



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

**Sixty Plus Intergenerational
Projects**

ENGLAND
Case Study Identity Card
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EAGLE CASE STUDY

ENGLAND

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Founded in 1994, Sixty Plus is a registered charity supporting older people in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, with the help of volunteers of all ages and diverse backgrounds.

The Sixty Plus intergenerational project started with one small project in 1996 and quickly grew into a strong community project with different strands, which were dictated by the older people's needs in the Borough. The various parts of which aim to create partnerships of mutual benefit between older people and young volunteers.

The reading project aims to fill the gap in statutory services for older people with a visual impairment, sending a young person once a week to visit them for an hour to offer administrative help reading mail, sorting papers or reading a book or newspaper.

New technologies do not always reach older people, and many feel increasingly excluded from a modern technological society and so a computer project grew out of this.

The language project was developed after several people approached Sixty Plus about their elderly parents who were speakers of other languages. With 100 languages spoken in Kensington and Chelsea, many people arriving in the country remained in their ethnic communities without learning English. As they become older, however, and their need to access services increases, they become heavily dependent on these communities for help with translating with doctors etc. Providing an opportunity to learn English as a second language informally in their homes helps develop their confidence in English-speaking environments and keeps house-bound people mentally stimulated and challenged.

60- **Sixty Plus** 60

supporting older people to maintain their independence



2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Title	<p>Sixty Plus Intergenerational Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading/Language ▪ Computers/ICT ▪ Youth Led
Country/ Countries of origin	<p>England - London</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> The project is based in the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea around half of the population are white British.</p>
Duration	<p>Starting Year: 1994 End Year: None</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Started intergenerational work in 1996 1994 with a mosaic project, 1997 reading project, 1999 computer project, 2001 language</p>
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running <p><u>Comments:</u> Sometimes run one-off projects such as the mosaic project or a summer drama production 'Acting Up'.</p>
Managing institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voluntary/social sector/foundations <p><u>Comments:</u> Sixty Plus provides services to people over the age of 60 with the aim of supporting independence, dignity and choice.</p>
Contact de- tails	<p>Last Name: Long First Name: Ben Title: Mr Position/Role: Intergenerational Project Worker Institution: Sixty Plus Street: 1 Thorpe Close Town: London Post Code: W10 5XL Phone: 0208 969 9105 Fax: 0208 969 5936 E-Mail: blong@sixtyplus.org.uk URL: http://www.sixtyplus.org.uk</p>
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public ▪ Private (trust) <p><u>Comments:</u> The Borough Council supports the work of Sixty Plus, specific funding for the intergenerational project is through Task Force Trust.</p>
Partnership arrange- ment/ or- ganisational form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bottom-up, grass root initiative <p><u>Comments:</u> The demand came from the older people and their families re the ICT and language projects, offering services of younger volunteers to help older people was taken up following the success of previous projects.</p>
Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community based ▪ Local <p><u>Comments/Description:</u> Restricted to residents of the Borough.</p>



3 DESCRIPTION OF COLLABORATING GROUPS

<i>Collaborating Group I</i>	<p>Older people 60+</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Gender split is approximately 75% female and 25% male, across the three projects 50% are non-British in ethnic origin. Education varies widely as does the motivation for being on the different projects. The motivation for the computer project participants for training is quite strong, many on the language project are illiterate in their own language and are unable to read and write in their mother tongue.</p> <p>Participants are predominantly from a lower-socio background, the majority are on means tested benefits.</p>
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group I</i>	<p>50-60 per year</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Over a one-year period Sixty Plus supports around 1,800 members as an organisation.</p>
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group I</i>	<p><u>Minimum Age:</u> 60</p> <p><u>Maximum Age:</u> None</p> <p><u>Age distribution:</u> Predominantly 70-80</p>
<i>Collaborating Group II</i>	<p>Younger people</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Gender is approximately 75% female and 25% male, the main reason for this is that Sixty Plus link with two Girls only schools in the area. The volunteers are 60% British and 40% non-British. There is only one state school in the Borough, there are two Catholic schools, two independent and Imperial College. Generally the younger volunteers come from a higher socio-economic status than the older people.</p>
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group II</i>	<p>64</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> 64 is the current number of volunteers on the project, they would hope to have over 70 in total over every one-year period. One school attaches volunteering to citizenship modules within its curriculum, and another has one afternoon per week for 'enrichment in the community' work.</p>
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group II</i>	<p><u>Minimum Age:</u> 16</p> <p><u>Maximum Age:</u> 24</p> <p><u>Age distribution:</u> Predominantly 16-18 year olds.</p>

