SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAMMING

Intergenerational Learning in Stockholm County in Sweden: A Practical Example of Elderly Men Working in Compulsory Schools as a Benefit for Children

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ABSTRACT. This article investigates a practical implementation of strategies for augmenting social capital, as they are being used within the Granddad Project, an intergenerational learning initiative conducted in schools in the Stockholm county area. Indicators for measuring social capital were constructed on the basis of questionnaire data. Responses from a total of 580 pupils, 19 granddads and 27 teachers in 17 schools were collected. Additionally, for the granddads, a qualitative analysis

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was also carried out using a set of narrative data, reflecting their perceptions and experiences of their work in the schools. The results indicate that the granddads’ work itself is forming part of the social capital between individual granddads and the pupils. The pupil responses indicate that boys and girls feel secure in school and that the granddad supports and assists everyone. The responses from the granddads demonstrate that they find their work demanding, but nonetheless rewarding because of the social network it has established for them with the staff and the positive response from the pupils. These results support the assumption that interaction that occurs in the classrooms in schools where there is granddad intervention provides opportunities for increased social capital to be generated on the part of both the younger and the older generation.

**KEYWORDS.** Granddad Project, volunteers, social capital

**INTRODUCTION**

The granddad programme started in 1996 by one retired man and a teacher in one school in Stockholm. In May 2003 about 150 elderly men in several municipalities all over Sweden participated in the programme. This article is built on research that took place during 2000 and 2001 when all the men that participated in the programme still were only active in the greater Stockholm area.

The “granddads” are elderly men working in schools as a benefit for children. They are not in competition for, or carry out, any of the duties or tasks of a teacher or any other staff in the school. The prerequisites for being accepted to work as a granddad in the school are fondness for children and adolescents, an ability to be aware of their needs and a preparedness to relate to them in a positive way. There is a steering group which arranges and organizes the contacts between schools and granddads and decide where the granddad will work. Each granddad and each school are required to accept an initial mutual trial period of 1-3 months before the placement is approved.

The granddad project in Sweden in compulsory schools is the object for research because it is an example of how intergenerational lifelong learning can be implemented in reality. The programme entails both a lifelong and a lifewide (that is, both formal and informal learning) per-
spective, and there is an opportunity to discover how social capital within the schools are increasing for pupils and granddads.

Social capital is derived and nurtured in social contexts where people are working together towards a common goal. The social capital invested in children by parents and other adults, for example, teachers and the “granddads” in this programme, is generated when people co-operate and make use of the common social capital available to them. The pupils regard the adults as role models and gain experience from working together with them in the mentoring and supervision that is taking place. This gives possibilities for generating social capital in the form of trust, norms and structure, together with a viable and vital communication between participants (Coleman, 1988).

Intergenerational learning is an integral part of lifelong learning as it encompasses both a lifelong and a lifewide perspective (Tuijnman and Boström, 2002; Boström, 2002; Boström, 2003). In the literature on intergenerational interventions, the concept of intergenerational transmission has been defined in a number of different ways. One such definition (Newman, 1997) targets specific, intergenerational programmes. Another definition is derived from explorations of all intended intergenerational transmission (Kaplan, 1998). At a meeting in Bommerholz, Germany, April 1999 organised by the UNESCO Institute of Education in Hamburg (UIE), an effort was made to clarify a common view on the concept of Intergenerational Programmes. The definition agreed upon was: “Intergenerational programmes are vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations” (Boström, Hutton-Yeo, Ohsako, and Sawano, 2000, p. 3).

This paper investigates the Granddad Project in Sweden, an intergenerational initiative conducted in schools in the Stockholm County area. There are three main reasons why the granddad intergenerational intervention became the subject of the present study. First, this intervention occurs on a regular and scheduled basis and constitutes a relatively long-term intervention (six months-two years). Second, although the intervention was largely confined to the greater Stockholm area, a variety of different cultural backgrounds and contexts are evident in the target population. Third, voluntarism is guaranteed in this intervention because of the manner in which the granddads are selected by the project group for participation in the programme. These factors allow a more quantitative method of analysis to be carried out than would otherwise be the case. One section of the research reported here concerns the extent to which the actual presence of these granddad figures in a school may be sufficient to prevent outbreaks of violent behaviour. It appears
that it may not be necessary for these male figures to act explicitly as guardians of the peace.

