

Spark Democracy in your Library

Democracy is more than politics, and libraries are more than books. Libraries bring people together. Libraries inspire knowledge, learning, and change. In 2020, libraries throughout British Columbia became spaces that sparked democracy. Through library programming, community members engaged with each other in ways that promoted shared values, collaboration and civic friendships—all vital to a strong democracy. Would you like to spark democracy in your library? Here are a few ideas.

The following projects represent the variety of civic engagement projects proposed by libraries across British Columbia. While many of the projects were disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, the ideas showcase libraries as community gathering space that promote shared decision making and collective action. See page two for a full list of projects.



Zero-waste Product Tutorials

The Nakusp Public Library created a series of zero-waste product tutorials where residents could learn how to combat climate change through creating their own household products such as toothpaste, shampoo, and bees wax wraps.



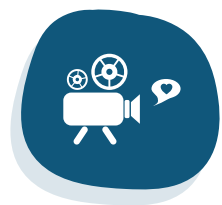
Inter-generational Holiday Hellos

In order to address social isolation and spread holiday cheer, the Coquitlam Public Library invited children to create holiday “hellos” to share with seniors in their community. They received almost 3,000 greetings in the form of cards, letters, and art projects.



Book Club Dialogue

The Nelson Public Library supported a local youth project by co-developing and co-delivering a community dialogue around the history of colonization to increase knowledge and appreciation of Indigenous cultures. The dialogue was informed by the book *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada* by Chelsea Vowel.



Community Conversation

In response to the development of a new multi-service facility and to help build connections among neighbours, the Squamish Public Library screened a film and hosted a conversation about the role of community and connection in healing trauma and creating a sense of belonging for everyone. The film, *Us & Them*, is a compassionate look at homelessness.

These projects were proposed through a Democracy Spark Grant Program hosted by the Simon Fraser University Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue and the B.C. Library Co-Op. Funded by a Vancouver Foundation System Change Grants, the grants provided libraries with \$1000 to create programs that built social connections and increased a sense of agency through experiential, solutions-oriented activities related to social isolation, climate change, or local community needs. The funding supported staff time and supplies and participation in an evaluation of the spark grant program.

Visit www.democracymdialogue.ca to learn more.

List of all Spark Democracy 2020 Proposed Projects

BRANCH	PROJECT
Kaslo & District Public Library	Zero-waste DIY kits for adults to take home and move toward zero-waste lifestyle.
Coquitlam Public Library	Holiday Hello and inter-generational video connections and care packages for seniors.
McBride & District Public Library	e-greeting videos created by seniors in rural northern community.
Nakusp Public Library	"Let's Connect Project" to help Seniors and other isolated community members connect with loved ones via tablets, wifi hot spots, and tech support.
Nakusp Public Library	Zero-waste workshops to address climate crisis and social isolation.
Nelson Library	Truth, resurgence, and reconciliation dialogues based on the book <i>Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada</i> by Chelsea Vowel.
North Vancouver Public Library	Four-week program to determine local solutions towards stopping global warming.
Richmond Public Library (RPL)	Expert speaker series for parents and caregivers to learn ways to help their children respond to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues during times of crisis.
Squamish Public Library - Local Solutions	Community Conversations program to start a dialogue in the community about food, youth, and social isolation.
Terrace Public Library	Multi-generational programs and activities for seniors, children, and their families held at the senior's centre and library.
West Vancouver Memorial Library	Climate Emergency Project incorporating a toolkit, a series of toolkit learning circles, a reading challenge, and an author event and community forum.
Burnaby Public Library	"Climate Emergency: Action Café," a civic dialogue and activation incorporating Indigenous ways of learning.
Burnaby Public Library	Creation of a queer space and youth-led Burnaby Pride event.
Burnaby Public Library	Stone soup conversation circle where people with low English skills come together to practice listening and speaking while learning how to make an affordable meal.
Burnaby Public Library	Traveling seed library allowing people to share seeds, harvest, and expertise.
Coquitlam Public Library	Inter-generational storytelling and recording where youth are connected to seniors to record their stories.
Cranbrook Public Library	Eco-leadership presentation with take-away "greening kits" created specifically for the vulnerable community members.
Greenwood Public Library	Movie nights to address social isolation in this remote, rural community.
Hazleton Public Library	Climate change focus groups.
Invermere Public Library	Purchase of headsets for seniors to use when accessing the library technology and WIFI to communicate with friends and family out of town.
Joss Paper Library	A conversation and workshop to deconstruct and interrogate questions about settler identity through the lens of the Asian diaspora.
Lillooet Area Library Association	Create a space for the "CommunityCONNECT" Conversations in order to develop strategies together to enhance efforts towards a healthy and vibrant community.
McBride and District Public Library	Climate change speaker series.
North Vancouver District Public Library	Aging well workshop series.
North Vancouver Public Library	Work in consultation with local First Nations elders to create a land acknowledgement statement that is authentic, sincere, and relates to specific actions they are taking.
North Vancouver Public Library	Volunteer Fair for job seekers, newcomers, and seniors.
Penticton Public Library	Inclusive book club for adults who have developmental delays or who have suffered severe brain trauma.
Richmond Public Library	Climate change presentations by city staff and research experts to educate the public and convene peer-to-peer discussions.
Smithers Library	"Renewable Energy Fair" bringing together businesses, government, non-profits, and community experts to showcase innovative, practical renewable energy options in the areas of transportation and home energy consumption.