

E N I L – European Network for Intergenerational Learning Report on Intergenerational Learning and Volunteering

This material has been developed within the ENIL project partnership

Contents

A. Introduction to ENIL.....	2
B. General information on the report.....	2
<i>B1. General information on the report</i>	2
<i>B2. Intergenerational Learning – context and background</i>	3
<i>B3. Definitions and acceptances of the term “IGL”</i>	3
<i>B4. IGL: Status, challenges and solutions for a research on IGL and volunteering</i>	5
C. General Policies and partner countries approaches on IGL.....	5
<i>C1. State-of-art in IGL throughout Europe: national organizations, programmes, funding, policies</i>	5
<i>C2. European-level policies and priorities for IGL and volunteering</i>	8
D. Deconstructing case studies	8
E. Conclusions and recommendations.....	11
F. Collection of Case studies	12

A. Introduction to ENIL

ENIL is a EU-funded project carried out by 25 institutions from 22 EU countries promoting Intergenerational Learning. The project brings together practitioners and thus facilitates the exchange of expertise and effective practice by creating support structures aimed at influencing policy makers and policies through research, dissemination and advocacy.

Its focus is on intergenerational learning (IGL) with the added value of volunteering on the part of all family members to engage in and develop on IGL.

As a Grundtvig project, the ENIL partnership has envisaged a work plan starting with information collecting, analysis of contexts and present practices within IGL in all project countries, and gradually evolving to understanding of the present needs of the main beneficiary groups with regard to intergenerational learning and the valorization of knowledge and experience, both on the part of the elderly and the younger generations.

It is the aim of ENIL to research the field of IGL in connection with volunteering and based on these findings supporting further development of:

- 1. Understanding of IGL and its importance if properly valorized*
- 2. Lifelong learning skills with regard to intergenerational learning and volunteering*
- 3. Traditions and customs regarding IGL at national level of the countries less focused on IGL development*

All these are targeted from the perspective of the stakeholders, who are best placed to disseminate and implement new programmes that would support the above mentioned aspects.

The ENIL partnership will address stakeholders by means of advocacy documents, which are another delivery envisaged by the project work plan.

One major activity within the project is represented by the Report on Intergenerational Learning and Volunteering. The report is the sum of the common efforts of the partnership members and has been created on the basis of primary data collected at national level and then collated at international level.

The following sections of this report will gradually introduce the reader to IGL, contextualize the concept, refer to national policies and practices, underline the state-of-art of IGL connected to volunteering in the partnership countries and illustrate the analysis with example of case studies collected by the representatives of the partnership at national level. The report also includes research on key concepts and their role within real social activities and the dynamics of present society.

B. General information on the report

B1. General information on the report

Objective

By means of this report ENIL partnership intends to:

- Present the current practice within IGL connected to volunteering at European level
- Analyse the dynamics of involvement in IGL and volunteering at national level as a way of illustrating the public, centralised interest of national authorities
- Compare and contrast implementation of IGL related to volunteering at national level by use of case studies analysis
- Offer suggestions for further development and enhancement of IGL related to volunteering

Focus

The report focuses on:

- *the concept of IGL in a comparative and contrasted manner*
- *the background of the activities and actions IGL refers to*
- *the implications that instances of IGL have at national level, especially enhanced by volunteering;*

The focus of the report is on examples of good practice of implementing intergenerational learning with the help of volunteers in different contexts and organizations. The examples have been selected and drafted so as to constitute an easy to follow model that could encourage involvement in IGL activities, increase strategies for motivating people to learn and interact for educational purposes and also give a renewed stimulus to volunteering activities in a lifelong learning contexts.

Target – *the report is mainly addressed to stakeholders and decision makers who have the position of further disseminating and implementing policies on IGL and volunteering. However, materials contained in this document are also relevant and supportive for the end user interested in updating their knowledge and understanding of IGL.*

In order to promote Intergenerational Learning within school systems the report is published both online and in 1,500 printed copies. The report can also be downloaded for free from the ENIL project website at www.enilnet.eu. More materials connected to the report – such as studies on the state of the art in IGL in individual countries, videos and pictures – can be found at the above mentioned address.

Methodology – *The partnership has been collecting and collating materials representing the state-of-the-art at national level. Conclusions have been drawn by analysing the data gathered.*

B2. Intergenerational Learning – context and background

To contextualise the concept of IGL it is necessary to present the background of its development and also discuss the manner in which it relates or is contrasted with formal, informal and non-formal education.

This section in the report is intended to offer the reader a higher and more complex view of how the above mentioned elements relate; what the differences are between them; what each of them brings to the end user and beneficiary.

Such an approach underlines the added value IGL brings to lifelong learning and also to intergenerational communication and collaboration with regard to the benefit of all parties involved.

Formal, non-formal and informal education

Formal education is a prescriptive system based on a well-established curriculum and syllabus designed to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills. The transfer of information is one of the basic principles of formal education, moving towards self –study and study and learning awareness of the learner.

Compared to this **non-formal** education is less prescriptive. It does function on the basis of an agreed or established structure but it is characterized by a higher degree of flexibility with regards to the objectives of the learning activities. It can include systems other than face-to-face classes like online or distance learning, where formality and very rigid structures can inhibit learning and skills development.

Informal learning is based on valorisation of various situations with educational potential. It is not comprised within the boundaries of curriculum although it can very well complete a formal or non-formal educational scheme.

Within this context IGL is a form of informal learning which, depending on the matrix used of its practice, can present some characteristics of formal learning. This means that intergenerational learning can happen both in non-formal and informal manners.

Most cases of intergenerational learning presented within this report can be included in non-formal education as they do happen within a structured environment.

The main difference between IGL and FL (family learning) is that IGL is not necessarily developed within the family. There are common components between the two forms of learning as both involve the transfer of skills or knowledge from one generation to another. However, FL also does not necessarily involve reciprocity.

B3. Definitions and acceptances of the term “IGL”

The partnership involved in the development of the EMIL project (European Map of Intergenerational Learning)¹ have agreed on the following definition of IGL, available on the project website, at the link mentioned below:

¹ <http://www.emil-network.eu>

Intergenerational Learning (IL) is a way that people of all ages can learn together and from each other. IL is an important part of Lifelong Learning, where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge. Beyond the transfer of knowledge, IL fosters reciprocal learning relationships between different generations and helps to develop social capital and social cohesion in our ageing societies. IL is one way of addressing some of the significant demographic changes and is as a way of enhancing intergenerational solidarity through intergenerational practice (IP).²

Within the EAGLE project, Intergenerational learning is defined “as a practice that aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities, which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and may contribute to building more cohesive communities.”³

Within the ENIL project, the partnership has agreed that a working definition which will allow the collection of best practice examples must contain the following three features that render an activity as IGL:

- involvement of more than 1 generation
- activity planned prior to its implementation in a progressive manner
- mutually beneficial learning

Based on these features ENIL partnership has been using the following IGL definition:

IGL is a learning partnership based on reciprocity involving people of different ages where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge.

Activities are labelled as IGL when they fulfil three criteria: involve more than one generation, planned in purpose and progressive, mutually beneficial learning which promotes greater understanding and respect between generations and, consequently, community cohesion.

The main issues addressed by Intergenerational Learning (IGL) approaches throughout Europe reflect the challenges of today’s European society: the digital divide between the young and the old, drop-out rates that are still worryingly high in some countries and literacy problems, risk of social exclusion for vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, migrants and young people at risk.

According to research in the field of IGL, a wide range of skills are enhanced when they are developed in an intergenerational study (teaching learning) context. Language, literacy and numeracy skills can all be supported and extended by IGL models if they are facilitated effectively.

IGL, provides a nonthreatening, reassuring learning environment and creates learning opportunities and activities that are relevant to the learner.

There is evidence that IGL provides a non-threatening first step to further learning for those who perceive learning to be irrelevant or who have had humiliating experiences in the past. The rationale for an IGL network is founded in development work undertaken so far by some of the partners, and by their desire to demonstrate the benefits of expanding the approach throughout Europe.

The ENIL Network supports sustainable, effective practice by facilitating the exchange of ideas and expertise and will provide a mechanism for practitioners to share ideas and understanding.

The ENIL partnership also tries to establish a context for IGL and volunteering activities as means of implementing IGL at national and international level.

The methodologies and practices that can be defined as IGL in Europe are diverse and the ENIL partnership has therefore decided to focus on a qualitative analysis of high-profile initiatives used in the participant countries and their application, rather than on a quantitative analysis. The rationale behind this decision was that qualitative data would be more beneficial and meaningful to IGL stakeholders and it would be difficult to collect consistent statistical data on IGL because of its diversity.

² <http://www.emil-network.eu/about/what-is-intergenerational-learning>

³ <http://www.eagle-project.eu/welcome-to-eagle>

The research and data collection of IGL best practice activities were conducted in each participating country according to a common template and the results have been collated and compared at European level. The report contains 15 best practice examples from 14 EU countries.

Partner institutions from the project countries have researched their national contexts and chosen one high-profile initiative reflecting the role of volunteering in IGL. The authors of that initiative have been contacted and based on the input received from them the ENIL partners have compiled a case study meant to capture the most relevant aspects of the respective activity, with a focus on its transferability to other contexts – as an example of good practice. All case studies have been collected based on a common template – annex 1 of this report.

IGL is applicable in a multitude of contexts, lowering boundaries and eliminating rigidity. In this way, IGL brings forward the possibility of involving senior citizens, migrants, young people at risk, and tackling issues such as literacy, active citizenship, social exclusion, employability or early school leaving.

B4. IGL: Status, challenges and solutions for a research on IGL and volunteering

IGL approaches in Europe and also throughout the world are best characterized by the concept of diversity. IGL is both a new approach and an old approach and when trying to label different learning activities as IGL, difficulties of standardization appear. This has been stated in various studies on IGL. For example the description provided by the report “Intergenerational learning in Europe – Policies, programmes and initiatives” produced by the EAGLE⁴ project describes the current status of IGL: “*this kind of interaction among generations covers a large spectrum of applications. It cannot be confined to formal (i.e. municipal, governmental, EU programmes) policies and strategies that empower the participation of aged persons to social life. It also includes non-formal and informal learning processes, which could be as much valuable for this effort.*”

C. General Policies and partner countries approaches on IGL

C1. State-of-art in IGL throughout Europe: national organizations, programmes, funding, policies

The general state-of-art reflects the fact that IGL in Europe is not an established concept, supported by coherent national policies. It is usually implemented to address specific issues and has clearly defined objectives. IGL is often being understood as Family Learning and in most of the cases it is being initiated by various organisations involved in adult education; the initiative being mainly connected to civic agencies, which focus on raising the educational level of lower skilled adults.

