



Youth United Foundation
“Silver United” -

A cross generational project to scope and test the potential for long standing, mutually beneficial partnerships between uniformed youth groups and retirement living venues.

Evaluation Report
July 2023

Contents

1. Executive Summary	Page 2
2. Background and Introduction	Page 3
3. Stage One: Consult	Page 4
4. Stage Two: Delivery	Page 6
5. Stage Three: Evaluation	Page 7
6. Conclusion and next steps	Page 9

1. Executive Summary

This Project was built on the previous experiences of the Air Cadets and retirement living venues where mutually beneficial partnerships have developed on a local, ad hoc level. Royal London provided funding to scope and test more structured and long-lasting partnerships between the uniformed youth sector and retirement living venues.

Phase 1 began in July 2022 where the project team undertook interviews with stakeholders, and desktop research, to gain an in-depth understanding of the current situation and potential opportunities. This research identified that there were already pockets of excellent work being undertaken between the sectors. There was desire to build on and adapt this good practice by coordinating both resources and activity that could then be utilised to deliver meaningful projects, which would bring benefits to the young people and retirement living homeowners and residents.

Working with Intergenerational Music Making (IMM), 4 music based intergenerational pilot projects were delivered between December 2022 and July 2023 across the UK. These projects involved uniformed youth groups visiting retirement living venues and working with the residents on music projects to kickstart meaningful relationships.

The pilots were overwhelmingly successful, delivering the following benefits;

1. **Knowledge and Experience Sharing:** The pilots allowed older adults to share their life experiences, wisdom, and skills with younger generations, passing down valuable knowledge and traditions.
2. **Breaking Stereotypes:** By spending time together, different age groups were able to break down stereotypes they held about each other, fostering empathy, and understanding.
3. **Social Connection:** The projects reduced social isolation and loneliness for the older adults as well as providing social and emotional benefits for the young people.
4. **Mutual Learning:** Both older and younger participants learnt from each other, gaining insights into different perspectives and life stages.
5. **Enhancing Communities:** The projects strengthened community bonds and created a sense of unity among diverse age groups in the community.
6. **Positive Youth Development:** The young people gained positive role models and in some cases mentors, contributing to their personal growth and development.
7. **Age-Friendly Societies:** By promoting intergenerational connections the pilots contribute to the creation of age-friendly societies that value and include people of all ages.

The pilots demonstrated that short term pilot projects are essential in forging sustainable relationships between retirement living venues and youth groups. By developing this work, we have the potential to create more inclusive and compassionate societies by fostering meaningful connections and promoting mutual respect between people of different ages. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Government's Levelling up Agenda.

2. Background and Introduction

Many recent, pre- pandemic, projects that involved both young people and retired people in the UK and other Western economies, such as the Netherlands, demonstrated multiple benefits. These ranged from the reduction of loneliness in the older generation to the positive developmental effects on young peoples’ lives.

This project (which was funded by Royal London Insurance) aimed to assess the feasibility of and scope options for pilot projects between retirement living settings and uniformed youth organisations. The aim of the project was to create formal on-going affiliations between uniformed youth units and retirement living, social housing, care homes and retirement villages that are near each other. It was hoped that ultimately, some of the retirement living venues would be able to provide a base for the meetings of the young people’s units.

Members of uniformed youth groups are trusted by the older generation and there is evidence which demonstrates that sharing experiences together helps build strong bonds and wellbeing in both groups. For example, through conversations with veterans, young people will develop a better understanding of their heritage and their own sense of value and responsibility. At the same time the older people retain a sense of self-worth.

The project plan

Learning from previous Youth United Foundation projects has identified the need to work in partnership with the member organisations and ensure any projects fit with both their needs and the skills of their local volunteers. As such, this project was undertaken in stages, with each stage building on the findings of the previous stage as set out in Fig 1 below:

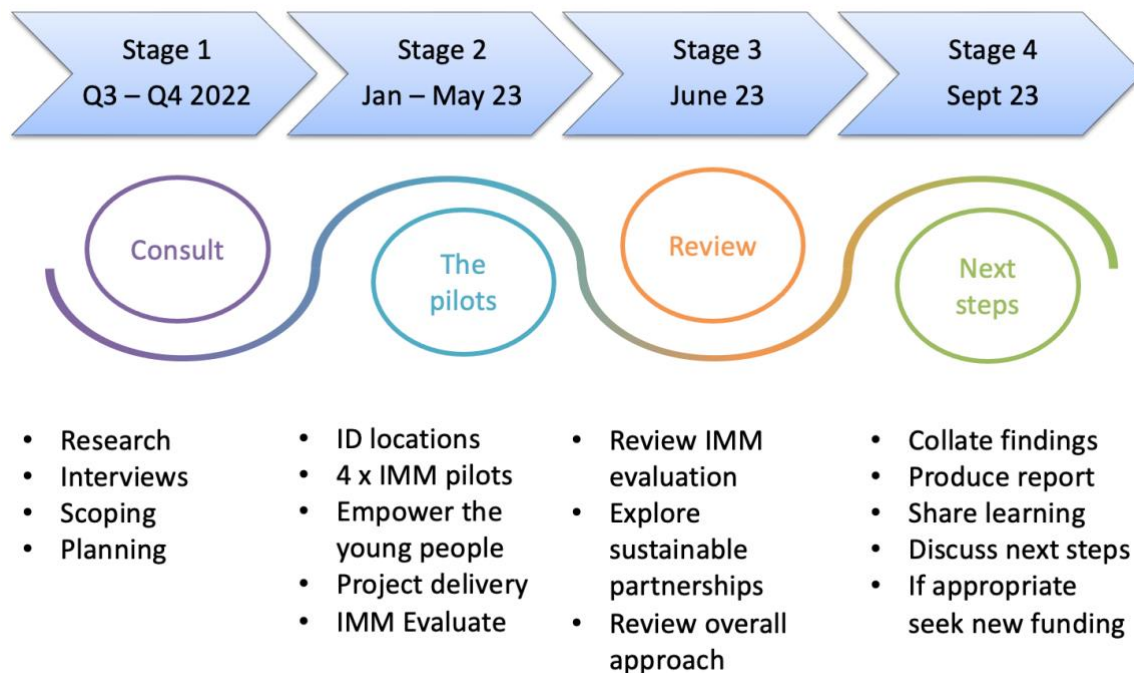


Fig. 1 The high-level plan to deliver the Silver United project.

3. Stage one: Consult

The project team undertook desktop research into previous and ongoing similar initiatives and their evaluations, in addition to models of partnership. They consulted with four groups of stakeholders – uniformed youth organisations, retirement living providers, and young people along with organisations with expertise in intergenerational activities. This approach allowed the team to gain an understanding of the needs of each sector and focus future activity on the central area of common good. A full list of organisations that have been involved is set out in appendix 1.

[Note: Examples of “good practice”, “resources”, “models of collaboration” and “evaluation reports” are being collated into a resource bank to support future thinking or proposals – some of these are referenced in the appendices]

After starting with the uniformed youth groups who make up the membership of Youth United (both adults and young people) the project team met with intergenerational organisations including the Intergenerational Music Making organisation ([IMM](#)). IMM have significant experience in operating within the retirement setting delivering both short- and longer-term intergenerational music making activity. The team also met with the Youth Sport Trust who delivered a partnership project '[Active Across Ages](#)'. This project brought young people and older adults together in purposeful activity and achieved considerable health and social benefits to both groups. Meetings were also held with Gita Prasad, author of [https://media.churchillfellowship.org/documents/Prasad G Report 2018 Final.pdf](https://media.churchillfellowship.org/documents/Prasad_G_Report_2018_Final.pdf) . Gita explored the success factors of intergenerational communities, whereby young people and elderly residents lived side by side.

A meeting was also held with the operations director of the [Audley Group](#), a luxury retirement living brand, and the young people who make up the Youth United Foundation Youth Panel.

The research identified that there were already pockets of excellent work being undertaken between the sectors. There was also a desire to build on and adapt this good practice by coordinating both resources and activity, which could then be utilised to deliver meaningful projects. This would bring about benefits to the young people and retirement living providers and residents.

Needs identified in stage one

Several themes emerged during our conversations with the various stakeholders:

Youth United Foundation Network

- A desire for time-limited cross generational projects, involving some form of activity (music, storytelling, heritage etc).
- A desire for 'ready-made' packages that release volunteers from the burden of instigating and developing health and safety, risk assessments and programme management, which may be a disincentive to engage.

