PHIONA NAFUNA

DOCUMENTOR OF COMMUNITY LIFE FOR A TELEVISION STATION

UGANDA

"My first experience of using a computer was when the library training started," says Phiona Nafuna, a young mother living in Nkoma Village near the town of Mbale in Eastern Uganda.

The eldest of four children, Phiona left school early. "My three young brothers were still going to school, and my mum could not afford my school fees," she explains.

One day, a friend told Phiona about free digital skills classes being offered by Mbale Public Library. Mbale is one of 27 public and community libraries in Uganda taking part in a project implemented by EIFL and partners, National Library of Uganda, Maendeleo Foundation and Peer 2 Peer University. The project builds the capacity of libraries to provide digital skills training in their communities, and connects learners to free online courses in entrepreneurial, craft-making, technical and other useful skills.

"I learnt Word, PowerPoint, writing and sending emails, and using the internet," says Phiona. "I started applying for work, and was called to a job interview by Know Your City TV.

"They asked if I have a certificate for my computer skills. I produced the certificate that the library awarded me - and I have got the job! I am happy to be able to support my daughter, who is aged two, and to help my mother."

Phiona also has a strong community spirit. Every Saturday, a women's group meets at the library to learn new practical skills. Using YouTube courses, the women have learnt how to make vaseline, liquid soap, paper bags and other crafts. As a volunteer Phiona helps the women to make and sell their produce.



Photo by Jjumba Martin

> "Women and young people should get involved in every activity offered through these digital skills courses offered by the library for a better and brighter future."
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> – **PHIONA NAFUNA**