



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

Case Study, Hilary: Gardening in London

As the oldest participant (85) Hilary was delighted to experience how much she could still learn from a diverse group of ages and cultures. She appreciated the combination of memory and experience (and ability to laugh at themselves) of the older generation, with the creativity, initiative and energy of the younger generation. She also appreciated the respect which each generation felt for what the other had to offer.

She was interested to hear of the differing social needs of different countries. For example, in Sweden which has a world renowned system of social provision, she saw that the need was for a warmer, more personal approach, especially regarding the elderly, as is more prevalent in the UK through volunteers for which there is an ever greater need.

When asked which ideas she considered most useful in building active citizenship through volunteering and social work she felt that the field was very wide. During the workshop, the young were keen to help the older participants use IT and social media and Hilary saw that these offered ways of finding out what structures there were for becoming involved in volunteering. She saw that in the UK organisations existed for helping young people into journalism, fashion, hospitality and homemaking skills, study clubs and youth activity holidays. In all these there were openings for older people to share their competences, which included being role models regarding patience, perseverance, consideration for others and other attributes stemming from life experience.

Through the many *“intellectually challenging and socially enriching”* (Hilary’s words) activities offered during the workshop – seminars, cultural visits, informal socialising with other EU participants at meal times and get-togethers - she felt motivated to use her own interest in gardening as a volunteering project and on the conclusion of the workshop and with the help of one young person, initiated a gardening activity with young people in London. “It [The workshop] has given me new ideas for an intergenerational group I am already involved in”.

Hilary also felt moved to express her feelings at the end of the workshop: “I am very grateful to have participated in this workshop thanks to the Grundtvig Learning Partnership which benefits many people and promotes understanding and active citizenship”.