The granddads in this present study fall under the category of “voluntary sector.” Consequently, they are members of organizations where both employees and volunteers are to be found. The granddads themselves have chosen to participate in this work and they receive a remuneration which is only slightly higher than what they would have received from the unemployment insurance scheme.

**INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECTS IN SCHOOLS**

In Japan, the role of senior citizens in intergenerational programmes in schools may take many different forms (Kaplan, 1998). They may function as an educator, a conveyor of culture or as a companion for pupils. According to Newman (1997), the senior citizens in the intergenerational programmes in schools in the United States may function as mentors, tutors, caregivers or nurturers, mature friends or coaches.

An inventory of the intergenerational programmes in Sweden (Boström, 2000, 2001a) indicates that a variety of different project models exist. The Granddad Project is included among these and it is a programme which has been developed in the context of the school. The “granddads,” as they are commonly known in Sweden, work on a voluntary basis in compulsory schools. They do not assume any of the normal duties or tasks of the teachers or any of the other staff in the school. When male senior citizens apply for work as granddads in this programme, they must fulfil two criteria. First, they must be fond of children and, second, they must be able to perceive the needs of the pupils and be able to relate to the pupils in a positive way.

**THE GRANDDAD PROJECT**

This intergenerational project started in the fall of 1996 with a retired gentleman together with a teacher realising the need for more male adults other than teachers in schools. The rationale for the project was the current situation in the Swedish schools. The student:teacher ratio has increased from 100:9 in 1991-1992 to 100:7.7 in 1996-1997. That is, there are fewer teachers and, at the same time the percentage of female teachers and school leaders has increased. Additionally of the 1.8 million children in Sweden, a total of 315,000 children aged 0-18 were living with only their mother (many absentee fathers and often a lack of a
family network). Furthermore, 69.7 percent of Swedish women between 16-64 years of age are working. These factors contribute to a stressful situation for female teachers who need to cope with young boys brought up with no male role models in the home. Because of the need for male role models, the number of “granddads” in the project increased, and by December 2000 there were about 41 older men working in 33 different schools. These older gentlemen work in the schools on a voluntary basis. Those eligible for this kind of work fall into two categories. Namely, in one group are recent retirees at age 65, and the second group, aged 55+, have been unemployed for some years because of early retirement or loss of a job. Though retirement age is 65, forced or chosen unemployment after 55 is often followed by early retirement resulting in withdrawal from the social network, the working environment provided. Even though funding from the Social Security and/or Welfare systems ensures financial support, many of these men often express an ardent desire to work and to feel that they are, in this manner, a vital part of society. In their work in the schools they are needed and wanted by teachers and students. Furthermore, they receive a salary, which is paid, partly from the employment office and partly from the schools. The belief is that these “golden men” will stay healthy and active because of a better quality of life and at the same time contribute to an increasing social capital within the schools.

