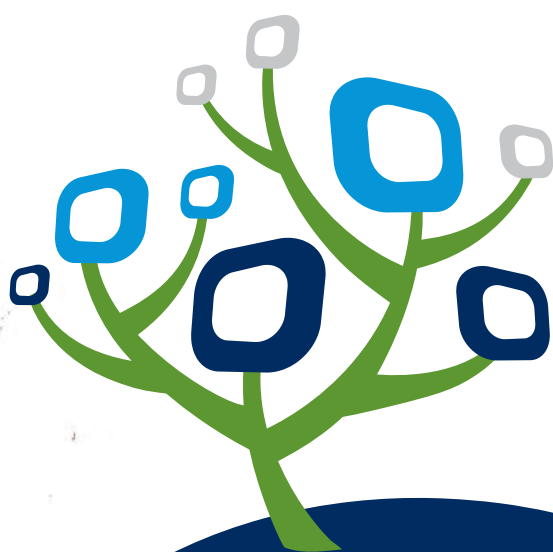


LIBRARIES POWERING DEVELOPMENT

HOW PUBLIC LIBRARIES
CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS
REACHING THE MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT GOALS





About Beyond Access:

Beyond Access is an initiative of IREX, EIFL, IFLA, Makaia, Civic Regeneration, TASCHA, The Riecken Foundation, and READ Global, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

PUBLIC LIBRARIES POWER DEVELOPMENT

As the world works to achieve the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), access to information must be a priority for all development initiatives working toward this ambitious target. In the 21st century, information is a powerful development tool that supports communities in a variety of ways: rural farmers learn improved

agricultural techniques, community health workers better gauge local immunization rates and start-up entrepreneurs target new markets. Development initiatives must give attention to community members' information needs and the venues through which that information is delivered.

Efforts by governments, multilaterals and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to address the MDGs require trusted, respected and sustainable community partners to provide critical information access. Yet all too often, many development efforts try to reinvent the wheel, creating new institutions that fail or disappear when outside funding ends. This risks overlooking existing local institutional resources that have a long-term commitment to promoting the adoption of information tools to meet local development needs.

Despite their growing presence in developing countries, mobile phones alone cannot solve the issue of information access. Mobile penetration is not ubiquitous, mobiles cannot effectively provide all information services and maximizing mobile functionality still requires an informed user.

It's time for development projects to re-think the "how" of information access and partner with public libraries.

Libraries and librarians have a history as trusted, community-based sources for addressing people's information needs. Public and community libraries are sustainable local institutions that can stimulate grassroots development. The 21st century library is no longer just about books or solely a place for kids. Libraries around the world can

and have become powerful partners to help deliver services that enable communities to achieve the MDGs.

As this report will illustrate, at a time of constrained budgets, libraries offer a proven, existing and sustainable venue that delivers results.

**LIBRARIES AROUND THE WORLD ARE HELPING
MEET THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.**





Today, there are more than **230,000** public libraries in developing and transitioning countries. Let's make them all hubs for development.





GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Many of the world's poorest communities lack access to existing knowledge that can be used to combat some of their most severe challenges. Libraries have consistently served as information hubs, supporting local community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in effectively addressing the needs of populations they serve. Libraries and organizations have partnered to help communities meet their basic needs most efficiently by helping farmers learn modern agricultural and marketing methods or matching workers with available jobs.

KENYA UGANDA TANZANIA

In Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, a network of 12 **Maarifa, or publicly accessible knowledge centers**, annually reaches 1.5 million people in the most remote regions, serving as public libraries. These centers offer tools for people to improve their health, increase their incomes and better their lives. Access to information via this library network promotes sustainable family farming, stressing its capacity to address hunger, poverty, environmental degradation and climate change.

The knowledge centers work with young people, farmers and extension workers to teach vital information and communication technology (ICT) skills, give them access to information and markets, and create youth employment opportunities. In weekday training programs, farmers are taught basic modern ICT skills including how to manage financial records and how to find market prices and connect with buyers of their produce.

