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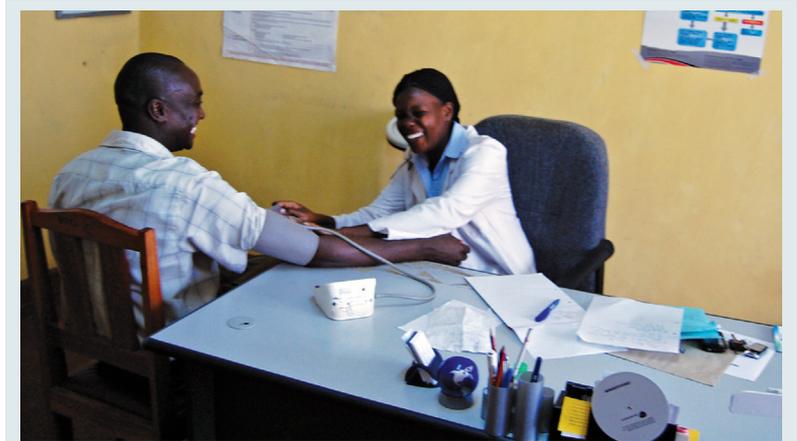
Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

Public library supports community health services

Kenya National Library Service

IMPACT CASE STUDY

Health information is crucial to building healthy communities. The Kenya National Library Service (KNLS), a government institution under the Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture, received grant support (US\$30,000) from EIFL-PLIP to set up e-health corners in two branch libraries. The e-health corners are spaces especially equipped and resourced for users who want to research health issues.



Health workers in Kisumu and Eldoret are using the KNLS e-health corners to improve their services.

The two branch libraries are in Kisumu, on the banks of Lake Victoria, and Eldoret, in the Great Rift Valley. Kisumu district has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence in Kenya. Surrounded by low level marshland, Kisumu also has significant levels of malaria and waterborne diseases. In the Great Rift Valley, where Eldoret is located, tropical diseases are and HIV/AIDS are common. Both towns have hospitals and are home to health training facilities. The two KNLS branch libraries are accessible, well-known and well used. Eldoret public library has an average annual attendance of 84,960, and Kisumu public library has an average of 94,724 visitors a year.

Achievements and impact

- E-health corners with free internet access set up in two branch libraries.
- Six librarians and eight health workers trained in using ICT and how to research and use digital health information.
- Librarians trained over 1,600 health workers, students and members of the public to use the e-health corners to access online health resources.
- The two libraries now regularly host public lectures on health topics, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, and sexually transmitted diseases. Lecturers use the resources in the e-health corners to prepare their presentations.
- Numbers of health workers and medical students visiting the library have increased.





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What the health workers say

'I am so happy that we have such wonderful resources in our midst.... I get all my resources, and I am now able to get information and knowledge at the click of a button.' - Dr Wainaina, Medical Officer of Health, Eldoret.

'I am doing research in polythene and community health. The library was a turning point in my research work. I got most of my literature from the e-health corner. My findings will help the community on methods of disposal and management of polythene waste.' - Were K'Nyendweh, Researcher on polythene and community.

What the librarians say

'The e-health services have challenged us to improve our ICT skills. We can now confidently train users to use ICT. We feel more appreciated now that we are serving a category of clients that were not in our priority list before we started this project. Since I started training the health workers, I gained respect, friendship and honour from students in medical schools, doctors, nurses and social health workers.' - Moses Imbayi, Librarian, Kisumu branch.

The future

KNLS is working with Book Aid International and the Elsevier Foundation on a similar project to increase access to health resources. E-health corner training was replicated in the Book Aid project, and KNLS is exploring further synergies between the two projects. KNLS is also seeking further funding to extend the e-health corners to other branch libraries. A key partner, the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, is continuing to support the e-health corners with resources and by organizing lectures.

EIFL-PLIP supported KNLS in May 2010. A year later, the library assessed the impact of the project.

Information presented here is based on the library's assessment.

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[EIFL](#) (Electronic Information for Libraries) is an international not-for-profit organisation 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 public libraries to use ICT to implement innovative community development services. Learn more - www.eifl.net/plip; further information - plip@eifl.net. EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation