

Example of a Your Heritage project that meets our aims relating to: participation and learning



Project title: Cherish Our Roots
Applicant: Gabriel Care
Grant awarded: £49,900 (86%)
Project length: 2 years



Young people with one of the interviewees

1. Summary

Gabriel Care is a community group based in a disadvantaged area of St Helens, running services for elderly and isolated residents. It managed this inter-generational project and helped young people on two local estates to explore their heritage and capture local stories. Working with older people in their communities the young people recorded oral histories, focusing on memories from the first half of the twentieth century, and in doing so gained a wide range of skills. The memories were used as the basis of a DVD and a booklet, which were widely distributed. The project has helped to bring the different generations together and created a new sense of pride in the area's history.

2. The aims of the project

The project had three main aims:

- to involve people in their heritage by recruiting up to 20 volunteers to research and select 30 people to share their memories;
- to capture the memories in a DVD and booklet; and
- to share the results of the project widely, including at two celebration events.

3. Benefits for heritage

- Following initial reminiscence work with 50 older members of the two communities, extended oral histories were recorded with 30 people. Word for word transcriptions were made of 26 of the interviews by specially trained volunteers.

- The recordings and texts were deposited with the North West Sound Archive, where they are available for public use.
- Two hour-long DVD documentaries were made about each of the communities and deposited in local libraries, providing a lasting tribute to a disappearing generation.

4. Benefits for people

- 68 volunteers gained from training in research, interviewing, recording and transcription. They included a team of young people who also gained new skills in communication and video operation. The project raised their self esteem and opened up new horizons.
- The older residents who shared their memories felt valued for their contribution to the formation of local identity, and less isolated in the community.
- Large numbers of people have learned from the DVDs. 3000 copies were made but demand was much higher and the local bookshop now stocks copies. DVDs were distributed to schools and screenings were held in residential homes. They have been used by a local housing association for further reminiscence work with 120 residents, and by the local police to introduce new trainees to the area.
- The work brought together two communities and different generations. For example, the community celebrated its heritage together when over 350 people of all ages and backgrounds came together for two sell-out local events. The project has allowed people to strike up new friendships, and challenged attitudes on all sides.

5. Lessons learnt

- More time than expected was needed to build up confidence amongst elderly participants. Working with older people also meant adapting to periods of illness and fragility.
- Training volunteers to the high level required for the project took longer than expected due to varying levels of ability and experience.

6. Long term benefits

- The project has created a real sense of pride in the area's history and identity.
- Gabriel Care has taken part in showcase events to demonstrate the community benefits of heritage projects, and inspired other groups to do work in this field.

7. The budget

Main project costs	£	Funding	£
Equipment/materials	11,450		
Staff/recruitment	23,029	Non-cash contributions	8,000
Training	2,102	HLF grant (86%)	49,900
Design/writing/printing education material	5,898		
Event costs	3,320	Total costs	57,900