



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

Teddy Bear Project

FINLAND
Case Study Identity Card
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EAGLE CASE STUDY

FINLAND

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Teddy Bear is an intergenerational project involving older people, aged over 50 years, from all sectors of the community, sharing their life histories with fifth-formers at rural primary schools. The project aimed to encourage the whole community to adopt a caring approach to its older residents thus improving their overall quality of life.

In the first project year, the seniors encouraged juniors to respond to their life histories with structured questions and by producing creative work such as artwork, drama or written text based on these stories. The children were then 'paired' with the adults under teachers' supervision. Intergenerational learning focused on food, celebrations, WW II, world of work, rural crafts, games, childhood books and dialects, and the adults 'translated' their life histories into a language suitable for children. The children acted as 'mentors' to the same elderly people by assisting them with their computer studies. The adults thus gain IT skills, confidence and self-esteem, while the children enrich their knowledge of the history and the social changes in their community.

In the second project year the project concentrated to other groups than primary schools, and new activities were introduced. These were Net friends of two generations writing and talking in English; Goat Stories in Local Dialect in Vammala as well as Lantula Village School Reminiscence.



2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

<i>Title</i>	TEDDY BEAR (i.e. Twinning the Elderly Disadvantaged and Disabled with the Young By Encouraging Active Reminiscence)
<i>Country/ Countries of origin</i>	Finland, Italy and the United Kingdom <u>Comments:</u> Teddy Bear has European core funding for 2004 to 2007 from the SOCRATES Grundtvig 2 (Learning Partnership) programme. During the first two project years the coordinator of the project was County of Herefordshire District Council in Herefordshire, UK. In the third year the coordinator of the project changed and is now the Adult Education Centres Association (ECA). During the two project years the other participating organisations were Sastamala Community College in Vammala (Finland) and Cooperativa Sociale Itaca S.C.A.R.L. in Pordenone (Italy). In the third project year Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Slovenia) was also participating in the project.
<i>Duration</i>	Starting Year: 2004 End Year: 2007
<i>Status</i>	Running
<i>Managing institution</i>	Public training organisation <u>Comments:</u> In Finland, the managing institution is the Sastamala Community College.
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<i>Funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public <u>Comments:</u> The project has been co-funded by the European Commission through the SOCRATES Grundtvig 2 (Learning Partnership) programme.
<i>Partnership arrange- ment/organis- ational form</i>	Top-down programme/project
<i>Scale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community based ▪ International <u>Comments:</u> Community based projects were carried out in four different countries, i.e. Finland, Italy, Slovenia and UK that formed the international project consortium.

3 DESCRIPTION OF COLLABORATING GROUPS

<i>Collaborating Group I</i>	<p>During the first project year the collaborating group I was consisted of fifth-formers (11-12) children at primary schools in Mouhijärvi Municipality. During the second project year the activities were not only taking place at primary schools. The aim of the second year was to test how to integrate intergenerational learning directly to be a part of the existing activities of the Sastamala Community College. Sastamala Community College is offering courses for citizens of all ages. The courses offered by Sastamala Community College include languages, music, arts & articulacy, 'art of living', physical exercise, and manual skills. In addition the college offers open university courses.</p>
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group I</i>	About 70
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group I</i>	<p>First project year: Minimum Age: 11 Maximum Age: 12 Fifth-formers</p> <p>Second project year: Minimum Age: 8 Maximum Age: 12</p>
<i>Collaborating Group II</i>	<p>Seniors that were over 50 years old.</p> <p>For the activities of the first project year the elderly participants were invited to take part in the project by an advertisement in a newspaper. There were no required qualifications for the participants. The only precondition was that they should be interested in handi-craft combined with storytelling and show an interest in traditional craft techniques as well as in intergenerational learning.</p>
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group II</i>	About 70
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group II</i>	<p>Minimum Age: over 50 Maximum Age: 88</p>

4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES

Description of Learning Arrangement & Learning Practice

The aim of Teddy Bear project was to encourage both the elderly and young people to adopt a caring approach to each other, which in turn improved the quality of life of the elderly people. The overall objective of the project was to promote unity in the community through intergenerational understanding and cooperation.

