

# Bridge the gap between generations

## TOOLBOX

SUBPROJECT: COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF RECRUITING

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Participating partners:

Nærverkid Faroe Islands, Bodø Norge

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**Northern  
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2007–2013

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## I. Background

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Nursing homes and health care centres in our municipalities are facing a new challenge and we all have to rise to the occasion. The proportion of elderly in our municipalities is increasing year by year and is only likely to increase further in the near future.

The traditional family of several generations in one place is disintegrating, as young members move away to more populated areas. We see today that many elders do not have their grandchildren around them. This can in the long run have an effect on the younger generation; their knowledge of the life of elderly is limited.

Population projections show that the age structure of nations will change in the next forty to fifty years. The number of elderly will grow and fewer younger people will take care of the elderly in the future. Employment in the long term care has been undervalued and because of this there is a danger of shortage of people that are specially trained for the long term care in the future.

For that very reason we will have to act in some way and counter this development in an organised and thoughtful way.

In this report we will introduce the co-operative project School model that has been developed between the long term cares and schools in the Faroe Islands, Norway, and Iceland. The name of the project is *To bridge the gap between generations* and involves students paying frequent visits to nursing homes and day-care centres. The school model contains project for students in pre-schools, elementary schools, and colleges and the objective is to establish a positive image and to spark interest in jobs at these long-term care homes and furthermore, to create life at nursing homes and day-care centres. The school model Bridge the gap between generations provides five projects, one at preschool level, three at primary school level, and one at college level.

The idea is to improve communication between generations by establishing regular visits from the schools to the elderly in the nursing home and day care center. The visits have clear objectives:

- ✚ Bridging the gap between generations;
- ✚ create a pleasurable togetherness among the participants;
- ✚ give the elderly a role to educate the children about the past;
- ✚ the children give the participants insight into their world;
- ✚ to get to know the elderly at first hand, get a positive image of them, and the life in the nursing home.



With this project we hope to change the way the children think about the lives of the elderly and of services for the elderly, as a part of the school model. This suggests ways for further communication between the elderly and the schools. With increased knowledge and connection between the young ones and services for the elderly there is an increased chance of the young people choosing courses in services of the elderly as a career stage.

With this project we are also hoping to change the culture in the nursing department by implementing new working procedures. The objective is to bring changes and more pleasure into the homes of the elderly and getting them to participate and to increase their overall happiness.

### **Mission**

The main mission with the project is to support the wish from present and future elderly people on social stimulation and activity, the project has focused on establishing a model for physical and informal meeting places, where elderly can meet without obligation and organize their own activities, as well as cross-generation activities.

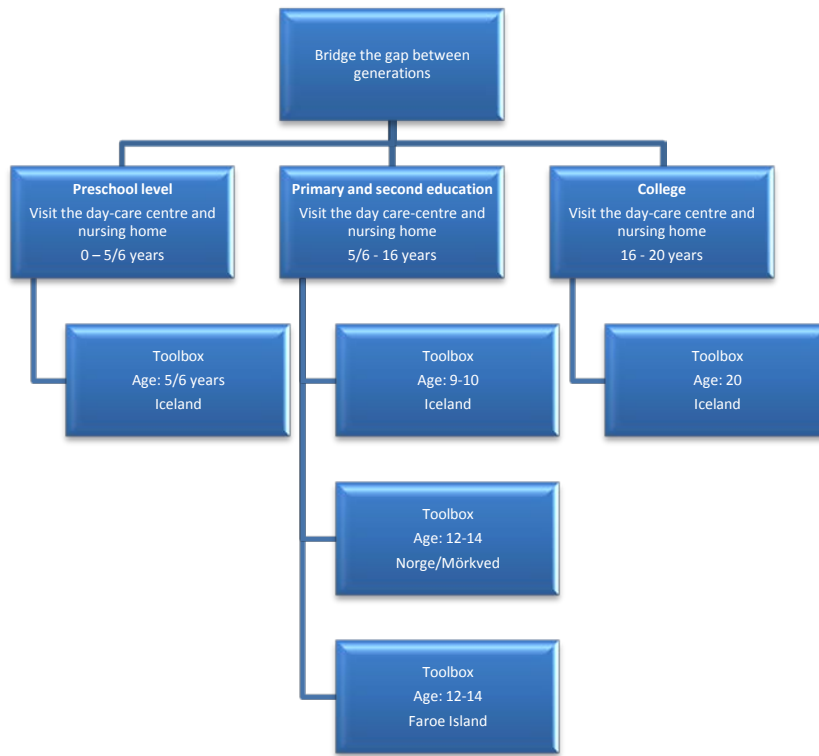
This can with time benefit the health care system and services, pupils will have insight knowledge of the way a nursing home and the elderly care is operated, and are more recipient to seek this field when choosing a carrier in the future.

Therefore, it is very important to make employment in the long term care more desirable because of growing demand for workforce. To make this possible, it is essential to:

- ✚ organise marketing and presentation for the caretaking work;
- ✚ organise long term planning for recruitment;
- ✚ establish a partnership between schools and labour unions, especially regarding recruitment and competence;
- ✚ adjust the basic needs for education for the present and the future.

The project is focused around collaboration with three age structures of children based on the children's level of education. (1) Pre-school level (0-6 years), (2) elementary schools (6-16 years), and (3) collage (16-20 years). (See diagram 1.1)

**Diagram 1.1.** - *Project overview and execution.*



- ✚ The collaboration with the preschools involves children paying monthly visits to nursing homes and day-cares centres. There is a detailed explanation of the structure of the collaboration in the report.
- ✚ The collaboration with the elementary schools, like the pre-schools, involves students paying monthly visits to nursing homes and day-care centres.
- ✚ The collaboration with the colleges is based on the joint ventures between nursing homes and day-care centres where part of their civics study involves community service at nursing homes and day-care centres.

The purpose of the project is to give the younger generation an insight into the way life forms from birth to death. To make the pupils understand that the nursing homes are a home for the elders and the day-care centres enable the elders to live as long as possible in their own homes by helping them to maintain their health. The young generation get the chance to have natural relations with the elderly and the disabled.



## II. Toolbox

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Based on the work with *To bridge the gap between generations* concept we have prepared a Tool Box for any other organisation interested in implementing the project within their own organizational frame.

The Tool Box contents:

1. General information about each project, including who to contact within each project for further information.
2. Detailed step-by-step description of how the project has been implemented in municipalities in Iceland, Faroe Islands and Norway.
  - i. Preparation
  - ii. Launch
  - iii. Evaluation
  - iv. Conclusion
3. Detailed description of the implementation process that was not included in the report but can be found in the annex.



