

Carnegie Library Lab: Final Project Snapshot from Cohort 3

About Carnegie Library Lab

Carnegie Library Lab aims to support innovation and leadership in the public library sector across the UK and Ireland by supporting personal development and innovative practice.

The programme is targeted at early to mid-career individuals and offers:

- project funding (£5000-£15000) to enable participants to pilot an innovative project in their library;
- an online learning portal that covers topics such as creativity and innovation, leadership, power and hierarchy, and change and transition;
- mentoring to assist with personal, professional and project development;
- networking opportunities;
- and input from external evaluators to support participants.

The third and final cohort of Library Lab ran for 18 months from June 2018 to December 2019. This is a snapshot of how our third cohort of Carnegie Partners got on with their projects during their time with us and their next steps. It draws on information collated by Blake Stevenson as part of an evaluation conducted on behalf of the Trust.



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Highlights from Carnegie Library Lab Cohort 3



over
1300
people reached
across all projects



85% of parents/carers attending a Number Ninjas workshop in Oldham thought the session had increased their child's interest in maths through play



Positive relationships built with two local High Schools in West Lothian



40 library staff received training and learnt new skills across all projects



An Open Awards accredited qualification created in Wakefield



86% of Reuse, Recycle... Robots participants in Redbridge reported an increased interest in electronics



Libraries in Bexley hosted a murder mystery evening, an instrument making workshop, a pop up games café and an escape room



A music event held and craft materials purchased with funds raised by the sale of MyLibrary cards in Powys

Reuse, Recycle... Robots

Maria Reguera, Vision Redbridge
Culture & Leisure



“This lesson was fun,
I learnt a lot and I would like to be a robot engineer.”

Robotics workshop participant

Project Description

Reuse, Recycle... Robots seeks to inspire children to create and programme robots using recycled materials and affordable electronic components, showing them that robots can be made from materials they would usually discard. The project also educates children about the importance of recycling. The project aimed to provide training and guidance for staff and volunteers in the library service to encourage them to run their own course or activity.

Project Development

Maria worked with a range of partners to deliver a variety of courses and workshops around robots and recycling. One partner, *U Can Too*, developed and delivered robotics courses which were run



over a number of days during school holidays. Another partner, *Output Arts* developed guidance for three family robotics workshops and trained library staff and volunteers to deliver them. Partners at *Amey* and *Keep Britain Tidy* developed content on recycling to be included in the workshops and courses, to encourage children to reflect on how their daily behaviours have an impact on the planet.

The initial activities were mainly delivered at Redbridge Central Library, due to the resources of

Lab Central (the library's digital making space) being based at the library and Maria's personal connections there. From April 2019 more activities were programmed in branch libraries with the support of trained staff and volunteers, however these were not as well attended. This has encouraged Maria to think about how to grow the reputation of Redbridge Libraries around tech activities beyond the Central Library.

"I have put myself forward to deliver talks about my work, something that I have avoided in the past."

Outputs and Outcomes

- ✔ 19 robotics workshops held, with 119 children and 51 adults participating;
- ✔ 99% families/children participating in a family learning robotics workshop or the robotics course successfully created a robot;
- ✔ 44% participants borrowed a micro:bit after participating in a workshop or in the course.
- ✔ 86% of participants reported an increased interest in electronics;
- ✔ 95% of participants reported an increased interest in robotics;



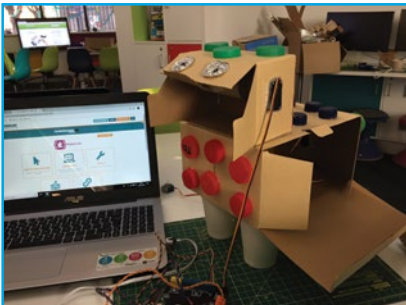
- ✔ 71% of participants reported an increased interest in recycling;
- ✔ 25 library staff and volunteers received training to deliver workshops, with 81% of library staff and volunteers going on to deliver a family learning workshop after the training sessions;
- ✔ 5 new workshops for family learning activities created, with guidance documentation so they can be delivered by other staff and volunteers.

Maria says her confidence and self-assurance has grown, particularly around talking to other library staff about her experience of organising ‘techy’ activities in a library setting. She was invited to speak at another library service’s staff conference

about creating a makerspace and inspiring staff about what can be achieved when incorporating STEM learning activities into their library offer, as well as being invited to deliver training for library staff from other services in a paid capacity. She has also successfully applied for funding from other grant programmes, which she believes was possible due to the confidence gained from taking part in Library Lab.

