



European Certificate in Intergenerational Learning

State of the Art report Intergenerational Education and Learning in the United Kingdom

Introduction/background

This report presents an overview of the current situation of intergenerational education, training and learning in the United Kingdom (UK). The report is one of a suite of country reports prepared for the development of the European Certificate in Intergenerational Learning (ECIL) by its partner organisations in Bulgaria, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Through its wide programme of intergenerational practice the Beth Johnson Foundation has access to practitioners and experts specialising in intergenerational approaches and perspectives. As such, these connections have been drawn on to support the analysis reached within this report.

(1) About generations and the relationship between them

How are generations and the relationships between them perceived in the United Kingdom (UK)?

The discussion about the generations in the UK is a complex debate where there are a variety of often contradictory discourses reflecting either a particular sectors view or the ideology of a particular group. The term generation in itself is also open to differing definitions and some of the debate about the generations is more accurately about particular cohorts such as the Baby Boomers (born between 1947 and the mid-1960s) or Generation X (born from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s.)

In general there is a perception, particularly in the media that relationships between the generations have been negatively affected by changing family structure, family breakdown and increased social mobility (Hatton-Yeo & Ohsako, 2000). At the same time organisations such as Grandparents Plus (www.grandparentsplus.org.uk) and the Beth Johnson Foundation (www.bjf.org.uk) have demonstrated that strong relationships between the generations are fundamental to the health of our UK Society and cite many examples of how this happens in practice.

However, we do need to acknowledge that our society in the UK has seen a reduction in opportunities for different generations to have natural contact with each other. While contact within families is generally still strong, outside the family changes in the nature of employment, housing, public space and the age stratification of accessing resources and activities have all reduced the opportunity for generations to mix naturally and have a strong sense of each other.

It has been this concern about the lack of opportunity for people of differing ages to mix and understand each other that have been one of the strong drivers behind the development of intergenerational programmes across the UK. This has been given particular importance as also countering the negative way that young people are often described which has led to a perceived belief that young people pose a threat to older generations although there is no real evidence for this.

Is there evidence that this has been changing over the last decade?

Within the media there has been a growing emphasis on the development of intergenerational conflict for resources and opportunities. Recently this has included suggested conflict over housing, employment, services, benefits and the cost of education now as compared to the past. The Intergenerational Foundation (www.if.org.uk) have been particularly vocal in developing this argument and in particular positing that young people are unfairly disadvantaged as compared to older people, particularly the Baby Boomers because of the advantages they enjoyed (Willetts, 2010).

However, an examination of the evidence does not bear out this picture of growing antagonism between the generations. If anything the evidence would suggest that people tend increasingly to live and socialise within their particular generational cohorts except within the family. A forthcoming report by the Children's and Older People's Commissioner in Wales (www.olderpeoplewales.com) has explored a number of the common stereotypical beliefs about the young and old and the picture that emerges from research is very different to the myths that are often quoted. Pain (2005, P32) concluded that there was "much evidence for cohesion as well as conflict" with regards to intergenerational relations in the UK.

The really significant change over the past decade has been the global economic recession which has reduced mobility and opportunities for people of all ages. But when you get behind the way this has affected communities you find increasing examples of people volunteering and collaborating to support one another and this is expanded in the next section.

What are the existing forms of solidarity and cooperation between generations in the United Kingdom?

There are two ways that this manifests itself but these are interdependent. These are within the family and within the wider community. Within the family we have seen increasing evidence for the rediscovery of the importance of the extended family (www.grandparentsplus.org.uk, Hatton-Yeo & Ohsako, 2000). In particular the resilience and success of young people is positively correlated to active involvement with older kin and older kin contribute the resources and support that are needed for

both their children and grandchildren to become economically successful. This ranges from child-minding to supporting grandchildren financially with their university fees or the deposit to purchase a house. This support is then reciprocated as people age as much of the care that people need to remain independent comes from younger family members.

Within the wider community solidarity and cooperation are most visible through the many initiatives of people supporting one another through volunteering and community activism. This covers a broad spectrum from mentoring, shared community projects on areas as diverse as community gardens to heritage to young people supporting isolated and older people in their communities. For examples of the wide range of such initiatives go to the website of the Centre for Intergenerational Practice (www.centreforip.org.uk)

(2) National legal framework of intergenerational education/ learning/ learning opportunities

Which national policy measures are supportive of the generations and/or solidarity and cooperation among them?

