

2009 CDNLAO COUNTRY REPORT

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CAMBODIA

1. General Overview

The National Library (NLC) and Library Association has been continuing its efforts to provide better service throughout the country. In particular the Cambodia government's policy is to build several school libraries and develop the human resources within the country, improving the quality of service in the library sector. The Central Library of Phnom Penh was established in 1921 by the French protectorate Government of Indochina and became the National Library of Cambodia (NLC) in the year of the independence 1954. The Library opened to public in 1924 with a collection of 2,879 volumes. Today, the NLC is under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and has over 30,000 items in its collection.

The mission of the National Library of Cambodia is to :

- Collect, preserve and provide access to the Nation's documentary heritage.
- Provide information and documents to support education, government and research in Cambodia .
- Promote public library services and support the work of other libraries.
- Coordinate resource-sharing and inter-library loan between all types of libraries in Cambodia

The National Library is divided into the following sections :

- Administration
- Technical Services
- Reading Services
- Research and Reference
- Conservation and Bookbinding
- Lending Services
- Manuscripts

2. New Information Products

Since 2008, the National Library has have been continuing to provide an Information Literacy Program to students on Saturdays. This is the first time the Library has been able to open on Saturday, allowing the NLC to further strengthen its influence and improve the quality of daily work and better services.

We have begun work on a National Bibliography of Cambodia. Once completed, this bibliography will provide access to more of Cambodia's written cultural heritage for Cambodian and international researchers.

The National Library has recently published volume 4 of the Books in Print , an index of all books published in Cambodia covering the period 2008-2009.

Project Valease (France) has provided funding to adapt and install a new integrated library system (PMB) at the National Library and an ongoing service contract until 2010. This system has been adapted to become Unicode compliant and so it can be searched using Khmer script. Eventually the OPAC will be available over the Internet.

3. New Information Services

- Information literacy programs are conducted by the National Library in collaboration with ANZ Royal Bank to provide an Information Literacy Program to students every Saturday. UNESCO, UNICEF, some NGOs and the French Embassy are also supporting the Writing Improvement program, which includes training in children's literature.
- The NLC has many different types of users and increasing every year, mainly students, researchers and the general public. As of 2008, the number of registered members was 32,396.
- The information service area of the NLC provides reference services using all kinds of information resources inside and outside of the Library for all user queries. The NLC also cooperates with various institute and non-government organizations.
- The National Library launched its lending collection to the public in 2006, with 785 registered borrowers in the system as at 2008.

There are currently no formal inter-library loan services, although informal exchange arrangements do exist among some cooperating libraries, such as the University of Phnom Penh Library.

- The production of the Cambodian National Bibliography was started in 2008, which has been continuing to compile databases from 1954 to 2005.
- The National Library is also the Cambodian Agency for ISBN.
- The National Library cooperates with a variety of institutions involved in reading promotion and has many activities to promote better reading habits in Cambodia such as :
 - Reading promotion program for children
 - National Library has also had a ceremony for the National Reading Festival are organized annually in November, in collaboration with project Valease .

- supporting access to books throughout the country
 - maintaining a mobile book service to rural areas
 - Special exhibitions
- Due to a lack of funding, the NLC cannot make overseas acquisitions on its own, but does accept donated volumes from all over the world.
 - The Library's website contains 3.300 biographical references as well as 2.600 illustrations about Cambodia. The Library hopes to make its digitized collection of rare books available on the website soon.

4. New and ongoing Projects

- The Library has submitted a proposal for government funding for a new Library building.
- Continued training program for Information Literacy to students.
- The National Library, in cooperation with Project Valease will organize a workshop on the new library system (PMB) and specific skills such as cataloguing, National Bibliography of Cambodia and others.
- The Library will hold the Cambodian Librarian Association's training course for three weeks in 2009.
- The Library has tendered a proposal for the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation 2009 for the "Conservation and digitization of historical Khmer books from the National Library of Cambodia's book and microfilm collections."
- A proposal for a Mobile Library Service for the Blind in Cambodia was submitted via the Force Foundation in June 2008.
- The National Library maintains good cooperation with the libraries and library related institutes locally.

Digital preservation

- The digital preservation of the Library's collection started in 2004. Rare books of Indochinese from the French colonial period as well as books about art, travel and history of Cambodia have been digitized so far.
- The Library plans to digitize more Khmer language books in the future, hopefully the entire collection.
- Newspaper and manuscripts have not yet been fully transferred onto microfilm to protect and preserve the quality of the newspapers.