

Llên Pawb | Lit Reach

Case Studies 2018 Activity



"Magical workshops.

I want to learn more. It's been fun
and I didn't know poetry didn't
have to rhyme, I enjoyed singing,
learnt more words...

I didn't know that I could do it."

A participant who took part in the
Lit Reach | Port Talbot Women's Aid Project

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Impact Case Study #1

A visual art and poetry project at the Llanrwst Library, in partnership with Macmillan and Conwy County's Wellbeing Team.

"I've been looking forward to taking part in an art workshop since seeing the poster."

Project Participant

In 2018, through the Lit Reach Project, Literature Wales delivered 6 workshops with the aim to provide the support to the individuals who attended Macmillan's Cancer and Chronic disease weekly drop-in sessions in Llanrwst Library, Conwy.

The project combined elements of poetry and visual arts and drew inspiration from Macmillan's *'I am also...'* Campaign. Literature Wales commissioned Cefin Roberts and Sian Hutchinson, author and art therapist, to allow the opportunity to continue their workshop delivery skills in a community setting.

The series of workshops began with Cefin working with the participants to create Haikus. Using their favourite words, personal experiences and stories as a stimulus, the group worked in collaboration to produce 3 poems which reflected their own lives and experiences. It gave the participants a chance to explore their creativity, passions and memories in a safe environment through the medium of creative writing.

Sian then asked the group to use their Haikus as inspiration in relation to produce mixed-media pieces to give the participants and opportunity to experiment with other arts activities. The attendees used the Library's resources to research books and images that were included in their poems.

By the end of the 6 workshops, the group had produced colourful mixed-media bunting, with their collection of Haiku poems featured in collages and other images and pictures reflected the theme of their work.

The creative visual collection is displayed at Llanrwst Library for both the attendees of the drop-in sessions to view, and members of the public to see.

Lit Reach is a programme delivered across Wales by Literature Wales in collaboration with various partner organisations and local authorities. The workshops and events delivered are tailored to increase literacy levels, life-long learning, self-confidence and resilience.

Lit Reach participants benefit from self-exploration and creative expression leading to:

- Increased literary & communication skills
- Improved self-confidence
- Improved mental health & well-being
- Greater social inclusion
- Increased employability skills

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Impact Case Study #2

An intergenerational project that saw the residents of Trafalgar Park and Abermill Care Homes engage with Nursery school children through song and rhyme.

"This project took me full circle, back to where I started my practice, in language and play development. Sandwiched between two generations..."

Rufus Mufasa, Workshop Deliverer

Over the course of 6 weeks from September to November 2018, Literature Wales delivered workshops which encouraged school children, aged 3-5, from Startrite and Footsteps Nurseries, and residents of Trafalgar Park and Abermill Care Homes, Caerphilly to share their favourite Nursery Rhymes and stories.

The project created connections through words and rhymes to promote positive, healthy, relationships between generations that would not normally interact. In 2017, the

Welsh Assembly's Health, Social Care & Sport Committee discovered that half a million people in Wales said they felt lonely often or always, particularly those who are aged 80 and over, and in receipt of residential care. The project contributed to reducing the feelings of loneliness and isolation, and improve social cohesion, encouraging a link between two establishments.

Sharing Nursery Rhymes and stories contributed towards increasing the health and well-being of these groups. The elements of literature and song within the workshops encouraged freedom and creativity, with a large emphasis on self-expression.

Although Lit Reach is a community project that aims to engage some of the most marginalised individuals in Wales in literary activity, each workshop also provides the opportunity for an Artist Practitioner to develop their personal and professional skills.

Poet and song writer, Rufus Mufasa, who led the sessions said that "the project has had a massive influence on my own writing, and my understating of duty of care, quite possibly the project has changed my life".

Following the project, Rufus Mufasa has recently been selected to be the first Poet of Residence for the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

Reference: National Assembly for Wales / Health, Social Care and Sport Committee (December 2017) *Inquiry into loneliness and isolation*.



Key Project Outcomes:

- Improved literacy and communications skills
- Reduced social isolation
- Personal, professional and development opportunities
- Improved social cohesion
- Writer development

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Impact Case Study #3

Musical Memories: Interlinking communities and art forms to create memories.

"I didn't know that I could help create poetry and songs"

Project Participant

- 6 Creative Writing Workshops led by, Poet, Patrick Jones
- 9 Music Sessions led by, Musicians, Ali Shone and Donald Stewart
- 1 sharing/performance event

Throughout October and November 2018, Poet and Musicians, Patrick Jones, Ali Shone and Donald Stewart led creative writing and music workshops in Blaenavon. In partnership with Head4Arts, the sessions brought together local members of the Celtic Café Music Group, and residents from the nearby Arthur Jenkins Care Home to create new poems, stories and songs.

At the heart of this project was the creation of two new songs. Using their creative writing skills, the Arthur Jenkins Care Home residents worked alongside Patrick to create the lyrics, organised as a verse and a chorus. This was inspired by their collective memories and included different things that they remembered and loved.

Their words were then passed onto the Celtic Café Music Group, who selected a tradition tune that they felt suited the lyrics. Ali then led the group to co-create 2 new pieces of music that not only allowed the group to hear their artistic ideas come alive, but also ignited an invaluable relationship between two groups of society that may not otherwise connect.

One of the Arthur Jenkins Care home residents said: 'I love the music, singing and the poetry. It made me very happy to share memories with everyone', and a member of the Celtic Café Music group commented 'I learnt so much from you that day.' The workshop leaders were also extremely pleased with the nature of the sessions.

"We've managed to secure their thoughts and feelings in a song, and poem"

Ali Stone, Workshop Deliverer

"It was a beautiful end to a fulfilling and relevant project. To watch the residents smile, sing the words and tap their feet along to the songs was truly amazing and life affirming. They had a marvellous time and lost themselves in the swirl of music..."

Patrick Jones

Workshop Deliverer

Key Project Outcomes:

- Improved communication skills
- Personal, professional and development opportunities
- Improved social cohesion
- Celebrated words, memories and songs

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Impact Case Study #4

Rondel House Reflections: A Dementia Friendly Digital Poetry Project in support of the annual Carers Week campaign.

"Age is just a number - I've had a good life."
Project Participant

Throughout May and June 2018, Author and Film Maker, Mike Church and Natasha James ran sessions at Rondel House – a Dementia Day Care Centre in Barry. These sessions encouraged the service users at Rondel House to recall their fondest memories, including growing up in the Vale and recalling how they remember the county, in order to produce memorable stories poetry to share online. Mayor Cllr Leighton Rowlands said that "creating digital stories is a fantastic way of recalling treasured memories and a great way of marking Carers Week."



As a result, a 17-minute video was created, that saw the residents reading their nostalgic poems against backdrops of old photos from different parts of Barry. Here's an extract from the poem that was produced by the whole group:

"Seems to have all gone so quickly
But we're still smiling
We're in our 80s and 90s, but we could be in our 20s
We might be involved with age concern, but we've
got no worries, we've had a good life..."

The service users at Rondel House

Key Project Outcomes:

- Improved literacy, communication and digital skills
- Reduced social isolation
- Improved social cohesion and cultural understanding
- Supported a national campaign

The staff at Rondel House reported that after each session, the service users would continue to talk about their memories. One staff member commented that "when the service users saw themselves on the finished DVD, there was lots of laughter and tears of happiness. Some did not recognise themselves; some were saying that it did not sound like them, some did not realise they had taken part, but all had a wonderful time remembering their past."

[Click here](#) to see the full project video which was made into a DVD.
The project was funded by Barry Council and Literature Wales

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Impact Case Study #5

Port Talbot & Afan's Women's Aid (PTAWA) Poetry and Song Project

"The ladies leave the workshops a little bit taller each week"
PTAWA Staff member

In November 2018, Poet, Rufus Mufasa worked with women from Port Talbot and Afan Valley's LIFE Survivors Network to create a series of poems and songs inspired by their experiences.

PTAWA provides support to families who have been affected by Domestic Abuse, enabling them to rebuild their lives. Their LIFE Survivors network is for women whose mental health has been impacted by past experiences.

Rufus Mufasa led 3 creative writing workshops that offered the women an alternative mode of expression. The majority of the group hadn't actively participated in a literary activity since school, and others had never read a poem out loud. Throughout the workshops, there was a strong sense of encouragement for the group to work together and share stories, experiences and make connection with people who could empathise with their emotions.

Here's an extract of a participant's poem:

"I do believe in magic, the sun shines on my face,
Sweet moments in the breeze, the stars sent me
kiss,
An unspoken connection, the kindness of a
stranger
I've got magic on my side, and it's a game
changer..."



Key Project Outcomes

- Improved literacy and communication skills
- Increased self-confidence
- Improved social cohesion and cultural understanding
- Increased active participation in creative activities
- Improved relationship with peers and team working skills

The poems that were created were used to produce recorded poetry and songs. The women then performed their pieces at PTAWA's annual Fashion show.



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