

# งานบริการ สาธารณบุคคล และการพัฒนาประเทศ

นักเศรษฐศาสตร์ในประเทศพัฒนา เชื่อว่าศูนย์สารสนเทศมีส่วนช่วยทุ่นเวลา ค่าใช้จ่าย และกำลังคนในการวางแผนเพื่อพัฒนาด้านเศรษฐกิจ ในทำนองเดียวกันนักบริหารงานด้านอื่น ๆ ได้ให้ความสำคัญกับงานบริการสารสนเทศมากขึ้น เห็นได้จากการนำเอาเทคนิคใหม่ ๆ เข้ามาใช้ในงานบริการสารสนเทศและการส่งเสริมสถานภาพของบุคลากร หนึ่ง การจัดตั้งศูนย์สารสนเทศให้เป็นแหล่งบริการทางวิชาการและรวบรวมข้อมูลที่มีประสิทธิภาพมากน้อยเพียงใดขึ้นอยู่กับปัจจัย 3 ประการคือ ปัจจัยแรกผู้วางแผนงานให้ความสำคัญศูนย์สารสนเทศที่มีต่อการพัฒนาประเทศ และเห็นสมควรจะลงทุนเพื่อการนี้เพียงไร ปัจจัยที่สองค่านักบุคลากรศูนย์สารสนเทศนั้น ๆ มีนักเอกสารสนเทศที่อุทิศตนเพื่องาน มีความสนใจที่จะแลกเปลี่ยนความรู้ความเข้าใจ และให้ความร่วมมือกับนักเอกสารสนเทศในศูนย์สารสนเทศหน่วยอื่น ๆ มีความสามารถในการเผยแพร่งานบริการสารสนเทศของตนให้ปรากฏ มีความสามารถในการคัดเลือกเอกสารใหม่ที่มีคุณภาพ และสำรวจหาแหล่งข้อมูลได้ดีเพียงไร ปัจจัยสุดท้ายได้แก่ การบริการ นักเอกสารสนเทศนอกจากจะต้องเป็นผู้มีความรู้ดี มีความเชี่ยวชาญงานสารสนเทศดังกล่าวมาข้างต้น ยังต้องมีความสามารถในการสร้างสัมพันธภาพอันดีระหว่างตนกับผู้รับบริการ รู้จักโน้มน้าวจิตใจให้ผู้รับบริการมีความประทับใจในบริการ และยอมรับว่าศูนย์สารสนเทศเป็นแหล่งบริการทางวิชาการและรวบรวมข้อมูลที่มีคุณค่า และทันสมัย ควรค่าแก่การมาขอรับบริการ

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

"....A pre-industrial society is essentially one based upon **Raw Materials**. An industrial society is organized primarily around **Energy** and the use of **Energy** for productivity of goods. A postindustrial society is organized around **Information** and utilization of **Information**... as a way of guiding the society." (\*)

## Information Services and National Development

*by Jacques Valls, Director Library & Regional Documentation Center  
Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok*

Development, a very controversial concept, will be given here the meaning it generally has today, that is "economic development". To develop its economy a nation has to improve and expand its activities in many areas, drawing on all existing resources of human knowledge and adapting some of them to meet its specific national requirements. In order to do this efficiently the first step is to know the present status of human knowledge in many areas related to science, technology and social sciences.... and that means getting Information in its broader sense.

If a country does not have a very good access to Information it will not be able to benefit from the considerable amount of already known facts, experiences, data recorded in the information sources. It will therefore run the risk of duplicating what already exists, of "reinventing the wheel"!. Such a risk no country can afford it, it is too costly and that is especially true of course for developing countries which have limited means and many priorities. In other words strong Information Services (\*\*\*) are a vital necessity if a country wants to develop efficiently, avoiding waste of finances, time and efforts.

Unfortunately many policy makers are not aware of the importance of Information, pay little attention to their countries' Information facilities and overlook their difficulties and financial requirements. Many signs show this to be generally true, for instance, the small budgets of libraries and the low status and salaries of librarians and information officers.

Policy makers and users may object that they are not pleased with existing Information Services and therefore that they do not deserve more support. It is partly true that because of insufficient means some Information Centers are not very efficient and that often users may feel frustrated. But to think that these Centers

(\*) in "Human Requirements, supply levels and outer bonds", policy paper from the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies Program for International Affairs (1975).

(\*\*) The terms Information Services or Centers are given in this paper a general meaning including libraries, information and documentation centers.

are useless is a very serious mistake. If some Information Centers are presently inefficient it does not mean they are not necessary, it just means that they have to be considerably improved and much more strongly supported.

We must not forget also that Information Centers are faced today by very dramatic difficulties. The fundamental problem is the fantastic volume of already recorded informations and its exponential growth rate, often referred to as the "information explosion". (\*) The total volume of published informations now doubles every 7 or 8 years! That really frightening phenomenon exists more or less for all fields of knowledge.

How can an Information Center, even a large national one, cover efficiently such an enormous mass of information? This situation has introduced spectacular changes in the information world. New techniques using computers, microforms, telecommunications have become necessary. Active cooperation between information centers is now considered indispensable. The very jobs of librarian and information officers have been upgraded requiring now very high qualifications. All these changes need additional financial means to be added to the already increasingly higher acquisitions budgets (2, 3)

The problem of efficient access to Information has therefore become a truly formidable one. It concerns all Information Centers worldwide but it is particularly dramatic for those in developing countries which suffer from drastic limitations in budgets, equipment and qualified manpower.

Without substantial additional investments in Information Services no spectacular improvement can be expected. Convincing policy makers that Information is a major component of their country's development, that a national information policy with suitable budget should be incorporated in long term national development plans is a very urgent matter but will probably need much time before it comes true.

Meanwhile, many things can be done right away to increase quite considerably the efficiency of Information Centers. Let us examine now a few such actions which would result in much improved access to information.

### 1. Sharing of existing information resources

As no one single Information Center can hope to solve alone all the problems of accessing Information it becomes indispensable to organize an intelligent, real sharing of resources among Information Centers at national, regional and international levels. This implies a close coordination of their activities seeking complementarity and avoiding duplication whenever possible. Sharing of resources is often difficult, complex but results in immediate increase of efficiency and must therefore be stubbornly pursued.

(\*) Figure 1 shows the growth rate of the well-known "Chemical Abstracts"

## GROWTH OF "CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS"

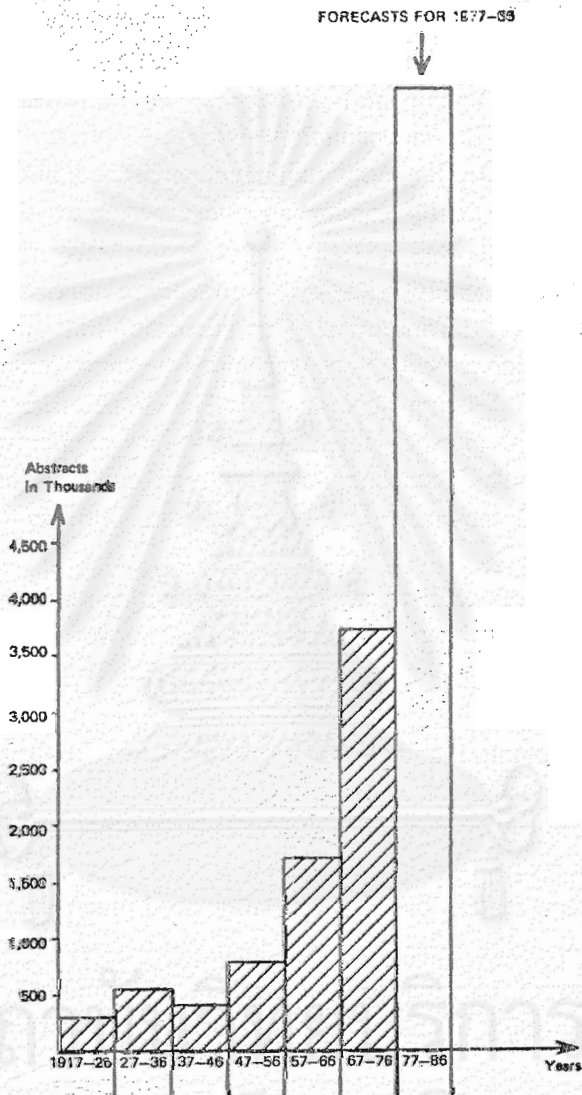


Figure No. 1



A prerequisite to the sharing of resources is the making of inventories of what resources do exist in a country or in a region. For instance, building up Union Lists of Serials, Union Catalogues, can be easily undertaken cooperatively by the libraries of a country as shown by the on-going project "Union List of Serials in Thailand". Such inventories are the basis for efficient inter-library loans and for coordinated acquisition policies (1, 2, 3).

Computerization projects for library automation and for access to large computerized data bases being costly, difficult and lengthy ventures, represent an area where coordination of the projects being considered and exchange of results is particularly important. To illustrate what can be done, it might be worthwhile to mention here that a group of Malaysian Libraries and the Asian Institute of Technology, both in a position to undertake some computerization projects are exploring the possibility of establishing a programme for several computer applications which would be handled by one or the other group, but not by both, with subsequent exchange of experience and results.

