



National Youth Agency

Beth Johnson
FOUNDATION

looking at ageing in new ways



Intergenerational Practice in the Youth Sector

Impact, challenges and learning for
a youth led approach

Foreword

The interest in intergenerational practice and programmes has increased significantly over the last five to ten years. This reflects a growing recognition of the importance of building mutually positive relationships between the generations that promote the positive contribution that our younger and older citizens make. In the United Kingdom it has been more common for the lead on developing work to be taken by older people's organisations and groups. This study explores intergenerational work from a youth led perspective and seeks to draw out the lessons learnt from an evaluation of eight projects to inform our future practice. This is set in the context that all too often younger people are seen as the 'root' of community problems rather than a key element of the solution.

The Beth Johnson Foundation and the National Youth Agency identified the need to support youth-led approaches to intergenerational work and developed an intergenerational youth learning network to help address some of the issues. The network brought together practitioners from across youth sector organisations and those wanting to work with younger people.

The study was part of a larger group of work funded by the Department for Education (formerly Department for Children Schools and Families) through the Children Young People and Families Grant Programme and the Beth Johnson Foundation is grateful for their support in enabling this work to take place. We would also like to thank the organisations and participants who worked with us to share their experiences and learning.



Contents

- Executive Summary... 3
- Chapter 1: Background... 5
- Chapter 2: The evaluation programme... 9
- Chapter 3: Key outcomes for participants and the community... 13
- Chapter 4: Key Findings – Intergenerational Practice Challenges... 15
- Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations... 18
- Appendix A: Project Summaries:
 - **Community Fun Day**.....21
 - Peterborough City Council, Young People’s Services/ Fulbridge Youth Club
 - **Everybody Dance Now: Reminiscence Phase**.....22
 - Central Youth Theatre, Wolverhampton
 - **Generate Cooking Project**.....25
 - Aylesbury Youth Action
 - **Huda Centre Garden Project**.....27
 - St. George’s Community Hub, Birmingham
 - **Intergenerational Film Project**.....29
 - Buckinghamshire Youth Services
 - **Intergenerational Media Project**.....30
 - Drop Inn Centre, Belper, Derbyshire.
 - **Story Telling Project**.....32
 - Beth Johnson Foundation, Stoke-on-Trent
 - **Talkin’ ‘bout My Generation**.....34
 - Groundwork London
- References.....36

Executive Summary

'The project was a great success in terms of bridging the gap between the two generations and altering the perceived notions both had of each other'.

The Beth Johnson Foundation in partnership with the National Youth Agency established a programme to support and develop the role of young people and youth organisations in 'growing' intergenerational practice from a 'youth-led' perspective. Supported by an Intergenerational Youth Learning Network, the programme commenced in late 2009 and eight projects were identified for evaluation providing key outcomes and important lessons to inform future work in this field.

Through a robust methodological framework the programme provided the following key outcomes

Shared outcomes for young and older people

- Improved perceptions of the other generation
- Improved attitudes to the other generation
- Improved intergenerational relations

Specific outcomes for young people

- Enjoyment of new experiences
- Skills development – including organisational and leadership skills, technical, practical and creative skills
- Personal development – with increased communication skills for interacting with older people, self-confidence and self-esteem

Specific outcomes for older people

- Enjoyment of new experiences – interacting with young people, feeling a shared sense of achievement, having fun together!
- Improved health and wellbeing – social contact, improved independence through development of new skills, becoming a role model and feeling valued
- Personal development, and increased communication skills through sharing of life skills

In addition the programme identified benefits to the wider community, including breaking down barriers between different ethnic groups and age groups, and many of the projects reported making a positive contribution to the community.

Issues for consideration to inform future practice

The legacy of the programme is through the greater understanding of the issues, challenges and benefits of intergenerational practice in the youth sector, and the development of further and 'better' practice. The following are the headline issues with key messages to inform future practice.

Project planning and youth contribution to planning

- The project plan should include a strategy for recruitment and adequate preparation of both groups before interaction
- The needs and capabilities of individuals in both groups should be carefully considered to ensure everyone is fully able to participate, without risk to health or well-being
- Young people should be given significant and meaningful involvement in planning and organising projects, with responsibility where appropriate for areas including recruitment, organising activities, fund raising and budgeting

Recruitment

- Sufficient time should be allocated for recruitment with shared responsibilities between stakeholder organisations with young people having an active role
- Recruitment arrangements should aim to provide a balance of younger and older participants to facilitate equal opportunities for engagement in intergenerational activities
- Youth organisations should aim to recruit marginalised and hard to reach young people who may have the most to gain from intergenerational engagement
- Greater emphasis should be applied to increasing the participation of isolated older people by 'taking activities to them' and strengthening links with older people's organisations

Preparation and quality of intergenerational engagement

- Both age groups should be provided with opportunities to meet separately before engagement to explore expectations, challenges and attitudes to other generations. This is key to avoiding potential retention issues during the programme
- Proposed intergenerational activities should be discussed before the groups meet to address potential challenges and to prepare participants
- Agree 'project rules' at the start of the programme and ensure they are adhered to
- Encourage sustained contact between groups of younger and older people to maximise the development of trust and exchange of learning. Short term projects whilst of value should provide a link to future intergenerational activity

Communication and sustainability

- Clear information should be provided at the recruitment stage to encourage informed participation, commitment required and intergenerational focus
- Coordinators need to ensure that everyone involved has a clear understanding of intergenerational practice principles and the project's goals
- Where projects involve incentives or competitive elements, participants need to be told in advance to maximise motivation
- Youth organisations should strengthen their partnership arrangements with a view to establishing long-term joint intergenerational ventures that will benefit younger and older people and their communities
- Strategic approaches should be taken to intergenerational practice by building an intergenerational dimension into future youth-led work programmes

Chapter 1: Background

The Beth Johnson Foundation, through its Centre for Intergenerational Practice, develops intergenerational practice across sectors in the UK, Europe and internationally.

“Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the younger and old have to offer each other and those around them”

Centre for Intergenerational Practice: Beth Johnson Foundation, 2001

The Beth Johnson Foundation and the National Youth Agency had an established partnership and, in September 2008, this led to the National Youth Agency launching a programme to support youth organisations wishing to develop intergenerational projects. The call for participants was positively received and twenty projects were chosen to become part of an Intergenerational Youth Learning Network.

The Beth Johnson Foundation made a successful bid to the Children, Young Peoples and Families Grant programme to undertake a range of intergenerational development activities, which included an evaluation of the impact of a sample of Intergenerational Youth Learning Network projects.

The Intergenerational Youth Learning Network was launched in November 2008 to engage with youth organisations in England and help them develop a better understanding of intergenerational practice through the planning and delivery of their own development projects. The projects were to be ‘youth-led’, and younger people given opportunities to develop leadership skills through contributing to areas such as project planning and fund raising. A further programme aim was to promote a range of positive outcomes for both younger and older participants, and the wider community.

The National Youth Agency planned to work with selected organisations over a period of 18 months, providing training seminars and networking opportunities ‘...to assist in the development of projects and to demonstrate how intergenerational work can be linked to other priority areas such as community cohesion, community safety, active citizenship and sustainable communities’ (National Youth Agency, 2008).

An organisational restructure at the National Youth Agency delayed the initial planned roll-out and the programme was re-launched in December 2009. As a consequence the eight projects identified for evaluation were a mixture from the Intergenerational Youth Learning Network and some projects that were being initiated by youth organisations outside of that network.

Younger people and intergenerational practice

Intergenerational practice has been increasingly recognised for its relevance to the youth agenda.

Intergenerational practice can increase participation in positive activities, which is a key element in improving the prospects of all younger people, especially those from communities with a poor history of engagement and the 25% of younger people who do not currently engage in any positive activities outside learning. (PSA 14/ Generations Together, 2009: 10).

