

Country report

Name of Country : Laos

Name of Library : National Library

Name of Director : Mr. Bounleuth THAMMACHAK

Name of Contact Person : Mrs. Khanthamaly YANGNOUVONG

Email of Contact Person : yangno2005@yahoo.com

Address : The National Library of Laos

Setthathirath Road, Xiengneune Village, Chanthibuly District, Vientiane Capital

P.O.Box 8818 Vientiane Capital

Telephone : (856-21) 251405-213029

Fax : (856-21) 219611

Official Website : w.w.w.nationallibraryoflao.org

Official E-mail : thuvienlao@yahoo.com

1. General Overview

The National Library of Laos was opened officially in 1956. It provides knowledge, literature, magazines and newspapers to the readers. It used to be under the Department of Fine Art in the Ministry of Education. Now National Library was under the direction of Department of Publishing and was under the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism.

The work of the library is the duty of the entire public of the country as well as requiring the participation of relevant ministries, sections and organizations, in order to provide places where people can read and gather professional data to contribute to the development of human resources.

2. Relationship to Government

The Government and the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism have appointed the National Library to cooperate with all sectors to organize a library development project, and to promote this project in order to attract assistance from international and neighbouring countries the ASEAN network. The Government have encouraged and supported fund to purchase books, magazines, newspapers and etc... . In this year the Ministry of Education and Sport have permitted to open curriculum library science and information technology in faculty social science and geography at National University. It is new step of wide open for library work in society and this is

importance to develop of human resources. This curriculum is to open bachelor degree and received 30 students to study library science and information technology.

3. Key Facts and Figures

The Lao Government's policy is to develop the human resources library infrastructure in order to promote information literacy within the country and quality services in the library sector. The National Library is responsible for building of public libraries in every provinces of the country and to develop its reading promotion program. At the National Library, we are not yet able to physically expand our premises, so we have focused on improving the quality of our services.

We developed an IT training room for training staff from Ministries within the Lao Government. We also renovated the Indochina collection, which was at the same time digitally scanned, including photographs of Laos from the French colonial period. We continued and improve the second phase of the Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts project, which made almost 12,000 primary manuscript sources (approximately 500,000 digital images) from Laos available via the Internet. Further research was also undertaken on the Annotated Catalogue of Tai Nuea Manuscripts, We have also prepared fresh plans for a new National Library building.

4. Infrastructures

The National Library is the center for local library networks throughout the country. We established Lao Association Library Center (LALIC) for connecting together in libraries and to make union catalog.

5. New Developments in Creating and Building Collection

The National Library has responsible to provide and administration rules from the Department of Printing and Library under the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism. So the Reading Promotion Project development cooperation with the Ministry of Education to build twenty school libraries. We had received fund from NGO's and helped classification of books, books shelves and children's activities training for them.

6. New Developments in Managing Collection

The National Library continues to provide reading corner for information on ASEAN countries, NGO, Women's rights and the Lao Women's Union, and national Heritage as reference materials. We has new collection in the national library is bellow :

- Filipino books collection donated by ambassador Philippines in Laos.
- Thai books collection donated by Institute research of Thailand.
- Thai books collection donated by Princess Sirinthorn of Thailand.
- English and thai books collection donated by Asia Foundation.
- And UNDP collection

7. New Developments in Providing Access

Librarians and Information professional are educated in all forms of published information, print, non-print and electronic, in the use of computers, automated technical and information system, and networks in principles of section, organization and use of information.

Therefore information professional provide services in such as traditional library setting as, academic, research library, public library, school library media centers, special or technical libraries, industry, the government or medical library and other specialized collections. The following background reading will be helpful to persons interested in the library information professional.

8. Collaborations with Other Institutions and Professional Associations

- Lao Library Association published newsletter each year 300 volumes, distributed for all libraries Lao Library Association made Directory of Professional Librarians and a Directory of members.
- LLA had conducted roadshows and delivered talks on the role LLA, librarianship as a career and professional development opportunities to government librarians, school librarians.
- LLA had organized local areas for surveying libraries and helped them for improving libraries is better.
- LLA organized meeting for sharing knowledge and experience together with members and we also conducted study visits to public libraries.
- Reading festivals are organized annually in June October , in collaboration with many partners.
- The national Library has also published children's books for distribution to schools. We are collaborating on establishing manuals and guidelines for librarians and we have two way of disseminating information to the public.

9. Education and Training

The work of the library is the duty of the entire public of the country as well as requiring the participation of relevant ministries, sections and organizations, in order to provide places where people can read and gather professional data to contribute to the development of human resources.

We have literacy program for grade 1 and 2 primary school. The government encouraged curriculum reading promotion to come in school. We have distributed book boxes to the primary school and lower secondary schools specially to Rural remote areas. We have also built and established 280 libraries and reading rooms has been supported by foreign organizations such as Japan and American NGO's. we have also been responsible for the publication of 250 titles children pictorial educational books. A week we organized to service mobile library two times to primary school and communities for children's activities such as story telling and how to make picture's books and children's books.

We organized week library and books exhibition , in slogan is “ **Today a reader and Tomorrow a leader**” for all students at National University.

Each year, The National Library and Lao Library Association had organized training workshop for provincial public libraries. The training covers from daily library management issues such as library management, acquisition, cataloguing, services, children's activities and book binding .The National Library was responsibility to build human resource training for trainer. There are many subject to teach such as this year we have organized training with topic digital books talking and produce CD stories for blind people, training method to use Subject Heading handbook for staff library in around country. And the last one training, we organized PMB database, it is database system to use in our National Library and all libraries in our country. This database is French system (PMB).