



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

Library teaches artists digital design skills

Saula Library, Nepal

IMPACT CASE STUDY

Bungamati village, in Nepal's Kathmandu valley, is renowned for beautiful crafts produced by artists and by farmers wanting to supplement their income. The village is especially famous for wooden crafts, but villagers also work in metal and stone. The craft workers work in isolation from each other and rely on a small pool of expertise for training and design ideas. Saula Library saw an opportunity to use information and communication technology (ICT) to help the



Traditional artists are using digital design software to speed up design and production.

craft workers upgrade and modernize their skills and improve their livelihoods. With support from EIFL-PLIP (US\$30,000), they bought 10 computers, connected them to the Internet and began classes in traditional and fine art, computer literacy and digital graphic design. The project, titled the Saula Library Innovation Programme (SLIP) faced and overcame many challenges. Most handicraft workers are also farmers and class attendance dropped off during the rice harvesting season. SLIP had to adapt to meet farmers' schedules. Saula Library's premises are tiny and could not accommodate the 10 computers. A local businessman offered space, rent-free, for an ICT centre in a building near the bus station.

Achievements and impact

- The library trained 43 people – 39 craft workers and four students – in traditional and fine art and computer skills; 35 craft workers learnt digital graphic design; 200 school students trained in basic computer use, internet research and social networking.
- Craft workers – who usually work in isolation – developed a culture of sharing during training, when they discussed problems and shared solutions.
- Numbers of library users almost doubled – from 240 a week before SLIP to 477 a week by the end of the project.
- Saula Library's new ICT Centre is a 'first' for Bungamati. Before SLIP there were no public internet facilities or cyber-café in the village.
- Saula Library has won recognition in the community as an innovative, well-resourced and modern institution. The ICT Centre, at the bus station, is accessible and visible.





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What the artists say

Kumar Nakarmi has been a traditional 'Thanka' painter for five years. A Thanka is a painting depicting a Buddhist deity or mandala. Asked about the impact of the training, Mr Nakarmi said he really valued learning about measurements, especially when painting the faces of the Gods. Three years ago, Mr Nakarmi started his own business. He said his new digital skills would enable him to save time and bring greater variety to his work. 'Graphic design helps us to move fast and fine in a competitive market,' he said.

Binod Kapali is a wood carver who has been carving since he was a teenager. The training had helped him with measurements and to carve the faces of the Gods. It had taken him a month to sketch the Lokeshwore (a form of Thanka), which he had to design as part of the SLIP training. 'But with digital design it only took me only five days to complete the Lokeshwore!' he said. Mr Kapali had never used a computer before the training.

Unexpected outcomes

A surprise development was when seven deaf pupils from a local school joined the SLIP training. When Mr Daya Ram Maharjan, a teacher, noticed one of his deaf pupils showing an interest in art classes, he contacted Saula Library. The library welcomed the pupils. Mr Daya Ram Maharjan was extremely happy. He said art was a good way for deaf children to express their feelings, and art classes would help them in their future careers. The children all completed the traditional art classes with good results.

The future

With the new ICT Centre, the library can offer a variety of valuable new services. The art training will continue – the handicraft workers say they now want to learn how to do digital graphic design in 3D. The Bungamati Village Development Committee has agreed to provide a hall for future training. The Nepal National Library has increased the number of books it brings to the library each year and the library has attracted the attention of potential supporters, like the international NGO READ.

EIFL-PLIP supported the service in May 2010. A year later, the library assessed the impact of the service.

Information presented here is based on the library's assessment.

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[EIFL](#) (Electronic Information for Libraries) is an international not-for-profit organisation 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 public libraries to use ICT to implement innovative community development services. Learn more - www.eifl.net/plip; further information - plip@eifl.net. EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation