

Youth Action and Engagement

building intergenerational relationships



Case studies from


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Editors:

Kerry Harrison and Angela Mulvehill

E-mail:

kerryh@nya.org.uk

Page layout:

Jim Preston

Cover photo:

Magic Me (photo: Leila Miller)

Back cover:

Sixty Plus

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The National Youth Agency

Eastgate House

19–23 Humberstone Road

Leicester LE5 3GJ

Tel: 0116 242 7350

Fax: 0116 242 7444

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E-mail: nya@nya.org.uk

Websites: www.nya.org.uk

www.youthinformation.com

Youth action and engagement –

building intergenerational relationships

Whatever definition you choose to describe 'intergenerational' work (and there are a few!), its potential to improve outcomes for young people, older people, and the communities they live in is becoming increasingly clear. While the different generations may be leading very different lives, both groups have traditionally experienced age-related stereotyping and are equally likely to experience social exclusion. Parallels can be drawn in a number of areas such as isolation, lack of confidence, family breakdown and fear of crime. Intergenerational work has the capacity to respond to these issues by reconnecting generations through mutually beneficial activities which help to build more cohesive communities.

Intergenerational practice can take many forms. In some projects, members of one generation support those of the other, while in others the two generations come together to learn from each other or to address issues in the community which concern them both. However, they generally have one thing in common: a commitment to bringing young people and older people together to help break down barriers that threaten tolerance and understanding. Aside from the potential impact on communities, the benefits to the individuals can also be far reaching. This may include increased confidence and self-esteem, developing reciprocal relationships and, for older people in particular, improved health and wellbeing and reduced isolation.

The government has included commitments to build capacity in intergenerational relations in its Aiming High for Young People implementation plan, with announcements expected this autumn. The creation of more opportunities for intergenerational work is very welcome, but makes it all the more important to recognise and build on existing good practice. This case study set, the ninth in The National Youth Agency's Youth Action & Engagement series, focuses on some of the many projects already undertaking and developing intergenerational work.

The five case studies include work taking place in a range of settings using a variety of different themes and approaches. The lead organisations range from specialist providers of intergenerational activities (Magic Me), voluntary organisations primarily concerned with developing work from an older person's perspective (Age Concern Enfield and Sixty Plus), to those originating in statutory youth work provision (Buckinghamshire Youth Service and Darlington Youth Service).

The five projects

Age Concern Enfield's Trans-IT computer project began as a pilot working in partnership with a local secondary school. Through a weekly programme of one-to-one tuition delivered by young volunteers, it has not only helped older people to learn IT skills and improve their sense of wellbeing but has served to dispel negative perceptions between generations and help build lasting friendships. After a successful first year the

value of its work has been recognised by local neighbourhood police and the project has expanded to involve more local schools in the area.

Starting as a modest 12 week programme designed to explore ways younger and older members of the community could come together to address issues of common concern, **Darlington Intergenerational Project** has evolved to provide a platform for promoting intergenerational activities across the county. The project, led by Darlington Youth Service and Community Development Services, used group based activities to create a variety of resources, providing support and a 'blueprint' for future intergenerational projects. Participants have gone on to share practice by delivering joint workshops and presentations. The project has also helped facilitate young people's involvement in local strategic decision making through membership of Community Partnerships. There are now plans for a county-wide intergenerational network.

Specialist provider of intergenerational arts based projects **Magic Me** is now in the fifth year of its annual project in partnership with the Women's Library – the national archive for women's history – and a local girls' school. It works with diverse groups of young women and older women to deliver themed projects which aim to promote learning, build relationships and challenge negative stereotypes. With the aid of professional artists, participants explore issues of common concern and interest which are expressed through creative arts and shared with the wider community.

Buckinghamshire's **Community and Youth Engagement (BCYE) Intergenerational Project** forms part of its post-16 citizenship programme. Over a two year period it has developed a model of practice which brings young and old together to share experiences and knowledge using four themes of conflict, consequences, resolution and reconciliation. By applying these themes to World War II young people have not only gained historical knowledge but have increased their understanding and respect for older people. The project has also given older people an insight into the lives of young people, helping build relationships and address fear of crime.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's **Sixty Plus Intergenerational Project** recruits young volunteers to assist older people with reading, computer and language coaching through one-to-one support, primarily taking place in the home. This core scheme and a range of other smaller projects taking place throughout the year are used as a way of building partnerships of mutual benefit and promoting both groups' self confidence and contribution to the community.

Key messages

Collectively, these projects demonstrate that intergenerational work takes many forms and can develop from the most modest of programmes involving small numbers (Darlington IP) into long standing projects with the capacity to establish strong partnerships (Magic Me). Some have the added benefit of contributing to other, wider, objectives, for example BCYE's citizenship programme and Magic Me's after-schools programme. Others may offer more traditional forms of volunteering as demonstrated by Age Concern's Trans-IT and the Sixty Plus programme.

One of the main strengths of intergenerational work is its capacity to contribute towards building stronger, more cohesive, communities. For the individuals taking part in projects the experience helps challenge negative perceptions

and can help build lasting relationships between generations. By sharing learning and outputs with the wider community there are opportunities to increase the level of impact by presenting positive images of both groups. Magic Me's relationship with the Women's Library, for example, allows it to share outputs with a wider audience and gain access to a range of resources to help inform the work. Darlington's Intergenerational Project also demonstrates how responsive communities can be when presented with more positive images of different generations, particularly when young and old join forces to deliver the messages.

Finding a suitable location and creating the right environment is essential for intergenerational work to flourish. For older people projects can offer opportunities to escape feelings of isolation by providing valuable links to the outside world. Depending on the nature of activities, it may be appropriate to use one-to-one or group work approaches. However, the key factor is the creation of a safe, welcoming and informal environment where both groups feel comfortable in sharing experiences and learning from each other. In order to extend services to those who are housebound, Sixty Plus recruit young people to provide training in the home – this also allows for one-to-one support which matches personalities and styles of delivery. However, as Age Concern's Trans-IT programme demonstrates, by bringing older people into locations such as local schools, young people are able to offer them learning opportunities aided by familiar surroundings and equipment.

Where young people are supporting older people, it is important to use activities that young people are familiar with and comfortable in sharing their knowledge of them. Age Concern and Trans-IT volunteers both use technology as a basis for providing support, including computers, photography and other digital mediums. For joint programmes, using themes that both generations can relate to helps stimulate discussion and highlight similarities. BCYE's focus on World War II enabled young people to understand issues faced by older people and, likewise, helped older people understand how the same issues can impact on young people. Meanwhile, Magic Me's focus on women's issues helps the two generations come together by exploring issues that resonate with all.

Projects that include young and old from a diverse mix of backgrounds have the capacity to build cross-cultural relationships within and between generations. For members of both groups this opens up opportunities to bring them into contact with people from other cultural/ethnic groups within the community that they might not otherwise meet. Whether a conscious effort is made to explore these differences as part of the programme or whether they emerge as an aside as the work unfolds, common misconceptions based on ethnic stereotypes may be broken down by bringing groups together in such a way. Magic Me's Heartfelt programme demonstrates how people with very different beliefs often discover shared experiences and a sense of connection when faced with subject matters that arouses strong feelings.

Finally, the role of staff supporting work of this nature is often integral to its success. Young and old have very different support needs and the most vulnerable often require specialist help to build confidence and relationships and facilitate their participation. Regardless of the nature of activities taking place, developing understanding of different needs is an essential part of project planning and preparation. This might include supporting groups separately to allow them to explore any fears and apprehension (Magic Me), or to ensure a good match between young and older people's interests and expertise (Trans-IT).

TRANS-IT

Brief description

Age Concern Enfield works in partnership with a range of voluntary and statutory organisations, to improve the quality of life of people aged 50+ and their carers in the London Borough of Enfield. Inaugurated in 1985, it is an independent charity and part of the national federation of Age Concern.

The Trans-IT intergenerational computer project began as a pilot project in September 2006. It aims to help older people access computers and the internet through a weekly programme of one-to-one tuition delivered by young volunteers from local secondary schools. The service aims to develop positive and mutually beneficial relationships between young volunteers and older learners and provide older people with new skills and confidence which help to promote their independence.

Collaboration

The pilot project was developed in partnership with a local secondary school, Albany School, in year one and has since expanded to include St Anne's Catholic School in year two. Two more local schools have approached Age Concern Enfield to become involved.

Funding

Funding for the pilot project came from monies allocated to Age Concern Enfield through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) budget for volunteer development. The project has since secured nearly £3,000 from Enfield's Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (to September 2008).

Staffing

The Trans-IT project is managed by the volunteers' manager at Age Concern Enfield. One of the sessions at the school is supported and supervised by a team administrator.



→Breaking down barriers between generations.

Nature of provision

Which groups of people does the project work with?

To date, 35 sixth form students – 29 young women and six young men – have volunteered on the project. Volunteers reflect the mixed ethnicity of the local community, including young people of Black African, Sri Lankan, Turkish and Kurdish origin.

They support older people aged from early 50s to late 80s who are unable to access group classes due to health issues, such as having a hearing impairment, or other barriers such as lack of confidence. Like the young volunteers, they are an ethnically diverse group. There are currently 14 people on the waiting list to join the project.



completes two training sessions: a general Age Concern Enfield induction and a specialised computer coaching session. Once they start volunteering, the volunteers' manager supports them both informally and through formal feedback and support sessions. Further training opportunities are also provided for the volunteers.

The older people are recruited in various ways including word of mouth, other projects run by Age Concern Enfield, articles in newsletters, links with local sheltered accommodation and the Enfield Over 50s Forum.

What are the main approaches used and activities offered?

An older person is matched with a young volunteer who provides one-to-one computer training on a weekly basis in the school computer suite. If a young person has particular interest or expertise in a specific application, where possible they are matched with an older person who wishes to develop their knowledge in this area. Similarly, if people have similar outside interests, they may be matched up together.

Each session is based loosely around a coaching pack which gives guidance on providing computer support to beginners accessing ICT for the first time. However, the young volunteer has to be flexible and tailor the training to the older person's learning goals. These are set before they join the programme and are documented in a learning diary. Each week, the older person and young volunteer review the goals and adapt the training accordingly.

One of the main aims of Trans-IT is to encourage positive relationships both between younger and older people and between older people themselves. At the beginning of the academic year, the group uses icebreakers to get to know each other better. As the year goes on, each group becomes closer and regularly swap tips and ideas between each other during training sessions. Both older and younger people consistently report that they have learnt from each other and that the programme has enabled them to break down barriers between them.

As many of the older people lack

How was the need for the project identified?

Although Age Concern Enfield has a proven record of involving volunteers in its work (including the successful TransAge Action project where older volunteers work with primary school children), the number of young volunteers aged 16-19 was low. With the backing of the Age Concern Enfield Executive Committee, the volunteers' manager was keen to redress this imbalance. Drawing on her experience from working for London charity Sixty Plus, she developed a programme targeting young people. Sixty Plus (which is also featured as a case study in this set) was able to provide invaluable advice and support in this process. The volunteers' manager established a link with Albany School through a contact, with St Anne's becoming involved in the

project after seeing an article in the local paper.

How do people become involved? What, if any, commitment do you ask for?

At the beginning of the academic year, the volunteers' manager makes a presentation at sixth form assemblies highlighting the work of the Trans-IT project. Students take an information pack home and those interested in the project complete an application form. All the young volunteers need to have an interest and knowledge of computer packages including basic word processing and the Internet. Most of the volunteers commit to coaching once a week in term time for at least one hour over an academic year.

Before becoming involved in the programme, each young volunteer

confidence, the creation of a safe, welcoming and informal learning environment is key to the success of the project. Each training session is attended by either the volunteers' manager or the team administrator. This continuity of contact reassures many of the older people, as well as providing a designated person who is on hand to sort out any unexpected absences or problems with computers. At Albany, a large bustling comprehensive school, the sessions take place after the school day has finished (between 3:15-4:15). St Anne's is a smaller school and older people access the facilities through a separate entrance.

How are participants involved in shaping the project/programme?

Both the older and younger people have been involved with developing ideas for other potential intergenerational projects, including gardening, outings, cookery, sports, home visiting and drama.

How does the project respond to the needs of different people, particularly the most marginalised?

Many of the older people who benefit from the training have limited mobility and may feel isolated. Most have little or no experience of computers. Improving their computer skills and using the Internet can help provide them with a link to the outside world and empower them to make choices. The friendships and links that develop from the project are also positive for the older people's mental health and wellbeing.

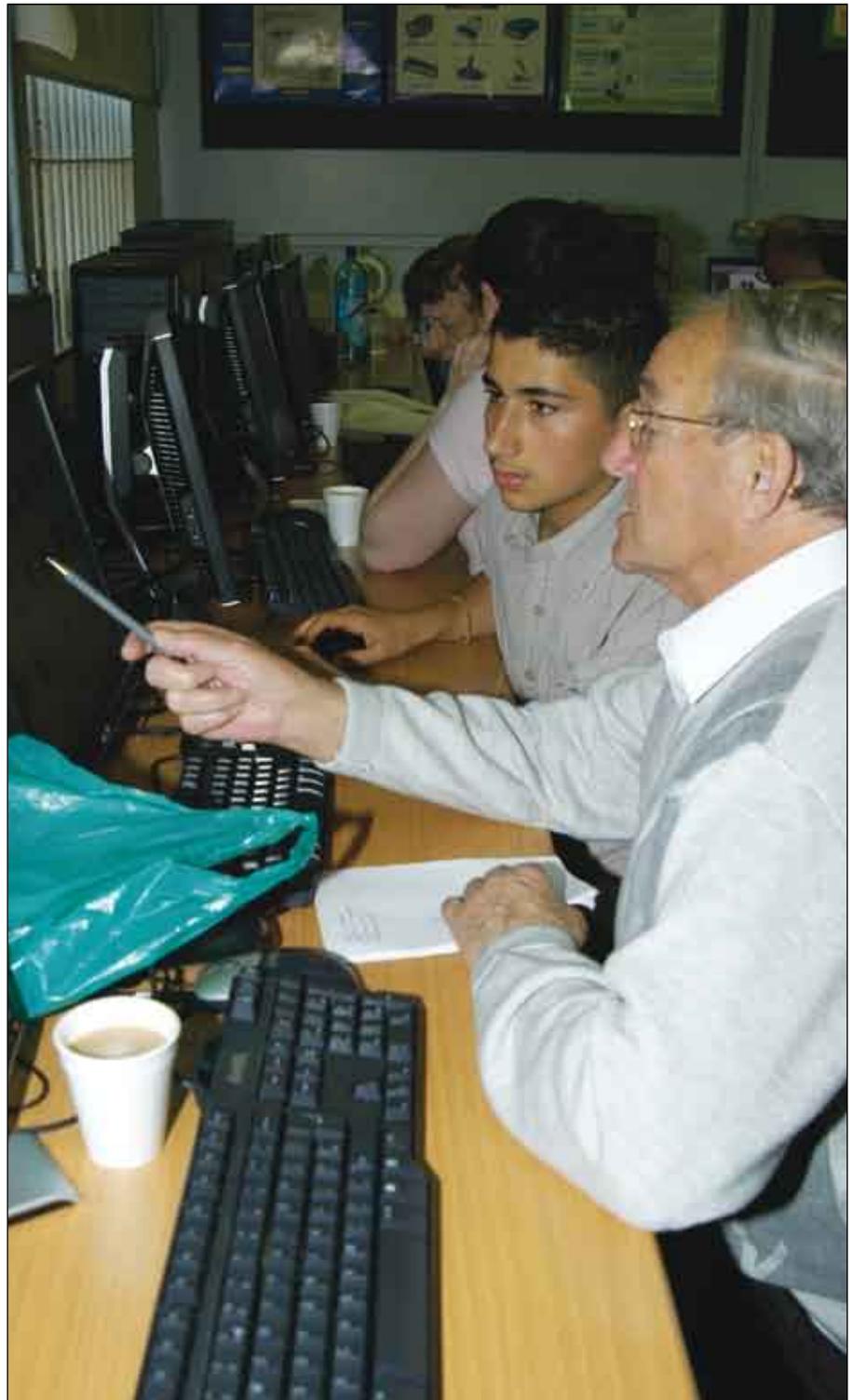
Outcomes of work

Does the project contribute to the five Every Child Matters outcomes for young people?

The young volunteers are making a positive contribution to their local community and fostering links with the older generation.

What skills and knowledge do young people gain through their involvement in the project?

Through the programme, the young



volunteers develop a wide range of personal and social skills, including improvements in communication and self-confidence. They also develop their knowledge of specific computer applications and of how to tailor training to an individual's needs.

Three quarters of the young volunteers change through their involvement in the programme and see older people in a more positive light. Many go on to form friendships which last beyond the project.

How are young people's progress and achievements measured and recorded?

At the end of the academic year, a celebratory session is held with the older people and young volunteers. This provides an opportunity to award in-house certificates recognising each person's achievements. Once a young person has completed 15 hours of volunteering, they can also gain a certificate through Youth Action Volunteering Enfield. For many young people, this link allows them to go on to

try other volunteering opportunities in the borough.

What has changed for older people, organisations or the wider community as a result of the project?

Older people who participate gain more independence and confidence through enhanced IT skills and social networks. They also change their opinion of young people through being involved in the programme: "I can't believe how many young people are volunteering. I thought you were all hoodies."

Measuring effectiveness

How is the project evaluated and by whom?

An evaluation and celebration event involving the young volunteers and older people was held at the end of the pilot year. A separate meeting was also held with senior staff from the school.

What are the findings of any evaluations to date?

The overriding view from all participants is that the pilot project was a great success. Comments from the volunteers and older learners included:

"The best part was being able to interact with people from older generations and gain a feeling of reward at the end of each session."

"It was a wonderful exercise mixing youth and old age together."

"I think we have all gained knowledge from each other."

In May 2007, Age Concern Enfield received the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard, recognising its good practice in volunteer management. The project has also been recognised at a reception on intergenerational work with HRH the Prince of Wales at Clarence House.

What changes/developments have occurred as a result of evaluation?

Feedback from the older people suggested that they wanted to extend the programme through further sessions.

More young volunteers have now been recruited to meet this demand.

What has worked well and why?

The combination of one-to-one tutoring within a group setting has particularly suited the learning styles of the older people.

What has been difficult and why?

Difficulties can arise when the young volunteers or older people are not reliable and committed. The volunteers' manager has had to put in place contingency plans to cover the disruption this can cause.

Partnership and strategic impact

What other agencies does the organisation work with?

Partnership working with local voluntary and statutory sector organisations is an integral part of Age Concern Enfield's work.

What does the organisation bring to partnership work?

Age Concern Enfield has considerable experience of reaching out to and engaging older people and working with volunteers. It is a trusted and authoritative body respected by local agencies and older people themselves.

Has this partnership resulted in greater collaboration or increased understanding between partners? If so, how?

As a direct result of the Trans-IT project, Age Concern Enfield is actively looking at ways to involve local schools and other organisations working with young people in its volunteering projects. The project has also attracted the interest of the local neighbourhood police who see intergenerational work as a way of breaking down stereotypes.

Have you experienced any particular difficulties in partnership working?

No, the project has had a very positive experience of partnership working. It attributes its success to

each partner having a reliable and committed member of staff with specific responsibility for the programme. This is backed up by the support and commitment of Age Concern Enfield's chief executive and the head teachers at the schools involved.

Do you consider this project to be innovative?

The project reverses the traditional role of a younger person learning from an older person and brings benefits to both the younger volunteer and older learner.

How do you disseminate the learning from the project?

The project is part of Age Concern England's Intergenerational Network which draws together intergenerational projects from around the country to share practice and ideas. The work of the project has also been highlighted in articles in the local press and through presentations at conferences.

Has the learning from this work influenced wider organisational/service strategies?

Because the project has been so successful, Age Concern Enfield is actively looking for ways to integrate intergenerational work further into its work.

What plans do you have to develop this work?

Funding allowing, Age Concern Enfield hopes to appoint an officer with specific responsibility for intergenerational work. It would be their remit to develop future programmes, including the ideas gained from the participants and volunteers on the Trans-IT project.

Contact:
Leonie de Botton,
Volunteers' Manager, Age
Concern Enfield, Vincent
House, 2E Nags Head Road,
Enfield EN3 7FN Tel: 020
8375 4103
E-mail: [leonie.debotton@](mailto:leonie.debotton@ageconcernenfield.org.uk)
ageconcernenfield.org.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COMMUNITY & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT

Brief description

Buckinghamshire Community and Youth Engagement (BCYE) Intergenerational Project was developed as part of its post-16 citizenship programme. It began in January 2006 as a two year pilot project in the north of the county, using the theme of World War II to build positive relationships between young people and older people. It uses a range of activities to enable young people and older people to share experiences and knowledge using the four themes of conflict, consequences, resolution and reconciliation. In addition to group work, field trips and community action projects, the programme included a joint residential to the site of the Normandy invasion and an educational visit to Berlin for the young people. Participants helped produce a DVD resource documenting their experience, for use as a learning and promotional tool to encourage further intergenerational activities.

Collaboration

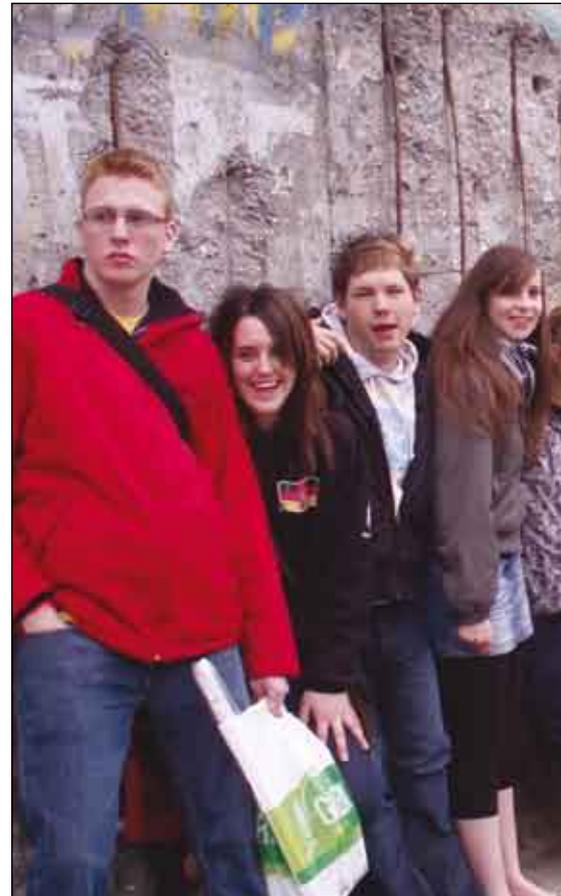
Older people's services, eg. The British Legion, helped the youth service make links with older people. Relationships have also been built with partner organisations in Germany. Other partners include local schools, Thames Valley Partnership, Connexions, and media company Cliff Productions Ltd.