In the countries placed 5geographically in the Northern part of Europe (**UK, Ireland, the Scandinavian countries, Finland, Sweden, Norway**) there is a longer tradition of concerted educational activities delivered through intergenerational channels and through a wider variety of private or public organizations funded from governmental or civil society grants.

For example, **Vox**, the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning, is an agency of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research with an active role as a national advisor on education and skills policy. Vox's main goal is to contribute to supporting active citizenship, improving employability and increasing participation in education. Vox promotes the government priorities identified in the recently published white paper called *Education Strategy* by offering programmes where adults are better rewarded for the skills and knowledge they have acquired in working life, (accreditation of prior learning) for people who have limited educational attainment.

Vox is the organization that implements the governmental white paper which states that the Government will give particular priority to the group of adults who lack basic skills and who have not completed upper secondary education by strengthening the right to receive training and by developing a flexible system that pays attention to adults' needs to combine education and training with work and family life.

Other organisations in Norway are involved in IGL too. There is a national network for FL, with approximately 130 members. FL tutors in Norway do Family Learning as part of their regular teaching, responding to a recognized need among their students⁵. Family Learning is mainly used in adult education for immigrants, primarily for

⁴ <http://www.eagle-project.eu>, reference no. 229981-CP -1-2006-1-GR-GRUNDTVIG-G1PP

⁵ In Norway there is the so-called “Parents’ schools” where parents meet at their children’s school to get to know the modern school and each other, make clear cut expectations towards one another etc. For more info: <http://www.efln.eu/downloads/index.php>, then open the file called Hilde Grankel, Norway

immigrant women with low schooling and/or small children. Kindergartens, primary schools and libraries are also involved, but this is usually in partnership with the adult learning sector.

In some of these countries in the North of Europe there are national strategies in place for coherent actions meant to support processes of lifelong learning, immigrant inclusion through family learning activities, basic education including literacy and numeracy skills, life skills, or tacit knowledge transmission from one generation to another in a systematic and coordinated approach aligned with other educational programmes. In some of these countries IGL is being nationally planned and schemes of work are being elaborated by national agencies which identify changing needs, learning objectives and monitor the quality and the impact of the learning approaches.

Some other selective examples of such organisations are included in this document in the hope that their vision on IGL may be inspirational for other organisations and in other countries.

NALA, in **Ireland**, is an example of a national governmental organization which advances adult literacy policies, working in partnership with government departments, organisations, tutors and learners to develop policies to meet the needs of people with literacy and other learning needs and difficulties. The intergenerational component is considered crucial. This work is supported by evidence-based research, which examines international best practice, reviews Irish policy and produces recommendations.

The exemplary work that NALA delivers also covers improving people's literacy, increasing participation in adult literacy services through distance education programmes, TV series and national advertising campaigns, offering freephone support line and tutoring people on the phone with the conviction that contributing to the increase of the education level of the family reflects back to the children's school performance and on the social and economic realities of a country.

The expansion of the services that NALA and its branches deliver has gradually increased and it has been supported by its participation in EU projects focussed on the support of intergenerational practice of active civic participation, citizenship and social responsibility, awareness raising activities about community involvement and volunteering.

Age Action, a charity based in Ireland with the focus on improving the quality of life for older people also has an IGL programme entitled "Generations Together" aimed at using IGL work for reducing the divide between generations, tackling hostility and stereotyping, combating social isolation.

In the **United Kingdom**, organisations such as **Campaign for Learning** realised a long time ago that parental involvement in a child's learning is more powerful than family background, size of family or level of parental education and, in the primary years, has more impact on attainment than the school itself. The organization has been influential in shaping national education and social policy to build on this belief.

The Campaign for Learning works to build motivation, create opportunities and provide support for learning in families. Key elements of their work in this area are national Family Learning Festivals, policy and advocacy, publications, events, projects and research. Since 2001 it has been in a partnership venture with ContinYou and NIACE, which established up the UK Family Learning Network, which supports thousands of Family Learning practitioners all year round all over UK.

Illustrations of operations and initiatives in the repertoire of this organization include the Big Lottery funded *Dads in Demand!* a New booklet on linking family events and activities to further learning has been established to recognise and promote the importance of family-friendly approaches in schools. New development work includes a programme called Digital Families, which aims to bridge the digital and intergenerational divide, whilst raising children's attainment at school.

In **Germany**, IGL initiatives are developed by a multitude of organizations, covering a wide range of activities and skills development, with the focus on one of the most urgent problems of the German society: the ageing population which is foreseen by statistics to progress rapidly in the next few decades, thus strongly affecting the economy⁶ of the country. This national trend of diverse IGL activities is encouraged by the educational policies in a context that envisages IGL as a national priority and as a means for tackling issues around ageing.

⁶ http://www.iglooproject.eu/files/a_6_national_report_germany.pdf

The Ministry of 'Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth' launched the initiative 'Dialogue of the Generations' (Dialog der Generationen) in 1994 and established a dedicated working group inside the federal ministry. The initiative organised two competitions on the 'Solidarity between Generations'⁷ in 1994/95 and 1996/97 with approx. 1,000 participating projects⁸.

In **Spain** there are IGL programmes initiated both by private (approximately 30%) and public (approximately 60%) organizations. It has also been observed that the number of IGL programmes developed has increased during the last two decades and that the main participants in the programmes are elderly people and school-age children. Surveys indicated that the benefits expressed by participants in IGL initiatives are: active participation in the community, intergenerational solidarity, awareness of the rights of the elderly, equal opportunities⁹.

In **Italy**, there are no legal provisions or policies aimed at governing and promoting intergenerational learning (IGL). Consequently, there is a lack of national and local programmes focused upon the development of reciprocal IGL. Nevertheless, since the early 2000s, a number of IGL activities have been implemented by foundations, NGOs, local government bodies, third sector organisations, trade unions and business associations, schools and vocational training centres. The majority of these activities are provided on a voluntary basis and have been implemented within the framework of various projects, specifically *Equal* and *Grundtvig*, co-financed by the European Commission. One notable project developed under the LLP is the *Intergenerational learning in organisations* (IGLOO) project that conducted research and produced reports on how IGL takes place within companies in the partner countries Italy, Latvia, Germany, Austria and Spain.

In post-communist countries such as **Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania**, Family Learning (FL), IGL and active ageing have gained visibility through projects implemented with the help of funding granted under the Lifelong programme. In Romania, for example, the FALCON project, the FACE IT! Project, EAGLE and ENIL are emblematic. At the policy level, Romania has benefitted from an increasing recognition by the national government and the local authorities that ageing and social cohesion are major issues that need to be tackled through policies and programmes. (EAGLE project report: *Intergenerational Learning in Europe. General Status of Intergenerational Practices*).

In **Bulgaria** the concept of IGL has been so far often being used concomitantly with Family Learning which has a long tradition in the Bulgarian society. At present, there is no national network for IGL in Bulgaria and there is no framework for validation of the skills acquired through IGL. Providing an intergenerational learning environment where generations can exchange knowledge, skills and competences for their mutual benefit has not been seen as a priority at national level and the benefits have been underestimated, especially by the formal learning institutions. However, IGL target groups are aware of the need for and benefits of the intergenerational learning and if offered, they are willing to join it.

In **Lithuania**, even though there is no officially agreed IGL concept, it can be safely said that many IGL initiatives at family, community and national level are currently being developed and implemented through various volunteering activities taking place in schools and community organisations. IGL takes place in educational institutions through various forms of interaction: older people assist with classroom activities, sports events or fundraising and transfer their life-skills (such as cooking, sewing or gardening) to younger people. In return students share their knowledge of ICT. Intergenerational educational activities take place in public spaces such as museums, computer clubhouses, and community centres. Numerous IGL initiatives are being implemented by Lithuanian businesses.

An interesting aspect that is still to be exploited in the IGL initiatives is that in Southern European countries, such as **Spain, Bulgaria** and **Cyprus**, there is "a strong solidarity between generations" within the closely-knit environment of the family and small community and this could raise the value of IGL initiatives.

⁷ http://www.iglooproject.eu/index.php?article_id=114&clang=0

⁸ http://www.iglooproject.eu/files/a_6_national_report_germany.pdf

⁹ Extract from the study: *Los programas intergeneracionales y el envejecimiento activo. Revisión de casos y algunas propuestas de acción* (Intergenerational programs and active aging. Review of cases and some proposals for action); presented in the National Congress of Social Psychology. A meeting of perspectives

C2. European-level policies and priorities for IGL and volunteering

With the EU priorities being centered around the goal of making the Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, policy initiatives and funding programmes supported by the European Union promote IGL as a tool with multiple purposes: facilitation of the inclusion of older people within the economic and social life, acquisition of ICT skills as a means to greater independence, easier access to the labour market, combating literacy issues and reducing social isolation.

Within the Lifelong Learning Programme, the **Grundtvig sectorial programme**, through the strategic priorities set for 2012, contributes to the funding of projects focusing on: transferring knowledge, methods and good practice for senior citizen education; equipping senior citizens with the skills that they need in order to cope with change and remain active in society; strengthening the contribution of older people to the learning of others, including young adults; developing innovative approaches to inter-generational and family learning¹⁰. Within Grundtvig, the **Senior Volunteering Programme** (SVP) funds exchange projects of senior volunteers between two associations in different European countries. SVP has also funded the development of awareness and support tools to help relevant authorities and associations undertake their own senior volunteering initiatives¹¹.

The EU programme **Youth in Action** has also supported initiatives promoting IGL, such as “Dialogue Between Generations: One Way to Solidarity”¹².

D. Deconstructing case studies

The case studies presented within this report illustrate the manner in which IGL is being perceived, understood and implemented at the level of the ENIL partnership. Although the number of case studies collected is not exhaustive they do underline major aspects and examples of good practices within the project countries.

The table included in this section presents a range of different elements identified in the IGL case studies and indicates how these elements are combined to create dynamic programmes. The table demonstrates how extensive the range of programmes and content is and the diversity of groups and beneficiaries engaged in IGL.