Participation in positive activities can support younger peoples' social and emotional development, develop their self-esteem and help them avoid risky behaviour. It also helps improve communication skills and fosters more positive attitudes to school/ learning, improving attendance and attainment. Overall, positive activities can *'have a significant impact on younger people's resilience and outcomes in later life'* (Aiming High, 2007: 6).

The coalition Government's flagship policy *Building the Big Society* (2010) emphasises the importance of younger people's participation in positive activities, and new measures are being introduced to encourage younger people to actively participate in their communities through volunteering and social action. For example the Government's *National Citizen Service* is a programme to help 16 year-olds *'develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and get involved in their communities.'* (*Building the Big Society*: 2).

The Intergenerational Youth Learning Network not only provided opportunities for younger people to increase their participation in positive activities, with the potential benefits outlined below, but also to develop organisational and leadership skills by playing a leading role in planning and delivering the projects. Having opportunities to become involved in decision-making and leadership locally can empower younger people, promoting more responsible behaviour and making younger people feel more valued and trusted (*Youth Matters*, 2006).

Social context

Significant numbers of younger people are isolated from older people in their communities: a third (36%) say they *'never'* or *'hardly'* speak to people over 40, other than parents, teachers or people at work, while older people often have very little personal contact with younger people outside their immediate family circle (Prince's Trust, 2008).

In addition younger people have to deal with widespread negative stereotyping, whereby the media and older people commonly associate them with problems such as gang culture, crime and anti-social behaviour. (*Think Community*, 2009: 4).

'71% of media stories about younger people are negative, a third of articles about younger people are about crime, and almost a third of adults think that "younger people hanging around" is a major problem in their neighbourhood. Younger people are keenly aware of their reputation in the community, with 98 per cent of them feeling that the media portrays them as anti-social.' (Aiming High: 2007: 4)

A recent project investigating younger people's perceptions of age found that they feel older people regard them as *'hoodie-wearing, knife-wielding, label obsessive'* (London Youth, 2010: 2). In turn, younger people think older people are: *'boring, very grumpy, weak and unkempt, with "one foot in the grave."* One younger person said that older people have *'lost touch'* with what it was like to be young. (London Youth, 2010: 9)

The distance between generational groups is worsened by social changes that affect the way individuals, families and communities relate to each other. These 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.'* (Hatton-Yeo, 2006: 3).

These changes *'...have led to a growing interest in approaches that seek to increase intergenerational contact, based on evidence that positive contact between the generations leads to recognition of commonalities, reduced ageism, increased positive perceptions, improved cognitive performance and reduced feelings of intimidation.'* (Lloyd, 2008, in *Think Community*, 2009: 4)

Potential outcomes of intergenerational practice for younger people

Outcomes for younger people include:

- Greater resilience and motivation to avoid 'risky behaviour'
- Greater participation in positive activities
- Improved perceptions of younger people by older people
- Stronger engagement in education
- Improved self esteem

(Generations Together, 2009: 15)

Evidence from intergenerational mentoring programmes shows that sustained contact with a positive adult role model helps younger people participate more positively in school life and increases their self-esteem and self-confidence (Ellis, 2003; BJJ, 2004; Sanchez *et al.*, 2007). A recent review of intergenerational literature also identified increased self-esteem as one of two main outcomes for younger people, with skills development as the other (Springate *et al.*, 2008: 13). Significantly, in a survey asking younger people what would hold them back most in life, 'low self-confidence' was the top response (32%), with a 'lack of job opportunities in second place (28%; Prince's Trust, 2008).

Intergenerational practice can help younger people engage with education/learning in innovative and collaborative settings, developing new skills and improving existing skills that enhance employability. Building positive relationships with older role models may help to raise younger people's aspirations and motivation to succeed in an increasingly competitive employment market.

Positive outcomes for younger people are especially important in communities with a poor record of youth engagement, large numbers of younger people not in education, employment or training, or high levels of anti-social behaviour. Intergenerational practice can, therefore, yield important benefits not only for individual participants but for the community as a whole.

Potential outcomes of intergenerational practice for older people

A number of benefits of intergenerational practice have been identified for older people in the literature, including:

- Improved sense of health and wellbeing
- Reduced sense of isolation
- Improved perceptions of older people by younger people
- Increased ability to make a positive contribution to the life of the community
- Greater satisfaction with home and neighbourhood
- Reduction in fear of crime

(Generations Together, 2009: 15)

Older people who have taken part in intergenerational mentoring programmes report enhanced physical and mental well being, and a sense of empowerment because they had '*made a difference*' to a younger person's life and gained their trust. They also felt they had gained respect from school communities for their contribution (Ellis, 2003: 33).

A recent evaluation of five intergenerational projects found a number of benefits for older people related to their well-being, including: '*...a reduction in isolation, sense of satisfaction and pride when acknowledged by younger people in the local community, and increased opportunities for involvement in other activities.*' (Martin *et al.*, 2010: vi.)

Shared benefits for both age groups

Shared benefits include:

- Greater understanding of the other group and challenging of negative stereotypes’;
- Increased confidence in interacting with people from the other group and the wider community’ (*Generations Together*, 2009: 15).

Potential outcomes for the community

Benefits for the wider community include:

- Increased meaningful interactions between people from different backgrounds;
- Increasing social capital through both younger and older people’s involvement in a range of volunteering activities (*Generations Together*, 2009: 15);
- Improved intergenerational relationships, fostering increased trust and respect between generations and contributing to improved community cohesion.

Chapter 2: The evaluation programme

The evaluation programme involved a study of eight intergenerational projects undertaken by organisations in the youth sector in England between February and November 2010. This chapter outlines the aims of the programme and the main stages involved in the evaluation process.

Evaluation aims

There is a significant body of literature that demonstrates the benefits of intergenerational practice. However, there is a limited evidence base for intergenerational practice in the youth sector, particularly where younger people have played a key role in planning and delivering projects.

The evaluation programme aimed to explore the impact of intergenerational practice within the youth sector, through analysis of the outcomes for younger and older participants and the wider community. The evaluation aimed to identify the challenges youth organisations face in engaging younger people in intergenerational practice, particularly in the context of 'youth led' intergenerational work. Overall, the programme sought to assess the effectiveness of the projects, with particular reference to the benefits for younger people and to identify any learning that emerged which could promote good practice in the future.

Methodology

The evaluation programme involved the following phases:

1. Identification of projects
Eight youth organisations were selected for inclusion in the evaluation programme, based on their project proposals and proposed time frame.
2. Initial scoping visits
Visits revealed that most organisations' planning was in the early stages as projects organisers/practitioners were seeking guidance on intergenerational principles and how to organise their work; which they were able to access support to through Beth Johnson Foundation and/or National Youth Agency mentoring visits.

Some projects were delayed because of funding difficulties or because organisers had problems identifying a discrete project or new phase of an ongoing project that would be suitable for evaluation.
3. Design of evaluation tools
Questionnaires were devised for each project to assess a number of generic intergenerational outcomes (e.g. improving intergenerational relations; breaking down stereotypes) and specific outcomes identified by each organisation (e.g. developing cooking skills; improving cross-cultural relations).
4. Data collection
Data for the evaluation was collected through a range of methods:
 - Observation of initial, interim and final project sessions
 - Questionnaires
 - Semi-structured interviews
 - Focus group discussions
 - Internal monitoring records (two projects)

- Email and telephone communication with organisations/practitioners and partner organisations

5. Data analysis

The small sample sizes in the projects meant that cumulative figures are not large enough to support valid statistical analysis. The findings in the report are therefore based on a qualitative analysis of the data collected from the eight projects using the methods outlined. In total, 64 younger people and 55 older people contributed to the data pool.

The qualitative analysis focuses on two main areas:

- Key outcomes for participants, particularly younger people, and the wider community;
- Opportunities and challenges that intergenerational practice presents for youth sector organisations.

Chapter 3:

Key outcomes for participants and the community

This chapter presents the findings for participants in the projects. It highlights the outcomes common to both groups, those specific to each generational and outcomes for the wider community.

