

Connect, Collaborate and Cultivate: community collaboration in a private tertiary institute

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Introduction

Institute of Pacific United (IPU) New Zealand is a private tertiary institute which has been operating in Palmerston North for the past 27 years. Within the institute there is a great emphasis on stakeholder's engagement beyond the campus walls. IPU Library has been involved with a few community events in the past, the most noticeable being its role in running the children's activities during IPU's International Spring Festival every September.

This poster summarises the methods and outcomes of two recent community projects undertaken by IPU library in order to promote community access to collection, physical spaces, and special events. Hopefully it will provide insight, inspiration, and valuable guidelines for other tertiary libraries with their community engagement programmes.

Our Vision

- Partnering with the community groups to create positive change and improve the well-being of our stakeholders.
- Recognising and celebrating diversity within IPU and the wider community through project collaborations.
- Strengthening the relationship between IPU, local schools and community organisations and promoting lifelong learning principles.



Description and Methodology

Project aim: Free access to Japanese Manga collection

At present, visitors are welcome to enjoy the beautiful space of the IPU Library and use its physical collection within the library at no charge. In 2016 the library received a large donation of Manga books written in Japanese from the president of IPU Japan and New Zealand, Dr Setsuko Ohashi. The library now holds the largest Japanese Manga collection in New Zealand.

The library aims to provide free access to this collection for the Palmerston North community. At the first stage of this project, we are offering free access to students at secondary schools where Japanese is taught. We hope that by doing this, we'll be able to contribute to the students' success in learning this language.

Results:

The initial communications and meetings have been finalised and the participating schools have selected the desired titles from the list of the available books in the library. The second stage involves bulk loaning these books to the school library of each selected school and rotating them at the end of each school term. An evaluation process is in place at the end of the academic year to assess the success of the project and move on to the next phase. This will involve providing free membership for individual borrowers outside of the institute.

Description and Methodology

Project 2: Writing and art workshop project collaboration

This project was a partnership with the Manawatu Multicultural Council and consisted of facilitating and delivering a series of writing and creative arts workshops for tertiary and high school international students. During these workshops the participants were encouraged to introduce themselves to their host community through writing and creating artwork. At the end of the project in November 2018, the writing pieces will be published as a story book and the art works will be on display in the Palmerston City Library for the members of the community to visit.

IPU students were the first group to participate in and successfully complete the first stage of this project. 15 students participated in a one day workshop at the IPU Library and completed their writing piece with the help of 5 volunteer tutors. Each student then selected their creative arts project and completed their work over the next few weeks.

Results:

This project produced creative outcomes that included painting, poetry, dance and even magic tricks. The initial results of the workshop will be on display at the IPU Library during the Spring Festival, which takes place on the 29th of September 2018.



Steps and recommendations

- Be clear about your purpose.
- Find one or more community partners.
- Have face-to-face meetings to discuss the project objectives, plans and expected outcomes.
- Organise an information session and include your stakeholders (students, staff, and community partners).
- To ensure a smooth operation, regularly keep in contact with the participants and the project partners.
- Evaluate the project regularly and discuss the possible changes with the project partners.
- Share the outcome of the project with the stakeholders and the wider community and seek their feedback.
- Be courageous and flexible; things might change during the process.
- Appreciate your partnership and invest in a long term relationship.



Conclusion

By stepping beyond the traditional borders of the library and engaging with the local communities, a tertiary library is able to play its part in fostering and developing information literacy, art, culture, and language in the wider community.

Community engagement also provides positive exposure for the library service and the tertiary institute as a whole and could lead to higher student recruitment rates in the future.

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