IGL is often understood as the transfer of information or experience related learning from the older people involved in the activities. Although this highly valuable it does however restrict the scope and impact of the IGL activities.

The formal presentation of the case studies mainly identifies the young participants as beneficiaries and older participants as facilitators. However, a closer reading of the case studies reveals that most of them actually describe IGL activities, where all participants contribute to the learning outcomes. It is also recognised that there are benefits to all groups of participants, even when the explicit objectives relate to only one group. (Where for example young people or children are the target group being offered help through IGL, the impact and the conclusions of the case studies underlines the positive effects that the activity had on the older people involved.)

Out of all case studies presented in the report only 6 present the two categories of beneficiaries, young generation and older generation, as information transmitters and in-takers simultaneously. The majority of the case studies present young people as the main beneficiaries even when older people benefited from the programme in a number of relevant ways.

This led to the conclusion that intergenerational learning in Europe is still driven by single objectives and is not fully understood in the complexity of its potential.

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lip/doc/call12/prior_en.pdf

¹¹ More details on SVP can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc986_en.htm; project initiatives developed under SVP can be consulted in the 2009 SVP compendium: http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc/svp09_en.pdf

¹² More details on 'Dialogue Between Generations' can be found here: <http://www.youthforeurope.eu/index.php?page=searchdetails&pid=1083>

Younger people are still not perceived as potential facilitators and a source of relevant knowledge or experience to be transmitted to other groups of beneficiaries. Authorities and decision makers still look at the way they can support the young generation as a passive or semi-active learner and leaves little room for casting this category in the role of the “expert”. However, the few examples of case studies in which young people did have this role prove that intergenerational learning can happen from both directions. The additional value of IGL relates to these multiple outcomes and beneficiaries.

	Country	Volunteers	Family members	Other individuals	Schools	Other private organizations	Other public organizations	Literacy & reading	Drop-out, poor student performance	ICT	Social skills (responsibility, parenting,
1.	AU	x				x			x		
2.	BG	x			x	x				x	x
3.	Cyprus		x		x		x	x	x		x
4.	CZ	x	x			x	x	x			x
5.	DE	x		x	x		x	x			x
6.	DK	x		x	x		x	x			x
7.	ES	x			x		x		x		x
8.	FR	x		x	x		x	x			x
9.	IT	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x
10.	LT	x	x		x		x	x		x	x
11.	NO	x		x	x						x
12.	RO	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
13.	SI			x	x	x		x			x
14.	UK	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x
15.	UK		x	x	x			x			x

E. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the analysis of these case studies collected from throughout Europe, a few recommendations and suggestions for further work can be made, focusing on transferability of initiatives, multiplication by public institutions, opening schools to volunteers and encouraging parental involvement.

ENIL partnership envisages a practical approach to IGL, with the added value of volunteering to create an inclusive model in relation to the roles of beneficiaries: Young people should be offered the opportunity to be “experts”, to increase their self-esteem and enable them to share, as well as receive knowledge and experience, so that they can move from being students to become facilitators and organizers.

Even if traditions in Europe at this moment focus more on the elderly as transfer point, gradual activities will illustrate the relevance and importance of young people’s input.

This however needs to be implemented in a gradual developmental way to allow national adaptation and flexibility on the part of both beneficiaries and policy makers.

F. Collection of Case studies

1. Austria
2. Bulgaria
3. Cyprus
4. Denmark
5. France
6. Germany
7. Italy
8. Lithuania
9. Norway
10. Romania
11. Slovenia
12. Spain
13. Czech Republic
14. UK
15. UK

Austria: “Providing Chances – Living Chances!”

Organization implementing the project

Name: GS gain and sustain OG

Country: Austria

Web site: www.gainandsustain.eu

Contact person: Mag. (FH) Sabrina Schifrer, Tel: 0043 650 6348883

Context

The economic background to the Austrian case study is the fact that an inadequate school education and the increase of the phenomenon of drug addiction together with inherited poverty patterns constitute main factors for young people's instability and behavioural problems. This combination of issues has resulted in young people developing serious social and medical problems instead of entering professions. On the other hand the plans of corporate social responsibility of trade and industry companies together with an increase of job security and guaranteed gender equality are priorities when implementing the social agenda. The project “Providing Chances – Living Chances” was designed in order to meet these challenges and in order to contribute to an increase in social justice. 2010 was the European year of fighting poverty and social exclusion and provided a suitable and welcome impetus for the implementation of this project. The purpose of the Austrian case study is to provide a very innovative example of IGL processes between two groups of people who have very different social backgrounds: managers in companies and young people in trouble. The project was carried out as a pilot project in two Austrian provinces in 2010 and in 2011. This case study also shows how companies can increase their corporate social responsibility.

A number of young people - for various reasons as indicated above - run into serious problems. Although different institutions and support systems offer different kinds of advice and help, the problems still exist for a considerable number of young people, who need further help and support in order to be able to develop a pattern which enables them to lead a trouble-free life. One manifestation of the problem for this category of people is that whenever they apply for a job, they either are not shortlisted for the job interview or only very few are actually invited for the job interview. The role of companies in such situations is of paramount importance.

Action

The project has a two main aims: it aims at diversifying the opportunities for in-service training of managers in order to enhance their general management competences and particularly their social competence skills within their companies and to offer young people who face serious problems a new chance by helping them develop new skills and competences which enable them to find a job. In other words the main aim of this project is to strengthen the social skills of managers and by doing so to improve the chances of young people who face serious problems to get a job.

To achieve this goal a closer connection is to be reached between companies and non-profit institutions which specialize in voluntary social work and their target groups. The project contributes to an enhancement of the social dialogue, improves social justice and increases the understanding of solidarity in the society of European countries.

The project has two main target groups: managers of companies in Upper Austria and in Carinthia, two Austrian provinces, and young people, aged between 15 and 25 who have developed serious problems because of theft and other criminal acts.

The project in Upper Austria was carried out in 2010 and the project in Carinthia started in March 2011 and will end in September 2011. Certificates are awarded.

The project developed a handbook with the title: “*Successful managers as mentors for young people facing crisis*”. Within a six month period the managers participate in five workshops which focus on visions for life, mediation, conflict management, body language and rhetoric and facilitation techniques. Furthermore, the managers arrange ten meetings and sessions with carefully selected young people. These sessions follow guidelines which facilitate the identification of individual steps and the development of strategies which contribute to solutions of the encountered problems. At the same time a new basis for communication is established between people of completely different social backgrounds. The company managers who act as mentors are recruited by the project coordinator and apply their theoretical knowledge about social skills which they acquired in the workshops in practical situations and have to explore the difficult circumstances of young people in order to develop solutions together with their mentees. The managers in many cases use their comprehensive networks in order to offer new job perspectives. The mentees establish a direct connection to the world of work and are supported in the implementation of the jointly developed objectives. Apart from the fact that experienced experts lead five workshops, non-profit making institutions send supervisors which offer additional support to the managers when dealing with young people whom they have never met before. This project is not to be considered to be a donation from companies to young people in need of support, but it was developed in order to “revolutionize” training programs for managers.

Outcomes and impact

The training program for managers lasting over a period of six months offers sustainable effects in comparison to short programmes which last only a few days. The enhanced social skills of the managers contribute to a better atmosphere at the workplace and to an increase in the motivation of the employees. Apart from that it also improves the public relations of the companies. The project received wide publicity on the radio and in newspapers. The companies involved also benefitted and gained publicity which increased their competitiveness. The project can also be integrated into the CSR strategy of the companies.

Quotes

Daniel Hendling, Telekom International: “*My motivation is not feeling of duty or compassion, but the feeling of responsibility and humanity*”

Monika Hirschmugl-Fuchs, Micraconsult: “*In the life of every person there are moments when advice can be very helpful. Also I received support from my parents in difficult situations and helping only one young person is better than not doing anything. I hope my social competence, my professional experience and my personal enthusiasm will support my mentee so that the way of no return can be avoided. Everyone deserves a second chance and this is particularly true for young people.*”

Bulgaria: “Elderly people now online: School in the afternoon project”

Organization implementing the project

Name: Konstantin Velichkov Medium School, village of Patalenitsa, District of Pazardjik
Country: Bulgaria
Website: <http://un2.community.officelive.com/default.aspx>
Contact person: Nikola Kolev, ouspatalenica@abv.bg

Context

The political changes that have taken place since 1989, the transition to market economy and the restructuring of the Bulgarian economy alongside with the economic crisis have led to a big migration in the Bulgarian society. Many, mostly young people moved to bigger cities looking for work, and almost 10 per cent of the population left the country to live, work or study abroad. This process has led to a breakdown in the communication between generations and the growing need of the elderly people to be able to communicate with their children and relatives who live and/or work or study away in the country or abroad. The poor economic status of the elderly has identified the need for some cheaper or free options to stay in touch with their children and grandchildren using new technology and tools like Skype.

Action

Retired elderly people from the village of Patalenitsa, District of Pazardjik, Bulgaria, returned to school to learn how to work with the internet-based communication programme Skype. The ‘School in the afternoon’ project has been implemented with the assistance of the Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (WCIF).

The idea came simultaneously both from the retired elderly and from the school board.

The programme Skype conversation in real time (Children train grandparents to use Skype) was focused on computer literacy and use of Skype. It envisaged 2 weeks training in the local school computer lab. The programme was developed by a team of pedagogues, including the school director Nikola Kolev, who guide the training process.

The trainers themselves are children and the appointed ‘senior trainers’ who are young teenagers from the computer studies class led by their trainer Yuliana Peeva.

Outcomes and impact

This was the second ‘wave’ of retired elderly trainees after 10 elderly completed the computer literacy course last year. The Intergenerational Learning initiative has become increasingly popular, thanks to the local senior club, where the enrollment takes place.

The second ‘wave’ in 2011 was successfully completed by 9 older people, the eldest one being 69 years old.

The certificates were given out at a special awarding ceremony.

The training proved that the computer helps older people to overcome their loneliness; that the elderly have a need to use modern computer technology, and, last but not least, that the school teachers and children can help them.

On the whole, this intergenerational learning environment on one hand allowed the school children trainers to share their knowledge and skills acquired, and on the other hand helped the retired elderly trainees to acquire some competence and skills to communicate with the young, as well as to build positive attitude to new technology and innovations, and to continuously improve their knowledge and skills.