KEY LEARNING

“ The online training has shown me that on every aspect, from becoming a leader to being more creative, I can learn to do it better if I am prepared to put the time in to learn new skills and methods.



Next Steps

The robotics courses with *U Can Too* will run again in spring 2020, due to demand. The family learning workshops will continue to run with the support of staff, volunteers and tutors from the Redbridge Institute.



Maria hopes that staff from branch libraries who attended the training sessions will run family activities in their branches, and plans to adapt the guidance for the family learning workshops to allow other staff to feel confident to incorporate tech activities in their current offering.

Reuse, Recycle... Robots! has inspired Maria to use recycled materials for other activities, including for a new car design

competition – *Eco Car Challenge 2020* – where young people are encouraged to use recycled materials to build a vehicle that is propelled without electricity or combustible fuel. This competition will use some of the design elements from Maria's Library Lab project for marketing materials.

Maria also feels that she and colleagues can offer training to staff from other library services to run similar activities.

Number Ninjas

Kate Smyth, Oldham Libraries



“I think Number Ninjas is an amazing event. It has helped my children build their confidence in numbers and other aspects of their lives. The children really enjoy coming here and get very excited when it's Saturday.”

Parent

Project Description

Number Ninjas introduced sessions focussing on maths through play and coding for children aged from 4 to 6, their parents and carers to Royton Library in Oldham. Numeracy activities were followed by Story and Rhyme sessions with counting songs and books. The sessions aimed to encourage children to explore, investigate and learn, while supporting their parents and carers to access these activities.

Project Development

Early in the planning stage, Kate met with the Head of School Improvement for Oldham Council and it was arranged for three library staff to undergo REAL Maths



training, which would not usually be offered to library staff. REAL Maths training builds knowledge, skills and confidence in early years practitioners to carry out work with parents, so that they can support their child's early mathematical development at home. This training meant that libraries and schools were able to present a consistent approach in early numeracy activities, and opened up the opportunity for the library service

to expand their numeracy offer. As a result, Count and Rhyme sessions for pre-schoolers are taking place in all Oldham Libraries branches.

Kate also purchased an online subscription service to access education resources, which has been very useful during the project and enabled the library service to build a collection of resources to use when the Carnegie funded project ends.

After consultation with Oldham Council's School Improvement Team, the target age range for children changed from between 3 and 6 years old to between 4 and 6 years old. This meant that the activities could be promoted to Year 1 children and helped the project



focus on supporting Key Stage 1 as well as school readiness. The project was therefore promoted within local schools as well as Early Years settings.

Number Ninjas was initially run in six week blocks after school, with attendance required each week. However the number of attendees dropped, and so the session timings and format were changed to Saturday mornings drop in sessions.

Attracting families who had newly arrived in Oldham or who did not access many services was more difficult than Kate anticipated. The project needed to be promoted in more places than those usually used to attract the traditional audience for family events, and Kate also reached out to organisations who could signpost families to the project. When Oldham Libraries became part of the Libraries of Sanctuary project in the summer of 2019 it gave the library service more links to organisations who work with new arrivals and refugees. Royton Library ran several *Number Ninjas* sessions aimed at these families who were targeted by the Libraries



of Sanctuary project. Close liaison with Oldham Council marketing department helped to develop an eye catching and original brand for Number Ninjas. The library service will continue to use the images and logos going forward.

“My confidence in leading staff members has improved and I feel more able to delegate tasks.”

Outputs and Outcomes

- ✔ 34 Number Ninjas sessions held from January to October 2019 with 392 visits from children and 284 visits from adults accompanying children;
- ✔ Feedback forms from parents and carers indicated that 85% thought that attending a session ‘increased their child’s interest in maths through play’;
- ✔ 65% thought attendance ‘increased their child’s confidence in maths’;
- ✔ Feedback forms indicated that 45% of parents and carers felt the sessions have ‘increased their confidence in maths’ and 85% thought that the sessions ‘gave them ideas about maths activities to do with their children’;
- ✔ 85% of parents and carers think the sessions ‘encouraged them to visit the library more’ and 75% said the sessions ‘helped them find out about other library events’;
- ✔ Staff have seen families attend other sessions within the library, such as Summer Reading Challenge activities, Rhyme Times, the Digital Festival and Code Clubs;

- ✓ 3 library staff received REAL Maths training;
- ✓ Count and Rhyme sessions for under 5s are now running in all libraries, helping embed numeracy into the library service's children's strategy;
- ✓ There has been a 16% increase in book issues for children in Royton Library.

