



'Bridging' Social Capital Seminar Series

Seminar no.4: Intergenerational Connections

20 October 2008, 4.00 to 5.30

Background

This is the fourth seminar in a series jointly organised by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Carnegie UK Trust Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK & Ireland. The aim of the series is to improve the understanding of the dynamics of social capital by exploring its operation in a number of different contexts.

The seminars provide an opportunity for practitioners, academics and policymakers to share insights into how 'bridging' social capital is generated and how it can enhance the effectiveness of civil society associations and organisations committed to change, and contribute to a more inclusive and socially just society.

Objectives

This seminar aimed to:

- Examine how intergenerational practice can promote inclusiveness, collaboration and better understanding across generations.
- Explore how intergenerational practice impacts on social capital.
- Share learning from those involved in intergenerational practice in the UK and abroad.

The speakers

The speakers at the seminar were:

Victoria Dare (Department for Children, Schools and Families) who outlined government's position and strategy on intergenerational practice.

Mariano Sanchez (University of Granada) who presented an overview of intergenerational practice in Europe and its impact on social capital.

Sally Chandler (Manchester City Council) who examined how intergenerational practice is being developed in Manchester and highlighted key learning points.

Beverly Hughes (Minister for Children – Department for Children, Schools and Families) recorded a video message as she was unable to attend.

In a nutshell

Summary of Victoria Dare's presentation and comments

- Research from organisations such as the Beth Johnson Foundation has shown that intergenerational work can be effective.
- Government programmes increasingly have intergenerational elements to them, and there is considerable untapped potential for intergenerational activity to be further embedded in our work.
- Intergenerational events have raised the profile of intergenerational work.
- Beverly Hughes will act as ministerial champion for intergenerational practice and encourage other ministers to develop an interest in this.
- The Government plans to publish guidance for local areas explaining in more detail how intergenerational activity could deliver a broad range of local priorities.
- It plans to embed intergenerational work so that both central government and partners in local authorities and in the voluntary sector, think of how they can encourage intergenerational activity, when planning the delivery of local or national priorities.
- The role of the government is to persuade local authorities of the benefits of intergenerational practice, not to develop a top-down approach.
- It is important to share good practice and evaluate the cost-benefit analysis of intergenerational activities.

Summary of Mariano Sanchez's presentation and comments

- Intergenerational practices can promote inclusiveness, collaboration and better understanding across generations but unforeseen divisions can develop if people are not careful.
- Many examples show that intergenerational practice can have a positive impact on social capital. However, intergenerational projects need to be inclusive.
- We are all intergenerational, but we have not really taken this on board. It is important to have a wider approach and to develop multigenerational initiatives.
- There should be more links between intergenerational projects and other community initiatives.
- We should be working towards a society for all ages, but this is not going to be achieved solely by having a multitude of individual projects.
- Key features of successful intergenerational practice are: community involvement; management and planning of relationships; and collaboration between organisations.

Summary of Sally Chandler's presentation and comments

- Manchester City Council's intergenerational programme was outlined in the document *Looking Back, Looking Forward*.
- Key elements to the implementation of the programme were: staff training; demonstration projects to share good practice and learning; appointment of an intergenerational champion; a citywide learning event; a members steering group.
- The programme's successes include: support from Extended Schools to create a mentoring programme and regeneration frameworks now including intergenerational approaches
- Remaining challenges involve: embedding intergenerational practice in the mainstream agenda; identifying further sources of funding; and evaluation.
- Identifying premises as multigenerational space is important.

- The voluntary sector is key in enabling intergenerational practice to develop.

Message from Beverly Hughes

(Minister for Children – Department for Children, Schools and Families)

Building bridges between generations has never been more important than it is today, because as many of you will know, 2008 has been a landmark year with the number of over 60s outnumbering the under 16s for the first time in our history. In 2050, 1 in 3 of the UK's population will be over 65, so now is the time to make sure that this widening gap in age does not become a widening gap in understanding in our communities. Intergenerational work can help beat outdated stereotypes through building bridges between people who might not normally meet and helping them to share their skills. Through voluntary activity with younger people, intergenerational activities can benefit older people by helping to fill the gap left by work and keeping minds active; and it can benefit younger people by providing them with a trusted adult, someone to provide advice, and to provide them with someone who can really encourage and support them to seize opportunities and experiences. Often, the older generation has a lot more in common with young people than we might suspect. For example today's younger people are passionate about the environment in a way their parents never were, so maybe green fingered retirees can teach them how to look after gardens or grow their own vegetables.

