



PROVINCIAL LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT 2020

Introduction

The Hazelton District Public Library (HDPL) is located on the bank of the Skeena River in historic downtown Old Hazelton. Although the population of the Village of Hazelton is only 300 people, in fact the HDPL provides library service to a great number of communities scattered across our region, from residents of the Kispiox Valley living up to 40 kilometres north of the library, to those in Witset, 40 km to the east, all the way west to Gitwangak and Gitanyow, 75 km away, and all points in between. The region's population is made up mainly of indigenous people of the Gitxsan and Wit'suwit'en nations, with the remainder being made up largely of the descendants of European settlers.

As in most northern communities, stable and fulfilling employment continues to be scarce for many people here. The main sources of employment in the Hazeltons are the service industries (education, health care, some government offices) and resource extraction. Of those who have work, a large number of them work away from home for long stretches, generally in forestry and mining. There is very high unemployment across the region, as well as low high school graduation and adult literacy rates. These issues, combined with the impacts of colonization, are important factors in other difficulties that many families in our area face, such as addictions, food security, a scarcity of affordable and safe housing, lack of transportation and often stressful home lives.

As a small town in an economically depressed area, Hazelton has limited recreational opportunities and few community gathering places. The library, a welcoming place for those of all stripes and where entry and services are free of charge, plays a crucial role in the community. We are a source of education, entertainment, and of stimulation for children and adults alike. HDPL is also a much-needed access point to information and Internet service in a rural place where connectivity is often limited and where many cannot afford a computer at home at all.

As we all have experienced, 2020 was an exceptionally stressful and complex year with changes required in all areas. Library planning and operation needed to be flexible and was required to change quickly. HDPL had planned for two large public events focused on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Unfortunately, events such as our 2020 planetarium visit, and our Spring Break STEAM Projects event were cancelled for safety reasons.

With closures of public venues and events, our library collection took on added importance as we could continue to provide education and entertainment materials without danger to patrons. When we closed our doors, we opened a safe porch pick-up service for physical items in our collection. We promoted our online services as a safe alternative to visiting the library and upgraded our Internet connection coverage to include more of the community.

Our main children's event, the 2020 Summer Reading Club, was dramatically redesigned to ensure that patrons and their children were safe. This year we ran six clubs in various communities in our region plus an on-line club. Three of the facilitators held in-person sessions, following the COVID safety guidelines at that time, and three facilitators offered packages for families to take home and use on their own.

We ran clubs in fewer communities this year but had a better percentage and quality of participation. A higher percentage of children reached their summer reading goals: 58% in 2020, compared to 24% in 2019. There was more contact with and participation from parents and caregivers as well. The average club size was 17 this year (not meeting at one time), compared to 12.5 in 2019.

Several of the facilitators intended to continue with the SRC model, adapting it to fit the programs they are continuing to run in their communities. We are thrilled to see this lasting effect of our outreach. Our confidence as an adaptable team has been bolstered by our success in 2020.

This year we developed several excellent relationships with other community organizations that we hope will become lasting partnerships for future programs. In addition to our standard partnerships with the Northwest Child Development Centre (NWCDC) and the Learners Opportunity Group Society (LOGS), we connected with

- Community Health in Gitanyow
- Hagwilget Education
- Gitanmaax Youth program
- Kispiox Independent School

We also engaged with the Sik E Dakh Education Coordinator and the Administrator for Gitwangak Education. Although neither of the latter two communities were able to operate a club this summer, we expect to be able to do more in coming years.

Discussion and Examples

Provincial Strategy #1

Fostering Equitable Access to Information and Services

Internet Connectivity: Internet for the community, even during community closures.

The closure of most local community doors in 2020 could have caused problems for those who do not have Internet connectivity for various reasons. The province of British Columbia delivered a welcome one-time grant this year that allowed our library to increase our public internet bandwidth, accommodate more community connections and expand the coverage of our wireless connection even during our public closure.

- Using the one-time BC grant we:
 - increased our Internet bandwidth to the maximum available on our fibre-optic connection.
 - purchased shareable digital equipment and applications to allow staff and patrons to produce and present local online video and audio content for the world. We have added these items to our collection of “things” so that community members can continue to use them in the future.
 - upgraded our wireless access point to enhance security, provide wireless access on two separate radio bands and expand the coverage from inside the building to include a 3-block radius. This allowed connection, education, entertainment and social inclusion for those who do not have Internet connection or even homes to connect to.
- **Partnerships:** Using our community connections and partnerships (see Strategy #3), HDPL has continued to advocate and support literacy education, access to library materials both in the library building and online through our databases and online library services.
- Aligned with **HDPL objectives:** “To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves on a continual basis,” and “To seek to identify community needs and to provide programmes of service to meet such needs. To cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programmes or services to meet community needs.”
- **Outputs & Outcomes:** HDPL provides communications and information awareness in each of our partners, connected community groups and other organizations on a continuous basis.

