



Youth Led Intergenerational Practice Case Study Report



Acknowledgements

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Foreword

Younger and older people are the two groups most affected by ageist attitudes, and the many changes in our society have led to generations frequently becoming segregated from one another. The way in which services are delivered and funded adds further difficulties in enabling people of different ages to come together on equal terms. Intergenerational approaches are an effective way to address these issues building active communities and promoting citizenship, and support in developing young people's personal development and skills

The Beth Johnson Foundation and National Youth Agency identified the need to support youth-led approaches to intergenerational work and developed an intergenerational youth learning network to help address some of the issues. The network brought together practitioners from across youth sector organisations and those wanting to work with young people.

Over the last two years it has been interesting to see so many different approaches across the projects we have worked with from gardening, cooking, reminiscence and storytelling to community radio and film making.

The emerging evidence shows that when young people are given much greater involvement in planning and organising projects, taking on more responsibility that the projects are more successful and the positive outcomes for both generations increase greatly.

Louise Middleton

Manager, Centre for Intergenerational Practice, Beth Johnson Foundation

Through this work we have found intergenerational practice can bring many benefits to participants that includes increased understanding and mutual respect between the generations, reducing fear of crime and providing volunteering opportunities for both young and old alike.

One of the challenges for youth sector organisations is to make intergenerational practice a part of integrated youth support services and ensure it fits strategically with localism and the Big Society and Healthy Community Agendas.

Peta Halls

Development Officer, The National Youth Agency

Introduction

Intergenerational practice can take many forms, a useful working definition provided by the Beth Johnson Foundation is:

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.

Beth Johnson Foundation (2001)¹

Youth Led Intergenerational Practice

The National Youth Agency and Beth Johnson Foundation have worked in partnership to develop youth led intergenerational practice since 2009. Funded by the Office of Civil Society this programme of work has supported both voluntary and statutory organisations to develop youth led intergenerational work as traditionally much intergenerational practice had focused on work between children and older people and has generally been led by adult participants.

The programme has resulted in several national seminars, a residential event, a series of regional Intergenerational Network meetings and an Intergenerational Youth Learning Network End of Project Showcase Event in March 2011. As part of this work, the Beth Johnson Foundation has developed and delivered an intergenerational training programme to over 270 workers from organisations working with young people which will leave a lasting legacy for future intergenerational work.

In addition, the National Youth Agency provided small development grants to six organisations to help them develop youth led intergenerational practice and this report provides a summary of each case study area:

1. Community Matters:
 - Horndean Community Association Intergenerational Theatre Project
 - Trinity Community Arts – Project Respect, Bristol
2. East Riding of Yorkshire Council Buddying Scheme
3. Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade Intergenerational Projects
4. Memories of Wythenshawe
5. Peterborough Council Youth Service – Fulbridge Community Fun Day
6. Trafford Prevention Team – Intergenerational and Multicultural Project.

1. Beth Johnson Foundation (2011), *A Guide to Intergenerational Practice*, Stoke-on-Trent, Beth Johnson Foundation

Community Matters

Community Matters <http://www.communitymatters.org.uk> represents the largest network of community organisations in the UK with over 1,200 members. They share with their members the vision of active and sustainable communities in which everyone is valued and can play their full part. Through a range of programmes and services – from advice and insurance through to training and consultancy – Community Matters supports the collective action of ordinary people within their neighbourhood in inclusive, locally-rooted and accountable community organisations.

Intergenerational practices lie at the heart of many community organisations that work with and for local people of all ages. Many of Community Matters members are involved in distinct projects to improve and increase engagement and understanding across and between all age groups. Uniquely, as multi-purpose and community-focused, these organisations also foster intergenerational practice through their daily operations (involving young people in governance and leadership roles with adults in the community for example) and in the spaces they provide for local people of all ages and groups to meet, share services, and acquire familiarity and understanding of one another.