KEY LEARNING

“Be flexible in terms of times and days that sessions run and alter according to community need and not the requirements of the service.”

Next Steps

Kate is dividing the *Number Ninja* resources into smaller packs that will be used in branch libraries at drop in, self-led sessions. Library staff will be trained with REAL Maths methods and will be able to access the online resource and worksheet collection so they can tailor the sessions to their communities.

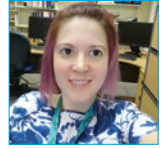


She will also be offering training on 'Maths through play' to Greater Manchester Libraries, to encourage more libraries to run numeracy sessions such as *Number Ninjas* and build the Greater Manchester Combined Authority STEM (Science, Tech, Engineering and Maths) offer.

Delivering *Number Ninjas* has given Kate the confidence to offer more maths-based activities. From January 2020 she is running family STEM sessions in all Oldham Libraries' branches. They will also be on Saturday mornings, and where previously similar sessions would have focused on coding, she is now confident enough to incorporate a maths element as well.

Libraries at Night

Emma Hubbard, Bexley Libraries



“I enjoyed the music and the setting. It was a great use of space and good acoustics. I enjoyed seeing the library used in the evening and it makes more use of the community venue.”

Attendee at the Rock Night

Project Description

Libraries at Night delivered a varied cultural programme in Bexley’s library buildings at times when they would normally be closed to the public. The project aimed to demonstrate the potential for libraries to be at the heart of a local cultural offer, and will be used to develop a business case for a longer-term approach to using libraries as evening venues.

Project Development

Emma worked closely with her manager and another colleague to plan the *Libraries at Night* programme so that the service could experiment with different types of events to see which worked best in libraries. The *Libraries at Night* project was



held during a two week period in February 2019, which coincided with the existing *Book Buzz* festival in Bexley. Emma was able to seek advice from the *Book Buzz* project lead on adding suppliers to the council system and marketing events. To make information about the events easily accessible online, Emma purchased a domain name for the project which was included in all of the advertising, taking customers to the Libraries at Night page on the Library website.



The *Libraries at Night* project was also financially supported by Bexley Libraries, who provided funding to modify shelving in the two largest libraries by putting them on wheels, helping to open up performance spaces easily.

There were initial challenges around the Council's procedure for adding new suppliers and raising Purchase Orders, and with a number of events happening at the same time it was difficult to keep on top of adding new suppliers and raising Purchase Orders. One provider dropped out at short notice due to the Council's terms and conditions, however a new provider was found

in time and delivered a successful event. For future events Emma plans to spread events out, so that a smaller number of suppliers will be added at one time, making it easier to manage.

“This programme has allowed me to jump into the deep end and do something that we have never done in our libraries before. It has shown that I can pull off events that people didn't think our libraries would be suitable venues for.”

Eleven events were held in three libraries across Bexley over a two-week period, including live music events, a murder mystery evening, an instrument making workshop, a motivational talk, a pop up games café and an escape room. The events were put on outside of library open hours by professional companies. Extra hours were offered to branch staff to help at events, and 12 members of staff assisted across the 11 events, with many staff working more than one event.

Outputs and Outcomes

- ✔ 11 events held in February 2019, with 481 attendees across the events;
- ✔ 79% of attendees said that they enjoyed the event they attended 'very much';
- ✔ 68% of attendees said the event changed the way that they think about libraries;
- ✔ 91% of attendees agreed that 'events like this help me to see Bexley as a good place to live';



- ✔ Many single tickets sold for events, with feedback noting that these people would not usually attend events in the town centre in the evening, and that they saw the library as a safe place to go alone;
- ✔ A music event held in September 2019, with 20 attendees;
- ✔ Proof of concept that people will attend evening events at the library;
- ✔ The library service now has a price range for various events to hold in the future;
- ✔ Local Business Improvement District (BID) offices expressed interest in working with the Library service to put on events;
- ✔ Emma is part of a panel working with the council and local BIDs to offer cross-market promotion for events.

Emma was able to use learning from the online learning materials to explain the project and its purpose to staff, meaning that the majority of staff were on board with the project even if they were not involved at events.



KEY LEARNING

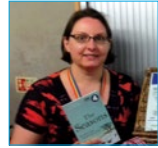
“Leading on this project has made me look at how we use our evaluation from events and to really think about the questions that we put on the forms.”

Next Steps

Emma hopes to hold up to four Libraries at Night events this year, including comedy, live music and a Christmas panto. She will also work with restaurants to offer deals on pre-event food in the local area.

