

THE GRANDMOTHER PROJECT

Bulletin

Dec 2008

BRIDGING THE GAP: Promoting Intergenerational Learning

In many parts of Africa positive cultural values are being lost as western values are being promoted especially by the mass media. And the communication gap between young people and older people is growing. There is a vital need to bridge the gap between generations to ensure social cohesion and solidarity within families and society at large.

The Grandmother Project (GMP) therefore promotes Intergenerational learning as an approach which 'builds on existing relationships between different generations and enables the strengths of two or more generations to complement each other, to the benefit of all the generations concerned'.

Adapting school programs to community realities

GMP in collaboration with World Vision (WV) Senegal aims to implement a school-based strategy in the Velingara area of Senegal, to integrate local cultural values into school programs and to strengthen dialogue between school children and elders within their communities. The project's aim is to *reinforce intergenerational relationships between children and elders in schools and communities, and increase appreciation of local positive cultural values and traditions.* The project involves production of innovative school-texts, cultural events, involving local radio stations, and will lead to production of a guide for teachers and community leaders to provide them with skills to implement intergenerational learning (IG) activities that link schools and communities.

In keeping with priorities of the Ministry of Education in Senegal, this strategy responds to a need expressed by communities, teachers and young people who are concerned with the loss of local positive cultural values and the weakening of intergenerational relationships. The approach will bolster the positive role grandmothers and elders play in their communities, particularly with regards to childhood knowledge and the handing down of traditions and life skills that sustain communities. It will also open up dialogue on subjects related to the challenges of current day life that are not easily talked about between generations.

The expected outcomes of the project include:

- ◆ Students develop a stronger sense of cultural identity and increase their capacity to use cultural knowledge and values in their lives



The Role of Grandmothers in African Societies

From "The Grandmother Booklet"

produced by The Grandmother Project in collaboration with local teachers and school children in Velingara, Senegal

- ◆ Students identify the benefits of an increased appreciation of their elders and traditions.
- ◆ Grandmothers and elders identify and use the necessary skills that reinforce their roles as leaders, protectors and guardians of the community.
- ◆ Elders, youth and children demonstrate their capacity to dialogue and learn from each other.
- ◆ Elders identify the issues youth are facing and demonstrate their capacity to engage in dialogue concerning these issues.
- ◆ An IG learning strategy becomes a sustainable integral part of school curricula in the Velingara School District.
- ◆ Lessons learned from this project are widely shared with other education and development professionals and organizations.

GMP is working with World Vision, Senegal, and local education officials within the Velingara District of Senegal, to implement this project. The project has received partial funding from World Vision Canada, but would value additional funds to further extend activities and the reach of this project. It is currently being implemented in 12 schools but many other school directors and communities in the area have expressed their interest in bringing these activities to their local schools.

If you would like further information about this project please do not hesitate to contact GMP (details below).

⇒ For more information contact grandmotherproject@hotmail.com or judiaubel@fastwebnet.it or visit our website: www.grandmotherproject.org

If you would like to support this project, please visit our website or contact Susie at GMP: s.carrington@tin.it or write to Betsy Stephens, 11 Magnolia Parkway, Chevy Chase, MD, 20815.