

A Review of Intergenerational Practice in the UK

Dr Gillian Granville
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Beth Johnson
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looking at ageing in new ways



Centre for Intergenerational Practice

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Dr Gillian Granville was the Head of Policy and Research at The Beth Johnson Foundation at the time of this research. In September 2001 she took up the post of Project Manager at the Health Development Agency in London to manage the Department of Health's Pre-retirement Health Check pilots.

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SUMMARY

This review was commissioned by the newly created Centre for Intergenerational Practice and funded by Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales. The purpose is:

- To provide an overview of current intergenerational practice (IP) in the UK.
- To further our understanding of what constitutes good practice and examine the relationship between practice, policy and research.
- To seek to identify those issues relating to intergenerational practice that may require further debate and consideration.

The author is extremely grateful for the co-operation and support she received in constructing this document. The appendix, listing details of the projects, will provide a rich resource for people wishing to learn more about IP within the UK.

The review analyses more than 60 projects that have in common participants who are convinced of the importance of an intergenerational approach to building healthy and cohesive communities. However, the evidence base to confirm the claims made for intergenerational practice is only in its nascent stages in the UK. Without further research and evaluation it is not possible to build a conceptual framework that explains in a rigorous fashion whether IP achieves what it claims and if so, why.

This is in no way to detract from the quality and commitment of project staff and volunteers. This review clearly illustrates that intergenerational work has great potential and, perhaps most significantly, it provides a vehicle to attack the incipient ageism in our society and to recognise the mutual dependency that characterises healthy communities.

The review prompts four recommendations that will help support the development and further understanding of IP.

1. The term 'intergenerational' is in many ways a loose one. We need clarity over what the approach is and what it seeks to achieve that also recognises and values the rich diversity of approaches current within the UK.
2. There is a need for further evidence to confirm whether IP meets the claims made forcibly for it by practitioners. The approach has a high perceived value but we need to do further work to explore and understand more fully its impact.
3. Further work is necessary to understand the specific attributes of IP that are over and above those of good project management. What is different about community development work when it has an intergenerational dimension and how can this be disseminated and explained to practitioners?
4. We need to build on the emerging policy analysis to demonstrate to policy makers at all levels the potential for IP to be used as one of the mechanisms to address social exclusion and inequality.

The review will be useful for practitioners, in a range of organisations and disciplines, who wish to develop new ideas and carry out effective intergenerational practice. It seeks to illustrate to policy makers at local, regional and national level the range and potential impact of intergenerational activity. It will be a tool to begin to engage the research community in establishing a firm evidence base in the UK and examining the extent to which the claims made for intergenerational practice can be substantiated.

The Centre for Intergenerational Practice

Within the United Kingdom there has been an increasing recognition of the need to systematically promote the development and understanding of intergenerational practice. In response to this and after a two-year consultation process, The Beth Johnson Foundation formally established the Centre for Intergenerational Practice in April 2001. With initial funding from the Community Fund and the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, the Centre plans to support those interested in intergenerational work, collect evidence of the benefits of IP, and influence decision-makers to appreciate the potential of intergenerational approaches in addressing social issues. This Review is part of that process. The Centre will also hold seminars, build a network of those interested in IP, provide consultancy information, support demonstration projects and foster links with others involved in intergenerational practice internationally.

CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

The social context

The demographic profile within the United Kingdom shows a number of consistent and marked trends. People are living increasingly longer, the birth rate is showing a steady decline, and the mean age is increasing steadily – so the number of older people is increasing at the same time as the number of the young is reducing.

Demographic projections

In 1996 there were 9.25 million people over the age of 65. This is projected to increase to 12 million by 2021 and to 14.6 million by 2061. Life expectancy is predicted to increase from 74.3 years in 1996 to 79.5 years by 2021 for men, and from 79.5 years in 1996 to 82.6 years by 2021 for women. By the middle of the next century the number of people aged over 75 will have doubled and the number aged over 90 will have more than tripled. At the same time the number of young people aged under 16 is projected to fall steadily from 12 million in 1996 to just over 10 million in 2061.

This major shift in age has occurred at a time when a number of factors have been contributing to the ongoing debate within the UK as to the nature of its future social structures and policies.

Economic and social shifts

Economically the UK has been forced to redefine itself as its traditional heavy industries have contracted massively, leading to high unemployment and changes in work practice and security. This has been accompanied by a significant change in the role of women in the workplace.

Traditional family structures have been eroded and children have an increased possibility of being born into single parent families with a raised probability of experiencing poverty. Concerns are being expressed about the effectiveness of the educational system in preparing young people for citizenship, and there is a belief that traditional community structures have been weakened, leading to a breakdown in positive contact between social groupings, particularly the young and the old.

A significant proportion of young people, particularly young men, are growing up disaffected from society. The tradition of the Welfare State in the UK has also been significantly reviewed because of economic and demographic factors, and older people are still too often described in terms of deficit, burden and need, with no recognition of the increased health and vitality that many now enjoy. Against this background of concern, government and other bodies are seeking ways to revitalise communities, and recognising Social Policy as a major vehicle to underpin this.

Potential benefits of intergenerational practice

There has been, within the UK, a tradition of the young learning from the old in their role as respected elders or through structures such as apprenticeship schemes and trade guilds, but this is now much reduced. There is a strong recognition of the potential for the old to benefit the young and for the need to rebuild bridges and contact between the generations. However, the conceptual understanding of why this is important, how it operates and what it can achieve is still in its infancy.

This development of understanding has, however, been fortunate in being fuelled by work elsewhere in the world, particularly America and Europe. In recent years a considerable amount

of intergenerational activity has been undertaken and a feature of this is that projects are now attempting to evaluate and disseminate their findings to a wider audience. However, university research departments are only just beginning to recognise this as a field of study and one that does not tidily fit to the traditional sectoral approach of both universities and government.

Volunteering programmes

A major factor for the development of many intergenerational programmes has been the increasing recognition of the need to develop volunteering opportunities for older people, both to strengthen current social provision and in recognition of the value to older people and their communities of them being engaged in life-long learning processes.

A wide range of programmes now exists within the UK. It must, however, be noted at this point that bringing young and old together does not automatically result in positive and beneficial exchange. If not properly facilitated and planned, activities may confirm or exacerbate prejudice. Furthermore, the term 'intergenerational' does not yet have a common agreed definition within the UK and interpretations vary.

Body of evidence

The systematic understanding and appraisal of IP in the UK is at its early beginnings. A number of evaluations and reports have, however, already been published and some of these are referenced in the Bibliography. Emerging from this early work is a body of evidence that demonstrates both the actual and potential value of IP in promoting benefit for the young, the old and their wider communities.

Within the UK perhaps the most significant implication has been the emerging potential for adapting and using IP as a model for community action and community development. IP is not being consistently delivered across the UK at present and its accessibility is consequently restricted to those areas where projects and initiatives currently exist. Where projects do exist, the greatest benefit demonstrated to date has been to release the potential of older people to contribute positively to their community and at the same time to meet their own needs for a valued role and identity.

The development of intergenerational programmes in the UK

The need to find ways to re-engage the generations has received greater attention in the last decade as an increasing awareness has emerged of the potentially negative impact on society of the widespread separation. The European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations in 1993 provided a catalyst for a range of intergenerational initiatives, and drew the attention of a wider audience to the value of the approach. Publications produced in the mid-1990s (Maureen O'Connor 1993, David Hobman 1993, Volunteer Development Scotland 1997, Chris Jones 1996) raised the profile of intergenerational work in the UK, tracing its development and raising a number of important issues.

Intergenerational work in Scotland

Research by Volunteer Development Scotland was undertaken in 1996 because of concern that there were limited opportunities for older people in Scotland to work with young people. A mapping exercise was carried out over a four-month period, with the focus being on intergenerational volunteering. The report reached these conclusions:

- Schools were most likely to engage with the older generation in activities where the pupils served older people.

- There was little evidence of older people pro-actively volunteering in schools, or of older people's groups promoting intergenerational contacts.
- Intergenerational volunteering did exist in a number of different contexts in Scotland, such as befriending organisations, youth and pre-school groups, and educational support; however, most of the activities in Scotland are small-scale, local, self-initiated and designed to meet local needs.

The report recommended the promotion of a wider recognition of the benefits of purposeful intergenerational activities as a means of promoting social cohesion and combating negative age stereotypes. This would require a public policy commitment to support intergenerational work.

Millennium initiatives

Many of the programmes established as a consequence of the 1993 events had a finite lifetime. However, the approach of the millennium rekindled interest in intergenerational relationships. In 1999, the UK programme for the United Nation's International Year of Older Persons had 'Generations Together' as one of its four themes. In 2000, Age Concern, as a result of its millennium initiative, 'Debate of the Age', produced the Agenda for the Age, with this as one of its principles:

"With the ageing of the population a much greater level of understanding is important if we are to achieve harmony and balance within society. For this reason more intergenerational programmes in education, work, volunteering and care must be developed as a matter of urgency" (2000:5).

In January 2001, one of the recommendations from the Better Government for Older People programme was:

"Recommendation 18: We call on the government and the devolved administrators to do more to recognise the significant contribution that older volunteers make and to develop older people's volunteering, *including intergenerational initiatives*, to encourage a wider range of older people to take part" (2001:43) [italics added].

The Government's response was to reiterate its commitment to volunteering by older people, although the response stopped short of mentioning intergenerational work.

One of the interesting observations of this historical overview is that the drive in intergenerational initiatives in the UK has come largely from the perspective of older people and older people's organisations, rather than from the vantage point of the younger generation.

These observations are in no way to underestimate the wide range of intergenerational work occurring across the UK and, indeed, around the world. America has a tradition of intergenerational programmes that stretches back more than twenty years and most of the literature available is based on American work. One of the great difficulties facing proponents of intergenerational practice in the UK has been the lack of written evaluations or of cohesive frameworks to bring partners together to share learning and to recognise each other's contributions and expertise. It is hoped, therefore, that this review will begin to facilitate the process in the UK.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

In this chapter a clarification of the terms used is followed by a description of the process undertaken to collect and analyse the information. The chapter finishes with a summary of the features of IP that emerged and the implications for effective practice.

Terminology

Throughout this report, 'older generation' refers to people in midlife and beyond, which, for the purpose of this review, is considered to be over the age of 50. The 'younger generation' refers to young people from birth to 25. Part of the rationale for this is that a number of the Government employment schemes and welfare benefits change at 25. The 'middle generation' is defined as the adult population between the younger and older generations, who characteristically will be in or seeking employment, and may have responsibilities for child care.

The term 'intergenerational' is in many ways a loose one: in the projects studied for this report, the term was interpreted in various ways, and this is one of the issues presented for discussion in Chapter Four.

The terms intergenerational 'practice', 'initiatives', 'projects', and 'activities' are used interchangeably in the text to describe the practical application of intergenerational ideas.

The process of collecting the information

The time frame for the review was just six months. This meant it was important to be clear about what could be achieved in that time, and what was not possible or necessarily appropriate. It was not intended as a comprehensive mapping exercise of all the intergenerational activity that was taking place in the UK. Instead, it sought to show the wide variety of initiatives that have been developed and the potential impact they can make in a number of different areas.

Furthermore, it was not structured as a literature review of UK intergenerational practice, because, whilst there are a number of excellent evaluation reports, one of the features of intergenerational practice is that it has not stimulated enough interest in the UK research community to establish a firm knowledge base. Whilst there is a considerable body of evidence from North America, it is important that the UK establishes its own evidence in order to understand what works for Britain. This is particularly important, as it cannot be assumed that American experiences are necessarily culturally transferable.

Combination of approaches

Characteristically, intergenerational practice is interdisciplinary, bringing together a number of different agencies and professional groups. These may include health and social services, independent providers of care services, education, childcare and youth organisations, regeneration, voluntary sector and small community groups. As it was not possible to comprehensively search all these areas, it was decided to use a combination of approaches to gather the information from a wide range of organisations.

- The Beth Johnson Foundation has been involved with intergenerational work for a number of years, and worked in consultation with other projects and organisations to develop the lottery bid to fund the Centre for Intergenerational Practice. The networks and contacts established through this process were invaluable in providing information and further contacts.

- Requests for information on intergenerational programmes, using the definition drawn up in Dortmund by a group of international experts in 1999¹, was placed in a range of journals and publications. These included *New Start*, *Community Care*, *Youth Action*, *NAPA* (National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People), and Age Concern England's *Bulletin*.
- A 'snowballing' approach was used, asking all respondents if they knew of any other intergenerational work, and then following up any contacts that were identified.
- Major funding bodies, such as the Regional Arts Lottery Programme, Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales and UK National Lottery Charities Board (now known as the Community Fund), were asked for the details of any intergenerational projects that had been given funding.
- Older people's organisations, such as Age Concern England and Help the Aged, and youth organisations, such as the National Youth Agency and Barnardos, were approached for information.
- A representative sample of paid professional staff who manage intergenerational work was interviewed.
- The process of advertising and snowballing led to several practitioners becoming interested in the work. Extended telephone calls were held to ascertain their views and expectations of intergenerational programmes.
- Project reports and evaluations were analysed and, where necessary, telephone calls made to contacts to gain a more detailed understanding of their work.
- A range of databases was explored, such as those of ARVAC (Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector) and the Institute for Volunteering Research. In addition the internet was searched extensively. Reflecting the perception that little has been written to date in the UK, these produced very little information specific to the UK.
- An extensive search was made during the period of the review of publications and books for references to intergenerational activity.

As a consequence of these processes, dozens of individuals and organisations provided information for this review – a list of their names and contact details follows the Bibliography. The projects themselves are listed in the Appendix, in alphabetical order.

Strengths of the method used

Firstly, individuals and organisations interpreted the definition that was used to request information on projects in a number of different ways. This reflected, in part, the diversity of experiences that had led to their initial involvement in programmes.

¹ "Intergenerational programmes are vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for individual and social benefits".

In fact this proved positive for the review as it challenged the definition and highlighted the fact that intergenerational work is often an aspect of other approaches. In particular many of the programmes analysed could have been characterised as community development. What was different in them compared with many more typical community development programmes was the recognition of the need to engage both young and old people to achieve effective change.

Secondly, much of the intergenerational work that has happened in the UK has not been formally written up or recorded. This reflects the way in which many projects have been established in response to a perceived local need and often with restricted funding. As a consequence much excellent work may have been lost. The review was able to track a significant surge of activity after 1993, much of which subsequently faded away, often leaving no written records.

This problem has been exacerbated by some funding bodies in the past, who may have seen intergenerational work as 'nice' but peripheral, rather than as a potential agent for addressing significant social issues. These factors restricted the type and format of written information available, while a more creative approach to the analysis was required, using a range of other materials, such as videos of drama and conference events, photographs, posters, artwork, exhibitions, audiotapes and the emerging use of the internet as an interactive medium.

Thirdly, the 'snowballing' method is useful for rooting out pieces of work which might have been missed by more targeted methods. This proved to be the case. There were some excellent examples of hidden projects serving a local community that had developed almost by accident or from a pragmatic idea to address a particular local issue.

Limitations of the approach

The limitation of snowball sampling is that it is possible to be sidetracked in one direction and collect a lot of information on a similar approach, or from limited geographical areas. We were aware of these potential biases, seeking to balance the following up of requests whilst looking for leads in other directions.

Using journals to request information means that there is no control over whether a journal will run the article, and no guarantee that people will respond. There was an excellent response from arts based organisations, but it is difficult to know whether they use intergenerational initiatives more, or whether they were simply more enthusiastic about the request.

Intergenerational practice, by its very nature, often happens incidentally, or as part of another initiative. Similarly, projects ranged in scale from small, one-off events to complex activities ranging over months and a few that were an ongoing part of an organisation's core activity. This meant that it was not considered appropriate to compare different projects, but instead our aim was to identify the factors that contributed to success.

The practical findings of the review

More than 60 examples of intergenerational initiatives are listed in the Appendix. These cover many different models of approach, providing a rich source of information. This enabled a comprehensive overview of intergenerational activity in the UK to be undertaken. The sample includes umbrella organisations, such as Age Concern, Age Resource and Sixty Plus, that have an intergenerational strand to their activities. There are intergenerational

programmes which carry out a number of intergenerational projects, such as Bridging the Gap and Magic Me, and there are individual activities such as Art Generations in Northern Ireland and the Gardening Project in Hereford. The examples also included an intergenerational network and other generic networks that have 'intergenerational activity' as one of their core functions.

Key features of projects

These have been drawn out because they were:

- Common to a significant number of the projects analysed.
- Seen as important to participating organisations and individuals.
- Identified as factors that contributed to successful projects.

Sound project planning and management

Successful intergenerational programmes demonstrated the same rigour and adherence to accepted principles of good practice as would be demonstrated by any effective community programme. In particular, those programmes that achieved greatest impact clearly identified why they wanted to establish an intergenerational programme and what they intended it to achieve for all participants.

Partnership working

A strong feature across all projects was the importance of partnership to effective intergenerational programmes. By their nature intergenerational programmes are intersectoral and place value on the contribution of all key participating groups. An underlying assumption about intergenerational work from the vast majority of projects was that it would achieve benefit and change for both young and old participants. Where this assumption was not present, projects could be more accurately described as volunteering with some coincidental broader benefits.

The presence of champions

A clear feature of the intergenerational programmes analysed was their power to generate enthusiasm and commitment amongst individuals who have been involved in this particular style of working. Whilst the written evidence base may be limited within the UK, this does not stop people becoming champions of the approach as a consequence of experience.

Developing the capacity of communities

Intergenerational work, by developing the competence, confidence and status of young and old people, was observed to make a significant contribution to developing the capacity and cohesion of communities. Young and old people are the groups who spend the most time within their communities and so programmes that promote positive engagement can have a considerable impact. This fits the government agenda for active communities, as well as supporting the regeneration of deprived areas. Many of the projects were receiving funding from policy initiatives such as Health Action Zones, Neighbourhood Renewal Funds and volunteering schemes.

Promoting social inclusion

Intergenerational activities can be a tool to bring together marginalised groups who experience discrimination and prejudice, and to change attitudes in the process. The review found, for example, projects which addressed racial tension and developed cultural

understanding. Others were working with young people who had difficulties at schools, and many were working with older people in care homes.

Benefits to participants

Fundamental to this work is that projects reported clear gains in well-being, confidence and understanding for both young and old participants. Typically a number of projects involved older people volunteering to work with young people who were experiencing some form of difficulty. Whilst the young people clearly experienced benefit, the impact was often just as significant for the older volunteer.

Preparing the generations

Projects that invested time and thought in initial preparation before bringing groups of young and old people together were more likely to achieve a successful integration and development of positive relationships.

Reinforcing stereotypes

Not all intergenerational programmes are necessarily positive in their outcomes. It was clear that, whilst intergenerational initiatives have significant potential to create positive change, the extent to which this can take place depends on good practice. Potentially, there are intergenerational activities that, because insufficient attention has been given to the process, may actually have a negative impact and reinforce the very issues they are seeking to address. Similarly, there are some projects that had the potential to address complex issues, but are under-developed in their approach and will not therefore achieve the desired outcomes.

The need for an evidence base

A negative feature identified in the findings was that intergenerational practice relies too much on anecdotal evidence or on evaluating a specific outcome, rather than on the impact of the intervention. There are many assumptions about intergenerational practice that need to be tested.

Definition of 'intergenerational'

Whilst a working definition can be adopted to broadly define what is meant by intergenerational, the word clearly had different meanings for different groups. The commonality was the involvement of the young and old. However, some programmes included biologically connected participants, whilst others specifically excluded these. Similarly the role of the middle generation was given very different emphasis by different projects.

Through analysing the practice examples, the review identified a number of components that appeared to be necessary in order for practice to be effective.

Guidance for practice

- When a project is set up, it is essential that participants are clear about what the programme intends to achieve for the young and old participants. All the programmes analysed were based on the concept of mutual benefit.
- Thorough project management needs to be applied to all intergenerational activity, consisting of clear objectives, target setting, monitoring and evaluation. In this intergenerational programmes are no different from any other project.

- All intergenerational initiatives require careful planning and preparation, involving all the different agencies that are to be engaged in the particular programme.
- In projects where the older and younger generations are brought together for greater understanding, preparation ideally needs to be carried out with the generations separately and clear ground rules established.
- Preparation is essential with other partners who may be indirectly involved in the work, such as care staff in residential homes, and classroom teachers, in order that they support the initiative and understand its aims.
- The role of the generation in-between needs to be clear. In intergenerational work, this is a facilitating function that brings the generations together in meaningful activity. If the purpose of the project is multigenerational, then the needs and aims of each generation need to be considered.
- All projects should be evaluated, both in terms of the process undertaken and of the impact of the intervention.

In summary, much of the intergenerational practice observed was based, albeit unwittingly in some cases, on the principles of good project management and community development. There are still, however, areas that require greater clarity and understanding. This review presents the opportunity to open a wide-ranging debate on these issues, and these are considered further in the concluding chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The analysis was carried out by examining the evidence and information obtained and then seeking to draw out features and characteristics to enable a set of general conclusions to be established. In this way, the analysis was grounded in practice, rather than attempting to fit practice into a pre-determined theoretical framework. The experience of practice and practitioners can inform the development of intergenerational activity, and help to set the policy and research agendas.

This being said, intergenerational practice takes place within a social context. The analysis could have been in a number of context areas, including health improvement, community development or reduction in crime, but in this study the context adopted is the current policy framework. The reasons for this include:

- To demonstrate the importance of linking policy and practice, and how one should inform the other, rather than the two taking place in isolation.
- To enable funding links to be made with local and national policy initiatives, such as Neighbourhood Renewal or Sure Start.
- To examine the relevance of intergenerational practice to current policy drivers.
- To look at the scope for intergenerational activities to address complex social issues.
- To encompass the wide range and application of intergenerational projects, rather than narrow them down into one discipline such as health and social care.
- To serve as a way to engage the research community in developing an evidence base which can further inform practice and policy.

Building social capital

The Government has identified four priorities to support its Modernisation Agenda. These focus on developing the capacity of individuals and groups in communities to improve their quality of life, through building social capital. Putnam (1993) describes social capital as the features of social organisation which work to improve the health, wealth and industry of the community. He suggests four characteristics of social capital:

- The existence of community networks
- Civic participation (participation in these community networks)
- Local identity and a sense of solidarity and equality with other community members
- Norms of trust and reciprocal help and support.

Communities where all the members are engaged in activities that support each other are considered to be high in social capital. It is a term that can explain the levels of networking, support and feelings of trust that exist in all communities.

The four government priorities are:

- Active communities
- Regeneration and neighbourhood renewal
- Citizenship
- Social exclusion.

An overview of the review findings indicates that intergenerational projects are addressing these themes in a wide range of ways. This chapter now explores the four areas in more detail and examines how intergenerational practice is delivering this policy agenda.

Active communities

A community that is rich in social capital requires individuals and groups to be actively engaged in a range of activities that support its members. It also requires social networks, support and feeling of trust, and a sense of solidarity with other community members. One of the ways to achieve this is through volunteering activity. The Government, as part of its Active Community Strategy to promote voluntary and community activity, developed the Active Community Unit, formerly the Voluntary and Community Unit, to oversee this strategy, and launched a number of new initiatives to stimulate interest in volunteering. This is an illustration of how policy can influence practice development.

The Active Community Unit (ACU)

The Active Community Unit within the Home Office aims to promote voluntary and community activity, and to support a healthy and cost-effective voluntary sector. It has produced a number of reports about active communities, including *Giving Time*, *Getting Involved: A Strategy Report by the Working Group on Active Communities* (1999a), and *Lifelong Action: A Guide to Recruiting and Retaining Older Volunteers* (1999b).

In January 1999, the ACU funded 23 projects as part of the Older Volunteers Initiative, and established a Community Resource Fund and a Family Support grant programme. In January 2001, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced additional money for mentoring schemes over the next three years. As part of this mentoring programme the ACU intends to fund three new voluntary sector 'Mentoring Points', to make it easier to bring volunteer mentors and mentoring opportunities together. Mentoring is considered here in more detail, because it has become a significant vehicle for delivering the Government's priorities, and is an example of where practice has influenced policy development.

Mentoring

There has been a substantial growth in mentoring during the last ten years and it is now prominent on the policy agenda in Britain. The mentor, defined as someone who provides an enabling relationship which facilitates another's personal growth and development (Morton-Cooper and Palmer 1993), is regarded as a versatile and valuable resource who can offer benefits in a range of areas, including the means to address social issues (Golden and Sims 1999). Increasingly mentoring is being used to assist the delivery of policies aimed at helping young people to realise their potential.

The National Mentoring Network, established in 1994, has enhanced the profile and practice of mentoring, and the Mentoring Fund is making more than £1 million available to the Network over a three-year period. The aim is to support the creation of a mentoring infrastructure that will help mentoring organisations to meet minimum standards.

Mentoring provides significant examples of practice influencing policy formation. The work of Salford Education Business Partnership's Generations in Action and the Beth Johnson Foundation's Year 7 Intergenerational Mentoring Project, where older people have been recruited as volunteer mentors, demonstrate how intergenerational practice, using older people as a community resource, can support young people. Through involvement in the National Mentoring Network and consequently the Active Community Unit, intergenerational mentoring practice has been noticed, and in the Mentoring Fund 'intergenerational mentoring' has now been named as one of the five priority areas.

Active communities through intergenerational practice

There were several projects which demonstrated that they were engaging the community and building social capital. Out of the Landscape, based in Chop Gate in the Yorkshire Dales, is an interesting example of how a rural community identified for itself the need to connect the generations, in order that young people could understand from the village elders the traditions and significance of their community. The village school was closing and people feared that, without interest from the younger generation, the village would lose its identity.

The Black History Poster Project, which was not intended as an intergenerational project, found that many of the heroes and heroines that the young people identified in the community as important in their lives were in fact older people. This surprised the facilitators and stimulated further ideas on developing intergenerational initiatives.

Getting On in Camden began as a Local Authority Older People's Project which, through listening to older people, identified 'vulnerability' as being about social isolation. Older people wanted to be more actively involved in their communities, and intergenerational programmes are a way to build solidarity and develop new social networks, such as between the local school and the pensioners group.

Country Reminiscence was a community arts project that aimed to strengthen community relations across generations in Cornwall by encouraging feelings of solidarity. A Little Acorn in Salford is an example of a Housing Association that has developed a range of projects to improve trust between the younger and older members.

Some projects focused on recruiting older volunteers to support young people, in order to demonstrate how helping other groups in the community can help us to understand each other's needs and create a more caring environment for everyone to live in. Examples include Age Concern England's TransAge Action programme, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme in schools throughout Britain, Interger in Salford and the Age Concern Kingston upon Thames Community Concern project.

Millennium Volunteers

This UK-wide initiative is one of two government schemes that were launched as part of the Government's Active Communities Strategy, to promote volunteering. Launched by the Government in 1999, it is aimed at 16- to 24-year-olds who want to make a contribution

to their communities, whilst gaining experience and learning new skills. More than 15,000 young people are taking part and using their interests to match volunteering opportunities. After 100 hours' service they receive a Certificate of Achievement, and after 200 hours they receive the Award of Excellence.

An evaluation of the Millennium Volunteers (MV) scheme, undertaken by the Institute for Volunteering Research and due to make a final report in December 2001, found that intergenerational exchanges were often coincidental to the actual volunteering activity. The main area, reported anecdotally, was where young volunteers were working alongside older volunteers or staff, with the effect of developing more understanding of the needs of each generation. Similarly, in a number of projects a range of stakeholders, including MV project staff, partner organisations and older members from the community, discussed how they now regarded young people in a more positive light after working with them, or witnessing their work through the initiative.

Sixty Plus is an example of an older people's organisation that has Millennium Volunteers working on intergenerational projects. This addresses the government's wish to increase volunteering by young people through developing a sense of responsibility to other groups in the community, of which older people are one. They read to older people with sight loss, and teach English to non-English-speaking older adults.

The Experience Corps

The Prime Minister announced at the Active Community Convention in March 2000 that he wanted to challenge Britain's older citizens to become more involved in their communities. He announced the Government's intention to support an 'experience corps' across the country that would support and mobilise opportunities for people over 50 years old to volunteer to help their local communities. In March 2001, the Prime Minister made a further announcement to the Faith in Politics Conference.

'The Company', as the Experience Corps is known, is chaired by Baroness Sally Greengross, and will build on work already done in the voluntary sector for volunteers aged over 50 years, such as the Older Volunteers Initiative. It is inevitable that this will stimulate new initiatives with an intergenerational focus.

Age Concern Millennium Awards

The aim of these grants has been to assist communities to mark the end of the second millennium and celebrate the start of the third. The scheme was set up in 1998 by Age Concern with money from the Millennium Commission, one of the good causes supported by the National Lottery, and £1,935,000 has been allocated throughout the UK over a three-year period. Grants of between £2,000 and £4,000 are offered to people aged over 50, to enable them to use their talents for the benefit of younger people. It seeks to combine the skills and experience of older people with the enthusiasm and ambitions of those who are younger. This initiative enables individuals or groups to run projects throughout the UK for the benefit of the young people aged under 25, and has helped older people to volunteer for the benefit of young people in their community.

Gordon Carruthers from the Wales Pensioners Assembly is an example of an individual winner who used the funding to bring the young and old together to explore their shared responsibility to engage in the democratic process.

The Ragged School Museum in London received a Millennium Award for its volunteer guide scheme, which uses the experiences of older people to help children understand their local community. Age Concern is planning a similar intergenerational award scheme when the Millennium Commission funding runs out in 2001.

This initiative has undoubtedly stimulated a growth in intergenerational activity, particularly in the Age Concern movement. Examples are Age Concern Cymru, where there is a wide range of intergenerational projects, and Age Concern Northern Ireland. One in particular, Building Bridges 2001, is an excellent example of how intergenerational practice can build social capital. Through a programme of activities around the theme of 'Care in the Environment', two separate generations in the community worked together for the benefit of everyone, and in the process developed a sense of solidarity and equality with each other and formed new social networks.

Summary

This section illustrates how intergenerational practice can address the Government's priority to have more active, engaged communities where all its members have a role to play. A number of policy initiatives have stimulated an increase in intergenerational activity, and it is interesting to recognise that the majority of these concern older volunteers as a community resource to support young people. The main Government driver to increase volunteering amongst younger people, the Millennium Volunteers, appears to have had greater emphasis on peer work than on intergenerational initiatives.

Regeneration and neighbourhood renewal

Regeneration describes the process of renewal which is carried out through policies, programmes and projects aimed at areas which have experienced industrial decline and/or multiple disadvantage (Fitzpatrick, Hastings and Kintrea 1998). These areas may range from inner-city enclaves and self-contained housing estates to whole towns and cities. More recently, the Government has acknowledged that rural areas also need regeneration. The concept of regeneration recognises that economic and social problems are intertwined and that regeneration will not be sustainable unless both aspects are tackled.

Government regeneration efforts can be broadly defined as Area Based Initiatives, mainly introduced by the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) and its precursors since about 1990. Early initiatives such as City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund (SRB) placed a stronger emphasis on comprehensive regeneration through partnership working.

Area-based initiatives

An example of an area-based initiative is New Deal for Communities which is targeting substantial resources at deprived neighbourhoods to achieve improvements in health, crime and education. Other government departments have also introduced local area initiatives such as Employment Zones, Education Action Zones, Health Action Zones and Sure Start.

A strong focus of the regeneration policies has been the need to involve local people in shaping the types of services provided in that community or neighbourhood. There is acknowledgement that investing in the people in those areas means that schemes are more likely to be effective and bring sustainable change.

A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation into young people's involvement in urban regeneration (Fitzpatrick, Hastings and Kintrea 1998) found that young people's expressed needs and concerns were being addressed only partially by regeneration initiatives. They suggested that there should be: "a greater emphasis on improving young people's relationship with adults living in the locality and, therefore, more projects designed to create intergenerational understanding" (1998:36).

Art Generations is an example of a project that worked across the generations to rebuild a deprived community in East Belfast. It is also an example of where a multigenerational approach was adopted in order to engage with all sections of a community, which was low in social capital. A range of creative activities was used to bring the generations together to help them understand each other's needs, and to develop mutual trust. The project manager was very clear that a high level of communication skills and facilitation was required by the artists to achieve this desired outcome of rebuilding a community through the interaction of the generations.

Environmental regeneration

Surprisingly few intergenerational activities were identified that used environmental regeneration as a medium to engage the generations. Groundwork is a leading environmental regeneration charity that seeks to make sustainable developments in the UK's poorest neighbourhoods, and has a focus on involving young people. It is now beginning to recognise that it may be able to address this policy issue through using the experience and availability of older people to support young people.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers did not have any planned intergenerational activities, although there is clearly scope within environmental regeneration to adopt an intergenerational approach. The Gardening Project in Hereford was an example where a wildlife garden was created between young people from the local school, using the knowledge and experience of older people at the local Day Centre.

Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

Before moving on to consider other examples, it is worthwhile considering the latest policy driver from the Government which is shaping the future of area-based initiatives and has particular relevance for the development of intergenerational programmes. In January 2001, the Prime Minister launched *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan* (Social Exclusion Unit 2001). This action plan followed extensive consultation on the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, produced by the Social Exclusion Unit in April 2000.

The Strategy was developed through the work of 18 policy action teams who made a total of 569 recommendations.

The Action Plan has two long-term goals:

- In all the poorest neighbourhoods, to have common goals of lower unemployment and crime, and better health, skills, housing and physical environment.
- To narrow the gap according to these measures between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

Key to the implementation of the Action Plan is the formation of Local Strategic Partnerships, which are described as a single body that brings together, at local level, the different parts of the public sector as well as private, voluntary and community sectors. The government has acknowledged that the different area-based regeneration initiatives need to be co-ordinated, and to support rather than contradict each other. Getting On in Camden is an example of how a Local Authority, at a strategic level, recognised that enabling meaningful contact between the older and younger generations, so they understood each other better, is important to their Community Plans.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, which became operational from April 2001, is based in the DTLR and is responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan, and policies targeted at neighbourhoods. The Government is supporting 88 of the most deprived local authority districts with an £800 million Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, and £45 million in Neighbourhood Management pathfinder schemes. Further funding will be available through the Community Empowerment Fund to facilitate involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships, and small grant schemes through Community Chests.

Conflict resolution

While this review was being compiled, there were several projects that were directly involved in regenerating their communities through involving the older and younger generations. For example, Teenagers, War and Museums in Manchester is addressing the conflict between young and old people in an area of deprivation, by bringing them together to share and understand each other's contribution to the community. Conflict and misplaced perceptions of the older and younger generations appears to be a particular issue in areas that already have multiple problems. This may be compounded by the fact that these two generations spend more time in their local neighbourhood, and are more affected by the local environment.

Regeneration and neighbourhood renewal requires members of a community to invest their time and efforts to rebuild the area and create a feeling of safety and security. Generation X on the Ely estate in South Wales was set up in direct response to apprehension and fear by the older people towards the local young people. The area has high unemployment, violent gangs and intergenerational tension, and many of the residents were looking for answers to these problems. Generation X worked with the experiences common to children, young people and those aged over 50 years and, through the medium of puppetry and performance, confronted the prejudices between older and younger people. This allowed them to understand each other better and see the benefits to their local community of reducing fear and tension for all.

LifeLink, in North Tyneside, is another example of an intergenerational project that was funded to address regeneration issues through lessening the fear of crime in older people. It did this through a range of intergenerational initiatives, some of which were more successful than others.

Summary

These examples illustrate the potential of intergenerational programmes to deliver aspects of the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, and suggest a real opportunity, through membership of the Local Strategic Partnerships and available funding sources, to find new solutions to established problems. At a policy level, improving communities and narrowing the gap between rich and poor is central to the Government's

reforms. The evidence in this section suggests that structured approaches to bringing the old and young generations together to resolve conflict and disillusionment between them can make a significant contribution to that vision.

Citizenship

Citizenship can be understood in two ways:

- Grounded in democracy and civil rights in a society whose choices are based on private preferences, the aggregation of which produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number.
- Members of a community with shared traditions bound to each other by ties of mutual obligation and common purposes (Crewe 1997:4).

Since the early 1990s, there has been a growing interest in the concept of citizenship as a means of creating a more inclusive society. This has come about because of an increasing concern in a society that was promoting self-interest and experiencing a decline in class solidarity and mutual self-help (Crewe 1997). The current Government's strategy is to empower individuals and local communities to become involved in shaping their own future, through creating interdependence and a caring society for all its members.

A striking example of participation in democracy is found in Gordon Carruthers' initiative with the Wales Pensioners Assembly. Mr Carruthers wanted to involve young people in campaigning for a better future for the older population because it would also benefit the younger people when they reach old age. He successfully campaigned to have youth organisations as equal partners in the City and County of Swansea Wales Pensioners Forum. The organisation has now adopted the slogan "Wales Pensioners Assembly for Pensioners and Future Pensioners". It promotes citizenship by showing the younger generation how to use the democratic system and make themselves effective in public life.

Links can be seen with the themes of active communities and regenerating deprived communities. In particular, volunteering is widely acknowledged to be an expression of citizenship. However citizenship and volunteering, though interrelated, are two distinct concepts and rest on different value bases, with not all active citizens engaging in voluntary work.

Citizenship education

Citizenship education is now part of the National Curriculum in primary schools, in the Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship framework, and will be a compulsory subject from September 2002 in secondary schools. It has three strands:

- Social and moral responsibility: pupils learn self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour, both in and beyond the classroom, towards those in authority and each other.
- Community involvement: pupils learn how to become helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their neighbourhood and communities through community involvement and service as well as in the classroom.

- Political literacy: pupils learn about the institutions, issues, problems and practices of our democracy and how citizens can make themselves effective in public life, locally, regionally, and nationally, through skills as well as knowledge.

The drive for citizenship education is aimed at young people and it is possible to see links between this and intergenerational activities. Older people can act as role models for young people in their communities, as well as participating in schools to support young people's learning. Intergen is one example of older people, with a lifetime of skills and experience, contributing in an active way to the education of young people.

Many of the community projects mentioned in the active communities and regeneration sections, such as Lifelink and Sixty Plus, could be examples of promoting citizenship through community involvement and mutual obligation between older and younger people.

Intergenerational learning

Intergenerational learning can be defined as: "the bringing together of younger and older people to share experiences and learn from them, creating change in how each generation perceives the other" (Tench, undated). It is about the generations learning from each other, rather than from a classroom teacher. They are equal partners in learning, through learning together and from each other. A recent training manual from the Community Education Development Centre (2000), *Inter-generational Learning*, asserts that it is an excellent way for young people to learn. The perspectives of older people can bring to life some aspects of the school curriculum, and the process helps to build solidarity between the generations.

Bridging the Gap in North Tyneside is an established intergenerational learning programme which uses the experiences of older people as a resource to young people's learning. In particular, it uses a method called 'Storyline' as an active participation tool in the classroom. Bridging the Gap is currently piloting a working pack on issues of ageing and ageism for teachers to deliver to young people. This addresses citizenship and intergenerational learning by involving pupils in the life and concerns of their neighbourhood.

Help the Aged Schools Programme is an interactive web site about ageing, with resources for teachers to use with children aged 7 to 11.

Project 16 in Oxfordshire was an intergenerational learning project which explored the experience of being 16 years old for both generations, and showed learning outcomes for both. The information collected was translated into A-level curriculum work in photography/art, drama and English, and into Information and Communication Technology for the older generation.

Sixty Plus's computer project creates younger and older learning partnerships and in the process each generation learns more about the other.

Reminiscence is another tool that has been used to promote intergenerational learning. It focuses on showing the value of older people and living memory as a primary teaching resource for delivering the National Curriculum. The Age Exchange Theatre Trust has produced some interesting and creative work using drama and improvisation, on topics such as evacuation in the Second World War. The Museums Reminiscence Network and The Living Memory Association in Edinburgh both list 'intergenerational' as a theme in

their activities. The Ragged School Museum contributes to the National Curriculum through its older volunteer guides, as did the Teenagers, War and Museums project.

Summary

This section shows how intergenerational practice can support citizenship education in young people through involving them in the life and concerns of older people in their community. Similarly, intergenerational learning can occur through using the living memories of older people to contribute to the National Curriculum in a number of subject areas.

Social exclusion

In some ways, the other three policy themes of active communities, regeneration and citizenship are ways that social exclusion can be addressed, but for clarity this section looks at individuals and groups that are marginalised in our society primarily for reasons of their age.

What is social exclusion?

The Government broadly uses 'social exclusion' as a term for what can happen when people or areas suffer a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown. Some commentators (Kleinmann 1998) are concerned, however, that the term is rapidly becoming a cliché covering almost any kind of social ill. Others argue (Atkinson and Hills 1998) that social exclusion is a relative concept, which is manifest in social relations and not individual circumstances. It recognises how social structures can exclude sections of society, and that disadvantage should not be seen solely in material terms, such as poverty.

The concept of people being socially excluded because of their age is underdeveloped in the discourse that is taking place in this policy debate, but it could be a helpful framework for explaining the circumstances in which old and young people find themselves (Granville and Hatton-Yeo, forthcoming). Chronological age could be a crucial factor in social exclusion, as people can be excluded from mainstream activities because of the characteristics of the age group to which they belong. Ageism allows social structures to be created which discriminate against people because of their age, and which allow prejudices and stereotypes to flourish. Changes in social structures have caused the generations to become progressively disconnected from each other at individual, family and community levels, and this has affected the natural relationship between the generations.

The current government, when it first came to power in 1997, made reducing social exclusion the cornerstone of its political agenda for addressing social inequalities and, in December 1997, the Prime Minister created the Social Exclusion Unit.

The Social Exclusion Unit

The remit of the Social Exclusion Unit is to help improve government action in reducing social exclusion by producing 'joined up solutions to joined up problems'. It works mainly on specific projects, chosen by the Prime Minister following consultation with other ministers and suggestions from interested groups. The Unit covers England only, but it keeps in close touch with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland devolved administrations, which have their own strategies for tackling social exclusion.

Since the General Election in 2001, the Unit has been located within the office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the Cabinet Office. Members of the Unit visit and consult widely with local authorities, businesses, the voluntary sector and other agencies, and people who have direct experience of social exclusion. A review of the Unit's performance was carried out in 1999, and found that it had been successful in its effect on wider Government policy. As a result, the Unit would continue and be reviewed again in 2002. Its current priorities include reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, children in care, 'young runaways', transport and social exclusion, and reducing teenage pregnancy.

Addressing social exclusion

Some of the intergenerational projects seek to address social exclusion work with frail elderly people and those with mental health needs, living in residential or nursing homes. Many of the practice examples came from members of the National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People (NAPA), such as Northcourt Nursing Home in Bury St Edmunds or the Gardening Project in Hereford.

Magic Me is an intergenerational organisation that works with professional visual and performing artists, experienced at working with diverse community groups. For example, 'Friendly People, Wicked Places' addressed social exclusion by building social relationships between people of different ages and different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, where there had previously been little contact.

Forest Forge's Age to Age project used reminiscence with drama, creative writing, storytelling and visual art to build relationships between a junior school and a local residential setting, where previously there had been little understanding of each other's needs.

Lost Chord was a music project where young musicians developed their skills by performing regularly to older people with dementia in residential homes, who would normally be excluded from such events. This enabled the younger people to have more of an understanding of the effects of dementia, and the older people gained from the enthusiasm and fresh approach of the young people.

Rolling Back the Years aimed to enhance the life for residents in residential homes and reduce social exclusion through engaging the residents in meaningful partnerships with other groups in the community. It is a fine example of clear planning and preparation, and the ability to build capacity in a project. It produced a useful evaluation, which as one of its findings recognised the need to work more closely with the middle generation of teachers and care staff. This project is also an example of intergenerational learning because it dovetailed into the National Curriculum History requirements.

Intergenerational cultural understanding

Others are working in communities where there is a mix of cultures and are seeking to create social inclusion through creating better intergenerational understanding. Sound it Out developed a Chinese cross-generational music project, and recognised that they could have developed this further through an intergenerational approach. Magic Me, in the East End of London, develops intergenerational projects to find out more about the needs of children and elders from the local Bengali and Somali communities.

The Ragged School Museum, through its older volunteers programme, engages with the culturally diverse population of Tower Hamlets, in East London, where 23 per cent of the

community are Bangladeshi. Sixty Plus's project supports older people whose first language is not English, by matching young volunteers with an older person who wishes to practise English. This offers an example of intergenerational work benefiting the individual rather than the group. These few projects demonstrate the possibilities of intergenerational or multigenerational projects, addressing social exclusion through promoting cultural understanding.

There are few examples of intergenerational work with disaffected young people and families, although clearly there is scope to develop such initiatives. The Sure Start programme is an area-based initiative to improve the health and well-being of families with children aged under 4 years who are at risk of social exclusion. It is linked to the Social Exclusion Unit's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. Age Concern Enfield's Sure Start programme engages older volunteers, who have life skills and experience to offer, in several placement opportunities with young children. The National Tenants Resource Centre residential training programme aims to inspire and enable young people aged between 11 and 16, who are at risk of social exclusion, to work effectively with adults. The organisation is interested in exploring whether bringing in older adults will enhance their programme.

Summary

These examples of practice aimed at helping members of each generation who have been marginalised and excluded from social networks include many which involve elderly people in residential and care settings. Others include the dimension of race and culture and demonstrate how, by using intergenerational initiatives as a tool, an understanding of difference can begin to be achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

This chapter draws together a number of threads that have run through the review and presents an overview of the findings. It opens the debate into some of the issues and questions that concern practitioners, and poses some suggestions for further discussion.

Delivering the Social Policy Agenda

The evidence suggests that intergenerational practice (IP) is one of the tools that can be used to address the Government's policy priorities. It can do this by bringing together two generations who have become separated from each other through changes in social structures, and enable the strengths of each age group to enhance the life experiences of the other. It has the potential to reduce tensions and misunderstandings between the two groups and can offer solutions to many of the social issues that concern communities.

Many of the projects described in the review are tackling complex social problems, looking for new solutions to inequalities and deprivation. Some of the projects even received funding from policy initiatives, such as Health Action Zones, Neighbourhood Renewal Funds and volunteer schemes. One example of the potential of intergenerational initiatives to be a mechanism for social change is by addressing racial tension and developing cultural understanding. Intergenerational programmes provide a means of building more inclusive communities which accept diversity and difference in their members. Another potential effect is reducing fear of crime and the resulting social isolation of older people.

Too often, intergenerational activity has been viewed as 'a nice thing to do', with a feelgood factor, while the potential of the exchange to solve difficult issues has been largely ignored, or underdeveloped.

Developing the capacity of communities

A common theme running through the four policy strands has been the ability of intergenerational activity to develop community capacity and build social capital, through creating new community networks and support systems. It appears that whatever the tools used in the process of bringing the generations together, whether creative arts, learning opportunities or volunteering, they all have the capacity to impact on community dynamics. It is, however, clear from this review that the medium of the arts, in its many manifestations, has a particularly important role to play in the building of understanding between generations.

Many of the initiatives have been developed to resolve conflict and potential tension in neighbourhoods. In other cases, the potential power of bringing the old and young generations together to address complex issues was not planned, but became evident to the organisers during the process. The advantage of intergenerational activities that are part of a community development approach is that they can be sustainable and part of the community processes, rather than isolated projects which come and go without enabling change.

Multigenerational versus intergenerational activity

The question of whether intergenerational activity should take place exclusively between the old and young generations, leaving out the generation in-between, is one that has divided opinion. It is even further complicated by the fact that, because of the demographic changes, there are arguably two generations in the older age group. There

are examples in this review of intergenerational work between the old and the young, but we have also included practice that has sought to bring all the generations in contact with each other. These seem to be particularly important where projects have wanted to engage with the whole community, for example in the regeneration areas, where disadvantage affects everyone. The community development approach of many of these projects seems to lend itself to a multigenerational focus, which recognises a role for all citizens.

If the aim of the work is to create better understanding between the old and young generations, and the particular qualities that each can share with the other for mutual benefit, then to leave out the middle generation in the activity may be appropriate. However, one of the dangers of intergenerational activity is that it may reinforce the very attitudes and prejudices that it is seeking to change. In order that this does not happen, the work needs careful planning and facilitation, and the avoidance of paternalism, when one generation is perceived as 'doing to' rather than 'working with' the other.

One answer is to be clear about what the project aims to achieve and to clarify the role of the in-between age group. In intergenerational projects, the '25 to 50-something' generation has an essential part to play in facilitating the exchange and ensuring that the process is well planned and evaluated. There are examples in this review that have identified the need to ensure that everyone involved in the activity, either directly or indirectly, has some ownership of the process.

In multigenerational work, it is necessary to ensure that the needs of the three generations, and even four if we recognise the very old as a separate group, have been identified and considered separately. This is because different generations have different needs and expectations and these should be understood and considered separately, in order to create cohesion. One of the considerations is the different power positions that the generations hold in the community. In particular, the middle generation often receives more attention from decision makers than the young and old, whose voices are often silenced.

Generations or relations

Another concern in the field of intergenerational practice is whether it should include generations who are related to each other. Once again, it appears to be a question of what the activity seeks to achieve. Clearly, whilst grandparents do represent the older generation to their grandchildren, evidence on discriminatory behaviour shows that it is less applied when the individual knows the person. If the purpose of intergenerational practice is to develop understanding between the generations and challenge negative stereotyping, then it may be right to exclude the grandparenting relationship. If the purpose is to create more inclusive communities, then families may play a role.

Discipline or approach

Within the field of intergenerational practice, and particularly influenced by practice in North America, is an ongoing debate as to whether 'intergenerational programming' should be a separate discipline, with its own training body and qualifications. The other line of thought is that 'intergenerational' is an approach which a range of professionals can use as a problem-solving tool. In the UK this model seems the most appropriate and, because of the multidisciplinary nature of intergenerational activity, it would enable a number of professionals to apply intergenerational activities to their work. The development of a multidisciplinary tool-kit could be usefully explored, and would be particularly appropriate for community development workers seeking to build the capacity of communities.

Short-term or sustainable funding

The majority of the projects discussed here are in the voluntary sector, which means they are vulnerable to short-term funding. The National Lottery Charities Board has been a major contributor to the work, and has particularly supported work in the arts. The advantage of time-limited project funding is that it enables innovation and allows the discovery of new ways of working. The disadvantage is that expectations can be raised and good developments disappear.

Only two of the intergenerational initiatives in this review were directly placed within local authorities. Bridging the Gap, in North Tyneside, is funded through the Social Services budget and is an established service of that department. Getting On in Camden, in North London, resulted in the inclusion of intergenerational work in the Borough's corporate priorities and this now features in its Community Plans. When intergenerational activity is recognised as integral to an organisation's business, rather than as an attractive add-on and susceptible to financial cuts, the potential for it to influence the policy agenda is immense.

The ideal is more of a balance between short-term experimental work and sustainable funding for activities within a range of sectors.

A range of outcomes

Intergenerational practice is not a single approach, but a style of working that can lead to many different activities and outcomes. This diversity was apparent in the projects analysed. There were some excellent evaluation reports that documented process and outcomes; others produced an 'end product' such as a book, video, play or exhibition, but did not report on the process. A few had external evaluations of the work, but the majority were internal reports. Unfortunately, some did not report at all, and valuable learning was lost.

The dilemma around determining outcomes is characteristic of much intergenerational practice. It is too often perceived by stakeholders as a natural activity to be engaged in, an attractive option which offers good photograph opportunities. The potential to be engaged in social change is missed and therefore not measured in outcomes, and many projects remain underdeveloped.

The challenge for intergenerational practice is to find an agreed set of outcomes that the intergenerational exchange is seeking to achieve. It is how those outcomes are delivered that will reflect the different styles of working, and where learning about best practice will be found.

APPENDIX

Intergenerational Projects

A Good Gathering of People – shared stories

This project was set up to encourage younger and older people to work creatively together. Artshare South West is a Regional Arts and Disability organisation which develops and promotes equal opportunities and access to the arts, and this intergenerational project was part of the No Limits project, funded by BT's Community Programme Fund.

The objectives of the project were:

- To produce a collection of work by a group of students and older people.
- To retell personal stories through the spoken word, writing, drawing and painting.
- To bring reminiscences to life.

The main outcome was a book, 'A Good Gathering of People', bringing together the stories, attitudes and concerns of a group of older and younger people, disabled and non-disabled, who met regularly, like a club, over a period of several months. People's own life stories form the heart of the creative work, with the generations working together to produce one piece. It is divided into topic chapters, such as 'Families', 'Doing what you're told' and 'Compared to you', with collections of narratives and poems.

At the end of the project, the group acknowledged that:

"Considerable change had taken place over the last 30 or more years in terms of ageing and sexuality. But more interestingly perhaps is the realisation that people's dreams, fears and aspirations often have much in common. And we realised that people's achievements were often limited by society's prejudices rather than any personal inability." (Gill Horitz, Arts Development Officer, Bournemouth Borough).

A Little Acorn

Peterloo Court in Salford is one of Irwell Valley's Housing Association Retirement Schemes. It won an award for activities in sheltered housing because of its intergenerational community initiative.

A range of projects, based on an exchange of new ideas and skills between young and old, was developed to promote community activities and form partnerships with local schools. One of the aims is to create positive images of all groups concerned so they will have more understanding and tolerance of each other. Projects include a gardening activity 'sowing seeds for the future', a cybercafe and reminiscence work. The manager has now received an Age Concern Millennium Award to continue the work.

ActivAge Unit, Age Concern England

TransAge Action Programme

The aim of this programme, which was piloted by Age Concern in 1995, is to train volunteers over 50 years old to fulfil the unmet and serious requirements of vulnerable children and young people. The volunteering activity takes place in a variety of settings, such as in the community, family centres, schools, crèches and children's own homes.

The project evaluation (Ivers 1999) was conducted over a three-year period with the three pilot projects, all situated in Age Concern groups in Enfield, Stockport and Warwickshire. In total 323 children were helped by 82 older volunteers in 58 settings, of which 45 were schools. The evaluation reports that the older volunteers found the experience fulfilling in that they could use their lifetime skills, and satisfying in terms of physical and emotional well-being. Key professionals valued the programme because the partnerships that developed gave the children confidence and enabled them to make best use of learning or other opportunities. Professionals commented on the positive aspects of working alongside an older volunteer. The full report is available from Age Concern England.

Age Concern UK Intergenerational Network

This Network was established in 2000, following the evaluation of the TransAge Action Programme. It describes its purpose in this way:

“Intergenerational work is a new, exciting way of volunteering, an opportunity to bring the skills of a lifetime to a generation that could do with help from their older friends. The Intergenerational Network brings together practitioners in local projects to share examples of good practice, to build a foundation where ideas may be exchanged and to benefit from a shared vision of intergenerational working.” (0314 UK Intergenerational Leaflet/10,000/3-01)

A number of initiatives are taking place in a range of organisations, including TransAge Action style work. The network has a membership structure and is administered by the ActivAge Unit at Age Concern England.

Age Resource

Age Resource is known as the ‘younger arm’ of Age Concern, and is part of the ActivAge Unit. It runs an annual award scheme for individuals and groups of volunteers aged over 50 years who are involved in innovative community projects. It particularly encourages projects with an intergenerational emphasis.

Age Concern Northern Ireland

As a result of success in the Age Concern Millennium Awards, Age Concern Northern Ireland has developed a number of intergenerational initiatives. Here are some examples, which ranged from one-off events to longer-term projects:

- An Intergenerational Activities day, which provided an opportunity for younger and older people to come together in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment. They participated in new activities and skills sharing in a safe atmosphere, and with an emphasis on team spirit.
- Teaching Gaelic football to local youths.
- Producing a book of poems jointly written by both age groups.
- Intergenerational computer project.
- Transforming overgrown land into a play and tranquillity area.
- An education support group, which provided the opportunity for older volunteers to share their skills and experiences with disaffected young people.

One of the initiatives is described below in more detail, as an example of building social capital.

Building Bridges 2001

This project, which had the theme of 'care of the environment', was carried out over a period of five months and had the following aims and objectives:

- To integrate community development and community relations principles and practices into intergenerational work.
- To build community spirit and support the development of relationships.
- To promote learning and sharing of experiences across generations.
- To address issues of stereotyping and prejudice involving different age groups from an inter-denominational and cross-community perspective.

The project was between pupils from St. Vincent's secondary school and older adults from the community of Ballynafeigh, South Belfast. It went through a number of processes to reach its aims and objectives:

- Training for older volunteers and ice-breakers with both generations.
- Looking at the local neighbourhood, and taking photographs with disposable cameras.
- Planting a garden at a shopping centre.
- Designing a mural together, to show Ballynafeigh at its best and worst environmentally.
- Morning in Colinglen forest park, and volunteering to tidy a park path.
- Boat trip on the river Lagan to take samples of water.
- Attended a reception at Stormont with the environmental minister.

One of the outcomes was the production of an illustrated booklet, detailing the action that developed out of a partnership between a number of agencies. Through a programme of activities designed by the two age groups and which benefited the whole community, they joined forces, bridged the generation gap and developed lasting friendships with one another. As a consequence, attitudes and negative stereotypes were challenged and, in the process, both age groups learned about protecting and caring for the environment.

Age Exchange Theatre Trust

The Age Exchange Theatre Trust promotes intergenerational learning in citizenship through the use of reminiscence.

'On the River'

'On the River' was the title of an intergenerational community play in August 2000, funded in the millennium by the National Lottery Charities Board's Arts for Everyone scheme. The aim was for young people and older people to work together, using 'living memory', in order to remember for the future.

The facilitators were interested in the process of making the play, not only in the final production, and used a combination of script and rehearsed improvisation. Forty older people from the river communities of east and south-east London were recruited and interviewed about their experiences of working in the docks. The young people took on the role of the older people in childhood, with guidance from the older person, and they improvised together in a purposeful activity. The outcome of the project demonstrated that careful preparation created a safe, trusting environment in which relationships between the generations were able to develop.

‘Goodnight Children Everywhere’

This second example from Age Exchange was a reminiscence workshop, using role-play, on the topic of evacuation in the Second World War. The project aimed to show the value of older people and living memory as a primary teaching resource for Key Stages 2 and 3 in the National Curriculum. It enabled the young and older people to explore together how they, as individuals, relate both to family and to the wider community. Once again, it was the process that allowed intergenerational learning to take place, with recognition of the importance of the teacher, as facilitator, in preparing the generations separately before they worked together on the project.

Art Generations

This arts project receives National Lottery Funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, through their Access programme. After a successful pilot scheme, funding was granted for a three-year, six-series project from 2000 to 2002. A project manager was appointed from series 3 onwards.

The project was not designed as an intergenerational one; however, it is an interesting example of a multigenerational approach which brought a community together to develop their learning.

The initiative was developed in a solid working-class area of Protestant East Belfast, a community with fairly high unemployment, low educational attainment, poverty, and poor cultural and leisure amenities. The project focus was on rebuilding a deprived community rather than, as with many initiatives in Northern Ireland, developing cross-community relationships between different factions. The Head Teacher of Elmgrove Primary School, where the project took place, stated:

“We wanted to give different generations of local families the opportunity to work together creatively and to develop their skills. Art Generations extends Elmgrove’s relationship with the local community”.

Each series of workshops takes place at the primary school on Saturday mornings for eight weeks. Pupils aged eight and over can attend the workshops if they bring along at least one member of their extended family. Each participant signs up for one course of eight weeks, and it does not have to be in the same one as their relative. Five professional artists are employed as workshop tutors, and each work with a different medium.

For series 3, there were courses with clay to produce a clay dragon, plaster to make a foot caste, mixed media and music, which included making drums, and mural painting. The different activities could be carried out as solo or group pieces. There were 80 participants, with an age range from eight to 83. Families included Elmgrove pupils, older

brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, grandparents and one great grandfather who came by default the first week and just could not resist coming back!

The project manager, Jan Branch, observed a number of dynamics taking place over the eight weeks of the project. She noticed the good humour and tolerance of the teenagers towards their younger siblings, and the positive excitement, the 'fizz' that was present in the groups. It was interesting that workshop members identified with their task group rather than with their peers of the same generation, and how the relationships were of equal power in those work groups.

An open day, to which the whole community was invited, was held to display and perform their efforts of the past eight weeks. This event had a huge response, and the workshop participants showed pride and increased public confidence in their work. A good relationship was built up between the school and the community. As a learning outcome, some of the adult women who had taken part found they had new talents and wished to develop their skills by enrolling on further education classes in art. Later classes have taken account of requests in the project evaluation.

Once again, however, as many of the intergenerational projects have demonstrated, it was the process that was all-important in achieving the outcomes and increasing the strength of relationships across the generations. Jan Branch, an experienced arts administrator, was very clear that a high level of skills and facilitation were required, alongside careful planning, to ensure the project was successful. The professional artists found it challenging to work across a wide age range with different expectations of the workshops.

Black History Poster Project

The project is interesting because, although it was not planned as an intergenerational activity, the generational theme emerged, and the facilitator recognised the power and importance of the exchange between young and old in the community. Also, it includes a biological connection, and raises the question of whether it is appropriate to consider grandparenting in intergenerational work.

Black History Month originated in North America and its aim is to acknowledge and recognise those people who ensure our community remains vibrant, intact, responsible and spiritual, and to create an opportunity to display a strong and positive image of the black community.

The project in Waltham Forest was facilitated by a Youth and Community Officer between May and October 1998, and his role was to contact young people and their parents, to identify their heroes and heroines of today. Posters were created in order to give a voice to the young people of the community, and these were, through partnership with Arts and Leisure Department, professionally constructed and marketed extensively in the local community. The outcome was that a number of young people saw older people as their role models, and also that the elders were seen as holding their history. One individual nominated his grandfather because: "he goes through a terrible amount of pain and arthritis in the knee, but cares for me and always ensures my safety."

The facilitator has now moved on, but is keen to introduce intergenerational activities in his next post.

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap is an example of an established programme of intergenerational learning which resulted from the 1993 European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations, and is now mainstreamed within the Local Authority. It was set up in 1994 to address the local authority's concern about age segregation, and to create joint projects between local schools and older people.

The Council created a post, from the Care in the Community (Social Services) budget, for a part-time intergenerational co-ordinator to take the work forward. It began with four hours a week in one primary and one secondary school and a day centre. The post is now 25 hours per week, and the service has grown to include an additional project officer working full-time on the initiative and is involved with many schools and agencies. The projects are varied and developed by a core multi-disciplinary team, including the co-ordinator, a project officer, a link teacher in the schools and care managers, with representation from Age Concern North Shields and the Museum Services within the North East.

Bridging the Gap creates opportunities for the generations to learn together. They are curriculum led, and include the subject areas of 20th century history, geography, English, art and drama. They also enhance social and personal development. The project's intergenerational learning goals are to support the children's appreciation of 20th century history, to see the similarities and appreciate the different ways that younger and older people learn, and to give the young people a positive insight into their future, so that they become less fearful of old age. The older people learn that they are appreciated for their life experiences, and have their beliefs and preconceptions of younger people tested by seeing the common thread between generations.