Coordinations of that type must be strongly encouraged for all information activities. A number of existing regional organizations could serve as supporting frame-works for coordinated activities, for instance, CONSAL (Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians), NLDC (Consortium of five National Libraries or Documentation Centers of the Asean countries), ISDS/SEA, SEAMIC (South East Asian Medical Information Center), SEAMEO (South East Asian Ministeries of Education Organization), etc.... These organizations could also play an important role in removing some of the many obstacles to the free flow of information (3).

## 2. Creating regional "commodity" or "mission" orientated information Centers

As already emphasized a single Information Center cannot hope today to cover efficiently a broad spectrum of fields of human knowledge, but if it restricts its coverage to a narrow field, on a product ("commodity") or on a specific problem ("mission") it can provide an efficient, comprehensive information service with a very modest budget. If in addition the topics chosen, products or missions, correspond to high priority areas and if the services are offered on a regional basis, the impact of such "commodity" and "mission" orientated Information Centers on national and regional development can be considerable. This statement is based on our own experience at the Asian Institute of Technology where four such Information Centers have been established for Geotechnical Engineering, for Ferrocement, for Renewable Energy Resources and for Environmental Sanitation (1, 5). Other similar specialized Information Centers exist or are being envisaged in Asia, for instances, for Rubber, Rice, Tin, Coconut, etc.

The information requirements for a "mission" can also be met by regional networks of closely associated Information Centers as shown by the existing networks for Low Cost Housing and for small scale Industries (TECHNONET).

The creation of additional "commodity" or "mission" orientated Information Centers or Networks ought to be strongly encouraged as it is a way of solving efficiently--not all--but some of the important information problems of developing countries, needing only limited financial means, these countries can afford.

### 3. Improving the relationship between Information Centers and Users

Most of the Information Centers in developing countries are insufficiently used, despite the considerable information needs of those countries. That rather paradoxical situation can be explained. Many potential users are simply not aware of the importance of information for their activities. Other individuals do try to make use of Information Services but too often they are frustrated and stop using them. A very wide gap exists unfortunately between Information Centers and Users. That is totally unacceptable and considerable efforts ought to be dedicated to fill in that gap or at least narrow it by establishing links between the two parties concerned.

The training of Users is a necessity, but not an easy venture, the main obstacle being the lack of motivation of users for being trained. The only efficient users' training method is a long term operation. It requires the well planned incorporation of Information utilization in the educational programmes starting in elementary schools for very young children right through high schools and post-graduate institutions. Training adults who have not been taught earlier to search for Information is a very difficult undertaking. It must be attempted but the results will often be frustrating.

The most efficient way to obtain a better utilization of existing Information Services is to convince in a practical way potential users that they can benefit from such services. It is the responsibility of Librarians and Information Officers to undertake that "convincing" process. They must not wait in their offices for users to come, they must "go out" to potential users, try to find out their areas of interest and then provide them, even if not requested to do so, with information tailor made to their requirements such as bibliographies or SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information). After a time some of these potential users will discover they receive information items valuable to them and will then become real users. Such action requires from Librarians and Information Officers a dynamic concept of their role in the transfer of information. In a way they must promote their services just as salesmen trying to market and sell their products or services. It also needs a strengthening of the Reference Sections in Libraries and, in Information Centers, an increased number of Information Officers in charge of direct service to users.

It could be added here that special efforts ought to be devoted for transferring information and certain technologies at the level of little educated rural users. Information specialists must devise suitable methods to meet that requirement which is of vital importance for developing countries (4).

From the Users, side, when a team is formed to work on a project, a member of the team ought to be specifically assigned the role of gathering the information necessary for the project. He would then serve as a direct link between the team and the Information Centers.

Users, and especially the dissatisfied users, tend too often to consider Information Centers as another world in which they are not involved, with very little concern about their fate. That is a very wrong attitude. If they understood the importance for them of getting adequate information they would consider that having efficient Information Services is as much their concern and responsibility than that of Librarians and Information Officers and they would strongly support their efforts to improve these Services.

### Conclusion

In brief, I would like to end this article dedicated to my friends and colleagues in developing countries with whom I work by making three appeals :

- to decision makers, urging them to consider proper access to Information as a major factor of the nation's development and therefore recommending the investments necessary to provide their country with an efficient information infrastructure.
- to librarians and information specialists, advising them to try, despite their many difficulties to cooperate among themselves, to share resources, to play a dynamic role in disseminating the information treasures they acquire and store in their centers.
- to users, warning them they cannot in our present modern world be really efficient without good information and that the setting up of strong information facilities in their country ought to be one of their major concerns.

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## The Management of the Office of Educational Technology in Open University System

The success of an open university depends greatly upon the work of the Office of Educational Technology. This article covers various aspects of OET management regarding the philosophical concept of openness, roles of educational technology to an open university, divisions of work in OET, coordination with other units inside the university, and some considerations that need to be taken in managing OET. An systematic model for long distance learning system is also discussed to clarify the role of the office of Educational Technology.