Linking Generations

Northern Ireland

Evaluation of the 'I Tea Time' Project

January to March 2016

With support from **BARCLAYS** **Digital Eagles**

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1. Introduction

LGNI were funded through the Department of Finance and Personnel's 'Go ON NI' digital inclusion programme to deliver intergenerational sessions in schools as a vehicle for getting older people online and engaged in using IT equipment.

The 'I Tea Time' project involved working in three school's including Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry; Slemish Integrated College, Ballymena and Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College. The schools linked with older people recruited through Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium, Mid & East Antrim Age Well Partnership (Good Morning Ballymena) and Age North Down and Ards (AGENDA).

Each project involved preparatory sessions with the older and younger people on their own which were followed by the facilitation of four intergenerational IT sessions which were supported by Barclays Digital Eagles volunteers. These sessions focused on using LGNI's Digital Age Project (DAP) toolkit as a resource for the younger people to assist the older people using a one-to-one, tailor-made approach to learning. This approach enabled the older learners to learn at their own pace and to focus on their own interest areas. It also maximised the use of the digital skills of their younger partners and the DAP toolkit.

The schools kindly provided the use of their IT equipment and internet access and Barclays' volunteers provided additional support when necessary. The sessions had the overarching outcome of improving older people's digital skills but also had the added social element of increasing contact between generations.

The evaluation shows that the projects worked very well. They were welcomed by the schools and the younger and older people involved. The input from Barclays Digital Eagle Volunteers was greatly welcomed as an extra resource and feedback from the volunteers on their enjoyment from the project was very positive. The school projects also lead to some additional activity/interest e.g. Bangor Academy got involved in Safety of Seniors events with AGENDA and LGNI and hope to continue their IT sessions twice a year. Sacred Heart have expressed an interest in further intergenerational activity and attended a local workshop linking up stakeholders in their area.

2. Evaluation data

Below is the evaluation information collected by LGNI through post project questionnaires issued to participants. For the purpose of creating a baseline LGNI also collected preliminary forms from a sample of older participants (14 forms) a sample of feedback from these forms has been included below.

A: Preliminary forms – summary of responses

Older people   14 forms received
Q 1: How often do you use the following? (tick 1 option per row)

	Very often	Quite Often	Sometimes	Never
Smart phone	1	3	0	8
Desktop Computer	2	3	0	4
Laptop	3	2	4	2
Tablet Computer	3	1	7	1

Q 2: How confident do you feel using technology on your own? (Tick 1)
Very Confident   0
Quite Confident   1
Not very Confident   10
Not at all Confident   3

Q 3: Circle the topics you are most interested in learning about
Online shopping   6
Social media   5
Email   8
Skype   9
Other online communications   3
Youtube   8

Q 4: How often do you use the internet?
Every day or most days   6
Once or twice a week   4
Several times a month   2
Less than once a month   1
Never   1

B: Post Project Evaluation forms –
summary of responses of older particpants

23 forms received

Sex   **Male** 3 **Female** 20

Age range   **55-59** 1

         60-64 2

         65-74 12

         75+ 8

Q 1: Your Use of Digital Technology (tick box)

Question	Yes	No	Total
Have you increased your online activity as a result of this project?	23	0	23
Has your confidence in using digital technology increased as a result of taking part?	23	0	23

Q 2: Please indicate how often you NOW use the following (tick box)

(some questions no response)

	Very often	Quite Often	Sometimes	Never
Smart phone	5	6		6
Desktop Computer	1	3	4	2
Laptop	6	5	1	3
Tablet Computer	9	5	5	

Q 3: How confident do you NOW feel about using technology on your own? (tick box)

(21 responses out of 23 forms)
Very Confident   0
Quite Confident   17
Not very Confident   3
Not at all Confident 1

Q 4: Before this project had you had contact with groups of young people?
Yes   5   No   18

Q 5: Would you recommend this project to a friend?
Yes   23   No   0

Q 6: Please use the space provided to make a comment about your experience working with the young people:
"I looked forward to every week and am now doing online shopping, facebook and Twitter!."
"I have found this a very informative time and the friendly patient mentor was a great help."
"The student who was assigned to me was just so helpful. Her quality of teaching was so easy to follow, I would love to do more sessions."

Q 7: How often do you NOW use the internet?

Every day or most days	12
Once or twice a week	4
Several times a month	4
Less than once a month	1
Never	0

Q 8: How often do you NOW ask someone to access the internet for you?