### III. Methods and implementation

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#### 1.0 Preschool Level: Aged 5-6 years

##### Partners

The Nursing home in Höfn of Southeast Iceland and the Preschool Krakkakot.

##### Project coordinator

Health service of Southeast Iceland (HSSA).

##### For further information

Ásgerður K. Gylfadóttir. E-mail: [asgerdur@hssa.is](mailto:asgerdur@hssa.is)

The preschool Krakkakot: <http://www.leikskolinn.is/krakkakot/>

The Health service of Southeast Iceland: <http://www.hssa.is>

##### Participants

**Students:** The participants in this project are from the age of five to six years old.

**Elderly:** Residents in Nursing homes or people in Day-care centres.

##### Organizational frame

The project will be implemented within the pre-defined project structure of cooperation between the local educational system and nursing homes and day-care centres for elderly in the municipality. The general principle and organizational frame can be implemented by any will be implemented through educational systems and nursing homes and day-care centres for elderly as applicable.

##### Area of responsibilities

**Project group:** Staff from the Nursing Homes and Day-Care Centres, teachers from the preschools.

##### Project period<sup>1</sup>

Each visit is one hour, once a month from September 2010 to May 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for further information.



## **Date and location**

First Monday of each month in the living room at the nursing home or as applicable for all involved.

## **Implementation**

The students from the preschool and the elderly people in the nursing home meet once a month in the nursing home for about an hour. For each visit, the preschool students and the elderly participants will prepare for a specific theme or a project which will be decided in cooperation between the preschool's teacher and the nursing ward staff. The theme is based on seasons and topics connected to them, e.g. autumn; rounding up sheep, winter; Christmas songs, stories and topics of discussion is based on the theme.

Emphasis is placed on interplay and interaction between preschool students and the elderly participants. The songs and discussions make a big role in connecting them together. It is important that every person has a role and that they exchange feedbacks during the programme. The children and the elderly will look over some toys; both new toys and old toys, e.g. old Icelandic toys such as sheep bones, Lego blocks or any other toys the children want to present to the elderly. Finally the children and the elderly participants are invited some refreshments.

The deployment process has been ongoing since September 2010. The supervisors responsible for the project group are the coordinators from the nursing home and a teacher from the local preschool Krakkakot.

## **Detailed description step by step**

### **Step 1. Preparation**

Project coordinators have a meeting in the spring and prepare a plan for cooperation.

- ✚ Decide what age group will visit the nursing home.
- ✚ Decide how many children and residents will participate.
- ✚ Set date and location, which will be once a month in the living room at the nursing home.
- ✚ Consider various ideas about themes for the visits.



## Step 1.1 Preparation

Project coordinators meet in the autumn and decide:

- ✚ Themes for each visit. For this winter the theme of choice was linked to seasons.
- ✚ Which songs, melodies and poems they would use and decide whether the children should bring their own songbooks to practice songs from.
- ✚ The visiting days, time and how long it will take approximately. It has been decided to have the visits at the beginning of the month at Wednesday at 10:45. The date can be changed if necessary.
- ✚ On what type of refreshment there should be during the visits.

## Step 1.2. Preparation

An important part of the preparation is to have a telephone meeting between the coordinators to plan the visits so they will be as efficient as possible. The decisions include how the themes should be implemented, e.g. what songs and melodies should be practiced and what poems should be read. The preparation also includes going over practical things that need to be solved, e.g. get permissions from parents to take pictures of the children during the visits for the OLE2 documentation, and various issues that need to be resolved regarding the elderly and the visits.

## Step 2. Launching

The visits are usually built up the same. The children come into the home, say hello to the hosts and the leaders help them to do so if necessary. Then one song is sung together. Later they talk about already decided theme and sometimes a story is told that is related to the theme. Then the children show what they brought. They have usually brought toys, pictures, costumes or other things. Their joy comes from showing what they have daily been working on and to talk about it with the elderly.

### Example from the first visit

In September 2010 where the theme was the autumn and rounding and sheep gathering both groups had practised few songs for the visit and sang one song together. Additionally the elderly participants had prepared the song and a story connected to the theme. The children and the elderly participants were then invited for refreshments as they discussed rounding and sheep gathering based on the story previously told. The children talked and enjoyed themselves with the elderly participants for a good while. In the end the children sang couple of songs before the visit was over.



### **Step 2.1 Launching**

The coordinators had a telephone meeting where they discussed how the visit went and decided whether there needed to be any changes for the next visit.

An example from the first visit: the visit went very well. No changes had to be made. Feedbacks from coordinators from both groups were positive about the visit. As decided before the children will show animal bones to the elderly and how they use it to make music. Songs decided for both groups to practise until next time.

### **Step 3. Evaluation**

Every visit evaluated between the coordinators by telephone call after the visit and/or e-mail. The residents and the coordinator have evaluated their input and part by discussion. The social activity coordinator at the nursing home documents a short description after the evaluation. The way the visit went is documented and if there is anything that needs to be changed for the next visit, what can be done differently, does someone need more feedback and so on. That documentation serves as a ground for the evaluation at the end of the season.

### **Conclusion**

The project is running as we hoped for in the beginning. The structure has worked well, the visits are conclusive and every participant has a role in the project. The elderly prepare the visits with the nursing home coordinator and they have many ideas about songs and stories that fit the themes. The elderly also bond with the children when the shyness decreases during the winter. The elderly are very interested in the things the children show them, for example the toys like Lego chips which some of the elderly have never seen and therefore like playing with it with the children. The children made pictures for the elderly and once they came all dressed up in costumes.

The children are getting quality time with a generation they are not used to be around. They hear stories and songs that they have never heard before. They are also very proud to show their toys to the elderly and teach them how to use things that the elderly are not familiar with.

The coordinator and the children in the preschool gave positive feedback on the project. They look forward to every visit and for preparing for them. Since the preschool is just across the street from the nursing home the children often come and talk to the residents and staff when they walk by, so they must be bonding very well through the project.

The children's parents have not been directly involved but they get information through the preschool. Both information and the OLE2 process have been



documented on the nursing home´s website [www.hssa.is](http://www.hssa.is). The social coordinator in the nursing home has been the key person in this program. Other staff members have been involved but not as active. There has not been a special evaluation with the staff apart from discussions where they all agree that this project has a positive effect on the participants and the culture at the nursing home.