Shared outcomes for younger and older people

1. Improved perceptions of the other generation

At the start of projects, some younger people described older people as *'out of touch'* and *'from different planets.'* They also felt older people had a very low opinion of them, although many admitted that they had little contact with older people in their communities. Interestingly, this perception of the older generation's opinion was not generally borne out by the older people's responses. Only a few said they had a poor opinion of younger people; most were ambivalent: *'Some are very good, some you cannot talk to'*. Others expressed a positive attitude: *'I have always liked younger people'*, *'Never had a problem with younger people'*. This may reflect the general nature of those older people who are interested to become involved in intergenerational work.

At the end of the projects, most younger and older people agreed that the experience had helped them to see the other generation in a more positive light. One older person said she had changed her opinion because of the lovely younger people she met through the project: *'I would like to meet more younger people now although for a long time I haven't had a very good impression of a lot of them.'*

2. Improved attitudes to the other generation

Questionnaire feedback indicated that most younger people felt they had developed more respect for older people as a result of the project. However, the older people were divided on this question, with some responding positively and some unsure. As in the case of relationship building, this may relate to the relatively limited amount of contact time between the younger and older people in a number of projects, or the fact that some older people already had a positive attitude to younger people. However, in focus group discussion, a number of older people said their attitudes had changed and they had gained more respect for younger people as a result of the interaction.

3. Improved intergenerational relations

A significant proportion of the younger and older people felt they had developed *'meaningful relationships'* with the other generation. This indicates that even short periods of purposeful contact can have a positive impact. A few older people said they had enjoyed the time spent with the younger people but felt they would need a longer period of engagement to develop relationships.

One younger person felt he had gained *'a great amount of knowledge and insight into the relationship between the two generations'* and said the experience had had *'a profound effect'*. Another participant said she had discovered how older people feel about the *'new'* generation, while two younger people felt the project had helped to break down negative stereotypes: *'The project was a great success in terms of bridging the gap between the two generations and altering the perceived notions both had of each other.'*

Specific outcomes for younger people

1. Enjoyment of new experiences

Enjoyment was an important outcome for the majority of the younger people, many of whom mentioned having 'fun'. Aspects of the projects which the younger people enjoyed included developing new skills (e.g. technical skills), meeting new people, socialising and forming new relationships with older people and peers. A number of the younger people were very enthusiastic about learning new skills alongside older people, and in one project, the younger people said they enjoyed talking to the older people and learning about the past through their reminiscences: '*...reliving the past through treasured memories.*'

Enjoyment is an important outcome as it can contribute to the emotional well-being of both younger and older people, and increase people's motivation to take on new challenges in new settings. Shared enjoyment of intergenerational activities helped younger and older people identify with each other, breaking down negative stereotypes and promoting more positive intergenerational relations.

2. Skills development

Most younger people felt they had gained new skills through participating in the projects and many identified skills development as the element they most enjoyed or valued.

Organisational and leadership skills - six projects gave younger people opportunities to develop organisational and leadership skills by contributing to the planning and organisation of activities/events. There was great potential here for younger people to be creative and assume responsibility for decision making and project development in a safe, supportive setting.

Where younger people contributed to planning, they felt this helped their confidence and gave them a great sense of achievement. In one project, the younger people said it was the first time they had been given responsibility for organising anything. Although initially nervous, they had enjoyed the challenge and felt very proud when their project was a success. They felt that taking responsibility for planning and then sharing ideas with the older people had given them much more self-confidence: '*It's an experience worth having to work with older people as well as your own age and to be able to organise an event and for it to turn out to be a success.*'

In another project, all the younger people expressed pride in what they had achieved in creating a DVD to challenge the stereotyping of older people. They gained a great sense of achievement from contributing ideas, creating story boards, and planning acting roles. The younger people also felt very proud when their DVD was well received at an event attended by older people from the local community.

In another project, where a youth steering group was responsible for the planning and organisation, all but one of the younger people felt they had gained a sense of achievement from their work and one person directly connected this with her own leadership role: '*I led the project and I believe it was successful.*'

Practical skills – in six of eight projects, the younger people were able to develop practical skills that could benefit them in everyday life and/or possibly improve employability. Most younger people mentioned gaining skills directly related to the main focus of their particular project, e.g. improving cooking or gardening skills; developing interviewing skills. In one project, participants had the opportunity to design and create a new community garden, getting hands-on experience of preparing and planting flower beds. In another project, the younger people said they

learnt from carrying out interviews with older people and the oral history training they received.

Technical skills - three projects helped younger people develop technical skills for DVD production (filming and editing skills) and making audio-recordings with professional equipment. In one project, the younger people stressed how much they had learnt from professional instruction and having the chance to experiment with proper equipment, gaining valuable hands-on experience:

'I learnt how to use the proper professional camera, and use the boom, and I learnt how to edit professional style. You could just play around. You learnt your own way.'

One younger person in each of two projects enjoyed the experience so much that they plan to pursue a career in film. In addition to developing new skills, these projects helped the younger people raise their aspirations and gave them a new sense of direction.

Creative skills - all eight projects gave younger people opportunities to develop creative skills e.g. through experimenting with ideas for a DVD, performing in a DVD, designing publicity material for a community event, drawing plans for a garden. In one project the younger people were able to photograph people/places of special significance in their local area, and share the images with each other. Modelling clay was also used to create symbolic objects that represented something about their character/ personality.

3. Personal development

Communication skills – most of the younger people who took part were already confident in their communication skills at the start of projects. However, some younger people felt they had improved their ability to communicate and interact with older people through the project. One younger person who was nervous about meeting new people at the start of the project said it had helped improve his/her social skills: *'I have gained skills to communicate and socialise with older people, working in teams'*.

Self-confidence – in focus group discussions a number of younger people said they considered their confidence had increased as a result of their participation.

Self-esteem – many of the younger people rated their self-esteem highly and there was no appreciable increase after the projects. However, data from end of project questionnaires indicated that the majority felt their self-esteem had improved as a result of the project.

Specific outcomes for older people

1. Enjoyment of new experiences/ Improved health & wellbeing

In all eight projects, the majority of the older people said they enjoyed their participation. Older people said they really appreciated having the chance to meet with younger people, as they normally have few opportunities to do so.

Many older people particularly enjoyed the social aspects of the projects, and some felt they had improved their communication skills. Some older people said they usually have very few opportunities to talk to other people and enjoyed sharing memories and stories with the younger people and peers in a context where everyone seemed genuinely interested in what they had to say: *'I like talking and don't get enough chances'* (aged 83); *'Nice to talk to someone who's interested.... The younger man was very interested'* (aged 80).

In one project, the older people particularly enjoyed *listening* to other people's stories and ideas. The mix of good talkers and good listeners in the group created a very supportive environment for people to share ideas and stories.

In another project, the older people had fun watching the intergenerational DVD the younger people had produced, satirising the stereotypical image of older people and showing extracts of interviews the younger people had done with the older people. The younger people were very gratified by the older people's obvious enjoyment and positive feedback and the experience of enjoying the film together helped to bring the age groups together, forging stronger intergenerational links.

In two projects, the older people enjoyed the practical aspects of the intergenerational work. In the cookery project, where the older and younger people worked in pairs, there was a shared sense of achievement in successfully preparing dishes that everyone enjoyed at the communal lunch that followed each cooking session. Two of the older participants said that being able to share a meal with the younger people was the most enjoyable aspect of the project. The gardening project also created a shared sense of achievement with younger and older people working together successfully.

2. Skills development

Practical skills – in one project, the older people felt they had learned from the hands-on experience of preparing and planting a community garden, and would be able to extend their new skills through the ongoing maintenance of the garden.

In another project, the older people already had good cooking skills, but enjoyed sharing their knowledge with the younger people. One older person felt able to give them encouragement and praise. Two people, who live in residential care and normally have no opportunities to cook for themselves, enjoyed putting their skills to good use again, and said the project had made them feel more independent and useful.

