared to have tried the hardest. Winning entries came from children of varying academic abilities. Some older people, reading the entries, identified with the special loss some children spoke about when a grandparent dies. There was a lot of laughter and not a few tears around the display boards.

In general, the older people were moved by the ideas and emotions that the children expressed, and it provoked much discussion between the older people themselves – both on the day and afterwards.

In the days immediately following the Roadshow, all the entries had to be sorted again, and each school was contacted by phone to let the head know which three children had got most ‘sticky dot’ votes, and thereby won a prize. A date was also agreed when members of the Forum would come into school to conduct a whole school assembly on the subject of Older People, during which certificates for everyone and prizes for the winners would be distributed.

Each assembly was led by the Network Co-ordinator for Older People, with an average of 4 Forum members. The assembly took the form of a lively discussion between the two age groups centring on three main questions directed at the children:

- What do you think is good about being an older person?
- What do you think is not so good?
- What could you do to make it better?

Without exception, each occasion was uniquely different – much could be learned from the ethos of the school by the quality of the children’s answers. It was clear which schools had built on the opportunity provided by entry in the competition to explore the concept of ageing with the children further.

**Key points**

- Older people are really daunted at first at the prospect of returning to school – in a number of cases, the same school they themselves had attended 60 years previously!
- Controlling up to 200 children and a number of older people at the same time is not easy and takes a strong facilitator!
Schools love good publicity, so often local press would be invited to take photos of competition winners with the Forum members after the assembly.

Winning anything works wonders for a child’s self-esteem, especially if they are not academic high-flyers!

Winning entries have not been returned, but have been laminated and now form a mobile exhibition that the Forum places in residential and nursing homes across the borough in the form of ‘corridor walks’ to encourage mobility, and as an aid to reminiscence therapy.

The experience of running the ‘Valuing Older People’ Competition and delivering more than 40 assembles to primary schools has been exciting and exhausting in equal measure! It has led on to a number of other opportunities including:

- invites for Forum members to judge poetry competition
- invites for Forum members to give talks on childhood or war time experiences (links well with national curriculum)
- further intergenerational projects around gardening and playground games
- opportunities for children to participate in borough-wide events aimed at older people
- invitations extended to the Forum to join schools for Harvest and Christmas festivities and entertainments.

High School Involvement

High school heads in each Township were written to at the same time as the contact was made with Primary school heads. Again the letter came from the Network Co-ordinator and the ‘official’ letterhead helped to ensure that the letter was read.

This was followed with a phone call about 4 weeks before the Township event to discuss the suggestion in more detail. The letter invited the school to identify a group of 6 - 8 young people who could come with a member of staff to attend the Roadshow event.

Key Points
- Young people from years 9 /10 are best – 7 / 8 tend to be a bit shy and want to stay in one big group. Year 11 have too much pressure with coursework/exams.
- Suggest schools send school council members or health/social care students – they are better at conversations and joining in!
- When the young people arrive – spend 5 minutes with them explaining in detail what will happen during the afternoon and how you would like them to participate.
- Reassure them that the older people are just as nervous to meet them as they are to meet the older people! Make it clear they are equals!
- Show them where the refreshments and the toilets are
- Split them up into 2’s and introduce each couple to a table with a number of older people. Stay for a couple of minutes to help get the conversation started and then withdraw.
The first thing the older and younger people on the tables did together was an intergenerational quiz – where some of the answers would be more obvious to a younger person and other answers would be more likely to be guessed by an older person. Some examples of questions are given below:

- How many Prime Ministers have there been since 1970?
- What is the name of Sabrina’s cat?
- What is number 1 in the Periodic Table and what letter is used for this element?
- Who sang ‘On the Good Ship Lollipop’?
- What programme is Ned Flanders in?
- How many tanners in a pound?
- Who or what is Hedwig?
- Who is the latest British tennis hopeful in the headlines?
- Which fish is pickled to make roll-mops?
- Where did Gracie Fields come from?
- What colour does acid turn litmus paper?

