



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

IMPACT CASE STUDY

Library ICT supports farmer-to-farmer learning KACE Community Library, Uganda

Kachumbala Area Cooperative Enterprise (KACE) Community Library uses information and communication technology (ICT) to build farmers' documentation and media skills so that they can share information with other farmers. This 'farmer-to-farmer' information service –

- Created local language learning materials for literate and non-literate farmers to make them available at the library, close to where farmers live.
- Developed digital documentation skills of 30 farmers who are now able to develop learning materials.
- Deepened the library's relationship with 15 farmers' cooperatives and villages in Kachumbala.
- Received a grant from an international non-governmental organization for expansion.
- Won local government recognition for the library as a dynamic, innovative institution able to contribute to improving farmers' lives.
- Increased library user numbers by 4,800 people, including over 3,300 farmers.

“Of all the local innovations, this one by KACE has done the most to transform traditional farming methods, to modern ‘best practice’. The results will live on for a long time.” – the Honourable Okerenyang Tomson, Chairman, Local Council III, Kolir sub-county.



“By creating visual learning resources, this library is helping our farmers try new farming techniques. Farmers’ attitudes are changing. In the community, seeing is believing!” – Mr Yakobo Okalebo, Chairman, Farmers’ Forum, Kolir sub-county.

KACE Community Library works with farming communities in Kachumbala in Bukedea district (Eastern Uganda) and promotes agro-ecology, a farming method that takes into account culture, traditions and the need to maintain and restore eco-systems. As part of its programme, KACE organizes regular farmer-to-farmer exchange visits. However, the visits are expensive, and many farmers – especially women who cannot leave their homes for long periods – are excluded. During exchange visits, KACE staff observed some farmers taking photographs. They recognized an opportunity to involve farmers in creating learning resources. With a small grant (up to US\$15,000) from EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP), KACE bought two digital cameras, a desktop computer to make documentaries, and a laptop, a projector, a screen and a generator



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“I am now using digital photography confidently. I have even bought my own simple digital camera, and I am using the photos for sharing my work within and beyond my community.” – Mr Robert Okote, farmer.

to screen documentaries in villages. In less than a year, the library...

- Trained 30 farmers from 15 rural producer organizations to collect information and to create, edit and present documentaries.
- Worked with farmers to produce four PowerPoint presentations on diseases and pests affecting fruit and vegetables.
- Organized 15 documentary screenings, attracting 500 farmers.

The future

The 30 farmers will continue to use their ICT skills to document and share learning through the farmer-to-farmer service. KACE has also received a three-year grant of US\$28,000 from the international non-governmental organization, Build Africa, to support and expand the service. The grant will enable KACE to disseminate material produced by the farmers more widely in the district, to install additional computers and to build farmers' internet research skills so that they can research marketing opportunities and market their produce online. The sub-county local government has pledged to continue to help mobilize farmers and to encourage use of the library.

Public libraries - partners in development

An estimated 75% of Ugandans live in rural areas and generate income from farming. Information is critical to agricultural development, but locally relevant information in local languages is extremely scarce. By building farmers' capacity to use digital technology to interview and photograph farmers engaged in sustainable farming practices, and to make learning materials in PowerPoint format, KACE Community Library is producing information in the local language *Ateso*. The material is screened at farmers meetings, or can be viewed at the library. Because it includes both visuals and audio, it is accessible to non-literate farmers. Supported by librarians, the farmers also reformat the PowerPoint material and make leaflets which they distribute at farmers' meetings.

“Giving farmers a stronger stake in the documentation process has built farmers' self-confidence and made the products more convincing for other farmers.” – Mr Akol Luca, documentation facilitator.

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 Charles Okubal, natacott@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.

