

Annual Report National Library of Laos 2015

For

Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania Annual meeting of 2016 – at the National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand

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NLL Mission Statement

“The National Library of Laos has a mission to preserve national cultural heritage; foster reading for development; and to promote organisational excellence in order to build a knowledge society for Lao people.”

- National Library of Laos Mission Statement, 2015

NLL National Development Plan 2016-2020, “Strategic Objectives”

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Objective 1: Acquire, Preserve and Build Knowledge

Build NLL Collections which:

- i. reflect and preserve Lao history, culture and society
- ii. better inform Lao people and international visitors about Lao history, culture and society.
- iii. support social inclusion for all Lao people,
- iv. Promote innovation and new forms of creativity; and
- v. incorporate local knowledge and wisdom.

Objective 2: Improve Public Access to NLL

Improve public access to collections and services, especially via the creation of a “Digital Library”, to:

- i. enable more equitable and inclusive access to online information
- ii. improve the economic, educational, health and social livelihoods of Lao people, including all ethnic groups.
- iii. encourage deeper regional and international links
- iv. support lifelong learning and the development of a knowledge society

ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Objective 3: Develop Professional NLL Staff

Promote staff professional learning and development opportunities to increase staff skills, knowledge and expertise.

Objective 4: Enhance NLL Organisational Structure

Strengthen the library infrastructure relating to library staff, legislation, content management systems and processes in order to improve the quality of library & information services.

READING ADVOCACY

Objective 5: Strengthen Communities through Reading Promotion

Raise awareness of the importance and benefits of reading to primary school aged children in Vientiane province AND increase their access to reading resources via mobile library outreach services to encourage reading for pleasure.

BETTER PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Objective 6: Improve Quality of Public and School Library Services in Laos

Upgrade library staff capacity in provinces around the country supporting them to deliver better quality public and school library services in their communities.

1. Relationship to Government

NLL is under the direction of the Department of Publishing within the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism. The Library works cooperatively with the Lao Library Association (LLA), other Lao Government departments and ministries, publishers, Foreign Governments and NGOs, businesses and members of the community to promote the benefits of reading and to increase public understanding of the role of libraries across the country.

In 2012 the Lao Library Law was enacted covering the organisation, structure and management of libraries across Laos. Article 17 covers Legal Deposit requiring publishers to deposit at least three copies of every book published in Laos to the National Library.

2. Facts and Figures

The National Library officially opened on 1 July 1956. Formerly under the Department of Fine Arts in the Ministry of Education, the Library is now under the direction of the Department of Publishing within the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism.

Annual Operating Budget

The NLL continues to rely heavily on its limited operating budget provided by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism. The 2014-15 NLL budget was approximately 1.1 billion kip (\$130,000 USD). The budget is limited mostly to administration and salary expenses with a small amount allocated to building the library's collection. As a result external funding is urgently needed to help maintain and expand library infrastructure, collections and services.

Organisational Structure and Staffing

The organisational structure of the Library is made up of a Director, four Deputy Directors and six sections, each managed by a Head of Section. The Library currently has 39 staff, including 21 women. The following table provides information about staff professional qualifications:

NLL Library Staff with Library Science Qualifications (Certificate, Diploma, Degree)	NLL Library Staff with other Qualifications (Certificate, Diploma, Degree)
7	32

Collections

Collection	Physical Items	Digital Objects
Books – catalogued (Lao Language)	3532 (*Titles)	0
Books – catalogued (Foreign Language - English, Thai)	3526 (*Thai language Titles) 831 (*English Language Titles - 20% of total English Collection)	0
Books – not catalogued (Foreign Language: English, Russian, French, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean)	15000 (*Estimate)	0
Children's Books (Lao Language)	3466	0

Children's Books – not catalogued (Foreign Language -*English, Japanese, Thai, French)	4758	0
Reference Books – not catalogued (Foreign Language *English)	5000 (*Estimate)	0
Palm Leaf Manuscripts (Bailan)	1600	12000* (Available for viewing on external website)
Indochina Rare Books – not catalogued (French Language)	5000 (*Estimate)	40* (Available for viewing in Library only)
Traditional Music	3000	100* (Available via an external website)
Historic LPs – not catalogued (Music and Oral Recordings)	900	0
Historic Pictures	0	1000* (Available for viewing on CD in Library only)
Maps	230	0
TOTAL	46,843 (*Estimate)	13,140 * (Limited availability)

Services

Service	2012	2013	2014
Total Visitors	16729	13114	14005
Number of people borrowing books	2759	1852	2150
Number of books borrowed	6616	4849	4480
New Memberships	155	138	129
Membership Renewals	67	61	61

3. Overview of Recent Major Developments

New Building 2016

In 2016, the National Library will move to a new four storey building near the Kaysone Phomvihane Museum approximately 6km north of its current location. The new location will be in proximity to the new National Museum building and the National University of Laos at Dong Dok providing an opportunity for closer collaboration with other learning institutions.

Construction of the new building will support the Library to improve conditions of current working space, provide greater public access, and develop better systems for storing data and materials. It will also allow the Library to further develop and display its collection, establish training facilities and set up meeting rooms to encourage greater opportunities for cooperation at the regional and international level.

Digital Library Access Initiative (DLAI) Project

As set out in Objective 2, the National Library aims to improve access to its collection through the Digital Library. Through the Digital Library Access Initiative (DLAI) Project the National Library will build a web portal that provides online access to the Library's collections and services. It is a key part of NLL's efforts to create an online Digital Library that makes information available for the benefit of all communities in Laos. The web portal will be available in Lao and English languages.

