

Library Authority, EIFL's mobile library project raises pass rate in BECE



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A partnership between the Ghana **Library Authority** and international non-governmental agency, EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) for the delivery of a mobile library project has resulted in a significant increase in the pass rate of students sitting for ICT at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) between 2016 and 2019.

Exam pass rate figures from schools reached by the mobile libraries from 2016 to 2019 show that the project helped over 3,200 students to pass the ICT exam. In 2019, 84% of children who gained practical computer skills passed the ICT exam – an increase from 45% in 2015 before the project started.

The Executive Director of the Authority, Hayford Siaw said, “this project has been a great success, we have seen how access to technology and practical classes not only provided students with skills for the future, but has inspired and motivated them to learn further. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated to us the importance of technology for learning and communications. GIFEC looks forward to expanding this project into the future and helping more students achieve better results in their B.E.C.E.”

“Currently, Ghana Library Authority has 74 libraries across the 16 regions, therefore, we could expand this project by equipping each branch library with the necessary resources to reach surrounding schools. This can increase our impact by over 50%,” Mr. Siaw added.

The project used low-powered laptops, solar panels and modem internet to give practical ICT classes. It

was started by Volta Regional Library with a grant from EIFL.

They equipped their mobile library van with five laptops, solar panels, a modem for the internet, and travelled to five junior high schools that did not have computers in and around Ho. The librarians and teachers together taught children from Grades 1 – 3 how to use the computers and research the internet.

In 2015 EIFL and GhLA expanded the project to cover four regions; Ashanti, Western, Upper East and Volta.

From 2015 – 2019 the Regional Mobile Libraries conducted classes in about 20 schools each year.

Their focus was the B.E.C.E. students, and the annual pass rate in the ICT exam steadily increased.

“I can proudly say that in 2018 ICT was the subject with the highest grades in the B.E.C.E. The project has transformed the children to become computer literate!” said Veronica McCarthy, Head Teacher, Aboadze Catholic Junior High School in Western Region.

The project also helped the children with their other subjects. Each laptop was pre-loaded with content related to other school subjects – geography, maths, science, English and questions from past B.E.C.E. exams so that the children could study and practice. At some schools, the teachers also used the computers to improve children’s reading and English comprehension skills so that they would better understand the B.E.C.E. questions, by including 30-minute sessions in which children read aloud from the laptops.

“We have been a partner in the project from the outset, and are proud to have contributed to its long term sustainability and expansion to the national level,” said Rima Kupryte, Director of EIFL.

“It is an excellent example how public libraries are contributing to quality education when equipped with ICT and relevant resources.”

The sustainable continuation of this project and its impact on quality education in the country has helped to contribute towards Ghana's progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education and the overall attainment of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.