The United Kingdom is made up of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We have given below key examples drawing from all four places.

In 2003 the Welsh Government produced its first Strategy for Older People in Wales. This included a commitment to develop a national intergenerational programme for Wales and this has been funded since 2003. In 2008 the Welsh Government ratified an Intergenerational Strategy for Wales and since then has been working to include intergenerational learning as a core element of new national policies wherever relevant.

This has been further supported by the Minister for Adults Social Care also now holding the portfolio for Children and Young People. An example of how this had affected thinking in Wales is the Child Poverty Action Plan has an intergenerational emphasis seeing poverty as an issue that has to be tackled across the life-course and emphasising the importance of lifetime education. Family Learning also has a strong policy framework and the refreshed strategy for ageing in Wales to be published in April 2013 will have a national intergenerational action plan. As part of its National Ageing Well Strategy Wales has announced its intention to be an All-Age Friendly nation; this will provide a strong platform for intergenerational learning in the future.

In Northern Ireland the main focus at National and Local level has been on building stronger and safer communities ([A Review of Intergenerational Approaches to Community Safety in Northern Ireland](#)). The new Legislation on Community Safety makes clear recommendations to the importance of intergenerational approaches to building better connected communities and Linking Generations Northern Ireland (www.centreforip.org.uk/northernireland) are developing a programme of work across the region to develop the capacity of Police and Community Safety Partnerships to develop and deliver intergenerational programmes. In parallel with this work to

develop solidarity within communities LGNI is also undertaking a range of projects and roundtables across the region to explore models around social justice and equity between the generations.

In Scotland the Scottish Government has funded Generations Working Together since 2006. The priorities for GTW are based on the six core national priorities of the Government for Scotland. These are:

- Wealthier and Fairer
- Smarter
- Healthier
- Safer and Stronger
- Greener
- Social Cohesion

Visit the Generations Working Together website for the detail of how these are shaping the national intergenerational programme:

www.generationsworkingtogether.org

In England we have moved to a localism agenda where greater emphasis is placed on the development of locally sustainable initiatives against a background of austerity. In such a context finding new ways for people to collaborate and get greater impact for less money has created a need for transformational ways of working that cut across traditional departmental boundaries. Intergenerational approaches have been one of the ways of developing such initiatives and this is exemplified in the government funded programme of intergenerational learning and development workshops and intergenerational practice reviews ([Intergenerational Practice: A peer-based review model for councils and their partners](#)).

There is also an increased emphasis on strengthening those families experiencing the greatest difficulties and intergenerational models to support young people not in Education, Employment or Training who need adult role models. The other key area has been the concern that older people are not being fully included in the digital revolution so the role of young people as IT tutors has developed significantly. The increased emphasis by the coalition government on sustainable community change has also created increased recognition of the importance of intergenerational approaches to building community cohesion and social capital.

(3) Intergenerational education, training and learning opportunities in the United Kingdom

From your national perspective, what makes intergenerational education/ training and learning intergenerational? What conditions must be fulfilled for them to be intergenerational?

Within the United Kingdom we would expect to see the following attributes before we would consider an educational, training or learning opportunity to be intergenerational:

- It must involve younger and older people but may also involve the middle generation(s).

- All participating generations must be actively involved in learning and there must be an intentional structure to promote learning between the generations. It is learning together not learning alongside.
- There must be a relational element to the learning experience where the traditional pedagogic processes are enhanced by the learning about and between the generations.
- Participants are encouraged to shape the learning processes.
- Facilitators have the necessary skills and understanding to work with people of different ages.
- A culture of respect and shared experience is engendered among the participants.

Is there a tradition of intergenerational education/training/learning in your country and what can be learned from current and past practices? Please give examples where possible.

There is a long tradition of intergenerational learning in the UK that can be traced back at least to 1980 if not earlier when the first Youth Opportunity Training Schemes were often intergenerational. The real growth in training in the UK stems from the founding of the UK Centre for Intergenerational Practice in 2001 and there are now a plethora of people involved in different forms of training and intergenerational programming in the UK. These are captured well in the National Foundation for Education and Research *Intergenerational practice: outcomes and effectiveness* and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education *Think Community: An exploration of the links between intergenerational practice and informal adult learning research reports*. Examples of these initiatives are given later in this report and further examples can be found on the Centre for Intergenerational Practice <http://www.centreforip.org.uk/resources/case-studies>

Why and in what form are intergenerational education/training/learning opportunities needed in the UK and why are they needed in different settings?