4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES

Description of Learning Arrangement & Learning Practice

ICT and language aims are decided by the older person based on their own needs and requirements, there are no fixed courses or programmes. The project worker discusses the needs and then matches the older person to a suitable younger volunteer(s), they then clarify the objectives.

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

All of the younger volunteers receive induction training then in addition they are given project specific training with a qualified tutor from the field. Tutors are available for volunteers to contact if they have any queries and the project worker is a trained English teacher. Before the language project training, the volunteers are matched with the older person that they will visit. This means that during the training they can ask the facilitator specific questions about the topics that the older person wishes to learn. The ICT training involves a session with an older person for the volunteers to put into practice what they have learned.

The project worker recruits the older people through Sixty Plus and via their newsletter. Project worker goes into schools/college to do an assembly at the start of the academic year to recruit young volunteers. Further participants are recruited by word of mouth, through contacts at sheltered housing schemes and other organisations. For the reading project they also have partnerships with the Metropolitan Society for the Blind and Royal National Institute for the Blind.

The activities take place weekly during term time, if the volunteers want to continue through the school holidays they can and some do.

The approach is learner centred, usually one-to-one and personal e.g. older person sitting at the computer and younger person instructing, younger person reading and helping visually impaired older people with their mail in their own home. A flexible approach is used as is discussion and review with participants to ensure sessions fit with how they want to learn, and vary them if appropriate.

Varied ICT's are used e.g. computers, digital cameras, DVD players etc. the younger volunteers teach the older people how to use equipment using learning materials and support. Role playing is used with drama productions and by those on the language project. The project worker organises all group projects and initial one-to-one meetings to start with. The decision is with the younger volunteer whether, and when, they are happy to arrange their own dates and times. Projects used to take place in community learning centres but then moved to targeting people who needed one-to-one or were isolated; always meet at older people's accommodation. Initially the trainers provide the learning to the younger volunteers, then the younger people pass on to the older people.

Group drama work was run by a Theatre company with the help of Sixty Plus, Police and Community Support officers from Holland and North Kensington Police Sectors and mentor and Youth workers from Holland Park School. The project took place over three weeks and helped to enhance all participants free time especially the young as they find Summer School holidays long. Some of the issues explored included safety on the streets, bullying, group and gang threats, friendships and building relationships. Quotes and anecdotes from both groups were included in the final plays, with the younger and older people portraying characters of both themselves and each other.

<i>Location of the learning activity</i>	<p>Formal settings i.e. community facility/building Informal setting i.e. home based</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Learning for the older people is home based, the training for the younger people is received in schools for language and the local library for the computers on Saturdays. Drama project is based in community theatre facilities.</p>
<i>Learning activities (related to policy objectives)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community development, living & safety ▪ Education, training & learning ▪ Media education ▪ Social inclusion/participation, active citizenship ▪ Employability ▪ Health ▪ Arts – theatre <p><u>Comments:</u> Interaction with someone who is not the same age as you and doesn't have the same references in their lives is key to the learning. Older people consistently report positive effects on their mental health and general well being from interacting with the young people, learning new skills and putting those skills to good use to enhance their every day lives. Younger people learn teaching skills, though no formal qualifications are gained, and develop social skills. Also important for young people is to show that they have committed to something and done it regularly, they have something 'extra' to put on their University and job application forms.</p>
<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 ▪ Productive cultural assimilation; <p><u>Comments:</u> The programme mixes many different people with/from a variety of different backgrounds.</p>
<i>Knowledge & Learning Ex-change/Flow between the target group(s)</i>	<p>Predominantly 'upstream' i.e. i.e. younger to older</p>
<i>Interactions between the target group(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one-to-one ▪ one-to-many (training) ▪ group based (drama) <p><u>Comments:</u> Sometimes younger people choose to volunteer in pairs.</p>