Quotes and photos

The communication via Skype has several advantages, the first of them is that it is free and can last for hours, but the best part is that unlike the telephone conversation, they can see each other with the help of the computer camera and this was said by the trainees themselves.

The idea is very good because at the other end the children-trainers learn how to explain what they know better and pass their knowledge in a more understandable way, but also, according to their teacher Yuliana Peeva, they have the chance to practice/rehearse/revise what they have already learnt in the computer training classes at school. This also helps children to learn how to be more diligent and patient.

A video material can be found at: <http://www.vbox7.com/play:fb40624d>

Cyprus: “Parenting in a multicultural complex society”

Introduction

This case study is based on a European project on parenting. It was an intergenerational learning project. The main aim was to empower parents to be able to assist their children to grow up, to know their children better, to be able to deal with problems that their children are facing, to help children with their school work, to give them skills to cooperate with the other children and school authorities, to be able to live in a multicultural society. The goal was also to mobilize all resources, local authorities, schools, tutors in adult education, the whole community for helping children integration.

Organization implementing the project

Name: Cyprus Adult Education Association (was partner in the project among 10 other countries)

Country: Cyprus

Web site: www.parenting-eu.com

Context

A growing number of immigrant children in the schools of the municipality of the town of Latsia, Nicosia; an increased number of children with antisocial behavior because of the complex society; the scarcity of information about children with disabilities and the lack of knowledge of teachers, parents and local authorities on how to deal with the above problems, motivated CAEA to be partner in the project. Statistically speaking, the Latsia community of 25,000 citizens is facing social and other problems as 85% of the citizens are refugees coming from 60 different communities, many living in refugee settlements.

The target group in Cyprus was selected under certain criteria. Efforts were made that each participant represents a group of parents. We have 15 members with the following categories of parents:

- Large family parents with more than 4 children
- Single parent families
- Immigrated Cypriots families
- Parents of different nationalities
- Parents with low education
- Parents with children with low performance e.g. dyslexic
- Foreign worker parents
- Divorced parents
- Refugee parents

It was agreed that in these contexts parenting is a challenging task and parents would benefit from specific training. Special remarks were made concerning the multicultural society and the efforts needed to adapt to this society.

The Mayor of the municipality, the school administration and schools' parents committees cooperated closely during the project. The Mayor was also involved with the activities. The schools' headmasters and the parents committees selected the target group (15 parents in total) and they circulated information about the project and invited registrations.

Action

The group of parents, together with the manager of the project, worked out a programme of activities. It was considered important to follow the needs and interests of the participants in order to have maximum success.

The main core of the plan of action consisted of discussions on various subjects chosen by the participants. The following subjects were chosen:

- Problems of single parents
- Xenophobia
- Violence in the family
- Conflict resolution

- The role of the local authorities in a multicultural society
- The role of the family in a multicultural society
- Anorexia in adolescence
- Overweight children
- Diversity
- Migration in Cyprus
- The needs of immigrants in a society
- Programmes for integration of immigrants in Cyprus
- Volunteering as a value
- Children's homework
- Dangerous toys
- Basic needs of children

The manager and two or three parents were responsible for providing expertise for each subject. Discussions were open to the public and the schools authorities kept informing the parents about the meetings.

During the meetings parents had the opportunity to come with their children. Childcare was provided.

The target group worked hard for the publication of the 80 page work entitled "*Parents in a multicultural European city*" produced in Greek and in English. Many articles from newspapers on intergenerational learning and family learning were included in the publication, alongside research findings about various problems that children and parents are facing today (dyslexia, overweight children, homework, handling career and children, children in large families etc.), articles that parents wrote and articles from international bibliography were all included in the publication. Two immigrant parents developed a section of the publication called "*How immigrants see Cypriots*".

Another important activity of the parents was the organization in Cyprus of an international symposium with 60 participants from 10 countries (partners and parents). It was an important cultural and educational activity and many organizational skills were developed. The parents group had 3 meetings before the Symposium. Parents worked in pairs and in groups to prepare the cultural activities (poems, dancing, traditional food, games etc.). Others worked out ways to better present the City Guide and the exhibition. Others worked for the study visits. More than 7-8 parents participated in the organized symposium and parents from Cyprus took part in another symposium in Italy.

Suggestions were made by parents for improvements of the learning facilities of the municipality adult education centre. Also suggestions were made for the necessity of more immigrants to participate in the programmes.

Meetings took place in the city hall of the town. The authorities were happy to contribute to the success of the initiatives.

Outcomes and impact

The parents group in Cyprus were happy with the results of the project. A small group of parents managed to mobilize the necessary resources from various sectors. Local authorities had a crucial role. Tutors in adult education were mobilized to work more effectively with parents. Parents became more confident. Parents felt that they could have a role in a better society. The close Cyprus society is now more willing to accept immigrants and to contribute together to build the new multicultural society. Parents are more confident to guide and help their children in their development and in solving problems.

The parents target group decided to keep in touch and find ways to maintain the interest and the results. Follow up meetings will take place. The mayor of Latsia emphasized the role that local authorities can play in strengthening families and he promised support for parenting initiatives. The mayor assured the interest of the municipality for the development of the learning society. Suggestions were made by parents for improvement of the learning facilities of the municipality adult education centre. Also suggestions were made for the necessity of more immigrants to participate in the programmes.

A training module for the training of the tutors in adult education who are working with parents was developed. A short seminar with 10 tutors took place at the adult education centre of the municipality. The training is exemplary about the possible methodology of teaching and learning for adults.

A large group of parents and another of carers and stakeholders involved discussed the basic needs of the children in relation to parenting support. Meetings with key persons took place. Meetings with immigrants' organizations, meetings with trade union officers, meetings at welfare services responsible for children and parents also took place. Schools committees were mobilized to cooperate more closely with the school to identify early problems and find solutions. The schools administration and staff observed a positive change with more skillful parents, more interested in their children, more cooperative. Immigrant parents could see the interest and concern of the local authority and of the school administration.

Denmark: "Reading Friends"

Organization implementing the project

Name: Tønder Kommuneskole

Country: Denmark

Context

Two problems are tackled in this project: To motivate 4th grade children to read and to give lonely elderly people in a nursing home company and build friendship across generations.

The context is a public school and a nursing home in the town Tønder in Southern Denmark.

The target groups are some elderly people living in the local nursing home Richtesens Plejecenter, and 4th grade pupils aged 10 years in the local school Tønder Kommuneskole.

Action

The initiative to the project was taken by a staff member in the nursing home. She approached a teacher in the local school and suggested that pupils from the school should regularly visit some of the elderly and read aloud to them. The school was enthusiastic about the idea and the project is now organized so that all pupils from the 4th grade in the school visit the nursing home on the last Friday every month. Each elderly person has got 2-3 "Reading friends". They take turns reading aloud from a book which they selected themselves, and after having read for 15-20 minutes, the pupils have an informal conversation with the elderly person, in which both parties tell each other about their life.

The initiative was awarded the "Success of the month" award by the local newspaper Jyske Vestkysten in June 2009.

Outcomes and impact

Outcomes: The project has motivated the children to read, and to become better readers. The children see a purpose to reading. The pupils are also forced to consider which kind of literature to select to make it interesting to the target group; the elderly people.

The elderly people are happy to get a visit from children, to whom they can talk and exchange experience.

Quotes

"We got a new pupil in the class who also got a reading friend at the nursing home. She came to me after a while and said: 'Now it is suddenly fun to read!' It is very nice that she's got that experience. The children can see a purpose, and that motivates them. Because of the contact with the elderly, reading becomes communication. They feel listened to, and several pupils told us it was like being on holiday"

(Gitte Bønning Kristensen, teacher)

"I was a little shy the first time. But not any more! Now, I just look forward to visiting him and reading aloud. He is very nice and a good listener. It is better and better each time, because we know him better, and he tells us about the time when he was working in a dairy" (Anders Thrige Nielsen, 10 years)

France: “Read and encourage reading”

Organization implementing the project

Name: Lire et Faire lire (“Read and encourage reading”)

Country: France

Website: <http://www.lireetfairelire.org/LFL>

Contact details: Lire et faire lire
3 rue Récamier
75341 Paris Cedex 07
Tél. : 01 43 58 96 50
Fax : 01 43 58 96 23
E-mail: information@lireetfairelire.org

Contact person: Laurent Piolatto, Director

Context

About 15% of all pupils entering the 6th grade in France (age 11) have serious reading problems, making them more prone to have a literacy problem as adults. One of the most important reasons for these difficulties comes from the family context in which reading practices are scarce and reading for pleasure is nonexistent. The project “Lire et Faire lire” was launched in 1999 by the French writer Alexandre Jardin. It is based on a model that existed already in 1985 in the city of Brest.

Two complementary objectives are at stake: to give all children the possibility to discover literature by the means of senior volunteers who are happy to share their time and the pleasure of reading with the younger generation.

The target groups are senior volunteers (50 years and over) and children attending primary schools and other educational settings (secondary schools, recreation centers, kindergartens, libraries etc.)

Action

The program is developed throughout France by the coordinators of two national networks: the League of Education and the National Union of Family Associations.

The commitment of each partner is described in two charters:

- the Charter of the reader : <http://www.lireetfairelire.org/LFL/article68.html>
- the Charter of educational structures : <http://www.lireetfairelire.org/LFL/article39.html>

Summary of the solutions that were considered:

At the request of the teacher or facilitator, volunteers offer some of their free time for children in order to stimulate their interest in reading. The reading sessions are organized in small groups (2 to 6 children) with one senior who reads aloud (20 to 30 minutes) a story for the children. The readings occur at least once a week throughout the school year. The approach is based on the pleasure of reading and the sharing between generations.

Outcomes and impact

In 2011, more than 12000 volunteers (retired seniors) are involved in these actions that take place in 5036 primary schools and 865 educational settings throughout France (including 150 secondary schools) which represent 250,000 children.

Impact on key stakeholders:

This action contributes to improve children’s literacy skills:

- by developing the pleasure of reading (children participate voluntarily)
- through the transmission and sharing between generations

It is the educational structure that decides its participation in the program: the intervention of senior citizens is integrated into its activities consistent with its educational project.

“Lire et faire lire” is a program designed for children but also for seniors. In exchange for their involvement with the children, they receive training, information and appropriate support. In 2010 the seniors involved benefited from 800 days of training and a review entitled “Il était une fois ...” (“Once Upon a Time”), entirely dedicated to them.

