



knowledge without boundaries

# EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

## Library links farmers to valuable support

### Panuipulli Public Library No. 296, Chile

IMPACT CASE STUDY

Set in the Andes Mountains in southern Chile, Panguipulli is known for its beautiful scenery and lakes. But roads to the rural areas are poor and the climate is harsh, especially in winter. Farming communities have lived in isolation for many decades, with limited access to information about modern farming methods. Agencies based in Panguipulli recognized the problem, but did not have clear policy for addressing farmers' information needs. Farmers were not coming to the library, and Panguipulli Public Library wanted to reach out to them. They saw a solution in information and communication technology (ICT), including the internet, radio and mobile phones.

### Sharing information, building links

The new service aims to increase information flows to farmers and between farmers, and between agricultural support agencies and farmers. The first step was to build a project team comprising the library, its key partner, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and other agricultural support agencies. The project team began by increasing numbers of agricultural resources – books and journals – in the library. They created a special space for farmers and organized information and discussion sessions on agricultural issues. With support from EIFL-PLIP (up to US\$30,000) they equipped a mobile laboratory with laptops, modems, video and audio equipment, and travelled to remote farming communities to train farmers to use ICT. They also created 15 radio programmes on agricultural issues for broadcast on local community radio stations.



*Mrs Luengo Silvia Vasquez, who farms with flowers and berries. After the library's training, Mrs Vasquez and her husband bought a notebook computer. 'I never thought of doing a computer course before, because of the cost. Learning was not difficult, and I already use our notebook computer without problems. Everything has become easier. I do not have to wait for advice to solve pest problems or flower diseases. I look for the disease on the internet and then find the solution. The radio programmes provided a great addition to my knowledge since the topics were varied and the experts gave me confidence.'*



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## Achievements and impact

- Agricultural agencies and farmers now recognized Panguipulli Public Library as an important information service provider for farmers.
- The library has established its place in a partnership, including non-governmental and government agencies, whose vision is to improve farmers' lives.
- More farmers understand the value of ICT. The library has trained 201 farmers in 12 hard-to-reach communities to use ICT.
- In addition to offering farmers free internet access, the library has 300 new books and resources on agriculture, donated by partners and other agencies.
- Farmers have a special space in the library where they can meet, exchange ideas, hear lectures and learn ICT skills.
- Farmers have access to a social network to share knowledge and experience and to market their produce.

## The future

The library will continue to work with its agriculture team and with the farmers. A key partner was the Municipality of Panguipulli, which provided political support and facilitated networking with public institutions. The municipality is revising its budget to accommodate the library's new service. Learning materials for the training were developed by Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos (DIBAM) and BIBLIOREDES; the National Institute of Agricultural Development (INDAP), through its local development program (PRODESAL) will continue to provide staff and expertise. Panguipulli Public Library has built a strong platform to serve farmers.

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. For further information, contact Ms Olga Nass, head of the library, [olga.nass@gmail.com](mailto:olga.nass@gmail.com).

[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](http://www.eifl.net/plip); further information - [plip@eifl.net](mailto:plip@eifl.net). EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