Unhampered Reads

Claire Pickering, Wakefield Libraries



“Everyone contributed
and said they found it uplifting and interesting
and expressed an interest in doing more things...”

Stride Theatre, Wakefield

Project description

The *Unhampered Reads* project developed themed baskets to inspire conversation, reminiscence, creative writing and spoken word in local communities, which are available for loan at Wakefield Libraries. Basket themes include sport, seasons and transport, and items inside included poetry, prose, activities and objects related to the theme.

The project also created an accredited training package for library service staff, health partners and volunteers to enable them to plan and deliver creative peer-to-peer bibliotherapy activities.



Project development

Claire had already started developing the idea for *Unhampered Reads* when she became a Library Lab partner, and was able to test and extend the project by providing training materials for library service staff, health partners and volunteers from local communities. Claire was also able to involve expert practitioners and have access to a mentor, who was extremely helpful in providing suggestions of how to develop the project and plan for future delivery.



Publicity materials were created for the project, however there was some delay in their preparation which had an effect on the momentum of the project in the early part of 2019. However a clear brand identity was created for the project, as well as a website and promotional video.

Claire worked with expert practitioners from Dreamtime Creative (creative organisation) and Words for Wellbeing CIC (bibliotherapy consultants) to develop a training course for library staff and partner organisations who were less

confident in planning and delivering peer-to-peer events. The training course has become an accredited Open Awards qualification and is available to commission via Wakefield Libraries. These organisations also made suggestions to improve the content of the baskets to widen their potential audience.

KEY LEARNING

“Working with expert practitioners has worked really well, they have brought ideas which I would not have thought of.”

Outputs and outcomes

- ✔ 16 themed baskets available to loan through Wakefield Libraries;
- ✔ The baskets were loaned 24 times during the project period and continue to be loaned regularly;
- ✔ 2 of the involved partners have borrowed the baskets over and above these loans;
- ✔ 11 library staff took part in a training course on delivering group and cultural events in the library;
- ✔ 5 of the trained staff have already delivered workshops and have demonstrated their skills to colleagues in branches;
- ✔ 5 partner organisations have received training;
- ✔ Open Awards accredited qualification created;
- ✔ Website and promotional video created which can be viewed at unhamperedreads.wordpress.com;
- ✔ Links with new organisations made, including local care homes and creative writing groups;
- ✔ Project lead has gained experience in registering trademarks and creative commons licensing.

Since the start of the Library Lab programme Claire has also collaborated on a number of creative projects with a range of local artists, with commission sizes ranging from £120 to £25,000.

She has spoken at meetings of the Local Cultural Education Partnership, the Regional Libraries Connected Heads of Service meeting and a national Library Innovator Network conference. She has also been promoted within Wakefield Libraries, and used examples from *Unhampered Reads* to demonstrate her skills at interview.



“My mentor’s enthusiasm, ideas, advice and contacts very much helped support the project and raise the quality of the end product.”

Next steps

The learning and contacts from the *Unhampered Reads* project were redeployed as part of Wakefield Libraries’ recent summer festival ‘Festival of the Moon,’ where Claire took on an organisational and delivery role. This included procuring resources, generating ideas, assessing creative commissions, managing artist relations and evaluation.



It was always planned that the project would be passed on to a member of library staff involved in Health and Wellbeing activities in Wakefield Libraries in the longer term, and now that Claire has been promoted the project will be taken forward by this staff member.

MyLibrary

Nichola Farr, Powys Libraries



“Powys Library Service has learned a great deal from the MyLibrary project, in terms of the challenges facing us with fundraising in our libraries. It has been interesting to see how the scheme produced varied outcomes in different libraries, with some libraries getting a good response, while others attracted little. The local benefits have been greatly enhanced by the networking and mentoring sessions, and through Nic, we have all gained new knowledge and ideas, as well as contacts around the UK!”

Kay Thomas, Principal Librarian, Powys Library Service

Project Description

MyLibrary was a promotional and fundraising project inspired by the Oxfam Unwrapped charity gift range. Library-themed greeting cards included a fixed monetary donation, with the option to buy an additional gift of bespoke merchandise. The project aimed to establish an income generating initiative, as a stepping-stone to making Powys Libraries financially sustainable, as base budgets decline.





Project Development

Nichola's original project name was *MyBooks*, however this changed partway through the project to clarify that the greeting cards would be fundraising for materials and events, rather than books. Nichola also decided to keep the card designs focussed on themes rather than specific items, in order to offer flexibility for the fundraising suggestions, justify the outlay and to make a profit.