In this project we received good practice case study examples from the following member organisations:

1. Voices of Allens Cross, Birmingham
2. Horndean Community Association
3. Intergenerational Matters, Breckland Local Authority
4. Trinity Community Arts – Project Respect, Bristol
5. Silver Surfers Intergenerational Project, Alton
6. Sports for All, Hillingdon, London

Through Community Matters we were also made aware of the intergenerational project: Together in Generations, based in East Lindsey. Unfortunately, we are unable to showcase all these case study examples and illustrate over the following four pages two member communities – **Horndean Community Association** in Hampshire and Bristol's **Trinity Community Arts** who have approached youth led intergenerational work in very individual ways:

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Horndean Community Association Intergenerational Theatre Project

Lead partner: Horndean Community Association (HCA)

Briefly: This was a joint drama project between a youth drama group and an amateur theatrical society in the Hampshire town of Horndean. The two groups worked collaboratively over a 12-month period to devise, write and perform a production in March 2011. Over the same period, members of HCA Youth Drama group worked with the adult members of the association in constituting the group as separate section within HCA, creating a youth led body to take forward drama, responsible for their own budget and administration.

Who was involved? A total of fifteen young people from the youth drama group took part, with a similar number of adults for HATS – Horndean Amateur Theatrical Society. The age range of the cast went from 6 to over 78. HCA manager Brendan Charles and a number of adult volunteers helped facilitate. Basingstoke-based professional theatre company Proteus Theatre were commissioned to support the young people in writing a script and developing it from page to stage.

Becky, a young person who was involved in the project said:

“Young people had felt their voices were not being heard, but this project has resulted in me and my friend being asked to become trustees to the board to provide links and effective communications.”

What did we do? At an initial meeting to discuss ideas for a drama, young people expressed the wish to do something that was a comedy, a romance but also had a murder in it. The Romeo and Juliet story was chosen as a backdrop. Young people were tasked with developing these thoughts into a script and a three day master class was held by Proteus Theatre. Regular script development sessions were held during autumn 2010 and auditions were held with HATS members, the young people deciding which of the adults would play which roles. Funding from Hampshire County Council’s Community Team was used towards script printing costs, stage set and eventually two public performances were held in March 2011 at the theatre within Merchistoun Hall, HCA’s community centre.

Reaction was overwhelmingly positive, performances being widely praised as very convincing. Adult members of the cast also said they were particularly impressed with the ability of young people to focus on the project in hand and demonstrate commitment over many months.

Over a similar time frame there was support from Community Development South East to run a consultation event at which young people and their parents/carers could be consulted on setting up youth drama as an autonomous, youth-led section within the community association. Further support from the Extended Services programme and the county Find Your Talent legacy programme helped develop the empowerment approach. The result is a steering group of eight young people (trustees are required to be over 18) with a chair, secretary and treasurer who lead their peers in being responsible for concept and delivery of new shows, including marketing, fundraising, recruitment and outreach.

What did we learn?

- Theatre can be a powerful vehicle for highlighting social roles. The play involved role reversal with adults playing school children and young people playing teachers – audience members commented afterwards that they quickly forgot about the age-groups and focused on the behaviour of the character.
- Young people really appreciate being listened to and having the sense that not only does their opinion count but that they can make a tangible difference to a joint project with adults. They also showed they can quickly learn boundaries and show respect.
- When young people feel ownership of a project and are challenged but given freedom, encouragement and support, it gives them confidence to be more creative. Respect and understanding becomes a springboard for further collaboration and, in this case, to learn and explore new skills and styles of performance.
- This kind of shared inter-generational activity brings people closer together, helps create better understanding of culture and values and is a platform for further activity. Young people are now brought more into the mainstream of HATS and HCA activity, accessing training and other opportunities. The groups are also now looking at a joint pantomime for next winter. The partnership working has also resulted in upgraded stage equipment that can be enjoyed by all.

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Trinity Community Arts – Project Respect, Bristol

Lead partner: Trinity Community Arts

Briefly: A series of workshops were held bringing together young and older people from diverse local communities, exploring people's memories and creating artworks together. Underpinned by a community cohesion approach the project targeted those who may otherwise feel excluded by their age, cultural or language barriers and helped to challenge negative perceptions of different ages and cultures.