<i>Categories of the learning activity</i>	Non-formal
<i>OECD/DeSe Co Competences addressed by the CS</i>	<p>1 = Competence Category 1: Using Tools Interactively 1.1 = The ability to use language, symbols and text interactively 1.2 = The ability to use knowledge and information interactively 1.3 = The ability to use technology interactively 2 = Competence Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups 2.1 = The ability to relate well to others 2.2 = The ability to cooperate 2.3 = The ability to manage and resolve conflicts 3 = Competence Category 3: Acting Autonomously 3.2 = The ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects 3.3 = The ability to assert rights, interests, limits and needs</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Older people set out a list of objectives and may move on to different volunteers to achieve this. Group interaction is with the drama project, which is an add-on to the main activities.</p>
<i>EC Key Competences addressed by the CS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication in the mother tongue ▪ Communication in a foreign language ▪ Digital literacy and ICT skills ▪ Learning-to-learn ▪ Interpersonal and civic competences ▪ Cultural awareness <p><u>Comments:</u> Some of the older people move on to do courses outside of the projects, some of which will have formal qualifications.</p>
<i>Success factors and barriers of the CS</i>	<p>One of the barriers with the language project is around participants not sharing a common language, one of the ways of over coming that is the training that Sixty Plus undertakes with the volunteers. Working with older people there are often many health related problems but by being flexible and adaptable in the approach and working one-to-one this is not such an issue.</p> <p>Sometimes older people don't want a young person reading to them or helping with mail. The project worker will look for a younger person of university age, and usually this works well.</p> <p>The adaptation to working in people's homes was a big change to allow the inclusion of housebound and socially isolated older people. All older people are visited before volunteers are assigned, ensuring their homes are a safe environment for young people.</p> <p>When the project starts the worker matches volunteers with older people and goes along for the first visit to see if the match dos get on. If there is any conflict the project worker will make adjustments; they may look for a new volunteer, it may be that the older person doesn't understand the volunteer or that the style of deliver is not suitable for them.</p> <p>Some funding from Adult and Community Learning helped Sixty Plus develop the use of a structure of ways of recording learning e.g. learning diaries.</p> <p>Each year one or two of the older people on the language project develop enough confidence to go on to more formal training. The project worker may signpost them to local e-college classes or link them with a trainer.</p>

Results of the CS

The whole hour each week is not all teaching as there is a lot of sharing of personal information. Some of the young volunteers still go during their revision/exam schedule as it is a total break from going to school. They have someone to talk to, who is not family, in a reciprocal relationship. There is high migration from the Borough of the families of the older people who have lived there a long time. Families cannot afford to live there and a high proportion of the older people have housing and council tax benefits due to their low incomes. The young volunteers provide a link with their community and the younger generations perspectives.

A drama production, by older and younger people, is put on in the summer as part of the drama project. Participants benefit from personal development and fulfilment, and make valuable social links within their community.

At the end of each year the project worker looks at the older people's objectives that were set out to see if they have achieved what they wanted. They will discuss and review the objectives and see if they want a volunteer for the next year, activities are not linked to formal qualifications.

Short term outcomes for some of the older people might be to be able to go to the doctor and explain a health issues or the ability to go into a shop and order things. This has long term effects on participants self esteem, quality of life and social interaction within their community.

Sixty Plus found that intergenerational work builds the confidence of both younger and older people. Older people are surprised and heartened to find that young people care and want to help, and are also able to provide a valuable sense of perspective for their young helpers. The young volunteers are surprised to find themselves so appreciated, and feel that the work is its own reward.

Young people from the Sixty Plus Intergenerational Project won a prestigious award for outstanding achievement in their community. The Philip Lawrence Award in December 2005, the group also won £1,000 prize money to invest in their community project.