Since today there is a considerable need for more adults throughout the school environment, including classrooms, most of the granddads in this study have a particular classroom as a base, and also participate in the work and activities that take place elsewhere in the school. Most of them feel that they are needed and are able to do more work in this way. Despite their age, they are still very active and want to participate and help whenever and wherever possible and to do as much work as they are able to do. The aim of this study is to include all the granddads (19 out of 41) that were formally registered as having some connection with a classroom. These 19 “granddads” have a variety of different backgrounds and have worked in diverse occupations before starting their present work in the schools. In fact no two of these men have the same background. The varied occupations while in the workforce included: engineering salesperson, technician working with draft beer, maintenance technician, finance manager, self-employed, welder and metalworker, employee in a social welfare department, municipal architect, employee in construction industry, bank manager, surveyor, office caretaker, chef, scenographer, painter, sales assistant, chimney sweeper, senior police officer, and mayor.
Since this kind of volunteer work is new to this society, the granddads are required to prepare their own job descriptions for this work in the schools. Therefore, each of the granddads has developed his work in a different way, depending on the context and the needs of the school in which he works. In addition, each school is organized along different lines. In some schools the teachers work in teams, so that the granddad may be working in all the classes that are part of the team. Often, in grades 7 to 9, the task of the granddad is to keep an eye on what is going on in the school during the breaks, especially in the corridors close to the student lockers. Initially, granddads are often assigned to a particular classroom, but eventually they find themselves working throughout the school as they discover that it is in this way that they are best able to make use of their own experiences. Most of the principals in the schools expressed the view that they wished to have a granddad who is independent and who is able to plan what is needed and carry out his work in his own way in the school.

**SOCIAL CAPITAL**

In Western societies, efforts have been made over a long period of time to develop human capital, while social capital that is associated with human cooperation and quality of life in the workplace has received little attention. In the publication *The Well-Being of Nations* (OECD, 2001), there is a focus on the role of human capital and social capital and the importance of quality in life and well-being. In Eastern societies, these values are often seen as being too important to be explained in terms of economics. As Okamoto (1992) puts it, lifelong learning should be of a sacred and spiritual nature to be enjoyed by people and to improve the mental and spiritual quality of daily life. The concept of social capital used in this article is based on the definition by Coleman (1988):

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, they facilitate certain aspect of social structures and they facilitate certain actions of actors—whether persons or corporate actors—within the structure. (Coleman, 1988, p. 98)

According to Coleman (1988), there are three forms of social capital, as follows:
• Social capital as the level of trust to be found in the social environment and the actual extent of recognized obligations.
• Social capital as information channels.
• Social capital constituting those norms and sanctions that encourage or constrain people to work for a common good, thereby relinquishing their own immediate self-interest.

Coleman (1990) referred to another use of the concept of social capital, as that set of resources found to inhere in family relationships and in community social organisation, where such resources are considered useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or an adolescent. These resources vary from individual to individual and may constitute an important advantage for children and adolescents in the development of their own human capital.

The concept of social capital has been utilized in a number of areas of investigation and in a variety of disciplines. Bourdieu (1984, 1992) was one of the first to develop the concept of social capital in relation to cultural capital. Putnam (1993), Fukyama (1995, 2000), Schuller and Field (1998) and Woolcock (1999) have also used the concept. There is, nonetheless, one common denominator in that most of this research entails the three pillars of the concept, that is to say, trust, communication and network.

**INDICATORS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Two Swedish studies were used to construct indicators of social capital. In one study (Boström, 1995) a questionnaire was given to parents regarding their children’s school. The responses from 46 parents were analysed from which the following three constructs emerged.

• Solidarity and unity within the group promotes co-operation, a safe environment, quiet and order (i.e., norms and structure) in the classroom.
• The staff provide supportive help for the pupils, when needed, and pupils have high self-esteem and enjoy going to school, indicating trust.
• Effective communication between teachers and parents and their children creates a well functioning network.
These may also be viewed from a social capital perspective since according to Coleman (1988, 1990) co-operation, a safe environment derived from norms and structures, assistance when needed, and effective communication are entities of social capital.

A quantitative study made by the Stockholm Local Authority (Utbildningsförvaltningen, 2000a, 2000b) had used a questionnaire in order to investigate the views of pupils with regard to the quality of the physical and social environment in their schools (see Table 1). The research for this study was undertaken during 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 and was carried out in two parts. One part covered 22,000 students in grades one to six and the other focused on 18,200 students in classes seven to nine. The study covered four areas: teaching and working methods, safety and well-being, external factors and information and participation.

The variables concerning safety and well-being have been extrapolated from the Stockholm questionnaire to the pupil questionnaire in the present study (see Table 2). Norms and structures are indicated by two

<p>| TABLE 1. Views of the Pupils with Regard to the Granddad and His Duties. The Categories Included: Never (1), Sometimes (2), Often (3) and Always (4) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils' Views with Regard to “Granddad”</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. He is present in the classroom.</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. He is with the children during breaks.</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. He is in the dining hall at lunch.</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. He accompanies children and teacher on excursions outside the school.</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. He supports and assists everyone.</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. He is solving conflicts.</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. He stops violence by his presence.</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. He gives restrictions.</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. He assists the teacher.</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. He is taking care of “disruptive” students.</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. He is taking care of one “disruptive” student.</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. He is helping students in different subjects.</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. He is talking to and comforting children.</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. He uses his own experience from earlier occupations.</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. He talks about his experience from earlier occupations.</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. He takes care of a group of children.</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. He substitutes for teachers.</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
observed variables, order and rules in the classroom (21), and a quiet and pleasant working environment (22). Trust is indicated if pupils feel completely safe at school (26). One question also concerned co-operation between pupils.

These variables, having been further developed, are used in the present study as indicators to measure social capital. However, it is preferable to have several different indicators for each of the entities of social capital. Therefore, more specific variables have been included for co-operation between pupils both in the classroom (18) and during

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators for Social Capital</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. Co-operation between pupils in the classroom</td>
<td>N 503 Mean 3.98 Std. 1.02</td>
<td>N 263 Mean 3.95 Std. 1.03</td>
<td>N 240 Mean 4.00 Std. 1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Co-operation between boys and girls</td>
<td>N 505 Mean 3.62 Std. 1.14</td>
<td>N 265 Mean 3.65 Std. 1.13</td>
<td>N 240 Mean 3.60 Std. 1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Co-operation between pupils during breaks</td>
<td>N 498 Mean 4.08 Std. 1.00</td>
<td>N 260 Mean 4.12 Std. 0.97</td>
<td>N 238 Mean 4.06 Std. 1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Order and rules in the classroom</td>
<td>N 501 Mean 3.36 Std. 1.19</td>
<td>N 262 Mean 3.44 Std. 1.15</td>
<td>N 239 Mean 3.27 Std. 1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Quiet and pleasant environment</td>
<td>N 500 Mean 3.06 Std. 1.29</td>
<td>N 260 Mean 3.14 Std. 1.29</td>
<td>N 240 Mean 3.00 Std. 1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Individual assistance and support from granddad</td>
<td>N 511 Mean 3.86 Std. 1.14</td>
<td>N 266 Mean 3.81 Std. 1.11</td>
<td>N 245 Mean 3.93 Std. 1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Individual assistance and support from teacher</td>
<td>N 497 Mean 4.22 Std. 0.94</td>
<td>N 258 Mean 4.16 Std. 0.96</td>
<td>N 239 Mean 4.31* Std. 0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Support from another pupil during breaks</td>
<td>N 498 Mean 3.96 Std. 1.00</td>
<td>N 260 Mean 3.80 Std. 1.05</td>
<td>N 238 Mean 4.14* Std. 0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Pupil feeling completely safe in school</td>
<td>N 500 Mean 3.94 Std. 1.08</td>
<td>N 260 Mean 3.93 Std. 1.07</td>
<td>N 240 Mean 3.97 Std. 1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Girls and boys have equal opportunities</td>
<td>N 506 Mean 3.94 Std. 1.00</td>
<td>N 265 Mean 3.94 Std. 0.96</td>
<td>N 241 Mean 3.95 Std. 1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Discuss with teachers</td>
<td>N 502 Mean 4.00 Std. 1.02</td>
<td>N 263 Mean 4.0 Std. 0.98</td>
<td>N 239 Mean 4.01 Std. 1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Talk to another pupil when there is a difficulty</td>
<td>N 511 Mean 4.12 Std. 0.99</td>
<td>N 266 Mean 3.92 Std. 1.07</td>
<td>N 245 Mean 4.35* Std. 0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Talk to the teacher when there is a difficulty</td>
<td>N 502 Mean 3.9 Std. 1.10</td>
<td>N 261 Mean 3.94* Std. 0.98</td>
<td>N 245 Mean 3.86 Std. 1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Talk to granddad when there is a difficulty</td>
<td>N 511 Mean 3.53 Std. 1.25</td>
<td>N 266 Mean 3.71* Std. 1.15</td>
<td>N 245 Mean 3.36 Std. 1.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant difference between boys and girls at a significance level of 0.05%
breaks (20) and co-operation between boys and girls (19). The latter variable also complements the gender variable (27). Being provided with individual support and assistance is important for the pupils and an indicator for the social entity of trust. Therefore, in this context, three variables are included: trust for the granddad (23), trust for the teacher (24) and trust between individual pupils (25). Opportunities for talking with someone, when a pupil is experiencing difficulties, are also an indicator of communication and trust. Talking with the granddad (31), talking with the teacher (30) and talking to a peer (29) are the variables that are included to indicate communication in the classroom. There is also one further variable regarding communication between teacher and pupil which is discussion with the teacher (28).