GUATEMALA HONDURAS

Guatemala's malnutrition rates for children under five are among the highest in the world, as are its maternal mortality rates. In Honduras, children's malnutrition rates exceed 26 percent, with over 300,000 children suffering from extreme malnutrition.

Sixty-five community libraries¹ in these two Central American nations not only promote child literacy and the understanding of new technologies, they open the doors to community-led development and improved health. Leadership training and community service are key components of these libraries' efforts to serve the general public. The libraries provide services customized to meet local needs such as prenatal classes, parenting classes or health brigades.

For example, the **Chiché Community Library** in Guatemala offers an early childhood literacy and nutrition class to teach new parents child care and nutrition, including hands-on preparation of nutritional, appropriate, affordable foods for babies and young children.

In Honduras, the library committee of the **San Juan Planes Community Library** played a central role in bringing safe drinking water to the entire community via a water treatment project they established in the town's central square.

CHILE

In Chile's remote Araucanía region, the heartland of the indigenous Mapuche people, the **Tolten Public Library** helps create new opportunities for the Mapuche who have faced a long history of marginalization and economic challenges. The Tolten library is one of many Chilean public libraries that offer technology training opportunities to individuals who live in remote regions. These services allow them to launch their own businesses and promote them online. The Tolten Public Library has seen women, in particular, take advantage of this training to create their own tourism, agricultural, or craft businesses, including jewelry, leather, weaving, or basketry, which are providing them with an income and financial independence for the first time.²

Public Library in southwest Burkina Faso



GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Schools are only part of the picture when helping children learn. Communities need a publicly accessible, common resource where children and parents together can benefit from access to information. Libraries are playing this key role in the achievement of universal primary education. Research shows that a strong library program that is adequately staffed, resourced and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socio-economic or educational levels of the adults in the community.³

ZAMBIA

Open access, **Lubuto public libraries in Lusaka, Zambia** reach large numbers of the country's street children, orphans and other vulnerable children who are largely not enrolled in school. The libraries make education accessible to this vulnerable group by providing information access for learning, literacy, cultural awareness, artistic expression and social services. Through carefully selected collections of library materials, high quality educational and cultural programs, and strong community outreach, these libraries offer a safe, nurturing space for children who have few other options. The libraries also offer hundreds of computer-based lessons helping children learn how to read in their mother tongues.⁴

BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso has thousands of villages with primary schools that lack libraries. **The Béréba Public Library⁵** in southwest Burkina Faso is an example of how communities have come together to develop public libraries to better address the literacy needs of their students. The Béréba Public Library is located near the primary school, where children from this 5,000 person village can visit after school. The library averages 45,000 visits per year with 400 books checked out per month. It is also equipped with a solar panel so that the children can read at night.

