

The Story so far...

In 2010, Kirklees Council sought to engage older residents from across the Huddersfield North locality to take part in a number of school and community based activities, to promote greater understanding and respect between the generations.

They wanted positive impacts for the residents' social and emotional health that would hopefully lead to lasting benefits for the individuals and the wider community.

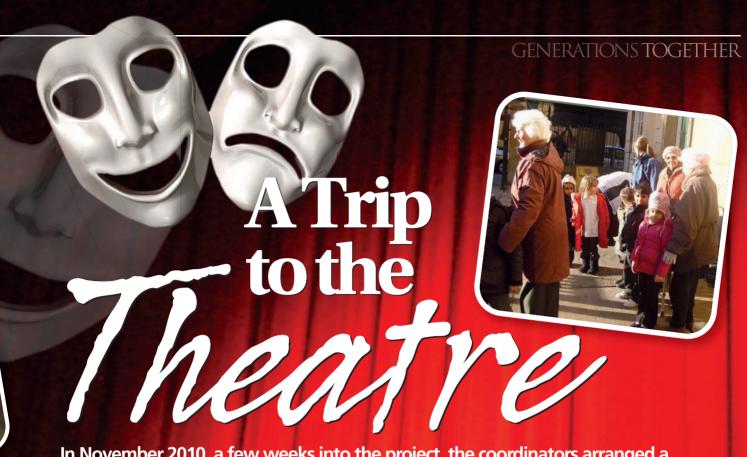
They commissioned **Generations** Together, a project based in nineteen schools in three clusters, namely North Huddersfield, Royds Hall and Salendine Nook. These three clusters of schools each employ an Enrichment Activity Facilitator (EAF), whose roles are to commission and facilitate projects and activities that contribute to the enrichment of the education and lives of children, their parents, families and the wider community. So the EAFs were perfectly placed to coordinate the project.

The EAFs are also well qualified: they are facilitators, event organisers, collaborators, brokers, mediators and coordinators. They work separately and together, thinking laterally and reflectively. They helped build relationships at every turn, whether between a school and a local organisation, or a child and an older person.

By November 2010, the groundwork was done; schools and partner organisations were on board. The first event was collaborative – a celebratory trip to the theatre - and from January 2011, there followed projects based in the schools, culminating in a week-long interactive exhibition in the summer.

The results of the EAFs' efforts, and those of the schools, organisations, partners and participants involved, are represented here; a few examples have been chosen to give an idea of the richness of the experiences involved therein. They are interspersed with knowledge gleaned from the documentation that was gathered along the way.





In November 2010, a few weeks into the project, the coordinators arranged a celebratory event to bring the participating schools together. The aim was to organise something unusual, and that would be suitable and interesting for all, regardless of age, culture, gender or social background.

The result of much discussion and research was a trip to the Lawrence Batley Theatre, who were showing 'Heidi: A Goat's Tale', performed by Northern Broadsides theatre company.

350 people, spanning an age-range of 5 to 94 years, travelled to the theatre by coach. For many, this was to be their first trip to a theatre. Most schools had arranged for their older guests to have lunch with the children first, either at school or within the town centre. making more of an occasion. The production was different, funny and engaging; the unruly goats started off in the audience, nibbling on coats and scarves and within touching distance of the children. One little boy who is usually very quiet was so excited that when he met his mum after the theatre, he excitedly told her all about the naughty goats eating someone's coat!

The interval was a touch chaotic, but everyone did get drinks and biscuits, kindly provided by the theatre.

Comments from both generations were positive:

"All the children loved the show and the interaction between the

goats and the audience; our older people were really touched at being invited to do something different."

Teacher from participating primary school

"I have never been to a theatre. It was such a memorable experience, I think I will take my family because they have never been" Older person from Ashbrow

TOPICAL TIP

This event was relatively straight forward to organise – but there are things that we will do differently next time.

Transport was organised centrally, using one coach company. The service was very good, but the impact of ten large coaches dropping off such a diverse range of people in a relatively congested area of the town centre hadn't been foreseen. With hindsight, each school ordering their own minibus, which could be more flexible to their needs, would have been easier for everyone.



How the Project was Documented

It was clear from the start that the project required an assessment of its activities that was light in touch but that would articulate the extent to which the project encouraged greater respect and understanding between the generations involved and make recommendations as to how to sustain the best practice of the project.

Mary Robson was engaged as an external assessor. Her role was to keep up to date with the project through regular meetings with project staff and to work alongside them to analyse and report on the project as a whole. She also attended events and held conversations with participants. As a result, all nineteen participating schools kept a book that captured, in as much detail as possible, how their projects developed and what was learned. The coordinators also kept books of their experiences and reflections, and a 'master' that timelined the whole project, including examples of work from every school.

The books offered the opportunity for all those planning, delivering and participating in the projects to be meaningfully involved in the evidencing of its activities. They are purposefully square, more scrap book than exercise book. They each have a distinctive front cover, and chronicle the life of the project, through notes, contributions from participants,

photographs, promotional material and signing-in sheets. They have become the 'family albums' of the projects.

