A LIBRARY LINK BETWEEN ABERDEEN\textsuperscript{1} AND GUAYAQUIL\textsuperscript{2}

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ABSTRACT: This paper is based upon a collaborative link between the Instituto Nacional de Pesca (INP), Guayaquil, Ecuador and the library of the Marine Laboratory. The link was part of a fisheries development project funded by the Overseas Development Administration. The paper sets out the terms of reference for the link, describes the INP library and the work carried out to improve and enhance the services provided, under the headings: Buildings; Furnishings; Equipment and Ergonomics; Policies and Services; Stocks and Routines; Staffing; Computer Applications.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To conduct a complete review of the INP library comprehending its cataloguing, lending and reference systems, as well as the type of users and frequencies of use by INP staff and persons from other institutions.

2. To assess the library staff's level of skills and knowledge on both the library systems and in meeting their users' needs (conduct \textit{ad hoc} interviews with users) identifying any training needs (long and short term).

3. To provide additional training on:
   a) Organisation and classification of the various publications received;
   b) How to request information from other libraries/sources;
   c) How to improve the system for inter-lending reports and information with other institutions;
   d) How to define user requirements;
   e) How to meet user needs;
   f) The use of international networks (ECUANET) in fisheries/bioaquatic research institutes.

4. To prepare a report on the consultancy visit for the Government of Ecuador giving details of the activities undertaken, progress achieved, the next phase of action to be undertaken and conclusions and recommendations for further activities in this area.

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METHODOLOGY

1. Review of Organisation
   - Number of staff
   - Number of students
   - General subjects covered
   - Areas of research, PhDs

2. Library
   General background info
   - Hours of opening
   - No of staff – ratio professional/non-professional
   - Subject areas covered
   - Selection policy
   - Lending policy
   - Budget of library staff
   - Interaction of library staff with scientific staff
   - How the library is promoted within the INP

   Holdings: Books
   - Selection policy
   - Budget
   - Classification scheme
   - Acquisition method
   - Method of recording
   - Circulation control

   Holdings: Periodicals
   - Selection policy
   - Budget
   - Organisation
   - Binding policy
   - Acquisition
   - Lending arrangements
   - Method of recording

3. User services
   - OPAC
   - Subject index
   - Guiding
   - Library guide
   - Intereibrary loans
   - Reference interview technique
4. Staff
   - Qualifications
   - Training opportunities, professional development
   - In-house training for non-profstaff

5. Miscellaneous
   - Automation
   - Preservation of stock

In order to address the service aspect of the library, 80 members of staff and students were interviewed at random, using a short questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire were collated and formed the basis of many of the recommendations.

Background

The INP was founded in 1960 and work began in May 1961. Its main objectives are to conduct scientific and technological research into bio-aquatic resources and to lend scientific and technical assistance in areas related to bio-aquatic resources. The INP comprises six scientific departments (Basic Sciences, Marine Geology, Marine Ecology, Fisheries Resources, Fisheries Products and Extractive Technology), in addition to its administrative, legal and financial divisions.

The INP is funded by the Ecuadorian government and in 1994 employed a total of 167 staff (91 scientific). This includes one professional librarian and one library secretary.

FINDINGS

Building

The INP is housed in a relatively modern building, but one which is close to the tropical estuary of the Rio Guayas in an area of high humidity. The storage of books and periodicals is a particular problem in these circumstances with woodworm infestation and the growth of moulds creating special difficulties.

The INP library occupies two floors and is situated some distance from the centre of the organisation. Heavy rainfall and poor drainage had resulted in extensive water damage on the upper floor inside wall, while the ground floor was regularly flooded.

The lighting throughout the building was inadequate for studying. This was especially so on the upper floor which has very little natural light.

The upper floor was overloaded. The periodical bays were badly laid out causing too much weight to be concentrated in the centre of the room where there was least support below.
The woodworm infestation had caused many of the wooden fittings, such as shelves and card catalogue drawers to be damaged.

Air conditioners were fitted, but were unreliable. Lack of air conditioning was a common complaint from students attempting to work in the library, according to the librarian.