We would see the main needs for intergenerational learning opportunities across a wide range of settings as being:

- The impact of our ageing society and demographic change necessitating new ways of thinking about relationships between the generations.
- The age-segregated nature of our society limiting natural contact between the generations.
- Changes in family structures creating the need for systems to strengthen understanding and mutual support between the generations.
- The need to create a new relational discourse about the society and communities the generations will share in the future.
- The need to enable the generations to share their skills and learn from one another.
- The importance of creating systems that are built on the understanding of how to work effectively across all the generations to promote cohesion not dislocation.
- Strong families and strong communities have a mutual co-dependency

What formats and methods are predominately being used for intergenerational education/training in your country?

The main format for intergenerational learning in the UK is project based, that is to say based on time limited pieces of work that create connection between people of different ages. As such much of this work occurs in informal, community settings.

The reverse side of this is the training for professionals and facilitators who enable such programmes and this would occur typically in training days designed to raise awareness and understanding and to learn of different examples.

(4) Practice of intergenerational education/training events and learning opportunities

Who are current providers of intergenerational education /training events and learning opportunities in the UK?

In the UK the long tradition of intergenerational learning ensures a wide and varied amount of providers, these include:

- Arts and cultural organisations
- Care providers
- Education providers
- Family
- Faith
- Housing organisations
- Local/Public Authorities: including libraries, museums and galleries
- Older People's organisations
- Public and Private
- Voluntary and community sector organisations
- Youth organisations

In terms of organisations providing intergenerational education and training the Beth Johnson Foundation is the lead provider. This is facilitated through its initiatives and partnerships across the UK and by developing a variety of intergenerational training programmes.

Deliverers of intergenerational education and training include the following organisations:

- Age UK County Durham
- Beth Johnson Foundation Centre for Intergenerational Practice
- Generations Together Cymru
- Generations Working Together Scotland
- Linking Generations Northern Ireland
- London Borough of Camden Council – 'Introduction to Intergenerational Working' run three times per year
- Magic Me

Please name and describe current four outstanding national initiatives in the field of intergenerational education / training or learning opportunities in the UK, including your own work.

i. Generations Working Together Scotland

Generations Working Together provides information, delivers support and encourages involvement to benefit all of Scotland's generations, by working, learning, volunteering and living together. The organisational objectives are to:

- Work with Scottish Local Authorities to develop a framework for the effective use of intergenerational practice within Local Authority policies and procedures to the benefit of local communities and all age groups
- Work with Education Scotland to develop proposals whereby IP can be positively and inclusively incorporated within the Curriculum for Excellence with a view to reducing age stereotyping, improving community cohesion and encouraging lifelong learning
- Work with NHS Health Scotland to encourage the use of IP in improving active aging, encouraging healthier lifestyles, supporting greater personal independence and, reducing social isolation of vulnerable groups and, in particular, the elderly
- Develop a series of local IP networks and thematic networks across Scotland and support them through training, advice and local events and enable the sharing of good practice
- Work with Third Sector Interfaces and a range of relevant organisations to encourage intergenerational volunteering to help both active ageing and community cohesion through participation in volunteering, attending community groups and other IP activity

www.generationsworkingtogether.org

ii. Linking Generations Northern Ireland

Linking Generations is managed by the Beth Johnson Foundation to promote and support the development of Intergenerational Practice across Northern Ireland by providing structured opportunities to bring different generations together, improving understanding and increasing mutual support. The vision is to achieve age friendly communities where everyone respects each other and has a voice and a role to play.

Linking Generations NI (LGNI) is core funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and additional funds support specific work-streams such as the Community Safety Unit of the Northern Ireland Department of Justice, the Big Lottery through a partnership programme with the Workers Educational Association and Intergenerational Peace Building work with Cooperation Ireland. In addition LGNI have also formed a very important partnership with the Age Sector Platform and Northern Ireland Youth Forum using the opportunity of the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations to promote collaboration between generations at organisational and community level.

The wide ranging focus of the intergenerational projects, programmes and events developed in the region reflects the applicability of IP to a wide range of social and public policy agendas. The broad aims of the Linking Generations Initiative are to promote intergenerational solidarity by:

- Developing and promoting opportunities to bring generations together and build capacity within communities to sustain this approach
- Supporting the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to recognise the potential of all-age approaches and embedding within their strategies, practices and policies
- Encouraging, lobbying and influencing the government to provide support and commit to all-age approaches to address ageism and segregation in society.

www.centreforip.org.uk/northern-ireland

iii. **Magic Me**

Magic Me have been the leading provider of intergenerational arts projects in the UK and brings the generations together to build a stronger, safer community. Over the last 22 years Magic Me has developed a core model of working and delivers a programme that reaches across parts of London to links young people aged 8+ and adults aged 60+ through shared, creative activity. Intergenerational groups meet on a weekly basis in schools, museums, older peoples clubs, care homes, community and cultural organisations.