Funding

Funding for the pilot project included £5,000 from the Youth Service Positive Activities for Young People budget, £20,000 from Big Lottery Fund – Home Front, £3,000 from Older People's Services, and £500 from Wycombe District Council. Young people also obtained £50,000 from the local Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) for the international residential to Berlin, team building activities, promotion materials and the DVD. Funding for future projects will be sought from YOF, with additional financial support from local partners. Buckinghamshire Community and Youth Engagement will continue to staff and manage the project.

Staffing:

Project was supported on a part-time basis as part of regular workload from one operations manager – strategic lead, three senior practitioners, six full time youth workers plus volunteers and part time staff with specialist skills.



→Lining up against the Berlin Wall remains, Bern...

Nature of provision

Which groups of people does the project work with?

Over the two years 42 young people aged 13 to 19 took part in the project. For the first year participants were recruited from youth clubs in the north of the county, while in the second year the project involved young people across the whole county. There was a core group of 15 young people, including some with physical or learning disabilities and from minority ethnic groups. There was an equal split of male and female participants.

Older people included four British veterans who took part in conflict and others who have memories of the Second World War period.

How was the need for the project identified?

The idea originated from the 'community cohesion' targets included in the Resourcing Excellent Youth Services national guidance and in response to comments made at national level that



auer Strasse, North Berlin.

teenagers have little understanding of the Second World War. Locally, reports of conflict between young people and older residents highlighted the need to encourage respect between generations and help resolve disputes.

How do participants become involved? What, if any, commitment do you ask for from young people?

Young people are recruited through local youth clubs/projects. They complete an application form which indicates why they want to be involved, the level of commitment they can offer and what they would like to achieve. This provided a way of coping with demand and getting the young people to think about what they are signing up to. It also helped workers assess their knowledge and experience. Participants met every other month in their area groups and once a term as a whole group for team building activities. Young people who had shown most commitment throughout the project were selected for the international residential, which had limited places available.

Older people are recruited through links with Older People's services. The British

Legion played a particularly active role in identifying war veterans and prisoners of war willing to share their experiences with young people.

What are the main approaches used and activities offered?

Over the two years the project created a programme of activities to enable young and older people to share experiences and knowledge using the four themes of conflict, consequences, resolution and reconciliation.

During the first year, group work activities were used to explore issues around community cohesion. Veterans and other older people shared their own experiences and perspectives on the community with groups of young people. Using the Second World War as a context for learning, the young people began to identify with the older people and understand how their experiences had shaped them and society. Older people also had an opportunity to see the young people in a positive and encouraging environment. Over the summer young and older people worked together on various community

projects including gardening, decorating and providing social activities, which provided a platform for more informal discussion on the four themes. They also undertook joint field visits to increase their understanding of the events and how they continue to affect lives today. Sites visited included the Imperial War Museum, London, and a nearby army military barracks. Young people also took part in team building activities and a UK residential to prepare them to visit the site of the Normandy invasion with the veterans.

In year two the project took a broader approach and included post-war reconstruction and reconciliation. Young people worked together in three area teams to consider the themes from an international and local perspective. The programme culminated with 29 young people taking part in a week long visit to Berlin to learn about events and consequences of the Second World War from a German perspective. This included visits to key landmarks associated with the war including the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate and Checkpoint Charlie.

Throughout the project participants documented their experiences on film and helped produce a DVD for use by others as a learning aid. All young people were trained in interview skills in year one. In the second year they were encouraged to take a more active role, and four young people recorded a short documentary of their experiences for the DVD.

How are participants involved in shaping the project/programme?

Young people identified sources of funding and successfully applied to the Youth Opportunity Fund to fund the second year of the project. They planned and delivered a presentation on how they would spend the money and encourage other young people to join the project.

Young people involved in the pilot project will be brought back as young leaders, to further develop the programme and take part in decision making and planning activities.

How does the project respond to the needs of different people, particularly the most marginalised?



→The group gather at US army 'Checkpoint Charlie'.

The project specifically sought to include young people from a broad range of backgrounds, particularly those who had not previously been involved in group activities and residential. The project paid for equipment and clothing for some young people so they could take part, and also helped some young people to obtain passports.

Outcomes of work

Does the project contribute to the five Every Child Matters outcomes?

Be Healthy – young people take part in physical recreation as part of team building exercises.

Stay Safe – young people develop knowledge of conflict and conflict resolution which they can apply to their own experiences.

Enjoy and achieve – it offered opportunities for personal and social development, though learning new skills, improving knowledge and gaining accreditation.

Make a positive contribution – developing positive relationships, supporting the local community.

Economic Well Being – working with budgets and funding.

What skills do young people gain through their involvement in the project?

Young people have gained historical knowledge relating to World War II and the impact of nations pulling together. Some of the subject matter stretched young people emotionally and helped them empathise with the older generation. They have increased their social and cultural awareness through exploring different languages, food, customs etc. For some young people the international visits were their first trips away from home, therefore provided valuable life skills. Working together in groups and team building exercises promoted inclusion of marginalised young people and raised individual self esteem.

Activities helped build on and reinforce citizenship knowledge and skills developed at school.

Being involved in filming the DVD gave young people experience of being interviewed and, for some, using video equipment.

What has changed for older people, organisations or the wider community as a result of the project?

Bringing different age groups and diverse communities together to share

experiences and learning has helped challenge negative stereotypes and develop community cohesion.

Young people have increased their understanding of the responsibilities of being a citizen. They have shown increased respect for older people, for example through reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour against older people. Similarly, older people have built relationships with young people which have helped reduce previous levels of fear.

How are people's progress and achievements measured and recorded?

Young people who have participated in the full programme gain local accreditation. Most have used their experience for the skills section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Measuring effectiveness

How is the project evaluated?

Internal processes include group based evaluation session, workers' feedback and session recording, and individual feedback sheets.

What are the findings of any evaluations to date?

The young people gained a lot and they

have recognised that their participation in the project was worthwhile. They have gained a more positive profile in the community.

What changes/developments have occurred as a result of evaluation?

The project now covers a broader geographical area and the number of young people involved in the project has increased.

What has worked well and why?

- The programme created an interest in citizenship by remaining focused on young people throughout.
- Using film and photography to capture learning opportunities as they arise which can then later be shared more widely.
- Involving a wide range of partners to allow access to more resources and funding streams, and work in a variety of settings.

What has been difficult and why?

Expanding the project to cover the whole county meant getting workers up to speed and maintaining strong communication links. As a result, some projects were delivered at different times in different areas.

Partnership and strategic impact

What specific experience and expertise does your organisation bring to partnership work?

Preparing young people so that they can contribute in a positive manner when working with partners. Youth workers acted as advocates for the young people with partner organisations.

Has this partnership resulted in greater collaboration or increased understanding between partners?

The project has developed closer links with partner organisations in Germany as a result of the project. There are hopes that a group of German young people may visit Buckinghamshire. Positive links have also been made with older people's services, offering

opportunities for further partnerships in the future.

Do you consider this project to be innovative?

The first year of the project was groundbreaking in bringing the generations together.