**Furnishings, Equipment and Ergonomics**

Study facilities in the library would be much improved through the provision of tables for discussion groups and easy chairs for more relaxed reading.

It was also felt that a telephone and photocopier in the library would aid communications and improve the library service respectively.

Since there were few signs in the library, other than those labeling individual pamphlet boxes, and one on the entrance door reading “Library,” we felt that the library users would benefit from a proper guiding system.

**Policies and Services**

The library opens Monday-Friday 0800-1600 hours. Like many research institutes, the INP library has simply grown with the institute. The link project gave the INP the opportunity to review library policy, to draw up written instructions relating to stock selection and retention, and to specify the requirements and duties of the librarian.

The establishment of a library committee would facilitate communication between the librarian and the scientific staff, and help to keep the librarian abreast of the scientific work of the institute.

Developing a policy on the selection of library resources and the discarding of old stock was required. The establishment of a collection relating to Ecuadorian fisheries and aquaculture was seen as a high priority.

More formal communication between library staff and scientific staff would enable the librarian to learn about the new areas of research being planned, and the literature that needed to be acquired. Areas such as plankton research and computer application required special consideration. The introduction of a discards or weeding policy would remove material which was out of date and taking up valuable space.

Various policies needed to be established. INP staff and students should be encouraged to donate copies of their publications and theses to the library in order to create a record of published research carried out at the institute.

Library promotion and user education were areas which needed attention. We found that 13 of the 30 people interviewed did not know how to use Dewey Decimal Classification.
The 14 people who did know had either been taught to use it during higher education, or had taught themselves.

We also found that 11 of the library users questioned regarded the INP library card catalogue as the only bibliographic tool they needed to use when conducting literature searches. It needed to be made clear to users that the card catalogue only contained references to the holdings of the INP library, and that they needed to make user of other bibliographic tools. Only two of the 30 people interviewed used ASFA (hard copy).

A photocopying service was not available in the library. The librarian or her secretary lent the books or periodicals to the user, who made photocopies at the nearby stationers.

A further service provided was the lending of books. This presented a problem as the librarian found it difficult to enforce the rules (INP staff could borrow up to three books for 8-15 days, students were not allowed to borrow books). In practice staff disregarded the rules. The librarian did not have the authority to challenge these people and consequently some of the most sought after stock was permanently missing. Of the 30 people interviewed, seven people usually found what they were looking for in the library, 19 did occasionally, and one never did. Both scientific and library staff were deeply dissatisfied with the lending arrangements. As a consequence of this state of affairs five members of staff said that they had private collections of books which they bought themselves. These collections were not accessible to the librarian.

The library was not involved in any inter-lending networks, nor did it maintain links with any of the libraries in Guayaquil. A survey of local libraries revealed that ESPO (Polytechnic of Guayaquil) ran courses in among other things, aquaculture, and had a well run, well stocked modern library. The librarian at ESPO had established inter-lending arrangements principally with the Catholic University library (Guayaquil) and had a less formal arrangement with a number of others in the city. ESPO was linked to ECUANET (Ecuador’s equivalent of Internet) and used it to make contact with libraries throughout the American continent.

Stock and Routines

The INP library stock comprised books (arranged in Dewey Decimal Classification, 19) which were housed on the ground floor, and periodicals which were being re-organised into an alphabetical sequence according to country and which occupied most of the space on the upper floor.

These collections were served by a set of card catalogues which were arranged into two sequences, one alphabetically by author/title, and one by subject heading. There was also a sequence of cards which give references to articles in journals. These were organised alphabetically by author. The subject areas covered in the library are: aquaculture, chemistry, computing, ecology, fishing technology, fisheries limnology, microbiology, oceanography and statistics. ASFA (Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts, hardcopy)
was being donated to the library by the Fisheries Link Project INP/SOAFD. However, not enough use was being made of this resource and problems were encountered when users tried to obtain the articles they required.

There was a small reference collection of encyclopedias and dictionaries. Maps, charts and various reports and pamphlets were also collected.

There were no current subscriptions to periodicals and therefore no arrangements with periodical agents. All periodicals received were either free, or came via exchange agreements. These were recorded in a satisfactory manner. The librarian had no budget as such and was not involved either in the selection nor the purchase of books. Books were selected by the Director and purchase arranged by administrative staff. There was no obligation on the INP to purchase materials for the library.

