<The audio was not picked up on <HANNAH’s> side for the first two minutes since I had my earphones in but it was general chat getting to know each other a little bit>

00:02:18 Interviewer

Alright, well, let me tell you a little bit about the study. So just bear with me. I need to put the speaker on here so that it can pick this up. So, can you still hear me?

00:02:35 Participant

I can hear you, yes.

00:02:36 Interviewer

Lovely, that's perfect. So, the study is about the experiences of older adults and lifelong learning with specific focus on intergenerational exchanges and digital skills. So <HANNAH>, what I mean by intergenerational exchanges, it's what we learn from our parents, our children. I know you said you don't have grandchildren, and so it's about lifelong learning generally, there is a focus on digital skills, but obviously that doesn't apply in this case. Your insights will help contribute to research in this area, in Ireland, because there's very little that's known about lifelong and intergenerational learning outside of the school and college environments, does that make sense?

00:03:25 Participant

Oh, that’s alright.

00:03:27 Interviewer

It's an important piece of research, so I'll just go through these consent statements and I'll read them slowly and at the end you can let me know if you consent, and if you have any questions I can deal with those as well. Is that OK?

00:03:45 Participant

That’s alright.

00:03:46 Interviewer

Fabulous. So, number one. I confirm that I understand the information about the study that has been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.

Number two, I understand that my participation is voluntary and if I'm involved in interview, I'm free to withdraw my participation within two weeks of the date of the interview without giving any reason, and my data will be removed. So what that means is if you change your mind about our conversation I’ll put it all in the bin.

Number three, I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles, publications or presentations by the researcher (that's me), but my personal information will not be included, and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect my anonymity when I'm involved in this project. Anonymized data will be offered to Lancaster University Archives, (Lancaster is where I'm doing this study) and will be made available to genuine research for reuse. So <HANNAH>, I'm not planning on using any names or anything, it's just the stories really that I want to make sense of for my research.

Number four then is similar. I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations without my consent.

Number five. I understand that interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.

So when I have the transcription all typed up, if you like <HANNAH>, I can pop a copy in the post for you to read if you wish, and if you don't, that's fine too.

00:05:35 Participant

Yeah, I think I’d quite like that.

00:05:38 Interviewer

OK, perfect. Well I'll take your address from you then later. It'll take me into next week now I'd say before I get this done but I think it's nice to have a record of what we've said so I'll be able to do that no problem at all.

And then number six, I understand that data will be kept according to university guidelines, for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.

And finally number seven. I agree to take part in this study. So how does that sound <HANNAH>?

00:06:07 Participant

Alright.

00:06:08 Participant

No, you're not doing anything....

00:06:12 Interviewer

No, nothing unethical. That's the whole purpose of this. So, that's grand. OK, the first seven questions that I have here are just to tell me a little bit about yourself and you've told me a little bit already, but I'll just go through them anyway.

00:06:31 Interviewer

Your age range, <HANNAH>?

00:06:34 Participant

My age is 83.

I don't mind telling my age. A lot of people don’t.

00:06:42 Interviewer

Well, I'm very careful about that, so that's why I have a category 75 or older. I don't actually ask.

00:06:48 Participant

You can put 75 or older.

00:06:51 Interviewer

OK, your gender is female, male, other or prefer not to say?

00:06:59 Participant

I'm a female, I think <laughs>

00:07:00 Interviewer

OK, people can be funny about that too, but that's perfect.

00:07:05 Participant

Oh my goodness.

00:07:05 Interviewer

Yeah, they can.

And your Irish county of residence is Cork right? I thought you might be on the border there with Waterford but no.

00:07:17 Participant

No, no, no. It's definitely Cork. I'm opposite the Cork Golf Club.

00:07:21 Interviewer

Oh, very nice place.

00:07:24 Participant

Now it's quite nice, it's quite nice. So, you get the ball is probably sitting in the garden sometimes <laughs>.

00:07:31 Interviewer

As long as they don't bounce on your head, <HANNAH>.

00:07:34 Participant

No, no, it's alright.

00:07:36 Interviewer

OK, good.

00:07:38 Interviewer

Perfect, and is it an urban or a rural area?

00:07:47 Participant

It's got over the years, more urban.

It was, I mean, there's more houses now, because this isn't that old a town, 19 or 20 years old.

