



**National Library of Cambodia**



**Country Report**

**To**

**CDNL-AO**

**Strategic and Major Developments**

## **Contents**

Organization Information .....	3
Overview .....	3
Parent Body.....	3
Key Facts .....	4
Strategic Developments.....	4
Digitisation .....	4
National Book Fair.....	4
Managing Collections.....	5
Unique.....	5
Legal deposit and ISBN.....	5
General Collections .....	5
Conservation .....	6
Equipment.....	6
Collaboration.....	6
Poland .....	6
France.....	6
Austria .....	6
Local .....	6
Education and Training .....	7

## **Organization Information**

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## **Overview**

The National Library of Cambodia (NLC) has strategically focused this past year on consolidating its core functionality particularly with respect to its Online access, collection development, conservation and preservation components and relationship building. The NLC has been working closely with interested parties to develop support structures around education, reading and learning.

The NLC has prioritised its Web site development programme so that it can make available its collections online. It is anticipated that the NLC Website and Online access will “go live” in a few weeks from now.

## **Parent Body**

The NLC in Phnom Penh falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts with direct responsibility to the Ministry’s Department of Books and Reading. It works to preserve and collect the written, audio and visual heritage of and about Cambodia and to guarantee that all Cambodians have access to information. Its motto enshrined over the doorway of the reading room is, “Force binds for a moment, ideas link forever.”

## **Key Facts**

- General population of the area served by NLC is up to 4,500,000
- Average number of hours NLC is open to the public each day is 8 hours per day
- Average number of days NLC is open each week is 5 days
- Average number of users NLC serves per year approximately 46,000
- The NLC is the primary library in Cambodia. Given the fact of no public or community libraries the need for reading, teaching and learning support to all Cambodians is crucial.
- The NLC provides a portion of its library as a public library. It offers the community the opportunity to access, read and lend books promoting reading in families.
- The NLC is building a Khmer collection that is available to all Cambodians. This provides the younger generation the opportunity to learn about their recent history. This is particularly important as some history is so recent that parents who suffered tragically do not find it easy to talk about and thus do not do so with their children.
- The NLC has a unique Palm Leaf and Paper manuscript collection, French Protectorate collection, along with Khmer rare book collection.
- The NLC has recently published its first ever National Bibliography.
- The NLC provides free computers and Internet access and when possible training on information literacy, research techniques, Internet research, basic computer usage, Word processing, using email and Job search.

## **Strategic Developments**

A major difficulty that publishers and writers have in Cambodia is the need for them to travel to the capital Phnom Penh and to the NLC to conduct their legal requirements of both ISBN and Legal Deposit. The NLC has concentrated on its Web site development this year to be able to provide these and other services online to all of Cambodia ensuring easy and effective co-operation.

## **Digitisation**

Digitisation is the means by which the NLC plans to preserve and conserve much of its unique collections. The state of some of these collections is of such severity that it is the only way of ensuring long term preservation.

## **National Book Fair**

The NLC conducted its inaugural National Book Fair that carried over three days. In partnership with the French Embassy, who through its Institute of France provided a

photographic exhibition, the Book Fair proved to be an important event and a successful one. Both publishers and writers came to participate from throughout Cambodia with local schools enjoying the exhibition stands and diverse book publications. It was an opportunity to showcase the proliferation of works and creations Cambodia is currently undergoing. The library was also able to show its conservation and preservation efforts on its unique collections.

### **Managing Collections**

The situation with respect to managing collections has not changed and does not look to in the near future. The NLC reiterates that there has been a great deal of effort and hard work done by the NLC to identify and catalogue the existing collections. With only 14 active staff the workloads are tremendous and the backlog is still substantial. Work is underway to update its National Bibliography as well as making it available online through its Web site.

### **Unique**

Our unique rare collections are in urgent need of good preservation and long term conservation administration to halt deterioration. The NLC has received a kind donation of a new scanner from India and has re-established its digitisation programme to begin the long process of capturing parts of collections that are in extreme danger of being lost through deterioration.

### **Legal deposit and ISBN**

The proliferation of both publishing and writing in Cambodia has increased workloads in ISBN and Legal Deposit services. The advent of its Website will help ensure the NLC is able to cope with this influx.

### **General Collections**

There is no change from the last report and again the NLC reiterates that how these collections are managed largely depends on resources and funds. Priority is given to identification and cataloguing but it is also important that immediate and ongoing conservation measures are taken. This is due to the backlog of cataloguing that is estimated at about 3 years behind.

There is also a programme in place, dependent upon funding, to retrospective catalogue the electronic entries in the library system. As the NLC now uses the PMB library system there is

a large amount of incorrect data input due to the migration of data from the old library system to the PMB system.

## **Conservation**

The NLC is currently awaiting final approval of funding from UNESCO that will give it the means to kick start its conservation and preservation programme again. The funds will allow the NLC to re-establish base foundation conservation for all collections and specific preservation for the most needed parts of its unique collections.

## **Equipment**

The Polish Embassy has donated a range of computers and printers to the NLC. These have enabled the NLC to improve its Network capability and capacity ensuring its technological security and giving it flexibility in its operations. The library now has secure backup services and control over the Internet ensuring safe and efficient working conditions for all staff.

## **Collaboration**

### **Poland**

The generosity of the Polish Embassy is very much appreciated by the NLC and their ongoing support is highly valued.

### **France**

The NLC acknowledges the work and support of the French Embassy which is very much appreciated.

### **Australia**

The NLC continues to work with the Australian Embassy to continue efforts with writers and publishers to expand the reading programme throughout Cambodia.

### **Local**

The NLC works with local Information Technology company AngkorGlobits to develop and support hosting its soon to be live Web site. The NLC has a Memorandum of Understanding with AngkorGlobits and will develop service agreements for future partnership ventures.

The NLC also has service agreements and works in partnership with local companies Khmerdev for its PMB service, and the Net Asia Form Company, for NLC network maintenance and development.

### **Education and Training**

NLC staff are currently undergoing training in the following areas:

- Conservation and preservation techniques particularly with the new scanner operations.
- Training on Web site and library system maintenance.
- Training has begun on digitising microfilm of unique collections as part of NLC conservation measures.