BOLIVIA

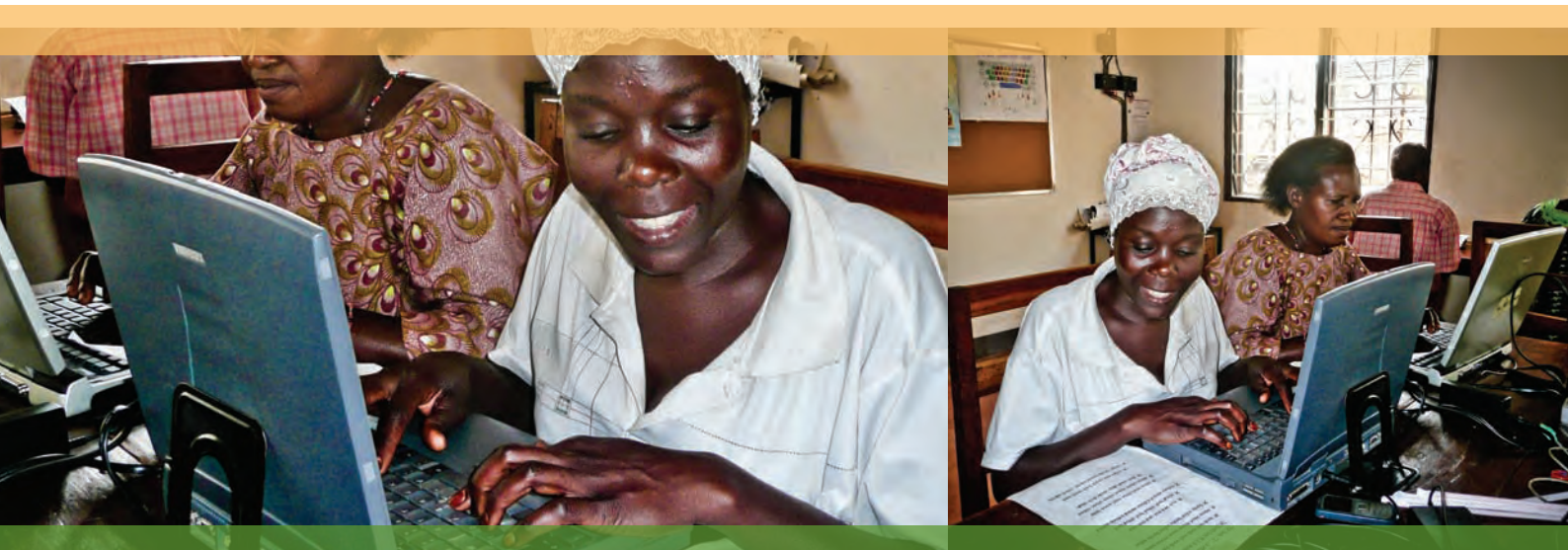
The small Bolivian villages of **Morado K'asa, Presto, Patacon, Sopachuy Tarabuco, Tomina, Villa Serrano and Yamparaéz** are all benefitting from public library resources that were previously largely only available to urban residents. Eight public libraries in the rural and impoverished central Bolivian countryside provide children with access to books, information technology, and a variety of classes and activities to improve their literacy skills.

By training local teachers how to use the library as a teaching resource and to promote literacy, school enrollment has increased, as have children's literacy rates and grade point averages. The libraries, located in the predominately indigenous Quechua-speaking region, are enabling students to pursue higher education and subsequently hold jobs with the potential to alleviate poverty in their villages.⁶





Comme si tout cela n'était pas assez effrayant, on
entendit un grand craquement et on vit le vieux portail
s'écrouler. Il ne s'arrêta qu'après avoir tourné
Heureusement, personne ne fut blessé, et son
poussoir un grand soupir de soulagement. Mais son
cœur battait fort, une vague d'émotion. Mais son
jusqu'au milieu de la nuit. Les murs sont déjà aux
portes du village ?



GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Libraries often offer the only local and reliably secure environments in which women and girls can obtain the information services they need to take control of their lives and influence their societies.

UGANDA

The Kitengesa Community Library in southwestern Uganda serves as a protected, respected meeting place where women can gather to support each other and have their questions answered. This library uses sustainable solar power to support its computer lab, and provides access to digital content and other programs that offer valuable information for the community's women. The library serves as space for learning, discussion and knowledge where local women gather for adult literacy classes, seminars on small business development, microfinance loans, and a place where women can discuss health issues of pregnancy and disease prevention, and safe organic farming and agricultural techniques.

KENYA

A network of four independent Kenyan public libraries⁷ in **Busia, Elangata Wuas, Garissa and Lamu** promotes the importance of reading to children while building literacy skills among young mothers who were not able to complete school. With the help of trained librarians, the Mama Mtoto/Mother Child Story Time teaches mothers to read locally published story books to their young children. The mothers are taught to engage children with the stories and answer their questions.

Since the number of books in the local Kiswahili language is slim and the number of books in other local languages almost non-existent, librarians also work with participating mothers to create storybooks from their own oral traditions. The project develops literary skills in young mothers while exposing pre-school children to a love of stories. The initiative also encourages the production of local children's books and develops the capacity of libraries and librarians to run other community programs.





GOALS 4 & 5: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY & IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

According to the Health Information for All 2015 campaign, tens of thousands of children, women and men die every day for want of simple, low-cost interventions – interventions that are often already locally available. Often, a mother, family caregiver or health worker does not have access to the information and knowledge needed to make simple diagnoses or pursue proven treatment plans. When libraries are part of this strategy, they can help save lives.