In the first project year, the intergenerational work was carried out in two different groups. The first group made cushions and told and recorded stories related to these cushions. Each member of the group entitled as 'A Story embroidered on a Cushion' made a cushion of his/her own and embroidered it with a modern story by using traditional crewel embroidery technique. All the working group members were free to choose the subject of the story and the embroidery.

The second group made a chip basket and recorded a story related to the basket. Each member of the group named as 'A Story Woven in a Chip Basket' made a chip basket of his/her own. The members in both groups worked in pairs. Every pair was consisted of a child and an elderly person.

During this course a tradition was handed down from one generation to another so that both the young people and the elderly people had the opportunity to pass on one's knowledge and skills to the other generation.

Traditional crewel embroidery technique was first explained and taught to the elderly people. Their task was to pass on this information to the younger generation. This created a situation where an elderly person guided a younger one. The same idea was repeated in making the chip baskets. Firstly, the elderly people were given the knowledge and directions of how to make a chip basket and then they transmitted the know-how to the young people.

ICT was also included in the project. The young people guided the elderly ones to record their stories on the computer. This kind of action created a situation where young people could teach the elderly people and perform their modern know-how.

The juniors were 'paired' with the seniors under teacher's supervision. The seniors taught the children how to make traditional handicrafts, and 'translated' their particular life history into a language suitable for children. The children acted as 'mentors' to the same older people by assisting with their computer studies. The adults thus gain IT skills (Internet, E-mail, games), confidence and self-esteem, while the children enrich their knowledge of the history and the social changes in their community.

- During the second project year the project new activities were introduced. The aim of the second year was to test how to integrate intergenerational learning directly to be a part of the existing activities of the Sastamala Community College. Sastamala Community College is offering courses for citizens of all ages. The courses offered by Sastamala Community College include languages, music, arts & articulacy, 'art of living', physical exercise, and manual skills. In addition the college offers open university courses. The new activities included Net friends of various ages writing and talking in English; Goat Stories in Local Dialect in Vammala as well as Lantula Village School Reminiscence.

Net friends of various ages writing and talking in English

In November 2005 the sixth-graders from Pehula Primary School started e-mailing in English with the adults' English group from Sastamala Community College. The members of these two groups did not know each other and did not even see photos of each other

beforehand. A special Teddy Bear mailbox was created on the College website on the Internet for the use of the adult learners of the College. The children wrote answers to the seniors' letters under the supervision of their teacher Jukka Leino. Letters were sent and read once a month.

At the end of the correspondence the adult learners wrote the children a letter of invitation to participate in a Teddy Bears' picnic trip which was going to take place in the beautiful woods near lake Kiimjärvi. The children accepted the invitation, and came along to chat in English face-to-face with their eFriends while grilling sausages and drinking real campfire coffee. The adults were surprised at the children's good knowledge of English and their courage to use it. At the end of the trip the participants struck up a song 'If you go out in the woods today...' accompanied by Pentti Tammiaho on flute.

The aim of the correspondence was to learn to tell about oneself in a foreign language to a correspondent belonging to another generation. The purpose was also to create real contacts and to get stimulation as well as encouragement to understand and respect people of different ages. The communication between the 12 to 13-year-old Pehula children and the adults of Wednesday Club both by e-mail and while sitting side by side on a bench of a Lapp hut was a successful example of natural intergenerational cooperation and learning. The trip itself surely was a great success and a rewarding experience from the children's point of view, too. It was a welcome change for their everyday work and a positive experience of being able to speak English and having the courage to use the language.

Goat Stories in Local Dialect in Vammala

The aim of this activity was to create an intergenerational practice between a study circle on local dialect of Tyrva region and a children creative writing group. Both groups started separately with discussions about what kind of participants is taking part in the other group. Senior group started recalled their childhood rules and regulations. Children's group discussed about their grandparents, and strange dialect words they had heard. The actual coming together took place in Kylvaja goat farm in Kiikka. Outileena Uotila who is a teacher of traditional skills guided both teachers with their groups first to the goats in a shed, then to her kitchen. Goat used to be the most important domestic animal in Tyrva in the old days, but nowadays very few people keep them anymore.

