Planet generation

How might we create stronger communities by bringing older and younger generations together to tackle social and environmental issues?

Brief 3: <mark>Planet generation</mark>

How might we create stronger communities by bringing older and younger generations together to tackle social and environmental issues?

Background

Beyond your grand-parents and other relatives, do you know any people who are old enough to have retired?

You might be less likely to answer 'yes' now, than other people your age would have 10 years ago. Britain today is one of the most **age-segregated** countries in the world, with the divide between **generations** growing sharply over the past decade . More of us than ever have little contact with other generations outside our own families, which can contribute to lower trust and weaker relationships across people of different ages.

Unfortunately, different generations are often pitted against each other. Some point the finger of blame at an older generation known as **baby boomers** for benefitting from free university education, affordable housing and job security, when many younger people today don't have the same opportunities.

Meanwhile **Gen Z** are often characterised in the media as being selfish and not caring about helping others, despite many young people being engaged with community issues . These narratives can create unnecessary barriers between people, and reduce our ability to work together – whatever our ages - to tackle some of the big social and environmental issues that our whole world faces.

There is, however, an alternative approach, that could help to heal these divisions: **intergenerational solidarity** is the name for the idea of different generations supporting each other.

There are many reasons why this is important. Young people and older people are the two groups in society most likely to feel lonely or socially isolated, with 31 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds and 17 per cent of over 55s feeling lonely 'often or all the time'.

The challenge of independent living also effects both generations. Younger people may struggle to achieve their own independence due to rising rent and house prices. Whereas older generations face a lack of housing suitable for changing mobility needs as we age, meaning many older people lose their independence.

One of the most pressing issues we all face is the climate emergency. Recent research found that three-quarters (75%) of adults across all generations were worried about the impact of climate change, including a sense of helplessness and concern for future generations.

How to approach the brief

We are excited to hear your ideas for ways to build inter-generational empathy, connection, collaboration and understanding.

Thinking about the information above, and through doing wider research alongside your classmates and teacher, how might your proposal incorporate long-term thinking to make this happen?

You can choose to explore whatever priorities you want – but here are some suggestions to help inspire you:

• What if intergenerational relations aren't just a problem to be solved, but an opportunity to be seized?

• How can we bring people together, and so help to build stronger connections between generations, and help to build more cohesive communities?

• These relationships build on the positive resources and skills that younger and older generations have to offer each other and could be the key to tackling social and environmental issues.

We are looking for proposals that:

• Empower people from across different generations to connect and act on issues important to them and their communities. We've given the examples of mental health, housing, and climate change but you could also look much wider for inspiration on how different generation can come together to solve the challenges of our time.

• Consider diverse needs. This means designing inclusive proposals that consider the needs of different ages, abilities and mobilities to participate. Test ideas with different age groups to incorporate feedback throughout.

• Think about the wider barriers that prevent people from different generations coming together? How can these barriers be addressed? How can peoples' perspectives around youth and ageing be changed?

• Demonstrate evidence that you have thought about the feasibility and longevity of your ideas to build stronger intergenerational communities.

Evaluation criteria

Your proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1

Social and environmental impact:

- How does the proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world?
- How does the final proposal consider diverse needs and equitable ways to meet those needs?
- How does the proposal engage with the local community in its chosen context?
- How does the proposal consider using materials, processes, and resources in a sustainable way?

2

Rigorous research and compelling insights:

- Has the pupil/team undertaken first-hand research by identifying the needs and motivations of people affected by the problem in your brief?
- Has the pupil/team conducted research into the wider context of the problem on the internet or through reading material?
- How does the proposal build on key insights grounded in people's needs and motivations, and gained through wider research?
- How does the proposal incorporate feedback and testing through prototyping and iteration?

3

Viability:

- Has the pupil/team considered how the proposal will work in practice?
- Has the pupil/team considered the cost of the proposal and how it might be funded and sustained?
- Has the pupil/team identified any potential barriers that might prevent the proposal working in practice? How might these be overcome?
- Has the pupil/team considered how they would measure the success of their proposal if it became a reality?

4

Creativity and innovation:

- How is the proposal different from existing solutions? How might it be better or more useful?
- What unexpected or surprising elements are included in the proposal? What value do these add to the idea?

How to submit your work

You may work as a team or individually. To submit your work into the RSA Pupil Design Awards you will need to present your proposal on **six A3 boards.** These six boards need to tell the story of your design thinking process from research to final idea. The experts will be looking for the story of how your design developed over time. When the experts first look at your work, you won't be there to explain it, so your six boards need to do all the explaining for you!
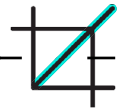
## The six boards:

1. Research

- What design brief are you tackling?
- What research have you done to investigate the challenge and understand how the people/environment are affected?
- How did you conduct some primary research to understand the issue better?

2. Findings

- What is the specific problem you are focusing on?
- What were your key findings from your research?
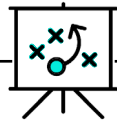- What were your insights from your research?

3. Ideation
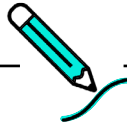
- How have you explored potential ideas?
- What ideas did you decide to explore further?
- What was successful/unsuccessful about them?
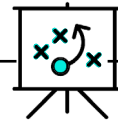
4. Testing & Development

- How did you test your idea?
- Who did you ask for feedback?
- How did you incorporate feedback into your proposal?

5. Impact

- How could your proposal work in the real world?
- What could be the challenges you might face when putting your proposal into the real world?
- What positive impact will your proposal have?

6. Final Idea

- Tell us about your final idea in one statement.
- Who is your proposal aimed at and why?
- What makes it different to existing solutions?