Stage One of the project will provide access to:

- NLL digitised collection of Lao palm leaf manuscripts <http://www.laomanuscripts.net/en/index>
- A selection of NLL's digitised Lao traditional music <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/lao/>
- A selection of NLL digitised collection of Lao images from the French Indochina period
- Link to the NLL National Bibliography http://kawinphong.com/show_data/
- Educational, economic, health and agricultural research databases (including HINARI, AGORA, OARE and ARDI) <http://www.research4life.org/>
- Lao English Agricultural Dictionary <http://dict.nafri.org.la/>
- Links to other ASEAN National Library collections
- Links to Lao resources in other library and information institutions https://wayback.archive-it.org/1054/*/http://inlao.com.la/
- Links to partners and other stakeholders - <http://www.ifla.org/>
- Links to other free EResources

ASEAN – COCI Palm Leaf Manuscript Workshop, Vientiane, LAO PDR

For the first time, the NLL will be hosting the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI) Palm Leaf Manuscript Workshop to be held in Vientiane, LAO PDR from 14 December to 17 December 2015 under the theme, "Preserving our Cultural Heritage".

4. New Developments in Building and Managing Collections

Indochina Rare Book Collection Conservation (IRBCC) Project

In accordance with the NLL's objective to make its collections more accessible, the NLL has commenced a working relationship with an Australian based company (Sydney Rare Book Auctions). By way of background, the NLL has a collection of more than 5000 rare books and journals from the French Indochina period (circa 1870s – 1954). This collection provides a rare and unique insight into life in Laos during the colonial period however, the majority of these books are now in a very fragile condition which prevents them being displayed or handled.

In October 2015, two Book Conservators visited the NLL and undertook an inventory of the collection; provided training to NLL staff on preservation and basic bookbinding techniques; developed Condition & Treatment Report templates; and, undertook repairs on more than 30 books and maps.

Further training visits have been planned for 2016, involving both NLL staff in Australia and Book Conservators in Laos.

5. New Developments in Providing Access to Collections

Digitisation of Resources

In addition to the “Digital Library” (DLAI) Project, the NLL is continuing to focus on improving access to its collections. The NLL continues to utilise the “Book2Net Kiosk” it received as part of the “Deployment of Digital Library System in ASEAN Countries” Project in 2013 and to date has digitised more than 40 books from the Indochina Rare Book Collection.

6. New Developments in other Services

NLL Library Survey

The National Library of Laos (NLL) conducted a survey for residents of and visitors to Laos in October 2015. The goal of the survey was to identify which services were considered to be most relevant to a national library in the 21st century. It was designed to include a range of services which are not currently available to NLL users so that resources could be allocated for those services as part of the move to the new library building in 2016.

The results of the survey were very pleasing as they confirmed the Library’s objectives to improve public access to collections and services, especially via the creation of a “Digital Library”; identify the importance of staff professional learning and development opportunities to increase staff skills, knowledge and expertise; and to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of reading to primary school aged children in Vientiane province as well as increase their access to reading resources via mobile library outreach services.

Longer Opening Hours

As of October 2015, the NLL in Vientiane increased its opening hours to include weekends. This initiative was based on feedback from library users and the results of the Library Survey conducted which confirmed that 86% of those surveyed believed the library should have longer opening hours to improve access to its collections and services.

Outreach Services

The NLL continues to actively engage with the community to promote the benefits of reading through our International Children’s Day, International Literacy Day, the Library caravan and the mobile book bus service. As part of International Literacy Day celebrations, the NLL partnered with the Australian Embassy to deliver storytelling, puppet show and other literacy activities to more than 100 children from disadvantaged schools. Our staff conduct activities for children including puppet shows, storytelling, drawing competitions and other games that encourage children to read for enjoyment.

Improving Public Access to Information

The NLL’s “Improving Public Access to Information” (IPAI) Project aims to promote access to information by providing the Lao public with access to computers and the Internet. This project is part of the National Library’s efforts to make information available for the consumption and benefit of Lao people. By improving access to information, IPAI’s main objective is to bring about changes that empower Lao citizens to:

- Exercise their civil, economic, social and cultural rights;

- Be economically active, productive and innovative;
- Learn and apply new skills; and
- Enrich their cultural identity and expression

7. Collaboration with other Libraries and Information Institutions in Laos

National University of Laos

The National University of Laos (NUOL) and NLL jointly run the LALIC. This collaborative working group is responsible for managing and developing the Lao version of the open source library cataloguing software system, PMB. The aim of LALIC is to build a network of PMB library systems across Laos to promote this open source library software so that in the future all of the libraries in Laos can offer interlibrary loan services, reduce the duplication of resources and share knowledge.

8. International Collaboration

INELI- ASEAN Project

Staff from the NLL were pleased to participate in the first convening of the International Network of Emerging Library Innovators (INELI) – ASEAN held in Malaysia in October 2015. The purpose of this convening was to build and strengthen the network of public libraries in the ASEAN community. This three year project is sponsored by the National Library of the Philippines and the first convening was hosted by the National Library of Malaysia.

CONSAL XVI

The NLL is very grateful for the close relationship it has with the National Library of Thailand. Most recently the National Library of Thailand supported a twenty person Lao delegation to attend CONSAL XVI in Bangkok, Thailand in June of this year.

AVID Program

This year saw two volunteers from Australia working as advisers with staff at the National Library to build capacity in implementing the strategic objectives of the NLL. The volunteers were fully supported by the Australian Red Cross and funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program.