



REPORTS ON THE LIBRARY EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AND THE LIBRARY STANDARDS PROMOTION OF LEAF-VN FOR THE VIETNAMESE LIBRARY COMMUNITY, 2009

**By
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At the invitation of Mr. Pham The Khang, Director of the National Library of Vietnam, LEAF-VN assigned Mr. Lam Vinh-The and Ms. Pham Le-Huong to be in charge of preparing materials in Vietnamese on the topic “The Library of Congress Subject Headings System” (hereafter known as the LCSH System) which has a history of more than 100 years of use.

I arrived in Hanoi on October 28, 2009 and, on October 29, 2009, Ms. Phan Thi Kim Dung, newly appointed director of the National Library of Vietnam (NLV), (who replaced the retired director, Mr. Pham The Khang) sent her driver to pick me up at my residence in Hanoi to be taken to the NLV in order to have a meeting with the members of her staff who were assigned to cooperate with LEAF-VN in preparing for a three-day workshop on the topic of the “Library of Congress Subject Headings System.”

According to Ms. Phan Kim Dung, even though Mr. Pham The Khang has retired, he is still continuing his tasks in cooperation with LEAF-VN on the Village Library Project and other projects. He has worked in conjunction with the NLV staff including: Dr. Le Van Viet, Vice Director, Mr. Nguyen Trong Phuong and Mr. Doan Anh Duc who also assisted me with the workshops on LCSH conducted at the NLV in Hanoi and at the General Sciences Library, Ho Chi Minh City in November and December 2009. Mr. Doan Anh Duc of the Information Technology Department produced 500 CDs of the workshop materials which were compiled by two LEAF-VN members: Vinh-The Lam and Le-Huong Pham.

I. Seminar on the Village Library Project, 2006-2009

On the morning of the November 23, 2009, I attended the ceremony for the 30th anniversary of the Hanoi Publishing House where the National Library's Digital Library Collection of Thang Long-Hanoi was introduced; this was organized as part of the coming 1000th anniversary of Thang Long – Hanoi. That afternoon, I attended the Seminar on village libraries at the National Library. This seminar was sponsored by Mr. Kent Converse, LEAF-VN director. In retrospect, I would like to mention here about the Village Library Project. It was in 2000 that Mr. Pham The Khang, Director of the National Library of Vietnam introduced the Soc Son Village Library near Hanoi to Ms. Huyen Ton Nu Lien-Huong [aka Lien Huong Fiedler], LEAF-VN President. She was very impressed and since then she has tried to find the means to help the village libraries. LEAF-VN launched a fundraiser among its own members and requested our friends and other organizations to help. Luckily, LEAF-VN got a matching fund from a Vietnamese-American, Ms. Le Thu Doan, who generously donated five thousand dollars; therefore, our fund for this Project was ten thousand dollars to make this project work. In August 2006 "The Village Library Collection Development Project" materialized in cooperation with the National Library of Vietnam. Mr. Pham The Khang, NLV Director, appointed Mr. Nguyen Trong Phuong who was in charge of this project in Vietnam.



Mr. Kent Converse, LEAF-VN, sponsored the Village Library Seminar 11-24-2009



Mr. Pham Thế Khang, former NLV director, gave his report on Village Library Project, 2006-2009

Mr. Kent Converse, and I were happy to hear the reports of some village librarians and a report from Mr. Pham The Khang, former director of the National Library. The ten village librarians said that after they received more new books donated by LEAF-VN, the number of their readers increased a lot. They expected that LEAF-VN would continue to support them. I was asked to give some remarks and I said that LEAF-VN would like to continue this project and even to help some new village libraries in the future providing that we have more funds. Mr. Kent Converse made some remarks about his visit to the village in Hai Duong Province with some students from the computer science field from the University of Hanoi. They introduced the computer technology to the villagers and some children were amazed about it; the children found some games in his computer that even he himself did not know that he had in his machine!



Group picture of Village librarians and LEAF-VN members, Ms. Phan Kim-Dung, Director of NLV in front of the National Library of Vietnam, 24-11-2009

II. Workshop On The Library of Congress Subject Headings System at the National Library in Hanoi

I was told that there were about 195 participants from all kinds of libraries from Hue to the Northern part of Vietnam who registered to attend this training. The National Library and the Vietnamese Library Association co-sponsored this training. LEAF-VN provided two trainers: Mr. Vinh-The Lam and me, but due to a family problem, Mr. Lam had to cancel his trip. He asked me to take over the class and I based my lectures on the 360 pages of materials that we had prepared together ahead of time. Dr. John Celli had indicated that he would join us for the training but, due to his health, he had to postpone his trip too; he indicated that he would go in January 2010. The National Library of Vietnam produced about 500 CDs of our material and distributed them free to the participants.

The topic of LC Subject Headings was very new to all of the participants; therefore, the Director of the National Library of Vietnam recommended that the instructional materials be slowly presented to them. There were few questions raised at the training session due to the limited knowledge of the participants.

During a three-day-workshop from November 25-27, 2009 at the National Library of Vietnam, the participants were enthusiastic. The CDs were distributed free of charge to all participants. Some of them took their own laptops to use in class due to the big conference room and small screen that made it difficult for those who sat at the end of the room to see what was posted on the screen. There were few questions raised by the participants because, according to the newly appointed NLV director, this

topic is very new to them. Questions were raised not only about subject cataloging with LCSH but also about descriptive cataloging, AACR2 and MARC 21. I slowly answered their questions and mentioned to them the importance and relationships between descriptive cataloging and subject cataloging and assigning classification numbers by using LC or DDC, and that the tedious task of a cataloger is to achieve the main purpose of supporting the library users to use its OPAC and retrieve library materials easier than ever with the support of library technology. Besides the materials on CD, I used the Internet with databases from the Library of Congress [its OPAC, LC Authorities, and Classification Web], the OPACs of the University of California and Cornell University in order to have them aware of and get familiar with free access via the Internet.



CD of LCSH material was distributed in class.
LCSH Class at the National Library in Hanoi from 25-27-December, 2009

Among the 195 participants, there was one who is a lecturer at the Library School, University of Social Sciences & Humanities, Hanoi National University; this participant brought the hardbound LCSH volume 1 to class and showed it to me to ask some related questions regarding its subject headings and its usage. I noticed that it was a very old copy (12th ed.) and I was told that his library did not have a budget for



foreign books and that they lacked support from the Department of Education and Training. I told him that I will try my best to secure a newer set for his school. After a few days I sent an e-mail to Ms. Huyen Ton Nu Lien Huong [aka Lien Huong Fiedler], president of LEAF-VN, and she told me that Mr. Tom Yee, LC Assistant Chief of Cataloging Policy and Support Office, had met with some of the Vietnamese graduate students from Simmons School of Library and Information Science when they came to visit the Library of Congress. He immediately gave LEAF-VN a new set of LCSH in order to help Vietnam. Dr. John Celli reluctantly agreed to bring this

Mr. Dong Duc Hung showed off his newest edition of the LCSH donated by LEAF-VN in Hanoi on 30 January 2010. (Photo provided by Dong Duc Hung)

heavy set and some other books to Vietnam (it weighted about 25 Kg and occupied one of his allowed 2-baggages) without any additional baggage charges by the airline). It was delivered to me in HCM City and my relatives brought it to Hanoi. Mr. Dong Duc Hung, lecturer of the School of Library and Information Science, was so happy to receive this newest edition of LCSH (31st ed., just published in 2009)

III. Workshop On The Library of Congress Subject Headings System at the General Sciences Library in Ho Chi Minh City

On December 2, 2009, I left Hanoi and flew down to HCM City in order to conduct another session of the LCSH workshop from December 8-12, 2009 at the General Sciences Library, Ho Chi Minh City. As I mentioned above, there were 95 participants who belong to the southern chapter of the Vietnamese Library Association from Danang to the south. Due to their previous experiences on the library trainings which were organized by the Vietnamese Library of Southern Academic Libraries (VILASAL), most of the participants were familiar with the topic through some trainings by the southern chapter of the Vietnamese Library Association (VILASAL) therefore I could do my normal speed of the lectures. There were a lot of questions regarding not only the main topic of LC Subject Headings principles but also the applications of MARC format and AACR2 in descriptive cataloging. Everyday, at my residence I also got e-mails from the participants regarding these topics. I tried my best to answer those questions and, the next day, in class, I talked about the questions I had received and explained to the whole class so that all of them would benefit from the questions and answers. After finishing the two workshops, Mr. Lam Vinh-The and I compiled two lists of questions with answers in details for both sessions (70 pages), attached it to the e-mail and sent it to the participants. It will be posted on our LEAF-VN website (<http://www.leaf-vn.org>) in order to have it available for others who were not able to attend the training program this time.



