The CDRI Library and the Tonle Sap Initiative Learning Resource Centre

Establishment of the Tonle Sap Initiative Learning Resource Centre

The Tonle Sap Lake, with its vast resources, has been described as the lifeblood of Cambodia. Similarly, a well-resourced library can be seen as the lifeblood of an effective research institution. The development of the Tonle Sap Initiative (TSI) Learning Resource Centre within the CDRI library was funded by an Asian Development Bank (ADB) grant. It was set up between early January and the end of June 2006.

The ADB TSI began in 2002 as a partnership of organisations and people working to encourage sustainable economic development of the Tonle Sap basin and the surrounding areas. This 10-year project is also aimed at preserving the unique potential of the Tonle Sap basin and ensuring that Cambodians are made more aware of this valuable resource. CDRI is pleased to be associated with this programme in a way that provides access for researchers and the wider community to information and outcomes of the many development facets of the TSI.

The newly established Tonle Sap Learning Resource Centre, an integral part of the CDRI Library, has been established as the capacity-building component of the TSI programme. The TSI resources complement existing facilities and networks at CDRI and are part of its ongoing activities. The existing valuable CDRI Library resources include a complete collection of all CDRI publications as well as our special collections, namely:

- Asian Development Bank Depository Library
- United Nations Research Institute for Social Development Collection
- UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking Collection
- World Bank Depository Library

All of these resources are being added to on a regular basis and enable the CDRI Library to remain the foremost collection of development-related resources in Cambodia.

During the establishment period, CDRI Library staff worked together to develop the collection and to add new resources, particularly relating to the TSI and the Tonle Sap watershed. Staff visited other agencies in a systematic manner to collect additional resources, including books, pamphlets, CD-ROMs and maps. In addition, considerable time was spent identifying materials available on the internet. All these resources have been included in the new CDRI Library Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), which provides all library users with improved access to its new and existing resources.

Items of particular importance include the following:

- Database of ADB articles on the TSI
- Tonle Sap biosphere database
- Database on TSI-related project reports
- Books, periodicals and documents relating to the Tonle Sap basin
- ADB TSI brochures and publicity
- Maps
- CD-ROM publications of ADB, Mekong River Commission (MRC) and other organisations
- World Fish Centre publications
- MRC publications
- Online resources
- Research reports and theses

Refurbishing the Library and Upgrading Facilities

The library team, which includes Mr He Hin, Ms Un Sinoch and Ms Sorn Maden, together with a consulting librarian and volunteers, worked together to redesign the

library by incorporating the new equipment, furniture and facilities. The new layout enables the library to provide more streamlined services, while at the same time focussing on the ADB TSI Learning Resource Centre as an integral part of the library.

In addition to the improved layout of the library, new signs have been added to direct users to particular subject areas. Four computers are available for use by visitors wishing to consult the OPAC, two of which provide access to the Internet. There is a reader-adviser available at all times to assist library users to find resources and to explain library systems.

The NewGenLib System

High quality access to information in modern libraries and resource centres is made possible by the use of library management systems (LMS) software. In most cases, this software is very expensive and well beyond the reach of libraries in the developing world. CDRI was able to purchase a modern "cutting edge" LMS, NewGenLib, which is central to the redevelopment of the library and the establishment of the TSI Learning Resource Centre. CDRI staff use NewGenLib to manage all relevant systems, including acquisition, circulation, cataloguing and the OPAC. NewGenLib was developed in India using open source technologies to produce an international standard LMS programme for developing countries. The new system has many useful features that will assist the staff to provide "quality added" service for all library users. NewGenLib makes possible

easy access to all the resources, books on shelves, documents on the internet or digital documents held in other locations as well as providing analytical entries of particular works.

To facilitate the adoption of NewGenLib at the CDRI Library, the library team worked closely with Mr Leng Vanna, CDRI's IT manager, and the NewGenLib team in India. Prior to the change-over, a digital version of the old WINISIS catalogue was sent to India for conversion of the bibliographic records to the international standard MARC 21 structure in preparation for the installation of NewGenLib. New computers and a server were purchased and installed in late March.

NewGenLib systems engineer Mr Meher Siddhartha visited CDRI for two weeks at the end of March 2006 to install the software and train the CDRI IT manager and library staff in the use and management of the new system. The library was closed for two weeks during the training sessions on NewGenLib.

Following the NewGenLib training, library staff, together with volunteers and temporary staff, have been hard at work on bar-coding books and "fine tuning" the cataloguing records preparation for implementation of the circulation module. Collection development continues, and the staff have a greater awareness of the kinds of materials required to maintain the relevance of the collection. They are continuing to learn new skills, focussing on developing their abilities in cataloguing and classification with guidance by the library consultant.

A New Look Library

The new look CDRI Library incorporating the Tonle Sap Initiative Learning Resource Centre is an attractive and user-friendly place. It provides users with access to vital information concerning the development of Cambodia and in particular the ADB Tonle Sap Initiative. Improved library services include signage based on the Dewey Decimal System, the location of a reader's adviser in the public area, the new OPAC and a reference collection. Library staff have learned new skills and welcome new visitors and researchers daily.