## 2.0 Elementary Level: Aged 9-10 years

### Partners

The Day Care Centre for elderly in Höfn of Southeast Iceland and the primary school Grunnskóli Hornafjarðar

### Project coordinator

Health service of Southeast Iceland (HSSA).

### For further information

Ester Þorvaldsdóttir. E-mail: [ester@hssa.is](mailto:ester@hssa.is)

The Grunnskóli Hornafjarðar: <http://www2.hornafjordur.is/grunnskoli>

Health service of Southeast Iceland: <http://www.hssa.is>

### Participants

**Students:** The participants in this project are from the age of nine to ten years old.

**Elderly:** Residents in Nursing homes or people in Day-care centres.

### Organizational frame

The project will be implemented within the pre-defined project structure of cooperation between the local educational system and day-care centres for elderly in the municipality. The general principle and organizational frame can be implemented by any will be implemented through educational systems and nursing homes and day-care centres for elderly as applicable.

### Area of responsibilities

**Project group:** Staff from the Nursing Homes and Day-Care Centres, teachers from the primary school.

### Project period

Each visit is one hour, once a month from September 2010 to May 2011.

### Date and location



First Monday of each month in Day care centre for elderly Ekra or as applicable for all involved.<sup>2</sup>

## Implementation

The supervisors responsible for the project's group are the coordinator from the day-care centre and a teacher in fourth grade class from the elementary school, Grunnskóli Hornafjarðar. In the beginning of the project two preparatory meetings were held where the staff from the schools and the day-care met, first in the spring and again in fall. The first preparation meetings were held in the spring where the arrangement for the visits was decided. The project started in September with an introduction in the primary school and in the day-care centre. After that the students along with their teachers meet the elderly (N=10-12) in the day-care's art and craft room once a month. In the first gathering in fall all the students in the class (N=24) come where everyone introduce themselves and again in the spring but then there is also a goodbye moment. During other visits the class is divided into two parts and each part (N=10-12) comes every other week. The themes are based on folkways since the co-operation with the school is linked to the curriculum of the fourth grade called folkways now and then and many of the goals of the subject is that the students learn to recognise the old times, national customs and the cultural heritage. The co-operation therefore comes into ancient jobs, toys and games now and then, accommodation, eating habits, art and craft, music, poetry and stories. The fourth grade teacher introduces the project for the parents at a parents meeting in fall when the entire curriculum is introduced. At that meeting the teacher asks for permission for picture- and video-taking during the visits to be used for the project.

The employee from the day-care centre and a teacher consult a week before every visit by e-mailing where they go over the theme for the next visit so the students and the elderly can come prepared.

Both students and the elderly prepare for each visit in co-operation with the day-care's employee and the primary school's teacher in regards to the visit's theme.

- ✚ The employee from the day-care service keeps a diary of each visit and how it goes.

When the project finishes in spring we evaluate the progress with interviews. A teacher talks to the students about their experiences of the project and an employee from the day-care centre talks to the elderly about their experiences. Each will document their own conclusions.

- ✚ The day-care worker and the teacher will discuss the conclusions in the spring meeting and prepare for next fall with regard to the conclusions.



All the children in fourth grade and all the residents, who were willing and well enough (N=11), were invited to participate in the project, Emphasis is placed on mutual communication of the participants where the elderly and the students have roles to share and receive knowledge and entertainment. For example:

In one of the visits the theme was games. An elderly participant brought animal bones and animals made of wood. The children liked the animals and the bones. The elderly participants taught the children some games from when they were young in which the bones were used to predict events such as if the weather was going to be good or bad the day after, and also some other *yes-or-no* questions. Later the children showed the elderly some popular games which they were used to play and everyone had a great time.

### **Detailed description step by step**

#### **Step 1. Preparation**

Project coordinators have a meeting in the spring and prepare a plan for cooperation

- ✚ Decide what age group will visit the day-care center.
- ✚ Decide how many children and elderly will participate.
- ✚ Set date and location, which will be every other week in the day-care's art and craft room.
- ✚ Consider various ideas about themes for the visits linked to the curriculum of the fourth grade called folkways now and then.

#### **Step 1.2. Preparation**

Project coordinators meet in the autumn and decide:

- ✚ Decide how the group will interact during the project, for example for each visit, send e-mails between the organisers and go over the schedule for the next visit in regard to the theme.
- ✚ Themes for each visit. For this winter the theme of choice was linked to the curriculum of the fourth grade called folkways now and then 3.

The visiting days, time, how long it will take approximately. The visits are every other Monday at ten o'clock. If there should be refreshments during the visits?

#### **Step 1.2. Preparation**

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A week before the first visit the supporting parties will keep contact through e-mails and go over the visit's theme and decide what needs to be done, what they need to bring etc.

## **Step 2. Launching**

Day-care's worker will welcome the students and their teacher in the day-care centre's art and craft room along with the elderly. All the time spent together is the same except the themes are different each time. Each visit usually lasts one hour.

### **Example from the first visit**

The elderly brought hand craft and decided what to show the children during the time together. The children got the opportunity to try out the knitting machine and helped the elderly with their knitting. They also learned about other hand crafting from the past which was used by many people but few knew how to use today.

A part of the student brought hand craft from home. One boy brought his own knitting needles and competed with the elderly, which brought a lot of joy to the people.

### **Step 2.1 Launching**

Supporting parties communicate through e-mails a week before the next visit and go over the last visit and evaluate if something needs to be changed. Afterwards they organise next visit.

## **Step 3. Evaluation**

Evaluation of how the project has worked comes from participants from the day-care centre's worker and the elderly on one hand and from the students and their teacher on the other hand. An employee and a teacher meet in the spring in a final meeting and go over conclusions. Employee of the day-care centre holds one meeting with the participants where they go over how the project went. The employee lays down some questions and documents the answers.

- ✚ How was your experience of the project?
- ✚ Was the time length of the time spent together acceptable?
- ✚ Was the number of students who visited acceptable? Were the assignments well defined?
- ✚ What was positive and went very well?
- ✚ What might be done differently?



- ✚ Do you believe communication between generations is important?

The teacher takes one lesson to go over the student's experience of the visit and documents them.

- ✚ Based on teaching methods from curriculum.
- ✚ Attitude towards associate with the elderly.

Supporting parties hold one meeting during spring when the project is over and comprehensively go over how the project went regarding the goals set in the beginning.