Intergenerational activity also has to be much more than token gestures; inviting pensioners to talk to young people about the war in history classes maybe is a start but it is not nearly enough, we have got to create an everyday culture where old and young people routinely come together to build strong communities, and we need to work at this because in many cases the natural bonds that linked people together are not as strong as they were, weakening the opportunities for the different generations to interact.

This year's Older People's Day which was based around the intergenerational theme was a really good start. It is important for everyone to seize the moment and that is why I am delighted that you all have the opportunity to make a real difference here, whether it's in setting the agenda, influencing local partners to take intergeneration activity seriously or starting your own project, so best of luck and thank you.

Growing together: increasing intergenerational activity

Victoria Dare (Department for Children, Schools and Families)

Why the government is acting

- Changing family patterns, living arrangements and the development of age-segregated activities are contributing to a lack of interaction between 'the young' and 'the old'.
- For older people, getting involved in their local communities reduces their fear of the younger generation and improves their quality of life. Younger people will gain support for meeting the challenges of growing up in the 21st century from people who faced the challenges of the 20th century.
- Research from organisations such as the Beth Johnson Foundation has shown that intergenerational work can be effective.

Government's programmes increasingly have intergenerational elements to them, and there is considerable untapped potential for intergenerational activity to be further embedded in our work. An informal ministerial working group, chaired by Beverly Hughes, includes representation from the Department for Work and

Pensions, the Department for Health, the Office of the Third Sector and the Department of Communities and Local Government. It has been considering what more the Government can do to encourage intergenerational activity to take place. The focus of this work is on three areas:

1. Raising the profile and highlighting benefits of intergenerational practice

- This includes our delivery partners and the public at large.
- Older People's Day on the 1st October 2008 involved intergenerational events held by Age Concern, Help the Aged and Better Government for Older People. The promotional information is still available online and schools are being encouraged to access it.
- Beverly Hughes will act as ministerial champion for intergenerational practice to encourage other ministers to develop an interest in this.
- Ministers are exploring the possibility of unpaid volunteers to act as intergenerational champions in their local area.

2. Providing support and guidance

The vast majority of intergenerational activity stems from local projects organised by local people. The challenge is to influence local authorities to support intergenerational activities. To this end, the Government plans to publish guidance for local areas explaining in more detail how intergenerational activity could deliver a broad range of local priorities. This will include the publication of case study examples of particular projects.

3. Embedding an intergenerational element into all governmental work

The Government plans to:

- Be in a position where everybody, both central government and partners in local authorities and in the voluntary sector, automatically think of how they can encourage intergenerational activity, when planning the delivery of local or national priorities.
- Embed principles of intergenerational work as part of the Department of Health prevention package for older people; and extend the learning from the LinkAge Plus pilots where intergenerational work is emerging as a strong theme locally.
- Include intergenerational dialogue as a strand of work in the Department of Communities and Local Government's work about increasing meaningful interaction between people from different backgrounds.

The Office of the Third Sector has already committed to a specific funding stream for intergenerational projects.

Intergenerational practice and social capital

Mariano Sánchez (University of Granada, Spain)

In my presentation I want to highlight the benefits of intergenerational practice as well as the challenges.

My key message today is that intergenerational connections may indeed help to increase bridging social capital. However, they need to be good intergenerational connections, not just *any* intergenerational connections. We need to make a continued and specific effort to enable the positive benefits of intergenerational work, and prevent intergenerational work from excluding people and leading to more fragmentation and inequalities.

Can intergenerational practices promote inclusiveness, collaboration and better understanding across generations?

There are many examples of intergenerational practice. For instance, in Spain retired emigrants who have returned to Spain are mentoring children from immigrant communities to help them integrate. Many schools in Spain are welcoming older people and involving them in other different ways. These intergenerational practices work to some extent. Research has argued that intergenerational learning in schools increases social capital. However, it also shows that it can lead to a deepening of gender bias because boys usually want to be mentored by male volunteers and girls by female volunteers.

Can intergenerational practice impact on social capital?

There are many examples that demonstrate that they do. This is the case for example, in Spain which has the largest home-sharing scheme in Europe involving older people and students. The scheme is based on an exchange; accommodation, companionship and support for the student in exchange of companionship and a range of services for the older person. Social capital is linked to cooperation, reciprocity and trust. All these are present in home-sharing schemes.

So, intergenerational initiatives can generate social capital. But, you need to be wary. It is often assumed that intergenerational projects are inclusive but this is not always the case. With many intergenerational projects the focus is exclusively on children and older people. If we want to be really inclusive what we should be developing are initiatives that are multigenerational. Many intergenerational initiatives tend to promote intergenerational solidarity outside the family context, but we should also be looking at what is happening within families.

The key features of successful intergenerational projects are:

- Community involvement
- Management and planning of relationships
- Collaboration between organisations.

Are we experiencing in Europe an unprecedented development of intergenerational practice?

Yes, in many ways we are. However, projects are often standalone projects that are not sufficiently linked to other community initiatives. More joined-up thinking needs to take place.

For example, I visited last August a great housing project in Alicante with 78% of the flats occupied by older people and the remaining tenants -people between 18 and 35 years old - paying low rent and agreeing to spend at least four hours a week with the older tenants. But the building also had a centre for people with Alzheimer's, with absolutely no functional connection with the tenants. It was a real shame.

Intergenerational working in Manchester

Sally Chandler (Valuing Older People, Manchester City Council)

Exploratory phase

Our programme Valuing Older People was set up four years ago to challenge the way older people are viewed in society and to improve the quality of life of older

residents. In January 2007, we met with the Beth Johnson Foundation to look at how we might start to develop a strategy for policy and practice across the city. Alan Hatton-Yeo from the foundation worked with us and held a series of interviews with key strategic leads across the city to map current practice and review current policies. The document *Looking Back, Looking Forward* was then launched. This document sets out how the programme would be implemented over the next year.

This phase involved:

- Staff training in intergenerational practice, project planning and evaluation methods and also approved provider standards.
- Demonstration projects to look at learning.
- An E-bulletin to enable those people who were interested in intergenerational practice to keep in touch with the developments of the programme.
- The appointment of an intergenerational 'champion'.
- The production of the 'City for All Ages' calendar 2008 (part of a positive images of ageing campaign).
- A citywide learning event bringing together all the learning from the demonstration projects and looking to inform future work.
- A members steering group which included deputy leaders and a number of other executive members.

Foundation year

We entered our foundation year in 2008. We aimed to further develop external partnerships and explored the possibility of a Year 7 mentoring project in schools helping children through the period of transition, by using older people as mentors in schools. We are also worked with Manchester University to look at how they could encourage students to volunteer. We are also planning to develop a citywide learning network and more online resources. A proposal for extending training for frontline staff has been put together.

Some of our early successes have been encouraging. For instance:

- We have identified resources to create a post at City Council (2.5 day/week) jointly with the Beth Johnson Foundation.
- We are working with Extended Schools who are keen to implement a mentoring programme across Manchester.
- Regeneration frameworks are now including intergenerational approaches.
- An increasing number of people who would not normally work together are collaborating and considering older people in their plans and activities.

Challenges ahead

The main challenge is how we mainstream intergenerational practice and how we:

- Further develop corporate ownership.
- Identify further sources of adequate resourcing.
- Demonstrate tangible outcomes.
- Ensure longer-term strategic lead.

Discussion

Caroline Bennett (NCVO Third Sector Foresight)

Currently intergenerational work seems to very organisation-based; how does it go beyond the organisation?

