*CILIPs Conference 2020 – ‘Disruptors and Innovators’* by Jennifer Stewart, Service Development Officer, Libraries, ON with Fife Cultural Trust

Life during 2020 has been very different and this year’s CILIPs conference was no exception – delivering a virtual conference surely comes with many challenges, however I hugely enjoyed the experience. Yes, I missed the quick hellos, the face to face conversations with friends old and new and the great lunch (no that’s not all I go to conference for!), but I also welcomed the chance to still connect with fellow professionals near home and further afield, to find out how the library world has adapted, and continues to adapt to Covid challenges and to be inspired by other’s projects and experiences… and I found it an optimistic conference.

The Keynote speakers were particularly inspiring - especially Dr. Jenny Peachey on the role of public libraries during and after the pandemic. It was fantastic to hear that her research found public libraries had a huge impact during lockdown and have in fact been making a difference to people's lives. Every one of us at conference who have worked so hard this year on adapting services and reaching out to communities must have been heartened to get this affirmation for the work that we’ve been doing.

The first session I attended was *Bringing Theory into Practice - Student Research Lightening Session*. I was very keen to hear about the great projects the students were working on and to see how the challenges of the pandemic had influenced their research. I was particularly intrigued by Rachel Salzano's work on the information behaviour of forced migrants and how they value library resources. I feel that this research is very important and something we can all learn from, particularly with how to engage and support this demographic*.*

*Makerspaces in Libraries and How Do They Stay Relevant in the New Normal* was next up, and although Makerspaces are not a feature within ONFife Libraries, it is something that has always interested me. I was very impressed to see how Edinburgh Libraries have overcome the challenges of the pandemic and have adapted their Makerspaces to remain relevant to their users! That said, it did sound very complicated and complex which made me think it would perhaps only be achievable for the more advanced/experienced Makerspaces.

*Open to All: Widening Services Through Partnership in Aberdeen* – great session which provided an inspiring insight into how well a public library and academic library can work together to achieve a shared goal - to create a joint wellbeing space. Aberdeen have shown the strength that partnerships can bring, and how together they can better meet the needs of their shared demographic.

Overall, I had an enlightening and uplifting day at conference… well organised, with relevant and informative speakers, I’m grateful to Cilips Tayside for enabling me to attend.

*The CILIPS Conference 2020* by Maria Ramirez, Library Assistant, Perth College UHI Library

Thank you so much for inviting me to the CILIPS Conference this year. It was the first CILIPS Conference I have ever attended and it was great to get inspired and to learn from so many library professionals. I was pleased to know about so many projects that aim to work with local communities in many different ways. I really felt that libraries play such an important part in including everybody in society. Some sessions were thought provoking, and reminding me that we still have to change the way we do things if we really want our libraries to be inclusive, but we also have the power to do it.

I was moved by *‘Playlist for Life and Libraries’* with Rebecca Kennedy who talked about her project related to dementia. I thought it was a great project for libraries to be involved in. From a personal point of view, I know how valuable the power of music is to spark memories in dementia sufferers and people in hospitals in general. It was great to see that we as a librarians could do so much about improving well-being and mental health for this particular vulnerable group that is not a group we normally consider as library users. I work in a library which is part of a college and university and I will be promoting this project, in particular among our Care students and staff but also anybody that could be interested.

There were a variety of sessions related to increasing digital literacy that I found really valuable. At work, I get to meet library users that could benefit from gaining digital skills, so important nowadays and more necessary than ever before due to the way education and so many aspects of our life have changed due to the Covid pandemic. I enjoyed the playful approach of the session *‘Dip into Digital’*. It was engaging and great to know that they involved many library users. I like the idea that people were learning digital skills without realising. They were right in not advertised the sessions as for learning digital skills. It was Inspiring and made me think that we could do something similar in our library, making technology exciting for those that see it as scary. It was helpful to see how they are adapting their project due to the Covid pandemic, as many other library professionals. As they did, we got funding from SLIC, and although their project is very different from ours it was to some extent relatable. It made me think of aspects I have not included in our project.

*‘Fighting Fake News’* was about such a topical subject, disinformation. I found it informative. It was fun to spot the fake news that was not fake, and made me reflect on how hard is to tell the truth sometimes. Manipulation is getting sophisticated!

I enjoyed the *Digital Storytelling in the Public Library* with Chris Leslie, again it shows a great use of libraries, and an inventive way to educate a wide variety of different people on digital skills. At the same time they created interesting accessible human records. With this project, the local community was involved, they are giving voice to a great variety of people including vulnerable group such as refugees, and other groups normally excluded from the digital world and therefore widening their options. People that took part seemed to gain a sense of connection and ownership.

Thank you again for the opportunity that the conference gave me in listening to so many library professionals and sharing their passion for their work.