00:08:04 Interviewer

OK, that's fair enough and we're using what the Statistics Office has – 1,500 as population under or over. So it sounds like it's urban. I mean, if you're in the area, close Eilish anyway, so that's definitely urban.

00:08:22 Interviewer

So do you live alone or do you live with anybody else?

00:08:30 Participant

At the present time I live alone.

00:08:32 Interviewer

OK, and your education level. So when, at what level? I know it would be different to Ireland, did you leave school <HANNAH>?

So, what kind of exams would they have been at that time? Would you have left with?

00:08:57 Participant

I left school at 15? I went to high school and I was in the second highest group. I was in the B class. And I did shorthand and typing.

00:09:11 Interviewer

Oh my goodness, excellent, and that was all part of high school?

00:09:20 Participant

At school, that was the school education system.

00:09:24 Interviewer

That's brilliant because they don't have that in this country, that's for sure.

00:09:27 Participant

I'm not sure, that's going back a long time now, and I don't know if they still do it. I don't know, but it's (probably) all changed now.

00:09:36 Interviewer

It's all computers now and recording, I think now.

00:09:43 Interviewer

Thank you so much for all of those. When I think of lifelong learning, and that's really what my study is about. So what you've explained to me there now is that will be considered formal learning so up to the point that we leave our full-time education.

00:10:01 Interviewer

And then <HANNAH> we would have non-formal learning. So this would be where it would be organised learning perhaps through a group or perhaps through a community.

00:10:11 Participant

I used to do some time with children. I used to do the Girl Guides, and this training was in England. And I used to try and play golf.

00:10:37 Interviewer

OK, fantastic.

00:10:43 Interviewer

So tell me a little bit about the Girl Guides because that's of interest (to this research).

00:10:46 Participant

That’s going back years now, it's all changed from what it’s like now.

00:10:53 Interviewer

It is yes. I was a Girl Guide myself in the early 1980s I think.

00:11:01 Participant

Actually I did do the Brownies in Cork here one time.

00:11:10 Interviewer

I remember being in the Brownies as well, and we learned so much from you know, the Brown Owl, and the Tawny Owl and that kind of thing.

00:11:19 Participant

Well I did it in Douglas Church.

00:11:22 Interviewer

OK fantastic. And what was that like being involved with them? All girls then of course.

00:11:31 Participant

It was all girls and was really good too. I enjoyed my time there.

00:11:36 Interviewer

I think it's nice as well because I teach at university, and I think it's nice to see students or people learning and going away with something that you've taught them.

00:11:49 Participant

The Dragon (Guides) age. And they’re just starting their learning, really, you know.

So then they go up. The Girl Guides, I think finish up at 18. I can't remember. I don't know how it goes now. It's all different.

00:12:20 Interviewer

Well it is different from when I did it as well because the I remember the Brownies were kind of 7 to 11, then the Girl Guides, but I think the Girl Guides stopped about 16. And then they brought in (because I used to be a leader in Cork with) the Venturers, Venture Scouts.

So they were boys and girls, but that was maybe 20 years ago or so. I can't remember exactly.

00:12:34 Participant

11 to 16 I think.

00:12:49 Participant

Oh, it's a long time since and I went over to England. I did it over there as well. I mean, when you're dealing with children of that age, you have to keep them to a certain level.

00:13:40 Interviewer

Any interactions that I have with young people in that regard, I find, and even when I'm teaching, I'm supposed to be the teacher, but oftentimes I learn more from them, than I teach them, you know?

00:13:51 Participant

Sometimes some of them can, yes.

00:13:53 Interviewer

Some, not all, though, that's for sure.

OK, that's lovely. So, tell me about how you got involved with the Active Retirement group and what kind of things you do.

00:14:04

Oh dear, I've only been with them for, well, it was through Eilish.

And I was sitting at home. My husband said “why don't you join something?”

So I went and I met them all and everybody was very nice.

We just went along to the village hall.

And I met Eilish.

I speak to this lady every week and just thinking I'm getting very bad with names unfortunately <laughs>.

00:14:51 Interviewer

It's OK, no worries.

00:14:53 Participant

And the other lady that she helped, Marguerite? No, it wasn't...

It was very good because I needed something like that to get out of myself, you know.

00:15:12 Interviewer

Something social?

00:15:14 Participant

Yes, and they were all very good and I'm just waiting on it to start again.

00:15:20 Interviewer

It should come back soon now. And what kind of things would you would you do when you go there then <HANNAH>?

00:15:21 Participant

I hope it does.