LCSH Class at the General Sciences Library, HCM City, December 8-10, 2009. At the 1st able, on the right: Mr. Bui Xuan Duc, Director of General Sciences Library. HCM City. (Dec. 8 to Dec. 10, 2009)



Certificate of the LCSH training sessions

At the end of the 3rd day of each session, certificates were awarded to all the participants. This time, in Ho Chi Minh City, the Director of the General Sciences Library also threw a Tet party for all of us. Everybody was happy to attend the training and the party and wished each other a Happy Year of the Tiger (Tết Canh Dần) 2010.

IV. Opening Ceremony of the Online Library Community Network – OLICON

On December 28, 2009, at the invitation of Mr. Nguyen Minh Hiep, Director of the Natural Science Library, National University of HCM City, Mr. Hoang Ngoc Huu, Vice President, (also webmaster of LEAF-VN) and I went to the Natural Science Library to attend the opening ceremony of the Online Library Community Network – OLICON. This group is a non-profit organization within the Vietnamese community in the south, which combined several academic libraries with the support from the Integrated e-Solutions Vietnam (Ie-SVN), to introduce a library management software and its application. Their efforts were to make a national union database and also a Vietnamese subject headings database in order to promote the highly praised concept of subject headings to the whole country since there is lack of such an important tool for the country.



LEAF-VN members: Hoang Ngoc Huu and Pham Le-Huong at the Opening ceremony of the OLICON at Natural Sciences University. (Photo provided by Nguyen Minh Hiep)

V. Visiting and Donating Books to the School of Library and Information Science, Saigon University

On December 19, 2009, Dr. John Celli and I went to the School of Library and Information Science, Saigon University at the invitation of Dr. Nguyen Van Bang, Dean of this school. We all knew that this school has courageously changed their curriculum matching the international trends such as the ones in Canada or in the USA. Our LEAF-VN directors: Vinh-The Lam and John Celli, etc. shared their opinions about the changes.

Top University members such as the President, Vice President, Dean of the Library & Information School, and other key staff members welcomed us and they made their reports on the success of their students. There were three-fourth of the graduates

who successfully got their jobs right away. Giving my remarks, I told them that I was impressed with their great leap forward by the changing of their curriculum in order to benefit their students' success. Because, after graduation, they were all equipped with their newly-learned knowledge and also their experiences working in their fields as they were doing their practicum at the libraries in HCM City. Dr. John Celli also gave his remarks on the changing of librarianship as well as the rapid changes in the application of electronics in the field of library and information sciences which made all librarians aware of it and they tried to adapt the new technology to their field in order to organize, retrieve and preserve the country's culture and materials for years to come.

This year some of our LEAF-VN directors made trips to Vietnam at almost at the same time; therefore, we accomplished a great many tasks including: attending a seminar on Village Library, teaching two classes on LCSH, and donating books to the Library and Information School of Saigon University, The Library and Information Science Department of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities of Hanoi National University in order to up-date their holdings to meet the international standards of their curriculum. Their faculty members and students benefited from their faculty textbooks in the Vietnamese language with up-to-date materials for reference usage. Dr. Nguyen Van Bang gave us a tour of the school facilities such as their library, Media room with high-tech equipment, and the student's Internet room, etc. with DSL connections to help their faculty and students get access to the Internet and retrieve materials successfully.



Sai Gon University Executives members:
from L. to R. : Dr. Nguyễn Việt Ngoan,
President, Ms. Ngô Thị Hạnh, Vice President,
Dr. Võ Văn Lộc, Chief of IT and Post
Graduate Training Office, Dr. Nguyễn Văn
Bằng, Dean of Library & Information Science
School.