How do you disseminate the learning from the project?

The DVD records experiences during and after the project and is used to publicise the work to stakeholders and other organisations. Local press coverage was also sought.



Linking the work to a wide range of targets and outcomes has allowed the project to promote its work in a variety of contexts.

What plans do you have to sustain/develop this work?

The project is now being rolled out across the whole county, and is embedded in the youth service business plan for the next three years. The youth service is seeking to expand its partnership to allow access to more resources and funding streams. It is also considering how other topics, such as the Iraq war or policy issues such as standards of care for older people, may be explored using a similar model.



Contact:

**Jacqui Tully, Operations Manager, Eastside Youth Centre,
Highcrest Community School Operations,
Hatters Lane, High Wycombe HP13 7NQ. Tel. 01494 452226.
E-mail: jtully@buckscc.gov.uk**

**Simon Billenness, Senior Practitioner, The Grange Youth Centre,
The Grange School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury HP22 5NE.
Tel. 01296 422091. E-mail: sbillenness@buckscc.gov.uk**



→Normandy: Remembering those who lost their lives.

MAGIC ME ANNUAL ARTS PROJECTS

Brief description

Founded in 1989, Magic Me is a specialist provider of intergenerational arts based projects in the East End of London. Its annual programme of activities brings together young people and older people for mutual benefit, learning and enjoyment. For the past five years Magic Me has worked with The Women's Library, based at London Metropolitan University, and Mulberry School for Girls to deliver an annual arts project for young women and older women as part of the after-school programme. Project themes have included beauty and self image ('Beauty?' 2004), women's relationship with the home ('Spinning Plates', 2005), campaigning on issues of concern ('Heartfelt', 2006), and women's voices ('Sound Tracks', 2007). A fifth project about women's achievements (Can I? I Can!) is running in 2008. Participants share their learning with the wider community through various artforms including photographs, poetry, a soundtrack and calendars.

Collaboration

Magic Me is the lead partner, working in close collaboration with Mulberry School for Girls and The Women's Library.

Funding

Magic Me has contributed approximately £3,000 in total over the past four years. Additional individual project costs were: Beauty? – £9,378; Spinning Plates – £11,600; Heartfelt – £9,000; and Sound Tracks – £6,255. Additional funding came from the St Katharine & Shadwell Trust, Awards for All, Lucas Tooth Fund, Women's Library, Tower Hamlets Partnership and Mulberry School.

Staffing

Each project has been led by the Magic Me Associate Artist, with Magic Me's director providing overall supervision. Activities are led by professional artists employed by Magic Me on a freelance basis.

The Head of Creative Arts at Mulberry School and the Access and Education Officer at the Women's Library are link workers for projects.

Photo: Frances Kearney for Magic Me



→ Women in the home – 'Spinning Plates'.

Nature of provision

Which groups of people does the project work with?

Each project involves a group of up to 16 young and older women. The young members are year 10 students (aged 14 to 15) at Mulberry School for Girls, a community school based in East London, whose pupils are virtually all Muslim, of Bangladeshi origin. Older women (aged 50+) are drawn from the local Tower Hamlets community and include those of White British, Asian, Black African, Caribbean origins and Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths. The oldest participant was aged 91. Some projects have included older women with minor disabilities, mental health problems and hearing impairments.

How was the need for the project identified?

The original project (Beauty?) was designed to coincide with the library's preparations for an exhibition on beauty queens. The library also wanted to increase community awareness of its



created images of the issues using 3D collage and 2D artwork which were photographed for display within the school and the library. Themes chosen by the group included 'memories', 'friendship', 'war', 'faith', 'child poverty', 'Islam' and 'the family'. A 'heartfelt' calendar was also produced and distributed for free by the school.

- **Sound Tracks:** a four month project in which participants explored the sense and power of their own voices, using diaries in the library archive. Workshops approaches included groupwork and informal discussion; creative writing and research; and developing skills using drama and imaginative exercises. The group also created its own sound piece 'My voice is the key to my freedom', launched at the library's fifth birthday celebration [available on www.magicme.co.uk].

How are participants involved in shaping the projects?

The chosen themes provide a starting point for each project, which the groups develop. Participants make artistic and thematic choices, and are involved in editing and preparing materials for the end product.

One older and three younger participants have joined Magic Me's Ideas Group, an advisory body for the whole organisation.

How does the project respond to the needs of different people, particularly the most marginalised?

Projects focus on supporting participants to understand each others' needs and value their skills and talents. On a practical level this is achieved through helping each other with tasks such as writing or reading, and artwork.

The library provides a fully accessible venue. Transport is offered to participants on low incomes and those who are less mobile.

Outcomes of work

Does the project contribute to the five Every Child Matters outcomes for young people?

work and involve more local residents. Mulberry School was keen to develop more after-school activities and, following the success of the first project, committed to an annual project.

How do participants become involved? What, if any, commitment do you ask for from young volunteers?

Young women are recruited from the school's performing arts department and also through word of mouth. Older women were initially recruited through previous Magic Me or library projects, a newspaper article and personal contact. However, participants now consist of women who return each year and those referred from local community groups.

Sessions take place after school (lasting one and a half hours), with full day workshops during school holidays. Participants are expected to attend regularly.

What are the main approaches and activities?

Individual projects focus on different themes, all of which use

intergenerational work to promote learning, build relationships and challenge negative stereotypes. Each project begins with separate peer group sessions to allow participants to explore any apprehensions and discuss hopes and expectations. This is followed by a programme of structured and unstructured joint activities led by professional artists. Participants also have sessions on how to use the library to research their topics.

- **Beauty?:** a 10 week programme exploring beauty and self image, leading to a photographic exhibition and poetry performance at the Women's Library.
- **Spinning Plates:** a 10 week programme exploring women's relationship to the home through photographs and poems. These were made into a calendar, which was distributed to Magic Me networks or sold to help cover costs.
- **Heartfelt:** a programme taking place over eight weekly sessions and two full days using discussion and creative writing to explore 'heartfelt' issues that participants would campaign for and against. They then



Photo: Anita McKenzie for Magic Me [Beauty?]

What has changed for participants, organisations or the wider community as a result of the project?

Projects provide individuals from both groups the chance to work with people from other cultural/ethnic groups that they would not normally meet. This has helped break down misconceptions across generations and communities with both groups showing a shift in perceptions by the end of projects. For isolated, older people, projects allow them to be more in touch with the wider community and build lasting friendships with other adults. Many show an increase in confidence as a result. Some younger participants have become regular visitors to the library and have taken part in summer activities.

Projects contribute towards the school's range of positive activities as part of its after-school programme. As a dominantly mono-cultural school, it recognises the benefits to students of working with a diverse group of elders. The school uses project artwork as a stimulus for class work throughout the school.

Visitors to the library see work created by local young and older women, highlighting their, often invisible, viewpoints alongside the academic and historical ones.

Measuring effectiveness

How is the project evaluated?

Individual sessions are evaluated by the relevant lead worker, working with the group and co-artists. The project manager produces a report at the end of each project for funders and partners, and to document learning to feed into future work.

What are the findings of any evaluations to date?

- The school reports improved behaviour and concentration among those girls who had been showing challenging behaviour in school.
- Some participants lack confidence at the beginning of projects and are apprehensive about working with different age groups from different faiths.

→'Beauty': more than skin deep.

Enjoy and achieve – through cultural and arts based activities promoting personal and social development.

Making a positive contribution – opportunities to build positive relationships with older women through voluntary and community engagement.

What skills and knowledge do participants gain through their involvement in the project?

