

Summary Report Of "LIBRARY INTERNSHIP" 09 March – 17 April 2015



Purpose and brief presentation of internship venues

Working as Sipar Training Manager and Prison Library Coordinator for 6 years, I have observed that Cambodia is lacking of human resources in library sciences. Not to mention the fact, most of librarians are completing their daily works in managing library depending on mainly their traditional experiences. In order to develop the library sciences, specifically to promote public reading in Cambodia, I have honorably been assigned by Sipar to do an internship in Public Library in French funded by Bibliothèque Publique d'Information (**BPI**).

My internship focused mainly on electronic and digital library, information system, cataloguing, cultural activities, events for children and collection enhancement. Therefore, BPI has organized the program to visit:

- BPIⁱ

With 250 personnels, BPI is a big library for public reading on Beaubourg tray, applied in 1960 in the center of Paris by Georges Pompidou. BPI carries three general missions: offering to all with every possible measure for free access a constantly updated selection of French and foreign collections document of general information and actuality; constituting a documentary research center in conjunction with other centers, libraries, and cultural institutions and participate in cultural activities of the Georges Pompidou Centre.

The library is easily accessible for all kind of public with different background such as high school students, students, teachers, family, social field speakers, newcomers in Paris and job seekers but **all documents are not allowed to be borrowed and the users have to consult on site.**

- Multimedia Library Network of Nanterre (MLNN):ⁱⁱ

Funded directly by Nanterre City, this network contains 5 multimedia libraries with 48 personnels. The main multimedia library is Pierre Marie-Curie including one mobile library. All the libraries organize the same sociocultural activities for beneficiaries although each library has its own schedule and policy in purchasing books.

- Multimedia Library Network of Plaine Commune (MLNPC):ⁱⁱⁱ

As Plaine Commune is the Committee of Agglomeration (25 cities), there are 25 multimedia libraries and three mobile libraries. More than 270 personnels working for this network are civil servants paid by the president of Agglomeration Committee not by each city as MLNN. The

management of this library network is very different from Nanterre Network. The commune service (service mutualisé), in charge of purchasing books for others multimedia libraries, is regrouped by section: comic books, novels, documentary...etc. In addition, there is a shuttle service (Navette



Service) for facilitating library services to borrowers. This service will transport books reserved by borrowers from Lieu Commun to each library or / and vice versa and collect return-books from one library to another library or to Lieu Commun because once the users have registered in the network they can borrow and return books at every library in the network.

- Libraries in Prison

Fleury Mérogis with more than 3000 detainees is the biggest prison in Europe. There are 5 buildings (5 districts) dedicated to 5 categories of detainees. This also means that there are 5 libraries supported by an association “**Lire C’est Vivre**”^{iv} and all documents were computerized.

At Women Detention Center of Versailles, the detainees are only between 60 and 70 detainees. Only one library, in where 7 detainees can access once, is opened to serve detainees. All documents and furniture of library are provided by municipal library and some part of Departmental Library of Loan (**DLL**).

To enrich my internship, two meetings were held which allowed me to meet with two representatives from network above, DLL on politic of loans to prison and Ministry of Culture and Communication on publics prevented (publics who cannot access to library services including detainees).

Possible Activities and any initiatives for Sipar

During six weeks of internship, I have visited BPI and its library services as well as received an internship in MLNN and MLNPC. There, I have interned with several tasks such as coating books with

sticker plastic (different plastic in Cambodia), quoting books by machine, redisplaying books on shelves and providing loan as well as returning books by software in computer (Vsmart in MLNN and Aloès in MLNPC) both in multimedia libraries and mobile libraries. In addition, I have participated in the committee of book evaluation and selection for libraries.

Fortunately, I was assigned or had a chance to assist to various animations organized by the library which included sessions of tales by professional artists or librarians, session of theater for adults, delivery of baby reader award.

Owing this internship, I have gained a lot of ideas and activities which can be implemented in Cambodia to fill in the gaps so that Cambodian librarianship can catch up with other countries in Southeast Asia.

1. Redefine the definition of library

According to Sipar's goal, promoting and developing public reading has been prioritized since 1992. However, Sipar has recently inaugurated the mobile library with Road Safety Subject instead. This year, as a result, another mobile library with the Environment Subject has also been established. Therefore, from my point of view, Sipar is moving in a little different direction apart from the initial goal.



Not to mention the fact that the utilization of library as a place for storing and lending books has not been practiced at all with the current projects of Road Safety and Environment Subject.

