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LIVING IN GLOBAL VILLAGE

Substantiated in the article is the expediency of intergenerational collaboration via the information and communication technologies – Internet, Skype, Facebook etc. By teaching the older people to use ICT the young learn their skills and mastery while the wisdom of the old passes over to the young. The generations have always learnt from each other which results in a better understanding and friendship between them. In the age of ICT people feel living in a global village.

Key words: *intergenerational collaboration, information and communication technologies, Facebook, Skype, Internet, skills,* resource, tool.

Before I tell you about 'Learn with Grandma' – how and why I am trying to bring people of all ages together, to learn and to teach each other, and of all the good this concept could bring to your community – I have to ask a question. Are there people here who would like to live and work in the USA or Western Europe? I learnt something dreadful in March when I was a speaker at an International Woman's Day Conference. It opened my eyes! We have Slavery in Wales! I had not realised that the trade in human beings is now a huge business – a multi million £££ business. So, be careful! Young people, boys and girls, from countries like Ukraine are very desirable to these dreadful people. They offer excellent jobs which do not exist! As soon as their victims arrive their money, passports, mobile phones etc. are taken away and they are sold into slavery. I was shocked to learn that we have slavery in Britain and it is even worse in some other countries. But you can use the Internet to help keep you safe. Do think carefully before going.

First of all, 'the grass isn't always greener on the other side.' It is true that on the whole those people in work in the western half of Europe do earn more than people outside the EU. But unemployment is now very high, especially for young people and those over 50. 'Learn with Grandma' is trying to help a little by encouraging the generations to share skills. Although salaries are higher so is the cost of living. In UK a normal supermarket loaf of bread costs about £1.40 and even more – over £2.00. Everything costs a lot more throughout EU, and most EU countries are in recession. So if you do want to come be very careful. If you are offered a job check it out on the Internet. If you can't find the company it probably doesn't exist. If you do find it send them an email, not just a reply to those who have contacted you, ask if they are recruiting. Tell your friends and family where you are going. Join a social network like Facebook, confirm your postal address as soon as you arrive, and post on FB regularly. Phone home. Keep in close touch with people. Should they suddenly stop hearing from you they can start a search before the trail goes cold. Simple measures but – to quote a proverb 'better be safe than sorry'.

How many of you are on Facebook? I love it and use it every day. It not only keeps me in touch with my friends and family all over the world, I get a lot of information from Facebook and I use it to tell people about 'Learn with Grandma'. I also have quite a few 'followers' now. There are 15 'Learn with Grandma' pages on Facebook: from Ukraine to Uganda. In fact, 'Learn with Grandma Chernihiv' was the first in the world! There is also 'Learn with Grandma Gorlovka' in Ukraine, and I spoke to students in the University in Gorlovka via Skype.

Gradually, without it costing any money, we built up a global network for intergenerational learning using free technology. On Facebook we can all get to know each other, share ideas across the world of how people of all generations can learn and have fun too. It does not matter what people do, the whole point is to share knowledge and experiences of younger and older people doing things together. But why bother, what is the point? The generations have always learnt from each other. Intergenerational learning is not new; it's as old as the hills. Psalm 78 tells us to teach our children the mysteries our fathers taught to us. There was an old saying 'it takes a village to raise a child'. We have gone away from that. The social changes of the last decade have happened so fast, it is enough to make your head spin.

The digital revolution has created a global village. In April I had major surgery and am still not able to travel very far but I am here with you today – thanks to technology. We can use these wonderful technology tools to contact people all over the world.

Older people feel that their skills are devalued, that they are a burden to society. But that is not true, they are a resource! They have skills we need to survive! We need farmers, bakers, plumbers, technicians, teachers, doctors; I suppose we need lawyers and accountants. We need all the many and various skills that man has developed over millions of years – but we are losing skills at an alarming rate. Modern technology enables us to record and share all of man's ideas, histories, cultures, languages and to communicate them round the world – individual to individual – instantly. We cannot live without technology now – most of us would not want too – but technology is just a tool. I won the first prize in a cookery competition in my village. The category was a custard tart. I got the recipe via Google – but I still had to make the tart!

All over the world skills are being lost – histories, cultures, traditions, languages. The conference title – "Languages in the open society: problems of cross-cultural communication" is an important issue. I live in a Welsh speaking village but cannot speak the indigenous language. Believe me I am extremely grateful that English has become the universal language. I could not share my ideas with very many people if I could only speak in Welsh. But all of the over 400 recognised languages of Europe – no one knows exactly how many languages there are in the World over 7,000. UNESCO has identified 2,500 languages which it claims are at risk of extinction. All are part of our heritage and culture. All could be saved. At least we could record them before they are lost forever. We need to save all of the knowledge of the past. We don't know what skills we will need in the future. We now have the technology, and the manpower to record everything before it is too late. We must do it now before all the pre-digital people pop off. When something is lost it is gone – forever! Don't say I can do it next week, next month, next year. Go and see your grandparents as soon as you can and ask them to tell you about their lives and show you how to make your favourite food. You will never regret capturing that precious memory.

As to your students do the same – build up a local history directly from the people who lived it. As you do that you will do so much more. You will give the generations a reason to connect. That will create greater understanding and respect. Many older people would love to teach their skills to younger people. Many younger people would love to show older people how modern technology works. Both ages have skills that would help them get or train for work. Throughout the world the people most affected by unemployment are 50 + and young people. We can bring them together and perhaps help to create jobs. We can use technology to break down the digital age separation and, in bringing the generations back together, they will have fun and learn to understand each other better.