Dr. John Celli & Le-Huong Pham prepare to
donate some new library science books to the
Dean of the School of Library & Information
Science, Sai Gon University.

V. Visiting the Floating Vietnamese School on The Tonlé Sap, Cambodia

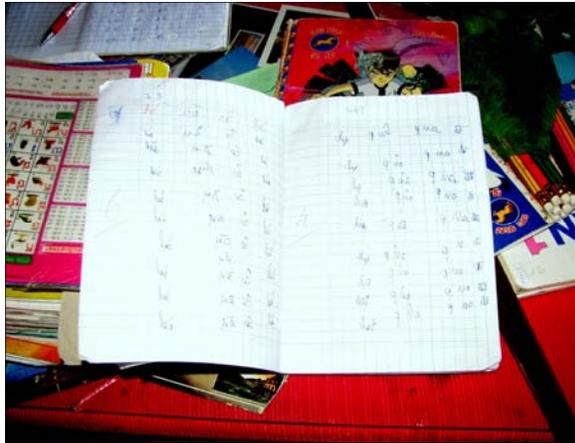
While visiting Vietnam, I made a tour to Angkor Wat, Cambodia and I had a chance to visit a Vietnamese floating school on Tonlé Sap Lake [Great Lake of Cambodia]. This school is run by some Vietnamese voluntary members to have several classes from grade 1-4 to support the poor Vietnamese children who live on Tonlé Sap Lake. Upon arrival, the tour guide suggested that food or monies would be very appreciated by the children; therefore, some of the tourists purchased instant noodles and brought them to the school in order to provide some more food for the poor children. The children stood up to greet us, and their teacher gave us some history of this school. It is a non-profit school and it depends on tourists' donations. The children come to school everyday voluntarily.



Floating Vietnam School on the Tonlé Sap Lake, Cambodia (January 27, 2010)



Students stood up to greet the visitors



Student's notebook and their "Library"



Appreciation for the donations was posted on the wall at the Vietnam School on Tonlé Sap Lake, Cambodia

VI. Conclusion

In the more than ten year of the existence of LEAF-VN (1998-date), this organization has followed its goals very closely as indicated in their website including:

- Providing assistance in the development of library infrastructure through the implementation of international standards of information organization, retrieval, and exchange;
- Providing assistance in the development of library collections to adequately support the learning, teaching and research functions of educational institutions which house these collections;
- Providing assistance in the development of library professionals capable of maintaining and continually developing international standards-complying library systems and services.

we recognized that LEAF-VN has become deeply involved in the field of library and information sciences via their members' trips to Vietnam and through contributed

publications such as: 1998: promoting library standards at the NIT'98 Conference in Hanoi, 2000-2002: translated the DDC summaries to post on LEAF-VN website with permission from OCLC; translated the cataloging tool The Concise AACR2, 1998 by Michael Gorman, 2004: cooperated with the National Library of Vietnam and the Hanoi National University to have 3 workshops on the application of the Concise AACR2, 1988, 2006- donated books and magazines to enhance the Village Library collections, 2007- LEAF-VN members directly involved in the curriculum changes of the Library School, Saigon University, LEAF-VN members delivered their knowledge and expertise to their Vietnamese colleagues, and this year (2009) three members went to Vietnam either to participate in the teaching of another important tool in cataloging field, "The Library of Congress Subject Headings system" or were involved in the collection development of the library schools by donating some new textbooks to their libraries so that their Vietnamese colleagues will have some up-to-date books to prepare their Vietnamese textbooks, to enhance their teachings, and to benefit their students.

LEAF-VN has made a great leap forward to achieve their goals by having such great cooperation from their Vietnamese counterparts at home and by financial assistance from philanthropists.

On behalf of LEAF-VN, I would like to extend our appreciation to the donors, our members and friends, the Vietnamese Library Association, The National Library of Vietnam, the General Sciences Library, Ho Chi Minh City and others who helped us to prepare materials and to organize the two workshops on "The Library of Congress Subject Headings System" in order to enhance the knowledge of our Vietnamese librarians to meet international standards.