Participants gain a wide range of creative skills including writing, photography, performance and image making. 'Sound Tracks' for example provided opportunities to gain skills in interviewing, recording, editing and vocal performance. Participants develop skills in research, speaking and

listening, and evaluation. The Women's Library has helped participants develop their awareness of gender issues and women's history, for instance the importance of voting rights through material on the Suffragette movement.

How are participant's progress and achievements measured and recorded?

All sessions include time for individual and group reflection. Individuals are encouraged to reflect on their own development, but do not set targets. Participants are presented with Magic Me certificates of project completion.

The school holds special assemblies to celebrate achievements and showcase artwork.

- Some adult participants have problems attending consistently due to ill health and others have experienced anxiety once projects come to an end. This raises issues about appropriate support and contact during and after projects.

What developments have occurred as a result of evaluation?

- Magic Me is fundraising for a community development worker to provide support and continuity between the projects, particularly for older people.
- Project dates have moved to avoid the June exam period, which put too much pressure on the young women.

What has worked well and why?

- The Activity room at the Women's Library is a comfortable and stimulating venue, providing a neutral meeting location.
- Producing calendars provides an excellent way of communicating the work of participants and Magic Me more widely and all year round.
- Providing refreshments during sessions allows time for more informal discussions among group members.
- Preparing exhibitions and performances to coincide with the library's own exhibitions gives their work a wider audience.
- Projects give people a place to talk about their reactions and feelings to difficult issues in their community, eg. 7th July bombings.
- Young women are able to share their aspirations and anxieties with older women outside their family.
- Attendance and presentations by the participants at Magic Me's Annual General Meeting and Celebration

What has been difficult and why?

- Occasional problems with attendance and time keeping among the young women can disrupt the group and affect what individuals get out of it.
- A busy, animated group can be hard for some older people to work within.
- Group members have to be willing to work with people with many different accents, opinions and personalities, which they mostly do very well.
- Raising funds in time to give a good



Photos: Lella Miller for Magic Me

→ 'Heartfelt' issues: Islam.

lead time to plan the next project has sometimes been a struggle.

Partnership and strategic impact

What specific experience and expertise do you bring to partnership work?

Magic Me is a leading intergenerational arts provider in the UK. Professionals leading the projects are experienced in using the arts with diverse community groups and working with professionals from other sectors. A Continuing Professional Development programme for artists covers key issues such as dealing with conflict.

One artist has led all the projects, providing continuity and building relationships with partners and participants.

Has this partnership resulted in greater collaboration or increased understanding between partners?

The relationship with the library has helped to bring different users and responses to its collections, and improve access and increase use of its resources. The Library has also recognised the practical needs of users, for instance providing a room near the entrance to avoid long walks for people with mobility problems.

A letter of agreement between all partners has been adapted and improved over the years and people stick to their commitments.

Have you experienced any particular difficulties in partnership working?

- Changes in staff at the library have meant renegotiation of project arrangements.
- The library has successfully



→ 'Heartfelt' issues: Racism.

maintained a long term relationship with Magic Me, but with their involvement in a number of projects, and limited resources this has not always been easy to sustain.

- Communication with school staff can be difficult during busy times.

Do you consider this project to be innovative?

Yes. Women-only intergenerational work is unusual, as is cross generational work with such different cultural groups. The projects are designed to give participants a chance to ask the difficult questions they don't have a place to discuss elsewhere, for instance about faith.

How do you disseminate the learning?

Projects are publicised in a range of ways, including displays at the library and school, sharing good practice through the Beth Johnson Foundation's Centre for Intergenerational Practice, local press, Magic Me's website and through conferences and training events.

Has the learning from this work influenced wider organisational strategies?

The need for a worker to provide continuity between time-limited projects has informed our planning.

What plans do you have to sustain/develop this work?

The annual projects will continue.

Contact:
Susan Langford, Director
Magic Me, 18 Victoria Park
Square, London E2 9PF
Tel 020 3222 6064
Website: www.magicme.co.uk

DARLINGTON INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT

Brief description

This partnership project brings young people and older people together to find common ground, break down barriers and explore intergenerational issues across Darlington using a variety of creative mediums. As part of an initial 12 week programme, the group produced a short film based on their discussions and secured separate funding to create a range of resources to support the development of intergenerational work more widely. Members of the group continue to be actively involved by developing and delivering workshops promoting intergenerational work to a variety of local youth, community and school based groups. As a result of the original programme some young people involved in the group have joined their local community partnership, participating in local decision making at a strategic level.

Collaboration

The project is a partnership between Darlington Youth Service, Community Development and Growing Older Living in Darlington (GOLD). A community artist from Scruff Productions joined the partnership at a later date to help develop the creative side of the project and Darlington Media Workshop assisted with the film production.

Funding

The initial 12 week programme was funded by the three partner agencies at a total cost of £500. Continuation funding was secured through Connect Youth's Group Work Initiatives (€7,500).

Staffing

The project was supported on a part-time basis by a participation worker from Darlington Youth Service, two members of the Darlington Community Development Team and a GOLD link worker.



→ Group members proudly present the resource pack

Nature of provision

Which groups of people does the project work with?

Ten young people aged 14 to 16 took part in the project, with an equal split of male and female participants. All young people were of White UK origin. During the second stage of the project, a young woman with sight impairment joined and became one of the key workshop facilitators. Four older members (three women and one man) were involved.

How was the need for the project identified, and by whom?

The idea stemmed from a meeting of the Community Partnership Steering group which looked at ways of involving more young people. There was also an ongoing issue of young people often being targeted and blamed by older residents for anti-social behaviour in the area and, likewise, negative attitudes from young people towards



ack.

older residents. The focus therefore changed to look at ways to break down these barriers and developing awareness of issues affecting both younger and older members of the community. Representatives from the Youth Assembly, Community Development and GOLD's 50 plus forum were brought together to explore how to take this forward, and an idea of an inter-generational project emerged from these discussions.

How do participants become involved? What, if any, commitment do you ask for?

Older people were recruited through their existing links with GOLD and local partnerships in the town. Young people were recruited through youth groups and the Darlington Youth Assembly. Promotional material was also displayed in youth centres and within older people's services. Participants were asked to commit to an initial 12 week programme, with one meeting per week

(4.30-6.30 pm).

What are the main approaches used and activities offered?

The project began with a 12 week programme of structured and unstructured group work activities. The initial sessions, facilitated by workers, were used to bring the two groups together in discussions to challenge negative stereotypes and decide how to take the project forward. The initial sessions included training designed to support a business approach to the project, covering area such as project management, budgeting etc. A community artist was invited to lead later sessions to help participants take forward ideas for the creative part of the project. They went on to create a resource pack for use by groups undertaking intergenerational activities including templates for agendas, promotional flyers/posters, event evaluation, ideas for workshop activities and risk assessment. The group also

took part in the production of a short film of their discussions and designed their own logo as part of the resource pack.

The final session was used to evaluate the project and start developing ideas for an inter-generational network in Darlington for those working with older and younger members of the community.

Following the 12 week programme additional funding was secured to enable members of the group to develop and deliver workshops across Darlington to a variety of local youth, community and school groups.

How are participants involved in shaping the project/programme?

Participants were encouraged to take an active role in managing the project. The programme itself evolved in discussion with participants with the intention of using the structure as a blue print for future projects. The idea of delivering workshops and presentations to share practice and promote intergenerational activities came from group members. They subsequently helped source additional funding opportunities to develop the second phase.

How does the project respond to the needs of different people, particularly the most marginalised?

The venue for the project was chosen because of its central location and facilities, including a creative space and social area designed for all ages. Transport was available so members of the group could get to and from the workshops safely and encourage maximum attendance. Some GOLD members received phone calls to remind them about meetings.

