

Gearing up public librarians for the mission of digital inclusion for all:

EIFL Case Studies from Uganda and Ghana

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Who we are?

Electronic Information for Libraries, EIFL is a not-for-profit organization that partners with **libraries to enable access to knowledge** for education, research, learning, and livelihood in developing and transition economy countries

EIFL currently works with library consortia in 40 developing and transition economy countries in **Africa**, Asia Pacific and Europe, representing more than 3,000 libraries.

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EIFL General Assembly 2023 in Vilnius, Lithuania

Public Library Innovation Programme, EIFL-PLIP

We seek to **inspire innovation and build public library capacity to use ICT in services** that improves lives and advance community development

Currently EIFL-PLIP focus is:

- Building capacity of **national public library networks in Africa** to integrate technology in library services to address community needs
- Advancing innovation in public library services through recognition by the **EIFL Public Library Innovation Awards**

Find more at: www.eifl.net/plip

This paper was inspired by the evaluator's question

How can the collaborative approach of the 'Digital skills @ Your Local Library - Uganda' project be replicated in other African countries?

- from the interview with the EIFL-PLIP team (Sept 2022), which was part of the strategic evaluation of the Wehubit programme, implemented by the Belgian development agency Enabel, which supported the project in 2021-2023 -

To answer the question in this presentation I will cover:

A short overview of two digital inclusion through libraries projects:

- Digital skills @ Your Local Library – Uganda (2021-2023)
- Digital Learning @ Ghana public libraries (2023, ongoing)

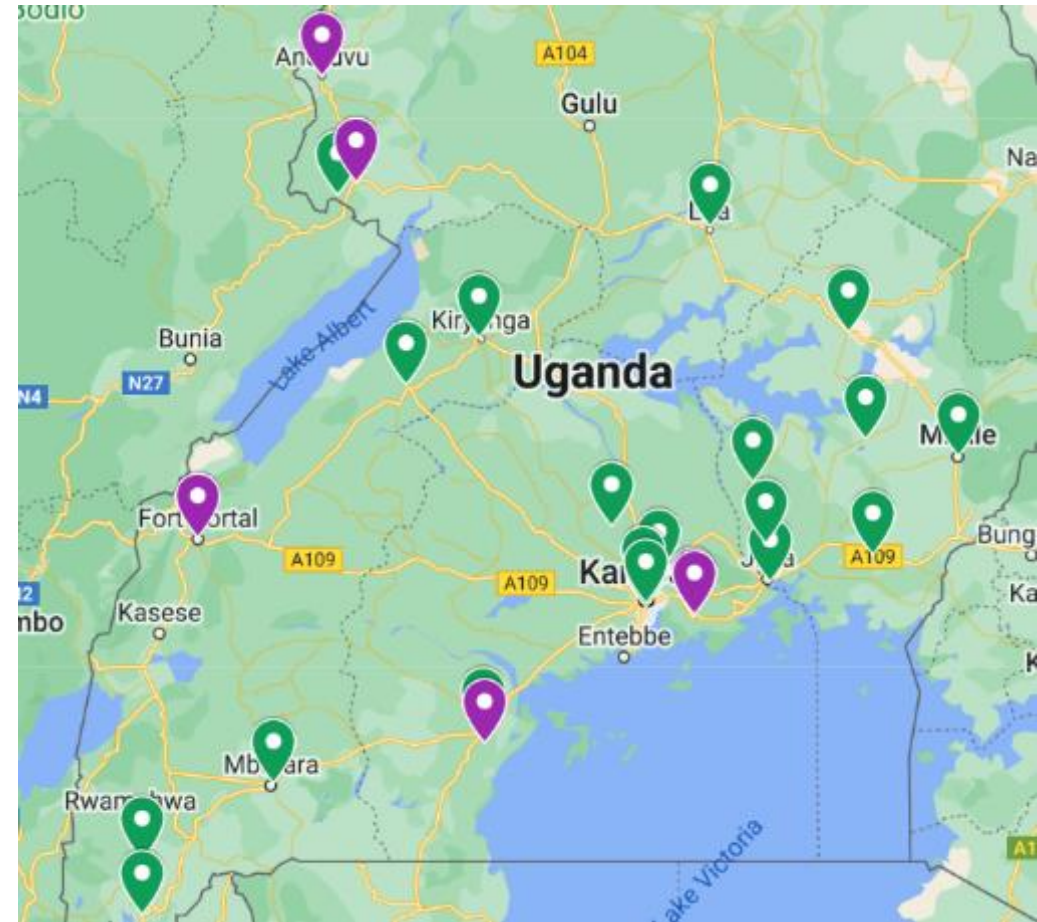
The digital inclusion model for public libraries in Africa:

- Setting up a supportive environment for digital inclusion programmes
- Engaging partners & designing digital inclusion programmes:
- Training of Trainers & launching regular digital training programmes
- Evaluating digital inclusion programmes

Read the full paper for more details

The 'Digital Skills @ Your Local Library – Uganda' project: Collaborative approach

- Built on investments by the Uganda Communication Commission through the Universal Service and Access Fund (USAF) to develop public access ICT infrastructure in local libraries across Uganda.
- Implemented by 4 key partners: EIFL, the National Library of Uganda, Maendeleo Foundation (Uganda), and Peer2Peer University (USA).
- Engaged 27 public and community libraries and their founders – local authorities or community-based organizations – by signing MoUs to collaborate on digital skills training in their communities.



Libraries engaged in the project's implementation

The 'Digital Skills @ Your Local Library – Uganda' project: Key components

- Train **50 librarians and volunteer trainers** from 27 public and community libraries.
- Enable **Ugandan youth and women to participate in the digital society** by equipping them with the basic digital and mobile literacy skills.
- Provide youth and women **access to meaningful online learning opportunities** through facilitated library workshops.



Digital skills training at Caezaria Complex Public Library

The 'Digital Skills @ Your Local Library - Uganda' project: Key outputs

- In two and a half years, 27 local **libraries provided basic digital skills to over 6,500 people** from all walks of life, including single mothers, street vendors, businesswomen, unemployed youth, teachers, and healthcare workers.
- **Over 12,000 people attended short outreach training sessions** in communities.
- **Nearly 1,500 individuals completed online courses** through learning circles within libraries.



Digital skills training at Nyarushanje Community Library

The 'Digital Skills @ Your Local Library – Uganda' project: Impact

- 94% of learners say that library training significantly improved their digital skills
 - New skills enabled youth and women to harness digital opportunities for education and livelihood development, through informal employment or starting new micro-enterprises.
- Martin Kakuru, e-literacy skills trainee, Kabale Public Library -
'At the library training I learned how to search the internet, and I am now using these skills to find information on how to repair computer equipment, like screens, extension cables and computer mice, and domestic items, like irons. This gives me a chance to generate extra income from the items that I repair'.



Mr. Kakuru in the store where he repairs ICT equipment and domestic items

The 'Digital Learning @ Ghana Public Libraries' project: the Concept

A two-year project in partnership with the Ghana Library Authority, supported by the Internet Society Foundation through the SCILLS grant programme that:

- Engaged 15 public and district libraries across Ghana and trained 30 librarians and ICT coordinators to become digital learning facilitators.
- Aims at creating educational opportunities for 12–18-year-old students by improving their ICT skills and engaging them in digital learning based on free and open educational resources through public libraries.



ICT coordinators are learning to use the coding game

The 'Digital Learning @ Ghana Public Libraries' project: Progress to date

- Conducted a needs assessment study, including interviews with 178 stakeholders, resulting in the selection of digital and mobile literacy topics and open educational resources for student training.
- Organised a national stakeholders' forum.
- Completed a training of trainers' programme for 30 head librarians and ICT coordinators from 15 public libraries under the Ghana Library Authority.