Very often	1
Quite often	4
Sometimes	12
Never	4

Q 9: Please write three words that describe how you now feel about computers and the internet:
"Happier, more confident."
"Info available amazing"
"Less frightening gadgets"
"It no longer intimidates me"

Q 10: What was the best part about taking part in this project?
"Learning at a speed suitable for me"
"Meeting the young people and giving their time to us"
"The whole experience of learning more about computers and interacting with 15yr olds that I don't get the opportunity to normally"

Q 11: How could we improve this project?
"More time with the students"
"Could be longer"
Continued training opportunities"

C: Post Project Evaluation forms –
summary of responses of younger participants

28 forms received

Sex **Male** 8 **Female** 20

Age range **14-15** 10

16-17 15

18 2

37 1 (teacher)

Q 1: Did you enjoy taking part in this project?
Yes **28**
No **0**
Why?
"Loved helping older people"
"not usual for us to meet older people…was great"
"Great eye opener"

Q 2: Do you think you confidence increased as a result of taking part in this project?
Yes 26
No 2

Q 3: Would you recommend the project to a friend?
Yes 28
No 0

Q 4: Please use the space below to make a comment about your experience working with older people:
"I have more in common with older people than I thought"
"Loved every minute…would love to work with older people"
"Fantastic four weeks meeting with my partner"

Q 5: Do you think it was a good approach?
Yes 27
No 1

Q 6: Please comment about working 1:1 – good and bad points
"Getting to know and understand older people – I did not understand before"
"1:1 is great, let one person chose their personal preference"
"More support material maybe"

Q 7: If the school was to host this project again would you volunteer?
Yes 28
No 0

Q 8: Did you use the resources provided?
Yes   18
No   10

Q 9: Please use the space to tell us how useful these were in your teaching:
"Helped us to stay on track"
"Good or older people to take home"
"Good starting point for teaching"

Q 10: What was the best part of taking part in this project?
"Improving my presenting skills"
"Meeting with the older people and being helpful"
"Learning from older people's life experiences"

Q 11: How could we improve this project?
"Setting up apps as an activity"
"Make it longer"
"Have better equipment – ipads, phones and tablets"

3. Conclusion

The data above strongly and clearly demonstrates that the project has achieved all of the outcomes that it set out to achieve:

Outcomes

1. **Increase in digital and online activity by older people**

100% of older participants surveyed agreed that they had increased their online activity as a result of this project

2. **Increase in confidence of older people in use digital technologies**

The preliminary survey figures showed that 93% of older participants felt not very or not at all confident before taking part in this project. The post evaluation survey showed us that this had changed with 81% feeding back that as a result of taking part they now felt quite confident using technology on their own. 100% of post evaluation responses from older people said they had increased their confidence in using digital technology as a result of this project.

3. **Increased contact between age specific organisations – schools and older people's groups**

All 3 projects provided linkage and engagement between age specific organisations most of which plan to continue linkages. 86% of older participants said in their post evaluation surveys that before this project they had not had contact with groups of young people. A young participant commented that they had taken part in the project as it was "not usual for us to meet older people…was great".

4. **Increased support and empathy between the generations**

100% of young participants in this project said they had enjoyed it, would recommend it to a friend and would volunteer again. 100% of older participants also said they would recommend the project to a friend. The following comments demonstrate empathy and support – the best bit was "meeting with the young people and giving their time to us" and "meeting with the older people and being helpful".

It has also been very rewarding to note that the young people involved also feel that they have improved their confidence by working alongside the older people. All of the young people stated that they would volunteer to take part in this project again. The projects big strength is the 1:1 element which seems to work really well and offers an opportunity to work at a pace suitable to the individual but also to form relationships.

LGNI used the opportunity of the funding from this project to test out this new 1:1 approach with young people and older people using the DAP toolkit. Due to the positive feedback and success of these three pilots we want to extend this approach through an extra year's funding of the Digital Age Project funded by the Big Lottery

Fund NI. LGNI also hope to support more schools to work this way with local older people and support those that participated to continue their linkages.

The project generated considerable media publicity with The County Down Spectator covering the story of the Bangor Academy based project and local paper in Newry covering the Sacred Heart based project. All projects were highlighted on LGNI's website and social media accounts.

The evaluation concludes that this has been a worthwhile project that could be valuably extended and adapted into the next financial year. The findings show that the participants thought it enjoyable and a good use of their time. We will use these findings and our learning in this project in creating a new proposal. Due to LGNI's connections with Generations Working Together in Scotland we would be keen to create linkage between our work with Go ON NI and GWT and Digital Scotland. Future opportunities to do this would be greatly welcomed.