



knowledge without boundaries

# EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

IMPACT CASE STUDY

## Library helps break silence on teenage sexuality Tanzania Library Services Board

Working through the National Central Library in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Library Services Board raises teenagers' awareness about crucial issues relating to puberty and sexual health. The library's mobile training project takes computers to schools, and combines computer and internet training with lectures by experts in adolescent sexual health. The service -

- Demonstrated the value of the internet as a source of information for teenagers struggling to cope with physical and emotional changes.
- Raised awareness of 104 teenagers about issues related to sexual development, enabling them to make sound and healthy decisions, and to prevent unintended pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Improved visibility of the library among teenagers.

In Tanzania, cultural barriers prevent many parents from speaking openly to their children about sex and sexuality. As a result, teenagers experience confusion and fear as they journey through adolescence, which is a time for sexual exploration and experimentation. Without the right information, teenagers are at risk of early and unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortions, sexual harassment and exploitation, and contracting sexually transmitted diseases like gonorrhoea and HIV/AIDS.



*"I have been able to search for information about sexual health, but also for information about school subjects, which helps improve my grades." - Secondary school pupil, Dar es Salaam.*

***"We value this training. Sexual and Reproductive Health Training is necessary for the teenagers, as many are sexually active - but do not have awareness."***  
*- Aneth Laswai, teacher.*

The library uses information and communication technology (ICT) and local expertise to help end the silence and raise awareness. With a small grant (up to US\$15,000) from EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP), the library bought eight computers and entered into a partnership with the non-governmental organization Femina Health Information Project (Femina HIP), which promotes healthy lifestyles for adolescents. Together, they





knowledge without boundaries

# EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

launched a programme of computer and internet research training and lectures on sex and adolescent development. To reach teenagers in a secure environment and to win the support of teachers, they worked through schools: Chang'ombe Primary School, Mgulani Primary School and Kibasila Secondary School, in Dar es Salaam's Temeka district.

In less than a year, the service -

- Trained 104 pupils (60 girls and 44 boys) from the three schools to use computers and internet search engines to seek information about adolescent sexual health.
- Presented lectures on physical and emotional changes related to adolescent development, sexual intercourse, safe sex and prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Distributed over 200 magazines and leaflets, provided by Femina, to teenagers.
- Signed up 100 new users - mostly pupils and teachers - to the library.

*“We are very happy to participate in the library’s training for youth, because we understand it is the responsibility of all organizations to provide knowledge to the community.”*

*- Ms Constancia Mгимwa, Femina Community Mobilization, Senior Officer.*

## The future

TLSB will continue to offer the service in the library, encouraging more schools to take part. The library’s partner, Femina HIP, has donated books and journals on adolescent sexual health and the partnership will continue in future.

The EIFL-PLIP grant was awarded in July 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 Angela Mandara - [mandaraangel@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mandaraangel@yahoo.co.uk).

[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.