Mariano Sanchez

We should be able to move from the level of project implementation to the level of real community building. The UN on ageing says we should be working towards a society for all ages, but this is not going to be achieved through having a multitude of individual projects. We need something more. For a number of years, the Temple University Centre for Intergenerational Learning in the US has been implementing the Communities for All Ages initiative which is proving very successful. It is an initiative that seeks to improve the quality of life for entire communities, not specific age groups.

Sally Chandler

If you look at other local authorities, there are many networks of intergenerational programmes, particularly in Leeds and Derbyshire. I think they grow organically from communities. What we have done is looked at it from a strategic top-down approach and I think the challenge for us is joining that up.

Karl Wilding

Many of the projects you have talked about seem oriented towards public services rather than community cohesion and changing attitudes.

Sally Chandler

Intergenerational practice lends itself to so many different agendas. From my experience it is not just seated in social care.

Victoria Dare

For example, Groundwork the environmental charity is doing some really good projects around intergenerational work and the environment. Young people are so enthusiastic about getting involved in these.

Susan Langford (Magic Me)

How a project feeds into the wider community and society is to do with how the people who are involved in it feel about what they are doing. Magic Me runs time-limited projects. What we hope people will take away at the end of a project is not just a good experience and the relationships with people in the room, but skills and recognition. Finding what people have in common with others is very important. For me it is about finding out how to feel comfortable with people who are different. People can then use that in all sorts of situations.

Karl Wilding

At the last NCVO/Carnegie seminar Nick Acheson, one of the presenters mentioned that quite often people involved in community organisations are self-selecting, and therefore they are the sorts of people who would already come together and already choose to bond more with people of similar backgrounds. Is there something about intergenerational projects that is genuinely different in terms of attracting different people together?

Mariano Sanchez

Generational intelligence is a concept coined by several colleagues, one of them in the UK - Professor Simon Biggs -. It acknowledges the fact that all of us without any exception are intergenerational. To some extent, we are the result of the previous generation's effort, willingness, care, love, whatever you want to call it. But to what extent are we aware of this and to what extent do we use this to enrich our identities, our capacity to make decisions, our choices? We are all intergenerational, but we have not really taken this on board.

Denise Burke (London Development Agency)

It seems there are two approaches in intergenerational work; sharing sites or creating activities to the benefit of either older or younger people. I think you have to look at them both completely differently. For example in the piece of work we have been doing on establishing a shared site, the barriers are enormous. One of the biggest barriers is actually working with not only the voluntary sector, but also with local authorities because you effectively need to break down those corridors of different departments in local authorities. It seems Manchester is getting there; you are clearly breaking down those boundaries.

John Appleby (Hastings Seniors Forum)

In Hastings there are about 900 of us, all over 50, working with our local Youth Council. We talk about mentoring or co-mentoring, which is a word I like because we all can learn from each other. The problem is that local authorities very often do not listen to young people. I had to prompt the youngsters and say "I'm not speaking for you, you speak" and of course once they got started, you heard exactly what facilities they wanted in town. I just wonder how this fits into the thinking generally. Top-down is a dangerous exercise, bottom-up is much more exciting but I do like the idea of an intergenerational champion.

Sally Chandler

You are right about premises and facilities. It is certainly something we have looked at. It is about encouraging new capital investment programmes to start looking outwards more, and that is something we are trying to do through the regeneration teams.

One of the unexpected outcomes from our demonstration projects was seeing people in premises where they would not normally be. For example, Powerhouse Library in Moss Side, which is seen as a place where younger people go, started getting older people using it on a more regular basis following the intergenerational work they did. Another example is in Sure Start Centres, where we had older people helping young mums cook. It became a multigenerational project because the young mums had their babies with them as well. They now use their nearest Sure Start Centre as a point of contact with the Council. So I agree re-thinking how we use premises is really important.

John Appleby's point about top-down being dangerous is absolutely right if that is all you are doing. There is a real commitment in Manchester to refresh the Youth Engagement Strategy to give younger people a voice and to use older people to help facilitate that as well.