KENYA

The **Kenya National Library Service (KNLS)** is helping to prevent deaths during pregnancy, birth or unsafe abortions by providing healthcare providers with knowledge on how to correctly apply simple, inexpensive interventions. KNLS has established e-health corners in two libraries to assist health workers with research and to seek information about treatment of illnesses. The e-health corners are dedicated spaces where health workers can use the internet to access online health resources, guided by the assistance of a trained librarian. Librarians have trained 1,600 people, including health workers, students and members of the public, to find the information they need.

The **Eldoret and Kisumu Public Libraries** regularly host sessions for the general public on topics of local importance, such as HIV/AIDS, personal hygiene, breastfeeding, malaria, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases. Presenters often use the e-health corners' resources to prepare their presentations.

CHILE

In Chile, child mortality under age five is declining but at 8.8 per 1,000 live births in 2010, the government believes that number is still too high. A number of **Chilean public libraries in the Atacama, Los Lagos, Maule, Los Rios, Biobio, Valparaiso and Coquimbo regions** have launched programs in partnership with local hospitals that establish early childhood reading corners to promote information from the national Chile Crece Contigo (Chile Grows With You) initiative.

The reading corners allow parents of hospitalized children ages four and under to learn about good parenting skills including nutrition, health care and the importance of reading to their children as a means of stimulating early childhood development. The initiative is the result of a partnership between Chile's National Network of Public Libraries (Biblioredes), the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning.

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The Ramotswa Public Library in southeastern Botswana is playing an active role in reducing the impact HIV/AIDS has in its community.



GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Libraries can play a central role in disease prevention efforts, using their wide networks to serve as focal points of information dissemination. Effective prevention and treatment awareness campaigns demand a trusted community source of information and a place where the most current information is consistently available – whether in print, online, or available by communicating with distant specialists

KYRGYZSTAN

Alarming levels of tuberculosis (TB) in Kyrgyzstan reflect a lack of current and dependable information on simple effective prevention methods in many isolated areas of the mountainous country. Librarians are now contributing to national efforts to combat spread of the illness. **The Kyrgyz Libraries Information Consortium (KLIC)**, which represents public libraries in Kyrgyzstan, is partnering with the Red Cross to roll out a “No to TB” service where library users, school pupils, teachers, health workers and media can find information about TB and new forms of multi-drug-resistant TB in areas otherwise cut off from this information. The new service provides an accessible place where people can learn about risks related to TB and access information about prevention, symptoms and care.

BOTSWANA

HIV/AIDS has had a devastating impact on Botswana. An estimated 320,000 of Botswana’s population over the age of 15, or 25 percent of all adults, are living with HIV/AIDS. Another estimated 16 percent of children, ages 0-14, are infected with the virus. Life expectancy had fallen to 40 years in 2005, but in 2011 life expectancy at birth had risen to around 53 years, in part due to the expanding access to information and services to prevent and/or treat people living with HIV/AIDS in recent years. A central component of the strategy to ensure everyone has access to such information is a nation-wide government initiative to offer free computer and internet access in all public libraries.

The **Ramotswa Public Library** in southeastern Botswana is playing an active role in reducing the impact HIV/AIDS has in its community. The library has partnered with the District HIV/AIDS committee on a “Lifeline Project” to help educate young people, ages 14 to 30, about important health issues, including HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention of teenage pregnancy.⁸ Based at the library, Lifeline educates young people to reach out to their peers at schools and on the streets to share their knowledge about health issues and encourage other youth to visit the library to read more about the health topics and research them via the library’s computers and internet. To date, Lifeline has nearly 75 youth members in the town, who recently on a single day in this community of 27,000, recruited over 600 other children to visit the library.



GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Public libraries are helping community members learn how to incorporate principles and practices of sustainable development into their daily lives. Libraries conduct programs, provide library users print and electronic access to information about environmental preservation, and demonstrate best practices of sustainable technologies, such as solar power, safe sanitation and sustainable farming strategies.