Here are some examples of Bridging the Gap's activities.

Storyline

Bridging the Gap is particularly well known for its model of intergenerational learning using a method known as Storyline, originally created by Steve Bell and colleagues at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, to take participants through a series of linked activities on a particular topic. Bridging the Gap adapted it as an intergenerational model as a result of involvement in an EU-funded programme that chose Storyline as a model of best practice for intergenerational learning across Europe.

Topics for Storyline are chosen by the teacher to fit in with school activities. The Storyline is then designed and delivered jointly by the teacher and Intergenerational Co-ordinator. This way the learning and support of both generations is ensured.

Learning takes place through active participation. It starts from a main event and develops using multiple activities, allowing the generations to work together discussing, explaining, comparing and problem solving. Both generations participate, working as a team and taking responsibility for their own learning. A range of approaches are used, such as role-play, use of the media, technical drawing, modelling, sculpture and collage.

Over the years, Bridging the Gap has created a number of Storylines; for example:

- Families at War – year 11 students studying humanities, and older people from a residential home.

- Designing Your Ideal School – year 7 students at the Community College and adults from the Disability Resource Centre.
- A Town for the Future – year 9 students and volunteers from Age Concern.

All the Storylines are written up in evaluation reports, 'How to' books and workbooks, which provide an important resource for others who may be interested in learning about this method. The core team members at Bridging the Gap have, over the years, developed more confidence in methodology and are now exploring more sensitive and challenging areas within the school curriculum. For example, year 11 in the Community College are following a story on love and marriage, and the meaning of relationships. The adults range from 60 to 84 years of age.

Early years programme

This programme was initiated by the senior manager for intermediate care, and is facilitated by the intergenerational project officer. The rationale was that research from the USA revealed that misconceptions and stereotypes are developed before the age of eight. This project aims to present positive images of older people to young children.

Befriending scheme

Year 11 students from the local High School, in their own time, visit and befriend an older person who has Alzheimer's disease and lives in a residential home. This piece of work provides an excellent model in how to prepare and support the participants so that negative stereotypes are not perpetuated.

A curriculum on ageing

A recent project added to Bridging the Gap has been a partnership with Age Concern North Shields to design a working pack on ageing for teachers to deliver to year 7 in the Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum. It is an interactive pack, covering eight to ten sessions, and includes ageism awareness, demography, and the ageing body. It is being piloted in two high schools, and there are plans to distribute it to all schools in North Tyneside.

Socrates

Socrates was a European Commission education programme in which Bridging the Gap took part. This three-year project resulted in a transnational training package for teachers and other workers interested in setting up intergenerational learning projects. The manual was produced by the Community Education Development Centre (2000) and is divided into four parts: general background; questions that need to be considered; activities which make up the core training with suggested materials, time scales, methodology, evaluation; and, finally, additional information and materials.

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

This organisation promotes practical conservation work by volunteers throughout the UK, and educates people in the principles and practice of nature conservation in rural and urban areas. An enquiry to the Head Office revealed that they do not have any planned intergenerational programmes, but they do work across the generations and encourage people of all ages. It is probable that some of the schemes involve young volunteers working alongside older people, and once again there is scope to create purposeful intergenerational projects.

Community Concern

Community Concern has been operating in Kingston upon Thames for ten years, with the aim of bringing together young people and their elderly neighbours in the local community. It is a partnership between the Age Concern group and a local high school, with funding from the Borough Council. It has two major strands:

- Girls of 14–15 years old develop relationships with older people through visiting them regularly. Fifty girls are visiting elderly people, and some long-term relationships have developed.
- 'Friendship Hour', where local older people are invited every week to the Sixth Form Centre after school, for a cup of tea and a chat. The aim is to enable an ever-growing group of older people to exchange observations about their life experiences with sixth formers preparing for University and their own careers.

One young woman had this to say about the project: "I have been able to form friendships with people who, without Friendship Hour, I may never have met. I now find myself talking to them in the street..." (Claire, 17 years).

This Age Concern project represents a traditional model of intergenerational activity, which focuses on the support needs of both age groups rather than seeing them as a community resource.

Country Reminiscence – a rural community natural history project

This 1999 Country Reminiscence project was funded by the Help the Aged Millennium Awards, and was a partnership between MaDE and James Sargent, a former County Advisor for Music in Cornwall. The community arts group was committed to arts evaluation, in order to disseminate models of arts practice which can be built on and replicated elsewhere. The theme was to be natural history from memories through the medium of the performing arts, and took place in three Cornish communities. The project had four intergenerational objectives:

- For young and old to learn more about local wildlife and habitat, its care and conservation.
- For older people to be stimulated by expressing memories in new ways, enjoy being valued and passing on old skills.
- For young people to learn about change, ageing and disability, and acquire new skills in observations and communication.
- To strengthen community ties across generations and stimulate new interest groups to continue after the project ends.

The evaluation drew out some interesting conclusions. For example: "The young participants gained mutual respect and understanding and are beginning to ask about ageing and disability in a healthy way". There was a learning point about the important role that the middle generation has in facilitating the intergenerational exchange: "Communications in some of the institutions was difficult, most noticeable where key staff left or opted out and new staff were not briefed". There was a recommendation in the

evaluation report that, in future, it would be necessary to draw up an explicit contract with role definitions in the early planning stage, to ensure that organisations and individuals are not overlooked or under-represented. It was concluded that the Country Reminiscence arts project served as a microcosm for community networking and problem solving.

Forest Forge

Age to Age in stories and drama

Forest Forge in Ringwood, Hampshire, is an arts organisation which has been in operation for three years. Members are particularly interested in developing songs from people's stories. Between February and March 2000 Forest Forge, with partner organisations, developed a project between a group of local school children and elderly people at a residential home. The Forest Forge outreach director and a designer/visual artist worked together, with their specialism in reminiscence, drama, design and visual art, to facilitate a project that built relationships and links between pupils of Clatford Junior School and the Elders of Goodworth. It was funded by Test Valley Borough Council. The school children were supported in developing the skills of reminiscence gathering, then the elders and school students worked together in a reminiscence workshop. Stories were distilled via creative writing, storytelling, drama, and visual art. The project culminated in a celebratory presentation of stories in short dramatic sketches, and an exhibition of visual art.

Aims of project

- To encourage and develop a deepening relationship via creative arts work between first and third age members of the community.
- To encourage and support the oral tradition, focusing on the reminiscence skills of communication, speaking and listening.
- To encourage and support the development of creative writing and drama among school pupils.
- To encourage and support the development of visual art.

Method of delivery

- Outreach director will meet with schools.
- The elders and designer discuss themes and layout of project.
- Outreach director and designer first visit to gather reminiscence with the elders.
- 1st session with the school children to run workshop on the skills that are necessary for reminiscence.
- 1st session with the school students and the elders to reminiscence gather.
- A session with the outreach director and designer to focus on viable themes for creative writing, drama and visual arts exploration.
- 2nd session with the school to develop creative writing and visual art and to explore dramatic presentation of stories.

- To be further continued and developed by teachers.
- Rehearsal and presentation of exhibition and drama sketches.

No information has been received about the outcome of this interesting project, but it is clear from the method that careful planning and preparation took place before the generations were brought together.

Gardening Project in Hereford

This initiative focuses on a gardening project between the clients who attend Hereford WRVS Day Centre and a neighbouring primary school. It is an example of a community project which sought to involve members of the neighbourhood who are often excluded from mainstream activities.

One of the facilities at the Day Centre is for clients, known as club members, aged from 60 to 93 years. The members are referred from the Social Services Department, and have a range of physical disabilities, hearing and sight loss, early dementia and other mental health issues.

The WRVS wants to develop the capacity of its Day Centre and to use the building as a multidisciplinary resource for the community. It already has a children's centre and play school, and is carrying out a feasibility study on the possibility of a youth centre for the local young people. It was agreed to run an intergenerational project as a catalyst to stimulate interest throughout the community. It was hoped that the gardening project would demonstrate the potential of the Centre to bring in other sectors of the community, and to contribute to necessary fund raising.

The project started with the primary school that is next door in the village to the WRVS Day Centre. A wildlife garden and greenhouse were to be created on a waste piece of land between the two. The whole community was drawn into the planning of the garden, and volunteers did the hard labour of preparing the ground. The children drew up plans and visited the club members in the Centre to talk to the older people about their ideas. The meetings were facilitated to enable the older people to pass on their knowledge and skills to the younger ones.

This project has the potential to draw in a number of other socially excluded groups, using intergenerational activities as the focus.

Generations in Action

Generations in Action, a programme operated since 1996 by Salford Education Business Partnership, encourages mature people to engage with younger members of the community by using local schools as a focus. Education Business Partnerships are non-profit-making organisations found in most centres of population in the UK, and their purpose is to stimulate employment opportunities through linking with local businesses. They mainly target local schools, raising aspirations and encouraging young people in employment opportunities.

In Generations in Action, the older people support the development of literacy skills and act as mentors to the young people, in both primary and secondary school settings. They are seen as a valued asset in the schools and over the years have been included in the

menu of resources the teachers can use in their task of developing young people. In partnership with teachers, the volunteers bring their experience, their expertise and another adult perspective to help pupils reach a level of understanding and experience that will prepare them for work.

This model of intergenerational mentoring, which is facilitated by business enterprise organisations, has been successfully replicated in four parts of England: Ryedale in North Yorkshire, Sandwell in the West Midlands, Partnership Link in Morecombe/Lancaster, and Wigan.

Generation X – an intergenerational participatory theatre project

A specific process called 'Participatory Theatre Research' has been adopted in this project. The aim of the method is to use theatre to build social capital in the community, in this case by working with the experiences common to children, teenagers and those aged over 50. The learning occurs between the groups as a function of participation in activities that have real meaning and purpose. It is considered a valuable tool at times of rising social violence and instability, because it allows participants to explore conflict in their community without confrontation. It was thought a particularly appropriate tool for an estate in Ely, Cardiff, following riots in 1991. Other problems such as high unemployment, intergenerational tension, failing schools, violent gangs, and high levels of theft had resulted in many residents looking for answers. There was a need for creative solutions to secure any reasonable future for the estate.

In 2000, Generation X emerged from two earlier projects (in 1995 and 1997) which had identified apprehension and fear of youth by many of the older people of Ely. Young people also clearly held many ageist assumptions about older men and women. The key purpose of the project is to use the medium of puppetry and performance to:

- Explore the perceptions each group has of the other.
- Confront these prejudices about older and younger people.
- Communicate with each other.
- Better understand each other.

The performance involves actors, life size puppets and shadow puppetry. The puppet character becomes the focus of their thoughts about the other generation, and the use of masks imposes a discipline which requires the wearer to find ways of expressing emotions through subtle body movements, rather than dialogue and facial expression. Next, each group chooses one issue as a basis for drama improvisation, and a play is devised from the improvisations. The rationale is that whatever performance evolves, if it is a reflection of the concerns of the local community, then it will engage the local community.

The project involved members of the 'Healthy, Wealthy and Wise' group for people aged over 50, together with the pupils of the Glyn Derw comprehensive school, who gave 13 performances of 'Generation X', a community play, for the primary schools of Ely. The process was crucial in making change. There was excellent preparation, over a period of several months, with the generations, in separate age groups, using puppets to

represent the other generation. The play was performed in and for the community of Ely by members of that community. The sponsors also commissioned an external evaluation.

Evaluation

Perceptions of each generation were expressed before and after the performance to see if there was any change.

The evaluation used a method called 'community of enquiry' to discover whether change had taken place. This involved the participants (in this case the children in four classes in two schools) selecting the topic for discussion, and then directing the process of enquiry, through generating questions, choosing a question, and then discussing the topic. The discussions provided an insight into the power of theatre to engage children's interest in the lives and experiences of others in their community. Community of enquiry enabled the children to deepen their understanding as they extended their discussion beyond the play.

The evaluation report (S. Lyle and D. Hendley 2000) has this to say:

"Other researchers have demonstrated the importance of weeding out negative stereotypes before they take root in young people's minds. The evidence from this project and the work in 1997 suggests that intergenerational theatre work of this kind has enormous potential to address this task" (2000:22).

The report concluded that:

- Generation X succeeded in its goal of challenging and even changing the attitudes and perceptions of the young performers and their audiences towards people aged over 50.
- Older people's perceptions of young people were also challenged, but the most significant finding was the concern that they had for the future of the young people. They showed feelings of responsibility, in acknowledging the need to provide positive role models for children.
- There is a need for work with teaching staff to share the aims and objectives of the project, and to clarify the impact on the mainstream work of the school.
- There is efficacy in funding intensive work with small groups, if this leads to a final product that is disseminated to a wider target audience.

Getting On in Camden

This example of intergenerational work is significant because it resulted in an intergenerational post being created in the local authority, and intergenerational activity has been included in Camden's Community Strategy, *Our Camden Our Future*¹. It is an excellent model that demonstrates how intergenerational initiatives which developed as a response to community needs have become part of the mainstream agenda.

¹ Community plans will feed into the Local Strategic Partnerships.

It began in 1995 from the older people's perspective, following a review of leisure services which identified, as a co-operative priority, a three-year action research programme to reduced vulnerability. This became known as the Vulnerable Older People's Project. At a conference of older people, vulnerability was defined as being socially isolated, and the conditions that created it were identified. As a result of this listening process it became apparent that many older people wanted to be more involved in their communities as a means of reducing their vulnerability, and that the local authority needed to view their involvement with older people in a wider context than social care and to treat them more as citizens.

This led to new ways being explored of establishing partnerships, to enable better understanding of the issues facing older people. Older people's social needs as citizens were included in Camden's 'Preventative Strategy', and most significantly, in the 'Best Value' review and the Health Improvement Programme. The Older People's Programme, which originated in the Vulnerable Older People's Project, is now agreed as a mainstream corporate programme with permanent funding with permanent posts, replacing the previous temporary appointments and secondments. Within this new structure will be an intergenerational development post, and it is expected that the programme will be located within the new Primary Care Trust to be established by April 2002, under the public health division, with dual accountability to public health and primary care.

Camden's Community Strategy, *Our Camden Our Future* (2000:14), states:

"A truly inclusive borough respects and values the needs and contributions of everyone in it. So we will also encourage people from different generations to get to know each other better and to understand the contributions they can each make".

One example of the way the Borough sought the views of younger and older generations was an event held in July 2000. It demonstrates how one-off events, if well planned and facilitated, can act as a catalyst to develop a more sustainable intergenerational approach.

Meeting across generations

At a previous 'Debate of the Age' event in Camden, both old and young people expressed the wish to see more of each other. They wanted to come together to air views, discuss issues, break down any barriers that exist between them and build better communities.

Following this, Camden's Vulnerable Older People Project and a local primary school wishing to develop the school within the community decided to stage an intergenerational event in partnership with other local organisations. A steering group was formed to plan the event over a three-month period, and included younger pupils, local older people and a number of agencies across the sectors.

The whole day intergenerational event, held in July 2000, consisted of six sessions with six groups of eight or nine people, from different generations, gathered around a table. The process was facilitated by using the method of appreciative enquiry. This method seems particularly appropriate for intergenerational activities because it seeks to discover, in the past, the bricks to build the future.

The key was to focus together on ways to ask questions and have conversations that appreciate experience rather than identify problems. This helped participants to steer their conversations away from an emphasis on differences and confrontation, and instead to explore their shared environment and focus on living and working together. Examples included: what would community life be like in King's Cross if we built an age-inclusive community? What can we do together that offers a real opportunity for everyone living and working locally to play a part? What can we contribute and benefit from being there?

The participants at the end of the day said they had learned:

- The importance of having respect for younger and older people.
- That sharing ideas with others gives a different perspective.
- That putting older, younger, different cultures together can be fun.

