



Innovation and Development Fund

Final Project Report

Section 1

Project Title

What is the title of your project?	HELP YOURSELF TO LEARNING
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Project Partners

Who is the lead organisation?	Scottish Borders Council Library and Information Services	
Please provide contact details for the lead organisation (name, address, telephone and email)	Library Headquarters St Mary's Mill Selkirk TD7 5EW 01750 20842 libraries@scotborders.gov.uk	
Who is the project manager (name, organisation, address, telephone and email)?	Gillian McNay (as above) gmcnay@scotborders.gov.uk	
Who are the other project partners?	Scottish Borders Literacies Partnership, which includes Scottish Borders Council (SBC) Community Learning & Development, SBC Library and Information Services, Careers Scotland, Scottish Enterprise Borders, Borders Adult Learners' & Students' Association, Borders College, NHS Borders, Jobcentre Plus, Apex, voluntary groups	

Project description

<p>Please give a brief description of your project (no more than 150 words).</p>	<p>The project will continue to build on the success of libraries' <i>Help Yourself</i> resources collections for people with literacy and numeracy needs, by employing a tutor for 10 hours per week. This tutor will develop and deliver a programme of free supported workshops/courses through People's Network computers in two libraries, thereby enabling learners to develop the skills to access online learning themselves. Also to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• draw in new literacies learners through ICT• create suitable course material which will generate hard copies to be included in the <i>Help Yourself</i> collections, and to be shared with colleagues• market, evaluate and report on the project• identify potential clients• liaise with partners/local adult literacy workers• train library staff to identify and help people who might have a literacy challenge• contribute to the Borders Community Grid for Learning
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Amount of Award

<p>How much was awarded from the Innovation and Development Fund?</p>	<p>£10,000</p>
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Section 2

Help Yourself to Learning

Project description

Building on the current Help Yourself literacies resource collections in libraries, which contribute to the Scottish Borders Literacy and Numeracy Action plan, the project introduced the People's Network as a learning tool for literacy skills. It also provided a Project Tutor who developed free tutor-supported learning opportunities through People's Network computers in two libraries, encouraged self-help access to learning and generated hard copy support materials to include in the Help Yourself collections.

Project Aims and Objectives

The aims of the project were to:

- Assist in improving literacy levels in the Scottish Borders through partnership working with Community Learning and Development
- Increase use of People's Network to access online learning opportunities
- Empower literacies learners to take ownership of their learning
- Raise awareness of libraries and the service that they offer, especially with regard to ICT

The objectives of the project were to:

- Create courses and computer resources/hard copies to be used with the People's Network and in Help Yourself resource collections
- Deliver 3-4 six week courses or equivalent number of workshops
- Minimum of 36 learners, including new literacies, empowered to access further learning through self-help
- Minimum increase of 5% in issues from the library Help Yourself collections
- Increase use of People's Network for learning opportunities

Summary of Outputs and Outcomes

All the above objectives were achieved and some targets were exceeded:

- Courses were created and both books and literacies software were added to the Help Yourself collections
- 6 courses lasting 8 or 9 weeks were delivered and also 6 workshops
- The courses were delivered to 46 learners, including 6 literacy learners
- The 5% increase in issues was surpassed
- The number of people using the People's Network to access online learning rose from 21% in August to 45% in March

Methodology

The first two months of the Help Yourself to Learning project consisted of awareness raising, research and development.

Contact was made with the Borders Literacies Partnership and the Literacies Practitioners, to introduce the project and to invite any thoughts they would like to share. Both the partnership and the practitioners were subsequently kept up to date on progress throughout the project.

A powerpoint presentation was developed as a promotional tool and this was shown to staff in both Hawick and Peebles libraries to explain what the project was about. Training on raising literacies awareness was delivered to 16 members of staff representing 5 libraries. It was felt that frontline staff needed to be aware of adult literacy issues. The training covered objectives such as developing an understanding of what it means to be literate, the effects that limited opportunities and past experience can have on adults' self-esteem, capabilities and confidence, the idea of lifelong learning in an informal setting and local and national provision for literacy and numeracy.

The research included a visit to Learning Connections in Edinburgh, to make the link and introduce the project, to try out various literacies software and visit the literacies library at their Resource Centre. The International Literacies Day Conference at Murrayfield provided a good opportunity for networking with other practitioners from partnerships around Scotland, to learn about their projects, how they were run and what resources they used. Much research was carried out on the Internet, looking at the bigger picture of literacies provision and the resources available.

Literacies software and books were purchased and added to the Help Yourself collections. Additional handouts and a step-by step E-mail book were also created. These all became an integral part of the literacies workshops. Monthly figures for literacies issues showed an increase over the duration of the project. Other resources used included tasks from the 'Using ICT with Literacies Learners' resource pack created by Learning Connections. The Project Tutor attended a training day in Glasgow regarding this resource and then cascaded this training down to the local literacies partnership.

Gradually a plan was developed as to how this could be put into practice. It was decided to have three channels to the project:

The E-Citizen course which was open to all, aimed to teach people computer basics to enable them to use the Internet for everyday tasks such as shopping, paying bills, buying tickets or booking a holiday.

