



## Synergy of Adult Education and Youth Work: Bridging the Intergenerational Gap

### Bank of Ideas

Active Ageing through Active learning focussed on volunteering as a means of continued learning and personal development with special emphasis on the value of intergenerational communication.

For many older people, a lack of confidence or recognition of what they have to offer limits their willingness to engage in volunteering activities. Taking the time to converse across generations can help develop a fuller appreciation of the contribution of older people. Amongst other things they can:

1. Mentor to improve emotional intelligence (especially as many young people have much less time with parents who are out working) and promote values such as
  - a. Serenity
  - b. Prudence
  - c. Temperance
  - d. Respect for others
  - e. Understanding the needs of others
2. Be a role model to others
3. Illustrate through recollection /demonstration the value of hard and constant work
4. Pass on a cultural and spiritual heritage
5. Help young people enjoy simple things such as walks or board games which cost little or nothing
6. Develop home and life skills including cooking and etiquette
7. Encourage young people to dress well and do it without spending a fortune

We created a Bank of practical ideas on how to engage the older generation in educational volunteering activities for young people.

1. Create opportunities and events which engage older and younger people in mutually dynamic exchanges e.g national celebrations – street parties to commemorate key events (WW1 & WW2, Coronation etc)
2. Provide taster sessions to present volunteering opportunities to older people before they are asked to make a longer term commitment.
3. Offer more workshops to explain the importance of volunteering. It can:
  - a. promote active ageing and bridge the generation gap in constructive projects
  - b. disseminate practical ideas and experience for intergenerational projects
  - c. present Information Technology as important for active ageing; encourage young people to help older people engage with IT and Social Media
4. Provide examples of projects where volunteering has been of benefit to those of another generation.
5. Provide regular volunteer training as important element in long term social engagement.
6. Explore what is going on in the community and join these up with existing volunteering opportunities.
7. Lead by example – accompany a friend to volunteer in activities
8. Invite older people to volunteer in youth activities such as:
  - a. YES, a residential activities week for young people offering enjoyable and educational activities. Older volunteers create ethos of sound values – respect; teamwork; willingness to help; consideration; responsibility; perseverance; punctuality etc. These are not always transmitted in schools or homes.
  - b. SMART, a home skills course where older volunteers teach domestic arts (budgeting, cooking & nutrition, cleaning & laundry, repairs, avoiding waste), which lay the foundation for domestic well-being and sustainable living important at the personal, societal and the environmental levels.
  - c. LOCAL CLUBS AND SCHOOLS where older volunteers can offer their professional/life skills to supporting learning and personal development.
9. Ensure, through proactive planning in volunteering projects, that language, age and ability are not insurmountable barriers to communication