Groundwork – ‘changing places, changing lives’

Groundwork is a leading environmental regeneration charity whose mission is to make sustainable development a reality in the UK's poorest neighbourhoods. It aims to bring about economic and social regeneration by improving the local environment, and to build sustainable communities through joint environmental action. It has six strategic programmes:

- Communities – building stronger neighbourhoods.
- Land – re-connecting people to their surroundings.
- Employment – training for work and stimulating enterprise.
- Education – learning, citizenship and sustainability.
- Business – integrating the economy and environment.
- Youth – realising young people's potential.

It has a federation structure and, through its network of 44 Groundwork Trusts across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, it undertakes intergenerational activity. Through two of its major funding streams, the Garfield Weston Foundation and the National Lottery Charities Board's Environments for Everyone (E4E) Programme, the organisation has begun to consider developing work that brings the younger and older members of a community together. Whilst its focus is with young people, Groundwork has become aware that intergenerational activities can fulfil its aims of regenerating communities. Here are two examples:

Groundwork Hackney: Wick Village gardening club and Gainsborough school

The aim of this work was to promote healthy lifestyles and cross-generational teamwork through the creation of a community garden. Wick Village gardeners were involved in the design and implementation of a garden, whilst school children were assigned tasks in the garden as part of the National Curriculum. The intergenerational group consisted of ten young members and ten older ones. The outcome is that a piece of wasteland has been

turned into a garden which is supplying fresh fruit and vegetables. However, as with most intergenerational work, it is the process that is important in influencing attitudinal change. In this example, the gardening club members all got to know each other much better, and in turn they developed relationships with the children from the local estate and the school.

Groundwork Macclesfield

This project set up allotments with a composting facility, and invited key members of the older community to become involved. Contact was made with older people living on the local housing estate, through leaflets and newsletters, asking if anyone was interested in a gardening project. The estate already has a Groundwork young persons' project and the aim is to make some links between the two, in order to enable better understanding between the two generations.

There is clearly a great deal of potential for the Groundwork trusts to develop intergenerational projects that support regeneration.

Help the Aged Schools Programme

Help the Aged have created an internet Schools Programme, available on the Help the Aged web site, with a range of materials aimed at pupils aged 7 to 11 years. It is intended as a resource for teaching staff and designed to support the delivery of citizenship education. In Wales, it is available as a bilingual programme.

Homeshare UK

Homeshare UK was set up in 1993, originally to support older people who wanted to remain in their own homes. The emphasis is on a generational exchange, where householders provide free accommodation to a young person, known as a homesharer, in exchange for ten hours of support each week. The help provided is matched to individual needs, for example domestic tasks, companionship, security at night for those who feel vulnerable, and personal care. The homesharer pursues his or her day-time occupation, but has to sleep at home six nights a week, with one weekend off each month. The minimum time for the homeshare is six months.

The profile of the householders is typically women in their eighties, living alone, and sometimes Homeshare forms part of a wider package of social care. Homesharers are usually in their early twenties, visiting Britain from Australia and New Zealand in order to broaden their experience. The scheme offers them low-cost accommodation in expensive cities like London.

The programme is run by paid co-ordinators, and the evaluation suggests that it has enriched the lives of householders and homesharers alike. Schemes have experienced variable amounts of success, with more householders being available than homesharers. It is making a difference to the support needs of many older people, even those with dementia, and social service departments can buy in the service in community care packages.

Intergen

Intergen is a voluntary project in Sale which recruits people over the age of 60 to help in schools. Its aim is to promote partnerships between education and the voluntary sector, and young and older citizens, by building effective links between retired older people and children and teachers at schools. Among the seven objectives of the project were:

- To enable the skills and knowledge of older people to be used effectively to enhance and enrich the learning environments of children in primary and secondary schools.
- To enable the generations within our local community to learn from each other and through this improve their quality of life.
- To increase fun and pleasure through mutually valued contacts in an educational setting.

In the pilot phase of the project, after a year of project planning and recruitment, 13 volunteers were introduced into two primary schools and one secondary school. The schools were approached to find out what they wanted the volunteers to do, and the skills of the volunteers were matched to these needs. They carried out a variety of tasks including individual work with readers, developing a garden, helping with geography and art teaching, accompanying a class on a fieldwork week, assisting in choir practice, and working behind the scenes in IT and library departments.

A full evaluation report is available on the first year in which the volunteers went into school. Overall, it was judged to be successful in terms of:

- Enabling older people to increase their sense of self-worth by contributing to the lives of younger people.
- Enabling the skills and knowledge of older people to be used effectively to enhance and enrich the learning environments of children.

In addition, it provided older people with first-hand knowledge of younger people, school organisation and modern education.

The organisation was granted charitable status in 2000, and future plans involve a roll-out to two other clusters, making nine schools in total. The aim is to explore the viability of the model in different socio-economic settings and the impact on children, teachers and volunteers. Funding is being sought for further evaluation and support for local co-ordinators.

Intergenerational Community Project

This targeted piece of work evolved from a previous project at the Beth Johnson Foundation (1993-99) which looked for ways to engage older people in their communities in order that they could influence the services in their neighbourhood. It became evident during the earlier project that many of the issues that concerned older people in their communities also concerned the young people.

The Foundation, with funding from Charity Projects, was able to develop three community action groups in three neighbourhoods, when groups of younger and older people came together to learn about how to influence the local services to better meet their needs. The evaluations from the two community action projects, and the learning that was taking place from a school-based intergenerational mentoring project, demonstrated that those projects had a wider influence on all generations in the community.

Funding was granted from a local Health Action Zone for an initial two-year community development project (2001-03) which aims to improve the health and well-being of older

and younger people in the Newcastle-under-Lyme Coalfields Regeneration Area, through a process of connecting the generations. Three strands to the work are being developed:

- Community action groups where the two generations will highlight issues of concern in their neighbourhood and work together to find ways of addressing these problems, through influencing the local decision makers.
- Opportunities will be created for younger and older people to take supportive roles towards each other in their community.
- Similarly, a partnership has been developed with the local Play Council's Out of School Clubs so that older people from the community can volunteer to support the children's learning.

This community development project, working in partnership with a Health Action Zone, is testing whether it is possible to build community capacity in an area of severe deprivation through a series of intergenerational projects which are visible to the local community. A project evaluation will be available towards the end of 2002.

LifeLink – ‘mixed age work around the fear of crime’

The partnership began between Age Concern North Tyneside and the Pyramid Project (a joint YMCA and Northumbria Probation Service project) as an innovative approach to addressing fear of crime in communities. It wanted to use community development methods to bring together groups of people in the community who, for a variety of reasons, may be suspicious of or hostile to one another. The aim was to promote better mutual understanding. After 12 months, in 1999, LifeLink became one of several projects funded for seven years from the Northumbria Community Safety Partnership Single Regeneration Budget, and managed by Age Concern North Tyneside.

LifeLink developed a range of activities to bring together people over 50 years of age with those aged under 25. The young people involved came from a number of places, including a community high school and further education college. A community profile was carried out to assess local needs, and then a multifaceted range of activities was put in place.

Activities included links with middle schools and sheltered housing, the use of a four-wheel pedi-cab to transport the less mobile to community events, information technology training for the over 50s by a school computer club, the making of a wall-hanging by a lunch club and college students, and a video-conferencing project.

One school had a lunch-time science fiction club, and an older woman from the nearby sheltered housing complex attended for several months. She enjoyed the interaction with the young people in the club, and also discovered that she enjoyed the informal contact with other students in the school entrance area, whilst she was waiting to go into the club. As a consequence, she now acts as a volunteer reader at the school.

In another example, the Busy Battlers from the Battle Hill Community Development Project's lunch club became involved with students from the local Further Education College. The purpose was for a group of students who were studying fashion and graphic design to meet up with older people to exchange knowledge and skills. The students practised their drawing abilities and the older people were able to impart old techniques

which had been popular in the region. The themes debated were to be translated pictorially and sum up the respective generations. The sessions have continued and now take place in the public library. This makes the intergenerational exchange visible to the wider community, and enables interaction with the general public.

An example of a project in the LifeLink programme that was unsuccessful, but which produced a great deal of learning, was between the Princes Trust and a sheltered housing unit. The project was to turn the grassed area at the rear of the court into a paved patio with hanging baskets. The problem was that expectations were raised with the older people following a successful meeting between the Trust Volunteers and the older tenants. The Trust Volunteers finally chose another project and the warden and older people felt let down. The LifeLink report 'Finding Common Ground' concluded that, far from reducing stereotypes between the generations, this experience appeared to reinforce them.

Intergenerational conference

At the end of LifeLink's second year, in March 2001, a conference was held to draw together some of the threads of the intergenerational initiative. Representatives came from the various activities and participative workshops, with small group exercises, which encouraged equal input from younger and older people.

Evaluation

The impact the work was having on the fear of crime was unclear. The intrinsic value of intergenerational exchanges was easier to demonstrate; it was an enriching experience which achieved more understanding of each generation, with concern and increased tolerance towards each other. There was evidence that older people who are active and involved are less anxious about crime, and anxieties about using public space can multiply out of proportion. It was concluded that a greater understanding of each other's view had been stimulated by the dialogue between generations. Some friendships are expected to be sustained after the project ends.

LifeLink was an intergenerational project set up to address fear of crime, and it highlights the value and benefit of intergenerational work. Many older people's fears are real and justified, but the project concluded that those who are engaged in their communities, and have social networks, can generally overcome their fear more easily than those who are socially isolated and without community support structures. Intergenerational projects increase awareness between generations, and foster understanding and mutual respect between age groups.

The project also drew attention to serious issues caused by short-term funding, targets and imposed agendas, which can lead to raised expectations and a lack of sustainability.

Living Memory Association

This organisation was set up in 1986 to promote interest in the practice of oral history and reminiscence in the Edinburgh area. The Living Memory Association has as one of its aims the bringing together of older people and children to learn from each other. One of its annual conference themes has been 'cross-generational work'.

Lost Chord, Yorkshire Arts

Lost Chord is an offshoot of Live Music Now, an organisation of young professional musicians sharing their music with people who would not normally have access to live

performances. Lost Chord is a three-year project in 16 older people's residential homes in Rotherham, of which the majority of the clients have dementia.

The aims of Lost Chord are interesting because they directly reflect the mutual benefit of the intergenerational approach. It seeks to bring live performances, of high quality, to people whose access is otherwise restricted, whilst at the same time assisting young professional musicians. The project uses a variety of musical styles, such as classical, jazz, and folk. Around two hundred concerts a year are being performed, with an average of twenty older people in attendance.

The benefits to the participants in the residential homes are the opportunity for reminiscence, 'awakening', enjoyment, singing, active participation and an enlivening atmosphere. The benefit to the young people and organisers is the breadth of audiences covered, and the opportunity to enhance the musician's skills.

The project is dependent on the staff in the care homes facilitating the process. The evaluation identified that liaison with the venue staff had created some difficulty, and would need to be approached differently in future. Encouraging support and active involvement was also an issue, which may be addressed if care staff are engaged more fully in the project.

Magic Me

Magic Me is a dedicated intergenerational arts organisation and locally based charity in the East End of London, which runs projects linking young people with elders from a rich mixture of cultural backgrounds. Its way of working is to bring together young people and elders in long-term programmes of training, visits and creative activity. School pupils aged from 9 to 16 years make regular visits to a local residential home or day centre, joining elders in activities including photography, music, poetry and dancing. Holiday clubs are also held, enabling the friendships to continue out of school time. The project leaders at Magic Me are all professional visual and performing artists, with experience of working with diverse community groups.

In 1999, Magic Me celebrated its tenth birthday. Through its research and practical projects, it is finding out more about the needs of children and elders from the local Bangladeshi and Somali communities, and developing a deeper understanding of working with elders with dementia. The Director, Susan Langford, records that in 2000 Magic Me led:

- Imaginative arts projects for hospital patients with dementia *and* the nurses who work with them.
- Bilingual projects that created points of contact between people of different cultures.
- Action research initiatives to further improve the quality of their work and develop new ideas.
- Projects involving singing, writing, weaving, theatre, video, stained glass, ceramics, photography; ways of exploring identity, sharing skills and celebrating achievement.

Magic Me staff are very clear about the need to prepare thoroughly for intergenerational activities. Before their first visit to a partner venue, pupils take part in training sessions

that mix drama, role-play and discussion to explore their fears and misconceptions about older people. They also practise techniques to use when meeting adults who are confused, or have hearing and speech impairment. Preparation with elders is also considered essential, to prepare them for their meetings with the young people and to explore any potential issues. Project artists, in liaison with nurses or care assistants, meet elders individually or in groups, explaining the aims of Magic Me and inviting their participation and ideas. All the project staff, who facilitate the process, are given training and support to carry out often challenging work. Increasingly, Magic Me is seeking to recruit bilingual artists, to support communication and understanding within cross-cultural projects. Here is an example of one of Magic Me's multicultural, intergenerational projects.

Friendly People, wicked places – the 'mapping Wapping' project

The aims of this piece of work were:

- To research and record the very different lives of the ninety or so people taking part.
- To enable participants to discover one another's past experiences, present lives and dreams for the future.
- To build relationships between people of different ages and from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- To begin to build a relationship between the two groups of elders, white and Asian, whose centres were adjacent, but between whom there was little contact.

The project involved four venues in Wapping, London, all within walking distance of one another. Deancross, a Social Services Centre, was created in the borough of Tower Hamlets in 1995, to develop and provide services that were more culturally appropriate for the growing number of Asian elders; 35 clients attend daily from Monday to Friday. Magic Me facilitated the involvement of a small, multicultural community primary school, Hermitage School. A link was also made between Fitzgerald Lodge, a residential home catering for mostly white elders, and Blue Gate Fields School, where 95 per cent of pupils were from the Bangladeshi community.

Both groups of pupils visited their partner elders for project workshop sessions lasting an hour every week for one term, from September to December 1997. From January to Easter 1998, the weekly sessions continued, sometimes intergenerational and sometimes for the adults and children only. The emphasis was on the process of interaction, not solely in the outcome.

During shared activities, the children and adults recorded information about their own and one another's lives through writing, drawing and photographs, creating a 44-page paperback book. The children from the two schools met to design a cover and write up introductions for the publication. The groups also made two large collage maps from old magazines, showing the places where people lived.

This intergenerational project provides an example of mapping a diverse community in order to promote cultural understanding and generational exchange. It is possible that such an activity could have wide ranging influence in improving community relationships.

Magic Me has recently produced 'Sharing the Experience' (2001), a practical handbook on running intergenerational arts projects.

Memory Lane Café

This project between a local high school and a residential home for older people forms part of a school community project. Pupils from Peebles High School volunteered in a café that was created in Dunwhinny Lodge in 1998 so that residents, many with dementia, could visit an environment that was different from the rest of the living establishment. The café was situated away from the main thoroughfare of the home and seen as a source of refuge for the residents.

In 1999, the pupils created a sensory garden for the residents, and in 2000 the 'Beach Hut' project was set up to ask residents about their past lives.

Museums Reminiscence Network

The Museums Reminiscence Network was established in 1995 to share information and promote good practice among those using – or making available – museum artefacts for reminiscence work. It produces a directory of museums undertaking reminiscence work, and the categories listed in the directory include intergenerational activities.

National Tenants Resource Centre, Trafford Hall

This charitable organisation is included because it responded to the call for information and is interested in developing an intergenerational approach to its work. It seeks to address social exclusion that is induced through poverty by 'offering training and support to all those living and working in low income communities around the UK, to develop their skills, confidence and capacity to tackle problems and reverse poor conditions'. Currently, it is developing a residential training programme that aims to inspire and enable young people aged between 11 and 16 to work effectively with adults, and for adults to do the same with young people, for the benefit of their community.

Northcourt Nursing Home

The activities co-ordinator at Northcourt Nursing Home in Bury St Edmunds, Adrian Grenville, has been running intergenerational programmes for a number of years with local schools. He has also extended the activities into Community Education, Health and Social Services, and voluntary groups like Age Concern and the Alzheimer's Society. In particular, these have included a school for disabled children with special needs, disability groups, and year 6 of the primary school. The broad themes are music and artwork; for example, the children have assisted the residents to paint a 49-foot (approx. 15m) banner on the theme of music. There have also been holiday workshops on craft when the older people can take part.

The latest project is a 1940s reminiscence event of music-making and artwork, taking place in the local school. This is linked to the National Curriculum requirements on World War Two (WWII), and the children will be learning WWII songs from the residents, plus oral history with the children asking prepared questions. The intergenerational group are role-playing characters from the 1940s, and camouflaging a wall in khaki and green paint and sponge pads.

Through his experience Adrian Grenville has made a number of observations about intergenerational activities. He found that where people with dementia interact with young

people who have learning disabilities, they offer mutual support to each other. The disabilities are ignored when they are working towards a common theme. He was particularly aware, through working with a young adult with Down's syndrome, that she stimulates the residents and reduces incidences of challenging behaviour.

Out of the Landscape – a book of stories and reminiscences from the Yorkshire Dales

The project was the result of a bid to the Pre-school Learning Alliance, which had funds to provide Family Learning Millennium awards. It enabled a number of activities in Bidsdale and Raisdale to take place that brought the younger and older residents together throughout the millennium year to produce a book of stories and memories. The book was to focus on the seasons and cycles of the year, because these symbolised the life blood of the community.

The activities included a summer coffee evening collecting reminiscences on tape, visits of young children (accompanied by parents) to older people who had lived and worked on farms, a whole-school visit to a newspaper and creating a front page. In the winter months, computer skills were developed, and then contrasted with turning all the lights out to show how things were lit, playing old fashioned games and serving traditional hot drinks. In January 2000 there was a visit from a writer telling about life as a school inspector and the hall was packed with young and old.

The motivation for the project was a concern in this rural community that the village was losing its identity because of farm closures, the high price of housing and the dispersal of older people around the dale. The village school was in danger of closing, and the community of older people were trying to preserve the identity of the dale for the benefit of the young people and the future. Besides the millennium project, there were other key traditions in the village which brought the generations together in a multi- or cross-generational way; for example, three days of carol singing around the farms and harvest time when the farmers present their fleeces and produce, and a 10-year-old boy who, as the next generation farmer, presents hay and eggs. One village parent comments:

“In one sense we do not strive to create intergenerational understanding, but on the other hand, if we do not consciously do so we may lose everything the village stands for. This in mind we created the book using a year's events” (Miriam Stanton in Chop Gate).

Project 16 – quotes from ‘Book of Memories’ young and old

This arts based, intergenerational learning project was initiated by the Arts Development Officer in the local authority in Witney, Oxfordshire, and was a partnership between the University of the Third Age (U3A) and sixth form students at the local secondary school. As in the case of all structured intergenerational projects, the intention was to provide mutual benefits to the younger and older generations, as well as supporting the generation in-between. The aims were:

- To explore together the experience of being 16, now and in the past, and to enable this information to be interpreted into A-level curriculum work in photography/art, drama and English.
- To encourage U3A members to take the work further and record their whole life experience in some way, including the use of ICT.

The project had four phases over a period of two years. These were initial planning and fundraising, U3A oral history sessions, joint activities with the students, and presentation evenings.

The practical outcomes were: the 'Book of Memories', computer generated photographic life stories, drama presentations, an art exhibition, and the construction of memory boxes. Fifty people took part, aged between 15 to 84, of which 22 were from the U3A.

The evaluation raised some important issues:

- The older people learned about being 16 today, and gained many new insights.
- A student reported that: "Talking to the members of the U3A made me realise just how similar the ladies had been to us when they were 16 or 17. The same kind of things mattered to them that matter to us now."
- The presentations allowed work to be more visible and to ripple out into the wider community.
- Members of the U3A would have liked more time to work with the students.
- The project was unable to link with other groups who had experience of working within the A-level curriculum, which they felt was a disadvantage.

Ragged School Museum

This museum aims to enable everyone to gain inspiration, learning and enjoyment from exploring the history of the East End of London and its people. One of its key aims is to create a sense of community while celebrating diversity, and to encourage active participation. Through ensuring access to the exhibitions by as many people as possible, it engages with the culturally diverse population of Tower Hamlets, where 23 per cent of the community are Bangladeshi.

The museum was set up by members of the local community, and it continues to rely heavily on volunteers. Intergenerational work is seen as an important aspect of its activities, particularly with its Schools Programme. Through an Age Concern Millennium Award, it runs a Volunteer Guide scheme, where local older people talk to children aged 6–11 about growing up in the East End. It focuses on handling some domestic objects, which are familiar to the guide but not to the children, and as one of its outcomes the project allows those who have left grandparents in another country to make a personal link across the generations. Evaluation from teachers and pupils showed how much the children had enjoyed the contact with the older people, and one teacher said of the school children:

"They have the beginnings of an understanding of change over a lifetime. A very difficult concept to teach".

A tribute to one of the Volunteer Guides, Tom Moore, told how he was fiercely proud of the sense of community that bound people in the East End together, and believed strongly in giving something back to the community he lived in.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme

This volunteering programme for people over 50 years of age has more than 7000 volunteers in the UK. The older volunteers use their life experiences and knowledge to create and manage projects, which meet community needs. The Schools programme involves RSVP volunteers providing support to teachers and pupils alike through activities such as one-to-one support for children with learning difficulties; drama experiences as a way for children to express themselves; and organisation of school resources, library and after-school clubs.

Older volunteers initiative

The Better Government for Older People (BGOP) and RSVP submitted a successful joint bid to the Home Office's Older Volunteers Initiative to run volunteer projects in nine of the BGOP pilot sites. In Middlesbrough, activities include volunteers offering support, through Home-Start, to local young families and single parents. The volunteers provide a friendly, experienced ear for those who want to talk, as well as knowledge of local services and practical and emotional support. At a comprehensive school in Ormesby, four RSVP volunteers offer support to young people and those at the school with physical and sensory disabilities.

Rolling Back the Years – an integrated arts and reminiscence project

This pilot project in Cornwall is an example of enhancing life for those in residential homes through engaging the residents and creating meaningful partnerships. It was designed to foster encounters, across generational boundaries, between the residents of Trengrouse Care Home and pupils from Parc Eglos primary school. It was supported by Cornwall Care Ltd, a company with responsibility for 18 residential care homes throughout the county, and funded largely through the Arts Council's 'Arts 4 Everyone' Express Lottery Fund. It was inspired and led by the Music and Dance Education Trust (MaDE), with Pat Hickman as dancer and Chris Morgan as musician. MaDE is a community arts group based in St Ives, established in 1996 to work with pre-schools and elderly care homes.

The aim of Rolling Back the Years was to explore creative interaction between the young and old generations through arts and reminiscence work, using the living memories and experiences of older people. It ran for the ten weeks of the Autumn term and particular attention was paid to the process. There were combined workshops, the choosing and preparing of music and dances, mounting exhibitions of relevant artefacts from the local museum and arranging displays of work done in class, leading to a performance in December 1998. It was planned with a multi-disciplinary steering group, and the schedule drawn up:

- Staff development – for teachers, care workers, support staff and MaDE.
- Workshops.
- Performance – four collaborative performances.
- Evaluation.

Each phase was carefully planned and implemented – which, it was believed, contributed to the success of the process and the final outcome.

It dovetailed the project into the National Curriculum History requirements covering 1930 to present day, which enabled the teaching staff to participate and gave greater credibility to the activities. The core planning took place in intergenerational workshops over a term, with raw material gathered from the residents in the care home being used in the school for a wider group of students to work on. The core group consisted of 12 pupils joining 12 of their elderly friends each week for shared workshops. In total, 200 participants were involved, including the middle generation of teachers and carers. The core group fed back to the five classes at their school the ideas, material and, above all, the quality of the relationships they were enjoying at the home.

One of the facilitators, James Sargent, comments: "Any generation gap seemed to have dissolved and the joy of taking part, of giving something of themselves and at the same time receiving, was the overall impression" Also, he recalls: "An 89-year-old resident with her group of ten-year-olds, keeping the pulse of a spoken round with her walking stick, summoning sparkle and vigour thought to have been lost long ago".

A 90-minute final performance was promised of scenes covering the period 1930 to the 1990s. With the exception of some songs, it was all new work. This included a variety of dance patterns with musical accompaniments in stone, wood, metal and voice as well as more conventional instruments. The richness of texture, in sound and movement, the basic elements of step, gesture and form remained simple, enabling participation by everyone.

Evaluation

The performance was deemed a success, but many other complex outcomes emerged. In particular the process gave rise to discoveries and opportunities outside the intended scope of the project.

The children and residents, through working together, formed relationships based on mutuality and common purpose. This also affected staff in both places, and the school and residential home wished to build on and develop the relationship. The children's energy and enthusiasm during their visits to the home meant that the atmosphere of creativity and purpose spread throughout the establishment. The residents and staff discovered new aspects to each other's identity; recollection had brought to light experiences, memories and skills which would have remained obscured and which undoubtedly enriched interactions between residents and staff.

The project challenged assumptions about older people, particularly in residential care, as having very little to contribute to the community. Relations tend to be one way, with visitors expecting to be the active givers, for example in the manner of Christmas carol services and other seasonal rituals. In this carefully planned and skilfully executed project, it was assumed from the start that the residents would play a vital role, and that they would be capable of working together creatively with young people to produce a complex and demanding piece of work.

One of the conclusions was that key care workers and teachers need to receive training and professional development throughout such a project, so as not to undermine the creative potential and contribution to the whole. Also, it is necessary to nurture flexible attitudes and responses between young and old to ensure that all contributions are equally valued. Pat Hickman, Co-Director of Music and Dance Education, believes that:

“In an age of decreasing employment opportunities and an increasing population of older people, the time is right to create opportunities which utilise people’s skills in a way which will bridge the gaps of time and age and celebrate the community in which we are living and beyond” (1998).

The final recommendations were to build a strategic county-wide programme which established a grassroots network. This would facilitate a greater shared understanding of the value of the arts, intergenerational experiences and reminiscence work in the community as a whole. It was suggested that county-wide training and staff development could take place with a National Vocational Qualification available in caring and the arts.

MaDE is currently establishing a pilot research project with Cornwall Care Ltd and the Health Promotion Service, and also partnering a theatre company in a Healthy Living Centre bid.

Senior Studies Institute, University of Strathclyde

The Senior Studies Institute (SSI) was established in 1991 at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, as a dedicated centre of excellence in Lifelong Learning for people over 50 years. As a response to the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between the Generations in 1993, the Institute ran two summer schools to promote intergenerational learning. The first one, in 1994, included intergenerational pairs from France, Ireland and Scotland and was the first of its type in Britain.

The summer schools brought together people aged over 50 with young people aged 8 to 14, to learn in pairs, with one older person accompanied by one younger person. The rationale was that older adults and children learning together has been underdeveloped in formal educational settings in the UK. In this situation, any positive benefits of interaction between the generations are not a planned part of the curriculum, but incidental and peripheral. The content of each programme was intended as a framework for creating an environment where the experience of learning together would open up insights, tolerance and good communication between generations. Evaluation of the summer schools showed that there were new perceptions of the partners, and the beginning of intergenerational understanding and appreciation.

Since 1995, the Senior Studies Institute has not engaged in a dedicated intergenerational project, but a number of its activities have intergenerational components, and one in particular is recognising the particular contribution that older people are making.

The spin project

This project works in partnership with the Spinal Injuries Unit at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. The aim is for volunteers to provide quality support by playing a pivotal role in a patient’s quality of life through social, cultural and outside activities. Many of the patients in the unit are under 30, and the volunteers from the Senior Studies Institute are in their 60s to 70s. Anecdotally, it has been noted that the wisdom and life experiences of the older volunteers make a particular contribution to the patients’ well-being and reduce feelings of social isolation.

Campus guides

Volunteers from the SSI offer a personalised and unique service to the community by showing people around the University’s historic buildings of Barony and Ramshorn. They conduct campus tours for visitors and meet up with school parties.

Sixty Plus

Sixty Plus, a voluntary agency based in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, supports local older residents in maintaining their independence. It has 1300 members and service users and 200 volunteers, and has a well-established intergenerational strand to its work, funded by The Task Force Trust and The Campden Charities. The focus is on young people, under 25 years of age, matched as volunteers with older people who have an identified need. There are some Millennium Volunteers working on schemes and, whilst the emphasis is on young people supporting older people, the organisation is seeking to extend its intergenerational activities to include other initiatives. It has three intergenerational focuses:

- Reading for older people with sight loss.
- Teaching English to non-English speakers.
- IT and internet skills.

Reading project, 'bringing older and younger people together'

This is the longest established Sixty Plus project, begun in 1997, which aims to assist older people with a visual impairment to receive practical help with reading, writing and other administrative requirements. The young people, who are mainly sixth form students, receive training in visual impairment awareness to help them understand their roles and to perform effectively. They carry out weekly visits for an hour to an hour and a half, and the project offers a good example of multi-agency working between a range of statutory and voluntary agencies.

Language support, 'bringing generations and cultures together'

This project at Sixty Plus began in June 2000 when a member's mother, newly arrived in Britain, felt isolated due to her lack of English. It is a good example of how the intergenerational exchange has reciprocal benefits for both generations, even though it appears in this case that the younger person is giving to the older one. A young, English-speaking volunteer is matched with an older person who wishes to practise English, and they meet for about an hour each week to use English in natural conversational situations. Learning goals include wanting to make doctor's appointments over the phone and wishing to join various groups to extend friendship networks. The young people gain through developing communication skills and learning about another person's culture and life history.

Computer project, 'creating younger and older learning partnerships'

Young volunteers act as computer coaches to older people. They receive one day's training in adult learning before they begin, and are then matched, on a one to one basis, with an older person, who has expressed an interest in developing information technology skills.

In one example, an 87-year-old woman, Mrs S, who lives alone and has mobility problems that prevent her getting outside without support, was loaned a second-hand computer so that she could decide whether or not she could:

- Learn the basic computer functions.
- Enhance her independence by using the internet to do her shopping and banking.

- Maintain contact with relatives overseas.

After attending the training session, 17-year-old Thomas visits Mrs S most Wednesdays for one and a half hours. After five sessions, Mrs S reports that she has learned mouse control, keyboard skills and basic word-processing. She looks forward to Thomas's visits and says they get on well. Thomas is pleased with Mrs S's progress, and feels that what he is achieving with Mrs S is rewarding. He enjoys his visits to her.

Sound it Out

This is a community arts organisation that offers opportunities and support for people to make music in Birmingham. West Midlands Arts has funded some of its work through 'Year of the Artist', and the Regional Arts Lottery Programme. It has done some very interesting and challenging work, and whilst it has not planned projects specifically between older and younger people, it has worked across the generations to address issues of race and culture. One example of their work was with the Asian Children and Carers project, which worked with young disabled children and their carers. Also, it had the first ever community music project specifically involving the Chinese community of Birmingham. This was funded by the Grantham York Trust, the Gulbenkian Foundation, and the Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust.

Chinese cross-generational music project

Aims

- For people of different generations within the Chinese community to come together to share and create music.
- To provide opportunities for participatory music work for Chinese musicians, working in a range of musical styles.

Objectives

- To involve participants in music making that reflects their own culture and influences.
- To encourage participants to create their own music.
- To offer youth and community groups opportunities to work with professional musicians.
- To identify Chinese musicians working in both traditional and modern styles.
- For professional Chinese musicians to be able to develop their participatory music skills.
- To hold an event which brings together the different participating groups to share music and ideas from different generations within the Chinese community.

Various Chinese community groups, youth groups and elderly people's residential centres were identified, largely through the Chinese Community Centre, and approached to see if they wished to participate. Five young men aged from 15 to 18 years took part, older adults from the weekly English class aged from 40 to 50, and elders from the Elders Lunch Club, all retired and in the 60 to 70 age group. In the older generation, there was a predominance of women.

Eight workshops were held with four groups of people identified to create, record and perform music, using a diversity of Chinese music as source material. This culminated in a performance at the official opening of the Q-Lorc Residential and Resource Centre. The age groups performed separately, but at one show they did start to integrate and begin the process of understanding each other more.

The evaluation of the project demonstrated that the participants valued the opportunity to take part in a project that reflected their own culture and to present that work to a wider audience. The emphasis was on reflecting the cultural dimensions of the people involved, but the organisers recognised the potential benefit that would be had by bringing the generations together. This would create greater understanding and a sharing of changed cultural values, and would reduce conflict between the younger and older generations. Some of the facilitators were English but, as the generation in-between, they also learnt about some of the issues facing the Chinese community in Birmingham.

Summer Residency Project

This Leicestershire example of a multigenerational approach combines children, young people and adults of all ages performing to groups across the generations. The aim is to develop a more inclusive community where all its members are valued.

The project is planned as a five-day residential event, facilitated by Bill Brookman, a local theatre director specialising in street theatre, work in schools and with special needs groups. The event has been planned to fulfil the criteria of the Charnwood Parish of St. Peter and Storer Ward's Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, which is to promote community ideals within the locality and Agenda 21. Visits are proposed to a psycho-geriatric ward, an adult day centre, a Centre for children with special needs, and the Stroke Club at St Peter's Community Centre, as well as work with asylum seekers' children.

The activities include a juggling club for young people aged 8 to 13 who have an interest in circus skills, the 101 Dance Group for 11- to 18-year-olds with an interest in dance, and Clown One UK, for adults wanting to participate in clowning in hospitals and places of special need. The audiences will be interactively involved wherever possible, often on a one-to-one basis.

Sure Start

Age Concern Enfield works in a London borough with a high racial mix and well over a hundred different languages spoken in schools. The Sure Start programme sets out to improve the health and well-being of families with children aged up to 4 years who are at risk of social exclusion. Age Concern Enfield's services focus on two wards in the Edmonton area, where older volunteers have several placement opportunities. These include a crèche to support ESOL classes for young refugee parents run by Enfield College, the Temporary Accommodation Play Project which is mainly attended by refugee families, two nursery schools, the Family Centre and the Sure Start Family Drop-In. Currently 50 volunteers are engaged in the Age Concern Enfield TransAge Action project, which includes its work with Sure Start.

Teenagers, War and Museums

The purpose of this three-way project, between a High School, the Imperial War Museum North and the local community, was to resolve conflict in the community by learning how best to engage young people. There was an awareness by community workers, in an area

of social divide, assumptions and negative stereotyping, that relationships between students and local residents needed to improve. Also, the project wanted to support young people's learning by offering them an understanding of the links and similarities with present day.

Year 8 of the secondary school took part with local older people in a project to promote understanding and communication between the different generations. The focus of the intervention was to be the Second World War, which forms part of the National Curriculum. Older residents were invited into school for a two-day workshop, which would lead to the development of a web site. Imperial War Museum North visited a month later to learn lessons for the museum service exhibition and education programme through discussion groups with the young people. The following comments from the students about meeting the older people were noted: "I think it would be good if an older person was to interview us" (rather than just one way). "It gave us an opportunity to clear our names."

Regarding the history of the war, the students felt the older people had made it real, brought it to life, and challenged their perceptions of wartime experiences. Relations were improved between the generations by making connections with current experiences, such as the Manchester bomb in 1996. Some felt the intergenerational project made them more interested in museums, particularly temporary exhibition programmes, and that real people made it more interesting. There was a suggestion that students could act as museum guides, and that older people could act as interpreters or volunteers with schools.

Time Travellers

This intergenerational initiative in the London Borough of Hillingdon was set up in response to conflict and issues of social isolation that were identified in the local community, and is an example of a strong local partnership. The project has as its aim to improve mutual understanding between local young people and older people.

A number of factors triggered the Time Travellers project. In 1997, a consultant geriatrician spoke at a seminar about winter bed pressures at the local hospital, and her belief that older people needed to be more closely linked to their local communities. At the same time, older people on a troubled housing estate were in conflict with local young people and felt afraid to leave their homes.

The head of community affairs at a local manufacturer, Hasbro, who attended the seminar and was based near the troubled estate, set up a steering group of local key players, which is now established as an example of a strong local partnership. Volunteers were recruited through advertisements in the local press, libraries and so on, and in 1998 a dozen volunteers began helping in four local schools surrounding the troubled estate. The scheme now has a part-time co-ordinator, employed by Age Concern, and it has spread to the rest of the borough.

In return for volunteering, the older people are offered a free education course of their choice. The recruitment advertising and the adult education courses are sponsored by the local manufacturer, which is still a focal point for the steering group's activities. The manager considers that this involvement enhances the company's reputation and it is seen as 'a good neighbour' to the local community.

The scheme also looks at different ways to involve schools in supporting older people attending day centres, residential and nursing homes. One community school has linked students doing a GNVQ in health and social care with an over-60s lunch club.

Wales Pensioners Assembly

In October 2000, Mr Gordon Carruthers, Honorary Secretary of the Wales Pensioners West Glamorgan Branch, won the National Lottery Charities Board, Swansea Citizenship Millennium Award Scheme. He wanted the Wales Pensioners Assembly to hold a one-day conference on the theme of 'Pensioners and Future Pensioners'. Mr Carruthers believed very strongly that the Pensioners Movement needed to engage with young people, to include them in debates about pensions and pensioners rights and to understand their expectations for the future. He personally was against what he called 'elderly ghettos', and wanted the issues of both generations to be considered. He wished Wales to lead the way in opening up links between pensioners and young people.

At the one-day event of the Pensioners' Assembly, speakers included the President of the Swansea Student's Union and the City and County of Swansea Youth Forum, as well as talks by young people. The event provided the catalyst to develop the initiative further, and in March 2001, an application was made for continuation of the Millennium grant to fund the all-Wales Pensioners' Assembly. The Swansea branch was also linking with Help the Aged to form the Swansea Wales Pensioners' Forum. The aim of the Wales Pensioners, championed by Mr Carruthers, is:

"To use available funding to consolidate the Swansea based initiative to improve communication and understanding with the younger generation – the pensioners of the future."

Objectives

- To map out the number and types of organisations representing the younger generations.
- To ensure that a two-way dialogue develops on matters of common concern.
- To encourage local businesses, local authorities, schools, colleges and universities to collaborate in enabling our vision to succeed.

The method proposed was to offer a visiting speaker to describe the many roles played in society by older people, to insist that older people are not excluded from events and discussions because of their age and disabilities, and to publicise vigorously in the media, the events that demonstrate the unity between various age groups. The initiative has received support from the Local Authority Community Recreation Section which is to pilot the project in community centres in Swansea.

In April 2001, an agenda item was put forward and added to the constitution. It stated that: "all further meetings of the City and County of Swansea Wales Pensioners Forum will welcome the attendance of youth organisations as equal partners". The organisation now has the slogan: "Wales Pensioners Assembly for Pensioners and Future Pensioners".

This is a unique example of intergenerational practice, which relied on a 'champion' with a passionate belief in the need to connect the generations. It will be interesting to watch how it moves forward.

Year 7 Intergenerational Mentoring Project

The purpose of this Beth Johnson Foundation initiative is to develop a sustainable intergenerational mentoring scheme in one Local Education Authority, across the majority of high schools in their reception year (year 7). The three-year project (1999-2002) has been funded through a National Health Action Zone Innovation Award. It aims to promote educational, social and health benefits for both the older and younger participants and, through the process of engaging two generations, to develop community capacity and create positive models of ageing.

Older people (aged over 50) work one to one alongside young people in the classroom, supporting and encouraging their learning. Currently, 50 volunteers are supporting 50 individual young people in ten high schools. However, the older people also interact with other young people in the classroom, the whole school and the local community, making the potential impact of the scheme, in terms of challenging negative stereotypes, much wider. A study of the experience of older volunteers in schools (Granville 2000) indicated that the presence of an older adult has beneficial effects beyond the individual child, and influences the perceptions of the local community.

An evaluation of the project will be available at the end of 2002.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank all of the people and organisations whose work informed this Review. Below is a list of individuals with whom we spoke or corresponded and organisations whose work features in the Review.

Rosemary Allan

Volunteer Co-ordinator and
Age Resource Desk
Age Concern North Tyneside
22 Northumberland Square
North Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE30 1PW

Mike Amos-Simpson

National Tenants Resource Centre
Trafford Hall
Ince Lane
Wimbolds Trafford
Chester
CH2 4JP

Eli Anderson

Youth Officer
Westminster Youth Service
29 Cosway Street
Marylebone
London
NW1 6TN

ARVAC

2D Aberdeen Studios
22-24 Highbury Grove
London
N5 2EA

Karen Bell

Policy and Resources Officer
West Midlands Arts
82 Granville Street
Birmingham
B1 2LH

Barbara Bond

Development Officer
Witney U3A
221 Farmers Close
Witney Oxon
OX28 1LH

Rachel Bottomley

Northern Arts
Central Square
Forth Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 3PJ

Denise Brace

Museum of Edinburgh
Huntly House
142 Canongate
Edinburgh
EH8 8DD

Jan Branch

ART GENERATIONS
Elmgrove Primary School
289 Beersbridge Road
Belfast BT5 4RS

Bill Brookman

Vanda Brown

Activage Unit
Age Concern England
Walkden House
10 Melton Street
London
NW1 2EB

Margaret Butterworth

NAPA
5 Tavistock Place
London
WC1H 9SN

Julia Calver

Regional Development Officer
Lifelong Learning
Yorkshire Arts
21 Bond Street
Dewsbury
West Yorkshire
WF13 1AX

Gordon Carruthers

Hon. Secretary
Wales Pensioners Forum
16 Berw Road
Mayhill
Swansea
SA1 6UD

Ann Carter

Imperial War Museum North
Lambeth Road
London
SE1 6HZ

Peter Collins

Generations in Action
Salford Education Business Partnership
1st Floor Charles House
Albert Street
Eccles
Manchester
M30 0PD

Judy Crabb

Senior Community Services Manager
WRVS
Manchester Administration Centre
Ground Floor
Duckworth House
The Lancastrian Office Centre
Talbot Road
Old Trafford
Manchester
M32 0FP

Cynthia Dize

Director
Sixty Plus
1 Thorpe Close
London
W10 5XL

Catherine Drury**East England Arts**

Communication Department
Cherry Hinton Hall
Cherry Hinton Road
Cambridge
CB1 8DW

East Midlands Arts

Mountfields House
Epinal Way
Loughborough
Leicester
LE11 0QE

Josh Elwell

Formerly of Forest Forge
Crow Arch Lane
Ringwood
Hampshire
BH24 1SF

Nicholas Foster

Opportunities Centre
370-376 Uxbridge Road
Shepherds Bush
London
W12 7LL

Sheila Gent

Community Support Officer
Age Concern Kingston Upon Thames
14 Nelson Road
New Malden
Surrey
KT3 5EA

Sally Giddens

Education Officer
South West Arts
Bradinch Place
Gandy Street
Exeter
EX4 3LS

Adrian Grenville

Northcourt Nursing Home
Northgate Street
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 1HS

Lesley Hart

Head of Senior Studies Institute
University of Strathclyde
Graham Hills Building
40 George Street
Glasgow G1 1QE

Pat Hickman

Music and Dance Education (MaDE)
Stepping Stones
Plain an Gwarry
Marazion
Cornwall
TR17 0DR

Homeshare

3rd Floor
55 Southwark Street
London
SE1 1RU

Gill Horitz

Arts Development Officer
Bournemouth Borough Council
Leisure and Tourism Directorate
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum
East Cliff
Bournemouth
BH1 3AA

Jayne Humm

Community Development Foundation
60 Highbury Grove
London
N5 2AG

Chris Jones

Development Manager
CEDC
Unit 1C
Grovelands Court
Groveland Estate
Langford Road
Exhall
Coventry

Di Jones

Project Manager of the All Day Club
26 Vicarage Road
Hereford
HR1 2QN

**Jeff Joseph Sale Moor
Technology College**

Norris Road
Manchester
M33 3JR

Susan Langford

Director
Magic Me
118 Commercial Street
London
E1 6NF

Lindsey Lavender

National Programmes Co-ordinator –
Community
Groundwork UK
85-87 Cornwall Street
Birmingham
B3 3BY

Rebecca Lim

Imperial War Museum North
Lambeth Road
London
SE1 6HZ

Nan Maitland

Homeshare International
54 Christchurch Street
London
SW3 4AR

Dave Martin

Social Services
The London Borough of Camden
The Cravendale Centre
218 Eversholt Street
London
NW1 1BD

David McConnell

Age Concern Northern Ireland
3 Lower Crescent
Belfast
BT7 1NR

Jennifer McIntyre

Senior Manager
ActivAge Unit
Age Concern Enfield
Community House
311 Fore Street
Edmonton
London
N9 0PZ

Denise Murphy

Director
CSV/ RSVP
237 Pentonville Road
London
N1 9NJ

Denise Nelson

Sheltered Services Manager
Irwell Valley Housing Association
Peterloo Court
St Lukes Road
Salford
M6 5GZ

Northwest Arts Board

Manchester House
22 Bridge Street
Manchester
M3 3AB

Nick Pizey

Age Concern England
Astral House
1268 London Road
London
SW16 4ER

Margaret Plummer

Norfolk Adult Education Service
Curriculum Office
Wensum Lodge
169 King Street
Norwich
NR1 1QW

Ragged School Museum

Curator
46-50 Copperfield Road
London
E3 4RR

Norma Raynes

Professor of Social Care
Faculty of Health and Social Care
The University of Salford
Stalham Building
Salford
Manchester
M6 6PU

Pat Robertson

Age Concern South Staffordshire
Sure Start Programme
21 Park Road
Cannock
WS11 1JN

Stella Robinson

Assistant Regional Co-ordinator -
Association of Retired Persons
20 Gerrard Road
Brierdene
Whitley Bay
Tyne and Weir
NE26 4NL

James Sargent**David Savill**

Arts & Education Co-ordinator
Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre
11 Blackheath Village
London
SE3 9LA

Small World Theatre

Fern Villa
Lllandygwydd
Cardigan
Ceredigion
SA43 2QX

Claire Smith

Director
Sound It Out Community Music
The Arch
Unit G9
48-52 Floodgate Street
Birmingham B5 5SL

South East Arts

Union House
Eridge Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN4 8HF

Southern Arts

13 St. Clement Street
Winchester
Hants SO23 9DQ

Miriam Stanton

Pip Tench

Intergenerational Co-ordinator
Bridging the Gap
North Tyneside Council
Care in the Community Function
123 Great Lime Road
West Moor
Newcastle
NE12 7DQ

Sam Tennant

Jane Tonne

North West Arts Board
Manchester House
22 Bridge Street
Manchester
M3 3AB

Volunteer Development Scotland

72 Murray Place
Stirling
FK8 2BX

Beryl Whitehead

SARP Coordinator
Nottingham Health Authority
1 Standard Court
Park Row
Nottingham
NG1 6GN

Michelle Whitworth

LifeLink Co-ordinator
Age Concern North Tyneside
North Tyneside College
Embleton Avenue
Wallsend
Tyne and Wear
NE28 9NJ

Ann Wilson

Beamish Open Air Museum
The Regional Resource Centre
Beamish
County Durham
DH9 0RG

Steve Wilson

London Arts
2 Pear Tree Court
London
EC1 0DS

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The Centre for Intergenerational Practice
The Beth Johnson Foundation
Parkfield House
64 Princes Road
Hartshill
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 7JL
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1782 844 036

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