A qualitative study on the commitment of the volunteers of the “Lire et faire lire” association is available on the “Lire et faire lire” website: <http://www.lireetfairelire.org/LFL/rubrique3.html>

Germany: “Meeting of the generations”

Organization implementing the project

Name: Hermann-Staudinger-Gymnasium Erlenbach am Main

Country: Germany

Web site: www.bdg.hsgerlenbach.de

Contact details: Dr. Hans Jürgen Fahn, dr.fahn@onlinehome.de

Context :

The ageing of the population in Germany is one of the most stringent issues of the country's society. Statistical data such as that published in the report ‘The German population until 2050’ by the Federal Statistical Office Germany shows, in short, that the ratio between the non-working population (juveniles and senior citizens together) and the working population will grow from 65 in 2005 to 89 in 2050.

Within the wide array of IGL activities in Germany, there are many that tackle the perceived lack of contact between young and old. The case study described below tackles a situation repeating itself throughout the country: many old people live in care homes and most of them feel lonely and lack attention from their nearest relatives, many of whom live far away from them. This initiative is transferable thus in other contexts, both within the country itself but also in other European communities.

The cooperation between the manager of the Red Cross care home and a high school teacher in Erlenbach brought about the idea for a project called “Meeting of the Generations”.

Action

The project involved 70 pupils of the Hermann-Staudinger-Gymnasium in Erlenbach am Main aged between 9 and 13 and some 16 partners, including 3 care homes, one counseling center for the old people and an Office for Senior Citizens.

Within the project called “Meeting of the Generations” there were 25 various activities that were planned and carried out, e.g. visits to the care home, mobile phone and Internet courses for the old persons, intergenerational theater groups, gymnastic classes, movie visits and discussions afterwards. The pupils renovated rooms in the care homes, helped out with the laying-out of a garden for people affected by Alzheimer disease, and they painted pictures during their art classes that depicted scenes from the life stories of the old people they had met and talked to. The seniors sang in the school choir, gave the pupils cooking classes and taught them how to cook traditional dishes.

The planning of the activities took on a spontaneous nature, with new ideas and initiatives coming from the participants themselves. Each participated in ways that matched their own interests and personal abilities.

Outcomes:

The pupils of the school experienced first-hand the life stories of the elderly and, on the other hand, the older people were slowly introduced to the modern world of communication technologies. In this way, both groups developed interest and understanding for the concerns of the other generation and got to know about traditions and values of the others. For the young participants, there was a general recognition on their side of the life efforts and achievements of the senior participants. The project resulted in the opening of the school to the outside world and enabled an interdisciplinary approach to learning, involving a wide range of subjects, including Art, Music, Sport, German, Religion/Ethics, and ICT. The younger participants also learned to be reliable and to keep appointments that were made.

Quotes

“...the school does not only teach knowledge and skills, but also heart and character.” – State Minister for Education, Eberhard Sinner (CSU)

“They are maybe slower, but it can be fun just the same.” – Florian Wöber (he delivered Internet and mobile phone courses for the senior participants)

“60, 70 pupils are in and still we have no motivation problems.” – Hans Jürgen Fahn, Project coordinator

“The project is almost the only contact to the world outside the old people’s home for many of the senior participants, which is why it is even more important for the pupils to be reliable and to come on time for their appointments.” - Hans Jürgen Fahn

Italy: “Born to Read” (Nati per Leggere)

Organizations implementing the project

Name: Associazione Culturale Pediatri (Paediatricians Cultural Association), Associazione Italiana Biblioteche (Italian Libraries Association), Centro per la Salute del Bambino (ChildHealth Centre)

Country: Italy

Website: <http://www.natiperleggere.it>

Contact person: npl-coord@aib.it

Context

Advanced research points conclusively to the major influence which reading aloud has upon a pre-school child’s ability to learn to read and write and upon the development of his/her interpersonal skills and cognitive functions.

A survey submitted by family paediatricians during well-being visits of children from 6 months to 6 years of age found that parents/grandparents engagement towards reading aloud is about 20% at national level.

In view of the need to promote the practice of reading aloud amongst specific target groups (parents, grandparents, pre-school teachers and youth-adults-elders who volunteer as readers), in 1999 three institutes established and implemented “Born to Read”, a non-profit initiative, one of the leading Italian programmes in Intergenerational Learning (IGL).

Action

Forged from an alliance between paediatricians, librarians and child-health centres, *Born to Read* is a non-governmental nationwide programme, which aims at constantly involving the community in order to give children a better chance to grow, and grant them the opportunity to develop from an intellectual and emotional point of view. The programme is articulated in regional and local projects aimed at establishing an extended support network to enhance the inclination to read in children from a very early age: the network is composed of librarians, paediatricians, educators-teachers, associations and volunteer readers from three different generations (youth, adults and elders).

The training of the local project promoters, parents, grandparents and volunteers is the programme’s most important aspect: training is essential to create a common language among people of different ages, professional and cultural backgrounds.

The following materials were produced: leaflets for parents, an age-appropriate children’s book donated by paediatricians, the start-up of small libraries in pediatrics consulting rooms, crèches, nursery school and family consultation rooms. The National Prize “Born to Read” was awarded to the best pre-school children’s books and an international exhibition of books for babies and toddlers was organized together with events aimed at promoting the programme extensively.

Bibliographical tools: *Born to Read, a guide for parents and future readers*

<http://www.natiperleggere.it/index.php?id=22>

The decision to start the programme from the age of 6 months is consistent with the research conducted by James Heckman (Invest in the Very Young, Chicago 2002) which demonstrated the great importance of early intervention for infants, as the benefits accrued to the development of the child’s cognitive functions and, above all, interpersonal skills are major. “Born to Read” aims at breaking the vicious circle of intergenerational reading difficulties and subsequent poor student performance.

Outcomes and impact

According to the most recent available national findings (2007), the programme was implemented in all of Italy's 20 Regions, with over 400 local projects conducted in 1195 communities. The participants included 137,369 families with 258,698 children from 0 to 5 years of age, and 7468 professionals: paediatricians, librarians, educators-teachers and volunteers. The percentage of the Italian population which took part in the programme rose from 15% in 2003 to 33% in 2007.

"Born to Read", as an IGL reading programme, encourages volunteer participation on the part of the parents and grandparents of each family unit, young students and elders within the local community facilities (libraries, hospitals, waiting rooms, crèches and primary and nursery schools), and in public spaces (namely, playgrounds, parks etc.). In addition to the objectives of the programme, the role played by the promotion of Family School Partnership and IGL in schools is demonstrated by the high number of participating educators and pre-primary school teachers (3162).

Outcomes and impact on:

Children: an increase in phonological awareness, the acquisition of a larger vocabulary and stronger communication skills, a greater interest in literature and in books, an increased attention span and level of self-esteem, a greater possibility of overcoming the disadvantages deriving from deprived backgrounds. Reading aloud is the most important activity in equipping children to achieve their potential in school.

Parents and grandparents: heightened awareness of their central role as educators of children/grandchildren in infancy and of the importance of reading aloud during these pre-school years, initial steps in Family Learning as a basic form of IGL and in family-school forms of collaboration (Parental Involvement, Family-School Partnership), improved emotional-cognitive relationships with children/ grandchildren.

Paediatricians: inclusion of an educational dimension in their professional work ethos.

Librarians: increased attendance in libraries on the part of parents/ grandparents and children, a rise in book loans, the creation of groups of volunteer readers in libraries, public spaces and pre-primary schools

Educators/pre-primary teachers: increased cooperation with families and libraries, greater time dedicated to reading aloud in class, a wiser use of local resources.

Volunteers: trained to read aloud and an increased diversity in the functions assigned to them within IGL, a growing passion and satisfaction with the activities carried out with a trend towards the establishment of study groups which regularly bring together individuals from different generations to exchange experiences and good practices.

For many students, adults and elders, *Born to Read* often represents their first experience with voluntary work.

Quotes

"How to instill a love for reading through an act of love: an adult reading a story" (*Born to Read* slogan)

"The training course which I attended with 5 other individuals was extremely useful. Parents and grandparents express their heartfelt thanks to me when I read stories in the paediatrician's or hospital waiting room. It's wonderful to be able to show members of another generation the importance of reading aloud to infants. The most enthusiastic are the younger parents." (A voluntary reader, student, 16 years old)

"Without the support of the Born to Read programme, I would never have thought that reading aloud could be so important to the emotional and cognitive development of my child. I have learnt that I can play a decisive role in the education of my son and, when he starts school, I shall be committed to cooperating with his teachers." (Parent of a three-year old child)

"A valuable element of the Born to Read project are the regular readings which we organise for children aged 3 to 5 years accompanied by parents/ grandparents and teachers. Everyone recognizes the importance of creating greater collaboration between families, schools and public libraries to improve children's reading abilities and school performance." (A librarian)

"I am passionate about the work carried out by the Born to Read programme (...) I am thrilled that with the aid of a simple picture book, already at 18 months (...) I have the opportunity to transmit something of great value to my

daughter.” (Mother of a 2-year old Down’s Syndrome child)

“The emotions displayed by parents indicate that they are surprised by how attentive the local community is towards their children, that they would never have imagined that reading aloud to infants could strengthen the mother/child and father/child bond; or otherwise they are highly proud of the fact that their child, at such an early age, can already start his/her own book collection.” (Family Paediatrician)

“The crèche teachers recommend the “Born to Read box” books to children aged 1 to 2 years, they read them aloud and lend them to parents at the weekend.

Two teachers put at the children’s disposal the box of books, they read or relate them to them, a third teacher observes the children when they are invited to sit in the “comfy” corner; the books are distributed amongst the children and they are free to choose where to “read it”: seated on the carpet, at the table, stretched out on the sofa.” (Nursery teacher)

“After having attended a training course divided into three sessions, 57 secondary school students – contacted via the Voluntary Services Department and the precious cooperation of two teachers - read aloud to children and accompanying parents in the paediatrics hospital ward, in all paediatric practices and in the family consulting waiting room.” (Local project coordinator)

Famous writers’ quotations: <http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.468091991746.250135.305712251746>

Video material (links are also available on the ENIL project)

Born to Read during paediatric check-ups: <http://www.youtube.com/user/alesila76#p/f>

Born to Read Award in the Piedmont Region: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxjNFdfP4eA>

Voluntary readers’ party: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQYweW_chHM&NR=1

Born to Read in Macerata: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlHKn2L2Ve8>

Lithuania: 'Išmanusis aš' (iSmart) contest

Organization

Country: Lithuania

Website: www.omnitel.lt,

Contacts: Daiva Selickaitė

Omnitel head of public relations

Phone: +370 686 85906

Email: d.selickaite@omnitel.net

Organization implementing the project

Name: GS gain and sustain OG

Country: Austria

Web site: www.gainandsustain.eu

Contact person: Mag. (FH) Sabrina Schifrer, Tel: 0043 650 6348883

Context

In earlier days, one of the parental tasks was to communicate knowledge to their children, but nowadays everything has turned upside down: one would hardly find a parent who would not boast about his kid being a whiz in the computer or mobile telephone world. Hence, children could be teachers for their families about the cutting edge technologies as well as to give some advice to prevent parents from awkward or even dangerous situations because of their lack of experience.

Mobile telecommunications company Omnitel is the largest mobile operator in the Baltic States. It is part of the TeliaSonera group, providing a wide spectrum of reliable and quality telecommunication services including transmission of voice, data, imaging, information, entertainment and financial operations. Omnitel network has about two millions of users. Since its establishment, the company has been actively contributing to the country's technological and social development.

The target groups envisaged were school-age children and students – all digitally-native / digitally-smart youth (as the teachers) and all parents, grandparents, adoptive parents (as the learners)

Action

The contest 'Išmanusis aš' (iSmart) has been initiated with the purpose to encourage the younger generation to share their knowledge and skills in the newest technologies with their parents, grandparents, and other adults, to increase self-esteem of both participating target groups, enhance mutual respect and trust.

The contest was open to anyone who has made at least one video or photo report of the youngster teaching adults to use a computer or a smart phone and its programs and uploaded their reports on the www.IsmanusisAs.lt website. The number of reports was unlimited.

The contest took place in seven stages, each lasting one week. Weekly voting for the best work was done via the social network Facebook, clicking on 'Like' under the most interesting report. The authors of the most popular "work of the week" have been awarded with smart phones. A special commission has chosen the absolute winner of the contest.

Outcomes and impact

During the contest, the website www.IsmanusisAs.lt was visited by more than 36 thousand persons from all over Lithuania. The organizers received 31 entries, illustrated by photos and video recordings with the most popular lessons – on how to use smart phones, calls and chat programs, electronic payment of bills through the internet and e-mail writing.

The participants' age was from 13 to 18 years. The *grandprix* went to one of the youngest competitors, a thirteen-year-old girl, who even posted 4 pieces of work showing how she instructed not only her relatives and teachers, but also random senior passers-by on the street.

The greatest benefit of the contest was achieved through engagement of the target groups into the intergenerational learning process not only by teaching and learning the subject, but also by transmission of values from one generation to another and recognition of those values as significant and important. The initiative resulted in the increased interest in intergenerational issues and greater confidence in the teaching competences of youth.

Quotes

'Hi, my name is Gytis, in these photos you can see how I am teaching my grandfather to use modern technologies. What seems to us so simple, it can be very difficult to use it for older people, but my grandfather is quickly learner:) he learned all the tricks very soon:)' (Gytis Kasparavičius)

All report online: <http://www.ismanusisas.lt/darbai/134>

'My grandfather is probably one of the oldest participants in this contest. This year we look forward to his 77th birthday. He is an active citizen, punctual, responsible and still restless. He is my model in a lot of ways.' (Henrikas Gaidamavičius)

All report online: <http://www.ismanusisas.lt/darbai/87>

'My mother has several relatives living abroad. I suggested calling them using Skype, because it is very easy and costs nothing, and when I said that she will be able to see them on the screen, she immediately agreed! :)' (Roberta Rimkutė)

All report online: <http://www.ismanusisas.lt/darbai/97>

More reports online: <http://www.ismanusisas.lt/darbai>

Norway: “The Gjelleraas project” or “School grandparents”

Organization implementing the project

Name: Gjelleraas skole, Skjetten
Country: Norway
Web site: <http://www.skedsmo.kommune.no/Hovedtema/Barnehage-og-Skole/Skole/Grunnskoler/Gjelleras/>

Context

The project started as an offer to children with very low test scores, but it has increased to include pupils with learning difficulties, behavioural problems or simply in need of more contact with adults or little knowledge of (Norwegian) society. The activities are put up, and then the teachers cooperate on identifying children for the activities.

At present (2011) the volunteers include three men and five women. One drives a mini bus they borrow from the municipality for outings.

Action

The volunteers and the “social teacher” take the pupils on various excursions and organise activities at school.

The excursions may go to a number of places, and are chosen both for the benefit of the children and of the “grandparents”. They may go to outdoor museums, visitors’ farms, the technical, zoological, botanical or historical museums, the Munch Museum, the famous new Opera House, or a nearby lake for a nice walk in the woods where they pick berries and mushrooms, and may have a barbecue.

Activities carried out within the school’s premises include crafts, cooking, baking, storytelling and board games, but also reading and homework aid.

Two of the «grandparents» are trained chefs, another is a painter and textile artist, and their courses are highly popular. All activities include communication.

The volunteers are also responsible for applying for funding, and are sometimes invited to school to assist in different school activities like reading aloud with the children.

This was added to what already exists: parents’ meetings twice a year and “development talks” (one pupil and their parents) twice a year and the opportunity to talk to the “social teacher” when needed.

Outcomes and impact

Children and “grandparents” are all stimulated by their common activities. There is also a positive impact on the local community, as both the children and the elderly through this have more people to simply greet in the streets. It has also has a positive effects on mental health, as the children experience mastering, well-being and improved social skills. Research shows that poor social skills are an important factor in relation to substance abuse and crime.

The children gain vocabulary from the activities, which is especially important for children with an immigrant background. They also get important contact with adults, and feel “seen”.

The “grandparents” likewise get important contact with children, and say that the project helps them remember their skills and keep them young. They also get the opportunity to go places they would not go on their own, so they too experience new things.

Quotes

“This is good mental health!” (Volunteer)

“We learned a lot about the history of Oslo. We also saw the 17 meter tall Monolith and found out that it is has 121 figures. We had a nice trip in the warm sun.” (Pupils)

Romania:” MyStory - creating an ICT-based inter- generational learning environment”

Organization implementing the project

Name: EuroEd school
Country: Romania
Web site: www.mystories.eu
Contact person: Lucia Petrescu, lucia.petrescu@euroed.ro

Context

Young people are extremely engaged in working with computers and internet research. This sometimes causes a lack of communication and of communication skills in real life among young people and older generations. On the other hand older generations (eg. those over 60) tend to become marginalised because of their less active social and professional life. They also need help with relating to other age categories.

The MyStory project aims to support both categories of beneficiaries as follows:

collect life stories from seniors, older people, and thus valorize their life experience, their knowledge and make them understand that they still represent an active part of the entire society. The MyStory project empowers seniors to network and better relate to the present society by organizing ICT training to help them develop basic computer and internet skills.

Young people are trained to be story collectors and the methodology of collecting life stories and are engaged in processing the collected materials and discussions about what they have gained from listening to and working with the older generation.

Action

The MyStory project involves 5 rounds of story collecting throughout the 3 years of the project implementation. During this period trained teams of story collectors will be engaged in interviewing seniors to collect stories and then process the materials (video, audio or written) to create the final products which will be available online on the project website (www.mystories.eu). The first round of story collecting has already started and the story collectors have collected a large number of stories within the Romanian team but also in the international partnership. Children and teenagers are working together with the national project team to develop these interviews based on the DSK – Digital Story Telling Kit which was developed in the first part of the project.

The interviews are structured into two parts:

The first part is a general introduction where the senior, the storyteller is encouraged to share his/her own story just as they see it and look at all the directions they want to develop. In this initial stage, the interviewers do not ask too many questions in order not to distract the storyteller. The aim of the initial interview is to familiarise the team with the storyteller and her or his story and also to give the storyteller a chance to become familiar with the project team.

The second part of the interview is organized on the questions the interviewer develops for the storyteller. These questions are focused on certain aspects selected from the first part of the interview and allow the interviewers to receive more details on those aspects they consider of major interest and relevance.

Outcomes and impact

A database of lifestories is collected and made available online for researchers and other parts interested in further continuing the research. Young people will have the opportunity to develop communicative skills and practise them with the senior beneficiaries but also with young people in the project countries. Senior beneficiaries are offered socialising opportunities and their stories are valorised. KITs are also being developed to support the story collecting and its processing and its further use by third beneficiaries.

Slovenia: “Primary school and intergenerational learning”

Organization implementing the project

Name: Ljudska univerza Ajdovščina
Country: Slovenia
Website: www.lu-ajdovscina.si
Contact details: Cesta 5.maja 14, SI-5270 AJDOVŠČINA, info@luajdovscina.si, phone: +386 5 366 4750, fax.: +386 5 366 4755

Context

IGL and education is becoming an increasingly interesting but still relatively unexplored phenomenon. Throughout history, intergenerational learning has taken place in various environments such as at work, in the family, at events, rituals, etc. Older people passed their knowledge on to the young.

The organization established a project network (primary school, centre for adult education, university) and prepared an intergenerational education project.

Action

This network provided a framework for an intergenerational learning project which aimed to encourage older people to learn by working in tandem with primary school students. Together they learned computer skills, which were then used to record stories reflecting local culture and history. The stories were found in the local oral history. These stories had never before been recorded in writing, but had only been passed down orally.

Nine tandems were included in the group. The meetings were held in the computer classroom of the Dornberk primary school. The staff included two primary school teachers, an education coordinator from the Centre for Adult Education Ajdovščina and a university researcher.

After the first year, during which computer education was provided for the elders paired with pupils, results were gathered and evaluated. Then, activities were planned for the following year. The plans for the follow-up project included the following objectives:

- to foster appreciation for local history,
- to introduce youth to the local culture through stories,
- to present personal histories through life stories.

Learning about Alexandrian women in the context of local history was aimed at encouraging reflection on similar issues in the modern world such as interculturality, migration, discrimination, intolerance and exclusion.