So let me tell you why and how I set up 'Learn with Grandma'. How you can get involved and bring the advantages to your community. I used to write educational books. At the end of the books I added a 'Learn with Grandma' section – to get the most educational value possible out of the stories and this was set up as a not for profit company. In 2008 I won an international award for innovations in education and made my first visit to Ukraine – to Chernihiv – to speak at this conference [1]. And I am still in touch – via technology – with many of the students and teachers I met.

I won a £10,000 in a competition which I used to set up 'Learn with Grandma'. The organisers decided to have an on-line vote and I had just three days to ask people to vote for me. My grandson Adam put it on Facebook – the first time I had used social networking – and I did a mail shot to my email list. 'Vote for me!' went around the world instantly and I received votes from here in Ukraine to California and Latvia to Australia. Amazing! It could not have happened without the Internet. 'Learn with Grandma' took part in our first European project and now – again via technology – I am in contact with people all over Europe and have spoken about intergenerational learning at quite a few international conferences.

The furthest away was in Tanzania in May 2011. This film clip has now been seen by over 1,000 teachers in Uganda and some are now taking up Grandma's Challenge [2]. Of course the message of Intergenerational Learning is the same for all over the world. Here in Ukraine – your country, your district, your city; and if you would like to try to start this project I will help you using technology.

When one teaches one also learns. When I was in Tanzania I heard an African chief say that we are losing traditional skills at an alarming rate. In Africa? I was shocked. Now I realise that this is a global problem. My grandma would not have electricity put upstairs – far too dangerous – she went to bed with a candle. My mother never learnt to drive a car – mind you she became an expert back seat driver. Technology is wonderful but – but it can't bake the cake! We need all the old skills too. Your students are digital natives. Technology is as normal to them as the telephone and TV was to me. You can encourage them to be teachers and as they teach – they will learn. As they show older people how technology works, as they record older people's skills – stories, traditions, history, culture. So they will learn that our older people are not just a problem – they are a resource, a huge pool of knowledge. That knowledge could be used in innovative ways to create employment and help people become more integrated and involved citizens.

All over the world the highest levels of unemployment are the young and people over 50. Some of the skills of older people could help young people into more traditional form of employment – we cannot survive without physical skills too. As people learn and teach across the generations, some older people could be encouraged to learn technological skills that could enable them to combine their existing skills and competencies with the rapidly evolving needs of the modern labour market and retrain for work more suited to their age and physical capabilities. By encouraging intergenerational informal learning in your school or college, you will help integrate your school more fully into the community. You could build a team of volunteers, who could be encouraged to become involved in other aspects of school life – set up intergenerational activities that would benefit school and community.

I recently gave a presentation at a conference on Peace and Communication at international school for 16-19 year olds [3]. They have children from 90 different countries and I am thrilled to report that they have set up a 'Learn with Grandma' Project in the college. I hope that, in time, students will take the concept back to their countries. I hope you will want to get involved – become part of the international 'Learn with Grandma' Community. Share your intergenerational activities and learn from those that are happening in other countries.

The internet has broken down international barriers – we do live in a global village. I cannot be with you in person and I am really sorry about that. I wish I could be there and meet you properly, but I am with you via technology! Via Skype you will be able to ask me questions – just as if I were there in that lovely hall. Do send me an e-mail if you would like me to speak in your school. Do join 'Learn with Grandma' in Chernihiv or set up your own 'Learn with Grandma' group. Together we can help break down the digital age barrier and help heal our societies. Together we can show people that the world is not parcelled up into little bits – we all live in the same world.

There is a lovely little Welsh word – Cwtch. It means a safe and loving cuddle – like sitting on grandma's lap. Shall we try to bring a little more cwtch into our lives and love our neighbours in our communities and in our global village? I am ready to give you a digital cwtch.

References

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Валері Вуд-Гейджер

ЖИВЕМО В ГЛОБАЛІЗОВАНОМУ СЕЛИЩІ

У статті обґрунтовується думка про доцільність співпраці поколінь у опануванні інформаційно-комунікаційними технологіями – Інтернет, Скайп, Фейсбук тощо. Коли молоді люди навчають старших користуватися ІКТ, вони переймають їхні вміння та майстерність; мудрість старших поступово стає надбанням молодих. Покоління завжди вчаться одне в одного, а це породжує взаємну повагу й дружбу між ними. У вік ІКТ люди почуваються односельцями.

Ключові слова: співпраця поколінь, інформаційно-комунікаційні технології, Фейсбук, Скайп, Інтернет, уміння, ресурс, інструмент.

Валери Вуд-Гейджер

ЖИВЕМ В ГЛОБАЛИЗОВАННОЙ ДЕРЕВНЕ

В статье обосновывается идея о целесообразности сотрудничества поколений в освоении информационно-коммуникационных технологий – Интернет, Скайп, Фейсбук и др. Когда молодые люди учат старших пользоваться ИКТ, они перенимают их умения и мастерство; мудрость старших постепенно становится достоянием молодых. Поколения всегда учатся друг у друга, а это порождает взаимное уважение и дружбу между ними. В эпоху ИКТ люди чувствуют себя односельчанами.

Ключевые слова: сотрудничество поколений, информационно-коммуникационные технологии, Фейсбук, Скайп, Интернет, умения, ресурс, инструмент.