Victoria Dare

From central government's perspective, we could not do it top down; our role is about influencing and persuading local authorities of the benefits of intergenerational practice. What we can do is say "Look, this is the experience that someone else has had in this area; if you have got a particular problem, this might be a solution to that local problem."

An example of a very good project that I have come across is one in Stratford, where the local authority took teenage boys who were exhibiting early signs of anti-social behaviour to cooking classes with older men, some of whom who had been recently widowed and needed to learn to cook. They were taking part in the activity as equals and sharing each other's company. What the project found was that first time entrants into the criminal justice system for that age group of boys decreased by 25% during the life time of the project. It is about sharing good practice at local level.

Stephen Aguilar-Millan (European Futures Observatory)

I found the presentations very interesting because the scene was set in very much a futures perspective in talking about the ageing population, but all the solutions that have been presented, have been presented in a cross-sectional sense, i.e. the work that we are doing across generations today. One of the things I do not sense from either national or local government is some sort of long-term commitment. I think the acid test would be what budget are you willing to devote to this action in the year 2030?

Victoria Dare

Government spending is planned on three year cycles. We just do not know how much money we might be spending on this in 2030. For central government, part of the issue is that it is not for us to dictate to local areas how much money they spend on it. It is for them to decide whether they think it is right for them in their particular circumstances and whether intergenerational solutions will help them deliver their priorities.

Stephen Aguilar-Millan

The Norwegian experience is really quite instructive. They have got a commitment that has lasted 40 years, where the proceeds of their Sovereign Wealth Fund has been placed at the disposal of intergenerational action. Now that the Treasury owns so much of the banking sector, why can't we do something similar?

Victoria Dare

When we were thinking about whether we were going to have a long-term intergenerational strategy, what we found was a plethora of local examples but most of them had not been robustly evaluated. We do not know what the cost-benefit analysis is, what types of intergenerational practice are better than others, and which ones offer the best value for money. Until we do, we are not in a position to be having that conversation with the Treasury. It is not to say we will not be in that position in five years' time when projects that are starting up now are evaluated.

Sally Chandler

We have to invest in the evaluation of some core projects to be able to roll out the programme and to convince our partners. We also need to look at economic impact of intergenerational practice.

Mariano Sanchez

We are presuming that these programmes are and can be evaluated like any other. Why are we presuming that something as powerful and as deeply rooted in social structures can be measured using the poor evaluation methods currently at hand? Evaluating intergenerational programmes challenges us to rethink our methods of evaluation within the realm of social intervention.

[No name]

From a practical point of view it does not always come down to needing more money, because even if we think about just sharing sites, there is huge potential out there - by 2010 we will have 3500 children's centres; one in every community. A lot of it is pure coordination. We do not need huge investment to get these things off the ground. You need local authorities to start working with voluntary organisations and to start thinking outside the box. Collaboration and planning are both key.

Robert Edwards (Age Concern England)

I agree with the last point with one exception, that funds are needed to invest in the infrastructure to join up some of those dots. Research and evaluation are part of

joining up those dots. We looked at what intergenerational activity was happening in 52 boroughs and compared that with the social cohesion requirement in the Comprehensive Area Assessment. We are only just beginning to engage. We are not empowering a society for all ages.

[No name]

With regards to funding, there has not been much concentration in the discussions from what I have heard about third sector activity. There is a very good description about the way local government organises itself but I am trying to find out what is specific about intergenerational practice. Are there specific issues that are more difficult for you to organise, that need support from funders?

[No name]

One of the things the third sector can do is help people through transitions of life stages. There is a role for the third sector in enabling social capital. Most of the community led groups have got knowledge in how to provide that, but they do not have the time or capacity to share that knowledge onto other places. I am less interested in how third sector organisations show other people what to do in a top-down approach. I am more interested in how we can get everybody involved in intergenerational activity so that becomes the norm.

[No name]

When recruiting for a member of staff, we rarely get anybody who has done intergenerational work before because it is a new field. We have been going for 18 years and initially we were working out our practice as we were doing it. I suppose we have got to the luxury point now where some people have done this for a long time, and we are beginning to tease out what works and what does not. It is about building up this knowledge base and passing it on.

[No name]

It is really important to also look at tackling some of the barriers that young people have with spaces, and not just focus on schools. We need to look at all the different ways needed to re-engage young people, and to stamp out some of the practices that are excluding them.

Alan Hatton-Yeo (Beth Johnson Foundation)

The debate has developed because ten years ago there was very little discussion going on around intergenerational work. There is now a dialogue going on and people are beginning to actually understand this. We have moved away from a movement which largely in the UK was led by older people's organisations to one where there is increasing parity between young and older people's organisations. The debate is genuinely becoming intergenerational.

The big challenge is to move from segmented structures where we tend to exclude certain groups, because either we have not been professionally trained to work with them or because they are not seen to be part of the club that we belong to, to actually looking genuinely within communities at how we are going to socially include people. I have always been most comfortable when talking about intergenerational work to talk about asset-based community development. It is about looking within a community at the contributions that everyone can make. The most powerful thing about intergenerational work is that it actually asks questions of all of us.

Sally Chandler

I want to return to some of the points about the third sector. I was not here to talk specifically about Valuing Older People but it is central to the programme that we

work with Manchester's older people. It is a partnership between the Primary Care Trust, the local authority and the voluntary sector. Everything we do is very much driven from the community. We could not have achieved what we have achieved without the third sector. I think they are the converted and we have been trying to convert the council in many ways. So without Alan's knowledge and expertise and support, we would not have got where we have got today. We are also actively seeking out new partnerships in the third sector.

Victoria Dare

I think from our perspective we have been really pleased by the number of organisations that are taking intergenerational practice seriously. It is really good to see this enthusiasm. Hopefully that will continue. I know Alan will be there to make sure that it is taken seriously in years to come.

Mariano Sanchez

What is specific here? Good question. For me it is not about age, it is about lifecycle and relationships. Age is not that powerful variable we used to consider it to be.

Biographies

Sally Chandler

Sally Chandler is a former Registered General Nurse, specialised in gerontology. She has also held a number of roles in both the voluntary and statutory sectors and so has wide-ranging experience in project development across all sectors. She has significant experience in community development and has had considerable success in developing innovative and varied engagement mechanisms.

Sally joined the Valuing Older People initiative in 2004 shortly after its launch. She manages a number of programmes that have contributed to the national recognition of the Valuing Older People approach to improving quality of life for Manchester's older residents, and has taken a strategic lead for the development of intergenerational practice across the city. Sally is firmly committed to challenging the traditional 'needs-based' model of supporting older people.

Victoria Dare

Victoria Dare joined the then Department for Education and Skills in 2004, and worked in a range of policy and financial strategy roles focusing on improving further education, and the skills base of the country. She also worked as the Secretariat to Sir Alan's Steer's practitioners' group, which published their influential report Learning Behaviour in 2005. She joined the Youth Inclusion Unit in 2008, and leads the DCSF's work on intergenerational practice and on improving services for young runaways.

Mariano Sánchez

Mariano **Sánchez** is Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Granada, Spain, and technical co-ordinator of the Spanish Intergenerational Network. He is a member of the Management Committee of the International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes, and an honorary member of the Association of Education and Ageing, Great Britain. He is also a member of OFECUM, a not-for-profit organisation devoted to the implement of intergenerational programs in Granada, Spain. Mariano was responsible for the first research in Spain mapping out and assessing intergenerational practices and programs in the country. His published works include the collective books Intergenerational programmes: Towards a society for all ages and La evaluación de los programas intergeneracionales (The evaluation of intergenerational programmes). He has also published numerous articles in journals such as "Journal of Intergenerational Relationships", "Knowledge, Work and Society", and "Educational Gerontology: An International Journal".

Karl Wilding

Karl Wilding is Head of Research at NCVO. His research interests include mapping the changing third sector economy and the relationship between new technologies and philanthropy. He is a trustee of the Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector (ARVAC), a trustee of St Albans CVS, and an Honorary Senior Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Charity Effectiveness, Cass Business School in London. He is also a co-investigator for the ESRC/OTS Giving and Philanthropy Research Centre.