

**COUNTRY REPORT TEMPLATE**  
(For CDNLAO Meeting on 26 March 2006)

**I. The Year 2005: General Overview**

2005 was a good year for Cambodian libraries and the National Library in particular achieved some major milestones in implementing an ISBN system and setting up a Lending Collection.

**II. Library Administration/ Organization**

The Cambodian Librarians and Documentalists Association (CLDA) was founded in 1995 and now has over 100 members.

A Federation for the Development of the Book Sector in Cambodia (FDBC) was established in 2003 and continues to develop its activities. In 2005 the Federation received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to promote reading and publishing in Cambodia and to produce a Books in Print in collaboration with the National Library. Work on this project is underway.

The National Library of Cambodia (NLC) is continuing to develop its research services and Cambodiana collections as well as its Lending Collection which is the only such public lending service in Cambodia. A visit from a New Zealand library consultant in late 2005 led to the review and redevelopment of the NLC's Development Plan and Collection Development Policy and the recommendations of these reviews are currently being implemented at the library. Particular areas of focus are the development of the Reader Services, the improvement of the WINISIS catalogue and the integration, conservation and promotion of the Cambodiana Collection.

There are some 13 academic libraries in Cambodia. A few have recently incorporated internet access. In addition, there are 28 libraries in various government institutions, including the National Assembly, the Senate, the Buddhist Institute and various ministries. In the provinces, there are now 22 Community Information Centres with Internet access. In addition, there are over 1000 school libraries.

There are over 50 medium or small-sized specialist or private libraries and at least 23 non-government organisations that have their own libraries, as do at least 5 UN agencies.

Probably the busiest library in Cambodia is the Hun Sen Library at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, which receives on average 600 visitors per day. The National Library receives 35 to 50 visitors per day. Smaller libraries throughout Cambodia tend to receive 10 to 15 visitors per day.

**III. Collection Profile**

The total number of volumes held in Cambodian library collections is presently unknown.

The National Library maintains the country's most comprehensive collection of Cambodiana including books, reports, newspapers, serials and non print items, published in Cambodia, about Cambodia, or by Cambodians, mainly in Khmer, English or French. There is a computer catalogue of the post-1970 collection and a printed classified list, but many books still await cataloguing. It is intended to publish the National Library Cambodiana Catalogue in 2006.

The French collection at the NLC dates from the founding of the library in 1924 and contains over 20,000 volumes. It contains laws and administrative documents for Cambodia and Indochina as well as books about art, travel and history of Cambodia. In addition the collection contains many French novels from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and recreational reading typical of a French public library. The entire collection has been restored and kept as a special collection, which reflects the anthropological, historical and social thinking of the time. It is valuable to the understanding of both the French community in Cambodia and Cambodian history. A bibliography of this collection is currently in preparation.

The National Library is also the home of an important set of palm leaf manuscripts. Other palm leaf manuscript collections exist at the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient, the Royal Palace, the National Museum and individual Buddhist temples.

#### IV. Services

The directory *Repertoire des bibliotheques et centres de documentation* for the Phnom Penh area was published in French and Khmer in December 2003 and is set to be updated soon to cover all of Cambodia. A glossary of library terminology is in preparation, as is a manual/handbook for librarians. The report by Helen Jarvis and Peter Arfanis *Publishing in Cambodia*, first produced in 2002, is now being updated for formal publication. The Cambodian Librarians and Documentalists Association also produces a regular newsletter.

In 2005 the National Library of Cambodia established an ISBN service which provides ISBN and barcode allocation to publishers and produces a semi-regular newsletter. The ISBN Agency at the NLC is working with the Federation of the Development of the Books Sector in Cambodia to produce a Books in Print publication that will be distributed across Cambodia as a service to publishers, booksellers, libraries and researchers.

The NLC launched its lending collection to the public in July 2005 and the use of the collection continues to grow; there are now almost 400 registered borrowers in the system. Further efforts were made to establish ISSN and Legal Deposit and it is expected that further progress will be made on establishing these norms in 2006. The NLC also is working to produce a Reader Services brochure and is preparing to introduce reader services training for clients, now that the WINISIS database has been made available to

the public on-site at the NLC. It is expected that internet access will be made available at the library in 2006.

A variety of institutions are involved in reading promotion, including the Department of Books and Reading in the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. The Department administers the National Library of Cambodia and, among many activities, maintains a mobile book service to rural areas in Kandal Province. The Federation for the Development of the Book Sector in Cambodia (FDBC) is active in supporting access to books throughout the country, while NGOs such as Room to Read and SIPAR, have focused on help to school libraries, particularly in the villages. The Buddhist Institute Library has also set up branch libraries in the provinces.

Information literacy programmes are conducted by UNESCO, UNICEF and some NGOs such as Buddhism for Development. The French Embassy is supporting the Writing Improvement Project VALEASE (Projet du Fonds de Solidarite prioritaire de Valorisation de l'Écrit en Asie du Sud-Est) which includes training in children's literature. The VALEASE project also supported several other activities in 2005 including the *Lire en Fete* in November where an exhibition of new books was held at the National Library of Cambodia.

Digital library services are relatively undeveloped outside the university and special libraries of Phnom Penh, although all eighty-five libraries listed in the *Repertoire des bibliotheques et centres de documentation* indicate some automation of their catalogues and promotion of online information services. The privately-run Centre for Khmer Studies has an online catalogue of its Cambodiana Collections and other libraries such as the government's Senate Library do have websites which at the very least list the collections of the library.

There are currently no formal inter-library loan services, although informal exchange arrangements do exist among some cooperating libraries.

Various special services are provided by the WINISIS working group, the working group of the FDBC and various NGOs.

## **V. Copyright/ Intellectual Property Rights**

Cambodia passed copyright legislation, the *Law on Copyright and Related Rights, NS/RKM/0303/008*, in 2003. However, there are not yet any copyright/intellectual property rights watchdog organisations or associations.

## **VI. Professionalization / Training / Continuing Professional Education**

Cambodia has just four fully trained professional librarians. There are no library training schools in Cambodia. Some on-the-job training is provided by trained librarians, including international volunteers. There are four major training initiatives: the National

Library WINISIS group, an annual basic training course organised by the CLDA, the Royal University of Phnom Penh training programme, and a training programme funded by the French Cultural Centre in Phnom Penh.

## **VII. Infrastructure**

There are currently no dedicated library networks in the country although the Royal University of Phnom Penh is currently establishing a library network for its campuses. Options for the development of a unicode for Khmer script are currently being explored by all major libraries in Phnom Penh, and while some progress has been made, no single solution has yet been adopted.

Library buildings in Cambodia are generally of an acceptable standard. Many buildings are quite old and do not have the appropriate infrastructure for the establishment of network connections and so forth. However some of the major libraries such as the National Library are seeking funding for capital works and library building expansion at this time and the government's Senate Library has recently moved to new premises.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

Libraries in Cambodia continue to develop and an increasing number of Cambodians, especially younger members of the population, are visiting libraries to access reading and research materials. Although libraries in Cambodia are still under-funded they are certainly not under-utilised and their services are appreciated by users; this bodes very well for the country's development for the expansion and enhancement of libraries in Cambodia.