

# **Generations Together and Inspiring Communities**

Legacy Event, 01 February 2011

## **Conference Report**

***‘Supporting the development  
and  
maintaining the legacy’***



## Introduction

With both the *Generations Together*<sup>1</sup> and *Inspiring Communities*<sup>2</sup> programmes drawing to a close in March 2011 it was considered essential for the key learning to be shared and new partnership arrangements considered to ensure a full and sustained legacy be realised. While both programmes have their own specific aims and outcomes there are also strong comparisons not least the locality partnership working required for both, the intergenerational workstream of Inspiring Communities and the external evaluation of both by York Consulting.

Hosted by the Beth Johnson Foundation [BJF] and Community Service Volunteers [CSV] with the full support of the government funding departments over 60 delegates representing both programmes attended the event.

## Some delegate comments

*"Great to hear from other projects experience of success and challenges. Enjoyable day."*

*"Very well organised day, great buzz in the room"*

*"This event has provided a platform for sharing innovative local projects – now there is determination locally to sustain the momentum."*

*"Good to network. Been a privilege to be part of the project, inspirational for the future. Thank you."*

## Programme overview

All materials including presentations and delegate contact details will shortly be available on the bjf website [www.centreforip.org.uk](http://www.centreforip.org.uk) . As both programmes draw to a close this will be extended to ensure a web portal of the resources including toolkits and reports developed by the programmes are readily available.

**Bert Provan, DCLG** welcomed delegates to the day where we aim to put these programmes in the new policy contexts of the Big Society and localism. This is a difficult period for projects such as these ending as they do set against a back drop of reductions in public expenditure and deficit reduction. However the new policy landscape having as a driving force of decentralised budgets brings new challenges at local level with the Government keen for all partners to develop a more innovative and efficient responses to local priorities. The experience of Generations Together [GT] and Inspiring Communities [IC] programmes demonstrated just this they display

<sup>1</sup> Generations Together - [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2009\\_0140](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0140)

<sup>2</sup> Inspiring Communities - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1198867.pdf>

a wealth of talent and expertise already existing within localities and it is therefore essential to share the learning and to sustain activity where it met local priorities.

**Janet Crampton, DH** praised the contribution of both programmes to enhancing the quality of life for older people, and demonstrating health outcomes. This was particularly important in the light of media-fuelled negative perceptions of young people. Meaningful interaction between generations is key to adult social care policy developments and it was evident that positive and innovative outcomes were being generated. Janet invited programmes to offer case studies including life histories from local evaluation where there were links to improving the health and well-being of older people and positive connections to other policy outcomes.

**Alan Hatton Yeo, BJJ** spoke in terms of the legacy providing 'a gift to the future' with the event providing the catalyst by ensuring learning could be shared and sustained through a range of mechanisms. Through his own organisation, intergenerational resources would continue to be made available through a web portal. Building upon both national and local evaluation, BJJ would continue also to support organisations and individuals with their intergenerational practice. As part of this Alan confirmed BJJ would be working with Local Government Improvement and Development [LGID] to enhance its Ageing Well programme by implementing an Intergenerational Peer Challenge and Support programme commencing April 2011. With 2012 being the European Year of Active Ageing there was a busy agenda ahead and much to celebrate with the commitment of both CSV and BJJ to promoting and enhancing the legacy of GT and IC.

**Duncan Tree, CSV** spoke in support of both programmes and confirmed the key role volunteers had played in ensuring successful outcomes in a relatively short space of time. At the heart of this was ability of both programmes to demonstrate meaningful engagement and the learning from this provided a solid foundation for the future which would be captured and shared.

**June Mason, CLG, [GT programme lead] and Yvonne Dove [IC programme lead]** confirmed the importance of the Legacy Event as the programmes were nearing completion. Success in planning the day without a formal budget was also a reflection of the strong partnership between sectors and the high level of attendance by programme leads was recognition of the importance of sharing learning and building upon this for the future. Brief overviews were provided of both programmes followed by testimonies presented by the **Generations Together, Reading Partnership and Inspiring Communities Partnership Thetford**. These presentations focused upon challenges, successes and programme influence on local policy making and service delivery. Two further testimonies were made in the afternoon by the **Generations Together Wakefield Partnership and Inspiring Communities East Shields Partnerships**.

## Round table discussions

Key to the success of the day was the opportunity for delegates to share their experience in small groups each with a mix of GT and IC locality programme leads and considering the following 5 issues:

1. **Successes**
2. **Overcoming Challenges**
3. **Influencing local policy making and service delivery**
4. **Models for sustainability**
5. **Continuing the networking and supporting peers**

**Feedback** – key actions/opportunity points [this is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of actions and issues discussed]. It identifies those issues considered most significant for shaping the legacy providing a useful framework for prioritising future activity.

### Successes

- Learning in a new way, achieving different outcomes
- Providing opportunities and activities that don't cost too much
- Recognising the expertise within the Third Sector
- Increased positive perceptions of different age groups
- Effective consultation required changes to planning and agreement to be flexible
- Having all directorates from the council on board from the outset
- Free events were hugely influential on attendance in poor areas
- Rise in attainment levels, reading age, attendance and 1:1 tuition
- Raising aspirations outside of school through family learning
- Cross cultural aspects of work e.g. Chinese YP/OP mixing together, Muslim women engaging in dialogue with different generations
- Improved perception of the role of the school in bringing generations together
- Target of volunteers met and many happy to 'do it again'.
- IC has unlocked interest in addressing YP aspirations and potential
- Reinforcement of the arts and creativity as tools for engagement and participation.

### Overcoming challenges

- Overcoming negativity- showcasing via a website, local media, social networks. Using facebook / texting to engage young people
- Working with those who wanted to be engaged – addressing 'heard it all before' attitude
- Tapping into youth market that wasn't there before and observing development of individuals especially volunteers in a way that is important to them

- High degree of networking to source funding streams and opportunities  
Tapping into local and national initiatives wherever possible
- Learning how to address bureaucracy including 'fast tracking' procurement processes
- Recognising the importance of providing opportunities for interaction through shared and safe places
- Stepping up local evaluation after demise of national programme
- Gaining consent from parents and trying to obtain data for evaluation
- Addressing seasonality issues in the planning of projects and recognising what different age groups value
- 'Walking the community' and breaking down perceptions
- Changing negatives into positives. Making it acceptable for a YP to leave a project and then come back bringing different life experiences
- Not having all the control – presenting proposals to the community and letting them choose, and recognising the importance of 'organic development' through relevancy

### **Influencing local policy making and service delivery**

- Thinking differently about delivery to maximise engagement and resources
- Addressing and influencing the key policy drivers e.g. CYP plan, Ageing Strategy
- Intergenerational meetings attended by councillors helped establish a community and improved awareness of local issues
- Can influence if the strategic partnership is effective
- Embed good practice within integrated networks including multi-disciplinary teams with a focus on health and well-being
- Role of participatory budgeting in allowing young people to engage and choose ideas. This process has created a replicable model for other localities
- Adoption of champion to take issues forward and increasing the engagement of others
- Community is now looking at how they can support each other, e.g. mentoring/volunteering
- Importance of celebration events and local toolkits to spread learning and raise profile
- Young and older volunteers are a valuable resource and their skills need to be harnessed and their contribution valued
- School leadership and role of Heads/Governors is key but often constrained by school improvement targets
- Promoting integration and community cohesion through learning about heritage
- With longer time to plan and shape less money would have been needed

### **Models for sustainability**

- Recognise sustainability isn't free and it needs on-going investment
- Demonstrate impact and outcomes and bridge the gap between strategy and neighbourhood

- Promoting and making the best of local initiatives already in place
- Embrace localism, look at influencing the local agenda
- Focus on revenue generating activities and potential for increasing the role of volunteers – explore options including company volunteer schemes [in kind contributions] social enterprises, not for profit arrangements
- Encourage user led development so initiatives can be self supporting and encourage communities to invest in their ‘community’
- Find sustainable comparable volunteering opportunities and up skill volunteers through accreditation and training
- Work with partners to identify other funding and develop collaborative funding bids e.g. heritage lottery funding
- Incorporate added value of IP and sustainability within tendering process when commissioning
- Allocation of schools budget to support IC initiatives
- Mainstream as part of wider core activity and provide local evidence to influence other stakeholders
- Maximise opportunity of public health move to local authorities for delivery of health and well-being outcomes

### **Continuing the networking and supporting peers**

- A knowledge of who is doing what in each locality with best practice identified through sharing of toolkits
- Sustaining relationships and networks with BJF and other key stakeholders
- Finding ways of keeping expertise and enthusiasm going – it will be hard to build back
- Flexible communication arrangements – forums, networks, blogs, quarterly e-bulletins
- Explore potential of European Year of Volunteering with GT/IC projects providing champions
- Sharing the resourcing of future events, national and regional
- Importance of peer support and critical challenge

### **Summary**

**Duncan Tree**, summarised the day events emphasising the value of the networking experience and thanking all delegates and presenters for their participation. Particular thanks were extended to DCLG colleagues and Melissa Grant DfE who had contributed so much to making the programmes a success

In terms of next steps Duncan confirmed:

- A report of the event would be made available to all delegates
- A web portal hosted by BJF would be developed for all GT and IC resources
- Both BJF and CSV would explore wider opportunities to support sustainability and growth of the legacy