In general, around 15 questions are enough. One answer sheet is completed per table, thereby encouraging everyone to contribute. Tables then swap answer sheets in order to mark and score. The winning table is presented with a prize. It must be one that can be shared – like a box of Celebrations or Miniature Heroes chocolates!

Thus the ice has been broken, and everyone on the table should have had a chance to introduce themselves and contribute to the quiz. Allow 30 minutes for quiz, answers and prize.

After this, staying at the same tables, older and younger residents are asked to consider three questions:

- What’s good about living in your Township?
- What’s not so good?
- How could it be made better – how could the Over 50’s Forum help?

This table-top discussion can last between 20 and 40 minutes, and one person needs to record the thoughts of everyone on their table.

Sometimes, tables can polarise into younger and older members each talking in a smaller group. If so, join the table and direct the conversation to include everyone’s viewpoint again. The most powerful thing to come out of this discussion from an intergenerational point of view is the similarities of experience each generation finds they have with the other generation! Typically, these include experiencing difficulties with public transport; lack of sufficient disposable income, be it pension or pocket money; not having somewhere to go to meet up with peers, and a common sense of powerlessness – both groups perceive the power to be held by the generation in the middle.
The rest of the afternoon features opportunities to view and vote for the Valuing Older People competition entries, and a small ‘market place’ style area where pension advice, information on Social Services and Age Concern and healthy eating can all be obtained. Younger people are also encouraged to look around these stands with grandparents or older neighbours in mind.

The afternoon finishes with a short chair based exercise session, which everyone joins in with. There is much laughter and smiling as older and young people clap along and do the movements together.

Typically, the young people will comment on leaving the event that ‘they’ (the older people) ‘are just normal really!’ and the older people will report how good it is to see ‘that not all teenagers are hooligans!’

Assemblies don’t seem to work with this age group because they are too rushed – staff have a lot of information to pass on to the pupils and assembly is not geared to delivering a message in the same way as at primary school.

However, involving High schools through the Roadshows has led on to a number of other intergenerational opportunities including:

- Day time French taster classes
- Dialect workshop
- Intergenerational drama production
- Collection of Wartime Memories, VE Celebration event and subsequent commemorative book.
- Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN - children with special educational needs) linked into Social Service Day Centre for Elderly
- Contributions to GCSE coursework
- Oral History Project – Health and Social Care
- Teenagers decision making down the decades – Philosophy

The key seems to be in understanding where the school recognises a fit between what you can offer and what they need, and then tailoring a project/event to keep as close to that fit as possible whilst maximising the benefits and contribution for older people.

**Conclusion**

The Forum is now recognised locally as a valued link between the generations. Schools have had a good experience of involvement with the Forum and now ring, perhaps to request older people to come into school to talk on a specific subject, or perhaps requesting help with a project idea they have. Intergenerational activity is now recognised as valuable and is written into the Township Plan for each area.
The older people who have participated have grown tremendously in confidence, and have begun to change their attitude towards the young people of their area. At Forum meetings, any new projects with younger people are always high on the agenda; members are anxious to make links with the Youth Council in the borough, and with more disaffected young people, through the Youth Offending Team – they want to hear their views, and how as Over 50s Forum members, they can take responsibility for improving the communication between the generations!

Our experience here in Wigan has been a matter of dipping a toe in and trying a few ‘easy’ projects, of which I have described one. It has certainly whetted everyone’s appetite for more, and we are currently pursuing ways of doing this.

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Write-On! Learning Through Life Project

Key words: creative writing, learning, lifelong learning, community development, ICT, schools

Aims of project/organisation:
The University of Glamorgan’s Strategic Goals highlight the commitment “To advance, within the wider international HE context, the economic, social and cultural priorities of Wales”, and a fundamental purpose listed in its mission statement is “to serve the community in Wales”. In 1999, the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CeLL) was established and one of its primary remits was to continue to build on community relationships and widening participation, “specifically targeting people, who for various reasons may have been marginalized from the university sector, such as:

- Young people who are still in school, but lack confidence in progressing to post-16 study
- Young adults who have left school and who are generally described as educationally disadvantaged
- Community based learners associated with older age groups

(CeLL Strategic Goals)

Working within this remit, and based on our experience of engagement with young people on schools-based programmes and older adults such as the University of the Third Age Groups, the Write-On, Learning Through Life Project was designed and initiated with the support of European (Objective One) funding and match funded by CeLL. The initial concept underpinning the project identified three aims, to:

- improve communication between the generations
- improve community relationships
- break down the negative stereotyping that exists about ‘other’ generations through a process of researching and recording common life experiences.

