



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

Mobile library lessons improve children's ICT skills Ghana Library Board/Volta Regional Library, Ghana

IMPACT CASE STUDY

The library's mobile service takes computers to five schools in under-developed parts of Ho Municipality in Volta Region so that children can get hands on information and communication technology (ICT) experience and pass their ICT exams. The service –

- Built ICT competencies of 200 students, increasing their potential to pass their exams.
- Attracted additional funding and technology support from the local technology agency, Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communication (GIFEC), which donated five desktop computers, additional solar panels, a canopy for outdoor lessons, desks and chairs.
- Won recognition across the municipality, receiving requests to expand the service to include more schools.
- Increased visibility of the library: mobile library user numbers increased by 38%, from 553 in 2012 to 762 in 2013.

“In the past, my students did not have the opportunity to relate to computers. Now they can see everything in real terms because they are able to interact with computers. They are also learning through educational games, and this helps build their skills and talents. Now they can handle computers confidently!” - Mawuli Amenya, ICT teacher, Ziavi Lume Methodist Junior High School.

Volta Regional Library is helping reduce failure rates by giving children in poor, rural parts of Ho Municipality hands on computer lessons. With a small grant (up to US\$15,000) from EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP) and technical support from the technology support agency TechAide, the library equipped their mobile library van with five netbook computers and solar panels to charge the netbooks. Each netbook was loaded with a digital library, including content related to the school curriculum and educational games. The library marketed the programme to schools, and trained 13



Keen learners – the mobile library service takes fully-charged laptops to schools so that children can receive hands-on computer lessons.

“I can create a shortcut and open an email programme. I also have confidence in moving the mouse. The books borrowed from the library have improved my reading skills.” - Dzanku Ophelia of Klefe Achatime Junior High School.



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librarians and teachers to conduct hands on computer classes. In October 2012 they began an intensive programme of weekly computer classes in five schools, in the villages of Ziavi Dzogbe, Ziavi Lume, Sokode, Ho Fiave and Taviefe.

In less than six months, the library -

- Conducted 105 computer lessons, teaching 215 students the computer skills needed to pass the Basic Education Certificate Exam.
- Taught 119 students how to research the internet and use e-mail.
- Built strong relationships with two local radio stations which aired programmes about the service, attracting requests for further ICT training from marginalized communities and schools.

The future

The Ghana Library Authority, GIFEC and TechAide will continue to support the service. An online funding campaign through GlobalGiving raised US\$5,400 for the service, and the library will use the funds to buy additional netbook computers. The library will continue to visit schools and monitor the impact of the service on the Basic Education Certificate Exam results. They are also further equipping the mobile library to serve other vulnerable members of the community.

The EIFL-PLIP grant was awarded in April 2012. 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 Mr Alikem Tamakloe – tamakloealikem@yahoo.com.

EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to enabling access to knowledge through libraries in more than 60 developing and transition countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP) supports libraries to implement community development projects. Learn more at www.eifl.net/plip. EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Public libraries – partners in development

This service offers a cost-effective model for providing access to technology and improving education in rural schools. With regular practical computer classes and the support of skilled librarians to search the internet for information, more students will pass their computer exams, learn skills for future employment and climb out of poverty. The Ghana Library Board funds running costs of the mobile library service. The library conducted a short impact survey with 60 students (20 boys and 40 girls; aged from 11 to 19) selected for computer lessons. All said they believed the lessons had improved their chances of passing the Basic Education Certificate Exam -

- 91% said they did not have access to computers or the internet before the service.
- 63% said they had learnt basic computer skills; 38% said they had improved existing skills.
- 75% said they had used the internet to seek information related to their studies, 66% succeeded in finding the information they were seeking; 33% said the information found had helped improve their school marks.
- 55% said they could apply their new skills to search for agricultural information to help their parents, most of whom are farmers.