Who was involved? The young people came mainly from the City Academy's DICE (Diversity and Inclusion Challenges Education) Project. This works with young people who speak English as a second language and so they were from a range of cultures and backgrounds, including some with very limited English. Some members of the voluntary sector group Young Bristol also took part. Older people were British (African-Caribbean and White British) from local groups including the Golden Agers, Malcolm X Centre, and Brunel Care Home.

The project was run by Trinity Community Arts, with involvement from staff including the Training & Events Coordinator, a project artist contracted to develop, deliver and evaluate sessions, administrative help from the Trinity's centre manager and usually two volunteers from the local community – participants from previous Trinity projects. Often the groups of young people would also come with one or two support workers.

What did we do? The project started as a one-off community arts project but is now annual as it proved so successful and popular. As such feedback has been used to refine and improve it. The core of the project has been 12 workshops of one and a half hours, generally held on a Monday afternoon at Trinity's own community hub.

Activities included a variety of arts and crafts workshops designed to explore themes around storytelling, memory and experiences. For example, on the second project, everyone was given disposable cameras and asked to photograph a journey (such as their walk home). These images were developed and shared by the group and helped in the producing of paintings based on each other's journeys. The sessions would involve a wide variety of activities, games and forms of interaction. In another session, for example, each person developed their own box in the shape of a book to hold aspects of their life story that they wished to share and there was lots of opportunity to share what each person had written or drawn.

The project offered opportunities for intergenerational and multicultural interaction. It took people out of their comfort zone, meeting groups they wouldn't usually interact with, and got them to open up about issues of prejudice and misunderstanding. It also provided a safe place for the participants to explore aspects of their own and each other's life story.



What did we learn?

- Young people developed their language skills and the older people began to gain a deeper understanding of the complex challenges facing asylum and refugee seeking communities. One older participant commented in his feedback: 'The children brought a deeper understanding to me. I see why they came to this country – for their own safety. I understood why, if I were in their situation, I would do the same thing as them. It's better not to judge, we are too quick to complain and to judge.'
- You need to pick your groups carefully. The biggest challenge for the third year of the project was engaging older participants, as some groups said they were 'project exhausted' having been invited to join in many activities around the city. What worked particularly well with the 2010 project was the young people contacting with older people residing in Brunel Care Home in St Georges. While this posed many new challenges, this also meant that the project reached older people who were otherwise not engaged at all with any community activity. One of the older people from the home commented: 'we don't get any visitors so it is really nice to see young people – we don't really have any activities here and there is no full-time warden so it was nice to create an activity that we can meet the community'.
- Having an arts focus is useful as it allows you to explore themes that may otherwise be quite sensitive (such as migration). Helping people to share their experiences is an effective way to break down barriers.
- Young people quickly picked up the theme of respect, helping frailer older people with stairs, making refreshments and so on. One of the young women who was particularly isolated at the beginning really came out of herself by the second and third session. Having never been to school prior to coming to England and barely speaking English, she was smiling and laughing along with the other children and the adults by the end.

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East Riding of Yorkshire Council Buddying Scheme

Lead Organisation: East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Briefly: The ongoing Buddying project brings together elected members, community representatives and young people to promote communication and discussion and promote positive intergenerational links between young people and their communities. Around the core of Buddying meetings were related intergenerational events that saw young people engage with older people in skill sharing workshops and Question Time events with key public servants.

Who was involved? Young people were recruited for the project through the work of the Council's Youth Assembly and through publicity by youth workers and schools. By late 2010, some 200 young people had been involved in putting forward their views to adults at various events, with 80 being involved in the Buddying programme and associated intergenerational events. Adult involvement included around 30 community representatives from key services and voluntary organisations and 33 councillors.

The project is funded through the mainstream funding of the Council's Youth Service as part of its Engagement and Participation strategy there are two full-time youth workers who lead on the Council's wider youth participation agenda and who manage and develop this project within that framework. Other staff, from youth service and schools are involved as necessary.