People used to come and give us talks.

And we went to the theatre at times and we used to go down to Cobh and meet the group in Cobh.

00:15:53 Interviewer

Fantastic, well, that's all great. So when people used to come in to talk to the group, what kind of things would they talk about?

00:15:59 Participant

Generally, things that would appeal to people. You know housewives generally and things.

00:16:10 Interviewer

Fantastic, and I think it is so important and as you said like that's the that's the non-formal learning and then you've already talked about informal learning from your peers and people that you meet there so you're covering off a lot more than you think you know?

00:16:30 Participant

They were all very nice. It always ended up with a bit of keep fit.

00:16:40 Interviewer

OK, well that's always good, yeah?

00:16:41 Participant

I'm having a laugh at that.

It was pretty good at. It was very good, depending on who the teacher was, but it was very good. We all enjoyed that.

00:16:51 Interviewer

Yeah, just gentle exercise You must have missed all that have you, <HANNAH>, since the lockdown?

00:16:57 Participant

Yes, I've missed it very much and I just hope it's starting again soon.

00:17:03 Interviewer

Yes, I would think so.

And during the whole of the lockdown especially, you know, last year, a lot of people who never had use of any technology or anything before, and they were starting to do video calls and that kind of thing.

00:17:24 Interviewer

Did you have any interest in in doing anything like that?

00:17:29 Participant

No, never had never crossed my mind really. I never had anybody approach me or anything, no.

00:17:38 Interviewer

OK, I can tell you’re a telephone person as is Eilish, she told me so. I know that I need to ring her anytime I want to speak with her. So I know there were some other groups around the country giving out these Age Friendly tablets, to people who might be interested in that kind of thing. So, if something like that came your way, is that something that you might be interested in <HANNAH>, if the opportunity arose?

00:18:10 Participant

I don't know, I don't know.

No, I’ve not done anything like that before <laughs>.

Now I suppose that I’m getting older, I'm getting a wee bit, I’m a lot slower than I was.

00:18:30 Interviewer

OK, so let me ask you then, in any typical week, before COVID lockdown, how often would you get a visit from or would you visit friends or family in a week, do you remember?

00:18:51 Participant

Oh, Gee <laughs>.

00:18:54 Participant

Visit people?

00:18:58 Participant

Well, my husband died and I went out...

We have no family here at all other than my daughter.

00:19:13 Interviewer

And what about friends?

00:19:16 Participant

We've got friends, we used to see them at the weekend.

00:19:19 Interviewer

OK so of course that all stops then with COVID.

00:19:25 Participant

Well it all stopped, but then with my husband dying it kind of stopped anyway.

00:19:32 Interviewer

That must have been very difficult as well for you?

00:19:36 Participant

It was. I'm back now. I'm gradually getting back, but I find it very, very strange.

00:19:47 Participant

Age Action was very good because I had done Age Action and they actually came to my husband's funeral. I mean they were very, very good.

Eilish and the Active group, the whole group has been very, very good.

00:20:08 Interviewer

Yeah, fantastic, I know that's so important. So, have you used the telephone more than you used to?

00:20:18 Participant

I mean the thing with me is I have a very small family as well. I don't have a lot of relations.

And I do use the telephone. Sometimes I speak to Eilish, sometimes I speak to Marguerite. And my daughter phones twice a day.

00:20:48 Interviewer

I see. Well that's important. Now when I think of quality of life I think about three things. I think about health. I think about happiness and I think of my wellbeing.

00:21:10 Participant

Yes, well I had a bit of a shock there recently. Fortunately it wasn't true, but I’m a person that can get very high.

00:21:26 Interviewer

OK.

00:21:28 Participant

I can get too excited <laughs> and just about 6-7 weeks ago one of my neighbours, she was taking me to the doctor.

00:21:44 Interviewer

OK.

00:21:45 Participant

Then the doctor decided I should go to the hospital.

00:21:51 Interviewer

OK.

00:21:52 Participant

So we went to the hospital and I'm staying overnight in the hospital and they told me I had had a stroke.

00:22:02 Interviewer

Oh my goodness.

00:22:06 Participant

Now it turns out, my daughter and I had a long conversation with my doctor. And he has no recognition of me having a stroke. The hospital told me that the hospital had not told him or anything, so he said you have never had a stroke.

00:22:31 Interviewer

OK, good.

00:22:33 Participant

Which is good, but it was quite, quite frightening.