BANGLADESH


The **Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha** project overcame the challenge posed by the frequently flooded ecosystem of Bangladesh and found an innovative way to deliver information and education to residents to alleviate poverty and hunger and promote sound environmental practices. Using specially equipped boats, Shidhulai has transformed the region's waterways into pathways for education, information and technology.

Boats equipped with internet-linked laptops, multimedia equipment, books and educational materials dock at remote villages to teach modern farming techniques, introduce affordable technologies such as bicycle pumps and solar lamps, and provide information on climate change, healthcare and human rights. Through the work of Shidhulai, nearly 100,000 families in hundreds of riverside villages are benefiting from improved communication with the outside world, while rural children are learning computer skills to help them become more competitive for jobs and entering into universities.

GUYANA

Guyana's rural villages rely on endangered forests and natural resources for their livelihoods and self-preservation. The **Yupukari Public Library**⁹ helps surrounding communities to sustain themselves by offering access to computers, the internet, books and unique programming in partnership with organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund and Conservation International. The library has become a hub for village meetings and a place where local NGOs can conduct community workshops. The community workshops reach the largely low-literacy indigenous people of this rural area and have focused on topics such as turtle preservation and prevention of deforestation.

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The expanded services of the Network of Public Libraries boosted the number of library visitors from **90,000** per month to more than **500,000**.

GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Dynamic partnerships between libraries, government and the private sector are helping to shift the perception of libraries from traditional depository of books to places that offer the benefits of new technologies for personal development and economic improvement. Libraries, as neutral, safe, respected places that are accessible to all, can be vital community centers that have the flexibility to offer programs that respond to community needs. Public libraries reach those who otherwise lack access to technology and need guidance in maximizing its benefits.

COLOMBIA

Medellin, Colombia was once a fractured city, scarred by overwhelming drug and gang-related violence. But a government-led initiative to build a new future for its city has been transformational, with the **Network of Public Libraries (NPL)** serving as a key to community development and citizen empowerment.

Among the NPL's 34 libraries are five library parks, located in some of Medellin's most marginalized communities. The library parks have become cultural centers, providing free, broad, community access to information and educational resources. NPL allows easy outreach out to traditionally underserved groups and young people, who see the libraries as after-school destinations.

NPL's expanded services boosted the number of library visitors from 90,000 per month to more than 500,000. The network has also helped narrow the digital divide in Medellin and the metropolitan area, reducing the individual-to-computer ratio from 140-to-1 in 2005 to 47- to-1 in 2008, giving the most marginalized citizens critical access to information to improve their lives.

JAMAICA

Since the Jamaica Library Service (JLS) introduced public access computers in over 100 public libraries, libraries have reported a doubling of computer and internet usage over the previous year, and nearly all report stronger demand than supply.

This increase in traffic spurred by the introduction of free access to computers and the internet has allowed the Jamaican government to reach more people more effectively through efforts like the Ministry of Health HIV/AIDS awareness program and other community education initiatives, including earthquake preparedness and conflict resolution. A number of JLS libraries have also expanded their literacy services by partnering with KFC/Chicky to offer Reading Corners and Homework Centers funded by the restaurant chain.



VENEZUELA

In Venezuela, only about 30 percent of the population has access to computers and the internet. Government leaders of the city of Maracaibo, Venezuela were committed to helping the 2.1 million residents of its metropolitan region change the quality of their lives by giving them new skills, knowledge, and confidence through computer and internet training programs at a new modern public library.

The government leaders intentionally built the **Zulia Public Library** in a very poor city neighborhood, plagued by many social problems, including prostitution, drugs, and crime, as a way of offering constructive alternatives for people to spend their time. Over a two year period, the library trained a diverse group of more than 6,000 elderly, disabled, unemployed, children, women and indigenous people in using computer technology, while offering a variety of outreach and cultural programs for children and adults, including concerts, storytelling, book events and a school partnership for HIV/AIDS prevention.