What did we do? As a developmental tool, young people and older people took part in an intergenerational workshop aimed at building communication links and a mutual understanding. This workshop was run by Playscape and also involved members from the voluntary youth and community sector. A total of 18 people attended which included young people and local councillors. Young people who were keen to promote and further develop this work made a bid to the Youth Opportunity Fund and £5000 has been awarded for intergenerational engagement workshops to be rolled out in Bridlington and Beverley.

Another event forming part of the programme saw young people attend an event for older people in Pocklington at which they canvassed their perceptions of young people and their views on intergenerational meetings and what form they should take. From the 53 people spoken to, 94 per cent expressed interest in meeting young people and the preferred method of interaction was via skill sharing – such as cooking or using IT. This information was used to form the basis of skill share sessions at the Drop In, Goole, where in total eight older people learnt new skills from young people about mobile phones and the internet, while in return the older people shared decorating skills with six young people. The members of the group were very positive and more such events are planned for the centre and the concept is to be rolled out to other interested areas.

For the main part of the project, 44 buddying meetings took place between 80 young people and 33 elected members in eleven locations. Issues discussed covered topics such as community engagement and the young people raised their concerns about transport and environmental issues. The meetings helped create increased knowledge of how the council works and what councillors do, increased awareness of issues in the community and helped developed skills in research and campaigning.

Also stemming from the Buddying scheme have been Question Time events for young people and Local Action Teams which have seen young people raising issues with representatives of the Police, Health, Youth and Fire and Rescue Services along with voluntary sector bodies.

Among other specific outcomes achieved by joint working in the Buddying programme were new art boards at Bridlington Skate Park, joint environmental work by young and old buddies near the Humber Bridge to help combat adult anti-social behaviour, while in Hornsea the buddying has led to the development of Hornsea Youth Forum.



Young people in East Riding at an intergenerational event

What did we learn?

- Successful projects inspire further work. More training events are to be rolled out and new projects initiated such as a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for intergenerational work in ten village communities. New partners are coming in with their skills and expertise which are helping to shape delivery within the emerging Big Society context.
- While lead by the Youth Service, the involvement of partners has been crucial to success. Involvement of schools, the police and the voluntary youth and community sector has been important.
- Feedback from adults said they felt they had been challenged about the way they respond to key issues affecting young people but that they very much valued the opportunity to learning directly how their policies and practices were received by young people.

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Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade Intergenerational Projects

Lead partner: Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade, is a national youth organisation and works with young Jewish people aged 18-25 from across the UK. Central to the ethos of the JLGB is active citizenship and giving back to society. The JLGB encourages young people's involvement in volunteering, inter-faith and intergenerational projects in both the Jewish and wider community.

Briefly: Different Groups from the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade across England set up twinning arrangements with a range of Jewish community organisations that work with older people. They engaged on joint activities with themes around reminiscence, remembrance and Holocaust.

Who was involved? Young people from three different groups of the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade, a national youth organisation offering fun and challenging activities for young people aged 8-18. A wide range of community organisations working with older people were contacted – from care homes and organisations including AJEX (the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women), the Holocaust Survivors Centre (Jewish Care) and the Association of Jewish Refugees. Project staffing included Antony Grace, JLGB Identity Worker, and young volunteer leaders from JLGB Groups.

What did we do? Different JLGB Groups around the country chose their own activities. In Redbride a representative of the charity Jewish Care talked to young people about life in a care home and about resident's health issues including dementia. The young people then joined the old people in an art activity, designing and decorating glass jars, during which time they were able to talk on a one to one basis, the young people developing their communication, encouraging the care home residents to share their reminiscences.



Many survivors do not want to relive the horrors. JLGB young people sharing platforms and listening to their stories.

Telling the story of the Holocaust by those who lived through it is a priority for the community. For obvious reasons the numbers of survivors is declining. Young people in the JLGB Hendon Band had visits from Holocaust survivors and were to hear stories at their centre, which they were able to retell at Yom Hashoah, the annual Jewish Remembrance Day for the Holocaust. The Jewish community is a close knit, family-oriented one and has always done this kind of activity, but the focus of it becoming an intergenerational project helped deepen the experience. Young people were able to front up and represent older people who may now be too frail to tell their own story and continuing their legacy from generation to generation.



