



Generations Working Together

Intergenerational Practice X Asset-Based Community Development

A core principle of intergenerational practice is that it is asset-based. What does this mean? We want to focus on existing strengths, within generations and within communities. This blog post explores this further.

We believe that a major asset of so many communities lies in there being people of all ages. However, the post-industrial shift to independent living has resulted in a growing cultural wall between younger and older people. Ageism and social isolation are, as a result, a continuing problem for communities and wider society, as people become increasingly separated from their traditional social and geographic roots. We believe that intergenerational assets exist in communities and are there to be benefitted from; communities just need support in realising and uncovering these. Intergenerational practice can empower communities, and there is extensive evidence that points to the mutual physical and mental health benefits of IG work. We want to raise awareness of these practices and shed light on the mutual benefits of IG work. We want to change the narrative from intergenerational work being 'a nice thing to do', to being a necessary component of community development and sustainment. We want to see it accounted for in urban planning and community development from the outset, to ensure places and spaces are conducive to IG practice, where people of all ages can connect and flourish.

Asset-based community development argues that, for example, it is more important that we invite older people to share their gifts, rather than invite them to some programme that has been designed for them, rather than by them. Intergenerational practice presents great opportunities to do achieve this, whereby social isolation and loneliness aren't necessarily challenged through programmes, or initiatives. Instead, local resources and community assets are utilised to create the conditions necessary for intergenerational relationships to develop and grow. The development of these relationships will allow for new individual and community assets to be uncovered. Older people suffering from loneliness form new

relationships and have a new intergenerational network where they can rediscover former passions/interests and even discover new ones; younger people learn from the wisdom and expertise of older people, helping to dismantle their existing preconceptions of elderly persons. Social isolation/loneliness is overcome, whilst younger persons benefit from new life skills and unique opportunities for education. Importantly, once this sort of community is developed, it should persist. If implemented effectively, it is not a transitory programme, subject to an end-date. Rather, it will establish the grounds for continued relationships between generations, for generations to come.

Check out the 'news' section on our website, where you can find more information on various intergenerational projects that are ongoing or planned.

Also check out some of the links below, to learn more about Asset-Based practises.

[News \(generationsworkingtogether.org\)](http://generationsworkingtogether.org)

[Asset-Based Community Development - 5 Core Principles - Nurture Development](#)