**DATA COLLECTION**

To collect data from the pupils, a questionnaire was constructed. The questionnaire had two main sections. One section regarded information on how pupils perceived the granddads’ work (see Table 1) and the other was constructed to measure social capital as described above (see Table 2). The two parts are connected. Questions 1-17 deal with the pupils’ views with regard to the granddads’ work, and 18-31 deal with indicators of social capital. The author of this paper administered and collected the questionnaires during the spring of 2000. The total number of schools participating in this research is 17, all in the greater Stockholm area. Here, as in all other compulsory schools in Sweden, as a result of the recent process of decentralization in education, considerable variation is to be found with regard to the manner in which the schools are organized. Thus, the size of the schools ranged from 120 pupils to 923 pupils, while the total number of classes in the schools ranged from 6 to 39.

Data collection for a qualitative follow-up with open-ended questionnaires to the granddads was carried out in November 2001 at a monthly meeting of the Association for Granddads in Stockholm. All the participating granddads at that meeting agreed to answer seven questions regarding their work. This questionnaire was also sent to those granddads who had not been present at that particular meeting, giving a total response frequency for this data collection of 26 from a total of 41 males working as granddads in the schools, giving a response rate of 63%. All granddads in the schools had been targeted in this data collection in an attempt to achieve as many experienced and differentiated responses as possible.
RESULTS

The pupil questionnaire was distributed to a total of 580 pupils from the 17 schools involved. The pupil response rate is given for each question (see Table 1 and Table 2). One section of the questionnaire asked the respondents about how they perceived the activities of the granddad in their school. The answer to each of the questions could be chosen from the following response alternatives, as they were listed on the questionnaire: (1) never; (2) sometimes; (3) often; or (4) always. The wording of the questions, in the order in which they appeared in the questionnaire, are listed in Table 1. The answer to question number 7: “Does granddad stop violence by being present in school?” is drawn from a report to the Swedish National Agency for Education regarding the work of the granddads (Boström, 2001b) where it was found that there was a significant difference between the answers from the boys and the girls. A cross tabulation in SPSS between the variable from question 7 (Does granddad stop violence by being present in school?), and gender implied that there is a difference between the impact of the granddad intervention as regards boys and girls at a significance level of 0.001.

The views of the pupils with regard to the granddad and his various duties are presented in Table 1. The mean and the standard deviation for each question are presented. Particular attention is drawn to questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 13. The responses to these questions indicate that in the view of the pupils, the granddad is of help to them, he resolves conflicts, he imposes restrictions, he assists pupils in the different subjects and he talks to, and comforts, pupils. They also indicate that the presence of the granddad prevents violence from occurring. It is to be noted that, with regard to three of the observed indicators (see Table 2), there are some significant differences between the responses of the boys and those of the girls (see Figure 1). The boys feel that the granddad prevents violence from occurring and that they do not feel they have to start fights or be disruptive when the granddad is present. The responses of the boys also indicate that a disruptive pupil (a pupil who talks in class and shows concentration problems when doing school work) is better able to concentrate on schoolwork when the granddad is by his side and providing support. Further, the boys, to a greater extent than the girls, make use of opportunities to talk to the granddad when any difficulties arise.

