



**Linking Generations
Northern Ireland**

Report of the 'EngAGE Project

March 2018 – March 2019

Part 1

**Including: Clareview Nursing Home Ballyclare
Bradley Manor Crumlin Road Belfast
Blair House Newtownards**

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1. Introduction

LGNI were funded through the Arts Council Northern Ireland (Arts and Older People Programme). It involved working with residents of care homes and linking them with students from local schools to complete an art project, facilitated by a local artist.

The EngAGE Art (part 1) project involved working in three care homes. Namely Clareview Nursing Home BallyClare, Bradley Manor Crumlin Road Belfast and Blair House Scrabo Newtownards. They were linked with students from Ballyclare Primary School, Holy Cross Girls School Belfast and West Winds Primary School Newtownards respectively.

Each project involved preparatory sessions with the older and younger people on their own to outline the aims of the project and discover the art genre that was most suitable for the project. All the students in the year of the pupils engaging in the project in Dementia Awareness Training. Pupils were then selected to participate in the project.

The overall aims of the project agreed by the Arts council are:

- Engage older people in intergenerational arts projects with school children as a method of addressing social isolation and to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing
- Use the medium of arts to create linkages between generations in communities improving older people's community connections, participation in the arts
- Create sustainable opportunities for continued intergenerational arts by creating partnerships between schools and care homes
- Showcase and recognise arts produced by older people as part of each intergenerational arts project at an event that connects all groups involved
- Provide community arts opportunities for local artists

Each project facilitated six sessions in each care home beginning in April and ending in a Celebration and Exhibition in June.

The arts sessions were facilitated by a local artists. Creating art that would be a permanent display in the care home and in the school.

The care homes looked after providing snacks for residents and pupils and the schools undertook to transport the children to the care homes and back to school. In most cases this involved walking from the school to the home and back.

Part 1 Projects

Clareview Nursing Home and Ballyclare Primary School

Following a meeting with the residents and the activities to talk through the options and the benefits of being engaged in an intergenerational art project, dementia Awareness Training was undertaken by seventy five P7. From this number pupils volunteered for the project

Ten residents engaged with eighteen pupils in the Project. The art facilitator was Jude Lunn. The first session involved getting to know each other and doing some simple art work to relax participants and decide the art work to be completed.



Certificates were presented to all participants



Bradley Manor and Holy Cross Girls Primary School

The same approach was used in this project namely engagement with each group individually and dementia awareness training for the school pupils. Then six art sessions plus a celebration and a reveal of the art work in an open session.



Residents from Bradley Manor met with pupils from Holy Cross Girls Primary School

During the six art sessions the produced ceramic tiles which decorated a wall of the residents' garden the sessions were facilitated by Grannie Keilty. These session were of great value to both residents and children. The art work produced gave a great sense of achievement and was an inspiration to residents, pupils, families and staff.





Blair House and West Winds Primary School

The same approach was used in this project namely engagement with each group individually and dementia awareness training for the school pupils. Then six art sessions plus a celebration and a reveal of the art work in an open session.

The six sessions were facilitated by Rosie Moore. Incorporating weaving, cutting materials, patterns and drawing on canvas.







Some Initial Conclusions from part 1 of EngAGE Art

The full figures from our appraisals will be presented at the conclusion of part 2 of the project at the end of March 2019.

Some Outcomes noted from the first three projects

1. Increased understanding of the nature and outcomes of living with dementia

100% of younger participants said they were more aware of the range of dementia symptoms after the dementia awareness training. Understanding that people can still live fulfilling lives and enjoy relationships really helped the younger participants interact with the residents in each care home.

2. Increase in confidence of older people in engaging in art.

Completing the art project produced greater confidence in residents to engage with younger people to complete a joint work of art that would be on display for all to see. There was a real sense of achievement expressed following the three projects

3. Linking people in a care home with the community was positive.

All of the care homes had a range of activities arranged for residents on a regular basis. These were greatly appreciated. Brining the community into the care home added a further dimension. There was engagement with outside the home context.

It over came feelings of isolation. There was measurable more energy displayed by the residents. They were so happy that on many occasions they broke into song and alongside the art work the room was filled with the joy of singing old songs. Everyone joining in.

4. Increased contact between age specific organisations – care homes and schools

The first 3 projects provided linkage and engagement between age specific organisations most of which plan to continue linkages. All of older participants said in their post discussion surveys that before this project they had not had contact with groups of young people. When asked why they enjoyed the project a young person stated; 'It allowed me to speak to new people from different backgrounds and ages;' 'Improved my confidence and to socialise and engage in art; 'and an older person who missed outside socialising said' It really made me feel alive.'

5. Increased support and empathy between the generations

All of young participants in this project said they had enjoyed it and that they would recommend it to a friend and would volunteer again. Many of the pupils said that they would consider being involved in a caring profession. Those of older participants who could verbalise their response said that they would recommend the project to others. The following comments demonstrate empathy and support when asked about working with the other age group 'I found it easy to get on with my partner.' 'The children were wonderful and really well behaved. I did not think that young people were as and good today as they were years ago. They are even better.'

6. New ways to engage older people and younger people together

Following these three projects the following joint initiatives have taken place;- Formation of an all age choir; a simple baking group; a reading group; and handcraft group.

7. All participating group want to explore more ways of working together

All the care homes and the schools have recognised the value of this project and have stated that they want more residents and further classes to be able to experience such a positive experience.