Provincial Strategy #2

Developing Skills and Knowledge: enabling inspiration and innovation.

The changes that occurred in 2020, especially for our Summer Reading Clubs, encouraged facilitators and families to learn new literacy skills and knowledge. Our Summer Reading Clubs in various communities allowed young readers to improve their literacy skills and participate in STEM activities.

Family Literacy Training and Experience: Summer Reading Club (SRC) as a vehicle for literacy advancement and training.

HDPL planned several STEM / STEAM events for 2020 but they were not able to run due to COVID safety restrictions. Instead, we focussed our energy on putting together a well supported Summer Reading Club.

- The SRC program in 2020 allowed us to continue to train our community facilitators on family literacy and event planning in a COVID safe environment. The facilitators used their skills to pass on family literacy tips and ideas to more parents this year than ever before.
- Paper circuits were the theme of our Christmas craft take-home STEM kit held in December. We were, once again, overwhelmed by people of all ages wanting to learn about electricity and make electric Christmas cards.
- Aligned with **HDPL objectives**, “To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves on a continual basis,” and “To seek to identify community needs and to provide programmes of service to meet such needs.”
- **Outputs & Outcomes:** We had 102 children registered in the community clubs and 10 registered for the on-line club. This year 60 out of 102 children in 6 clubs earned medals by reaching their reading goals, more than 50%!

Provincial Strategy #3

Working Together: creating lasting and sustainable partnerships.

In 2020 we could no longer meet face-to-face with our existing partners but continued to develop several excellent relationships with community organizations that we hope will become lasting partnerships for future programs.

Community Connection Expansion: connecting with literacy educators and organizations in various communities.

In addition to our standard partnerships with the Northwest Child Development Centre (NWCDC) and the Learners Opportunity Group Society (LOGS), we connected with

- Community Health in Gitanyow
 - Hagwilget Education
 - Gitanmaax Youth program
 - Kispiox Independent School
 - Sik E Dakh Education Coordinator
 - Gitwangak Education
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- **Partnerships:** North West Child Development Center continued to take the lead in funding the Summer Reading Clubs. We also received support from Canada Summer Jobs, the Raise-A-Reader fund, Imagine Grant and the Northwest Library Federation to augment our own SRC funds.
 - This work reflects **HDPL's goals:** "To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves on a continual basis;" and "To seek to identify community needs and to provide programmes of service to meet such needs. To cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programmes or services to meet community needs."
 - **Outcomes:** By working with funding available through the BVCDC, HDPL can continue to provide the Summer Reading Club outreach to the communities outside of Hazelton in our catchment area. HDPL also can provide literacy training in more of our remote First Nations villages.

Provincial Strategy #4

Enhancing Governance: sustaining our success and demonstrating impact.

Governance Planning: Strategic planning and training in 2020

HDPL's Board of Trustees continues to enhance governance in 2020.

- Online training sessions for our new trustees were offered in 2020 as new trustees assume their board responsibilities. Continuous training opportunities are available for 2021 and beyond.
- HDPL's Board has completed their first Strategic Plan and is finalizing the document for publishing in early 2021.
- HDPL's 5-year plan is now in place. We are going forward with plans to request funds from additional communities and funding agencies.
- Aligned with several **HDPL goals**: "To seek to identify community needs and to provide programmes of service to meet such needs. To cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programmes or services to meet community needs." Also: "To serve the community as a centre of reliable information;" "To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves on a continual basis."
- **Partnerships**: Working with our Regional District, Provincial supporters and local villages continues regularly.
- **Outputs & Outcomes**: A new, refreshed Board of Trustees will enable HDPL to continue the service to our communities.

Summary

2020 was a time of change and regrouping. We continued to work with our community partners, and are focussing on literacy, STEAM and STEM training for our communities. Starting with the younger members of our community, training and play in STEM and STEAM activities is increasing the knowledge and skills of all participants and their parents in addition to providing an exciting and rewarding introduction to the library as a safe and informative place to be. We are looking to open up and restart our face-to-face events in 2021 and beyond!