Outcomes and impact

Students/children:

- at the end, they expressed satisfaction, and even enthusiasm, for group work with elders;
- at the beginning of the project, many had doubts; individual animation was required;
- after the first year, all participants wanted to and did continue to participate in the project;
- after the second year, they expressed satisfaction and willingness to participate in similar projects;
- the participating students were more patient, tolerant with slow learners, more understanding and cooperative during classes;

- changed their communication with teachers (improved attitude and communication, it seems as if assuming a different role made them realize the complexity of education and as a result the relationship between the participating teachers and students improved);
- the students showed high motivation for work, which is illustrated by the students asking if they could still work on an occasion when the meeting was to be cancelled due to a teacher's absence.

Students/elders:

- expressed satisfaction with the acquired knowledge and enthusiasm for learning,
- experienced the idea that new technologies open doors to information (enthusiasm about the internet),
- wish to progress faster,
- expressed intention to continue using the computer,
- expressed intention to participate in similar projects in the future.

An added value from this project was a published scientific monography:

Intergenerational Learning and Education in Later Life and two e-books *Tandems go! Twinning the Elderly and Young People as a Possibility of e-Learning* and *Education - a bridge between generations, A guide for intergeneration learning*.

The links to the twp publications are also available on the ENIL website.

Spain: "Reading friends"

Organization implementing the project

Name: Centro Internacional de Gandía. Universidad de Valencia

Country: Spain

Contact details: proyectoescuchame@gmail.com

C/ Fundación Vicente Ferrer, 6, Gandía

Tel. 96 295 96 30

Context

According to OECD data, Spain has the highest dropout rate in Europe: In 2007, 35% of those aged 25 to 34 left school without having completed the degree in secondary education, while in the European Union (EU19) the proportion was 19%. Moreover, Spain has the lowest rates of involvement in adult education and lifelong learning of all European countries. In Spain it is very difficult to re-engage in education for those who are 25 years old and have left school. For this reason, the project ESCUCHAME was launched aimed at preventing dropout in adolescence.

Action

The project aims at designing a model according to which retired people can act as mentors (tutors, counselors or guides) of young people aged 11 to 14 and at risk of abandoning their studies. For the mentors, the project organized a training course on how to be a good mentor and the training materials were distributed throughout Europe.

In principle, the starting point is a 40 hour course for the mentors consisting in ten sessions throughout ten weeks.

A young person is paired with a mentor and the goal is to establish ties and create relationships of trust and respect that could help both parties grow.

Outcomes and impact

Outcomes for the senior citizens volunteering for this project

- Increase self-esteem and motivation to participate in social life or share experiences of life and have someone to listen and appreciate
- Learn about today's teens
- Helping teens find their way in life and feel involved in the current problems of social life

Outcomes for the adolescents involved in this project

- have a more positive perception of older people
- learn about life and coping with the problems
- receive academic support and career counseling

Outcomes in the society in general:

- awareness raising of the links of reciprocity and social cohesion among people different ages who live in Gandia
- using the plurality of knowledge of the society as a whole through dialogue with senior citizens

The Czech Republic: Volunteer-lead tutorial sessions for children from socially excluded environment

Organization implementing the project

Name: Tady a Ted', o.p.s.
Country: The Czech Republic
Web site: www.tadyated.org
Contact details: Farského 20, 32600 Plzeň, Czech Republic
Telephone number: +420 724 247 191

Context

The "Tady a Ted', o.p.s." is an NGO that deals with educational deficiency and subsequent socialization of socially excluded children and youths into different socio-cultural environments. Furthermore, "Tady a Ted', o.p.s." (TaT) aims at promoting public awareness about the problem, as well as supplementing the lack of valid information regarding the issue in institutions dealing with socially excluded population e.g. municipal police, schools, social bureaus etc. The chosen project reacts to the wide-spread problem of children having difficulties with learning whose parents are not able to provide them with appropriate support or tutorials.

Action

The TaT implemented the terrain approach to educational deprivation of socially excluded children and youths. Basically, skilled social workers cooperate with social excluded families and volunteers who help to prepare children from the families for their school duties and they try to show them "middle class" or mainstream society role model.

The TaT also runs Mentoring Program which aims is informally direct socially-excluded teenagers onto the next degree of education (secondary school) after completing the basic education or to lead them to the legal employment market.

Outcomes and impact

Tens of TaT's volunteers provide services to tens of families where a considerable number of school children have been improving their school results. A very notable outcome of the project is also the fact that some of the first "children" clients are now successfully studying at the secondary vocational schools which is not a common practice among the social group in the framework of the Czech educational system.

Another very important feature of the project is the cooperation with the Faculty of Education of the University of West Bohemia. Some faculty students studying the study program "Social work" can complete an obligatory internship participating at the project. We can see a mutual benefit for both participants in the model where a volunteer can act as a model of well- educated "older friend" that can motivate his/her younger "client" to better school performance. Volunteers, on the other hand, can gain primary experience in working with clients from socially excluded environments that can serve as practical basis for their future profession of a social worker.

The project of afterschool learning and mentoring was also awarded a second place in the Czech National Award of Career Counseling in 2009 and 2010.

Quotes:

"It helped me to uncover social stereotypes rooted in me. Working with those children was very enjoyable. Moreover, both I and the children could benefit from the experience and I am convinced that it somehow affected lives of both (Bernard Kalný, aged 23, former volunteer, now a full-time social worker).

England: Digital Families- Bridging the Digital and Intergenerational Divides

Organisation implementing the project

Name: The Campaign for Learning
Country: England
Website: www.campaignforlearning.org.uk
Contact details: jcollier@cflearning.org.uk
24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD
Tel: 020 7766 1111

Context

The Digital Families programme was developed in response to some key challenges in England that are currently driving the learning agenda: There are significant attainment gaps between the poorest children and young people and their wealthier peers. The OECD published a report in 2010 that highlighted the UK's lack of social mobility. "The chances of a child from a poor family enjoying higher wages and better education than their parents is lower in Britain than in other western countries"¹³ Policy reforms designed to remove obstacles to intergenerational social mobility and promote opportunities have focused on education and narrowing attainment gaps. The Coalition Government has introduced the Pupil Premium¹⁴, which gives schools additional funding for each child eligible for free school meals and created the Education Endowment Fund¹⁵ to test approaches that increase attainment of disadvantaged children and young people and gather robust research evidence.

At the same time it was recognized that Digital Exclusion was a significant issue and nearly 10 million people in the UK did not have Internet access and most of these had never been on-line. A campaign called Race On-line 2012¹⁶ was established to motivate people to 'get on-line'.

Action

The Campaign for Learning (CfL), an independent education charity, recognised the crucial role of intergenerational learning in supporting positive outcomes for children and the role of families and friends in supporting each other to use the Internet. CfL piloted an approach that integrated three key interventions to address educational disadvantage and support digital inclusion in one programme:

1. Learning to Learn: Approaches that support the development of knowledge, skills and dispositions for learning (particularly metacognition: reflective and strategic thinking about learning that supports knowledge and skills development, demonstrated in recent Sutton Trust¹⁷ research to be highly effective in raising attainment.)
2. Strategies to extend and embed the teaching and learning in the home learning environment and provide parents, carers and grandparents with the skills and knowledge to effectively support children's learning and development.

13 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/mar/10/oecd-uk-worst-social-mobility>

14 <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/premium/a0076063/pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know>

15 <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>

16 <http://raceonline2012.org/>

17 <http://www.suttontrust.com/research/toolkit-of-strategies-to-improve-learning/>

3. ICT: Approaches that stimulate and support effective teaching and learning (including interactive software to promote essential feedback on learning outcomes and stop-motion/flip cameras to create compelling learning opportunities and record and evaluate learning)

This digital learning programme uses new technologies and software, for families to produce stop-motion animation films, talking photos and creating personal comic books. It involves writing stories, making the sets and characters, using animation software to take pictures, editing film, and adding sound, titles and credits.

Recruiting families involves working closely with each school, its staff and appropriate external partners. The most effective tool for engagement has been speaking at whole school assemblies about the project and giving them a demonstration. The children then go back to class to make 'wanted' posters to personally invite their chosen adult. This has proved to be significantly more effective than sending letters home in schools bag.

Activities have been delivered on school premises after school hours and during weekends.

Adults and children have been encouraged to learn together over ten hours of stimulating learning activities that they have enjoyed. Once completed, videos are uploaded on to YouTube, such as 'the computer swallowed grandpa'18 film, for families to share and view in their own time. Andy, the Project Manager, and his team organise an end of project event for participants to celebrate the achievements and showcase all their films in front of an audience. Over 80% of the work targeted dads, granddads and male carers.

In addition to delivering sessions for families, the team train schoolteachers and local practitioners to ensure sustainability of the approaches after the programme ends. Staff receive training on how to ensure learning outcomes for both children and adults, how to use the software and how to embed learning to learn techniques. They are also given session plans, evaluation tools and relevant documents and resources to support delivery.

Outcomes and impact

Observations revealed that fathers and grandfathers' interaction with their child or grandchild is often very different, from mothers' and grandmothers' but equally beneficial to the child's social and educational development. The project has helped to change cultural attitudes and perception of fathers and grandfathers' role in their child/grandchild's learning and development. One person noticed that his father is more approachable and interactive with his grandchildren than he was with his own children. On the other hand, grandchildren have supported their grandfathers' learning; for example the Director of the Surma Community Centre, not-for-profit organisation for Bengali ethnic minority community, observed that children were actively helping their grandfathers to learn the English language and use computers.

Impact evidence from one London borough demonstrated that the number of children that achieved the expected National Curriculum level for their age rose from 15% in the previous year to 73% after the project. This is a great achievement as over 90% of pupils were from significantly disadvantaged backgrounds. For nearly 80% of them it was the first time they had had the opportunity to learn with their dad or other family member in a school environment and for some families it was the first time they had ever used a computer.

¹⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvNGXCq6Fzq

It has changed the mindsets of fathers/male carers, grandfathers, practitioners and schools about how to encourage and improve learning outcomes of children and their families. The project has transformed interaction with their children and schools and has helped to create a supportive environment. As one participant states: "Before the project I wasn't involved and I didn't know the level of my children's education. I didn't know the teachers well. Now when my kids come home from school we come together, eat, and do homework."

The 'Digital Families' project is now being further developed, in partnership with the E-Learning Foundation and funded by the Nominet Trust and aims to engage with over 14,000 families UK wide. A new peer-to-peer support programme has now been introduced and parents can volunteer to be Digital Champions to support other parents.

