

Innovation and Development Fund

Final Project Report

Section 1

Project Title

What is the title of your project?	Learn @ Your Library
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Project Partners

Who is the lead organisation?	Forth Valley College of Further and Higher Education
Please provide contact details for the lead organisation (name, address, telephone and email)	Alison Inglis Head of Learning Services Forth Valley College Grangemouth Road Falkirk FK2 9AD
Who is the project manager (name, organisation, address, telephone and email)?	Alison Inglis Contact details as above
Who are the other project partners?	Stirling Council Library Service

Project description

Please give a brief description of your project (no more than 150 words).	<p>The project aims to provide a first step into learning for library users across the Stirling Council area.</p> <p>The intention is to provide individuals with free access to a range of National Learning Network resources through our college Virtual Learning Environment accessible in libraries and at home/work.</p> <p>By identifying interesting and interactive resources in a number of interesting subject areas learners will become engaged in the learning process through these tasters and will progress onto further learning appropriate to their needs.</p>
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Amount of Award

How much was awarded from the Innovation and Development Fund?	£9,750
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Section 2

Project Title: Learn @ Your Library

Project Description

Learn @ the Library provides an innovative online first step into learning for library users across the Stirling Council area through a partnership approach involving Forth Valley College and Stirling Council Library Services

Individuals are given free access to a range of National Learning Network and other resources through our college Virtual Learning Environment accessible in libraries, at home/work or in local learning centres.

By identifying interactive resources in a number of interesting subject areas learners become engaged in the learning process through these tasters and then progress onto further learning appropriate to their needs.

The first phase of the project focused on topics of general interest and hobbies such as gardening, art and design, cookery etc. The second phase responded to learner need by providing online courses in the development of IT skills.

Project Aims and Objectives

Learn @ Your Library was developed as an innovative approach to meet both the library sector's learning agenda and the college's aim of overcoming barriers to accessing learning.

Our objectives are to

- Engage library users in the learning process by providing free access to a range of interactive learning resources provided by the National Learning Network.
- Encourage library users to experience the benefits of online learning.
- Provide a platform from which learners can progress to other forms of learning appropriate to their needs.
- Enhance the service provision within project partner institutions.
- Develop staff skills and knowledge in online learning within project partner institutions.
- Create a best practice approach to learning engagement in public libraries for dissemination to the wider library community in Scotland.

Summary of Outputs and Outcomes

The initial outputs and outcomes of the Learn @ Your Library project were to:

- Engage 150 library users in learning across the Stirling Council area.
- Enable 80 learners to progress to further study across the Stirling Council area.
- Evaluate the process of engaging library users in learning using this approach.
- Provide a case study of the project for dissemination to the wider library community in Scotland highlighting lessons learned and subsequent implementation recommendations.
- Implement the concept within other Forth Valley council areas, namely Falkirk and Clackmannan Library services.

This has been a very successful project delivering real benefits for the library users and organisations involved. Although the project is continuing, the following outputs and outcomes have been realised during the SLIC funding period:

Outputs

- Provided, in the first phase of the project, a range of interactive learning resources in subject areas such as: Beauty and Hairdressing; Art and Design; Childcare; Cookery; Customer Care; Garden Design and Care; Maths; Small Business Skills; Theatre Arts.
- Provided, in the second phase of the project and in response to learner demand, a range of interactive learning resources in IT such as: PC Housekeeping; Digital Photography; Working with Digital Images and Photos; Effective Online Shopping; Building a Website; Getting the Most from Digital Devices; Getting Started with Microsoft Applications; Getting Started with Internet and E-mail.
- Engaged 200 library users in learning across the Stirling Council area.
- Progressed 100 learners to further study.
- Evaluated the process of engaging library users in learning using this approach.
- Provided a case study of the project for dissemination to the wider library community in Scotland, highlighting lessons learned and subsequent implementation recommendations.
- Created a network of 17 local learning access points across the Stirling area.
- Implemented the concept within other Forth Valley council areas – Falkirk and Clackmannanshire library services.
- Piloted and implemented technology (Webex) to provide real-time onscreen support for learners across the internet who have logged on at home/work or in a library.

Outcomes

The main outcomes have been in the benefits realised by both the library users (learners) and the partnership organisations.

The main benefits realised by learners as a result of the initiative have been:

- Access to learning opportunities in convenient locations.
- Introduction to online learning using high quality, interactive resources.
- An improved sense of direct engagement with the college through our Webex technology when studying remotely.
- Development of progression pathways from this first step into learning in consultation with college staff.

A successful and supportive partnership approach, has enabled both organisations involved in the project to

- Work together in an innovative way to achieve mutual aims and enhance our service provision.
- Share resources in the achievement of these aims resulting in effective and efficient delivery.
- Realise CPD opportunities for staff in the use of new technologies and the provision of learner support.
- Develop ideas and share best practice across organisations.
- Create a strong foundation upon which to build further partnership working.

Methodology

The project provides a first step into learning for learners dependent upon their circumstances and interests. Learners are provided with a short induction into the College Virtual Learning Environment and the range of topics on offer by library staff. Additional learner support and advice on further learning opportunities are provided by college staff on a face-to-face, email, online and telephone basis.

Learner progress and support is monitored by the college's online and flexible learning team who also make monthly visits to the libraries for face-to-face advice sessions with learners and to support library staff in running the project. Once initial taster sessions have been completed, learners enrol onto further flexible and online learning provision or attend college or local community classes run by the college.

In addition, the piloting of new Webex technology during the project to provide real-time onscreen support for learners across the internet, who have logged on at home/work or in a library, has revolutionised the quality and level of support the college is able to provide remote learners. It ensures effective tracking of learner activity which facilitates retention and achievement.

Extensive marketing was used (radio, bus and newspaper advertising plus local shopping mall stands, library postcards, bookmarks and posters) to promote each phase of the project and the courses on offer.

The project is overseen by a management group comprising representation from the partners involved including

- Head of Stirling Council Library Services
- Head of Learning Services, Forth Valley College
- Stirling Council Library Development Manager
- Librarians representing participating libraries
- Flexible Learning Coordinator, Forth Valley College

Day to day management of the project is carried out by the college Flexible Learning Coordinator overseen by the Head of Learning Services. A Project Plan details milestones and the achievement of project outcomes and this plan is monitored on a monthly basis with corresponding action plans produced to enable implementation. Ongoing self-evaluation against the outcomes and identified key performance indicators takes place and a final evaluation of the project has been concluded.

Appraisal of project in terms of service and professional practice enhancement

As mentioned earlier, this has been a very successful project delivering real benefits for the library users and organisations involved as outlined on page 3 of this report. It has enabled the college and library service to meet their lifelong learning agendas. The CPD it has provided for both library and college staff has been invaluable in developing their skills in supporting the learning and teaching process through the use of technology and in assisting individuals to progress in their learning.

Lessons for other services' developments

The key lessons that have emerged as a result of this project are as follows:

- Committed and supportive partnership approach is vital.
- Combination of online courses supported by face-to-face and Webex tutor support is crucial.
- Continual marketing and publicity is required to raise awareness which can be expensive.

- An effective operational partnership between library and college staff is fundamental and ongoing support of libraries in implementing the initiative is essential.
- Clear action plans ensure successful completion of objectives and achievement of outcomes.

Publications

As the project is still continuing and we have been focusing on delivery we have still to submit articles to sector publications. However, there has been a number of articles about the project in local newspapers and community newsletters throughout Forth Valley and in college and council newsletters.

Section 3

Milestones

Please list the milestones agreed as condition of grant and report progress against them		
Milestone	Progress	Remedial action if required
Develop Project Plan	Completed	
Marketing Materials available	Completed	
Initial training provided to College and Stirling Council library staff	Completed	
Engage 150 library users in learning	Achieved – 200 library users engaged.	
Enable 80 learners to progress to further study across the Stirling Council area	Achieved – 100 learners progressed.	
Evaluate process involved	Completed	
Case Study produced with lessons learned and recommendations	Completed	
Engage with other Forth Valley Council areas	Completed. Initiative now running across Forth Valley – includes Falkirk and Clackmannanshire libraries	

Problems and solutions

Please list any problems encountered and the solutions to them		
Problems	Solutions	Notes
Initial awareness raising of the initiative.	Extensive marketing using a variety of media.	
Demand from learners for relevant IT provision.	Introduced a range of IT related courses in 2 nd phase of project.	
Learner isolation when studying	Piloted and introduced Webex support.	


Project costs

Please list expenditure related to SLIC funding to date		
Item	Cost	
Staff Training	£ 4,500	
Marketing Materials	£ 8,250	
Project Administration	£ 3,000	
Project Dissemination	£ 500	

Dissemination

<p>SLIC will disseminate reports from your project through its website.</p> <p>SLIC will also require a follow-up report about the impact of your project between 12 and 24 months after the funding period.</p> <p>What support is the project providing for dissemination of the lessons learned from the project to the wider sector?</p>	
In what publications has the project presented its lessons to?	Local newspapers and community newsletters. College and council newsletters. Still to publish in CILIP Library and Information Update and SFEU Broadcast.
What websites has the project presented its lessons to?	Slainte Stirling Council Forth Valley College
What mailing lists has the project presented its lessons to?	Still to publish to Scot-FE-libnet and People's Network listserv
What seminars has the project presented its lessons to?	Stirling Council Senior Managers Network and Forth Valley College Senior Management Team and Learner Services Committee.
What conferences has the project presented its lessons to?	SLIC Innovation Conference
Are there other dissemination routes the project will use or has used?	Meetings with FE and other council library managers.

Declaration

The information provided in this interim report is correct to the best of my knowledge			
Name	Alison Inglis	Signature	
Position	Head of Learning Services	Date	30 March 2009