So that's one of those things that's happened recently.

00:22:45 Interviewer

You must have got an awful fright. But you sound to me like you have a very positive outlook on life and you know you've had a tough time you know, in the last couple of years, obviously, but you sound like a very positive person <HANNAH>. Would that be fair?

00:22:58 Participant

I try and be as positive as I can. Sometimes I'm not as good, you know, and now since this breakdown (lockdown?) I have very much kept myself to myself.

Because I have nobody around. I mean my neighbour is out working and I have no family as such, but our friends in Douglas. Now I didn't see them for quite a while, but they're back for coffee and I go there every second Tuesday. I'm gradually getting back into things, you know.

00:23:47 Interviewer

Good, that's great. Because it sounds like, especially after getting used to, making new friends in Eilish's group, it's very, very hard to have to drop all that, you know?

00:24:01 Participant

Now we're hoping that's going to start again. Because we’re all hoping that because it was a very big miss in this part of the country. Eilish is brilliant <HANNAH>. We generally have quite a good group.

00:24:30 Interviewer

Yes, it sounds like it. Hopefully that will be back up and running soon.

00:24:34 Participant

Well I hope so. A lot of them have their own families and bigger families, you know. I mean, I've a very, very small (family).

00:24:45 Interviewer

You know there are some organisations, for example, I volunteer with Cork City Partnership and they have a Friendly Call programme. So I ring a lady every day at lunchtime and we chat about the weather, the dogs, the cats, what’s in the news, anything really. And sometimes I might be the only person she would speak to in a day, you know. So there are programmes like that out there.

00:25:14 Participant

I'm a person, I read a lot of books.

00:25:18 Interviewer

Oh, do you? Tell me about that then. What do you like to read?

00:25:21 Participant

Oh, I like anything really <laughs>. I like a good murder <laughs>.

00:25:29 Interviewer

So do you use the library then?

00:25:33 Participant

No, I just buy them. I get them actually in the second (hand) shops.

00:25:40 Interviewer

Yes, so you must have had a supply then to keep you going during the lockdown then?

00:25:45 Participant

I have a supply. My husband was a very slow reader. So we've got books all over the house.

Some of his were a bit more highbrow than mine but I read them all.

00:26:03 Interviewer

I think it's something from childhood when for me it was just a very small library and the children could go on a Thursday afternoon to pick a book.

Like you I read anything and my cousin came in last week and she had been in a second hand shop and she picked up a Patricia Cornwell. Have you ever read her?

00:26:25 Participant

Patricia Cornwell, yes.

00:26:26 Interviewer

I love her and I haven't read her in a while but she picked it up and she opened it and it was in French so she decided to give it to me <laughs>.

00:26:36 Participant

I know a wee bit of French, but my husband was a French speaker. He was French and German.

00:26:44 Interviewer

Oh wow, goodness. Well, I don't know that I’ll read this in French, but it's there and I'll have to tell her I'll try it anyway, but perhaps not at the moment. But yeah, I'm a big fan of the library.

00:26:54 Participant

My French is very limited. Well, we used to love going to France. My husband loved France, loved going there.

00:27:09 Interviewer

I love practising the language when I was there. You know that you wouldn't really get an opportunity to do so here so it’s a country I’m very fond of as well.

00:27:18 Interviewer

I think reading is so important and I think we learn so much from books and you know, even more so than the television in many ways.

00:27:30 Participant

Well, I have the television on just now. And this morning when I got up I tidied the house and put the washing on and did all the things that we do.

00:27:51 Participant

I have this book, I’m dying to get it finished. I think I know how it ends but I won’t look at the end.

00:27:55 Interviewer

I know, well hopefully you can set the time aside when we're done here.

00:27:59 Participant

Oh no, no, I'll get there. There’s still quite a wee bit left. Now I’d be lost without a book.

00:28:08 Interviewer

Yeah, yeah, I'd be the same. I’ve been a library member for a long time.

00:28:15 Participant

I’ve hardly been in the library. I still have a ticket but I don’t think they could use it I’ve had it for so long <laughs>.

00:28:25 Interviewer

But they've gotten a lot more accessible, and during lockdown, the local library here in Skibbereen, in West Cork, they would they would send out a box of books to my older neighbours here, it was great.

00:28:40 Interviewer

It's a great service. You know whether you're online or not.

00:28:49 Participant

I'm not online.