Quotes

A granddad commented: "*The animation workshop was a natural extension to our normal engagement with our granddaughter.*"

One granddad noted: "*I tend to sit back and support my grandson's learning, whereas his dad prefers to get fully involved and sometimes lead.*"

The Deputy Head teacher at Stag Lane Infant School explains how the project encouraged parents to spend quality time with their children: "*Quality time is now part of their everyday routine with their children. We have particularly strong links with the dads who took part and have maintained their involvement through events held since. Last years' First National Fathers Story Week gave us the perfect platform to strengthen these links through an assembly which 128 dads attended.*"

The United Kingdom: Men Behaving Dadly: Greenway Primary School

Organization implementing the project

Name: Greenway Primary School

Country: The United Kingdom

Web site:

Contact details:

Context

Male participation in Family Learning is typically low whilst numerous studies and research indicate male involvement in a child's education has been found to be associated with children achieving greater educational attainment; better peer relationships; fewer behavioural difficulties, and lower likelihood of criminality and drug use later in life (*21st Century Dad, Equal Opportunities Commission, June 2006*).

The Green Way Primary School is located in an area of significant social and economic deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation rates the area in the top 10% 'most deprived' areas (*IMD 2010 chart for E01012917*) and is "...approximately double the size of the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is considerably above the national average." (*OFSTED 117792*)

In order to break the trend of a lack of male involvement it was imperative to ensure that the fathers were immediately engaged by the content of a Family Learning course. Typically (but not exclusively), fathers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds tend to be engaged by kinaesthetic activities rather than those of orthodox learning methods. After lengthy discourse with the fathers, it was mutually decided to progress this cohort onto a short joint programme aimed at developing the learning relationship between father and child.

Action

Following a successful Christmas craft Family Learning workshop at The Green Way Primary School, Hull, aimed at engaging male parents/carers and their children, a cohort of fathers/male carers of children at the school indicated a desire to progress onto further Family Learning courses.

The fathers enrolled on a ten week *Dads In The Picture* course which is part of the *Men Behaving Dadly* programme. The course needed to be flexible and responsive in order to retain these participants. It was important to remember that these male parents had mostly not been in an educational setting since leaving compulsory education themselves. Typically, their own experience of education was negative: their dialogue regarding education was largely in the pejorative and they found new teaching content, methods and techniques disenfranchising. For various reasons formal education had failed them but they had themselves begun to recognise that in an increasingly competitive world their children needed male parental support to maximise their potential as young people.

Initial learning aims focused around dismantling these pre-conceptions and barriers towards education; invigorating the parent not only with self confidence in their own ability to support their children but also the positivity that contemporary education and schooling can herald for today's children.

Regular input was given from the school's *Phase 1 Leader* (responsible for children aged 5-7) as well as the use of the school's facilities and resources to undertake kinaesthetic activities from cookery skills to woodwork projects. These activities allowed the fathers and children to work, communicate and simply enjoy the time learning together.

A visible change in attitude became apparent as the course progressed: a sense of pride and enjoyment with a strong essence of spending 'quality time' with their children. The fathers themselves recognised that as their own learning relationship developed with their children there was also a change in attitude towards educational activities by the children. This motivation became cyclic as positivity replaced negativity and belief replaced doubt. The fathers began to see themselves as a group and as stakeholders – and took the collective name of 'The Dads' Club'.

In terms of the gender of the staff working with male parents/carers it is important to note the work of the female crèche worker on the course, who was there primarily to assist the tutor and the young children. However, her role was not to be underestimated in terms of building relations and adding a female perspective during the course.

Often practitioners will state that fathers respond better in an all male environment. I would argue that sometimes this is true, but in terms of balance and certainly where children attend the sessions, a female presence can and did prove of value as a positive role model for children comprises of roles for both genders.

The *Dads in the Picture* course culminated with a visit to a local park and the presentation of certificates of achievement to the fathers in front of the whole school. This was consistent with the support the school had given throughout and highlights the value the school placed on fathers learning in school together with their children.

Outcomes and Impact

In terms of success, The Green Way Dads' Club, formed by the fathers to improve outcomes for their children is a success story in its own right that should be celebrated. The continuing work with the school has been forged on trust and dismisses the often accepted notion of the 'invisible parent' by recognising the important role that fathers have to play in the lives of children. The value of this partnership should not be underestimated; indeed one father stated that his child's work 'is the best thing that he has seen in a long time' as a direct result of working with his child.

This group are now progressing on to an accredited programme in September 2011; again this will be with their children and in partnership and support from the school. Learner records, evaluations, photos and voice scripts are all available through Family Learning that reinforce the success of The Green Way fathers to date. From a tutor's point of view it is important to see how the fathers have grown in autonomy and self belief, how families have been strengthened and the positive effect this has had on the children as a whole.

Quotes (from participants)

I've really enjoyed my time on the course and I would encourage everyone else to take part

I really enjoyed it so I've signed up for more

Brilliant experience and we ran a stall at the summer fete and raised money for the school

Wish we had done it earlier I have a new relationship with my daughter and communicate a lot more and new friends

I've been inspired to go on and do more for the school, I now volunteer as a parent reader and helper in the school

Considerations resulted from the analysis of the best practice examples

At this stage, we would like to outline the general tendencies observed at a European level with a focus on the main coordinates of IGL practices: issues tackled with the help of IGL and volunteering, main target groups, skills acquired through IGL, common challenges faced, implementation methodologies, recommendations for stakeholders and options for transferability of these best practice examples.

Challenges of today's European community

The main issues addressed by IGL approaches throughout Europe reflect the challenges of today's European society: the digital divide between the young and the old, drop-out rates that are still worryingly high in some countries, literacy problems, risk of social exclusion for vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, migrants and young people at risk. With the European Union's goal to become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy" (European Council, Lisbon, March 2000), all of the above are risk factors that must be addressed urgently.

The best practice examples presented in this report reflect a focus on these risk factors which are also included in the monitoring process of performance and progress of the European Union's education and training policies, as a series of indicators and targets set for 2020 to help measure progress in addressing key common issues at all levels of learning:

- at least 95% of children between the age of four and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education;
- the share of 15-year-olds with insufficient abilities in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15%;
- the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%;
- an average of at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning (EU annual progress report with detailed analysis and national statistics in each of the areas identified by the indicators and benchmarks¹⁹).

IGL has the advantage of a non-formal approach, i.e. is applicable in almost every context, lowering boundaries and eliminating rigidity. These features however do not limit the possibilities of acquiring a very wide range of skills. In this way, IGL enables the involvement of senior citizens, migrants, young people at risk, children with literacy problems. We have seen in the examples above that by means of IGL literacy (France and Italy), ICT (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, UK) but also social skills such as responsibility and active citizenship (Cyprus, Austria, Germany, Romania, Slovenia), management and conflict resolution (Austria, Cyprus), parenting (Italy, the UK and Cyprus) can be acquired.

The role of volunteering

In the activities described above, we have also seen that volunteering has a positive role in the IGL initiatives as it brings enthusiasm, good will and sincere desire to help, a passion and commitment that is often lacking in a day-to-day job. Throughout Europe, the profile of the volunteers does not follow a unique pattern. They come from different backgrounds and age groups. It is important to remember that volunteering is always needed, even when no specific skills are involved (see the example of the volunteer in Norway that also drives the minibus).

IGL initiatives: triggering factors, stakeholders, scope

The initiators of IGL initiatives come from both the public (schools, libraries, governmental associations) and the private sector (NGOs, associations, companies developing Corporate Social Responsibility programmes) and it is worth mentioning that in the examples covered by this report the public institutions' initiatives have a larger coverage (nation-wide in Italy and France). The bridge between the private organizations and the target groups is often realized with the help of open public institutions such as schools (Norway, The Czech Republic) and libraries (France and Italy) which underlines once more the important role the school has in opening its doors to IGL and encouraging the initiatives coming from volunteers.

Local and regional actors can do much to influence intergenerational solidarity through the education and training

¹⁹ The progress report for 2011 can be read in full here: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/report10/report_en.pdf

programmes that they run. **AGE Platform Europe**, an European network of around 150 organisations of and for people aged 50+, publishes on their website a list of intergenerational actions that show the wide array of events and activities implemented at an European level, ranging from conferences, discussions, workshops to projects lasting several years²⁰.

Further developments and bridges between the private and the public sector

From the successful examples of IGL implementation described above, potential for further development can be observed in, for example, public sector organizations overtaking and multiplying initiatives developed by small organizations, benefitting from the infrastructure and funding available to the public institutions. Where taking up initiatives or developing programs is not possible for public bodies, there is still the option of offering assistance by providing tools, facilities and other physical means.

IGL and improvement of parental involvement

Another direction that has been observed in several of the studies above (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, Spain and others) is that opening the schools to IGL and volunteers increases family and parental involvement which has an extremely important impact on the school performance of the pupils. The role of the family members involvement (parents and grandparents) in the school life is an approach tackled at first in the US and has proven a number of positive consequences²¹. The involvement of the family in the child's education has shown very positive results, such as the fact that family participation in education is twice as predictive of students' academic success as the family's socio-economic status. Where the family members are involved, students have higher grades and test scores, better school attendance, increased motivation, lower rates of suspension and drop-out.

Encouraging voluntary participation also ensures the access of older people to IGL initiatives, through NGOs or as family members directly. The elders are at risk of social exclusion and the rapid technical developments only deepen the gap between generations and minimize the possibilities of contact and social inclusion of the senior citizens.

Methodologies for delivery

As methodology of delivery, one-to-one / tandem initiatives have proven to be successful in several of the reporting countries (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Slovenia, The Czech Republic, Austria). This approach is very suitable for transfer across different contexts, as it requires a minimum of resources and management effort from the side of the organizers as tandems can make their own arrangements. On the other hand, the nation-wide initiatives also have their benefits and their visibility attract many volunteers and members of the target groups (12,000 volunteers in France throughout the country and in Italy 33% of the country's population participated in the "Born to Read" programme).

The perspective of the beneficiaries

Last but not least, from the testimonials of the participants in the IGL initiatives described above, it can be concluded that the learning and sharing experience had a positive impact and that the joy of giving and helping others at least matched (if not overcome) the satisfaction of gaining new skills.

²⁰ The list of these activities can be consulted at: <http://www.age-platform.eu/en/intergenerational-solidarity/613-list-of-initiatives-and-actions-across-europe>

²¹ More data of this research can be found in the FACE IT! Project handbook, Chapter 5, available on the project website: www.faceitproject.org

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