3. Personal development

Communication skills – many of the older people said the projects had helped them feel more confident about their communication skills. In one project, talking about their lives and experiences had made the older people realise how much common ground they shared and this had brought members of the group much closer.

Focus group discussions indicated that the older people felt more valued because of their involvement, particularly where they had had opportunities to share their ideas and experiences with an appreciative audience.

Community Outcomes

1. Community cohesion

Within the time-scale of these projects, it is difficult to assess their broader impact on community cohesion. However, one project in particular focused on breaking down the barriers between different ethnic groups, as well as age groups, and the feedback from participants was extremely positive in terms of perceptions of improved community relations.

2. Positive contribution to community

Participants in five projects felt their participation had helped them make a more positive contribution to the community. One older person said the project had given him the opportunity to become a 'role model' and felt his contribution was very positive because the community had seen the volunteers '*working together for the benefit of their neighbours.*'

Chapter 4: Key Findings

Intergenerational Practice Challenges

Project planning

Early on in the Intergenerational Youth Learning programme, a number of youth organisations experienced some uncertainty with intergenerational project planning and organisation. This was not surprising given that most had limited experience of intergenerational practice. The aim of the Intergenerational Youth Learning Network was to explore and develop practice, and this aspiration informs the learning from the programme.

Initially in some organisations, there was a lack of understanding of intergenerational practice principles, and the notion of an intergenerational project was less well defined, sometimes being equated with service-type activities (e.g. younger people helping older people with a one-off shopping trip, or handing out leaflets to older people), where intergenerational engagement could be fleeting and non-reciprocal.

A number of organisations initially found it difficult to identify desired outcomes for younger and older people, and the wider community. At the outset, most took a 'broad brush' approach, focusing on outputs (e.g. making a DVD) or general outcomes (e.g. learning to cook healthy food). Organisers needed some support to identify intergenerational targets relevant to their particular setting and participants' needs (e.g. improving younger people's self-esteem; breaking down stereotypes). Support was provided through mentoring visits.

Youth contribution to planning

The younger people's contribution to the planning process varied considerably from one project to another. Youth input was central to three projects: one where a Youth Steering Committee met to identify goals and make planning decisions before the project started; one where a small group of younger people made provisional plans for a community event before getting together with the older people; and one where the younger and older people met to design a community garden.

In five projects, organisers/practitioners assumed the main responsibility for shaping the overall project design, with the younger people being consulted to varying degrees. In one project, for example, they were invited to choose favourite recipes and one younger person helped prepare a funding bid. In two projects, the younger people contributed ideas for the structure and content of the DVDs they would create with professional support.

Understandably, planning was often driven by funding considerations and the staff may have been best placed to judge what was manageable in terms of other financial and time commitments. However, the younger people's role, particularly at the early stages of planning, could have been much more significant in most of the pilots.

Recruitment

Recruitment was a challenge for most organisations. Five organisations were successful in recruiting younger people for their projects but three experienced problems, and were only able to secure low levels of youth participation.

One organisation identified the timing of projects as an important factor. This pilot took place in the school summer holidays, when many younger people had work commitments, and other projects were running at the same time. The organiser also stressed the importance of reminding younger people of arrangements immediately before a project starts.

Another factor affecting recruitment may have been the lack of clear information from some organisers about what the projects involved, how they would fit with the younger people's interests and goals, and any incentives that would be offered.

Five of the projects experienced difficulties recruiting older people. This was not surprising as most youth organisations have little experience in this area. However, some had previously been involved in intergenerational work and had established links with older people's organisations/groups which could have been used to better advantage. One organisation was actually working in partnership with a national older people's organisation but even here recruitment had difficult.

Attendance/Retention of younger people

Youth retention was problematic in three projects. In two cases, some of the younger people did not participate after the planning stage; in the third project, attendance was sporadic throughout, with most of the younger people who started the project not continuing after the first session, and only two of the initial group taking part in later intergenerational sessions.

It is worth noting that the younger people's levels of attendance and retention were particularly high in two projects where they had had substantial input into planning and where the project activities were strongly output focused.

Preparation of younger and older people participants

A number of projects experienced problems associated with a lack of adequate preparation of younger and/or older people prior to intergenerational engagement.

Some projects were affected by difficult dynamics within the groups of younger people. This was particularly evident in one project where there was a rift between one person and the rest of the group, with the result that four participants dropped out. In another project, where the younger people had not met before the first intergenerational session, one person was very isolated for much of the time, while the more out-going (older) younger people were able to mix more easily with each other and the older people.

Most projects did not spend sufficient time preparing older people for intergenerational interaction. In one project, the older people were reluctant to get involved in team building activities with the younger people when the two groups met for the first time and the coordinator felt this was due to a lack of preparation with the older group.

Quality of intergenerational interaction

In most projects, the quality of interaction was affected by the relatively short amount of time the younger and older people were able to spend together. In one project, there was minimal interaction after the planning stage, although it had been agreed that younger and older people would take part in shared activities. One organiser commented: *'It is one thing to bring younger and older people into the same space but another to get them to actually interact.... there's learning here'*.

In two projects, the younger people appeared reluctant to engage with the older people outside of organised intergenerational activities and might, with support, have been more pro-active in extending the interaction. For example, in one project, the younger people separated from the older people and regrouped in another part of the room as soon as a shared activity ended, without any intervention from the facilitators. Only one younger person opted to stay with the older people when the activity finished.

In some projects, there was an imbalance in the ratio of younger people to older people. In one project, for example, the ratio was 9 younger people: 3 older people; in another, 1 younger person: 6 older people in one session. In such situations it is likely that the minority group will feel vulnerable and it may not be possible for everyone to participate fully, especially if individuals are not very out-going or familiar with working with a different age group. In the project where there were 9 younger people: 3 older people, the older people may have been discouraged by the imbalance in numbers, as only one older person persisted in attending, and the whole project shifted its focus from intergenerational engagement to concentrate more on working with the younger people.

Communication

Seven of the eight youth organisations experienced difficulties regarding communication with other organisations and/or participants:

In two cases, participating organisations were not well briefed about the nature and goals of projects at the outset. In one case, a lack of information led to difficulties setting up initial meetings with groups. In another, a participating organisation did not receive enough information about the support role required, which seriously affected the project's delivery and outcomes, particularly for the younger people.

In some projects, the project support workers needed to be given more information about intergenerational practice principles and intergenerational goals before projects started. This was particularly important in projects involving third party organisations with little or no intergenerational experience.

In four of the eight projects, participants needed to be given more information about their role, the schedule, and activities involved. In one project, for example, older participants did not realise that they were needed for more than one session; in another, the quality of interaction was affected because some of the older people had received no information about the project prior to engagement. At the start of another project, the younger people were not provided with a schedule of planned activities, although this information could have helped improve motivation, attendance and retention.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The programme proved challenging for most participating youth organisations as most organisations had limited experience of initiating intergenerational work. Nevertheless, the programme has provided valuable insights into the specific benefits of delivering intergenerational practice in the youth sector, and this learning will inform good practice in the future. The projects have also demonstrated a range of positive outcomes for younger and older participants, which should encourage youth organisations to further develop intergenerational practice within the sector.

Outcomes for participants

The younger people clearly benefited from their enjoyment of projects and development of new and existing skills, and many felt they gained in confidence and self-esteem. In particular, the younger people who played a key role in planning and delivering projects experienced a sense of achievement and pride, and felt more confident in their abilities. Younger people also felt more confident socialising and communicating with older people. Having a *better understanding of older people* was a recurrent theme.

The older people also enjoyed the projects, particularly having the chance to meet younger people and share their knowledge, skills and memories. A theme that emerged from three projects was that the older people wanted *to help* younger people, and felt they need substantial support and encouragement to succeed in an increasingly tough world. One older person commented, *'It was easy in our day. I left school one day and started work the next. Now there's nothing for the younger people.'* The older people also felt their communication skills had improved through talking with the younger people and each other.