- ✚ How did it work out to define the themes for every visit and to follow them?
- ✚ Were the participants prepared accordingly to the theme?
- ✚ Did the teacher and the day-care centre's worker manage to follow the everyday schedule?
- ✚ Was the time given enough, one hour per visit?

## Conclusion

The project has been going very well and is running as we hoped for when we decided to participate in this project. It has managed to establish connection between generations in a positive uninhibited way through communication. The visits are now conclusive and every participant has a role in the project. The elderly prepare for the visits with the day-care centre coordinator and the students prepare for the visits with the teacher. All those that are involved in the project planning are satisfied with how the project has developed. The teacher says that the students are both happy and positive towards the visits and that there were no problems to get them to participate. The project has given the teaching a new dimension when the children learn about folkways. One student said that the project had been enjoyable as they got to meet *old people*.

The project is well underway as it gathers experience and the next year promise to be exiting for fourth grade students. It is worth mentioning that after one visit three of the girls paid an unexpected visit at the day-care centre. They hand crafted cards with the elderly women to sell and the profit was supposed to go to the day-care centre, then they had some refreshments with the people, wiped the tables and cleared up after the coffee break. Then later that day they attended the elderly quire practice and sang some songs with the elderly.

The participants from the day-care centre are very happy with the project and many have been active in preparing the visits. The elderly describe the visits as enjoyable as it gives them opportunity to educate the children about their childhood, to teach



them old games and show them old handcraft. It revives their day to get the children into the day-care centre and get to know the youth's way of thinking.

We highly recommend this project to other schools and day-care centres as the project gives great benefit in increased communication between generations and after the first few months we can see a noticeable difference in the way the children act around and towards elderly people. The children are more positive towards them which we see as a very positive result, This seed that has been sown will hopefully result in a greater interest in working with elderly in the future from this generation, and other that participate in this project.



### 3.0 Elementary Level: Aged 12 years

#### Partners

Mørkved nursing home and Mørkvedmarka elementary school.

#### Project coordinators

#### For further information

E- mail: [elsa.kommedahl@bodo.kommune.no](mailto:elsa.kommedahl@bodo.kommune.no)

#### Participants

Students: The participants in this project are from the age of twelve.

#### Organizational frame

The project will be implemented within the pre-defined project structure of cooperation between the local educational system and nursing homes and day-care centres for elderly in the municipality. The general principle and organizational frame can be implemented by any will be implemented through educational systems and nursing homes and day-care centres for elderly as applicable.

#### Area of responsibilities

**Project group:** Staff from the Nursing Homes and teachers from the elementary school. The class teacher has the responsibility for the student´s visits, this means that the teacher has interests in this partnership with the nursing home and has a good dialog with the leadership in the home

#### Project period and location

**School year:** From August to December and from January to June: Pupils spend 2 hours pr. week, the Nursing Home.

They come once a week for 1.1/2 hours. Each group is visiting for 4 weeks

#### Project plan:

The school and the nursing home make an annual plan for the pupils in the 6th grade, 2 hours pr. week in a domicile subject in the nursing home.



### **Date and location:**

The project take place in the nursing home and each group from the school visit them for a period of 4 weeks.

### **Implementation:**

The administrators from the nursing home and the principal of the school have a meeting where a plan for the cooperation is presented. They also set a goal for what we want to achieve.

- + Get the teacher for the actual class involved in the project
- + Send out a letter to the parents, explaining what this project is, and have a answering note, that has to be delivered to the teacher
- + A nurse and a nursing assistant teach for 2 hours for the actual class, on the themes:
  - What is it like to become old?
  - What is dementia?
  - What is it like to live in a nursing home?
- + Children are then divided into a group of 12. Then each group as they come to the nursing home is divided into 3 groups. They work on the same unit for the 4 weeks they are in our nursing home.
- + They come once a week for 1.1/2 hours. Each group is visiting for 4 weeks.
- + Set up a plan for what they are going to do in the nursing home.
 

Examples:

  - o Take the elderly out for a walk.
  - o Have ballgames, puzzles, drawing as an activity.
  - o Gingerbread cookies for Christmas.
  - o Singing and playing instruments.
  - o Manicure.
  - o Make the hallway into a cafeteria.
- + Remember that they are “workers” in the nursing home, and not “visitors”.
- + It’s very important that their teacher is together with them at all times.

### **Detailed description step by step**

#### **Step 1.1 Preparations**

Inform and develop a model in close collaboration with the staff at the nursing home. Pick out some employees who would like to contribute to the development of this project. Let this group in collaboration with management looking at possibilities for the implementation of this project.

Make a plan for this project as seen from the nursing home side.



### Step 1.1 Preparations

Contact the headmaster for the appropriate school in the community to ask if they might be interested in a partnership. Meeting with the teachers and staff from the nursing home. Prepare a plan for cooperation.

- ✚ How many students and residents will participate?
- ✚ The demand for participation on the behalf of the school and the nursing home examined
- ✚ Set date, location and draft program for the first generation meet.
- ✚ Set time for the project period.

### Step 1.2 Preparation

Project coordinators meet in the fall and make a plan for the project period:

- ✚ Set a time for visits. Now is the appointed time on Wednesdays from 11:30 to 13:00 for 12 weeks.
- ✚ Agreement which activities students will participate in with the residents and make a plan for the period.
- ✚ Appointment of teaching from the staff at the nursing home to the students 2 hours before they come to the nursing home.

### Step 2.Example for plan for the visits.

**Visit 1:** Greet residents, look at the equipment, room, and building, and greet residents

**Visit 2:** Walk in the garden and gazebo. Trim, singing or hand massage

**Visit 3:** Walk in the garden and gazebo. Trim, singing or hand massage

**Visit 4:** Arrange cafe ` .Making waffles and servers.

**Visit 5:** Dance and beverage servers.

### Step 3.Evaluation

The evaluation must relate to the staff, students and residents. What has been good and what we can change for next time.

- ✚ How was your experience of the project?
- ✚ Was the time length of the time spent together acceptable?
- ✚ Was the number of students who visited acceptable? Were the assignments well defined?



- ✚ What was positive and went very well?
- ✚ What might be done differently?
- ✚ Do you believe communication between generations is important?

### **Conclusion**

The project has been going very well and is running as we hoped for when we decided to participate in this project. It has managed to establish connection between generations in a positive uninhibited way through communication

The project has now lasted for 4 years and all parties agree to proceed further.

## 4.0 Primary and Elementary Levels: Aged 12-14 years

### Partners

The nursing home Á Sýnini in Miðvági and the School of Giljanæs, The Faroe Islands.

