



knowledge without boundaries

# EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

## Library ICT helps children improve school results Busia Community Library, Kenya

IMPACT CASE STUDY

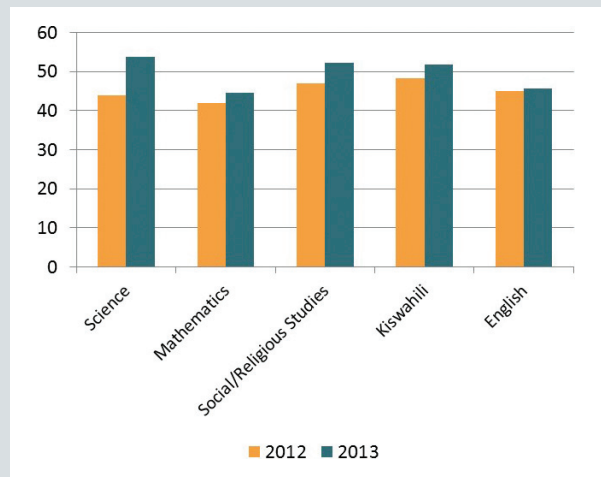
This pilot programme, titled Watoto kwa Watoto (Children for Children), uses internet-connected tablet computers pre-loaded with content related to the school curriculum and educational games to support primary school students who are struggling to pass their exams. The programme –

- Demonstrated the effectiveness of information and communication technology (ICT) in improving students' exam results.
- Improved students' social skills and confidence. Parents, teachers and headmasters all reported positive behaviour changes, saying that students who participated in the programme were more socially outgoing, well-mannered and curious about the world.
- Enabled the students to teach others: 12 students said they had taught at least one other person (peers, parents and a school headmaster) to use ICT.
- Strengthened the library's links with schools and the Ministry of Education.

Busia Community Library is the only library in Busia District in Western Kenya. Located in the busy market town of Busia, with about 50,000 people, the library is open to everyone and to children from all schools. For the pilot project, the library especially targets schools where high numbers of children struggle to pass the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education exam, which determines entry into secondary school. Working with the Ministry of Education, the library identified three primary schools (Bwamani, Bugengi and Mundulusia). They called for volunteers and selected 15 students (five from each school). With a small grant (up to US\$15,000) from EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-

### Public libraries – partners in development

Throughout the year, schools conduct tests to assess students' progress. The library obtained average test scores for the 15 students selected for the pilot in March 2012, before Watoto kwa Watoto, and again in March 2013, at the end of the pilot's first year. Test scores in key subjects improved. Science scores saw the greatest improvement, from 43.9% to 53.7%. Parents, teachers and headmasters all firmly believe the improvements are a result of the Watoto kwa Watoto programme.



*“The learners are exposed to a variety of learning materials. They gain new knowledge every time they interact with learners from other schools. This programme is building them academically and socially.” – Mercy Musungu, Bugengi Primary Head Teacher, Grade 7.*



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PLIP), the library bought six tablet computers, a wireless router, a printer, and tables and chairs to create a comfortable learning environment. The library's partners, the technology consultancy iHub in Nairobi and the educational agency eLimu, trained two library staff members and the District Curriculum Officer to use the tablet computers and applications (apps) for accessing school subjects. Guided by Minimally Invasive Education theory, in which children learn to use technology in a minimally supervised environment, librarians encouraged the children to use the tablet computers to access the apps, to research the internet and to play educational games.

In just one year, the library –

- Held 18 three-hour learning sessions, during which the 15 students downloaded educational apps, played educational games, researched the internet, and created and used email accounts.
- Worked with up to 15 more students every Saturday, teaching them to use the tablet computers.
- Organized special ICT training sessions for headmasters from 10 schools in the district who wanted to understand the technology their students were learning.
- Hosted and attended events to share learning about the pilot with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Education, the United Nations, librarians, community-based organizations, headmasters, teachers and school students.

*“Roselyne was shy before she came to the library. Because you ask them questions and encourage them to talk, she has gained confidence... She has become the teacher in the family.” – Helen Tambo Ojambo, mother.*

## The future

Busia Community Library will continue to offer the Watoto kwa Watoto service, working in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Maria's Libraries, a non-governmental organization committed to strengthening libraries in Kenya. Work with the three rural schools will continue, and the library is also reaching out to more schools in Busia town. The Kenya National Library Service, the government agency which establishes and manages libraries, and the US Embassy Resource Centre, which provides funding support to some libraries in Kenya, have expressed interest in replicating Watoto kwa Watoto, and the library has provided them with detailed documents describing the programme and its impact.

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 Ms Esther Ajambo – [estherajambo@gmail.com](mailto:estherajambo@gmail.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](http://www.eifl.net/plip). EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

