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CDNL-AO Vietnam Country Report
2006 – 2007

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I. REGIONAL PROJECTS

1. Promotion of written publications in Southeast Asia

The National Library of Vietnam has completed the digitization of over 70,000 pages (618 titles) of old French books published in Vietnam before 1954 as part of the regional project VALEASE funded by the Government of France. Under the project (2006-2007), the National Library of Vietnam, the National Library of Laos, the National Library of Cambodia and other libraries with valuable French holdings are granted funds for the digitization of their old French materials. The objectives of the project are to make the French collections in these libraries more accessible to library users through digital media, especially to young people, and to enable better preservation of the originals. The project also lays foundations for the development of an Indochina Digital Library offering access to titles of great significance to the cultural heritage of the countries in the Mekong Sub-region.

2. Improvement of public library services in Laos and Vietnam

Vietnam and Laos jointly developed a regional project “Improvement of public library services in Laos and Vietnam” which was applied for funding from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The project’s activities include training of library staff, reading promotion, library marketing and public relations. The project, with the proposed budget of over 4 million US dollars, was scheduled for the period 2006-2008; however, it has been postponed indefinitely due to the change of the Swedish Government.

II. NATIONAL PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

1. Translation of international bibliographic standards

The National Library of Vietnam officially launched the Vietnamese translation of the Dewey Decimal Classification in a seminar in Hanoi on 16 August 2006. Translated and published by the NLV under license of the copyright holder OCLC (Online Computer Library Center, Inc.), this is the first official and complete Vietnamese version of the DDC scheme. The publication was also introduced at the IFLA 77th General Conference in Seoul, Korea on 22 August 2006.

In October 2006, the National Center for Scientific and Technological Information (NACESTI) also announced the completion of the Vietnamese edition of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2). With these achievements, three major international bibliographic standards including MARC21, AACR2 and DDC have been translated into Vietnamese for nation-wide implementation. All three translations take root from a workshop in Hanoi in September 2001 attended by leading librarians across the country, who decided to choose the standards as their national ones. It was expected that the standards will improve the bibliographic control, promote resource sharing and international cooperation among Vietnamese libraries.

2. Foundation of Vietnam Library Association

Vietnam Library Association (VLA), the first and long cherished nation-wide grouping of Vietnamese librarians, was officially founded in a conference in Hanoi on 22 October 2006. The national association of Vietnamese librarians shall have the following objectives:

- Advance and strengthen the Vietnamese librarianship; enhance the roles and positions of librarians and library institutions in the Vietnamese people's social and cultural life; make positive contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of the country.
- Establish, maintain and strengthen networks, partnerships and linkages among Vietnamese and foreign librarians, libraries, library schools and library associations and related organizations in the areas of experience sharing and improved professional knowledge; foster the development and international integration of Vietnamese librarians and library institutions.
- Serve as a national forum for library professionals, library related people and library friends to share experience, to promote mutual understanding and to unite their intellectual power to solve major issues of the Vietnamese library profession.

The conference also elected VLA Executive Board of 31 members for the term 2006-2010, among which three top executives are also CONSAL XIV Executive Board members:

1. Ms Nguyen Thi Ngoc Thuan, VLA President
2. Mr Pham The Khang, VLA Vice President cum Secretary-General
3. Mr Nguyen Minh Hiep, VLA Executive Member

3. Publication of Directory of Vietnamese Libraries and Information Centers

In October 2006, the Library Department of Ministry of Culture and Information published the Directory of Vietnamese Libraries and Information Centers (2nd Edition). The Directory (in Vietnamese) provides an overview of all library systems and information centers with contact details, collections, number of staff, facilities and IT infrastructure of each library. The publication is resulted from a comprehensive survey by the Library Department of:

- The National Library of Vietnam
- 64 provincial/city public libraries, 582 district libraries and 6046 village book stacks
- 57 research libraries, 230 academic libraries and 17000 school libraries
- 218 information centers and 2740 military libraries

4. Digital Library for Oversea Vietnamese

Assigned and funded by the Ministry of Culture and Information, the National Library of Vietnam has started a new project to build a digital library for oversea Vietnamese. The online digital library is targeted at about five million oversea Vietnamese (Viet Kieu) living in the United States, Australia, and Europe who have relatively different demand for Vietnamese information. The provision of information resources on Vietnam's economy, society and culture is of great importance to strengthen their bonds to the motherland and make greater contribution to the national development.

The digital library, scheduled to be online in 2010, will provide published materials in various format such as text, sound and video clips digitized from the National Library of Vietnam's legal depository collection. The digital collection will cover a wide range of subjects and be available in both Vietnamese and major foreign languages. It will also include online Vietnamese dictionaries to help library users have better understanding and correct use of their mother tongue language.

5. Launch of new services in libraries

General Sciences Library of Ho Chi Minh City, the largest public library in Southern Vietnam, launched the first "Multimedia Children Library" and the first "Mobile Internet-ready Library" in Vietnam in early 2007.

The "Multimedia Children Library", funded under the VALEASE Project by the French Government and other sources including National Library of Singapore, is modern children library that meets European Union standards. The Library offers a comfortable space with a special collection of books, Internet connection and multimedia materials to the City's children. Events such book reading contests, story telling, and other creative activities are also regularly held at the Library.

The "Mobile Internet-ready Library", opened on 18 January 2007, is the first of this type in Vietnam. It is a bus equipped with 8 Internet-ready PCs, 1 LCD, 2 TVs, 2 DVD Players and about 1,500 titles of books and magazines. The mobile Library's mission is to serve border guards and users in the suburbs and remote areas of Ho Chi Minh City where Internet services are not available.

