



**European Approaches
to Inter-Generational
Lifelong Learning**

**Derbyshire Intergenerational
Strategy – Gardening Projects**

ENGLAND
Case Study Identity Card
2007



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EAGLE CASE STUDY

ENGLAND

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| Work Package: | WP 2 Scoping & Mapping |
| Authors: | Louise Middleton (BJF) & Jen Edgar (Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy), United Kingdom |
| Research Coordination: | Thomas Fischer & Walter F. Kugemann (FIM-NewLearning), Germany |
| Project Officer at the Euro- pean Commission: | Brian Holmes & Ramunas Kuncaitis |
| Publisher: | FIM-NewLearning, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Konrad-Zuse-Straße 3, D-91052 Erlangen, Phone: +49 9131 8524735, Fax: +49 9131 8524738, E-Mail: info@fim.uni-erlangen.de , Web: www.fim.uni-erlangen.de |

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Derbyshire County Council have been advancing their Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy project (DIGS) through its school communities and its Better Government for Older People programme. The strategy aims to increase activity within communities to develop social contacts and awareness between the generations.

As part of the strategy's developmental work four gardening projects produced two sensory gardens, a wildlife garden and an allotment. The participants gain knowledge and a new, or renewed, perspective of people in their community, which teaches them to value and respect others leading to, improved societal cohesion.

The projects showed that they had made a positive contribution to the lives of the participants and their communities. Three further strands of projects around book groups, digital photography and writing and drama were evaluated to inform the development of the Council's Intergenerational Strategy.



2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Title</i> | Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy – Gardening Projects |
| <i>Country/ Countries of origin</i> | England – East Midlands (Derbyshire) <u>Comments:</u> Derbyshire County Council have been promoting intergenerational projects through schools throughout the County with the Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy Project (DIGS). |
| <i>Duration</i> | Starting Year: 2005 End Year: Sept 2007/Mar 2008 <u>Comments:</u> Derbyshire has taken a strategic approach to intergenerational work and has recommended that intergenerational work is taken forward as one of its key well being activities. |
| <i>Status</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running <u>Comments:</u> There are four different gardening projects. |
| <i>Managing institution</i> | Public organisation i.e. Derbyshire County Council |
| <i>Contact details</i> | Last Name: Edgar First Name: Jen Title: Ms Position/Role: DIGS Project Manager Institution: Derbyshire County Council Street: 182 Browndedge Road Town: Buxton Post Code: SK17 7AA Phone: 0044 1298 27472 E-Mail: jennifer.edgar@tesco.net |
| <i>Funding</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public <u>Comments:</u> Funding is through the County Council, the first funding came from Derbyshire Better Government for Older People programme and later some came from Safer Derbyshire via the Council's Community Safety Unit. |
| <i>Partnership arrange- ment/organis- ational form</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Top-down programme/project <u>Comments:</u> Derbyshire Intergenerational Strategy Project (DIGS) |
| <i>Scale</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community based ▪ Local |

3 DESCRIPTION OF COLLABORATING GROUPS

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|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Collaborating Group I</i> | <p>Older people</p> <p><u>Description:</u> The older people are all British white with a 50/50 split between male and female, reflecting the population in Derbyshire, which has a very small ethnic populace. A mixed group with regard to educational and economic status but mainly upper working class.</p> |
| <i>Total number of Collaborating Group I</i> | <p>12 - 32</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> There are 12 older people permanently on the projects with a further 20 involved in action days at some of the schools; one school also used teachers and their partners/friends so there were mixed ages for those action days.</p> |
| <i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group I</i> | <p><u>Minimum Age:</u> 50</p> <p><u>Maximum Age:</u> None</p> <p><u>Age distribution:</u> There is an even spread across late 50's to late 70's.</p> |
| <i>Collaborating Group II</i> | <p>Younger People</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> The projects involve whole mixed gender classes with a fairly even split between male and female. Young people come from mainstream and special schools where some have learning difficulties, autism and/or challenging behaviour. They are from a broad spectrum of backgrounds from deprived to middle class upbringing, some from rural and some from urban areas.</p> |
| <i>Total number of Collaborating Group II</i> | <p>90</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Projects each work with one school; four schools in total.</p> |
| <i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group II</i> | <p><u>Minimum Age:</u> 5</p> <p><u>Maximum Age:</u> 16</p> <p><u>Age distribution:</u> There are two projects working with Junior schools; 7-11 year olds. One project in an Infants school; 5-6 year olds and one in a special school; 5-16 year olds. Mainly 7-11 year olds.</p> |