- Fundraising and support for operational delivery of uniformed youth groups, with potential for hosting uniformed youth groups in retirement community premises.
- Support for governance and management of uniformed youth groups, possibility with the formal adoption of units by retirement living venues.

Young People

- A desire to increase their understanding of the older generation and their needs.
- Help those most in need – young people highlighted their desire to work with residents in care homes as well as higher end retirement living venues. This aligns with the government's Levelling Up agenda; to spread opportunities to areas where they are weakest and restore a sense of community where it has been lost.
- A desire to gain confidence in their social skills with older people alongside a greater sense of belonging and purpose within their local community.

The residents of the retirement homes and villages

- Members of uniformed youth groups are trusted by the residents/older generation.
- A desire to interact with the younger generation, which will improve their sense of connection with broader society, understanding of the modern world and the perspectives and challenges of today's youth.
- A desire for improved wellbeing from increased bonds and a sense of pride in their young befrienders and the achievements and traditions of the unit.

The operators of the retirement homes and villages

- A desire for improved resident wellbeing.
- A desire for residents to have natural social interactions within their local community and improved local relationships.
- A need for cost effective ways of delivering the support which is needed for residents (over 65% of Housing 21 residents are on social housing benefit).

4. Stage two: Delivery

Introduction

As there was a desire from all stakeholders to undertake intergenerational pilot projects that could lead to a longer-term partnership, it was decided to engage the services of a not-for-profit organisation called Intergenerational Music Making ([IMM](#)). IMM were able to provide the 'ready to go' packages required, along with a recognised evaluation process. With their support, 4 'kick-start' music based intergenerational pilot projects were undertaken.

From December 2022 to June 2023 the 4 pilot projects were delivered in the following areas:

Pilot 1: Pendleton Court Care Home, 53rd Manchester Boys Brigade, Salford

Pilot 2: Campbell Snowdon Residential Home, 45th Greenock and District (Quarriers) - The Scout Association, Scotland

Pilot 3: Barchester Wykeham House Care home, Horley Surrey, 2nd and 6th Horley Brownies, Girlguiding

Pilot 4: Ridgemount Care Home, Banstead Surrey, 7th Banstead, The Scout Association

Sessions were delivered as follows (full details in appendix 3):

Creative Training

1 x Training Day - providing the theory, knowledge, and practical ideas for working in an intergenerational way, using music and movement as the vessel to promote social connection. The training aims to inspire and equip the young people and their volunteer leaders with creative tools that they can use across groups within their community.

Creative Delivery

6 sessions of intergenerational workshops were delivered to provide opportunity for those trained to put their learning into practice, supporting a larger creative workshop. They made use of musical activities, song writing, choral singing, physical activities, and storytelling to spark inspiration and conversation, build confidence and create new work. Opportunities were given for connection and for individuals to create original songs, rooted in identity, culture, history and emotion.

Creative Celebration

At the end of the project, the groups hosted celebration events creating the opportunity to capture work, celebrate new connections, share, and reflect and invite new audiences to experience and be inspired by the work.

5. Stage three: Evaluation

The evaluation of the pilots was completed in 2 stages, the first being undertaken by IMM through their evaluation process, which is outlined in appendix 17.

Headlines (Overall):

Residents had a 100% increase in well-being

Young People had an 88% increase in wellbeing

Young People had a 47% increase in confidence

Young People had a 43% reduction in nervousness in meeting the elders

The YUF project team also conducted separate interviews with the uniformed youth leaders, residential living venue staff and, where possible, the young people. The YUF team wanted to gain a greater understanding of the different participants' experiences of the project and what might be possible in the future to sustain relationships.

A debrief was held between YUF and IMM and the following issues and opportunities were identified:

- Feedback from participants demonstrated that the pilots were essential to creating sustainable links with care homes. All groups stated that they had tried to create relationships in the past, but these has not endured or they had not known how or where to start. With YUF acting as the broker, and creating a catalyst for relationship building, this forged a path forward.
- The pilots took longer than expected to set up due to working with volunteers. Longer lead in times are required in any future projects.
- An initial training session in the unit meeting, prior to entering the residential setting, is essential. This breaks down the potential intimidation of a care home setting and prepares the young people for working with elderly residents and what to expect.
- Having a 'ready-made' package was essential to the youth groups in enabling them to take part in the project. This removed the burden of programme development and delivery, and health and safety requirements etc., as volunteers are already over-stretched.
- Young people need to be involved in the planning of the sessions to engage them fully and give them ownership of the process.
- There is crossover on the projects that both YUF and IMM are working on in other areas and with other funders. By raising awareness of this project, there could be opportunity to work with other funders to develop the project further.