Nichola worked with an external graphic designer for the designs of the cards and bags, as well as a promotions company for the production of the bags. Working with an external designer meant that there were fewer restrictions around corporate branding, giving the designer more opportunity to be creative.

Nichola planned to trial the cards and merchandise in Brecon, one of Powys' main libraries, which

was in the process of being relocated to a new building. She worked with staff at Brecon Library to gather feedback on the project and draft materials from colleagues and customers, and form a focus group. However, complications with the building project for the new library and museum led to significant delays, and the items were trialled in smaller branch libraries instead.

Staff in the branch libraries were responsible for merchandising the cards and bags, for deciding on the activities or events they would like to fundraise for, and for engaging the public in discussions about the initiative. Nichola has found that these discussions helped to raise the profile of the library service and the financial pressures it faces.

KEY LEARNING

“It's been useful to reflect on the culture of my library service, and that the development of a project is as much about equipping the staff with the right skills as it is about the administration of the project itself.

Outputs and Outcomes

- ✔ 15 branded bags and 20 cards sold in Ystradgynlais Library;
- ✔ £250 raised at Ystradgynlais Library through these sales as well as money raised in collection tins, under the MyLibrary brand;
- ✔ Professional musician event held, paid for with funds from wellbeing-themed card;
- ✔ Craft materials for children's activities purchased, paid for with funds raised through the children's themed card;
- ✔ 90% of people said they would consider buying branded products as a gift in the future.

“Library Lab has made me consider the bigger picture, and my role in it.”

Next Steps

The new Brecon Library has now opened, and is collocated with Brecknock Museum in a cultural hub, y Gaer. The facility also has its own shop, where *MyLibrary* cards will be introduced. Nichola



plans to design cards to raise money for exhibitions and big events, and to build on the ‘pay it forward’ ethos of the charity card. She also hopes to harness business sponsorship opportunities, and is working with the graphic designer on media packs for potential sponsors.

Library Lab also made Nichola more aware of how she can develop business skills in order to further develop income generating initiatives in Powys Libraries. As a result she started an MBA qualification in September 2019.

STEMShops

Lisa Battle, West Lothian Authority



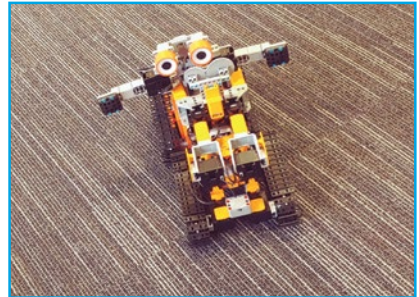
“This STEM project allowed us to work with teenagers who we, as a library service, often find difficult to engage. The young people were very engaged in the workshops and we plan to ensure we continue this by taking the workshops around as many high schools as possible.”

Anne Marie Vance, Neighbourhood Manager,
West Lothian Council

Project Description

The aim of STEMShops was to run workshops for a range of STEM based activities, particularly but not exclusively targeting girls. STEMshops included activities such as coding and robotics, and aimed to engage more young people in libraries. By targeting young girls in particular, the project aimed to overcome gender bias often prevalent in STEM environments.

Lisa joined the Library Lab programme in August 2018 after the previous partner left West Lothian Libraries.



Project Development

When Lisa joined the Library Lab programme she developed a programme of workshops and made links with local high schools to promote the *STEMShops* project.



Two local high schools selected a group of 8 young people from each school that they thought would benefit from the project, and it was arranged for them to attend workshop sessions at Almondbank Library each week. A colleague worked with Lisa to speak with the schools and arrange transport to bring the young people to the library, as it was not their local library.

Lisa overcame initial problems with technical equipment at the library by purchasing new items, and changed the type of computer used for coding after advice from one of the high schools attending the workshops.

A six week course was developed involving STEM themed team-building exercises, building robots, coding, 3D printing and programming. The course ran weekly and workshops lasted for 2 hours.



“This has given me an opportunity to widen my skills in working with young people from different schools and in the local community.”

Outputs and Outcomes

- ✓ 16 young people have taken part in a course of six STEMShop workshops – 8 people per course
- ✓ Relationships built with two High Schools

Next Steps

A third high school will join the STEMShop programme this year, with three further courses of workshops throughout 2020.

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

Andrew Carnegie House
Pittencrieff Street
Dunfermline
KY12 8AW

Tel: +44 (0)1383 721445
Fax: +44 (0)1383 749799
Email: info@carnegieuk.org
www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

This report was written by Rachel Heydecker

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