In France, library is considered to be a **third-place** which has been successful already in England and in Netherland. The **first-place** and **second-place** refers to home and workplace relatively. Therefore, the **third-place library** or **multimedia library covers mainly social life. It is actually a friendly place where people can meet and talk about life.** In another word, the library or multimedia library is the place where the librarians can facilitate users with various services such as accessing their lives with knowledge, information, public services. This can change the old view point that library is just a place for lending and returning books. Library is actually a **cultural and social mediator**

where many workshops can be conducted namely **session of tales, film projections, video games, activity around books, awards to baby authors or adults, public writer, job searching.**

Regarding these facts, Sipar is on the right way in promoting public reading. From my point of view, I believe that it is necessary to introduce the concept – library is the third-place – in library training and to all stakeholders in developing public reading or public library field.

2. Redefine the duties and roles of mobile librarian

There are 4 different multimedia libraries available for the internship program. Among them, I have observed two separated duties. One duty is related to internal works, another is public services. The internal works include purchasing books, cataloguing books, coating books, repairing book and so on. The public services, which are involved by not only the librarians but also the person in



charge of library, covers lending/borrowing services, collaborating with social association in order to persuade people to come to library, organizing social and cultural activities in partnership with artists or professional in this section. It is surprisingly noticed that the time management for both internal works and public services are divided almost equally. This is the main factor which I believe in contributing the good quality in services of library or multimedia library.



Looking back at our mobile libraries, it is understandable that mobile librarians are very busy with **public services** that they do not have **enough time to do some main daily works** like coating books, repairing books, participation in books purchasing and preparation their animations. I totally agree with Marie BOYER (after reading his mission report) to reduce their works on field and

spare some time for daily works which is always done by volunteers. As a result, this will also allow Sipar to save some money from hiring those volunteers. **The more time the mobile librarians spend time with books, the more they will read them.** Discharge them from their field works, they will have **time to prepare cultural and social activities** for villagers like environment issue, domestic violence, hygiene, drugs, human trafficking. We should keep in mind that Sipar is providing orientation of each the theme “road safety and environment subject” to **each mobile library. I believe that by modifying this point will lead to a better beginning for the current project.**

During my assisting in tale session organized by BPI, I noticed that professional artists are invited to do narration accompanied by interesting and lively musical performance.



What about our mobile librarians? Of course, they are gifted in art so I think that they can develop themselves if they have time to be trained. In addition, if Sipar wants to sell this service, Sipar has to decide to discharge their works on field because in France all artists or professionals invited have been paid.

Our mobile librarians normally work in disadvantaged villages. Therefore, why don't we intervene to promote public reading, by choosing important date in public area when there are children and adults? This way, two things can be gained, our visibility and service provision. In France, this kind of activity called “Street Library”, which I believe to be Practical in Cambodia, has been successfully achieved.

I plan to select one mobile library to computerize its documents after my returning to Sipar PP in order, first, to facilitate the lending and returning services in villages, and second is to test the effectiveness of PMB function.

Another important thing, in order to reorganize their schedules, villages, activities, duties and roles, a project manager for mobile library team is required. Not to mention the fact, the Library Development Coordinator alone is handling a lot of works from abundant projects already. I believe that the presence of s project manager which can be hired from outside or assigned among our mobile librarian team will lighten the works and manage more tasks regarding this activity.

3. Activities to be implemented in Prison Library Project

In general, the prison in Cambodia and France shows no differences in management in term of respecting each own policy. For instance, **detainees who want to consult books by willingness** have to be registered in a list by the librarian. Similarly, to access the library including other sessions like cultural or educational activities, the willingness of detainees is important like in Cambodia.



However, at national level, the prisons in France are managed by **Ministry of Justice** when the ones in Cambodia are leaded by **Ministry of Interior**. Related to library, many differences can be observed from prison to prison. The Prison library can be handled by an association (**Lire C'est Vivre** at Fleury Mérogis Prison) or Municipal Multimedia Library (Prisons in Versailles). In addition, the librarians can be volunteers or professional municipal librarians or detainees.

The prison libraries meet less difficulty in renewing documents than Cambodia because there are public multimedia libraries which weed documents and associations who intervene in this field. The most important thing is a lot of sociocultural activities are available not only in public multimedia library but also in prison library. Of course, these sociocultural activities such [*film projection, art-drawing, comic art producing, sport, writing session, literature award, cooking course, reading aloud...*] can be implemented in Cambodia but we still have problems in finding appropriate speaker or implementer for each activity. Hopefully, in the next project, we can begin with easy activities like film projection, writing session, reading aloud. If it is possible, we can even invite author into prison library (by providing award) to promote the reading more efficiently.

Regarding reading promotion in prison, France has signed and approved in 2013 the law "**Reading one book, reduce 5 days of detention**". Personally, I find it as a good initiative and benefit for detainees that can be shared with General Department of Prisons in Cambodia?