The GSLHCM is also the leading provider of library services for the Blind and Visually Impaired people. The Braille books and talking books collections held at the Library are so far the best in Vietnam. The Library also produces books and other materials for the blind and visually impaired users as well as train staff of other libraries in serving this special type of client.

III. INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

1. Research on Computing Access in Vietnamese Public Libraries

Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the project's objectives were to draw an overview of computing access and to identify challenges as well as opportunities to bridge the digital divide in 64 provincial/city libraries and nearly 700 district libraries in Vietnam. Conducted by Library Department of the Ministry of Culture and Information, National Library of Vietnam and General Sciences Library of Ho Chi Minh City from October 2006 to February 2007, the project is one of the most comprehensive surveys of information technology infrastructure and computing access in Vietnamese libraries. The project's deliverables are expected to lay foundations for a possible project applying for funding from Global Libraries Program of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

2. Library training cooperation with Japanese universities

The National Library of Vietnam is working with Tsukuba University in Japan to develop a project titled "Research Development of a model for improvement of information environment through Japanese libraries' assistance" which applies for funding from Japan's Ministry of Culture and Education. The project, whose budget is estimated at 15 million Yen, is expected to last in 3 years and focus on training of public and school librarians in developing countries, starting with Vietnam in a pilot phase.

3. SEAM Microfilm project

Negotiation is underway between the National Library of Vietnam and the Center for Research Libraries, USA, to start a new project on microfilming of early Vietnamese newspapers as part of The Southeast Asia Microform Project. If the negotiation succeeds, the project is expected to start in January 2008 and complete in December 2009. Under the project, the CRL will provide the NLV with microfilming facilities and training of staff to produce a negative copy of each issue and makes one positive copy for scholarly use. However, the NLV remain the copyrights holder of the microfilmed materials and the CRL does not have permission to make copies of the materials without the consent of the NLV.

4. Sino-Nom Digitization Project

The National Library of Vietnam is working closely with the Vietnamese Nom Preservation Foundation to digitize the NLV's Hán-Nôm collection. The valuable collection of manuscripts in old Chinese and Vietnamese scripts is one of the oldest collections in Vietnam. The materials, however, are under danger of deterioration and damage if the originals are used. The project, once started, will produce digital copies of the collection using high-end digital photographic technologies which will be put on an Internet accessible database.

IV. NATIONAL CONFERENCES IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

1. IT Application in Vietnamese Public Libraries

The conference "IT Application in Vietnamese Public Libraries" was held in Ha Long City to review the implementation of a national Information Technology project headed by the National Library of Vietnam. Under the project, major public libraries across the country were provided with a common Integrated Library System, computers and IT training. As a pioneer library in IT application in Vietnam, the National Library of Vietnam also introduced its current model of electronic library that could be applicable to other libraries in the public library system.

In 2006 - 2007, there are further 14 province libraries to implement the total Information Technology Project, raising the total public libraries implement the project up to 34/64 libraries. These 14 libraries are funded 800,000 USD from 2 sources: local and governmental for implementing the project.

2. The use of DDC in Vietnamese Libraries

The workshop, held at the National Library of Vietnam right after the successful launch of the Vietnamese translation of the Dewey Decimal Classification Abridged Edition 14, reviewed the whole translation process, expansions of the edition to meet the need to classify Vietnamese publications and arising issues during the translation that need further consideration. The workshop, which was joined by Ms Julian Beall, DDC Assistant Editor, also discussed key features of the DDC and its advantages in bibliographic management in Vietnamese libraries. The workshop ended with the opening of the Vietnamese National DDC Office and the launch of a DDC website in Vietnamese.

3. Vietnamese Libraries – Integration and Development

Jointly held in Ho Chi Minh City in August 2006 by Federation of Southern Academic Libraries of Vietnam (FESAL) and Northern Association of Academic Libraries (NALA), the

conference convened nearly 300 outstanding librarians from libraries of all types across the country. The conference agenda covered major challenges and opportunities such as new library services, the use of international library standards, library education, etc. that Vietnamese libraries are facing on their way to integrate into the international library community. The conference was also joined by Ms Leslie Burger, President of American Library Association, and several famous American lecturers of Library and Information Science.

For 19/04- 21/04/2007, in Hue city, Vietnam libraries successfully hold the 1st Meeting of CONSAL XIV Executive Board with the participation of representatives from 10 countries.

The libraries in the nationwide commenced to organize activities respond to the World Copyright and Book Day and encourage reading culture. On the occasion of beginning new year, libraries hold spring newspaper exhibitions.

In order to raise ability for libraries in remote, dept areas, serving for integration process, the Government has imlemented an assistance program for these libraries with the capital of 1.8 million USD in 2006-2007.

V. UPCOMING EVENTS

1. The 10th International Conference on Asian Digital Libraries

The International Conference on Asian Digital Libraries (ICADL) is the leading event in Asia in digital libraries research. Through a series of nine annual conferences, with focus on the development, implementation and utilization of digital libraries, the ICADL has gained its reputation as an important and well-known international event in the field of computer science and library and information science. It provides an effective forum for IT and information professionals to share and discuss latest development of digital libraries. The Conference has shown a significant impact not only in Asian countries in particular, but also in the whole world in general.

The 10th International Conference on Asian Digital Libraries (ICADL 2007) will be held in Hanoi, Vietnam and is jointly hosted by the National Center for Scientific & Technological Information (NACESTI), the National Library of Vietnam (NLV), General Science Library of Ho Chi Minh City (GSL), the Library & Information Center of the Vietnam National University Hanoi (LIC/VNUH), Hanoi University of Technology (HUT), Vietnam Association on Scientific and Technological Information & Documentation (VASTID), Vietnam Library Association (VLA), Vietnam Association for Information Processing (VAIP), and other organizations.

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