

Summary of Activities and Evaluation from the Intergenerational Volunteer Initiative

Initiative #10: Intergenerational Volunteers Ontario's Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias

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OVERVIEW OF REPORT

The following report provides a summary of Initiative #10 – Intergenerational Volunteer Initiative of Ontario's Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias. This report includes: an overview of the activities undertaken as part of the initiative; highlights from the evaluation results; and comments from the Alzheimer Strategy Evaluation Consultant regarding the evaluation. A full report on this initiative was prepared by the Initiative Consultant¹.

OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVE AND ACTIVITIES

The overall goal of Initiative #10 was to provide funding for the recruitment, training, and support of high school students who volunteer with individuals with Alzheimer Disease and related dementias (ADRD) in long-term care homes and community agencies. A total of \$500,000 was available to support these activities.

Implementation of the initiative was led by the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO). Other key partners included United Generations Ontario (UGO) and the Alzheimer Society of Ontario (ASO).

Funding was available to support one-year projects; however, projects could be continued beyond the one year if funds were obtained from other sources. Projects were required to incorporate an educational component that was to be delivered by the Public Education Coordinator in the local Alzheimer Chapter. A training module² developed by ASO to support this initiative guided this training.

Projects were selected using a set of criteria developed by the initiative partners, along with consideration of geographic distribution. A total of 40 applications were submitted. In September 2000, 27 projects were selected for funding. The distribution of projects by OACAO region is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Projects by OACAO Region

OACAO Region	Number of projects	OACAO Region	Number of projects
Southwest	4	Golden Horseshoe	3
Grand River	4	Metro	2
Northwest	2	Central	4
North Central	2	Eastern	5

Progress reports were submitted by the sites in March 2001 and in May 2001, site visits to further assess progress were conducted by the Initiative Consultant for 12 of the 27 projects.

The report prepared by the Initiative Consultant¹ includes information from the final project reports submitted by 23 of the 27 projects. The remainder of this report identifies highlights from these final reports and comments on the evaluation that was conducted.

¹ *Intergenerational Volunteer Program to Implement Provincial Alzheimer Strategy Initiative #10 Final Report*. Jim Ward, Consultant, November 2001.

² *Intergenerational Volunteer Training Guide – 2000*. Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CONSULTANT'S FINAL REPORT & COMMENT ON EVALUATION

Evaluation Overview

The evaluation of the intergenerational projects funded through Initiative #10 involved asking the site coordinator for each project to answer a set of questions related to their project. The questions were developed to assess whether the overall initiative goals were being met at the local level, namely:

1. to improve the quality of life for those with ADRD;
2. to provide young people with a valuable volunteer experience that would encourage such activities throughout their lives; and
3. to provide a context in which well seniors and seniors with ADRD could work together in mutually satisfying situations.

Responses from the site coordinators were compiled by the Initiative Consultant and included in the final report.

Evaluation Highlights

Much of the evaluation data provided in the Consultant's final report was qualitative in nature. The main themes addressed through the questions asked of the site coordinators included: the value of participating in the project; the aspects of the project that were successful or most valuable; and the aspects of the projects that could be improved. Each of these areas was assessed from the perspective of the youths, well seniors, and seniors with ADRD involved. Highlights from the evaluation results are presented below.

Of the 23 project sites that submitted final reports, 18 (78.3%) reported that they intended to continue with their project if additional funds were available; another 4 sites (17.4%) indicated that they intended to continue with their project regardless of the availability of additional funding.

Table 2 provides information on the number of participants involved in the local projects. (Note: This is the same information as that available in Table 11 of the Initiative Consultant's report.) A large number of youth, well seniors and seniors with ADRD were involved in the 23 projects. The average numbers of participants were 29, 9 and 19 for youths, well seniors, and seniors with ADRD, respectively.

Table 2: Participants in Local Projects
(based on final reports from 23 project sites)

Group	Number of Participants	Mean Number of Participants (Range)
ADRD Seniors	430	18.7 (5 – 60)
Well Seniors	213	9.3 (1 – 39)
Young People	667	29.0 (3 – 280)

Table 3 indicates the number of volunteer hours contributed by each of the participant groups involved in the project. (Note: This information is the same as that provided in Table 15 of the Initiative Consultant's report.) Over 10,000 volunteer hours were contributed during the course of the initiative. Over 50% of these hours were contributed by the youths involved.

Table 3: Volunteer Hours Contributed
(based on final reports from 22 project sites)

Group	Number of Volunteer Hours	Mean Number of Hours
Young People	5,659	257
Well Seniors	4,141	188
Others *	1,084	120

* Volunteer hours for “others” provided for 9 projects only.

The qualitative data presented in the report suggested that the projects were successful in achieving the overall goals of the initiative. These data also spoke to the value that participating brought to the youths, the well seniors, and those with ADRD.

Another achievement of the initiative, which occurred after the submission of the Initiative Consultant’s final report, was the Trillium grant received by OACAO, ASO and UGO in January 2002. This grant was used to provide continued support for three years to 16 of the 27 original projects and also funded four new multicultural projects.

Comments on Evaluation

The majority of the evaluation information included in the Initiative Consultant’s final report came from the coordinators at each project site, including information on the impact of the projects on those involved (the youth, well seniors and ADRD seniors). While a handful of comments from youths and well seniors are provided in the Consultant’s final report, the true impact of the projects on those involved is not known. Using a standard format to elicit information directly from those involved in the projects (i.e., youths, well seniors and ADRD seniors) would have provided more meaningful information.

Including more quantitative information in the report would have also helped to determine the impact of the initiative. For example, ratings of the success of the projects by those involved and others, where possible, would complement the qualitative information presented in the final report. Such information could also be used to determine the number (and percent) of projects deemed to meet the initiative goals.

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For further information or questions about the Initiative #10 evaluation, please contact:

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