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: HAZELTON DISTRICT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$ 11,082

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.)	Increase the use of our free, high-speed, unlimited bandwidth Internet access.	Assess number of users and duration of connections.	BC Strategy 1, 2: Providing universal access to high-speed, unlimited bandwidth Internet is key to a strong digital future for our communities.	Upgrade Internet bandwidth to the maximum available (275 MBPS).	None	April 2020 – March 2021	\$ 2,657	\$ 200 labour costs for upgrade programming and installation.	Although the hardware equipment will remain, the bandwidth upgrade will be re-evaluated at year-end.
	Access to free, reliable, high-speed Internet in the northwest is exceedingly rare.	Interview users (ad hoc) to determine value of this increased service in their lives.		Purchase new, high-speed capable wireless router and network switch.				\$ 200 to advertise the availability of the new service.	Budget constraints could limit future bandwidth affordability.
	Many of our community members have no Internet access at home.			Reposition and increase power on WiFi to increase our hotspot area.				Covered by HDPL	
Staff hardware upgrades	Better quality communication equipment allows for more effective meetings and better programming for our online patrons.	Record frequency of use.	BC Strategy 2, 4: Increase program participation from remote communities.	Purchase USB HD camera, lapel mic and headset for online meeting and training sessions.	None	April 2020	\$ 254	None	Clear visuals and audio are required for effective communications.
Staff software upgrades	Provide online group programming abilities to a wider group of library patrons.	Record frequency of use.	BC Strategy 2, 4: Increase meeting participation with remote communities and providing training opportunities for remote staff and board members.	Purchase an annual Zoom licence to allow online meetings and presentations to the community.	Shared resource with co-located Hazelton Area Historic Association as they have no budget for IT systems.	April 2020 – March 2021	\$200	None	Licence costs will be evaluated at year-end for suitability and value going forward.
	Increase participation in library board meetings and training opportunities for staff and board members.	Document activities where remote users would normally not attend meetings or training.							

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.)	Provide in-house access to green screen and podcast recording equipment for library programming and patron media creation.	Document use of equipment: events, participants, outcomes.	BC Strategy 1, 2: Building the capacity of our community to participate and contribute to the digital economy.	Purchase portable green screen backdrop, tripod and lighting kit, HD camera, and software. Portable audio sound studio equipment.	2020 SRC collaborations with literacy and education societies in our rural communities.	August 2020	\$ 1,512	Staff and patron training (\$ 400) for 2020 Summer Reading Club (SRC) event and other future uses will be provided by HDPL.	Providing new and different technology experiences in our area increases online participation levels dramatically.
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.)	Provide shareable tablets for patron use.	Record frequency of use.	BC Strategy 1 - 3: Building the capacity of our community to engage with services, participate and ultimately contribute to the digital economy.	Purchase tablet computers for in-house patron use and project-based events (see green screen project above).	None	August 2020 December 2020	\$ 665 \$ 665	None	A new project that could not have been completed without the grant.
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.)	Provide a secure charging station for patron devices. Many patrons do not have reliable access to power or a secure location to charge their Internet access devices.	Document frequency of use. Interview users (ad hoc) to determine value of this service in their lives.	BC Strategy 1 - 3: Building the capacity of our community to engage with services, participate and ultimately contribute to the digital economy.	Purchase a charging locker so that patrons can securely charge their devices while at the library.	None	October 2020	\$2,625	None	A large portion of our patrons have no home. Their only connection to the larger community is through their devices. Providing this service plays an extremely vital role in keeping <u>everyone</u> connected.
Electronic collections (licensing)	Providing increased access to online resources (databases and e-materials).	Assess frequency of use.	BC Strategy 1 - 3: Building the capacity of our community to engage with services, participate and ultimately contribute to the digital economy.	Purchase (additional) access to new resources, training, and other materials for patron use.	BC Libraries Coop	Early 2021 BCLC is coordinating this project.	\$ 3,200	We can bring more materials to our patrons than we could afford alone in this collaboration with other BC libraries.	This would be a trial year with the results evaluated for usefulness and value going forward. For example, access to Lynda is on our “must try list” if available soon.

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments

General Notes:

- Access to this grant enabled purchases of equipment and services that would not have been affordable without reducing other services in our normal budget. Those services with annual cost may not be affordable after the grant funds are exhausted.
- Strategic links for each area continue further than the statements made on the form. All the items listed above can be used to enable most, if not all of the strategic points for B.C.