Another group linked up with AJEX to meet members and talk about their lives during the Battle of Britain and the wider experiences of British Jewry during the war. Young people marched with the ex-servicemen and women at the National Remembrance Parade, also acting as Stewards and a Guard of Honour. One young man laid a poppy posy at The Cenotaph on behalf of his great uncle who died in the First World War. This was designed as a small pilot project which would be the catalyst for a major national JLGB/

AJEX Intergenerational Project in time for National Remembrance Day in November 2011.

What did we learn?

- It can be hard to tell difficult, painful life stories to the immediate next generation. A two generation gap can sometimes make this easier. One member of JLGB staff recalls their own father in law never being able to talk about his experiences in the Kindertransport, so much so that he could not bring himself to talk about it to his daughters. It wasn't until his 13 year old granddaughter approached him to talk about a project for her Bat Mitzvah that he felt willing to open up.
- When young people talk to members of the older generation personally it can make a big change to the way they perceive the past. Some 150 young Jewish people attended the AJEX National Remembrance Parade – an increase of 100% on the more previous year.
- When young people meet older people with dementia they are not only more aware of the needs of the elderly but they demonstrate they are not afraid of the potential obstacles or challenges when interacting with them.
- Orientation and training prior to the event are vital for young people to gain the most out of their joint sessions so they are prepared for the shock of seeing dementia for the first time.
- It is a difficult process to ensure a shared partnership of young and elderly people working together, so it is not just a youth-led project but a truly shared experience. Practical problems faced included the issue that much of Jewish community is much more spread out geographically and the residential homes are not necessarily in areas where most of the younger Jewish community live. Therefore the young people do not necessarily experience the local community feelings of the elderly people they are meeting. Other practical problems include finding time after school but before elderly care home residents retired to bed – the Jewish Sabbath observance can also restrict some participation.

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Memories of Wytheshawe

Lead partner: Nacro, East Wythenshawe YIP

Briefly: A cross section of generations within the community of Wythenshawe were involved in an oral history project using a community audit format. Young people interviewed two older age groups about their memories of the area, creating space for the first time for discussions to take place on equal terms.

Who was involved? Young people on the project were aged 13 to 16 and drawn from a range of programmes, including open access youth work sessions, run by Nacro's East Wythenshawe Youth Inclusion Project. YIP's work with young people who are either offending or at risk of doing so, and aim to steer them away from antisocial activities and crime by setting them on the path to education, training and jobs. One of the project partners was Manchester Young Lives, an adventure play and youth work charity that has worked in disadvantaged South Manchester communities for some thirty years.

Adults were drawn from the Peel Hall estate resident's group as well as individuals involved in other community groups and voluntary work in the community who were also looking at issues of community safety and were keen to do joint work with young people.

Key staff involved were three members of the Nacro YIP team (two full-time and one part-time). Additionally, a volunteer worked on facilitating the sessions part of their work as a student on placement for a Youth and Community BA from a local university.

What did we do? The project sought to create critical dialogues between groups of people who previously may not have communicated at all, or, if they had, it may have been on negative terms and founded on previously communicated on negative distinct power imbalances.

The programme of work was explicitly orientated toward methodologies taken from informal and community education and so started with conversations. Richard McHugh of Nacro explains: "Young people involved felt a animosity from others, so they were initiating conversations about people's perceptions of them. We started to ask 'what about your perceptions of older people?'"

The project that developed became about oral histories, underpinned by a community audit approach toward development, giving a chance for community members to question, speak and be heard. The first stage involved the formation of an audit team, initially just involving young people, and a range of team building activities and problem-solving activities focusing on personal development.

Joint work started with two groups of adults from the Peel Hall Estate resident's groups and individuals from other community groups one aged 25 – 50 years and another 50 and over. Young people interviewed members of the community on the subject of 'Memories of Wythenshawe', and the idea was for all three groups to question and challenge each other's perception of their community. Much discussion focused around issues such as the changing use of and access to public space, such as the way local shopping parades in Wythenshawe had depleted over time with the face of social activity changing over generations, yet with

some commonalities across generations and economic activity further developing within the town centre. "This began to open up a greater level of consciousness of other people's varied experiences of the same locations, events and community," said Richard McHugh. Alongside the interviews, young people produced art works which questioned and parodied misconceptions of their community.

"I just feel I understand older people more – how they see young people and their feelings"

What did we learn?

- It takes a lot of preparation and development work to overcome the lack of knowledge and stereotypes about other groups.
- To be genuinely participant-led requires patience and development time. "It wasn't as simple as sitting down and coming up with a set of questions," said Richard McHugh. 'The first questions young people came up with were like "have you got a wooden a leg"! It was a relatively long, organic process.'
- Although all participants responded very positively to the project, it was still a big challenge to match up complex schedules. This in turn meant some young people opted out of the project. Although not all stages of the work were able to be completed due to time constraints, there is still ongoing work continuing to develop from this work across the projects.

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Peterborough Council Youth Service – Community Fun Day



Briefly: Youth and community workers in the Fulbridge area of Peterborough brought together young and old for informal meetings and together they helped plan a community day that involved hundreds of local people in fun activities. A joint group is continuing to meet after the event.

Who took part? A group of young leaders from a local Scout troop responded to the idea of an intergenerational project and soon recruited more of their friends from the area. A core group of around eight went forward with the project. Youth worker Rachel Panther also made contact with older people – aged 70 and over – living in a sheltered housing development with a centre where they met regularly, eventually bringing the groups together to work on a community day. For the preparation work there were three main workers, and on the day of the event there were some 20 staff from a range of services involved.

What did we do? Workers spent time with each of the two groups, discussing what kind of activity they wanted to pursue. There were then two joint sessions. The first was a simple afternoon tea session for introductions and informal chat about hobbies and so on. Discussion also centred around Fulbridge today and in earlier times, young people asking questions both about the old days and how the older people felt about their community now – what issues they had and how comfortable they felt when out and about. A second session started to focus more on planning for a Community Day.

The actual event in August took place on a recreation ground in the community and attracted local people from the ages of 4 to 80. There were bouncy castles for the young ones, while older people and teenagers compared the kind of street games they both used to play – hopscotch and the like. This theme was extended with a giant outdoor Wii machine and there was an aerosol artwork area that enabled the generations to talk about their feelings towards art as opposed to graffiti. A barbecue and healthy eating display proved popular and the police were invited as both generations had expressed negative views about them. There was limit of 200 at the venue and with comings and goings this level of attendance was achieved all day.

After the community day there have been more drop-in tea sessions with the two age groups joining in activities and discussions around topics such as gardening, baking and knitting. These sessions have helped revive older people's interest in their area and the old and young talk together about how to address community issues such as vandalism and racism.

“As well as it being fun, at the same time, we're trying to help each other understand each other more, so you're having fun and having a laugh but at the same time you're breaking down that wall between the two generations as well”

What did we learn?

- This is a powerful process for combating stereotype and prejudice. One young woman had a virtual phobia about old people – the image of the cruel stepmother from fairytales lodging in her mind. She was able to get over this and realise there were really nice old people about, while older people spoke of their pleasure in meeting up with young people who were respectful, challenging lingering thoughts of all young people as potential vandals.
- Be realistic. The initial idea had been to work with a group of 'hard to reach' young people but it proved difficult to raise their trust and interest. With main staff being new to the area, the relationships weren't yet in place with those young people to convince them this would be a fun and rewarding activity.
- Young people themselves are the best advocates to others to get involved. They can better explain the benefits of being involved.
- The word 'intergenerational' was off-putting for some young people, sounding somewhat clinical. When the project was referred to just as a community project, the response was more positive.
- Getting the time when both groups can meet together requires effort and planning. Similarly, be prepared to spend time coming up with the right kind of activity that both groups are keen to enjoy. Young people had hoped to run a fun and educational Halloween ghost walk around Peterborough but the older group weren't keen, but cookery seemed to get all-round agreement.