Why did you do it
Within Wales at the time of the project’s development, any strategy for increasing the uptake of learning/engagement opportunities by local people of all ages needed to respond to the particular circumstances of the heartland of South Wales, at a time of great social, economic and demographic change. Key features of this area, which the Write-On! project attempted to address or draw from, include:

- a low percentage of the adult population engaged in learning activities
- significant barriers to accessing learning for many disadvantaged groups
- a large group of disaffected or alienated young males
- a large number of Third Age learners able to make an active contribution to the development of their local communities
In the development of the project, specific barriers to participation for the target groups were identified. For younger people they included:

- a cycle of low or negative expectations resulting in underachievement
- a culture of dependency. Many young people are, or expect to be, third generation unemployed in their families.

The project rationale also acknowledged the Welsh Assembly’s view that “None of these problems will be overcome without the closest collaboration between schools together with further and higher education, training providers and employers” (The Learning Country, pt81).

Barriers facing older generations in their efforts to access support to proceed to further education, take advantage of employment opportunities, or make a difference to their communities, included:

- age
- negative educational/ employment experiences
- finance
- location and timing
- forced or voluntary redundancy leading to negative perception of self-worth, leading into the cycle of dependency
- those who have been trained for and worked in specific industries do not always appreciate the potential for the transferability of their skills
- often an unwillingness to access new/further education or training.

Additionally, Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT), where the main project activity was based, has an ageing population and a Carnegie research project carried out a few years ago in the Rhondda districts investigated health (and related issues) within the Third-Age Group. It demonstrated that involvement in activities that stimulate mental activities sustains/improves health and decreases dependency on Social Services. However, it was noticeable that many residents in this category were not socially active, did not access many, or any, of the local facilities, especially anything of an educative nature, and often relied heavily on family or state support.

Write-On’s development took these issues into account and sought to engage schools in a collaborative project, together with individuals from local communities. Recognition of the importance and relevance of personal experiences was key, particularly with regard to the older target groups, as well as their contribution to the regeneration of their communities and a better understanding between generations. This aspect of the project complemented the aims of the education pack for secondary schools, launched by the National Assembly for Wales early in 2002 in ‘reinforcing the importance of rights and responsibilities in a democratic society’.

**What did you want to achieve/change**

The underlying intention of the project was to bring together younger and older residents of local communities to overcome the negative stereotypes that prevail in today’s society, and to develop and foster community relationships. We planned to address the major problem of motivation via an innovative, flexible, non-threatening approach, which highlighted the opportunity to contribute to the communities and to work towards a more secure future for themselves, their children or grandchildren. The objectives were to develop self-reliance, flexibility and breadth of knowledge, in
particular through nurturing competence in core skills, especially communication, in all its forms.

The growing importance attached to social exclusion by national governments across Europe and in national discourses is a response to the rapidly changing social, economic and political developments in Europe. The Write-On! Project sought to address the aims of the National Assembly of Wales in “boosting the participation of children and young people across a range of dimensions in community life” (The Learning Country: Introduction).

