

INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING MyStory, BILFAM & ENIL

ÎNVĂȚARE INTERGENERAȚIONALĂ PROIECTELE MyStory, BILFAM și ENIL

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Abstract. *Because social dynamics have lately been restructured we no longer have the time and the opportunities we once had to transfer the experience of one generation up to another. Establishing collaboration patterns among various age groups is not only a form of socialisation. Beyond that, intergenerational learning is a very practical way of developing on transferred information and thus equip beneficiaries with new skills and abilities. **MyStory** project (511641-LLP-1-2010-1-RO-KA3-KA3MP) plans to collect a series of life stories engaging seniors and young people who are very good computer operators. Materials produced will be freely available online. **BILFAM**(511515-LLP-1-2010-1-IT-KA2-KA2MP) is a transfer of innovation project involving parents in children's language teaching and in reflection activities on the margin of this topic. Online support will also be available. **ENIL** (510890-LLP-1-2010-1-FR-GRUNDTVIGGNW) focuses on involving parents and grandparents in volunteering activities in schools to present children with direct learning experiences within their families.*

Key words: intergenerational learning, stories, volunteering

Rezumat. *Societatea actuală evidențiază lipsa oportunităților de colaborare intergenerațională pe fondul schimbării dinamicii relațiilor sociale. Stabilirea acestui tip de colaborare între diferite categorii de vârstă nu trebuie văzută doar ca o formă de socializare. Colaborarea intergenerațională presupune și o modalitate de procesare a materialului și a informației transferate de la o generație la alta precum și o oportunitate de dezvoltare a grupului țintă prin formarea de noi deprinderi și abilități. Proiectul **MyStory** are în vedere colectarea unui set de povești de viață implicând grupuri de seniori și de tineri, foarte buni operatori de computer și material online. **BILFAM** este un proiect transfer de inovație în cadrul căruia părinții și copii vor fi implicați activ în modalități non-formale de învățare a limbilor străine. În cadrul proiectului **ENIL** părinții și bunicii vor fi implicați în activități de voluntariat la nivelul școlilor pentru a oferi copiilor experiențe directe de studiu cu ajutorul membrilor familiei.*

Cuvinte cheie: învățare intergenerațională, povești, voluntariat.

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INTRODUCTION

This article will present three different approaches towards intergenerational learning (IGL). The approaches are developed by three European projects, funded by the European Commission, that encourage IGL in three different ways. The ENIL project promotes IGL by supporting practitioners in the field, the BilFam project aims at enhancing foreign language learning by enabling parents to teach their children a foreign language and the MyStory project aims at involving grass-root target groups in IGL by involving young people and senior citizens in a mutually beneficial learning partnership taking place in the wider community, not only within the family.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

MyStory project focuses on collecting basic input, seniors' stories, processing this input to be available online in several languages. The project also looks into directions these materials could be made use of in the future by other beneficiaries.

The project team bases story collection on an internally developed tool – the DSK (Digital Story Telling Kit). The Kit has been developed under the supervision of an expert with input from field research and field literature. The Kit contextualizes storytelling and story-collecting presenting future story collectors with basic tips for their work. Methodology is described and clearly presented in gradual steps so that those who will do the field work (collecting stories from seniors) do not need to have prior special studies in this domain.

Another way of working on quality assurance is to organize trainings for the staff working on the project activities. Training are delivered in a blended format for adults working with the young story collectors. The training focuses on content, methodology and collaboration skills. Trainings are also developed and implemented for those delivering the IT trainings to seniors. The project team wishes to engage a centralized yet flexible approach to all these activities.

There will be four rounds of story collecting. Representatives of the project team accompany the story collectors to offer support and ensure a smooth implementation of the interview. The stories and complementary materials collected from the seniors will then be processed and transferred into electronic format. Materials will be uploaded on the project platform under the proper content category and linked to various other relevant online input. These connections can provide extra information on the events described in the stories and thus create a context to frame the stories.

The ENIL (European Network for Intergenerational Learning) project aims at creating a network of professionals in the field of sustaining intergenerational learning (IGL). The main goal of the project is to set up a network that will offer these professionals the possibility to share good practices, opportunities for training and certification, strategies for influencing decision makers. The network will also offer a series of instruments to its target groups: a research report on volunteering in relation to IGL, a glossary of the most frequent 200 terms connected with IGL, a library of resources and a series of events for IGL practitioners.

The IGL glossary contains terms such as: "Literacy/ Numeracy/Skills for Life", "Active Citizenship" which are easily translatable in all European languages but also terms such as "school grand parents", "Service learning", "job shadowing" are difficult to translate since they do not reflect a reality in all the European countries.

The BilFam project aims at encouraging foreign language learning at a young age. The main drive behind the project is to use a learning methodology that enables parents with little or no knowledge in the foreign language to be mentors in their children's learning and even learn together with them. The BilFam project uses the Hocus&Lotus learning and teaching model and the narrative format created by Professor Traute Taeschner of the University of Rome 'La Sapienza'.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The two primary beneficiaries in MyStory project are senior citizens and very young people. These categories include very skilled ICT users and those socially marginalized partly because of the great emphasis put on their ICT interest or competence. The partnership has developed a strategy directed towards activating these two categories creatively, so as to support and educate one another. Thus, the partnership intends to valorize and enhance the potential of both groups in teaching and helping the others in mutually rewarding ways.

Collaboration between the two beneficiary groups discovers new opportunities to enhance and extend both young people's computer skills and senior citizens' life experiences. Through their volunteering activities young people have the opportunity to offer their support to senior citizens and help them learn how to access the Internet, how find new information that may be of interest to them and how to upload their life stories online. On the other hand, senior citizens can share their stories with the younger generation raising their awareness – not only on the historical events that can be easily traced back in history books – but, more than that, on real and personalised life stories to illustrate history and offer much more complex shades of real life and shared socio-historical meaning.

This gradually progresses into a continuous loop cycle that is intended to engage active, conscious learning on the part of both beneficiaries spanning both generations. However, transfer of skills and information extends beyond the two direct groups of beneficiaries into wider circles of social interaction throughout societal space.

The research report on IGL and volunteering aims at providing a general framework for action for practitioners working in the field. Very popular in the western part of Europe and in many countries institutionalized and acknowledged as a practice for enhancing learning, less used in Eastern Europe, IGL has many forms and this makes it hard for experts to define it and to label certain activities as being IGL or not. The research report shall present a series of learning situations which can be considered IGL best practices. They will be collected from 20 European countries and this means that both countries with a certain tradition in IGL but also countries with less experience will be represented. This instrument is meant to assist IGL practitioners with examples of activities, methods for overcoming obstacles such as reluctant learners and with the possibility to contact the professionals that are developing the activities presented in the case studies. The research report will be available on the project website in November 2011, for free for all those interested.

The glossary that will also be available on the project website contains 200 terms relevant for the field of IGL, together with their definition in English. The glossary is translated in over 15 languages (the languages of the ENIL partnerhisps) for enabling practitioners all over the EU to standardise the terminology they use and to better understand materials and activities from other countries. The project partnership has tried to standardise the terminology and to find translation equivalents for all the project languages. Being a field so differently developed throughout Europe, a lot of the terms used in some countries in relation to IGL do not have an equivalent in all languages.

CONCLUSIONS

Use of latest technology can enhance social integration if used to trigger communication and collaboration at international and intergenerational level;

Integrating family in school activities derives in higher school performance and a more open communication channel school-students-family;

Stories, games and cartoons, the attributes of childhood, are a magic tool family can use to link to school activities, especially those related to foreign language learning;

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