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Trafford Prevention Team – Intergenerational and Multicultural Project

Lead partner: Trafford Youth Offending Service

Briefly: Old Trafford is a deprived but richly multi-cultural area. This project aimed to build community cohesion by linking intergenerational work with a multicultural focus. A diverse group of young people interviewed elders in the community about the area they live in and what changes they had seen over their lifetimes and made a professional quality film.

Who was involved? A group of seven young people from Old Trafford were recruited, five of whom remained committed throughout the programme. This core group were aged 12 to 14 and included those of Pakistani, Polish and African Caribbean backgrounds. Several were known to the Youth Offending Service, one had an Acceptable Behaviour Contract, while others were described by family members as having 'discipline issues' or as never having taken part in community activities. Staff included a Polish practising Christian from the YOS and an Afro – Caribbean practising Muslim pastoral care worker from the local high school.

Identification of a group from the older generation people proved to be difficult. Availability during the daytime, lack of interest and difficulties around safeguarding all made it difficult to recruit a new group, so it was decided to approach already established groups. Although this hindered a few of the original proposals, there were also many positives from this approach. Eventually three groups were involved – an Over 50s Afro-Caribbean group, residents from the Harry Lord residential care unit and an over 50s South Asian Muslim group.

What did we do? The project began with an ice-breaking 'Working Lunch' when young people devised ground rules by drafting and agreeing a behaviour contract. They then discussed expectations, roles and proposals for



the project, a process which clarified that they would be leading the project and involved at all possible stages. Over the next few sessions, the young people learned how to work as a team and focused on devising an action plan. They made contact with the older people with the aim of gaining insight into their everyday life. Over a number of sessions the two generations engaged in informal conversations whilst playing dominoes and taking part in the regular activities provided for the groups.

After this initial stage the young people devised a strategy which proposed capturing a representation of different generations, cultures and faiths through a short film showing what it's like to live in Old Trafford. They felt this could also help show a positive representation of young people today. The group decided to involve a locally based professional film crew to help them gain practical experience of media, multimedia and journalism.



They then came up with a set of key questions they would ask older generations about life in Old Trafford, relationships between communities and what had changed over the years. Young people were helped to develop their ideas by viewing a film made by young people in Blackburn about their experiences of living in the town and how they wanted to unite local communities.

Young people really bonded during the making of the film, taking it in turns to interview, film and record sound. They gained practical skills and the process of becoming reporters stimulated willingness to learn more about the older generation and different cultures. For older community members, seeing young people engaged in a positive way in the heart of the community helped them to reassess their image of today's youth, and there was much positive feedback from those interviewed.

The film will be shown to the local community at a celebration event in Old Trafford Spring 2011. The group are also now linking with young people from another area within Trafford to show how they can use this approach and are working with a group of young people from a travelling community.



What did we learn?

- Giving young people a chance to interact with older generation in their local community in safe and positive way can build public confidence, develops community cohesion, and challenges stereotypes.
- Interactions between group members were extremely in-depth. Through informal chats the young people gained a breadth of knowledge around different religions and faiths which increases knowledge and tolerance levels.
- Projects such as this address Every Child Matters outcomes, such as helping spread a feeling of community safety, gaining new skills linked to employability, and enjoying and achieving through taking responsibility and working hard.
- A longer timeframe would have enabled young people to take on additional roles such as budgeting and training. Future projects would also see more emphasis put on initial team-building to create solidarity within a core group.
- This pilot project showed there is scope for extending the approach with other communities in the City.

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About the Beth Johnson Foundation

The Beth Johnson Foundation is a national organisation that aims to build a society where people can age well; it does this by challenging age discrimination through pioneering initiatives. Our Centre for Intergenerational Practice plays a key role by bringing younger and older people together through a structured programme, working with partners across all sectors.

The Centre offers specialist intergenerational consultancy and evaluation services, bespoke training and development, in addition to a set of core training modules. This is delivered through its team of experienced consultants, trainers and researchers, and is tailored to organisational needs. The Centre also has an extensive library covering a range of intergenerational topics that can be accessed through: www.centreforip.org.uk/resources/toolkits-and-guides



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About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

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