Why was it intergenerational
The view that lifelong learning has social as well as economic outcomes was fully supported, and the planning of the project addressed the aims of the National Assembly for Wales towards developing an inclusive society, by bringing together members of communities who would not, necessarily, seek each other’s company. The design of the project had to consider the needs and potential level of contribution of both generations. It had to be structured, but in a way that allowed scope for negotiation of the direction of its practical element, and of the methodology for data collection and recording. It was also essential to consider what the benefits would be for each group. The project team considered that this intergenerational, experiential approach would highlight participants’ transferable skills and engender a sense of self worth: the first step on the road to equality. Subsequently, there would be a greater level of respect between generations and an appreciation of the diversity and value of lifelong learning. (Adamson, et al, 2001)

We believed that, for the older age group, emphasis needed to be placed on the practical benefits and value of sharing their experiences and contributing, not only to the development of the younger generation, and to their community as a whole, but also to their own well-being. The value of the contribution of young people to the project was expressed in terms of individual empowerment in relation to:
- the energy they could bring
- their input to the design of the project
- their knowledge of technology, and opportunity to share that (or acquire it) in an innovative and applied way
- taking control of even a small part of their own future

Project Description

What did you do
During the pilot year (2001-2002), we established six groups, each meeting for two hours a week for 30 weeks. Each group, of approximately 12 -15 younger people (aged from 13-18), and 7-12 older people (45 plus), had a facilitator from the project team who stayed with them throughout the project. One of the conditions imposed by European funding meant that the two hours were split into one of training, with a focus on communication and the development of ‘employability’ skills, and the second hour was dedicated to a practical aspect that engaged the groups with the researching and recording of common life experiences. We chose this focus as we wanted to offer both generations an equal opportunity to engage in discussions. The training programme was quite prescriptive and had been designed by the project team during the bidding phase, with the two generations accessing certain elements,
such as IT, separately during the first few weeks mainly to allow the adults, who generally did not know each other, to ‘acclimatise’ to the environment and to each other. For the practical element, where the groups worked together from the start, only the theme (Schooldays) had been pre-determined as it was our intention to encourage the groups to negotiate and work through series of sub-topics to create a basis for the planning of this element. Subsequent common life themes have been: Being a Teenager; Leisure Through the Ages; Heroes, Idols & Role Models, and this year it is Food and the Environment.

The groups were also encouraged to investigate different ways of locating, collecting and recording data, and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of both ‘traditional’ and ‘electronic’ means. We introduced those participants lacking in ICT experience to the world of PCs, with a specific emphasis on the application of skills, such as Internet searching and Powerpoint, to the practical element of the project. Every participant developed a personal portfolio but also contributed to a group ‘end-product. These have ranged from posters, oral presentations, scrap books, games, collages, stories, plays and poems.

Over the last 4 years the project has run in six venues throughout RCT and one in Merthyr Tydfil and involved collaboration with comprehensive schools and local communities to recruit participants. In total, 330 people have worked with us and on average there has been a 3:1 female:male ratio and approximately the same for younger:older participants each year. The project is now in its fifth year and we are experimenting with variations relating to group contact time and, in response to demand, the inclusion of specific target groups such as sheltered housing residents.

**What happened as a result**
The needs of the younger target group were assessed in collaboration with the schools and, in the initial sessions we repeated the self-assessment exercises and group work analyses that were implemented during the pilot phase. These help individuals to identify their own strengths, weaknesses, concerns and expectations, to set goals for future development, to realise that they have voice and a part to play in shaping their own future. Many of the adult participants from the pilot were, initially, reticent to engage with these activities, but one of the benefits of the intergenerational approach has been that through helping the younger generation with whatever task was being undertaken, the adults have not only enjoyed the experience but also have learned a lot about themselves. This has worked for both age groups and the approach will be continued.

As we neared the end of the pilot phase, we witnessed improved skill levels within both age groups and there was a sense of ‘ownership’ of the project by all the groups, as all participants were encouraged to contribute to its development and progression. Younger participants stated that they were more confident with communicating, and preparing and delivering talks to a variety of audiences. This also reflected across their other studies. One team of younger participants, with their facilitator, delivered a presentation about the project to targeted pupils, and out in the community. Some of the adults reported increased confidence in speaking out at public meetings, making presentations for, or to, community action groups, or making ‘complaints’ to local authorities.
The strengthening of our partnership with schools during the pilot phase developed a growing interest from many more staff than our immediate school facilitators. The project complements the focus on the development of wider key skills and, in consultation with appropriate tutors, enables younger participants to assimilate project data into other subject specialisms. We were also invited to deliver information to staff to highlight the benefits of the project across all curricula areas. We believe that this supported the aims of the project, and ensured its success. The relationships developed with adults from local communities and community/interest groups also encouraged us to believe that the pilot phase was successful, and many participants agreed to act as ambassadors for the project for the future. We have also been delighted that a significant number of the adult participants have returned to subsequent years of the project.