We also discussed the potential for a digital inclusion project based on the IMM - "Together with Music" platform. This could involve a dedicated digital space for intergenerational collaboration. A digital inclusion platform could serve as a hub for sharing experiences, resources, and fostering connections between youth groups and retirement settings.

We have provided recommendations for digital inclusion in the conclusion section.

KPIs

The following KPIs were agreed, and the project delivered as per the table below:

KPI	OUTCOME
4 projects delivered by May 2023	4 Projects were delivered by July 2023
30 young people engaged in the projects	ACHIEVED – 30 young people engaged
30 care home/retirement setting residents engaged with the project	OVERACHIEVED – 32 residents engaged
8 Leaders/Activators created (2 per project) - <i>these activators will ensure long term sustainability as the youth groups will have the tools and skills with which to continue intergenerational projects within their communities</i>	ACHIEVED – 8 Leaders trained
4 YUF Volunteers (unit leaders) engaged in the projects	OVERACHIEVED - 8
4 articles of media coverage (social media/internet/local newspaper etc)	Scotland: https://www.greenocktelegraph.co.uk/news/23507312.campbell-snowden-house-teams-scouts-mark-coronation/ https://www.the-gazette.co.uk/news/23507441.bridge-weir-care-home-residents-scouts-mark-kings-coronation/ Salford: https://www.carehome.co.uk/news/article.cfm/id/1686734/intergenerational-music-making-at-salford-care-home https://www.hc-one.co.uk/our-news/news-and-events/intergenerational-music-making-at-salford-care-home?costcode=Pendleton-Court-Care-Home https://twitter.com/53rdBB/status/1640657489191378950?s=20
80% of young participants report improved mental health and wellbeing	OVERACHIEVED - 88%
100% of elderly participants report improved mental health and wellbeing	ACHIEVED – 100%
Intergenerational toolkit / handbook created	ACHIEVED – Click here to access
1 X podcast episode produced	To be recorded in September 2023
4 x celebration events	ACHIEVED – 4 celebration events

6. Conclusion and next steps

This project has identified that there is a desire for uniformed youth groups and retirement settings to work together to form sustainable relationships. The 4 pilots have demonstrated that short term projects are the ideal springboard to launch those relationships, while providing life enhancing opportunities for everyone involved.

Stimulating local relationships is not without its challenges, both in brokering opportunities and identifying willing partners. YUF are uniquely placed to develop this work further. By working with its network of 11 uniformed youth groups, YUF can broker these relationships between uniformed youth groups and retirement settings. Therefore, YUF would like to develop this work by:

1. Develop a project framework that includes the learnings from this pilot, and expands to include other activities, for example cooking, art, sport and nature as well as music.
2. Seeking further funding to trial intergenerational projects extensively in areas of deprivation within the UK, working with identified regional youth united organisations.
3. These projects will ideally be located within IMD areas 1-5, and therefore within the context of the Levelling Up agenda.
4. Develop partnerships with IMM, and potentially other intergenerational organisations including working closely with Intergenerational England
5. Continue to explore Governance opportunities with luxury retirement living venues.

Digital Inclusion Recommendations:

1. Create a new platform or expand on leveraging the existing ["Together with Music"](#) platform to create a dedicated digital space for intergenerational collaboration. This platform can serve as a hub for sharing experiences, resources, and fostering connections between youth groups and retirement settings.
2. Implement a mentorship program within the digital platform, where tech-savvy youths can provide guidance and support to older adults in navigating digital tools and resources. This not only promotes digital inclusion but also strengthens the bonds between generations.
3. Organise regular virtual events and workshops on the platform, showcasing the talents and interests of both youth and retirees, such as virtual art exhibitions, cooking classes, or music performances. These activities can serve as opportunities for meaningful interaction and skill-sharing.
4. Promote the use of assistive technologies and accessible design principles within the digital platform to ensure that it is inclusive and user-friendly for individuals of all ages and abilities.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the digital inclusion initiatives, collecting feedback from both youth and retirees to continuously improve the platform and tailor its content to the specific needs and preferences of the users.