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EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

Vulnerable children 'play to study' in the library Utena 'A. and M. Miskiniai' Public Library, Lithuania

IMPACT CASE STUDY

Librarians were concerned about the numbers of children who were not attending school, especially those who preferred to come to the library to play computer games. They feared the children would drop out of school, increasing their risk to negative influences like crime and addiction. With support from EIFL-PLIP (US\$30,000) the library built a team of librarians, teachers, educational consultants and computer software specialists. Together, they created an educational computer game to help children reconnect with the school system.



Iššukis - The Challenger

The game is designed for children in the 5th to 7th grades. School subjects included are mathematics, Lithuanian language, history, nature sciences, practical knowledge and English language. There are 1,900 tasks which change frequently so that the children remain interested. Teachers assess the players and the points that the pupils win are added to their school results. To move forward at key points of the game the children must ask their teachers for help.

Achievements and impact

- In just six months, 1,132 children from 13 schools registered to play Iššukis.
- Children can play the game at 25 public libraries – three town and 22 village branch libraries.
- Twenty-four librarians have been trained to act as game instructors.
- Thirteen teachers are assessing pupil's results and evaluating the impact of the game.



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What the librarians say

- The number of children coming to the library during school hours has decreased at nine libraries, and the overall number of children coming to the libraries has increased by 26%.
- 20-30% of players are children who the librarians feared were at risk.
- The children are more calm and disciplined in the libraries.
- There is better communication between librarians and children: more children are asking for help and the librarians have more to offer.

What the teachers say

- All pupils, high and low achievers, want to play. The overall number of 5th, 6th and 7th graders playing is 60-80%. In village schools almost all the children are playing.
- School attendance has increased.
- Children who used to get poor results are now doing better.

What the children say

'I learnt many important things in biology, and my knowledge in Lithuanian language got a bit better. This game helps me to remember easier! It helped to improve my results in the trimester – we play to study!' – Tautvydas, 6th grade.

'I succeeded in getting better marks at the end of term. When I told my classmates about the game, everybody got interested. Now we go together with friends to play in the library. We also go to consult with teachers.' - Deividas, 7th grade.

The future

News about the game reached the highest levels, and the library earned the praise of Lithuanian Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius. The Ministry of Education Science has agreed to a proposal to expand the game and to implement it in more districts. Librarians have committed time to continue working with the children, and the children can't wait to register when the new term starts: 'I would like to play more!' said Aiste, a 5th grade student.

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

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