What worked
The development of a range of games, from ice-breakers and energisers through to more sophisticated communication and negotiation exercises has worked exceptionally well. The groups have been particularly appreciative of the tea, coffee, or chocolate, and biscuits, midway through the session! The main project highlights have been the:

- development of intergenerational friendships
- enthusiasm and commitment of participants and project team
- wealth of material collated: artefacts, photos, stories, poems, paintings, plays, music
- acknowledgement that learning can be fun

What didn’t work
The main area for concern during the pilot phase was retention, which we identified as having three main causes: The overall length of the project; the training/practical split, as the young people reported that they found the first hour ‘boring’ and older adults did not often see the relevance to themselves; and the separation of the generations for training in the first weeks. Other challenges, which have continued to affect the project include:

- ICT resources at school venues
- Recruitment, especially of adults
- Transport for project field trips
- Accessibility for adults - a lack of private transport, or inaccessibility of venues using public transport, has been a significant, reported barrier, despite the introduction of free travel for pensioners on buses in Wales. To overcome this and increase recruitment, we negotiate a car-share/lift system, and occasionally, the group facilitator gives adults a lift.
- Voluntary v. compulsory participation of young people. For each year, there have been three routes to participation:
  - entirely voluntary, taking place directly after school
  - compulsory for the pupils: timetabled during the school day
  - a combination of the two, with one hour timetabled and the second following directly after school
Each of these approaches has had its challenges and advantages. Whilst the entirely voluntary and compulsory models have been effective, on the whole, the third model has been the least successful. Trying to engage pupils who have to attend, and encourage them to remain voluntarily for an additional hour has brought mixed results, depending on the level of disaffection of the pupils involved.

**What has changed as a result of the project**
The project is ongoing and is now in its fifth year. To date, its outcomes have had a far reaching impact. For example, for the Organisation, it has

- raised the profile of IP and its benefits for HE and the wider community
- led to the establishment of a focus group for IP which has increased the opportunities for curriculum design, research and funding
- strengthened the relationship with CIP
- led directly to the establishment of the Wales Centre for IP, which is now hosted by the University
- led to membership of the International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes

For the project team, it has provided opportunities for personal development and a level of expertise of IP which has enabled us to modify the project design in response to identified issues or concerns. As a result of the experience of, and feedback from, the pilot year, for example, we recognised the need for the:

- integration of the training and practical elements
- introduction of at least one preparatory session with each generation prior to meeting
- reduction of the overall length of the project
- development of an accredited route for those (over 16) who wanted it
- development of a series of games, based on the theme and followed up with discussions on the underpinning rationale, to replace the more formal training approach

For the participants, their feedback has highlighted their enjoyment of the intergenerational nature of the project, such as hearing the different views and experiences of all ages, and, specifically from the adults, observing the growth in confidence of the young people. A recurring theme in the feedback has been that the project provides ‘opportunities’: to do, to experience, to try. The main benefits highlighted were increased:

- confidence
- communication skills
- presentation skills
- team working skills
- broadened horizons
- new perspectives
- self fulfilment
- meeting the ‘other’ generation and getting to know them
How do you know
We have employed a number of strategies to gather feedback from participants, partners and facilitators, including:

- Questionnaires
- Group evaluation exercises/activities
- Journals and overviews
- Facilitator logs
- Ongoing verbal feedback

Formal questionnaire evaluation, carried out anonymously, resulted in a 44 per cent response from the pilot year up to 83 percent in the third year. We attribute the increase to the fact that initially the evaluation forms were distributed by post, whereas subsequently we have distributed them during the final sessions. Those who felt that the project had met their needs or expectations, adequately through to fully, has risen from 83 per cent to 96 per cent, positively reflecting the changes we have made. Negative responses generally focused on the issues discussed in the ‘challenges’ listed in section 2.4. We have also sought feedback from our school partners who have acknowledged that the project has significantly benefited the students. Those skills particularly highlighted have been, work-related, communication, learning strategies, working with others, and personal awareness and self confidence.