Outcomes of work

Does the project contribute to the five Every Child Matters outcomes for young people?

Main contributions made to outcomes as follows:

Making a Positive Contribution: through opportunities to engage in decision



→ Preparing to spread the word.

making and voluntary action in the community.

Enjoy & Achieve: young people designed and developed a piece of work and played a major part in its delivery. The project also provided opportunities for social interaction with older members of the community and developing new friendships with peers.

Staying Safe: the project facilitated discussion on community safety and respect from the perspectives of different generations.

What skills and knowledge do young people gain through their involvement in the project?

Young people have gained a range of skills to help them take forward the project. These include group work, project management, budget skills, presentation skills, workshop design and creative skills.

As a result of the project, two young people have joined their local partnerships where they are now extending their knowledge of local issues and gaining an insight into decision making processes within the council.

How are people's progress and

achievements measured and recorded?

The young people received accreditation through the Duke of Edinburgh Award or Millennium Volunteers. They were nominated for Darlington Youth Service's Vibe Awards, which celebrate young people's contributions to the community and their personal achievements.

What has changed for older people, organisations or the wider community as a result of the project?

The project has helped both generations engage with each other on equal terms, breaking down barriers and challenging negative stereotypes, and highlighting similarities – including discrimination – in their experiences.

When delivering workshops the older and younger people from the project represent themselves with a coherent and united voice which, in itself, helped demonstrate the impact of inter-generational work. The DVD has been seen in different arenas and has helped spark debate wherever it has been shown. It has given community and youth groups a platform to start breaking down barriers and intolerance and start building relationships and respect.

Measuring effectiveness

How is the project evaluated?

Evaluation took place at the middle and end of the project, including contributions from participants. Staff from Scruff Productions also evaluated the planning, development and delivery of the project.

A summary report has been produced for Connect Youth (which funded the second stage).

What has worked well and why?

- Support from professional artists gave the finished DVD a polished look and provided a valuable record of the work to share more widely.
- The involvement of group members in designing and delivering the workshops meant the content was well received and had greater impact.
- Good communication and relationships between partners and their ability to provide professional support to the respective groups was central to achieving the project's objectives and its overall success.
- Flexibility within the project was important in its development into phase two. Investing extra time and effort enabled it to achieve a greater profile and lasting impact.

What has been difficult and why?

- Problems identifying and securing continuation funding meant a six month delay between the end of stage one and the beginning of stage two. This posed problems in terms of keeping the original group members on board and sustaining the momentum of the project.
- Overcoming the initial resistance of older members in particular to taking part in this kind of project – this led to some inconsistencies with membership at the beginning.
- Reassuring group members of the value of the work – some felt that their efforts would not make a difference or influence change. But in turn, this made others more determined to continue into the second phase and deliver workshops as widely as possible.



→Designing the materials.

Partnership and strategic impact

What other agencies do you work with?

Community safety, elected members, community partnerships, youth groups, private business, members of the public and young people, Connexions, Groundwork YMCA, schools and colleges in Darlington, and a range of voluntary and statutory sector partners.

What specific experience and expertise does your organisation/project bring to partnership work?

The community partnerships recognise the grassroots need to develop intergenerational work as a way of building cohesion within communities that are currently struggling to work together. Although they invite young people to attend, this is rarely taken up. The project therefore offered an opportunity to build relationships between young people and older people in a context equally unfamiliar to both groups. Youth workers and community development workers were able to facilitate this through their insight into the problems that both groups faced and how it they affected the community. Likewise, GOLD staff have a background of working with and supporting older members of the community and are able

to build on existing relationships with their representatives.

Has this partnership resulted in greater collaboration or increased understanding between partners?

The project has encouraged differing groups to work together to address issues that affect communities, building on existing partnership work.

Do you consider this project to be innovative? If so, how?

- It was delivered in partnership with two other organisations, but led by young people
- It opened a number of doors to develop long term projects as a result of the workshops for the local community and youth groups.
- It addressed common issues affecting the community and helped encourage wider discussion in workshops
- The DVD can be used with any age group

How do you disseminate the learning from the project?

Sharing practice is a key part of the project's objectives. The DVD and resource pack is available to borrow from all Darlington libraries. Resources are also available for downloading from the project's website. To date group members have delivered eleven presentations to schools, youth groups and community partnerships in Darlington.

Has the learning from this work influenced wider organisational/service strategies? If so, how?

A Children & Young People's Charter is currently being developed for Darlington as a result of the project

What plans do you have to sustain/develop this work?

Distribution of the resource packs and workshop presentations is ongoing. Other follow up activities include plans for a project to explore the musical heritage in Darlington from the 1950s to the present day, and developing an inter-generational network involving community partnerships, schools and voluntary sector agencies.

**Contact: Gary Arnold, Darlington Youth Service, Central House, Gladstone Street, Darlington. DL3 6JX. Tel: 01325 346452
Website: www.darlington.gov.uk/Living/intergen.htm**

SIXTY PLUS INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT

Brief description

Sixty Plus is a small independent charity supporting older people in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) to maintain their independence, dignity and choice. Its Intergenerational Project involves young volunteers in a range of activities with older people, aiming to break down barriers and prejudice between the generations by building partnerships of mutual benefit and promoting both groups' self-confidence and contributions to the community. Its core scheme provides one-to-one support in information and communication technology, reading, and English language, plus other projects. Other activities include a three-week summer drama project and smaller projects throughout the year.

Collaboration

The project recruits young volunteers through local secondary schools, colleges and youth projects. Tutors from Action for Blind People, Westway Development Trust ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) project and Open Age IT project provide training for young volunteers. The Kensington and Chelsea Community Safety Team, Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, Crime Prevention Panel and Police Community Support Officers also support the work as a way of contributing towards community cohesion. A number of London based artists, including Theatre ADAD, support the arts based work.

Funding

Task Force Trust has funded the intergenerational work since 1996 with an initial annual grant of £20,000. This has been tapered over the past five years, and a final grant of £5,000 will be made for 2008-09. The core scheme direct costs are around £40,000 p.a. The remainder comes primarily from charitable donations and one-off project funding. The local authority has contributed £6,000 per year towards running costs for the past two years. The summer drama scheme has running costs of £13,000, mainly funded by the Community Safety Team with contributions from the Crime Prevention Panel and Holland Park School. RBKC has provided small grants for other one-off arts projects.

Staffing

One full-time project coordinator.



→ Snap happy.

Nature of provision

Which groups of people does the project work with?

Sixty Plus supports around 1,800 members each year, with around 50 to 60 taking part in intergenerational projects. Most members are aged 70 to 80. Approximately two-thirds are female and around half are non-British, with some language project participants unable to read and write in their mother tongue. Most are on means tested benefits.

Volunteers are aged between 16 and 24 years, with most aged 16 to 18 and in full-time education. The project currently supports 64 young volunteers, with a maximum of 70 in any one year. Three-quarters are female, and 60 per cent are British, including around 10 per cent Black British. The remaining 40 per cent is made up of recent immigrants from a variety of backgrounds, reflecting the school population in the borough. The project also involved young people attending a local pupil support unit.

How was the need for the project identified?

The intergenerational work started with a small mosaic project in 1996. Sixty Plus recognised the value of creating partnerships which benefited both older and young people and it quickly grew into a strong community project.



→Getting to grips with technology.

How do participants become involved? What, if any, commitment do you ask for from young volunteers?

The project worker recruits older people through Sixty Plus membership and contact with local voluntary organisations. The Metropolitan Society for the Blind and Royal National Institute for the Blind refer people to the reading project. Young volunteers are recruited at the start of the academic year, and are expected to volunteer once a week throughout the year.