### Project coordinators

Anna Dánjalsdóttir, leader of the nursing home and Hans Jørgensen Headmaster of the school of Giljanæs.

### For further information

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Web site: <http://www.naerverk.fo>

### Participants

**Students:** The participants in this project are from the age of twelve to fourteen years old.

**Elderly:** People living in nursing homes or attend Day-Care Centres.



### Organizational frame

The project is implemented within the pre-defined project structure of cooperation between the local educational system and nursing homes and day-care centres for elderly in the municipality. The general principle and organizational frame can be implemented by any educational systems and nursing homes or day-care centres for elderly as applicable.

### Area of responsibilities

**Project group:** Staff from the Nursing Homes and teachers from the primary schools. The class teacher has the responsibility for the student's visits, this means that the teacher has interests in this partnership with the nursing home and has a good dialog with the leadership in the home.



## Project period and location

**School year:** From August to December and from January to June: Pupils spend 2 hours pr. week, one morning pr. Week, from 10-12 am, at the nursing home.

Each group of 12 pupils divided into 3 groups, with 4 pupils in each group makes these visits in a time span of 6-8 weeks.

## Project plan

The school and the nursing home make an annual plan for the pupils in the 6th grade, 2 hours pr. week in a domicile subject in the nursing home, involving children and elderly citizens.

## Implementation

The leadership from the nursing home visit the school where the school's headmaster, teachers and children, receive information about the visit's structure according to the elderly and the employees at the home.

- ✚ Before the students start on this school subject, the teacher and leader for the nursing home have an informational meeting with the student's parents regarding this project.
- ✚ After the introduction with the leadership from the nursing home at the school, the students are invited to the nursing home for an introduction, given by a competent staff.
- ✚ Students are educated about how the work of care is structured regarding the elderly and their circumstances when living in a nursing home. They start by receiving lessons about how senior lives generally are in homes and the organizational frames of a nursing home. These lectures are given by the leadership of the nursing home.
- ✚ Students get practical tasks, in order to learn how to work with and around elderly people and by doing this they experience and learn what kind of care the residence need.
  - The tasks are: helping the residents to take a walk, tidying if needed, talking to them, reading for them, listening to the elderly when informed about tasks, experiences or general information from their lives.



- ✦ Students teach the elderly to use computers, mobile telephones and other useful daily technology.
- ✦ The project is evaluated and the results are documented. Evaluation will be conducted between partners at the end of the period.

### **Detailed description step by step**

#### **Step 1. Preparation**

- ✦ The school leadership and leadership from the nursing home meet for a plan schedule for the cooperation and make decision:
  - regarding the project before the new school year starts in August and make an agreement between the partners involved;
  - regarding date, location, and draft program for the first students meeting at the home;
  - on activities which involve context, rules, structure and timeframe;
  - on employees at the nursing home and the class teacher form the school so it is suitable for all partners involved.
  - on how many students and residents will participate.
- ✦ The project covers six to eight weeks.
- ✦ The demand for participation on the behalf of the school and the nursing home is inquired into.
- ✦ This activity will be a permanent subject in the student´s education.

#### **Step 1.2. Preparation**

- ✦ Integration of activity into curriculum. Activity implemented in study plan for 6th graders under the local domicile school subject.
- ✦ This will be accomplished by rotating individual assignments to the students during their visiting period.
- ✦ The assignment tasks will be in designated areas, such as:
  - Therapy room
  - Kitchen
  - Laundry



## Step 2. Launching

Students, teacher, staff and residents meet at the nursing home. The students arrive at the nursing home for an introduction lecture on the nursing home given by the competent staff. The students will:

- ✚ Have quality time together with elderly individuals.
- ✚ The students spend about 2 hours each visit together with the residence ca. from 10-12:00 am.
- ✚ Learn about the daily routine of elderly residents living in an institution.
- ✚ Students will sing and dance traditional folklore together with the residents.
- ✚ Learn about working in institutions.
- ✚ Storytelling, the residents will tell story from the past.

## Step 3. Evaluation of the project

The evaluation is divided into two parts: reports from the joined venture and visits where the leadership from school and nursing home brief each other. The way the visit went is documented and if there is anything that needs to be changed for the next visit, what can be done differently, does someone need more feedback and so on. That documentation serves as a ground for the evaluation at the end of the season.

## Conclusion

Results of the project have shown that it is both the elderly and the young that benefit from each other's company. Exchange of knowledge is one important matter, and the social interaction can even benefit dementia cases as well as underprivileged children.

Employees at the nursing home confirm that the visits have a positive influence especially on dysfunctional students. This has been an open programme for every one interested to seek information.

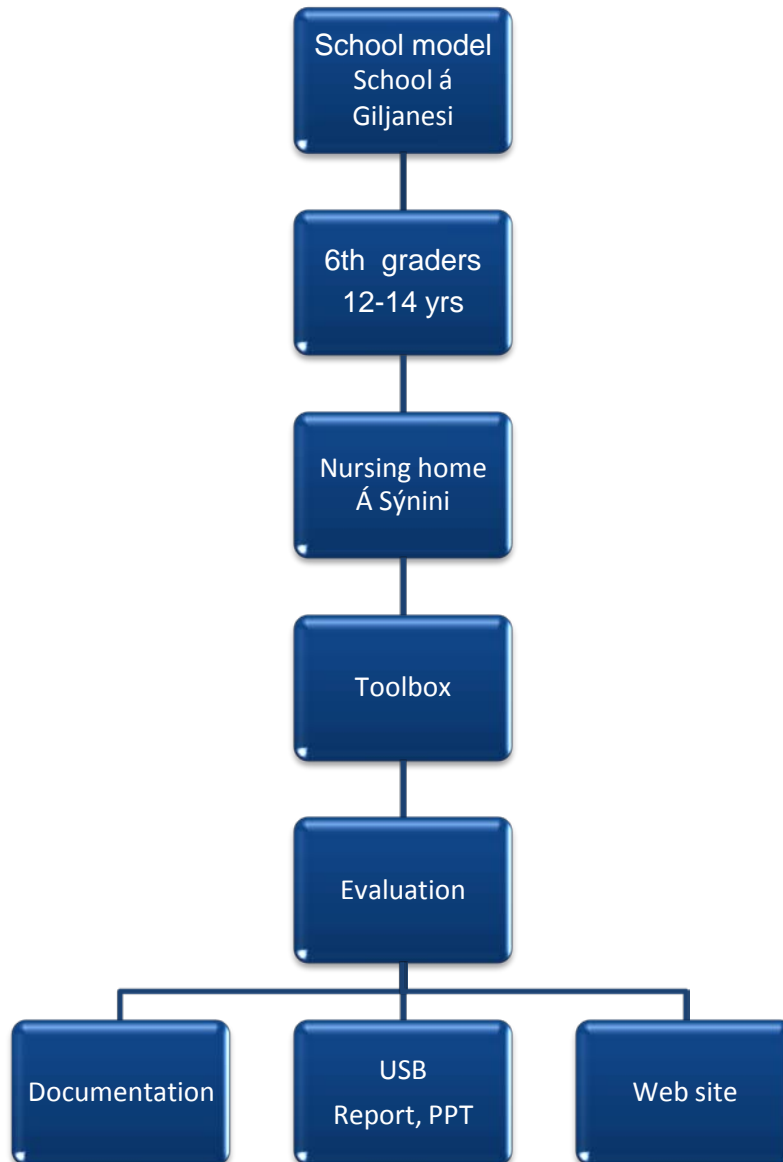
- ✚ The nursing home staffs inform that after having the students in the home they have experienced the gap between generations, at first the pupils are generally very reserved, but after a while they get more confident with the environment, the residents and the staff.
- ✚ It does not take long until the students feel free around the residents, the students take the residents for walks, they ask questions and talk to them, show them their newest technology, mobile phones, laptop etc. Some have



even adopted a grandparent whom they come and visit regularly also outside school hours.

**Diagram 2.2.** - Project overview and execution.

*Below is shown the structure of the project and the outcome of the joint project between school and nursing home.*





## 5.0 College Level: Aged 16-20 years

### Partners<sup>4</sup>

The Nursing Homes in Akureyri in North Iceland, The Akureyri Junior College and The Lutheran churches in Akureyri.

### Project coordinator

The Nursing Homes in Akureyri (Öldrunarheimili Akureyrar).

### For further information

Friðný B. Sigurðardóttir. E-mail: [fridny@akureyri.is](mailto:fridny@akureyri.is)

The Nursing Homes in Akureyri: <http://www.akureyri.is/oldrunarheimili>

The Akureyri Junior College: <http://www.ma.is/>

### Participants

**Students:** 20 years. The students are about to graduate from college and are at a crossroads in their life-having to choose their studies and future jobs. The participants in this project can be from the age of 16 to 20 years old.

**Elderly:** People living in Nursing homes or Day-Care Centres.

### Organizational frame

This product can be used, in school that are interested as well as in Nursing Homes and Day-Care Centres for the elderly. Also in the community where there is an interest in enhancing the communications between the generations.

### Area of responsibilities

**Project group:** Staff from the Nursing Homes and Day-Care Centres, teachers from the College and other partners if wanted e.g. the church or the Red Cross.

### Project period

The time period for the project is four to six weeks in spring semester.

### Date and location

Students work on these projects in pairs and they are required to put into this six to eight hours, divided in: (1) The big gathering two hours at the Nursing



Home, (2) visits in small groups for four hours, and (3) study visit at the Nursing Home for two hours.

The project takes place at the nursing home and also wherever the participants wish to meet in small groups. Some meet in private homes, museums, restaurants or in drives.

## Implementation

The project begins with an introduction in the school, at the nursing home and at the day-care. See letter attached (nr.1). Students and the elderly sign up for the project in pairs and the students arrive at the nursing home and the day-care a week later. The group is divided up into smaller groups (four people in each, max. 20 groups – 40 elderly and 40 students), where two students and two elderly people work together on issues that have to do with the micro-society (today's task). Representatives for the students take care of introducing proposals set forth by each group. The mayor and the Chairman of the Social ministry have attended meetings and listened to the ideas of the groups. During this initial meeting between the elderly and the students, the group tries to establish a comfortable atmosphere with fun activities organised by both groups along with sing-along's.

After the big gathering the groups meet up twice and do something fun together, even more often if there is any interest in doing so (two hours each time at least). The time period for the project is four to six weeks and finishes when the students arrive at the nursing home and the day-care centre for a study visit that takes two hours.

## Detailed description step by step

### Step 1. Preparation

Meeting with the teachers and staff from the nursing home and other partners if wanted e.g. the church. Prepare a plan for cooperation.

- ✚ How many students and residents will participate?
- ✚ The demand for participation on the behalf of the school and the nursing home examined.
- ✚ Set date, location and draft program for the first generation meet.
- ✚ Set time for the project period.
- ✚ The project covers four to six weeks.
- ✚ Find an appropriate venue, examine limiting factors such as size, accessibility etc.



- ✦ Decide on refreshments and who is going to be in charge of that (traditional cakes.)
- ✦ Organise and perhaps acquire activities from the young people and from the elderly. e.g singing, recitation or instrumental playing which has proven to lighten the mood.
- ✦ Decide the theme (today´s task) for the first gathering.
- ✦ A common project is chosen that has to do with the interests of the community that we live in.
- ✦ Projects that have been chosen are for example: Each group representing the community council gets the opportunity to make three to five important changes for the community or create a “needs analysis” for a common community centre or a residence where both young people and older individuals live together.
- ✦ **Purpose:** connects the group, people meet and have to exchange opinions about certain issues and reach a joint decision.
- ✦ Set date for short educational program in the Nursing Home and Day-Care Centres for the Students.
- ✦ An Educational day at the end of the project. Decided to end the project with this part so that it won´t affect the connection between the elderly and the young people. However, this part can be located wherever in the time period of the project.
- ✦ Contact media and politicians as it is essential to raise the awareness of the project in the community by contacting the local politicians and the media.

### Step 1.1 Preparation

A letter from the school introduced to the elderly at the nursing home and at the day-care centre. From the elderly, the ones who are capable and are interested sign up for the project.

Divide the participants into small groups (2 elderly and 2 students in each group). Each group is then given a number and seated at a numbered table. This is done to prevent any mix-ups or confusion.

- ✦ Things to keep in mind when dividing into groups:
- ✦ Try to accommodate wishes for partners.
- ✦ See if there are any people who know each other.



- ✦ See if there are any individuals get along better.
- ✦ The group is gender specific.
- ✦ Judging from experience, it has been proven that same gender groups work better.
- ✦ Preparation for the big gathering.
- ✦ Prepare the meeting place.
- ✦ Set the table, refreshments.

## Step 2. Launching

Students and the elderly meet in the Nursing home. The nursing staff meets the students. Important details regarding the project reviewed and a special emphasis on their responsibilities regarding communications and the importance of treating the project seriously.

- ✦ Big gathering, all the participants meet up.
- ✦ Each group signs its name, address and phone number: group members (triplicate, one for the student, one for the elderly and one for the staff member at the nursing home who is responsible for the project.)
- ✦ Music for the beginning
- ✦ Singing together
- ✦ Drinking coffee and cakes (or whatever)
- ✦ The group chooses a secretary and a leader who will later introduce the results for everyone else.
- ✦ Working on Today's task" with conclusions.
- ✦ Deciding where and when to meet in the small group.
- ✦ The Mayor and the Chairman of the social board listen to the findings of the groups.

### Step 2.1 Launching

Meeting in small groups twice (more often if wanted).

- ✦ The groups do something fun together.



- ✦ Meet up at the nursing home or at the Day-Care Centre and participate in the social life, play bingo, bowling or do crafts. Drink coffee and chat. Go to museums or coffee shops.
- ✦ Ideas for discussions will be available if the groups want, e.g. discuss trips and travels, automobiles now and then, telecommunications now and then, jobs now and then, transportation now and then, food now and then, entertainment now and then.

## Step 2.2 Launching

Introduce the Nursing homes and Day-Care Centres as a possible future working place (education, experience, assessment).

Students come to the Nursing home or the Day-Care Centre for about 2 hours (we would prefer more time for this part).

The visit is divided into three parts:

### *1. Introducing the Nursing home (20 minutes lecture):*

- ✦ The vision and the goals of the nursing homes.
- ✦ As a society, what characterises, are a home!
- ✦ What is done to stay positive? Stimulate interest among the young people. Try and erase old myths.
- ✦ Describe what is available and for offer, how many professions are actually at the nursing home.
- ✦ What is it like to become old?
- ✦ The main physical and mental changes.
- ✦ What is it like to live and work in a nursing home?
- ✦ The changes in moving into a nursing home.
- ✦ The Eden project which enhances the quality of life for the residents and for the staff members.
- ✦ The Eden perception – introduce and students bring with them to the nursing homes. See Appendix nr. 4
- ✦ Do they see any signs of an institution? Use their senses.



2. *Examine the homes (small groups) – examine and experience (30-40 minutes)  
The Eden perception / questions – impressions – answered inside the homes.*

3. *Summary. Everyone arrives back at the main hall.*

- ✚ Hand in their Eden perception papers
- ✚ Discussion about their experience

### **Step 3. Evaluation**

The evaluation is divided into two workshops:

1. In College for students.
2. In the nursing home and Day-Care Centre for the elderly.

Nursing home and Day-Care Centre:

- ✚ Nursing home and Day-Care Centre – 45-60 minutes (so that everyone can comment on and be a part of the discussion in their group, can be difficult in terms of the health of the elderly)
- ✚ Decide on a specific date
- ✚ Advertise
- ✚ Meet up and execution
- ✚ People divide into groups (3-4) and seat themselves. And think about the following questions and turn in a written opinion while having a coffee.
- ✚ How was your experience from working on this project?
- ✚ What did you think of the big gathering?
- ✚ What did you think of the project that you solved in the big gathering?
- ✚ How did you manage to get the group together and meet up twice after the big gathering?
- ✚ What was positive? What went well?
- ✚ Was there anything that could have gone better?
- ✚ Do you think communication between generations is important?
- ✚ Staff members are also there to help with any problems that might arise from answering these questions and also control the discussions.
- ✚ The outcome is then introduced before the group.



## Conclusion

The project is to be used in nursing homes and day-care centres. The preparation and execution of the project were successful.

Results of the project have shown that it is both the elderly and the students that benefit from each other's company.

The students had a positive attitude towards the elderly people when the project started and during the project that attitude did not change. On the other hand the projects changed the student's attitude towards the nursing home and the day – care centre. The students were surprised how homely and lively community the nursing home and day-care centre is. They find the variety in service, both physical and mental is varied.

They sensed a positive atmosphere between the elderly and the staff. Because of the participation in the project changed the student's attitude towards the nursing home and the day-care centre one can conclude that the possibility of choosing to work in the elderly service in the future has increased.

The elderly enjoyed interacting with the students. The staff thought it was a positive thing to see the students in the nursing home and the day – care centre. They also find the communication between the generations had a positive mental influence on the elderly and beneficial influence on the culture in the nursing home.



## IV. Final Remarks

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The project is now in its second year of implementation and overall it has been successful. The children are responding well to the visits and the elderly are enjoying themselves in the company of the youth. The structure has worked well, the visits are conclusive and every participant has a role in the project which bodes well for the future of the project.

We have managed to establish connection between generations in a positive uninhibited way through communication. Results of the project have shown that it is both the elderly and the young that benefit from each other's company. Exchange of knowledge is one important matter, and the social interaction has shown to increase the overall wellbeing of the elderly in the nursing homes as well as increasing the interest and knowledge of the children about the nursing homes, day care centres, and the elderly in general.

During this year we plan to improve the project implementation as we can to get the best possible results. We plan to increase the visits from the schools to the elderly and make a wider range of schools and age groups part of the project in order to increase its overall success as we believe it has the prospect of increasing employment in long term care.



## V. Appendices

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### Appendix 1

HSSA - kindergarten visits sept – dec 2010.

September 2010

Five children from Krakkakot and eleven nursing home participants took part in the first visit in September 2010.

The chosen theme was the autumn, rounding and sheep gathering. Both groups had practised few songs for the visit and sang *Kötukvæði* together. Additionally the elderly participants had prepared the song *Svífur að hausti* by Steingrímur Thorsteinsson as their contribution to the children.

The nursing ward staff read out the story *Göngur* (e. rounding). The story is about a young boy who is going sheep gathering for the first time.

The children and the elderly participants were then invited for refreshments as they discussed rounding and sheep gathering based on the story previously told. The children talked and enjoyed themselves with the elderly participants for a good while. In the end the children sang couple of songs before the visit was over.

The children suggested bringing animal bones for their next visit in order to show the elderly how to use them as music instruments.



### November 2010

Nine lively children visited the nursing home in November. They brought animal bones, stones and shells as they had previously promised to show the elderly how to use them as music instruments. Afterwards, the children sang a song using hand signals to emphasise parts of the song. The elderly then sang a few songs for the children. Then everyone sang few songs together before playing together with sheep bones along with other toys and then the children served refreshment for everyone.



### December 2010

The prearrangement for December was planned through e-mails and phone-calls among the project coordinators. The arrangement for December was going to be different than usually as all the children from Krakkakot were invited for the Christmas visit to the nursing home.

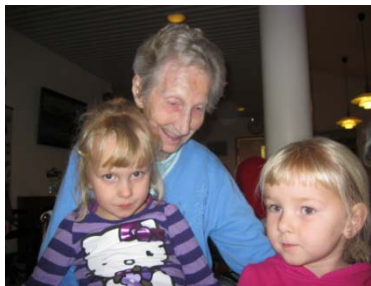


Forty-eight children visited the nursing home.

The oldest children had prepared a Nativity Play as can be shown in this video:

After the play all the children gathered together to sing a song for the elderly people and the visit was overall very successful.

The children are very lively and are starting to participate more with the elderly as they visit them more often.





## Appendix 2

### Icelandic folkways

#### *Teaching instruction*

*Come and have a look* ... the curriculum integrates objectives of many subjects but mainly those of social studies and natural history among the youngest students. *Come and have a look* at Icelandic folkways is no exception from the general rule.

The objectives of *Come and have a look* at Icelandic folkways is among other things that students gain perspective of the element in the history of Iceland that took place in people's homes in Iceland for centuries. Some of the folk culture that formulated at that time is still a part of the popular culture among Icelanders to this day.

The nature and the environment of Iceland, the weather, the four seasons, and general isolation from the outside world had great effect on peoples live. It tied down their existence, their work and customs from settlement to late nineteenth century.

The curriculum describes how people lived before the modern era began. Just as the students are supposed to recognise their countries political history it is important for them to recognise the life of the common people in Iceland, even though the culture in Iceland is similar to customs in the Western World today and is shaped by relations to other nation's commerce and technology.



Several objectives of come and have a look at Icelandic folkways are:

That the students:

1. Can name examples of similarities and differences between different time periods in Icelandic history when it comes to accommodation, clothing, diet, domesticity, education, customs, and habits.
2. Understand the importance of nature, such as the four seasons, weather conditions and the geography which have moulded habits, occupation, customs and culture of the population in Iceland.
3. Recognise old-line industries of Iceland and know to some extent how they and the community have evolved over time.
4. Gain a sense of perspective and a connection between current habits and trends and where they come from and learn to understand why they differ from habits of other nations, e.g. ethnic food or clothing.
5. Increase their lexis and understanding regarding various concepts, words and proverbs in the Icelandic language.
6. Are able to visualise themselves in the same environment as people from different time periods, especially with children their age.



7. Realise that knowledge about different time periods can help people to understand various things in the modern society which helps them live a good life in Iceland, to get through the hard winter seasons and enjoy the summer seasons.
8. Realise that it is important that people are familiar with their history and how people lived in the past, both in Iceland as well as other cultural areas in the world.
9. Recognise that cultural heritage is not only related to deceased things in museums but rather in habits, usage, work methods, and how those things were used in general and the conservation of cultural heritage consists in how one generation after another learns to use those things from the people that came before them.
10. Understand that it is the responsibility of modern Icelanders to know their history and culture and to preserve and treasure it. If they do not do it for themselves no one will do it for them.



### Appendix 3

Menntaskólinn á Akureyri

LKN 121

Spring semester 2011

An introduction to a project in Skills for life

At the Menntaskólinn á Akureyri there is a course which is called Skills for Life (LKN 121) and it is a mandatory course in fourth grade.

In this course we plan to allow the students to participate in various community services with the aim of making them realise where they can contribute something to our society.

This is a community project in which the students have to do voluntary work on worthwhile causes and study the related issue. Students work on these projects in pairs and they are required to put into this 6 to 8 hours. The time period is from 10.march to 10. April.

Examples of the projects that students will participate in are: Various projects that the Red Cross is involved in – Communications with the elderly, immigrants, children with special needs – communications with children at pre-schools.

Students can choose from issues that they want to study and work with them.

We request your cooperation in this project. The communication between these age groups can be rewarding and instructive for both parties. It is possible to do many things together which both parties enjoy, e.g. sit and talk about specific things, go on walking tours, go to coffee shops or attend organised events.

With regards and hope for cooperation

Herdís, teacher MA



## Appendix 4 – Eden perception

### Eden perception

Go on a walking tour around the home. Make notes of what you see and experience.

Date and time

---

Home

---

I / We see

---

I / We hear

---

I / We smell

---

I / We perceive

---

It is good to be here

---

Yes

No

---

Source: Eden perception file from Holmely in Assens, DK. 2005. Adjusted, Eden in Danmark 2009 KD/AP

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## Appendix 5 Faroe Islands

### Interview with Head of Dept. “Á Sýnuni”<sup>5</sup>

The Department Leader, states that she has often experienced the vast gap between children and the elderly which exists today. This is also apparent when children come to visit an elderly person. The children appear to be a bit afraid and perceive the institution as closed; where everything is run by white coats and bells, states the leader. She has no doubt that school children get something out of being there. At first they are very cautious, but after a short while they are up to doing everything. They don't hesitate to approach an elderly person and ask if they are in need of something. The leadership states that the elderly, in turn, very much enjoy having the youngsters around them.

There are no statements that show this will give the children a desire to work within elderly care in the future, now that they see how difficult and demanding it can be. The taboo surrounding nursing homes is being broken through this undertaking, and that alone is a great accomplishment.

The leadership states that it isn't so difficult to find applicants when seeking staff. However, there is a large turnover. People want to try it out, but many find it too difficult and physically demanding. Most alarming is that they seldom have time to do more than see to the resident's physical needs (food / cleanliness). There's far too little time for the staff to have input into their “quality of life”. It is draining to know that this need is not being met due to our limited work capacity.

The youth say they like very much helping the elderly in whatever way they can and doing various chores. They also really enjoy talking with the elderly, who have so much to share from their long lives.

The elderly also enjoy talking about the old days and mention how interested the young ones are to listen.

### Interview with Headmaster at “Giljanesi”<sup>6</sup>

The Headmaster and project leader for the local municipality.

It was from him this part of the project originated. He explains

the goal, which is to make nursing homes more open to the public. So that rather than appearing as a closed, secretive area, it will be seen as a nice place to be; where all are welcome and free to drop by. For the youth, this means that they gain a certain perspective into what it means to be old and that it isn't beneficial to be negative or boring. Perhaps, later in life, they will have a desire to work in the field of elderly care,

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