What did you learn
The main issues that we have had to address have been:

- The importance of preparatory session re: guidelines, expectations
- Separate training during the pilot was a mistake – the young people have been more than happy to ‘buddy’ with the adults and offer support with IT. Occasionally, adults have been really experienced and this has often surprised the younger participants and created lots of discussion
- Even though we thought we were being flexible during the pilot phase, we realised that we had to learn to be contortionists!
- Some people were seeking accreditation

While the project was non-assessed during the pilot, we responded to requests, primarily from 6th form students, and developed and validated two modules at HE foundation level in 2001. Of the 90 participants eligible to access this option, only 17 have refused to date, citing other commitments or existing HE/professional qualifications as their reasons. Thus we have moved from a formal, but non-assessed, structure to one which is more flexible yet offers participants the option of assessment. This approach encourages engagement from people with a wider range of abilities, as individuals can make the decision about assessment later in the project when confidence levels have risen.
Based on our experience of limited success with recruitment of adults through large mail shots, we have learned that the most effective means of reaching potential learners is by more direct contact such group talks and informal chats. Additionally, participants who have agreed to act as ambassadors for the project have been very effective with this method of recruitment. Thus, the strategy for the project now channels information through community partners, mediated by the members of the community, who are in contact with potential participants, and ensures that target groups have the opportunity to talk to project staff. This has proved to be the most successful recruitment strategy for older learners onto the project so far.

What would you do differently in the future
In consideration of the experience of the past four years, we recognise that to increase participation and to continue to widen access, we need to diversity the delivery by experimenting with different formats, especially in relation to the length of project and
- access funding for transport before beginning
- develop a wider partnership network, especially with the voluntary sector, age and youth agencies

Resource Materials
We have designed many of the project materials ourselves based on the following:
British Telecom:
- Talkworks Course
- Teachers’ support materials
- General communication & citizenship materials
- www.bteducation.org/joint/

BBC:
- www.bbc.co.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise
- www.bbc.co.uk/wales/education

Other useful sites:
- www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/index-new.htm (virtual teachers’ centre)
- www.teachingzone.org/index/htm (free materials for teachers. Used to support PSHE and Citizenship)

Particularly useful book:
T. Bond (1986), Games for Social & Life Skills, Stanley Thornes Publisher Ltd
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Young Hearts Intergenerational Project,

Key words: arts, community development, crafts, film, learning, reminiscence, schools

Aims of the Project
Young Hearts Project is a current intergenerational Project operating in North Monmouthshire. Funded until spring 2006, it is being run to record older people’s experiences and to build positive relationships between young and older residents in the area. We are working with 10 local schools and older people from different groups in the area, hosting a year of creative events with the following aims in mind:

- Giving older and younger people a respected, valued voice and role in the community
- Helping older people understand and feel included in today’s changing society
- To challenge the negative perceptions older and younger people have of each other, their cultures and values.
- Allowing people to share their experiences and learn from each other.
- Providing people with the skills to fostering positive and beneficial relationships between different generations
- Providing a catalyst to schools and community groups in the area to embrace intergenerational activities by witnessing the benefits of bringing different generations together.

Why did we do it
The Young Hearts Project is being run by Monmouth Disability Day Services with Funding from Monmouthshire’s Older Peoples Strategy Group. Monmouth Disability Day Services works with older, disabled and other vulnerable people living in and around North Monmouthshire. Through the years of working in Monmouth, the Day Service has witnessed older people’s changing perceptions of their environment and their role in the community and a growing fear of younger people in the town.