People sat around a huge table talking about goats and old times, until Outileena brought in the kitchen a 'krottimollikka', a traditional rag doll. This was when, quite spontaneously, a new branch of puppet theatre was born. Both juniors and seniors gave their voices to help the puppets talk and communicate.

The following week the children were each asked to tell a story about goats. The stories were then written down word by word. Some stories did not mention goats, though. This was understandable, because goats are known to be very stubborn animals that are not ready for service at all times! Still their ice-breaking role was very important.

The dialect circle talked a lot about this meeting with the children. They came to College Spring Show to perform proverbs in local dialect. And as Outileena was present with her rag dolls, the audience members were invited to participate in rug puppet theatre together with the dialect group!

Lantula Village School Reminiscence

Teddy Bear activity in Lantula village started at the beginning of February 2006. The local village council now owns the old, empty village schoolhouse. On Fridays some of the elderly people living in the area were invited first to have lunch at the house, and then in the afternoon to take part in a Sastamala Community College class called 'School Memories'. The villagers organised transportation for these seniors, many of whom did not normally leave their homes because of their disability or mild dementia. Eight seniors (all women) and the same number of children between 8-12 years from the local village primary school attended the class. The children and some of the senior ladies did some

	handicraft, for example a small embroidered tablecloth, a pouch for the mobile phone or a fashionable spring handbag. At the same time they talked about school today and in the past. Some of the discussions were documented on photos or recorded. In addition, a small leaflet was made on one interview and handed out in the college spring exhibition. This activity will continue through mutual learning on how to process linen.
Location of the learning activity	Formal settings i.e. educational institute Informal settings i.e. community facility/building;
Learning activities (related to policy objectives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community development, living & safety ▪ Education, training & learning ▪ Mentoring i.e. intergenerational support, services and consultancy ▪ Media education incl. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) ▪ Social inclusion/participation, active citizenship ▪ History and reminiscence ▪ Arts incl. culture, theatre, play, music;
Fields of Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills for the Knowledge Society ▪ Individual competence development (for private and professional purposes);
Knowledge & Learning Exchange/Flow between the target group(s)	Balanced and/or bi-directional e.g. shared activities
Interactions between the target group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one-to-one i.e. the juniors were 'paired' with the seniors under teacher's supervision ▪ one-to-many ▪ group based ▪ many-to-many ▪ physical/offline interaction ▪ blended interaction
Categories of the learning activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-formal <p><u>Comments:</u> The activity was non-formal but took place at Sastamala Community College in Vammala, at local rural schools, in the Internet as well as in the wilderness.</p>
OECD/DeSeCo Competences addressed by the CS	<p>1 = Competence Category 1: Using Tools Interactively</p> <p>1.1 = The ability to use language, symbols and text interactively</p> <p>2 = Competence Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups</p> <p>2.1 = The ability to relate well to others</p> <p>2.2 = The ability to cooperate</p>
EC Key Competences addressed by the CS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication in the mother tongue ▪ Communication in a foreign language ▪ Digital literacy and ICT skills ▪ Interpersonal and civic competences ▪ Cultural awareness

Success factors and barriers of the CS

- Success Factors (first project year)

The interacting partnership was the one of 'extremes', i.e. seniors talking history and teaching traditional skills to kids' as well as kids teaching new technologies' to seniors. The juniors were 'paired' with the seniors under teacher's supervision. The learning flow was bi-directional and quite balanced. The seniors taught the children how to make traditional handicrafts, and 'translated' their particular life history into a language suitable for children. The children develop their intergenerational link through acting as 'mentors' to the same older people by assisting with their computer studies. The adults thus gain IT skills (Internet, E-mail, games), confidence and self-esteem, while the children enrich their knowledge of the history and the social changes in their community.

- Barriers (first project year)

The experiences of this project among the participants have been merely positive. However, this project did not have much effect on formation of new social relations. The course did not have effect on continuity of the social relations. Social relations of the young people did not change essentially, because the young people already knew each other. Due to working mostly in pairs during the course, the formation of permanent relations was possible mainly between the persons in a pair.

Not all of the young people were able to complete their work. Sometimes, the elderly people helped the children 'too much', wanting the results to be as good-looking as possible.

Telling and recording stories did not have so much space in the thoughts of the young people. For them, doing things and concrete achievements were more important than telling and recording stories. However, neither changes nor alterations were necessary during the life cycle of the value and competence building activities.

Results of the CS

In this chapter only the results of the first year are analysed. The specific outputs of the project were stories, cushions and baskets. The activity was not linked to any formal accreditation.

A study of the effectiveness of the project was carried out. This evaluation concentrated on two key questions: How did the participants experience the project? What kind of meaning did the project have in participants' lives? In order to get answers to the questions, four project participants - two young and two elderly persons - were interviewed.

According to the evaluation, the young people learned to appreciate all the information that the elderly people have. The attitudes of the elderly interviewees towards the young people were respectful and they accepted them as individuals. They also accepted their opinions and appreciated their know-how.

During the project the participants learned different things from each other. The young people felt that the elderly people found out new dimensions in themselves. They noticed that the elderly people are able to do things that they usually do not do.

The cooperation between the generations was interactive. On one hand, the young people learned something from the elderly people and about them. On the other hand, the young people experienced that they were able to pass on to the elderly people the kind of know-how that the elderly people did not have. Traditions as well as modern information were passed from one generation to another. The young people helped the elderly people to write their stories with the computer. One of the young interviewees put it into words: It was great when you were able to teach them to use the computer. The young people were amazed that the elderly people did not have the IT skills that the young people had and that the young people had to teach these skills to the elderly people.

Handing down tradition is not just recalling old things and habits. History can be transmitted to the present day. One of the elderly interviewees made an excellent statement by

saying that the cushion was made in a traditional way but it was embroidered with the feelings of this day.

Tradition can also be transmitted in spoken language and in images. While making the cushions and the chip baskets, verbal tradition was transmitted to some extent. Tradition is a way to see things. Thinking of handing down the tradition, an elderly cushion maker stated that after this course the young people at least know how this type of handwork is done when they see it.

One of the goals of this project has been promoting the unity in the community. The unity came out in the interaction between the young and the elderly people during the project itself. Cooperation between them was unforced, open and respecting.

All the interviewees experienced the project as a very positive event that both the young and the elderly people will remember as an enrichment of their lives. Doing things together and especially the intergenerational cooperation created a memorable frame for the course. The young people were very satisfied with their achievements: the cushions and the chip baskets. The young interviewees felt that they also had possibilities to influence on things. On the other hand, not all of the young people were able to complete their work all by themselves; the elderly people helped them 'too much', wanting the results to be as good looking as possible.

The experiences of this project among the participants have been merely positive. The unity of the community was emphasized as a strong and positive factor during the project. This form of cooperation where young and elderly people make joint efforts to reach a common goal always gives the participants new experiences. In this type of cooperation you have to meet the representative of another generation more closely. Both young and elderly people noticed that there are people – other than their families - who are interested in them and their doings. The participants surely were confirmed that cross-generational friendship is possible.

The project enabled both young and elderly people to notice that they can do things that they did not even think they could do. The voluntary participation of the young people in this handicraft course where they worked together with the elderly people is remarkable. The unprejudiced attitude of the young people towards experiencing new things was also significant.

According to the interviews the interaction between the generations was respectful and it showed appreciation toward one another. It was interesting to notice that all of the interviewees stated the meaningfulness of intergenerational cooperation. The age is not a barrier for common activities but different generations can learn from each other and they can also be friends. However, it is difficult to say if this intergenerational course had an effect on preventing the feeling of loneliness and social displacement. At least this course produced happiness for both generations for a long time.