



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

Fun financial literacy classes for young people 'Lyuben Karavelov' Regional Library, Bulgaria

IMPACT CASE STUDY

The library's 'Fun Financial Literacy' classes for children and young people –

- Taught 233 young people to understand and manage money, and how to use mobile digital technology to bank online.
- Increased the number of young people using the library by 27%.
- Won acclaim from the World Bank, local government and other libraries in Bulgaria for providing an innovative service that meets local needs.
- Impressed partners, who donated time, expertise and technology.
- Attracted new partners: employees from the sewing company 'Rennie Style' requested computer and financial literacy training; the finance company NN Group Bulgaria offered trainers for the library's workshops, and Private school Leonardo da Vinci, enrolled all their pupils for the library's courses.

Research by the World Bank (2010) found that Bulgarians had limited financial understandings, and recommended introduction of financial literacy programmes. In response, 'Lyuben Karavelov' Regional Library introduced financial literacy training for adults in 2013. In feedback, 70% of participants said families would benefit if their children also had financial literacy skills.

This prompted librarians to design a financial literacy programme for young people. Because financial services are increasingly offered online and many young people use tablet computers and smart phones, librarians decided to integrate mobile digital technology into the training.

With a small grant (up to US\$20,000) from the EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP), the library designed a fun, interactive financial literacy course, including games, role-plays and practical technology training. They bought tablet, laptop and desktop



Children learn about touch-screen banking during a visit to the bank.

"I now know how to prepare a family budget, and I enjoyed the many games that confirmed my new knowledge. I made new friends in the group." – Young learner, Ruse.

computers, smart phones, and an interactive whiteboard. Working with experts from their partners, including UniCredit Bulbank, Bulgaria's largest bank, the librarians developed a two-tier financial literacy curriculum. Children aged up to 14 learnt about the history of money; family budgets; saving, spending and investment, and how to use mobile devices. Learners aged from 15 to 24 learnt about budgeting; banking; how to access financial services through mobile devices, and consumer protection. A highlight for younger learners was a visit to the bank to get hands on experience of using automatic tellers.

In just one year, the library –

- Trained 52 librarians and community volunteers to facilitate financial literacy classes using digital technology;
- Joined the European Night of Museums and Galleries 2015 celebrations by organizing an exhibition about money in the library;
- Created online learning materials and uploaded them to the library's website. The materials were viewed over 600 times in seven months;
- Organized an essay contest on the theme of money, which attracted 49 submissions. The winner received a smart phone.
- Presented the service at an international conference on financial literacy organized by the World Bank, after which World Bank officials visited the library and praised the service.
- Showcased the service to hundreds of librarians at 11 library conferences and events in Bulgaria, and invited 34 librarians from two libraries to visit Ruse and see the service in action.

The future

The popular training is continuing. Guided by participants' feedback, librarians have introduced new topics and games, and refined their presentations. They have also been busy training librarians from other libraries in Bulgaria who want to replicate the service. Librarians and community volunteers in Slivo Pole (Ruse Province) have already launched a similar programme for children; and librarians in Byala Municipality (also in Ruse Province) are adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of their community.

The EIFL-PLIP grant was awarded in May 2014. A year later, the library assessed the impact of the service. Information presented here is based on the library's impact assessment. For further information, contact library director, Teodora Evtimova: director@libruse.bg.

EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) works with libraries to enable access to knowledge in developing and transition economy countries in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe and Latin America. The EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP) supports libraries to implement community development projects. The EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



Teenagers learn by playing the 'Cash Flow' game in the library.

"To be honest, we expected to be bored by the library's training. But it was very entertaining. We do not learn about finance or banks in school – so everything we did was new and different. The librarians showed us new games and everyone laughed and had fun." – Young learner, Ruse.