The pattern for question 7 is also presented in Figure 1. The answers from the girls and boys are shown in the graph. For boys, the graph shows they reported granddads’ presence “often” or “always” stops violence in the 80-90 percentile. In comparison, girls reported the granddads’ presence “often” and “always” stopped violence in the 70+
and 40+ percentile, respectively. The girls have considered the category “sometimes” and not so much the categories for “often” and “always” compared to the boys which used the last two categories of “often” and “always” more than the two first categories. The results from the third and fourth category imply that there is a difference between boys and girls regarding the impact of a “granddad” intervention. The findings reported here in fact do indicate that from the point of view of the pupils, the very presence of a granddad is sufficient to prevent outbreaks of violent behaviour. Differences between male and female pupils have also been investigated, where it has been found that the presence of a granddad figure is of more significant to boys than for girls.

**PUPIL RESPONSES REGARDING INDICATORS FOR SOCIAL CAPITAL**

No differences with regard to boys and girls appear in the pupil responses to the questions concerning the indicators for social capital for co-operation between pupils. This is the case with regard to co-opera-
tion in the classroom, co-operation during breaks and co-operation between boys and girls. The pupil responses also indicate that boys and girls have equal opportunities in school and feel equally safe there.

However, analysis of the data from the pupil population indicates that the responses do display some differences between boys and girls with regard to feelings of trust and having the opportunity to confide in a friend when a pupil is experiencing difficulties. The girls confide in friends to a greater extent than do boys when experiencing difficulties, while the boys tend to talk more than the girls to an adult, either the teacher or the granddad.

The responses to the questions concerning the gender variables, co-operation between boys and girls, together with equal opportunities in school, do not indicate any differences between the boys and the girls. However, the responses indicate that there is a significant difference between the girls and boys with regard to individual support from the teacher, which occurs to a greater extent for girls then it does for boys, although the responses from the pupil population as a whole still indicate that they consider they have ample opportunities for receiving individual support and assistance from the teacher.

Pupils appreciate the individual assistance and support they receive from the teacher, although the appreciation is greater among the girls. The girls are also satisfied with their opportunities to talk to a fellow pupil when experiencing difficulties and for support and assistance from other pupils, whereas the boys are more likely to talk to the teacher or the granddad when experiencing difficulties rather than talking to a peer.

**How Do the Granddads Perceive Their Work?**

During the informal exchanges that took place at the time the questionnaires were administered, many of the granddads reported that they enjoyed carrying out their duties very much. Subsequently, the granddads were asked to complete a questionnaire containing seven open-ended questions, in order to attain deeper understanding of their experiences from their work in the classrooms and the extent to which these experiences contributed to any developments that increased social capital on their part. Twenty-nine granddads completed the questionnaire. In this article, two of the questions contained in the questionnaire are accounted for, question number three and question number four (see Table 3).

A qualitative method was used in order to analyse the data from the responses to the open-ended questions. First, all the responses from the
twenty-nine granddads were collated. Then this collated data were ana-
lysed to identify similarities across the various responses in order to es-
tablish several different categories. The responses to each question 
were treated separately. Thus, all responses to each question have been 
collated, after which the traces of different categories contained in the 
responses with similarities and differences noted.

What Is the Most Important Aspect of Your Work 
as a Granddad in School?

All the respondents wrote about what they felt to be the most impor-
tant aspect of their work as a granddad in school. Their responses fall 
into three categories, the first, exercising influence and being a role 
model (9 of the granddads), the second, being available and able to offer 
comfort and to provide assistance (9 of the granddads), the third is being 
able to support the pupils in various ways in school (10 of the 
granddads). One of the respondents stated that he did not really have an 
answer to this question. It might well be that he arrived at the school and 
saw things “through a new pair of eyes.” Two of the granddads pro-
vided statements that could be related to responses in two different cate-
gories. Examples of how granddads expressed what they felt to be the 
most important aspect of their work appear Table 4.

In one of the responses, the granddad expressed the view that it was 
important that he would be a male role model, socially supportive, a lis-
tener and a comforter. Most of the respondents expressed the opinion 
that they consider it important that granddads behave in a friendly but 
resolute manner, that they establish clear limits that apply to all pupils.

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TABLE 3. Open-Ended Questions to the Granddads Regarding Their Work in 
Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Why did you choose to work as a granddad in a school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What was your impression when you returned there as an adult?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the most important aspect of your work as a granddad in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What do you gain from your work as a granddad in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you feel that you are an active participant in school activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What advice would you wish to offer teachers and principals who are considering employing a granddad in their school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What advice would you give to prospective granddads?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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What Do You Gain from Your Work as a Granddad in School?

With regard to the responses to this question, the comments were largely very positive. Here, too, the responses may be grouped into three categories. In the first category (9 granddads included), the respondents state that they feel needed and that they have established new contacts in the community. In the second category (15 granddads included), the respondents describe their feelings about working in a school, and, finally, in the third category (5 granddads are included), the respondents state they are learning something about the functioning of society. Examples of written statements by respondents in each of the three categories are presented in Table 5.

CONCLUSION

The pupils receiving formal education in schools meet male senior citizens, as role models and friends. The senior citizens are not professionally engaged in formal education of their students; their interest is in the students’ social character, where they are providing care for the
pupils but not teaching them in any direct manner. The pupils expressed that they were assisted and comforted in school by the granddads’ indicating that they were having a social benefit from the granddads, intervention in their classrooms. Pupils co-operate with each other and individual pupils feel secure and trust the adults present with whom they are able to co-operate. In this context a granddad is able to recognize that his presence is needed and that his role in this network is important.

Most of the men chose to be a granddad in a school for two reasons: they were unemployed or retired and still wanted to participate in society and they wanted to support and assist children in schools. When returning to school after 40-50 years it gave them various experiences. The schools were different in their organisation and environment, and were different for each granddad. Some of the granddads were quite satisfied with the school environment and others were shocked. Some felt a lack of respect for the elderly that young people had when they went to school. They described this as bad discipline and chaos with a high level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A reality “fix” and a social life.</td>
<td>It is a wonderful feeling when the pupils come forward and ask questions about anything and everything as if one were their real granddad.</td>
<td>New experiences, my contributions meet with direct responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a person, I really feel needed. No age segregation—rather the opposite, particularly in the case of pupils with immigrant backgrounds.</td>
<td>Much happiness, little sorrow.</td>
<td>I have both children of my own and grandchildren who are in their middle-school years. I am learning how society functions today with regard to children and young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A feeling of being needed and gaining insight into the world of young people today.</td>
<td>It is stimulating to work with young people who are open, honest and spontaneous.</td>
<td>I have learned a great deal myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am considered a professional and an equal by the staff.</td>
<td>Headaches and sleepless nights but also much that is positive, not only from the school management, teachers, and parents but particularly from the pupils. During the whole of my 40 years in working life never have I been met in such a positive manner. I feel very happy.</td>
<td>Working as a granddad means that I will learn Swedish fully.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of noise, which was worse than they could have imagined. They described these differences as “freer” schools and children today are restless and lack concentration. They therefore try to influence the students in a positive way by being available to support and assist them. Although this environment makes the work hard and demanding they like their job because they feel needed and have a social life and attain new experiences. They really feel that they are included among the other professionals in the schools and show this by using a superlative to underline their responses. In their advice to granddads-to-be, their experience is evidenced. Men starting to work as a granddad should put away their prejudices. They should also be flexible and available. As a summary it could be said that it is hard work but still they find it rewarding because of the social network which develops with the staff and children and the positive feelings from the students. All this indicates a growing social capital for the granddads themselves in the school situation. The results from this research of the granddad program in Sweden indicate benefits for both pupils and the elderly.

REFERENCES


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