Literacies Workshops were delivered 1:1 to those who needed help with reading, writing or numbers. These would cover a variety of topics including computing basics, getting online, sending email, writing letters, creating posters and household budgeting.

Online Learning courses were available for people who already had the skills and wanted to try out free courses on the Internet.

While working on a course plan, it became apparent that in order to give a complete beginner a thorough understanding of the basics, the length of course would have to increase from the 4 weeks originally stated in the funding bid, to 9. It was also decided to keep the class sizes small. This meant that the Project Tutor had more time for each individual, everyone got to know each other and the atmosphere was informal and friendly.

The project was marketed in a variety of different ways. A press release was done at the start of the project and this, coupled with the Project Tutor being interviewed on local radio, brought in the first stream of enquiries. Leaflets and posters were produced and distributed to job, leisure, community and health centres, agencies and through the Borders Learning Partnerships. Exhibition boards were produced and the project appeared on the SBC website.

In order to measure the expected increase of people using the computers to access online learning, a two-week survey was carried out at Hawick and Peebles libraries at the start of the project and again at the very end. The results of the survey showed an increase of people using the People's Network to access online learning from 21% in August to 45% in March.

Various administration procedures were set up. Enquiries for the classes were taken by library staff, who forwarded the enquirer's details to the Project Tutor. These contact details were then recorded on the project's database. The Tutor then contacted the enquirer and through targeted questioning, their existing computer skills level was established and it was decided which class they would go into.

As part of the induction at the start of the class, a registration form was completed, the course was explained and a tour of the library and literacies collection was included. Literacies learners had a separate, informal, confidential 1:1 chat to establish what they would like to do and what their needs were. It was also explained to them that they would have an Individual Learning Plan. On completion of all courses, evaluation sheets were filled in to provide feedback.

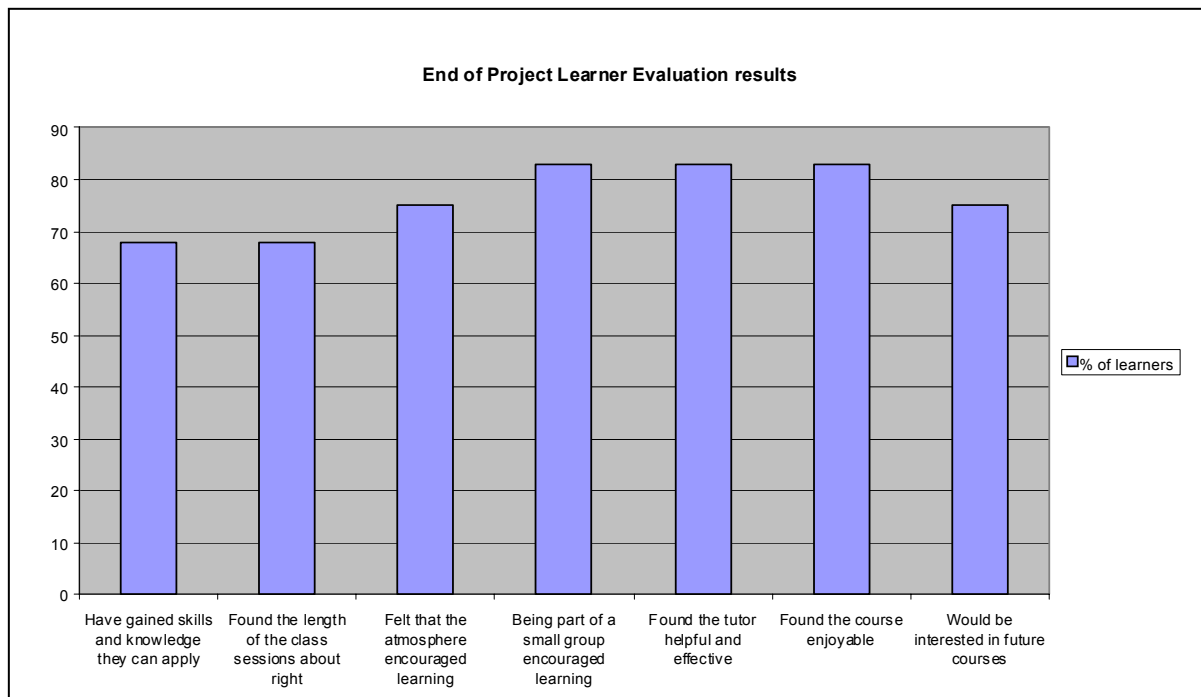
Classes started in October. By the end of March, 6 E-Citizen courses and 6 literacies workshops had been delivered to 46 learners.

The project was monitored throughout by the E-Learning Committee, a group which was set up at the start of the scheme to provide a discussion forum, guidance and feedback. On the Committee were representatives from the Libraries and Information Service, the Adult Literacies Partnership, Community Learning and Development Management and the Scottish Borders Community Grid for Learning. The Project Tutor reported every 2 months to this group and also provided the librarians at Hawick and Peebles with regular reports.

Appraisal of project in terms of service and professional practice enhancement

In terms of service, we have created a demand for this project. This demand has been sustained throughout the term, and by the end of March there were still many people on the waiting lists for Hawick and Peebles.

The success of the project can be measured by the evaluation feedback :



People were also asked if there were any comments they would like to make. The comments and the evaluation feedback were all anonymous, as the Project Tutor believed you were more likely to get the truth from someone, especially when they want to criticise, if they don't put their name to what they have written. However, the comments were all very positive and a few are quoted below:

"The course has opened up the world of computers to me. I never thought I would be able to send an e-mail. There is so much more I would like to learn, but the course has given me courage to explore"

"I had limited knowledge of computers and after the course I gained much needed experience and this improved my confidence greatly"

"This course makes me want to learn more. Hope there will be a follow on. Helps to keep the brain active."

"Very good course. Would like to do more"

In terms of professional practice enhancement, the project encouraged communication and networking with other literacies practitioners both nationally and locally. This included information

extraction and information sharing. This has proved to be an excellent support network for the Project Tutor. It has also provided an awareness of the big picture in terms of literacies provision.

It has also presented a platform from which the Tutor could improve her own writing, IT, communication and training skills.

Lessons for other services' developments

1. When embarking on partnership working, it is important that each partner knows what their role will be and exactly what is expected of them.
2. It is fundamental that the brief for a project is absolutely clear. Aims, objectives, criteria and timescale should all be specified in a fashion that is completely understandable and unambiguous. Without clarity, grey areas can develop, leading to misunderstanding, incorrect decisions, and time wasted.
3. If planning similar courses, it is important to allocate time for administration and preparation. With Help Yourself to Learning, the Tutor did not want to turn any literacies learners away and ended up using most of the time as class contact, leaving very little time for preparation or administration within her allocated hours.
4. Be aware of just how much administration there is for a project like this!

Publications

Articles about the Help Yourself to Learning project appeared in the following publications:

Hawick News 12/08/05

Berwickshire News 18/08/05

SBSScene Autumn issue

Hawick News 20/01/06

What's On Spring issue

Website

www.scotborders.gov.uk/libraries

Seminar

Help Yourself to Learning Workshop at the Libraries and Literacies Seminar in Dundee.

Conference

Scottish Borders Adult Literacies Conference on 1st December - 'Good Practice, New Practice'. Help Yourself to Learning project represented on exhibition boards.

Project also included in Conference Report.

Section 3

Milestones

Please list the milestones agreed as condition of grant and report progress against them		
Milestone	Progress	Remedial action if required
04/05 Tutor in post, raising awareness of project	Initial advert unsuccessful.	Job description sent to all tutors in Community Learning
08/05 Promoting project, courses researched	All libraries' staff awareness-trained. Press, radio promotion. Researched existing courses and literacy/accessibility software.	
09/05 Outreach, students signed up, interim report to SLIC, ongoing course creation	Partners, literacy workers informed. Pre-advertising - 14 learners signed up, 4 potentials identified. Report completed. Draft courses created.	
10/05 Report to partners	Startup report made to Literacies Partnership on 7 th September.	
12/05 Prepare exit strategy	Requirement to identify funding for project dissemination flagged up at Literacies Partnership meeting.	
03/06 Final report to SLIC	Successful project -Library & Information Services identify funding to continue and extend, in conjunction with Literacies Partnership ESF monies.	

Problems and solutions

Please list any problems encountered and the solutions to them		
Problems	Solutions	Notes
Late start due to lack of tutor	Com. Learning partners flagged project up to sessional tutors	Successful outcome – tutor started 1st August
	Once tutor in post, doubled project hours to catch up	Project recovered according to timescale
Concern about overwhelming demand from learners	Identify criteria for prioritising literacies learners	Agreed in discussions with local literacies tutor

Most hours being used purely for class contact	When planning intake, build in admin and prep time.	
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Project costs

Please list expenditure related to SLIC funding to date		
Item	Cost	
Tutor salary + oncosts	£7100	
Tutor travel	£934	
Learning resources	£1307	
Printing, photocopying	£782 (currently paid out of Library & Information Services budget)	

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? Literacy Practitioners kept up to date.</p>	
In what publications has the project presented its lessons to?	Hawick News 12/08/05 Berwickshire News 18/08/05 SBSScene Autumn issue Hawick News 20/01/06 What's On Spring issue
What websites has the project presented its lessons to?	www.scotborders.gov.uk/libraries
What mailing lists has the project presented its lessons to?	None, but new resources created and websites used by Project may be included by Sheerface, who are compiling new literacies online resources for Learning Connections.
What seminars has the project presented its lessons to?	Help Yourself to Learning Workshop at the Libraries and Literacies Seminar, March 2006, Dundee.
What conferences has the project presented its lessons to?	Project represented at Scottish Borders Adult Literacies Conference 'Good practice, New practice', 1 st December 2005, Tweed Horizons
Are there other dissemination routes the project will use or has used?	Regular e-mails to Borders Literacies partnership and Literacies Practitioners.

Declaration

The information provided in this final report is correct to the best of my knowledge			
Name	Gillian McNay	Signature	
Position	Community and Operations Librarian	Date	16 th May 2006