Projects are led by a team of freelance creative artists: musicians, dancers, photographers, printmakers, writers and drama specialists. They design activities to stimulate conversation and an exchange of ideas. Participants are often diverse in culture and faith as well as age group.

An annual programme combines tried and tested models with trialling new ideas and projects. Examples of projects include:

- **Cocktails in Care Homes** brings younger and older people together in care settings to reduce loneliness, improve care and challenge ageist stereotypes
- **Pen Friends** is a group adults of all ages who meet to write and share their work with one another; the group was established by Magic Me in 2007
- **Work with Schools** Magic Me teams up school groups with over 50's clubs and care homes for projects that last at least 10 weeks. Each project is designed to stimulate and appeal to both age groups. They meet weekly so that relationships can grow and skills develop. Participants work towards a common aim: a performance, a book or an exhibition
- **View from the Top** London's 205 buses were transformed for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games with vibrant artworks depicting life on High Street 2012 (the route from the City to the Olympic Stadium).

Magic Me have developed its own training for delivering intergenerational arts projects, and have been commissioned to deliver this training across the UK and beyond. www.magicme.co.uk

iv. **National Federation of Women's Institutes-Wales - Get Cooking**

The Get Cooking project runs in eight areas across Wales - Ceredigion, Clwyd-Denbigh, Clwyd-Flint, Glamorgan, Gwent, Gwynedd-Caernarfon, Pembrokeshire, Powys-Montgomery and Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire - and is funded by the Welsh Government. The courses aim to teach young people basic food preparation skills, ways of obtaining a varied healthy diet on a low budget and demonstrate that the basic preparation of food, cooking and eating can be enjoyable.

Older volunteers deliver a six week programme of cookery courses in a variety of venues, such as community halls, across Wales. The older volunteers pass on their skills to young parents and other groups of young people, including youth offending groups, with a lack of knowledge of cooking, health and nutrition, budgeting etc. The project started in 1997 and is on-going.

<http://www.thewi.org.uk/wi-in-wales/current-projects/get-cooking>

(5) Beth Johnson Foundation as a provider of intergenerational education

What is your organisation's experience in the field of Intergenerational projects?

The Beth Johnson Foundation (BJF) has been involved in the intergenerational field since the early 1990's. Initially BJF set up evaluated pilot projects to enable it to learn about the potential benefits that were being expounded about intergenerational practice, and where the approach would fit within the wider context of BJF's work around ageing. This led to BJF's first three-year funding for an intergenerational mentoring programme across five secondary schools in the city of Stoke-on-Trent to support young people with the transition from primary to secondary education. Further intergenerational programmes were developed around communities using IT, the environment and the arts.

The step change came with the development and launch of the UK Centre for Intergenerational Practice (CIP) in April 2001 to provide a national platform for the development of intergenerational practice; CIP now has over 2,200 members which are mainly UK based. A review of intergenerational practice in the UK was commissioned by BJF in 2001, and a short review was carried out in 2012 for internal purposes to support the organisations strategic planning.

In 2008 BJF assisted the Welsh Assembly Government in devising and planning its intergenerational strategy. Similarly there was support to the Scottish Executive in developing its Ageing Strategy in this year and intergenerational practice was identified as a key priority, with funding, for a Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice to be created with BJF as expert advisers to the Centre.

2009 saw the development of the ageing strategy for England, Building a Society for All Ages, which included £5.5m Generations Together funding for IG projects to break down barriers and challenge negative stereotypes. BJF had a pivotal role in developing the Generations Together programme and worked closely with national and local government to ensure the success of the programme:

<http://www.centreforip.org.uk/england/generations-together>

BJF launched Linking Generations Northern Ireland in 2009 with funding from Atlantic Philanthropies, a private grant funding organisation; described in 4.ii above.

From the early days of the CIP a variety of training tools and workshops were developed and delivered across the UK. In 2009 BJF received funding from the Big Lottery Fund and the Department of Education (previously the Department for Children Schools and Families) to develop core training modules and a Train the

Trainer programme for intergenerational practice. It is this training that the ECIL partners will develop through the European Transfer of Innovation fund.

