

# Film Education in Libraries (FEiL)

## Summary Report

**Dr George Head**

**Dr Angela Jaap**

**Dr Katarzyna Borkowska**



## Contents

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Introduction .....                 | 3 |
| Project activities .....           | 3 |
| Sustainability .....               | 3 |
| Project Aims .....                 | 4 |
| Expected Outcomes .....            | 4 |
| Methodology .....                  | 5 |
| What the projects did.....         | 5 |
| In their communities .....         | 5 |
| To meet the aims and outcomes..... | 6 |
| In collaboration with others ..... | 6 |
| What was achieved .....            | 6 |
| Recommendations .....              | 7 |

## Introduction

In Autumn 2016, Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), in conjunction with Creative Scotland (CS) issued an invitation to tender for evaluation of Film Education in Libraries. In pursuit of Creative Scotland's film strategy (2014-17) and the national strategy for public libraries in Scotland (2015-20), Creative Scotland and the Scottish Libraries Information Council developed a small number of pilot initiatives to develop film learning in libraries in Scotland. The overall aim of the project was to test Film Education within a Library context and see whether it brought different audiences to discover Film Literacy, engage people who otherwise would not have the opportunity to experience film and develop staff within communities to support film education. A team from the University of Glasgow was awarded the contract.

One of six strategic aims within *Ambition and Opportunity*, the national strategy for public libraries in Scotland (2015-20), is for, '*libraries in Scotland to promote their role as cultural centres, inspiring people through books and literature, music, film and theatre, and encourage creativity.*'

This project aimed to develop, pilot and evaluate some of the means by which libraries can achieve this aim with regard to film, in order to guide such developments more widely in the longer term.

## Project activities

SLIC invited Library Services to apply for funds to support the development and promotion of film education and creative film learning. Examples of activities included:

- Engagement of communities in working with archive film from the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive.
- Development of film clubs in libraries – watching and/or making
- Developing film learning with early years

## Sustainability

As well as testing various activities to enhance film education in libraries, the pilot sought to identify how such activities might be sustained beyond the life of the project. SLIC and CS recognised that sustainability of the projects was dependent on the Library service staff involved in developing and offering the project and that significant development of staff skills would be required. CS and SLIC envisaged, therefore, that this project would inform the future of Film Education in Libraries, and help guide libraries in developing their role as cultural centres with respect to film.



## Project Aims

The overall aim of the project was to test Film Education within a Library context and see whether it brought different audiences to discover Film Literacy, engage people who otherwise would not have the opportunity to experience film and develop staff within communities to support film education. Specifically the evaluation focused on the following features of FEIL:

- Increases in staff confidence
- Encourages sharing of learning, with particular focus on the use of archival film
- Addresses a demonstrable gap in this area.
- Demonstrates efficiencies and benefits to the library sector
- Draws from good practice
- is Iterative (i.e., can develop into a future programme)
- is Deliverable and Sustainable

- is Flexible and responsive – proper use of resources within a service area
- Demonstrates value for money
- is Transferable between library authorities
- Provides a mechanism for sharing and adopting good practice in a seamless and efficient way
- Increases resilience in the sector through innovation and sharing of best practice

## Expected Outcomes

SLIC and CS envisaged that staff in public libraries would be able to quantifiably and demonstrably apply skills to:

- Share innovation across the public library network and across structures/geographic/management boundaries
- Use the model to further develop peer groups – whether local, regional, national or thematic
- Allow for and account for adopting good practice from both within and from outside the sector.
- Articulate and share innovative approaches to film education and film literacies
- Create space for community film sharing experiences
- Support people to access film

- Create a film culture and knowledge within communities
- Increase the strategic capability of the public library sector to lead film education within communities with confidence and competence.

## Methodology

Given the central role of library staff in how they constructed and offered FEIL in their own contexts, the research team adopted a Participatory Action Research approach. From late 2016, through to November 2017, the research team conducted face-to-face and telephone interviews with library staff in 11 libraries involved in the FEIL project. The research team felt that generating data to address the issues identified by SLIC and CS entailed the priorities, issues and experiences of individual library staff in relation to their own unique project. Consequently, the interviews were conducted in the form of a Solution Focused Conversation. The research team was also represented at 4 advisory group meetings.

## What the projects did

### In their communities

Libraries adopted a mixed approach in terms of arranging films. Sometime, library staff chose films and these were aligned with the needs and wishes of targeted audiences. For other sites, there was more collaboration with library users through

negotiating a list of preferred titles and themes for screenings. These included: family, classic, festive films, foreign films, cartoons, archive films, Black Star-related films, films to support World Book Day, Men's Shed screenings, women's film festival screenings, LGBT-related films, films to promote dyslexia, screenings related to local and national film festivals.



A range of film screenings and film festivals was used to explore social and cultural issues related. Some were in the form of a film club, similar to a book club. Other libraries provided more of a 'cinema' experience with screenings taking place at regular, normally monthly, intervals. Whenever appropriate, libraries also arranged screenings to complement current cultural initiatives in their locality, or arranged pop-up screenings, sometimes using non-libraries venues.

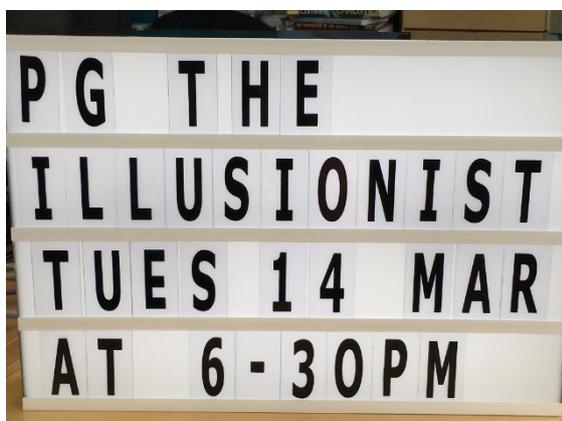
Libraries employed a wide range of promotional techniques displaying posters and leaflets within the library and (in some cases) in the local community centres to advertise screenings. A popular means of communicating with a potential audience was using the library's Facebook page whereas other library sites utilised word of

mouth and library staff promoting the film club also helped to increase numbers.

### To meet the aims and outcomes

Library staff sought creative ways to emphasise educational aspects of film and to ensure effective audience involvement by setting up informal discussions (pre- or post- screening), using activity sheets, Question and Answer sessions, scoring films out of 10 and informal feedback.

While running the summer reading programme for children, one of the libraries organised video game tournaments. They plugged the PS4 console in to the cinema equipment and projected FIFA 17 and dance tournaments.



### In collaboration with others

Collaboration has been an important feature of the Film Education in Libraries project; where collaboration and collaborative working has taken place, it has been highly appreciated by the participants and library users. Collaboration across the project manifested itself in a range of ways,

including as a means to involve 'hard to reach' groups. Some libraries worked in collaboration with local partner organisations, which included specialist charities in addition to working with local nurseries, primary and secondary schools, all of which were seen as a means of increasing footfall and creating a positive learning experience.

### What was achieved

Library staff reported that initially it was challenging to encourage audiences to participate in discussion on film and some viewers would leave the library immediately after the screening. However, with time there was a greater sense of engagement especially among a regular audience.

One library, utilised archival materials related to their locality and attracted an audience of 70, plus a waiting list. Another example is a library that set up an archive screening accompanied by live piano music and brought together around 50 people. In total, archive film was used in five libraries, and proved popular with audiences.



The projects contributed to a culture and knowledge of film within communities,

simply by their existence. In some instances, they created the culture by introducing film education into the community.

FEIL generated a range of efficiencies and benefits for the library sector including consistent audience membership and the attendance of some users who did not previously engage with the library service.

An overwhelming benefit of the project noted by several library staff in the interviews was developing interaction between service users and library staff.

Analysis of all interviews, indicates that each library site can see a benefit of film within the library context either for educational purposes and/or to increase foot-fall, while simultaneously increasing community engagement

The FEIL project has provided library staff with opportunities to be creative in partnership with their communities. Many library sites have developed new ventures with families, schools and community-based groups.

A major success of the project is the increase in confidence among library staff. All interviewees reported increased confidence in choosing films, speaking about films, and preparing materials for screenings.

The value in which the initiative is held by both library staff and library users indicates that FEIL represented value for money. Very few interviewees referred to the cost of the project but the overwhelming view among participants was that it was a valuable contribution to the services available in libraries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Recommendations

1. A relationship between SLIC, Creative Scotland, the Scottish Government and local authorities already exists and we recommend that this is used to pursue the major recommendation of establishing film education and film literacy as core to the library offer.
2. Similarly, a relationship exists with other screening bodies including commercial and community cinemas and bodies such as Filmbank. We recommend that this relationship is used to explore the possibility of procurement and support.
3. Creative Scotland and SLIC should consider how their own resources and expertise, including that gained during the project, can contribute to sustaining film education in libraries.
4. SLIC and Creative Scotland to develop a CPD education programme for current library staff.
5. Film education and film literacy to become part of initial education and training for library staff.
6. Where appropriate, libraries to seek to engage with local groups who are interested in or may benefit from screenings and other aspects of film club.
7. Where appropriate and possible, libraries to form mutual support groups. These may be geographical within the same local authority, virtual through social media or occasional (e.g. training or 'conference') organised by SLIC and/or Creative Scotland.