



Connecting generations through museums and galleries

- In 2010 -11 Generations Working Together financed, and managed together with Museums Galleries Scotland, a one-off small grant fund (up to £2,000 for each project) through which 8 museums delivered intergenerational projects, through to Spring 2011.
- The participating museums were: the museum services of West Lothian, Inverclyde, South Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils; Old Haa Museums Trust, Shetland; Ullapool Museums Trust and the museum service of the University of St. Andrews.
- Each project was inspired by objects from their local museum, involving younger and older people in art and craft and reminiscence, and other activities.
- Intergenerational understanding and, in some cases, the development of close bonds between the participating people and organisations, have been reported.
- Guidance on intergenerational practice in museums has been published on Museums Galleries Scotland's website, providing ongoing support for intergenerational practice in museums throughout Scotland.

What did the museums offer to intergenerational practice?

- A safe, creative place for different generations to meet
- Objects or paintings or object handling (boxes or kits) to provide project theme, and stimulate discussion.
- Staff, skilled at facilitating group work and putting on exhibitions, and keen to work more with the local community
- Reminiscence skills and equipment
- Exhibition space



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Key factors of success

- Making time available for the participants to actively input throughout the project
- Local knowledge of people willing to become involved in the projects
- Access to a museum space and objects for inspiration
- Good project planning and communication
- A flexible outlook
- The enthusiasm and talent of local participants and contributing organisations
- Access to appropriate recording and filming equipment, for oral history project work

Challenges

- The projects took place in a period of extraordinarily bad weather, when it was difficult to bring people together.

- Fitting the project around school timetables and the busy lives of older people.
- Limited time for the project participants to get to know each other.

Benefits of the projects

- Local people enjoyed finding out more about their local heritage, gained a sense of pride in their locality, and made a connection with their local museum.
- The production of local oral history records, made available to local communities.
- Breaking down barriers between the generations, with plans to extend new relationships beyond the life of the project – the younger people were fascinated with the insights that the older people could provide; the older people were delighted to be valued and to build relationships with interested younger people.
- The schools enjoyed object ‘handling sessions’, and a mark of this success is that arrangements have been made for further school-museum activities.
- Many participants got to grips with recording and filming technology, interviewing techniques and other craft skills
- Many of the participating museums were given objects, or stories about existing objects related to the various projects, which is a testament to the enthusiasm of project participants, and will make a long-term contribution to local heritage.
- Participants were able to proudly show off their work in project exhibitions, celebration events and tours to surrounding areas, in many cases.



Additional information:

Information on the ‘Connecting Generations through Museums and Galleries’ projects:

<http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/publications/publication/362/information-about-the-fund-for-intergenerational-activities>

Locate your local museum: <http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/search-for-museums-&-galleries/results/?all>

Contact Museums Galleries Scotland: helenag@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk

For further info on GWT, check out the website at <http://www.generationsworkingtogether.org>

The original case studies were written by Fiona Frank, Soundboard Consultancy, in collaboration with Brian McKechnie of the University of Strathclyde Centre for Lifelong Learning