The main shared benefit was improved intergenerational relations.

Intergenerational Practice – Learning/Recommendations

Project planning

To ensure high quality engagement for both age groups, intergenerational practice requires careful planning around *clear* intergenerational *goals* and careful organisation of *'meaningful and mutually beneficial activities'* (BJF, 2009). The project plan should also include a strategy for recruitment and adequate preparation of both groups before interaction.

Before finalising project plans, organisers need to engage with potential participants of both age groups to identify areas of mutual need/ interest, so that activities can be tailored accordingly.

In planning intergenerational activities, the needs and capabilities of individuals in both groups should be carefully considered, to ensure that everyone is *fully* able to participate, without risk to health or well-being. For example, the physical capabilities of participants (e.g. older people with limited mobility), and any special support or facilities required, need to be factored into the design of a project.

Youth contribution to planning – younger people should be given significant and meaningful involvement in planning and organising projects, taking on more responsibility in areas such as recruitment, organising activities, fund raising and budgeting. Apart from giving younger people opportunities to develop leadership and organisational skills, greater involvement in planning can help improve younger people's motivation and attendance, opening up opportunities for additional positive outcomes.

Recruitment – enough time should be allocated for effective recruitment and responsibilities shared between stakeholder organisations. As noted above, younger people should be given a much more active role.

Organisers should aim to recruit roughly equal numbers of younger and older participants so that everyone will have equal opportunities to be fully engaged in intergenerational activities. Recent research suggests that the ratio of younger people to older people is ‘a key factor for achieving successful outcomes’ and recommends a ratio of 1 younger person: 1 older person (Martin et al., 2010: vi).

Youth organisations should aim to recruit marginalised and hard to reach younger people, who may have the most to gain from intergenerational engagement.

More efforts should be made to encourage the participation of isolated older people and project information could also be more widely advertised in the places many older people frequent (e.g. supermarkets, church halls, community centres, GP surgeries etc).

Youth organisations should be more pro-active in developing and exploiting links with older people’s organisations, to help with the recruitment of more older people and to promote more sustainable intergenerational programmes.

Preparation of participants – both age groups should be given opportunities to meet separately before engagement to explore intergenerational issues (e.g. attitudes to and perceptions of the other generation) and personal goals.

Forthcoming intergenerational activities should be discussed before the groups meet to identify potential challenges and, as far as possible, to prepare participants (e.g. younger people working with frail older people; confident older people working with shy and retiring younger people).

Quality of intergenerational engagement

Particular individuals should not be allowed to dominate activities/sessions to the exclusion of less confident or out-going participants; asking everyone to agree ‘project rules’ in initial sessions can help address potential problems.

Ideally intergenerational practice requires sustained contact between groups of younger and older people. It is difficult for groups to establish relations and develop trust if the opportunities for engagement are limited, as in the case of one-day events or short interview sessions; though short-term projects can be used as taster/exploration sessions to develop and inform future intergenerational work and the evaluation showed that even short term involvement does have a meaningful impact.

Communication – organisations need to disseminate clear information about projects at the recruitment stage, to encourage informed participation and ensure potential participants are aware of the intergenerational focus and the commitment involved. Where projects involve incentives or competitive elements, which some younger people particularly enjoy, participants need to be told *in advance*, to maximise motivation.

Coordinators need to liaise with partners, participating organisations and third party organisations to ensure that everyone involved has a clear understanding of intergenerational practice principles and a project’s intergenerational goals.

Sustainability – to promote positive outcomes for younger and older people, youth organisations should seek to take a strategic approach to intergenerational practice by building an intergenerational dimension into their future work programmes.

Youth organisations should strengthen their links with community groups and older people's organisations, with a view to setting up long-term joint intergenerational ventures that will benefit younger and older people, and their communities.

Appendix A: Project Summaries:

1. Community Fun Day

Lead organisation: Peterborough City Council, Young People's Services/Fulbridge Youth Club

Participating organisation: Shakespeare Community Centre, Fulbridge.

Date: May-August 2010

Background

Peterborough's North Ward is a priority area for community based youth work as it is a deprived ward where younger people have little to do and local residents are concerned about levels of anti-social behaviour and youth crime. There are also some issues regarding the large-scale migration of Eastern Europeans into the area.

Previous intergenerational work involved younger people visiting an older people's club to share life experiences. The Youth Work team decided to take this work forward by establishing a core intergenerational/ multi-generational group to organise community events. The Fun Day project brought younger and older people together to plan an event for the whole community.



Purpose

The project aimed to give younger and older people the opportunity to work together for the good of the community, changing their perceptions of each other, improving intergenerational relations, and promoting community cohesion.

Participants

3 younger people (aged 15-16), recruited through the Youth Club; 7 older people (aged 60-84), recruited through the Shakespeare Community Centre.

Activities

Planning/ pre-engagement

- The younger people met with youth workers to discuss ideas and draw up provisional plans for the Fun Day.
- The Project Lead met with the older people to introduce the project.

Intergenerational activities

The younger and older people met to discuss provisional plans and the kind of activities the older people would like to include. They also discussed the history of Fulbridge and what the neighbourhood was like when the older people were younger. The two groups met to finalise plans. The younger people arranged to meet the older people at the Community Centre to bake cakes for a cake stall on the Saturday before the Fun Day, but there was a misunderstanding and the older people did not turn up.

Fun Day activities

The event was well attended by local people of all ages. Refreshments and a wide range of activities were provided free of charge. Some activities were aimed at children and younger

people (e.g. bouncy castle; football shoot-out; face painting). Others, such as Nintendo Wii guitar and graffiti painting, had been chosen because they were suitable for younger and older people to enjoy together, and the younger people could show the older people what to do. A local leisure organisation had also been invited to facilitate sporting activities that younger and older people could take part in together.



Activities were enthusiastically taken up by the children and younger people, with some parental involvement in sporting events (e.g. egg and spoon race). The older people circulated, watching the activities, but there was limited involvement.

Facilitation

Activities were mainly facilitated by staff from the Youth Work Team and third party organisations (e.g. *Vivacity*, *Peterborough Leisure and Culture*). Younger volunteers, recruited through the Youth Club, acted as 'Event Crew'.

Measured/Observed outcomes:

Younger and Older People

- Improved perceptions of the other generation
- Fun/ enjoyment

Younger People

- Increased positive contribution to the community
- Improved skills (organisational, communication, social)
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved self-confidence
- Sense of achievement and pride

Older People

- Improved sense of belonging to the community
- Reduced fear of crime/anti-social behaviour

Funding

The project was funded by a £2,000 grant from the National Youth Agency.

2. Everybody Dance Now: Reminiscence Phase

Lead organisation: Central Youth Theatre, Newhampton Arts Centre, Dunkley Street, Wolverhampton WV1.

Email: jane@centrallyouththeatre.org

Partner organisations:

- Kuumba Youth Theatre; Wolverhampton and six European Youth Theatres
- Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Participating organisations:

- Blakenhall Resource Centre

- St Columbas Day Centre
- St Matthews Day Centre
- Inglewood Court Residential Centre

Dates: *Everybody Dance Now:* Aug 2010 to Sept 2011
Reminiscence phase: August to October 2010

Background

Central Youth Theatre has a 27 year track record of delivering large budget projects and meeting ambitious artistic goals. In 2008-2009, an 18-month programme of work (funded by Grants for the Arts) brought three generations of members together to celebrate shared ownership of Central Youth Theatre and to enable older members to pass on professional skills to current younger members. This programme included a photographic portrait exhibition, career lectures, festival and celebration of production work, and a radio play.

Central Youth Theatre is currently coordinating *Everybody Dance Now*, a partnership project involving six international youth theatres, which started in June 2010 and will run until September 2011. Within the broader framework of *Everybody Dance Now*, Central Youth Theatre aims to celebrate the multi-cultural social dance heritage of Wolverhampton through a series of short plays based on the reminiscences of older people from different ethnic communities and a documentary film about Asian dance. The project will culminate in a week-long international festival of theatre, dance and film at site-specific venues in Wolverhampton during Summer 2011.

