



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

Library information service for poultry farmers Tanzania Library Services Board

IMPACT CASE STUDY

The library's mobile training service combines information and communication technology (ICT) with business skills training to help poultry farmers who supply Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's capital city, with chickens and eggs to improve their livelihoods. The Poultry Information Service -

- Raised awareness among poultry farmers about the ways in which ICT can be used to access information needed to improve farming methods and incomes, and to market poultry products.
- Built farmers' confidence with ICT, encouraging them to use the internet.
- Increased poultry farmers' access to information about varieties and choices of chicks, poultry nutrition, medication and preservation.
- Improved farmers' business skills, enabling them to compete with bigger suppliers.

"I thought I would lose my customers and waste my time attending this training. But it has been worthwhile for my business and now I can use information technology to help me diagnose poultry illnesses." - Mrs Bhoke Mwita, Poultry Farmer, Kitunda.

Kitunda, a busy farming area on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam, is home to many small-scale farmers who keep poultry to supplement other income or to feed their families. The farmers struggle with many issues: poultry diseases, parasites, poor nutrition and access to professional veterinary services. Without ICT, modern marketing skills and market information, they are unable to compete with bigger suppliers who sell to supermarkets and hotels. The Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) helps farmers overcome these challenges.

With a small grant (up to US\$15,000) from EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP), TLSB bought eight computers and entered into partnership with the poultry company, Interchick Co. Ltd. Together, they designed a computer skills, internet research and business training programme for poultry farmers. The library travelled to Kitunda,



Mr and Mrs Mwita, members of the Kiyombo Poultry Keeping Group. The group has 25 members and owns a shared farm with 300 chickens.



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bringing eight computers, and worked with two farmers' groups: the Kiyombo Poultry Keeping Group, which has 25 members and a shared farm with about 300 chickens, and the Kiyombo Dairy Society, which also has 25 members and keeps cattle as well as poultry.

This was the first-ever ICT training for poultry farmers in Kitunda. In less than a year, the library -

- Organized two four-day workshops in Kitunda, training 50 poultry farmers (24 women and 26 men) to use computers and to research the internet for information about poultry farming.
- Introduced the farmers to online marketing and developed their market research and business skills.
- Taught the farmers to use email and social media to communicate with buyers.
- Disseminated brochures and journals on poultry farming and business development to the farmers.

The future

TLSB will continue to build poultry farmers' online research, communication and marketing skills, and support growth of poultry farms in Kitunda. The partnership with Interchick Co. Ltd. will continue, ensuring poultry farmers have access to a steady flow of up to date books and journals on poultry farming and marketing.

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.

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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.

Public libraries - partners in development

From large cities to remote villages, new fibre-optic cable networks are rapidly bringing fast broadband to Tanzania. Yet only 12% of the country's 43 million people are internet users (International Telecommunication Union, 2011). The vast majority of Tanzanians (over 80%) are involved in farming, but most farmers do not know about the information and opportunities the internet provides.

Through training that combines basic computer applications with information literacy, e-marketing and business skills, Tanzania Library Services Board shows farmers the value and the potential of the internet to improve their lives. This library service provides a model for bringing farmers into the internet era.

"Working with the library was extremely helpful - and we went out of our way to make the training a success. The farmers were very excited. Many of them learnt for the first time that they could obtain the information they need so easily through the internet." - Dr Kapello, a veterinary surgeon at Interchick Co. Ltd., the library's partner organization.