A gathering of school staff took place in March 2011. Its purpose was to ascertain progress and collect evidence of the project's efficacy. Whether written in the books, or in focused conversations at meetings, evidence was gathered through four levels of questioning:

Objective (what is happening/has happened?) Reflective (what feelings are there about the project?) Interpretive (what is being learned?) Decisional (what next steps can be identified?)

CROWLANE INTERGENERATION

Crow Lane Primary School made links with Sycamore Grange sheltered accommodation, grandparents and members from local faith groups. The local community worker helped forge

links with Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing, and members from the wider community were identified. All were sent personal invitations sent to the start of the project an action-packed week of activities for all.



A workshop where the older and younger people shared stories and created objects that reminded them of their childhood. 30 children and 18 adults worked together, sharing their experiences. One of the older people said 'I cannot remember the last time Iplayed with clay. It brought me back to my childhood - messy but lots of fun'

The final piece created was a totem pole, made of all the individual efforts, scribed with the makers' hopes and dreams.

>TUESDAY Digital Photography

The workshop began with a photo treasure hunt where participants worked in groups to find a mix of

different images. By its end, beautiful prints of the older and younger people together had been developed.

>**WEDNESDAY** - Photograms

Older members of the community came along and worked with the Year 5 pupils to create images of their hands and discuss their hopes and dreams.

Natasha said 'its amazing how as a lady you only had the choice of 3 things to do once you left School

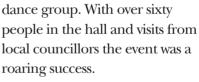
THURSDAY - Tea Dance

The Year 3 children danced with residents from Sycamore Grange, grandparents and a local ballroom dance group. With over sixty people in the hall and visits from local councillors the event was a

One of he children commented 'I didn't realise that older people could dance so well

>**FRIDAY** - Exhibition

The week ended with an exhibition. A gallery showcased images, comments and creations from the week's activities. 148 children and 52 adults took part in the week, with friendships formed and links with the community forged. The success of this week led to a new range of intergenerational activities that happened throughout the year.













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Helpful school pupils

WE recently held an Open Day at Fartown Village Hall as part of our 10 year celebration and to launch our history and intergenerational

project.

On the day we were privileged to have the assistance of a group of Year 8 pupils from Fartown High School. They helped out with all aspects of the day's co-ordination. They worked hard to make the event the success it was and we are very grateful. These children are a credit to their school, parents and the local community.

GRAHAM HELLAWELL Development Officer Agewell Kirklees

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North Huddersfield Trust School and Agewell

The partnership between North Huddersfield Trust School (formerly Fartown High) and Agewell led to a journey that is still not over. Initially at a loss as to how to identify older people in the community, teacher Mohammed Lone, forged a partnership with local organisation 'Agewell'.

gewell was established in March 2002, by local older people in the Birkby and Fartown areas of Huddersfield to address a range of needs and issues. It is a voluntary sector organisation run by a committee that reflects the community it serves, with representatives from white, African-Caribbean and South Asian communities

The partnership led to a range of events and activities that provided opportunities for the groups to meet: the Agewell Open day, their AGM, performances and events at the school, and most spectacularly the Pop Up Café.

The Pop Up café was a collaboration that included national education charity Agewell the high school. It was further supported by Kirklees College Catering Students, who acted as mentors to the pupils.

Twenty six pupils from the school gave up their October 2011 halfterm holiday to contribute to the venture. They spent days learning how to cook and serve the food in preparation for the event – a delicious three course meal of carrot and coriander soup, followed by either chicken chausseur or vegetable biryani, rounded off with a choice of sponge cake or apple crumble with cream.

"At first I wasn't looking forward to it as I thought the older people and us would have nothing in common... How wrong I was! I



GENERATIONS TOGETHER

have really, really enjoyed it and so have my schoolmates!" Paige Mawson.

Year 9 community ambassadors were subsequently invited to Agewell's Annual General Meeting, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to Agewell and intergenerational work. Head teacher Dr Williams was also in attendance, as guest speaker. It was a special and proud day for all involved with over £1500 being pledged to Agewell from various sponsors, for the sponsored bike ride undertaken by Omith Mistry from Sheffield to Huddersfield!

"The project has blossomed into a great friendship which continues to benefit the pupils, the older people and our school. It epitomises the significance and rewards which can be gained from actively removing barriers, building relationships and understanding and coming to together to not only learn but engage in some very exciting and fun moments!" Mohammed Lone - Associate Senior

"It's made me respect and look at older people in a different way. I no longer see them as odd or boring!" **Mohammed Haseeb**

Leader, NHTS

"I am proud to be an ambassador for the school and have loved working with and for Nancy and Graham at Agewell. The food is fab too!!" Ray Hill



FINDINGS

The overall aims of Generations Together were:

- 1. To seek to embed new ways of working and sustain a number of the intergenerational activities developed from this programme to ensure lasting impacts.
- 2. To bring people from different generations together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities that promote greater understanding and respect between generations and that contribute to building more cohesive communities.