Purpose

The *Reminiscence Phase* of *Everybody Dance Now* centred on collecting the reminiscences of older people who went dancing in Wolverhampton in the 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70. The older people's most interesting/ entertaining stories (e.g. of venues, styles of dancing, characters they knew) will be transformed into four short plays, one for each decade, by professional script writers and a younger person working as a 'Youth Apprentice' alongside the professionals. In addition the youth theatre members are also mounting an exhibition using the reminiscence materials and other archive information, which will be staged at the Wolverhampton Art Gallery. The plays will be performed and directed by Central Youth Theatre members at an international festival in Summer 2011.



The purpose of this intergenerational phase was also to help younger people gain new skills, through conducting interviews with the older people, and learn more about Wolverhampton's dance heritage. The interaction also provided opportunities for older people to feel more valued and less isolated from the younger generation, helping to break down intergenerational stereotyping and improve intergenerational relations.

Participants

13 YP (Central Youth Theatre members), aged 15-21; 110 older people, aged 50-100, were contacted through advertisements in the local media, leafleting in the City Centre, the City 10 drop-in; also through Age Concern, community groups, and Day Centres.

Activities

Project planning: The Central Youth Theatre Youth Steering Group meets weekly to develop various aspects of the project, including: research, marketing, fund-raising, recruitment and creative delivery.

Pre-engagement:

- Before they interviewed the older people, the younger people had one-day of oral history training with an expert consultant. Training included brainstorming interview topics and conducting a pilot interview with an older person.
- The younger people created publicity material and contacted the local media to advertise the project and recruit older volunteers.
- The younger people arranged reminiscence sessions in older people's homes and at a local Day Centre.
- The younger people ran a drop-in centre at City 10, a shop in Wolverhampton City Centre, for two weeks (20 Sept-2 Oct; 10am-5pm). The shop space was transformed into a 1940s sitting room, with period props and music, and older people were interviewed over light refreshments, provided free of charge.

Intergenerational Activities

- Reminiscence interviews were carried out at various locations; most of the older people were interviewed in City 10.
- Generally, the younger people worked without a set script and asked open questions (e.g. '*What do you remember about the old dance halls?*') to give the older people opportunities to talk freely about what they remembered.
- The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the younger people, before being given to the professional script writers; one younger person is working as an apprentice writer with the professionals.

Measured/ Observed outcomes

Younger and Older People

- Increased intergenerational understanding
- Improved intergenerational relations
- Increased positive contribution to the community

Younger People

- Increased participation in positive activities
- Improved attitudes to older people
- Increased knowledge and understanding of the dance heritage of Wolverhampton
- Improved skills (leadership; interviewing/ communication)
- Sense of achievement
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved self-confidence
- Increased confidence interacting with older people

Older People

- Enjoyment (recalling happy memories; talking to younger people who were interested in their experiences; helping the younger people with their project)
- Improved sense of well-being (feeling more valued and useful)

Funding

One of Central Youth Theatre's former members secured funding via VCash, a youth volunteering fund, to set up the initial reminiscence stage. This was then used as match funding to secure £15,600 of Heritage Lottery Funding to finance the exhibition materials, creation of web based materials, and a documentary film about the entire project. In addition, the project received a large grant of £99,668 to be part of the Cultural Olympiad in the West Midlands, inspired by London 2012. This funding will support the commissioning of

the reminiscence plays and the site-specific transformation of an old railway station into a ballroom, to enable the performances to be staged in this space. Central Youth Theatre will also stage a series of large scale intergenerational social dances, with the aim of celebrating different dance forms and different cultural dances.

Outputs:

- A short promotional video of the project ([YouTube](#)).
- Articles in the local newspapers.
- Transcripts of interviews with the older people.
- Drama scripts for four short plays are in progress, one for each decade (1940s-70s) and the theatre performances will take place in July/Aug 2011.
- An exhibition designed and created by the younger people, will be staged at the Wolverhampton Art Gallery; it will include accompanying performance sketches, costumes and other memorabilia.
- The younger people will help design Web based materials, including 3D virtual ballrooms.

3. Generate Cooking Project

Lead organisation: Aylesbury Youth Action

Email: aylesburyyouthaction@googlemail.com

Partner organisations:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Age Concern Buckinghamshire.

Date: May-August 2010

Background

Aylesbury Youth Action run a range of volunteering projects throughout the year, including intergenerational projects that give younger and older people a chance to interact and break down barriers. For example, during half-term breaks and summer holidays, younger people have taught older people how to play Nintendo Wii Sports, setting up competitions and tournaments. Aylesbury Youth Action also run a 'Christmas Shop' project where younger people help local older people with their Christmas shopping. The *Cooking Project* was planned as part of ongoing intergenerational work.

Purpose

The project aimed to help younger and older people develop cooking skills together, introducing participants to some healthy dishes. It also aimed to break down intergenerational barriers, promoting improved intergenerational understanding and relations, and to encourage older people to pass on their skills and experience to the younger generation.

Participants

5 younger people, aged 14-22, were recruited through Aylesbury Youth Action membership and Young Carers Bucks; 3 older people, aged 60-87, were recruited through Age Concern Buckinghamshire and Aylesbury Vale District Council; two were residents of a local residential Home, and one was a member of Aylesbury Vale District Council's 'Nifty Fifty Club'.

Activities

Pre-engagement activities

Some younger people were involved in planning meetings. One helped write a bid for Youth Opportunity Programme funding and another was involved in selecting suitable recipes. The younger people also sent registration questionnaires to potential older participants, to research their favourite dishes and collect information that would help with matching pairs. The information would have been used for short-listing if too many people had been interested.

Project sessions

Day 1

The younger and older people took part in an ice breaker before working in intergenerational pairs (one younger and one older people) to prepare dishes from recipes provided by the project lead. All the dishes were shared at a communal lunch, where participants and organisers took part in a communication game. After lunch, votes for favourite dishes were recorded on a wall chart and improvements for the next session discussed.



Day Two

After an ice breaker, participants worked in the same intergenerational pairs as on Day 1 to cook dishes from the recipes provided. The food was shared at lunch, over discussion of ageist statements. Votes for favourite dishes were again recorded.

Day Three

After an ice-breaker, intergenerational pairs again prepared dishes, which were shared at a communal lunch. Participants voted for their favourite dishes and the overall winners for the three sessions received certificates.

Facilitation

Sessions were facilitated by the Project Lead and Aylesbury Vale District Council's Leisure Community Project Officer. A support worker from the residential home accompanied two older participants on the first day.

Measured/ Observed outcomes

Younger and Older People

- Improved knowledge of how to cook healthy food
- Improved communication skills
- Increased contribution to the community
- Sense of achievement
- Improved attitudes to the other generation (greater respect)
- Improved intergenerational relations
- Enjoyment/ fun

Younger People

- Improved cooking skills

Older People

- Increased self-esteem

Funding

The project was financed by Aylesbury Youth Action core funds and a £20 donation from Tesco.

Outputs

Every participant received a certificate, with intergenerational pairs getting theirs for the same things, e.g. cooking the favourite main course, or successfully making a particular dish.

4. Huda Centre Garden Project

Lead organisation: St. George's Community Hub, Newtown, Birmingham.

Partner organisations:

- Huda Centre
- Catch 22
- Changemakers,
- Hockley Newtown and St George's Neighbourhood Management
- Birmingham City Council

Date: August 2010 – Jan 2011

Background

The *Huda Garden Project* is part of Catch 22's Community Space Challenge (CSC) programme, which encourages younger people to identify and develop neglected spaces in their neighbourhoods. A previous Community Space Challenge project, *Growing Together* (2008-2010), funded by Catch 22, Changemakers and Birmingham City Council Extended Schools brought families from different ethnic communities together to grow organic produce, cook ethnic food, and share each other's cuisine. The project engaged 65 people from across ethnic boundaries and generations.