Monmouth is not a town with a high crime rate, but is a typical rural town, where local families move away for better employment opportunities, and new families move in to the area. As a result of the demographic changes, many older people in Monmouth have become disconnected from the younger members of their families. They no longer have the feeling that they know the other members of their community, leading to a feeling of isolation and a lack of validity in society; effectively becoming invisible. Sadly, this perception is often an accurate one, and in a transient community such as Monmouth, older people frequently blend into the background, purely as receivers rather than contributors to society.
What did you want to achieve/change
We felt that it was important to challenge the perception of people becoming invisible when they get older, and saw that running a programme of events leading to an exhibition would help older people feel more visible and would remind other members of the public of the important role older people can and should play in family and community life. We also wanted to alleviate older people’s fear of young people, helping them value younger people, and giving younger people a positive regard of the elderly.

Why was it intergenerational
From the start the project was to include interaction with school children. At the planning stage of the project, we became aware of the Centre for Intergenerational Practice and became convinced of the importance the focus of the project being on relationship building between the generations as our core aim.

Project Description

What did we do
Since our funding was limited to a year, we decided to host one off events at all the local junior and secondary schools, designed to provide a catalyst to highlight the positive impact of intergenerational working. We were keen to provide the older people involved in the project with the chance to take ownership of the way the project ran. Day Service users were consulted with, in depth, about the type of events they would like to partake in.

The older people responded with a desire to pass on certain skills to children, and since we are based in a rural, farming area a number of the events are focused around sharing dying rural skills. They also wanted to help the children understand that whilst they were physically older they still perceived themselves as younger than they look. This was the reason given for the older people choosing the project name; “Young Hearts.”

As project organisers, we wanted to challenge older and younger peoples’ perceptions of each other and we have run events designed to do this. We also felt it was important that older people were helped to respect and value children and have held events where young people taught older people new skills.

Throughout the project, we have commissioned educational film company, Catcher Media to record events and interactions between older and younger people. This footage is being edited and produced into a film to be utilised as a learning tool.

Below is a list of activities we have held throughout the project:

Project Launch
Partnering with Monmouth’s Library Service we hosted two reminiscence events with readings, a themed lunch and country music dance in the afternoon.
‘Secret Gardeners’ Gardening Event
Yr 4 pupils from a school that has its own organic garden tended by the children, met with a group of older people who (had previously) enjoyed gardening and shared gardening tips with the young people. The event involved a 2 way sharing of knowledge, with the young gardeners sharing with older people their knowledge of organic principles.

‘Artists With Futures’ Exhibition and creative workshops
Held in summer 2005, this exhibition included creative work by older people. Alongside the exhibition, older people ran a variety of creative workshops including mug glazing, herb planting, community artwork and photography.

‘Golf Fore All!’ Golfing Day
Monmouth Golf Club’s Youth team invited us to spend the day on the course learning how to play from teenage members of the club. An event designed to help older people see that they can learn from younger people; and that many teenagers have self-discipline and focus.

‘Chewing The Cud’ Butter Making Event
With the help of older people, Yr 6 children spent an afternoon making butter in jam jars – a number of the older people brought their own more sophisticated equipment (this caused real interest). Afterwards the children tasted their butter on scones made by the older people and spent time talking with each other about their experiences.

‘From Rags To Rugs’ – Rag Rug Making Event
Older people taught children how to make rag rugs and then worked together to design a rug mural about aging and youth; the children are currently spending half an hour a week working on their mural. When finished it will be divided in two and hung at the School and in the Day Centre.

‘Who Owns the Catwalk?’ – Fashion Event
Textile GCSE students and older people looked at clothing from different eras of the 20th century. The girls were encouraged to try the clothes on and talk with older people about their fashion views.

‘T-Danze’
A large event held at a local ballroom, we hired a DJ who played a selection of music chosen by children, and a swing band that played dance hall music back to back with the DJ. This was a real clash of cultures and we were aware that there was a big risk involved in running the event (especially since music is such a big divider). However, the older people adored watching the children perform their routines to music such as Busted and McFly (played very loudly!) and a number of older people joined in dancing with the children. Vice versa, the children embraced the dance hall music and danced with older people to waltz’s and foxtrots!
‘Love is’
A day of creative writing at Monmouth Library, we held the event on Valentines Day with 30 Yr 6’s from Wyesham School and 15 older people (day service users and house bound mobile library service users). Worked in groups of one older person and two children, the participants had to think about different types of love and write lines of poetry starting "Love Is.....". The groups then came together and chose one line of poetry from each group to form one poem culminating in the creation of a group poem about people’s perceptions of love.