The evidence gathered during the course of the project showed the following:

Opportunities were created for all to take part in and develop new skills and leisure activities. Some also got the chance to show existing skills in new ways – examples include a man who brought his cacti collection to school and the ballroom dancers at the tea dance

Schools increased their links with the wider community across Huddersfield North. New contacts were made and existing ones strengthened. For example, Selandine Nook High School made significant contact with Parkwood Methodist Church Luncheon Club. Safeguarding children was modelled throughout the project self-regulation, tolerance, respect responsibility and good manners. There were opportunities to practice rather than simply talk.

provided for local deliverers and facilitators. These helped make links between schools and deliverers. Sustainability of some such activities has cost implications, but it was recognised that the deliverers lessened pressure on school staff and that such

support and learning opportunities can help sustain the work. Increased social interaction improved the social and emotional well-being of the older participants. Older people commented that they felt safe and included because the activities were in school.

Reduction of social isolation through participation in activities. There was a clear unexpected outcome: that some schools have become hubs of social activity for elders. Some of the plentiful examples given by school staff include:

- One isolated gentlemen is now a school governor and a regular
- One gentleman came to a workshop and now delivers art sessions at school
- How grateful older residents were to come into school – to have something to do
- Each week we have



Lindley Intergenerational Community Choir

The Huddersfield area has always had a strong choral tradition, and communal singing is also a growing modern phenomenon. Lindley Junior School chose to launch a new choir that spans the generations as their contribution to the project.





Then music teacher Alison North advertised for members for the Intergenerational Community Choir she was astonished at the response. She explained:

"We put out 80 chairs – and that was optimistic we thought – but in the end 120 people turned up. It was amazing!"

People of all ages attended. This initial taster session in early May was no flash in the pan. Every Monday evening since then, the hall at Lindley Junior School has been packed with enthusiastic singers from four-years-old to sixty-five and beyond.

Children, former pupils, teenagers, parents and grandparents have turned out to share the experience

of singing together. Families have sung together and older guests have made new friends. Singing together supports a sense of being part of a community, boosts self-esteem, raises happiness levels and can even counteract pain.

The feedback is positive and encouraging and a testimony to the intergenerational nature of the project and how it can help remove barriers and build positive relationships between the generations.

"Inspirational. And I have made new acquaintances."

"Now we can come and sing together and do it ourselves. It's another activity that we can do as a family."

Grandma Eileen, 58, said she had never believed she could sing.

"I thought I'd have to mime, but I don't,' she said. "I really enjoy it."

Dad Ian, 38, a plumber, is an enthusiastic supporter. He commented:

"When I first went to hear the school choir I can remember thinking that it would be all hymns and that sort of thing. But it wasn't, it was quite emotional and my bottom lip went. It wasn't what I expected at all."

"Joining the choir has been fantastic. The only singing I ever did was in the shower and I have been really surprised by how much I enjoy it."

"I came along for the children but now I'm doing it for me."

The Intergenerational Choir went on to perform at Lindley Carnival in the summer and rehearsals are now under way for an evening concert in March 2012.

Generations Together Exhibition Centre

The coordinators wanted to showcase the work that had taken place throughout the Generations Together Project. They also wanted to create an opportunity for the participants of the programme, young and old alike, to share their experiences and creations with each other and the wider public.









hey worked in partnership with the Packhorse Shopping Centre,
Huddersfield; general manager David Heathcoat-Smith kindly offered the use of one of the centre's vacant units as a venue.
Officially opened by Councillor Cath Harris, the week-long

exhibition brought together a selection of the work and record books that each school had completed throughout the project. All nineteen schools were invited to attend sessions throughout the week; this was the first time that participants were given the chance to work with





participants from other areas.
Further activities included the creation of an exhibit that evolved as the week went by - every participant created a self image which was displayed and eventually grew to fill the Unit's walls.
The feedback from the people in attendance was very positive from both young and old, one person stated

'It's exciting to be able to show to the world the great work that has happened in the Schools, I am really proud of what we have done'

Older person from Paddock area

Between sessions the centre was open to the general public, offering them the opportunity to see the impact of the project in the community. One member of the public, a 94 year old lady, came along to show off the tea cosy she had made at Crow Lane Primary school many years before. She spent time looking at the photos of the school, reminiscing about when she attended the school.

Local Councillor Hilary Richards commented

'I booked a free session to come and see the exhibit, in the end I wish I had booked the afternoon off, there are so many fantastic creations to see'



The project was developed and facilitated by the Enrichment Activity Facilitators:

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The schools involved were:

Ashbrow Infant and Nursery School, Ashbrow Junior School, Birkby
Infant School, Birkby Junior School, Christchurch Woodhouse J&I School, Crow
Lane J&I School, Cowlersley Primary School, Fixby J&I School, Lindley Infant School,
Lindley Junior School, Moorlands Primary School, North Huddersfield Trust School, Paddock
J&I School, Reinwood Infant School, Reinwood Junior School, Royds Hall High School, Salendine
Nook High School, Spring Grove J&I School, St Thomas Primary School,