The Huda Centre is a Somali community centre in the heart of a traditional Afro-Caribbean community in Newtown. St George's initially engaged the Somali community by providing them with facilities free of charge for Ede celebrations and an awards evening. Somali younger people were subsequently invited to join St George's B-United 2010 summer programme and took part in activities (ice skating, 25km bike rides, and team sports) with the Community Space Challenge group. St George's also invited the Somali younger people's parents and grandparents to take part in *Growing Together* and production of the *Growing Together Calendar*, which was funded by Birmingham City Council's Working Neighbourhood Fund.

To build on the growing links between the different communities, St George's Community Space Challenge group and their families offered to work with members of the Somali community to improve the neglected gardens around the Huda Centre. The project then went forward as a collaborative venture.

Purpose

The project aimed to break down ethnic and intergenerational barriers, and strengthen community cohesion, by bringing three generations from different ethnic communities together to create beautiful gardens at the Huda Centre. The work aimed to enhance the community centre and the local neighbourhood for the enjoyment of both communities.

Participants

The project involved 30 younger people (aged 11-18) and 12 older people (aged 33-50). All the participants were recruited through St George's or the Huda Centre.

Activities

Planning

As part of a three-week Summer programme at St George's, local younger people (mainly from the Afro-Caribbean community) met with younger and older members of the Somali community to plan the new garden. Two younger people from St George's Youth Advisory Board were involved in the planning session.

Some of the younger people worked on the internet researching suitable plants; others worked in small groups, some of mixed age, brainstorming ideas for the garden and drafting their designs. These were discussed by the whole intergenerational group and it was agreed that the final design would combine elements of the two most popular designs.

Celebration and awards evening

The celebration event was attended by about 40 younger and older people. The CEO of St George's gave a short presentation, reviewing recent successful initiatives: Community Space Challenge, Splash and B-united, and certificates were awarded to all the younger people who had taken part.

Progress with the *Huda Project* was outlined, and an appeal made for more volunteers of different ages and from different communities to take part in the next stage: creation of the garden. The evening concluded with live music (provided by St George's staff) and a supper of Afro-Caribbean and Somali food.

Creating the garden



A large intergenerational multi-ethnic group worked to create two beautiful flower beds, one on each side of the community centre. Younger and older people worked together on essential tasks: cutting the grass, marking out flower beds, excavating and removing waste soil, backfilling excavated beds with rich loam, laying out the plant design, planting, tidying up, and clearing away. Light refreshments were provided by the Huda Centre half-way through the work period.

The older people with gardening experience shared their knowledge and skills with the younger people, demonstrating techniques (e.g. for digging), which the younger people were able to copy. When the work was finished, participants shared a meal of Afro-Caribbean and Somali food at St George's.

Celebration

Everyone involved in the project was invited to an evening of celebration with food and entertainment, which involved written evaluation of the project.

Facilitation

At each stage, the activities were facilitated by youth support workers and the Chief Executive Officer from St George's.

Measured/ Observed outcomes

Younger and Older People

- Improved skills (design, gardening, communication)
- Improved perceptions of the other generation
- Improved intergenerational relationships
- Enjoyment/fun
- Increased positive contribution to the community
- Increased sense of belonging to the community

Younger People

- Increased sense of achievement

Community

- Increased sense of safety in the community
- Increased meaningful contact between people from different ethnic backgrounds
- Improved community cohesion

Funding

The project was funded by the Big Lottery as part of Catch 22's Community Space Challenge programme.

Outputs

Improved garden at the Huda Centre; article in *The Voice*, 9-15 December, 2010 and featured on ITV News at Ten (7 Feb 2011).

5. Intergenerational Film Project

Lead organisation: Buckinghamshire Youth Services

Email: sbillenness@buckscc.gov.uk

Participating organisations: Chesham Youth Club, Ivan Project (providing professional instruction on film production)

Date: February 2010

Background

Buckinghamshire Youth Services have been involved in successful intergenerational work since 2005, documenting projects through short DVD films that help to demonstrate and promote the work. The intergenerational *Film Project* was designed to take this idea further, bringing younger and older people together to create a DVD that could be used as part of a resource pack to inform and support the intergenerational strategy of Youth Services nationwide.

The project was planned as two phases:

- Phase 1 (February half-term): Planning/ design of the intergenerational DVD; expert instruction on film making from media professionals.
- Phase 2 production of the DVD; celebration event.

Purpose

Phase 1 aimed to reconnect younger and older people, bringing them together to share ideas and feelings, and develop their understanding of intergenerational issues. Participants would also have the opportunity to be creative in planning and designing the DVD and to learn new technical skills.

Phase 2 (pending at the time of writing) aims to provide support for younger and older people to create their intergenerational DVD, based on Phase 1 plans, and to further develop their creative and technical skills.

Participants

9 younger people, aged 12-19, recruited through youth clubs, schools and local media; 4 older people, recruited through Wallington House (no age data for older people).

Activities

Day 1: Support staff introduced the project and ground rules, and the younger people's expectations of the project were discussed. They then had an initial meeting with the older people at the Community Centre to discuss perceptions of each other's generation and to take part in team building activities. The younger people tried out the professional camera equipment and took some photographs of the session.

Day 2: In small groups, the younger people brainstormed ideas for the DVD and presented them to the whole group. The younger people who had been present the day before explained what they had learnt about the camera to the newcomers. One of the professional film makers explained and demonstrated filming techniques (e.g. framing a subject) and the younger people took it in turns to practice with the equipment by filming interviews with peers and staff.

Day 3: The younger people received further instruction about lighting techniques and setting up shots, and learnt how to plan a film. They also watched a DVD of previous projects.

Day 4: The younger people visited the Community Centre to share their ideas for the DVD with the older people and demonstrate the filming equipment. The younger and older people enjoyed board and group games together, and some of the younger people did henna hand art on the older people, who then tried doing it on the younger people. The interaction was captured on video and camera.

Day 5

Three older people came to the Youth Centre and were interviewed by the younger people. The younger people showed the older people how to operate the filming equipment, and the older people then filmed the younger people giving feedback on the project.

The younger people completed review forms at the end of each day, illustrating their feedback with photos of activities, provided by the youth workers. They also provided feedback through 'Personal statements', which they completed at the end of the week.

Measured/ Observed outcomes

Younger and Older People

- Improved intergenerational understanding
- Improved perceptions of the other generation
- Improved intergenerational relations

Younger People

- Improved skills (social, communication, team working)
- Improved technical skills (filming, editing)
- Enjoyment/ fun

Outputs

Ivan (media professionals) produced a 'rough cut' documentary DVD, showing some of the interaction between the younger and older people and interview material filmed during the week.

6. Intergenerational Media Project

Lead organisation: Drop Inn Centre, Belper, Derbyshire.

Participating organisation: Film City Productions

Date: March 2010

Background

This project builds on intergenerational work previously undertaken at the Drop Inn Centre under the *Linking Lives Project*, which helped to build relationships between younger and older people on Belper housing estates. Two projects in particular: the *Knife Crime Project* and the DVD project '*Role Reversal*' (both 2009) have challenged stereotypical perceptions of younger people and aim to reduce older people's fear of youth crime.

The new project was planned as two phases:

- Phase 1: Organisation of social events in local pubs to attract 'new' older people (not previously involved in the Drop Inn's projects); expert instruction for younger people on the use of video/ audio equipment from media professionals (Film City); initial recording/ filming of interviews with older people .
- Phase 2: Production of short documentary films exploring intergenerational relations.

Purpose

The overall aims of ongoing intergenerational work at the Drop Inn are to create a happier and more united community, to help YP develop new skills, and help older people feel more confident and less isolated in their communities.