4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES

Description of Learning Arrangement & Learning Practice

The aims of the activities are to break down the barriers between the generations and to help change their perceptions of each other, through older and younger people working together in an enjoyable shared activity which is fun and on equal terms. Learn new skills undertaking an activity that contributes to a healthy life-style. Encourage older people from the community to become involved in/with the local school.

Work in groups as equals, no one is in charge, groups are democratic but participants have to take responsibility. Held discussions to come up with their own ground rules together, even the very young ones understood these. They draw up a plan together with a 'wish list' that everyone contributes to with an understanding that all wishes can't be met. Budgeting (numeracy) was part of the project, participants visited a garden centre to purchase seeds and plants etc. and had to adhere to the budget set. One school initiative was to offer ice-creams to the group if they came in under budget – they did!

Project worker talked to older people's groups and advertised via flyers and posters in GP surgeries and shops, letters and word of mouth. The younger people were selected by the schools, in two of the schools there is a school council and through the council's the whole school was able to input into the design and ideas.

Projects take place on a weekly basis during term-time, three of the schools within school hours and one as an after school activity. Two schools arranged an 'action day' to clear the land and make ready the garden.

Printed materials, such as magazines and books, looking at other people's gardens and using computers to gain access to the internet were used in the designing of the gardens. A variety of garden tools were used by the groups when working in the garden. The project worker gets each project set up, wish list and design, and the motivation then each school assigns a member of staff to facilitate the project. The project worker visits at regular intervals then does a final evaluation with all participants, including the teachers.

The learning is provided through peer learning, and learning by doing. A member of staff's husband at one school was a landscape gardener and he came to talk to the group and give them some advice and information.

Location of the learning activity

Formal settings i.e. educational institute
 Informal settings i.e. community facility/building
 Comments: The gardens are within community schools.

Learning activities (related to policy objectives)

- Community development, living & safety
- Education, training & learning
- Mediation
- Media education
- Social inclusion/participation, active citizenship
- History and reminiscence
- Health
- Environment & environmental protection
- Grandparents and grandchildren
- Travel, excursions & leisure time

Comments: Assists in the prevention of anti-social behaviour by promoting cross generational links in the community. Preserve cultural heritage, older people bring in ideas about what they used to have in their gardens when they were young and/or during

