



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Regional Literacy Conference Addressing “*Literacy Challenges
in Europe with a sub-regional focus:*”

Building Partnerships and Promoting Innovative Approaches.

(Baku, Azerbaijan, 14-16 May 2008)

“Family Literacy with Grandparents”



United Nations Literacy Decade

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Presented at the UNESCO Regional Conference in Support of Global Literacy “Addressing Literacy Challenges in Europe with a sub-regional focus: Building Partnerships and Promoting Innovative Approaches”, 14-16 May 2008, Baku, Azerbaijan

Programme name: Family Literacy with Grandparents

Implemented by: NIACE

Basic facts

Country: United Kingdom

Starting year: 2006

Outreach: Approximately 100 a year

Target Population: Grandparents and their grandchildren, in areas of greatest need in England

Language of instruction: English

Contact: Carol Taylor, carol.taylor@niace.org.uk

Website: www.niace.org.uk

Brief Description

In England, Family Literacy has a long and rich history and has particularly targeted hard to reach families and those at most risk of disaffection, and has gradually developed within a wider social policy context. The relationship between poor literacy, low self-esteem and lack of engagement in democratic processes has been clearly shown and Family Literacy has been shown to be one of the most successful ways of engaging and retaining families with poor literacy, and of achieving successful educational outcomes.

Recently, NIACE has become more aware of the number of grandparents who are looking after their grandchildren for significant amounts of time, and often full time. This has come about because of demographic changes, economic factors and social change.

The Grandparents Family Literacy Project was developed to engage grandparents who are looking after their grandchildren in programmes which would enable them to better support their grandchildren's learning, and encourage the adults to get back into learning for themselves. Additionally, we were interested in exploring the ways in which older people learnt in schools, and to introduce them to new ways that children are taught. As with the model of Family Literacy used in the UK for many years, this project has 2 strands – grandparents develop their own skills working with an adult teacher and adults and children learn together.

Grandparents have always been closely involved in their grandchildren's lives, but an increasing phenomenon is that of grandparents having sole responsibility for their grandchildren. This programme offers children who may need additional educational support, targeted and supported activity to improve their language and literacy, which engages grandparents in developing their own literacy skills, and one which improves social cohesion by bringing families together.

Since 2006, specific programmes have run, supported by the development of a range of resources, a research element and the development of an employability strand.

The development of Family Literacy into work with grandparents has been very successful. This has led the English Government to add this way of working to the list of accepted programmes and therefore eligible for Government funding.