Currently the BJJ delivers an intergenerational module as part of Manchester City Council and Keele University's Ageing Studies Certificate, which is an accredited model.

What permanent intergenerational activities does your organisation conduct?

- **Centre for Intergenerational Practice**

BJJ has developed and managed the Centre for Intergenerational Practice since 2001. The Centre for Intergenerational Practice provides a national platform for the development of intergenerational practice by:

- Supporting a network of member organisations and individuals with a commitment to intergenerational practice
- Influencing policy-makers
- Conduct events
- Gathering evidence and resources of the benefits of intergenerational practice
- Promoting the evaluation of intergenerational programmes and research into the impact of intergenerational approaches
- Fostering local, national and international links

www.centreforip.org.uk

- **European Map of Intergenerational Learning (EMIL)**

EMIL is a collaborative network of members working together to support intergenerational learning taking place across Europe. Established in 2009 by BJJ, the network uses the existing expertise of partner organisations already working in the field to create a learning network for others involved in intergenerational programmes across Europe. Through supporting regional and global networking strategies, EMIL provides an overview of the role and status of intergenerational learning and broader intergenerational practice by collecting, exchanging, and distributing ideas and resources in the field.

www.emil-network.eu/

- **Generations Together Cymru**

Generations Together Cymru (GTC) is a partnership between The Beth Johnson Foundation and RSVP Cymru and is funded by the Welsh Government to work towards creating a Nation that is friendly to people of all ages. The GTC vision is to create a country where people of all ages are valued for their contributions and belong to communities that are inclusive, valuing their younger and older members by:

- Developing materials including newsletters, resources, case-studies and toolkits.
- Working with Local Authorities to support them to become national exemplars of the impact, practice and benefits of bringing the generations together.
- Provide targeted advice, support and training.
- Facilitate models of local partnership and develop models of collaboration across traditional age boundaries to demonstrate the benefits of such work.

- Provide an expert resource on the development of age friendly communities and contribute to the development of an Age Friendly Wales.
- Influence policy makers and organisations to consider how bringing the generations together strengthens and benefits their work
- **Linking Generations Northern Ireland** - See section 4 above.

BJF is the UK founding partner and host for the **International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes** - the global umbrella body for intergenerational learning. The objectives of ICIP are to:

- Promote the importance of intergenerational initiatives as agents for social change
- Support and promote intergenerational approaches to programmes, practices, public policy and research worldwide
- Provide a collective voice and networking mechanism to connect intergenerational practitioners and researchers across the globe
- Encourage a systematic approach to understanding how intergenerational programmes and practices work

www.icip.info/

Summary and Recommendations

Please, summarise the main points of this report and provide recommendations concerning specific cultural, social and other aspects of intergenerational learning in the UK that need to be taken into account when modifying UK training materials as to meet your national needs.

Negative stereotypical perceptions of the older and younger generations are consistently portrayed through the media in the UK, and abound in the segregated sectors in which we work e.g. children's services, adult social services etc. The reality in many areas can be quite different but the opportunities for different generations to come together and mix needs to be dramatically improved.

Some of the ways in which this can be achieved is through developing its workforce to understand and implement intergenerational approaches in their working methods. Similarly to support local and national policy and innovation in the development and delivery of services across communities, rather than using traditional methods restricted by age and its related funding. It should be noted that the four government administrations across the UK have differing attitudes and outlook towards intergenerational approaches.

As the training materials were designed by the Beth Johnson Foundation for the UK it is important that we use cross-cultural comparisons to develop and broaden materials for the course, and to support the understanding of the benefits of intergenerational approaches.

Literature and references:

Beth Johnson Foundation (2012) *Intergenerational Practice: A peer-based review model for councils and their partners*. Beth Johnson Foundation, England.

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Older People's Commissioner in Wales www.olderpeoplewales.com

Centre for Intergenerational Practice www.centreforip.org.uk

Linking Generations Northern Ireland www.centreforip.org.uk/northernireland

Generations Working Together www.generationsworkingtogether.org

Magic Me www.magicme.co.uk

National Federation of Women's Institutes www.thewi.org.uk/wi-in-wales/

European Map of Intergenerational Learning www.emil-network.eu/

International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes www.icip.info/

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Name of the partner organisation and of the person(s) reporting.

Beth Johnson Foundation

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