The purpose of Phase 1 of the *Media Project* was to recruit new older people for Phase 2 through a series of pub events, with live music and free refreshments. Phase 1 also aimed to give younger people opportunities to develop new skills through providing expert instruction on the use of professional audio/video equipment and having hands-on experience of recording/ filming interviews with older people around intergenerational issues.

Phase 2 will help younger people create short documentary films that explore intergenerational issues and relationships, to further enhance intergenerational relations and build on the skills developed in Phase 1.

Participants

10 younger people, aged 11-17, recruited through the Drop Inn Centre; 13 older people from the local community (no age data for older people).

Activities

Pre-engagement

Prior to the pub events, the younger people had two 2-hour instruction sessions with Film City staff to learn how to use the audio and video equipment.

Intergenerational - George and Dragon (23 March 2010)

Live music and refreshments were provided. The younger people gave the older people handouts with various images of younger people and asked them to write a comment for each picture. This generated discussion among the older people, most of whom already had links with the Drop Inn through earlier intergenerational projects. Some younger people also gave the handouts to older people in other parts of the pub to create new interest,



but there were no additions to the older group that evening.

The younger people also conducted interviews with some of the older people to find out their impressions of younger people today and perceptions of the differences between younger people now and when the older people were younger. Supported by Film City staff, the younger people worked in teams of three to record the interviews (one filming, one on sound, one asking questions). Some younger people gave a spontaneous demonstration of street dance on the stage, watched by the older people.

Greyhound (30 March 2010)

Live music and refreshments were provided. The younger and older people took part in an intergenerational quiz, hosted by one of the Film City staff, working in mixed age teams. After the quiz, the younger people conducted an interview with two older people who had not been present at the previous pub event. When the music resumed, two older people started jiving, with the younger people looking on. Some of the younger people started a conga and some of the older people joined in.

Facilitation

The pub events were facilitated by the Drop Inn's Director and General Manager, and Film City staff.

Measured/Observed outcomes

Younger and Older People

- Improved intergenerational understanding
- Improved intergenerational relations
- Enjoyment/fun

Younger People

- New technical skills (filming, audio-recording, editing)
- Improved skills (communication, creative, team working)
- Improved confidence
- Improved self esteem
- Sense of achievement

Funding

The project was funded by Mediabox, the Methodist Circuit, and Charisma Arts.

Outputs

DVD '*District 56*': film combining dramatic elements (conceived and performed by the younger people) and documentary footage of intergenerational interaction at the pub events. The DVD was shown at the Drop Inn's 10th Birthday Weekend, 18-20 June 2010, celebrating a decade of community work.

7. Story Telling Project

Lead organisation: Beth Johnson Foundation, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent.

E-mail: generations@bjf.org.uk

Partner organisations: Stoke City Council

Participating organisations:

- Total People (training organisation, working with 16-19 year-olds) Stoke-on Trent
- Old Blurton Community Centre, Blurton, Stoke-on Trent.

Date: July - September 2010

Background

The project was part of Beth Johnson Foundation's *Connecting Communities Programme*, a community engagement initiative, funded through Stoke-on-Trent's Local Strategic Partnership.

Purpose

The project aimed to bring people of different ages and from different backgrounds together to share ideas and stories about who they are, where they come from, and what makes their area/community special.

Participants

6 older people (aged 77-88) and one younger adult (aged 34) were recruited through Blurton Community Centre; 9 younger people (aged 16-18) were recruited through Total People.

Activities

Preparation of groups

The younger people had four sessions with the story teller before meeting the older people. They took part in a range of activities: listening to and discussing traditional stories, drawing pictures to illustrate their dreams/ aspirations, and making clay models to symbolise their interests/personalities.

The older people had five sessions; they listened to traditional stories, shared reminiscences (e.g. of school days and working lives), and displayed personal items/memorabilia (e.g. photographs). They also created a 'memory map' of the Stoke area, using images and words to represent significant places/ events in their lives.



Intergenerational activities

The younger and older people came together for two intergenerational sessions:

- Participants listened to traditional stories and discussed themes/ morals
- Younger people and older people shared stories about family life, childhood and school days
- Older people showed the younger people their memory map and told the younger people about some of the places/events recorded
- The older people explained the background to memorabilia they had brought along to show the younger people, some of which demonstrated the older people's skilled work in the Potteries (e.g. hand-painted china). One older person had some pre-decimal money (from her late husband's coin collection), which she presented to a younger person who was fascinated by the old coins.
- The younger people shared the pictures they had drawn to illustrate their aspirations with the older people; one younger person explained the personal significance of some photographs she had taken locally.

Celebration event

A celebration event was held on 30 September at Ceramica, Burslem. Display boards showing the older people's memory map and photographs of the project were put on display, as well as the clay models made by the younger people. The event was attended by the

older people, with friends and relatives; and representatives from Total People and Stoke City Council.

Facilitation

The sessions and celebration event were facilitated by the story teller and Beth Johnson Foundation support staff.

Measured/Observed outcomes

Younger and Older People

- Improved perceptions of the other generation
- Improved attitudes to the other generation
- Improved intergenerational relations
- Improved skills (communication, creative)
- Increased self-esteem
- Increased self-confidence
- Enjoyment/ fun

Older People

- Increased positive contribution to the community
- Improved sense of belonging to the local area
- Improved relationships with peers

Funding

The project was funded through Stoke-on-Trent's Local Strategic Partnership.

Outputs

Display boards made for the celebration event were exhibited at Ceramica for a month after the project finished.

8. Talkin' 'bout My Generation

Lead organisation: Groundwork London

Email: Judy.Hallgarten@groundwork.org.uk

Partner organisation: Hut Youth Club, St Ann's Church, Haringey, London.

Date: June 2010

Background

This project was a spin-off from 'Talkin' 'bout my generation' (2005-2006), one of six projects in 'Up to no good', a 3-year intergenerational programme of heritage activities involving younger and older people from social housing estates in North London

Purpose

The project brought younger and older people together for a series of fun activities to improve intergenerational relations and help the younger people learn about the past through the fashion and music of the 1950s/60s and experiences of older people who were younger at that time.

Participants

9 younger people, aged 12-16, from Hut Youth Club; 6 older people, aged 61-88; five were recruited through Tower Gardens Community Centre and one person through St Ann's

Church. Tower Gardens is recognised as an area of deprivation with community cohesion issues.

Activities

Pre-engagement

Lunch at Southbank; the younger people talked on video about what they think of older people, what older people think of them, and their personal experiences with older people. After lunch, the younger people visited the British Film Institute to watch film clips from the 50s/60s.

The younger people visited Alfie's Antique Market (St John's Wood) to look at 50s/60s clothing and learn about past fashions but staff were unwelcoming. The younger people captured their own reactions to this on film. They also tried to interview older people in the street about their views of younger people but met with distrust and only managed to film one interview. In the afternoon, they went boating on the lake in Regent's Park.



Intergenerational

Lunch in Charing Cross before going to see 'Dreamboats and Petticoats', a musical about life in the 1950/1960's, at the Playhouse Theatre. The groups discussed the play on the journey back to the church.

On a further day participants had a picnic in Regent's Park, and the younger people chose to go boating on the lake.

Facilitation

Activities were facilitated by the Groundwork coordinator and Hut Youth Club youth worker. Participants were transported to the venues by minibus, provided by Groundwork.

Measured/Observed outcomes

Younger and Older People

- Improved intergenerational understanding
- Improved attitudes to the other generation (greater respect)
- Improved perceptions and break down of negative stereotypes
- Improved intergenerational relations
- Enjoyment/fun

Younger People

- Increased knowledge about the past/ cultural heritage

Funding

The project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Outputs

DVD on which the younger people expressed their views of older people, what older people think of younger people, and their experiences with older people. The younger people also recorded their feelings about the negative reaction of shopkeepers at the antiques market and older people they tried to interview in the street. The film also shows the interview with the community support worker.

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We would be happy to hear from anyone who wants to find out more about our work. Whether you are seeking advice on one of our specialisms or are interested in one of our services, please get in touch.

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