4. CRAFT

CRAFT is the main point that Library Team should take in to consideration in order to improve its services. Comparing to MLNPC, our CRAFT is like commune service which provides books to other project and especially to Mobile Libraries. However, until now, the documents are not yet computerized. That is why the system of rotation cannot be applied. During the internship, I was not programmed to do cataloguing because



recently this is the role of National Library of France (BNF) and Electre^v, website from that all libraries can buy all documents as well as import book notices. As a result, the librarians just import book notices from BNF or Electre. Though there are many software available in managing the documents, I am satisfied that we have chosen the right one (PMB) for its simple usage.

I plan to have all the documents catalogued though step by step. The Library Development Team has to select a mobile library and computerize its documents then start testing lending-returning books by PBM in order to facilitate the daily of mobile librarians.

But the question is “do we have budget to buy laptop and PMB to start with this project?”

The capacities of Documentation Officer (updating new titles of publishing house, evaluating books to purchase, cataloguing...) have to be prioritized in reinforcing. Documentation Officer, Monitoring Officer and Training Officer have to be on the field with other librarian to find out the real users’ needs and observe the situations. It would be even better for them to apply daily activities of librarian at least once a month because this is very necessary for who are working in the library field.

5. Collaboration between Library Development and Edition Team

I have noticed that when there are new titles edited (**73 000 new titles per year in France**), books are always sent by publishers to the library to evaluate before they get purchased. Librarian committee plays an important role in this part. They read, comment and select the book to purchase. Regarding to this point, I think that Edition Program is very beneficial and should be practiced in Sipar as we also have mobile librarians who work directly and closely with readers. They can contribute all

information of readers to Edition Program to find new types of books (contents, quality and collection). On the other hand, since my presence at Sipar, I have noticed that we rarely work with each other, especially related to the collections and contents of books. Of course, we should acknowledge that Sipar Edition is the leading publisher in Cambodia in non-fiction books. However, it is still limited in fiction books. The questions are:

Why don't they collaborate with each other?

Is the level of education of mobile librarians still limited?

I strongly believe that if the collaboration among them can be strengthened more, the quality of Sipar Book not only in non-fiction but also fiction books will keep and continue to be the leading of publisher in Cambodia.

Note: Do not forget that librarians who work directly with readers can evaluate books and know clearly about the real needs of readers.



Another mission is whether we can publish comic books or manga in the future. In general, teenagers are known to adore reading the collection of manga. Of course, Sipar is lacking of human resource in this field, but I believe that we still can manage to translate manga (for example Ben10) as we have used to do. This will lead Sipar to be the first in publishing manga in Cambodia.

Conclusion

Through this fruitful internship, I have gained many new things and ideas during these 6 weeks. One of the most important concept is library is not merely a place for lending and returning book. It is actually a third place where people can come to have its services. Then, librarians do not only have daily intern works but also public services like lending/returning book; working with schools, association, social partners in order to promote reading. Sometime they help users to research and find job, to have social services. In one word, librarians provide all necessities needed to users to facilitate theirs lives in society.

In France, professional storytellers are hired to intervene in library or in school to promote reading. During storytelling, they play also music to get attention from spectators, children. In parallel, our mobile librarians are also talented in art but they need to be reinforced their capacity to get this point then we can sell our professionalism if theirs number of daily works at villages are reduced.



There are now some libraries named public library^{vi} like National Library of Cambodia, Library of Royal University of Phnom Penh, American Corner, Information Resource Center and Senate Library. But these libraries have not served to all publics but they serve only students or researcher.

Why doesn't Cambodia have a real public library?

There is no human resource and budget?

There is no importance for having it?

Of course, in addition to the requirement of Education, public library is the key actor not only to provide people access to knowledge, information or culture but it is the place where people can have time to relax from home and office. I think Sipar should be the first organization to create a pilot of Public Library Project and show the importance of this library to Ministry of Education. In order to develop the public library in Cambodia, the real internship (working as French Librarian) during 3 months or 6 month should be done. I will apply this internship again to BPI in the case of Sipar would like to develop this project.

Finally, I would like to show my appreciation to Marie BOYER and Jean Jacque Donard who have worked hard to request this internship for me and also to BPI for providing this opportunity.

ⁱ <http://www.bpi.fr/home.html>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.nanterre.fr/313-le-reseau-des-mediathèques.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.mediathèques-plainecommune.fr/opacwebaloes/index.aspx>

^{iv} <http://www.lirecestvivre.org/>

^v <http://www.electre.com/ElectreHome.aspx>

^{vi} <http://news.sabay.com.kh/article/331866>