00:28:51 Interviewer

No, and you're probably better off to be quite honest I think, in many ways, but is there anything <HANNAH> this you feel, and certainly we've seen this over lockdown with the bank, the insurance company, the tax, and services like that. They're all saying go online. How did that affect you over that period?

00:29:10 Participant

No, I don't bother.

Mind you, I’ve had a few calls telling me that the bank owes me money.

00:29:22 Interviewer

Scam calls.

00:29:24 Participant

I've had two or three, quite a few, then I just put the phone down.

00:29:28 Interviewer

Dead, right. That's the only thing to do with them because they tend to go for traditional landlines and that, where you can't identify where the call is from.

00:29:36 Participant

My daughters have had them as well.

I just put it (the phone) back. If I don't know who it is or what they're doing I just put it back <laughs>.

00:29:51 Interviewer

Sounds a very sensible thing to do.

00:29:54 Interviewer

I'm just conscious of our time, so we're at 35 minutes.

I promised you I wouldn't be any longer and this has been really, really great <HANNAH>. You've given me a whole pile of information that it's very hard to get access to people in your situation. So I was very grateful to Eilish when she offered to make a couple of phone calls to see if anybody would like to speak to me.

00:30:21 Interviewer

Now do you have any questions for me about what I'm doing or anything at this point?

00:30:25 Participant

Well, what are you doing? And what do you expect to gain from me?

00:30:32 Interviewer

OK. Well, quite a lot because and so my study is all about, lifelong learning, quality of life, and the impact that technology has on it. So, I know from the data from Europe that in the age group over 75 there’s quite a percentage of people who are not online. And I want to understand what life is like and be able to compare that with people who are online.

The way I see it is that, from the couple of people that I've spoken to so far, their outlook is as positive and their quality of life is not negatively impacted by not being online. Does that make sense?

00:31:25 Participant

Yes, I'm not online. I'm on the phone, but I haven’t got a mobile.

00:31:35 Interviewer

And that's the point. You can manage perfectly fine, you don't have a need to be online, I think is what I'm hearing from you.

00:31:51 Participant

Not really. And I'm not a big one for the phone. And I’m not a great one for running in and buying clothes you know <laughs>.

00:31:59 Interviewer

So if you did need something, I don't know, say a new pair of shoes or something during the lockdown. Would it be your daughter you’d reach out to?

00:32:12 Participant

My daughter, she’d get some for me. She's very good, actually.

00:32:20 Interviewer

Yeah, that's brilliant.

00:32:22 Participant

If I need anything. We go away on holiday. We’re just back, actually.

00:32:26 Interviewer

Oh lovely, where did you go?

00:32:31 Participant

We're just back from Tralee. We were there for six nights and it was lovely.

00:32:46 Participant

We always went to a hotel but this time we rented a flat.

It was good and my daughter has a lot of friends up in Tralee.

So we really had a very nice time and I had my birthday there.

00:33:03 Interviewer

Ah, no way. That's lovely.

00:33:08 Participant

So we had a really nice time.

00:33:12 Participant

And then we came back from Tralee to our kitchen ceiling falling down. And we just decorated it all.

So my neighbour had cleaned it all up and everything, so you just really got me at a good time because I'm going away, have to leave the house for a couple of nights while they get it all fixed up.

00:33:49 Interviewer

Oh goodness, that must've been so stressful <HANNAH>.

00:33:57 Participant

But fortunately we missed it.

00:34:01 Interviewer

Yeah yeah, thank goodness.

00:34:05 Participant

My neighbours were very good. One of them has three sons and they're very good.

They had everything cleared out already, you know. So we came back to the house as it is apart from a big hole at this stage.

They were not looking for it to be one of the bedrooms, but I have now been moved downstairs.

00:34:33 Interviewer

OK.

00:34:38 Participant

The doctor and all thinks that’s better than me going up and down stairs all day.

So that’s quite a bit of excitement here.

<At this point <HANNAH> C gave her postal address for a printed copy of the transcript>

00:36:01 Participant

I hope I have been of some help to you.

00:36:03 Interviewer

You have absolutely and it's been an absolute pleasure talking to you. I really, really enjoyed it <HANNAH>. So, I'm going to let you go and thank you for your time again. Really appreciate it and I'll be in touch by post next. Is that OK?

00:36:17 Participant

That’s lovely, thank you very much.

00:36:20 Interviewer

Take care and thank you very much too. Bye bye.