Until the Zulia Public Library opened in 2007, the state's libraries were only in older, donated buildings that had not been designed as a public library space. They offered no computers or internet access and only a few chairs for people to read from the limited book collections. The popularity and impact of the new library, which offers over 150 free computers and internet access, has led the government to plan for building five new branch libraries in different parts of the city in the coming years.

CHILE

As part of his election campaign, former Chilean President Ricardo Lagos made a commitment to upgrading Chile's technological capacity and sophistication via a national "Digital Literacy Campaign." The campaign launched in May 2003 with the goal of training 100,000 people on information and communication technology within the year and a total of 500,000 people by 2005 largely via a network of public libraries.

Through a nationwide effort that included a variety of private partnerships with software, internet, and other industries, millions of Chileans today are benefiting from national- and municipality-supported public library training on computer, internet, software and website creation trainings. These free trainings have helped Chileans launch businesses, access market information, develop technology skills to improve their job competitiveness and more. The BiblioRedes program has transformed the perception of public libraries, fostering support for libraries that has contributed to a 25 percent increase in the number of public libraries throughout the country since the start of the project.

CONCLUSION LIBRARIES ARE A DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

At a time of tight development budgets, libraries can offer a better, smarter way to achieve development goals. Libraries are flexible institutions that can respond quickly to community information needs, whether after a natural disaster or during an ongoing community medical, agricultural, economic or educational challenge.

The library and information initiatives outlined in this report are evidence that:

- Development projects that are working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals are most effective when they leverage existing resources and local institutions that people already know and trust, such as public libraries.
- Libraries have staying power because of ongoing public support and dedicated funding, and therefore governments and development agencies should seek to strengthen and expand the services public libraries offer, rather than funding new, unproven infrastructure or investing in narrow, technology-based approaches. Development practitioners should seek to partner with libraries wherever available as a way to sustainably support initiatives in a variety of fields, including health, agriculture, civic engagement, education and others.
- Libraries can have a powerful impact when they proactively promote their role in information access for development. Libraries should continue to seek innovative partnerships with government initiatives and NGOs as a way to address community members' needs and work to communicate their value as institutions that can sustain development efforts.

Beyond Access welcomes additional case studies and questions from governments and others about how to tap into libraries to strengthen them, making development dollars go farther for bigger, more cost-effective results.

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- 2 <http://www.biblioredes.cl/tolten>
- 3 Barbara Heyns, Summer Learning and the Effects on Schooling (New York: Academic Press, 1978, and Susan Roman and Carole D. Fiore, "Do Public Libraries Close the Achievement Gap? The Dominican Study," Children and Libraries, Winter 2010, Vol 8, No. 3.
- 4 The libraries are an initiative of the Lubuto Library Project, which also partners with the Zambia Government's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development on this effort. www.lubuto.org
- 5 While the Béréba Public Library is one of several library projects of the non-governmental organizations, Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL), FAVL is working with the mayor, who now sees the value of the Béréba Public Library, to gradually take over the operating costs of the initiative. www.favl.org
- 6 The libraries are an initiative of the NGO, BiblioWorks and the local municipal governments. www.biblioworks.org
- 7 The network is an initiative of the NGO, Maria's Libraries. www.mariaslibraries.org
- 8 The Peace Corps is also a key partner in this initiative.
- 9 The Yupukari Public Library, an initiative of the Rupununi Learners Foundation (RLF), a non-governmental organizations, funds its programs through an accredited program that brings U.S. college students to the region to learn about indigenous cultures. <http://rupununilearners.org/>

ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

- 1 United Nations Millennium Development Goals - <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
- 2 Maarifa (Public knowledge centers), Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN) - <http://www.alin.net/>
- 3 Kitengesa Community Library, Uganda - <http://kitengesalibrary.org/>
- 4 Maria's Libraries, Busia, Elangata, Wuas, Garissa & Lamu, Kenya - <http://mariaslibraries.org>
- 5 Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) - <http://www.knls.ac.ke/>; <http://www.eifl.net/kenya-national-library-service-kenya>
- 6 Eldoret and Kisumu Public Libraries, Kenya - <http://www.bookaid.org/our-work/where-we-work/kenya/vital-health-information/>
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Who We Are



BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation