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| | difficult times e.g. WW II. The groups used computers and the internet in the designing of their gardens. |
| <i>Fields of Learning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills for the Knowledge Society ▪ Individual competence development (for private and professional purposes) ▪ Societal/economic exchange and consultancy ▪ Development and continuity of societal values |
| <i>Knowledge & Learning Exchange/Flow between the target group(s)</i> | Balanced and/or bi-directional e.g. shared activities |
| <i>Interactions between the target group(s)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ group based |
| <i>Categories of the learning activity</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-formal ▪ Informal |
| <i>OECD/DeSeCo Competences addressed by the CS</i> | <p>2 = <i>Competence Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups</i></p> <p>2.1 = The ability to relate well to others</p> <p>2.2 = The ability to cooperate</p> <p>2.3 = The ability to manage and resolve conflicts</p> <p>3 = <i>Competence Category 3: Acting Autonomously</i></p> <p>3.1 = The ability to act within the big picture</p> <p>3.2 = The ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects</p> <p>3.3 = The ability to assert rights, interests, limits and needs</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Young people on the project went away and asked parents to work in a similar way to the democratic process they had within the group. Working how to plan a project assists in forming plans and personal projects.</p> |
| <i>EC Key Competences addressed by the CS</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology ▪ Digital literacy and ICT skills ▪ Interpersonal and civic competences <p><u>Comments:</u> The budgeting exercise assisted with maths literacy and working in the garden helped support science curriculum in studying plants, environment and impact.</p> |
| <i>Success factors and barriers of the CS</i> | <p>There was a change of perceptions within the projects i.e. genuine friendships were formed. Older people felt valued and appreciated that their past experience was of worth. Younger people don't usually have much of a voice so it was successful for the younger people as they were listened to. Being able to physically grow things and seeing the cycle of the growing process was important for all participants.</p> <p>The older people have something outside the routine of their ever day life, a lot of them have little or no contact with young people. Young people benefited from having older people there, teachers who stayed to work on the project became 'part' of the group and the young people found that really gratifying.</p> <p>Within one project there were two older people (males) who had a lot of gardening experience and thought that they knew how things should be done. The teacher facilitating didn't step in early enough and things became rather tense. Solved this by taking the younger people to see the older person's allotments (gardens) and resolved issue by talking about the difference between 'their' garden and 'the' garden.</p> <p>There were improved links with the community through the participants and their fami-</p> |

lies. The local garden centre visits were a real success with one centre offering to visit the school at a later date and give gardening talks.

Participants took responsibility for the garden. Watering the garden between meetings was undertaken by the young people, and by both older and younger people through the school holidays.

Recruitment of the older people was difficult, where the project is sited may restrict who can be involved. Practically if the project is on a slope then frailer older people may not be able to take part but if there is a possibility of lighter duties this was a way around that. One school was only able to take the project forward when grandparents of some of the students joined the group. The lack of response meant that the project was delayed. In future projects would benefit from more planning time to recruit older people as this impacted on the project.

Issues around Criminal Records Bureau checks for the older people and permission forms for the young people is necessary but takes time and needs to be accounted for when planning.

Flexibility within the project was key, if the weather was not fit to work outside then the facilitator would have an alternative plan e.g. planting seeds inside.

Results of the CS

There are permanent gardens at the schools involved in the project and they are able to use the produce from the gardens. All of the projects will continue as the older people have pledged to support the schools. All of the schools wanted to get members of the community in to strengthen community links and the projects have gone wider than that. During a Halloween celebration some young people were heard to say not to knock on some particular houses as an older person may live there but to move on to the houses where it looked as though children lived there. The older person who heard was so impressed that they contacted the school the next day to pass on their good impressions of the local young people and their consideration for older people possibly living alone.

An intergenerational projects resource pack has been produced to distribute to schools in Derbyshire, to enable teachers who would like students to become involved in inter-generational work to set up and run projects. The resource pack will also be available to community groups within Derbyshire, who are interested in taking intergenerational work forward.

The project worker does the evaluation work, the worker found that when generations are working together towards a common aim they see each other as 'people' rather than older or younger. Schools tend to be more sports orientated and not all young people are good at that, the project provides a healthy activity in a healthy environment with the added benefit of learning where food comes from.

One school wanted to gain an award as an eco school and being involved in the project counted towards that.

Citizenship and environmental studies are part of the curriculum, which the project assisted towards the learning of, art & design, and IT skills were also addressed with the garden planning and design.

Research shows that older people's health and well-being improves by being involved in social activities and the groups set aside half an hour of their meeting as social time. Anything that goes away from every day routine is beneficial, they take it away with them and it enhances their life, which has longer-term benefits.

Young people have a new knowledge base and see that success isn't only about passing exams but is about personal worth. They are not constantly being monitored academically and all of the participants are incredibly proud of what they have achieved. Participants said they feel valued for the individuals that they are, their perceptions have changed and they view the other generation differently – more positively.