Participants of the Training of Trainers programme

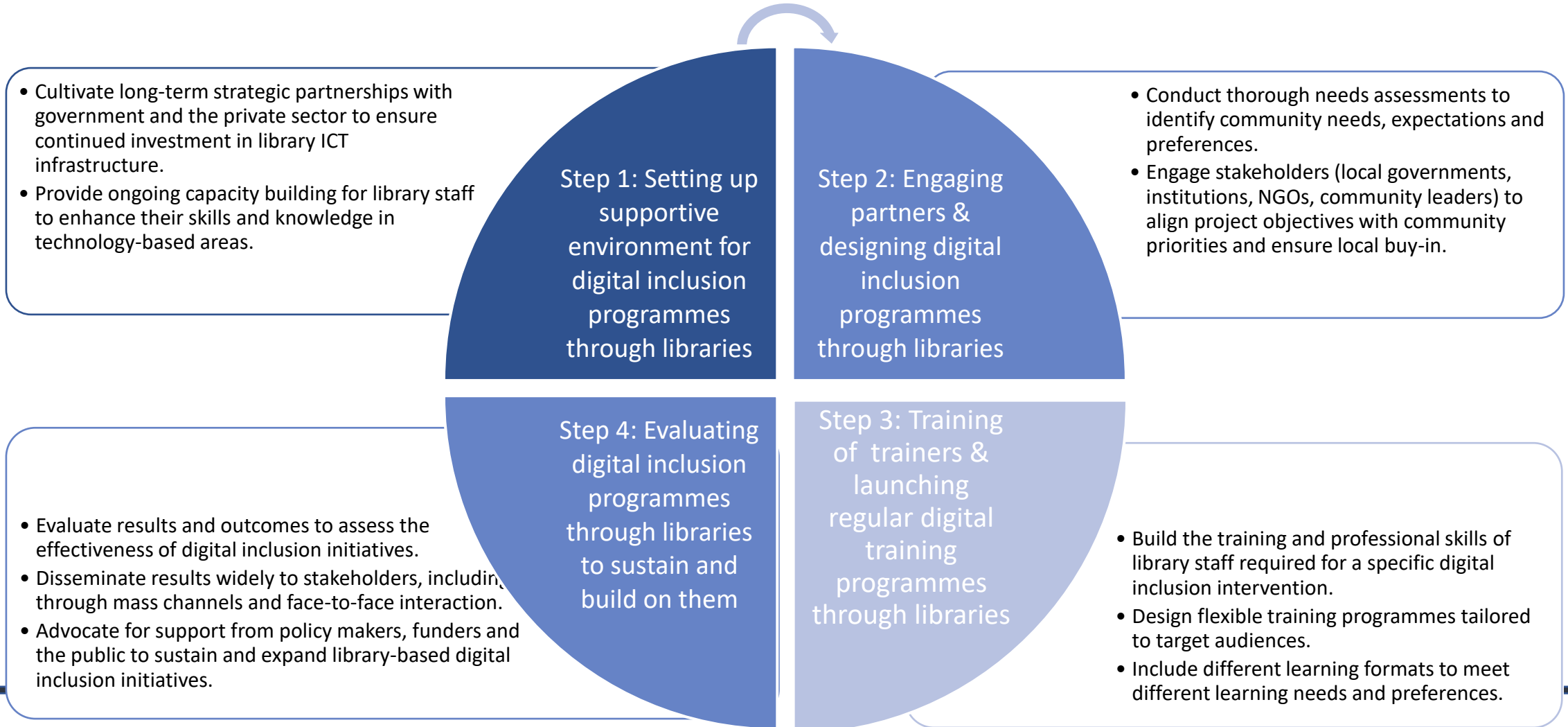
The 'Digital Learning @ Ghana Public Libraries' project: Early results

- Libraries conduct regular monthly visits to schools, introducing practical ICT skills, digital reading, online safety and coding basics, reaching around 1,000 students each month.
- To deepen students' understanding of ICT, they also run a series of facilitated digital learning workshops in libraries using open educational resources.



Students learning Internet Safety during outreach visit by Ashanti Regional Library

Digital inclusion model for public libraries in Africa



Step 1: Setting up a supportive environment for digital inclusion programmes through libraries

- Cultivate long-term strategic partnerships with government and the private sector to ensure continued investment in library ICT infrastructure.
- Provide ongoing capacity building for library staff to enhance their skills and knowledge in technology-based areas.

Step 2: Engaging partners & designing digital inclusion programmes through libraries

- Conduct thorough needs assessments to identify community needs, expectations and preferences.
- Engage stakeholders (local governments, institutions, NGOs, community leaders) to align project objectives with community priorities and ensure local buy-in.

Step 3: Training of trainers & launching regular digital training programmes through libraries

- Build the training and professional skills of library staff required for a specific digital inclusion intervention.
- Design flexible training programmes tailored to target audiences.
- Include different learning formats to meet different learning needs and preferences.

Step 4: Evaluating digital inclusion programmes through libraries to sustain and build on them

- Evaluate results and outcomes to assess the effectiveness of digital inclusion initiatives.
- Disseminate results widely to stakeholders, including through mass channels and face-to-face interaction.
- Advocate for support from policy makers, funders and the public to sustain and expand library-based digital inclusion initiatives.

Many thanks to the partners and teams of both projects for their hard work and dedication

Thank you and let's stay connected

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