



Keeping People Safe



Introduction

Linking Generations Northern Ireland (LGNI) is an intergenerational initiative and part of the Beth Johnson Foundation.

LGNI is the only organisation solely advocating the development and promotion of intergenerational practice (IP) as a catalyst for social change in Northern Ireland.

LGNI are aspiring to bring generations together to challenge ageism and have a vision of an Age-Friendly Northern Ireland where all generations are respected, understood, connected and engaged together in their communities.



Aims of the EngAGE Project

- Bring generations together to build understanding trust and respect for each other
- Address fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and overall improve relationships
- Improve relationships in the community, between older, younger people and the PSNI
- All Age approach to contribute to building safer, confident and cohesive communities

Glastry College and Rocky Acres

LGNI have been working closely with Glastry College, Rocky Acres and PSNI to plan, develop and deliver this partnership project.



The groups took part in a single age session and then had 6 joint sessions which were created and developed by the participants and it focused on the theme of Spring. Throughout the programme there was a range of activities and this created opportunities to build relationships. The main tool for delivery of the sessions was using a variety of art and craft activities using textiles, plants, paints and pots. Each week created excitement and motivation to be involved and continue to work and get to know each other.



'This is an amazing project and it made me so happy working with the older people every week and seeing them become more comfortable with us.'



The intergenerational approach within this project has created an opportunity for the group to build their confidence when working with a different age group and form new relationships that create a more inclusive community and the ability to share this with other friends, family members and their community as a great example of improving community cohesion.

The group have more positive perceptions of each other and to have developed their empathy to be more aware of the fear of crime older people have and the importance of their relationships to continue to improve community cohesion.

Nendrum College & Stepping Stones Sheltered Housing Scheme

This Comber group was based in Stepping Stones Sheltered Housing Scheme with the pupils arriving after school and was a brand new collaborative partnership.

All organisations were involved in a planning meeting, followed by a Dementia Awareness session delivered by LGNI regional development worker to 32 pupils and teachers from Nendrum College.

Separate single age sessions allowed the older and younger participants to discuss

- Aims and plans for the project
- Views and experiences of crime
- Anti-social behaviour,
- Attitudes towards the PSNI and the other age group

In the first joint age session and subsequent sessions, the residents and pupils shared a little about their settings and got to know more about each other through discussions over who had influenced them the most, sharing their 'mantra for life', advice that each age group would give the other, their most treasured object and finally how they would improve Comber.



'It has been great getting the opportunity to meet and talk each week to new people of a different age, to share different interests and understand them more.'

Participants took ownership of the project and over 7 weekly sessions, chose to explore activities including board games with the PSNI, creative clay, arts and crafts, a trip to the school for a tribal drumming session and creating collage memory boards. These activities provided opportunities to find out about each other, connect and engage in meaningful ways.

As the PSNI community officers were able to engage in an informal, fun manner, this enabled them to be seen in a more positive and approachable light and they too are planning to liaise separately with each setting to develop support talks and activities.



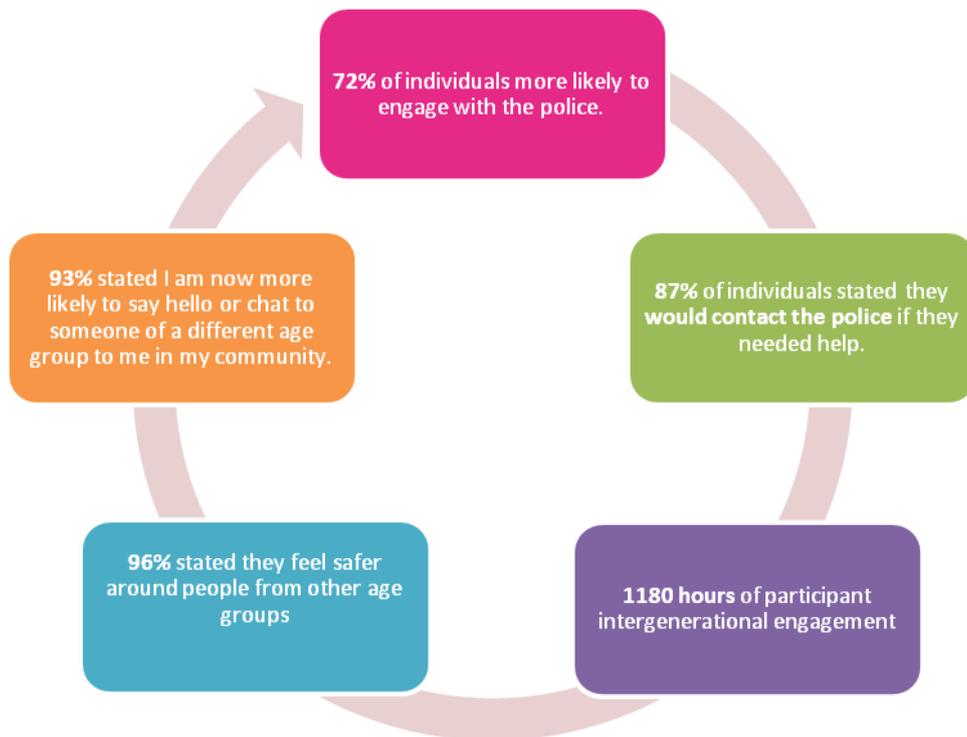
Spending time together, week by week, fostered empathy and interest for each other, genuinely creating more understanding and respect as people got to know an individual person not an age group.

The group used photos and comments to build a collage to keep and showcase the success of the partnership they had begun to build.

The EngAGE Comber project gained a lot of momentum and appeared in two local newspapers. Both the County Down Spectator and Ards Chronicle covered the project. It was great to see such fantastic press coverage to highlight the brilliant project.



At the celebration event, attended by Nendrum College Principal, Community PSNI officers, representatives from DOJ and CEO of Alpha Housing, participants shared the positive effect that taking part had on them and discussed plans to continue their links.



100 % of individuals stated the project made them feel welcome and respected. This feedback highlights how the groups had forged meaningful and mutually beneficial IG relationships.

LGNI are grateful to the PCSP for the provision of funding which enabled the delivery of the EngAGE project in Portavogie.