What are the main approaches used and activities offered?

Activities fall under two categories: the core scheme and arts-based, short or one-off projects. The core scheme provides weekly individual support to older people, mainly in their homes. This includes:

- **The Reading Project** – young volunteers are trained as readers and matched with visually impaired older people. Tasks include reading for pleasure, sorting mail and everyday administrative help.
- **Computer Project** – young volunteers coach older people in using ICT, including accessing the internet and using digital cameras or DVDs.
- **English Language Support** – English speaking young volunteers are matched with older people to provide

extra support to improve their everyday spoken English.

Projects provide opportunities for group interaction. They include an annual three-week summer drama project, 'Acting Up', involving daily workshops and culminating in a public performance by volunteers and older members at the Electric Cinema in Portobello Road. Participants use role play to explore issues such as safety on the streets, bullying, group and gang threats, friendships and building relationships. Smaller, one-off activities take place throughout the year. Past projects include a mosaic project and gardening work.

There is a strong emphasis on volunteer support to ensure that young people have a positive and rewarding experience, encouraging a lifelong commitment to volunteering. They receive induction training followed by project specific training with a qualified tutor from the field.

The worker matches volunteers with older people and accompanies them on the first visit to make sure that there is a suitable match of personalities and styles of delivery. After the initial meeting volunteers are left to arrange their own visits. If they prefer, young people may volunteer in pairs.

How are participants involved in shaping the project/programme?

The different strands of the project developed in response to needs identified by older people and their families. Participants continue to provide regular feedback to inform the project's development.

The first week of each Acting Up project consists of activities and discussion groups for the young and older participants, providing the basis for Theatre ADAD to develop the play's theme.

How does the project respond to the needs of different people, particularly the most marginalised?

Most classes are home based in order to offer services to those who are housebound or lack the confidence to go out. A range of adaptive technology such as large screen laptops, large roller ball mouse or keyboard stickers are available to assist with ICT learning. Many members of the reading project are referred shortly after being registered blind and the volunteers provide essential support as they re-adjust.

Group work is used to involve young people who do not feel able to volunteer on a one-to-one basis.

Volunteers can claim expenses for public transport fares and receive a contribution towards refreshments if sessions are longer than three hours.



→Bringing together young and old.

Outcomes of work

Does the project contribute to the five Every Child Matters outcomes for young people?

Making a positive contribution – volunteering allows young people to help meet identified needs in the community, increase self-confidence and develop positive relationships.

Enjoy and achieve – young people expand their horizons through arts and programmes which support personal and social education and citizenship.

What skills do young people gain through their involvement in the project?

Young people learn teaching skills and improve their social skills. Many benefit from developing reciprocal relationships and having someone to talk to outside their family.

What has changed for older people, organisations or the wider community as a result of the project?

Older people consistently report positive effects on their mental health and general well being from interacting with young people, learning new skills and putting them into practice. Many go on to

undertake more formal training.

In addition to individual benefits, social contact across the generations ensures that both older and younger people gain an understanding of each others' perspectives and experiences. The summer drama production provides opportunities for both groups to make valuable links with the wider community.

The project also helps schools fulfil their commitment to active citizenship; one school links volunteering to citizenship education, while another has one afternoon per week for 'enrichment in the community' work.

How are people's progress and achievements measured and recorded?

Volunteers receive certificates for training undertaken and to recognise their involvement.

Volunteers and older people are asked to record details of visits in a project diary to gauge what they achieve together. The project worker visits young people each term to discuss their placement, and asks them for feedback, including 'favourite moments' each summer. Older people are also asked to monitor the service and identify possible progression routes at the end of each academic year.

Measuring effectiveness

How is the project evaluated?

The Centre for Intergenerational Practice based at the Beth Johnson Foundation undertook a scoping and mapping exercise in May 2007. This used a framework developed to support European Approaches to Inter-Generational Lifelong Learning (Eagle) and now forms one of the national case studies in the European practice showcase.

Sixty Plus provides annual reports for the Task Force Trust to provide an overview of the work, plus reports on specific short term and one-off projects. Young volunteers won a Philip Lawrence Award for their community contribution in December 2005.

What are the findings of any evaluations to date?

As winners of the Philip Lawrence Award, the project was recognised for contributions to the community which bring out the best in young people, empower them to take the initiative and make a real difference to their lives and the lives of others.

(Capable of Greatness magazine for the Philip Lawrence Awards 2005)

What changes/developments have occurred as a result of evaluation?

The location of projects moved from community learning centres to older people's accommodation to ensure that services reached those who needed one-to-one support or who were isolated.

What has worked well and why?

- Young people providing computer coaching because it is second nature to them – they are not fazed by any of the requests for help.
- The Acting Up project gives young people a freer platform to express themselves compared to opportunities offered to them at school.

What has been difficult and why?

- Language barriers where participants do not share a common language. Volunteers' training includes advice on how to overcome this.
- Health problems relating to work with older people – the project seeks to overcome this by adopting a flexible and adaptable approach allowing individual circumstances to be taken into account.
- Adapting to working in people's homes – home visits are conducted to ensure they offer a safe environment for young people.

Partnership and strategic impact



→A performance of a lifetime.

What specific experience and expertise does your organisation bring to partnership work?

Sixty Plus has been involved with intergenerational work for over 10 years. It has extensive experience of brokering agreements and liaising with outside organisations and funders. As a result, it has built relationships with ten schools and colleges and gained a reputation for providing valuable volunteering opportunities for young people.

Has this partnership resulted in greater collaboration or increased understanding between partners?

Its relationship with some schools has resulted in them increasing their community outreach. For example, one school now regularly goes to a sheltered scheme to lead sing-alongs.

Have you experienced any particular difficulties in partnership working?

Schools and colleges work under pressure to meet targets so there is a need to make a clear case for intergenerational volunteering and ensure that schools receive regular feedback.

Intergenerational work is across 'client groups' and that can sometimes cause confusion with funders.

Do you consider this project to be innovative?

Working with young people and 'selling'



→Creating the mosaic.

the idea of community service during a very pressured time of their lives is challenging and particularly distinctive for an organisation focusing on older people's well-being. The project has shown how intergenerational contact contributes towards community cohesion.

How do you disseminate the learning from the project?

The project is a member of Age Concern's Intergenerational Network, as well as the Centre for Intergenerational Practice's networks, and its work has featured in these organisations' publications. During the past 18 months, presentations have been made to the National Council on Ageing, the Mentoring and Befriending National Conference and a joint All Parliamentary group on older people and children.

Has the learning from this work influenced wider organisational/service strategies?

Sixty Plus has opened up other services to involve young people. For example, it now approaches schools to help with large events such as its annual health fair for older people and Valentine's party.

What plans do you have to sustain/develop this work?

The project hopes to secure funds to appoint a second full-time worker to expand the arts work and create further partnerships with youth services.

Contact:
Ben Long, Sixty Plus,
1 Thorpe Close, London W10
5XL. Tel: 020 8969 9105.
Fax: 020 8969 5936.



The National Youth Agency

Getting it right for young people

Eastgate House, 19-23 Humberstone Road, Leicester LE5 3GJ.

Tel. 0116 242 7350. Fax: 0116 242 7444.

E-mail: nya@nya.org.uk

The National Youth Agency works to promote the voice, influence and choices of young people across public services and in their communities; foster young people's active involvement and volunteering; support the renewal and development of cohesive, safe, youth-friendly neighbourhoods and develop the contribution which youth work makes to the learning and achievement of young people. To find out more visit our website at www.nya.org.uk

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