‘Film Day’
A day spent at a school working with children to produce short scripts about people’s lives, hopes and dreams. After sharing lunch together, the scripts are performed with simple actions. Older and younger people help in all aspects of the filming and production of the piece of work (to be incorporated in the end film)

‘Henna Hands’
Joining a school during its cultural awareness week, children and older people had the opportunity to decorate each other’s hands and feet with henna, whilst sharing experiences of other cultures. Monmouthshire is not a culturally diverse area and as a result many older people do not enjoy the understanding or acceptance of other cultures that comes in more diverse areas. This event had been planned to help the younger people pass a positive message of acceptance onto the older people.

Incredible Invisibles Exhibition
At the end of the project we are hosting an exhibition screening the film and showing photographic portraits of older people in settings that reflect their life experiences (i.e. a retired miner at the coalface). This exhibition is designed to remind members of the community to consider the elderly as individuals with a huge amount of experience, value and potential, rather than just as ‘old people’

What has happened as a result
Most of the schools involved in the project have shown a real desire to continue more active and sustainable intergenerational working and a number of initiatives are currently being set up including the following:

- The local comprehensive school has established a scheme bringing older people into history lessons, providing expert witnesses on 20th century history. (The school has also started running Christmas Lunches for older people living in the neighbouring almshouses)
- A Junior School is setting up a pen pal scheme, developing friendships between older and younger members of their town.
- Another junior school is looking how to establish an intergenerational “Lunch Time Activity Club”, helping develop better community outreach in the local area.
- An isolated older person with previous experience of helping people with literacy problems has been invited to volunteer at a local school, helping with reading skills in a special needs unit.
What worked
The Young Hearts project is proving to be extremely successful, meeting all of the
desired aims and more. Two specific factors that we feel have enabled the projects
success and therefore worth noting, are:

Using the project as a catalyst
Due to the financial and time constraints of the project, we made the decision to run
one off events with schools with the hope that they would see the worth of
intergenerational work; this has proved to be a successful strategy and, as described
previously, has led to a number of schools implementing further, sustainable
strategies of their own.

Working with local partner organisations
Linking our project in with organisations such as Monmouth Library Service has been
an extremely positive element of the project and has not only helped form the path of
the project (allowing us to access additional resources and expertise) but has also
influenced the Library’s intergenerational strategy.

What has changed as a result of the project
Feedback from older people involved in the project has clearly shown that they are
changing their perceptions about younger people.

Schools feedback is that children have sometimes been reluctant to come to events
prior to meeting the older people and yet after the event, are highly enthused about
the older people and their experience together.

The project has helped change the way community based work is conducted within
the Day Service, moving from its traditional focus of older people being receivers,
(i.e. listening to singing) to become active participants with other community
members. (For example running Christmas craft workshops for children)

How do you know
Evaluation has been completed throughout the project, both by asking people to
complete simple forms and also by speaking with people immediately after events
(immediacy is an important form of feedback in our project since a number of
participants have early stage onset of dementia)

What did you learn
• We learnt about the importance and impact of working in partnership with
other local groups and organisations.
• We have learnt more about our own older service users, how to utilise their
skills and the value of their knowledge.
• We have become aware of the positive way children with challenging
behaviour respond to older people, and have learnt that there is a real role for
older people to play in engaging with and mentoring children with behavioural
and emotional issues.
**What would you differently in the future**

Our project was initially scoped as an oral history project. However some of the older people have commented that they would like to do less “looking back” and more “looking forward”. It was easy for us to make the assumption that older people would feel validated by reflecting on their lives, and whilst this is a legitimate tool, in the future we will look at working with people in a way that explores their futures more.

Due to funding constraints, administration time is limited and time spent on PR has been limited. Therefore the project has not been as widely publicised as we would have wished.

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