



knowledge without boundaries

# EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

## Three libraries team up to support vulnerable youth National Library of Uganda, Masindi & Lira Public Libraries

IMPACT CASE STUDY

The Electronic Information for Youth Employment project (EIYE) provides free information and communication technology (ICT) and employment support to vulnerable young people in Uganda's capital city, Kampala, and two rural district administrative centres, Masindi and Lira. The project –

- Improved skills and employment prospects of over 500 youth.
- Encouraged two more public libraries to express interest in replicating the project.
- Attracted new partnerships – Kampala Capital City Authority wants to partner with the library in a future youth employment service.
- Increased numbers of library users by 30%.

*“After finishing the library's training, I received a message on my mobile phone about a secretarial position. I immediately applied and was shortlisted. Three days after the interview, I received a call saying I had got the job! Mobile phone communication has transformed my future!”*  
– Sarah Apuu.



Working with National Youth Council volunteer trainers, the project provides ICT training for vulnerable youth in three public libraries.

Youth unemployment in Uganda is alarmingly high – according to the World Bank (2008), it could be as high as 83%. The EIYE project tackles two key barriers to youth employment. Firstly, the arrival of high speed broadband has opened up many jobs, but without ICT skills, young people are excluded from these opportunities. Secondly, young people do not have access to information about jobs and further education, especially in rural areas. EIYE provides free ICT skills training and – taking advantage of the fact that over 12 million Ugandans have mobile phones – offers a free mobile phone text message (SMS) opportunities alert service for trainees.

With a grant of US\$15,000 from EIFL-PLIP to cover equipment and some operational costs for one year, National Library of Uganda (NLU) bought 13 computers, three printers and two generators. Working with the National Youth Council and the two district municipalities, they set up ICT skills training centres in NLU (Kampala) and Lira and Masindi public libraries. For the first time ever, the three libraries offered free access to ICT and skills training. Advertising the project produced floods of applicants in all three centres.



knowledge without boundaries

# EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

In less than a year, the three libraries...

- Trained five librarians and three National Youth Council volunteers to staff the ICT skills training centres.
- Produced computer and internet training manuals in local languages.
- Trained 560 youth to use computers, including software skills like Word and Excel, and to research the internet for work and educational opportunities.
- Built a database including information about the skills, talents and career dreams of over 1,000 youth for the SMS information service.
- Sent out over 5,000 SMS, alerting young people to further education opportunities, scholarships and jobs.

## Public libraries - partners in development

Uganda's National Development Plan 2010/11-2014/15 highlights youth unemployment as one of the most urgent challenges facing the country. An estimated 390,000 school leavers enter the job-market every year, and the economy cannot keep up with the desperate need for jobs. As one solution, the government is stepping up efforts to provide vocational and technical training.

There are 32 public and 93 community libraries in Uganda, spread across the country and reaching deep into rural areas. The Electronic Information for Youth Employment project (EIYE) shows how – with ICT and limited additional resources – public libraries can partner with government agencies and local authorities to make a difference.

## The future

The EIYE project impressed the three municipal authorities, who will fund increased costs of electricity and maintenance of the ICT training facilities. EIYE has also inspired development of similar projects. Kampala Capital City Authority is discussing a partnership with NLU to set up a one-stop youth ICT skills training, employment support and information service to be based at the Kampala City Public Library, and two more public libraries, Kabale Public Library in western Uganda and Mbale Public Library in eastern Uganda are now considering replicating the training and SMS alert services. British Council has donated additional computers to Masindi Public Library, and they will also be used for ICT training.

The EIFL-PLIP grant was awarded in November 2011. 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 Ms Stella Nekusa, project manager - [snekusa@nlu.go.ug](mailto:snekusa@nlu.go.ug).

[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](http://www.eifl.net/plip). EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.