The librarian was responsible for cataloguing library materials and this was done to a good standard.

The classification scheme used is Dewey Decimal Classification 19. DDC 19 has been superseded by version 20, which contains many more headings for science. An English version of a DDC 20 has been given to the INP library, and we felt that this could be fully exploited if the science headings were translated.

The librarian kept detailed library statistics relating to who has used the library, when, and what they had borrowed. The librarian used this information to identify more popular items and had created a section where popular items were kept for quick reference.

**Staffing**

The INP library was staffed by one professional librarian and one secretary. The librarian had completed a four-year course at the University of Guayaquil and obtained a degree in Librarianship. Since graduating, the librarian had attended a course run by Idepro, which was funded by the Fisheries Link Project. She had also attended a short course at CEN (Ecuadorian North American Centre) which she had paid for herself. However, without the opportunity for even occasional training courses funded by the INP, there was no motivation to improve. The librarian felt isolated from the rest of the INP. Although this was in part due to the location of the library which could not be helped, it was exacerbated by the fact that she had no direct line manager to whom she reported.

**Computer Applications**

In 1994 there were no computer applications in the INP library, although the institute’s computer programmer had started work on an in-house library management system which would run off a 486 PC.
The UNESCO library management system CDS/ISIS had been considered. CDS/ISIS would probably be a better option than an in-house designed system since it is an established system which is already used in some of the libraries in Guayaquil (including the ESPOL library).

The subject of ECUANET (Ecuador's equivalent of Internet) was discussed among the librarian, the consultant and the Director, and it was agreed that a link to ECUANET would be most beneficial for the library. It would enable the librarian to access the catalogues of other libraries on the network, to communicate via e-mail and to use the Internet librarians bulletin board. However, since the technology is not yet installed at the INP, it was not possible to make any progress.

There were no CD-ROM applications in the INP.

**ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE VISIT**

**Building, Furnishing, Equipment and Ergonomics**

After consultation with the INP Director, a specialist was brought in to inspect the condition of the roof. Plans for repair work were made. The INP architect was approached, initially to discuss the load-bearing capacity of the upper room floor. The original plans for the building were found and the architect agreed that the layout of the periodical bays concentrated too much weight in the centre of the room where there was least support below. A second plan was drawn up, which showed the relocated periodical bays, against the wall. It included the re-organisation of the lower floor, where purpose-built wooden study booths would replace the high-chair type seats.

Efforts were made by the library staff to clear all combustible materials from the floors. As part of this exercise, material for discarding was also moved, creating more space. The building was cleaned and a date for the fumigation organised.

Specialist signs designed to provide a guiding system to the library (including Fire Exit signs) were made. Arrangements were made to have the signs fitted.

A visit to Xerox was made, and an estimate for the purchase of a suitable photocopier was obtained (including maintenance arrangements and paper supply). The estimate was given to the Director.

**Policies and Services**

After the discussion with the librarian, a formal library policy was drawn up by the consultant and the librarian and was given the approval of the Director. This legal document set out the requirements of both the librarian and the INP directorate.
The library policy addresses book selection and specifies the subject areas covered by the INP library. It states the current duties of the librarian, and extended them to cover the development and maintenance of an Ecuadorian fisheries collection (including the scanning of journals for relevant articles to be photocopied and catalogued).

The policy states that it is the duty of the librarian to promote the library and its resources both within the INP and in the wider community, which involved setting up and maintaining links such as inter-library loan arrangements and local user groups.

The lack of communication between the librarian and the INP scientific staff was addressed by the establishment of a formal Library Committee. The committee (made up of senior scientific staff) is to meet annually to advise the librarian on current areas of research, to discuss acquisitions and discards, and generally to provide a channel of communications. It is a function of the committee to support the librarian in her dealings with the Director.

During the visit the first meeting of the Library Committee was held. The committee members were unanimous in the support of the ideas set out in the report on which this presentation is based. The Library Committee acknowledged that lack of scientific knowledge on the part of the librarian was a problem, and to help overcome this, agreed to fill out Summaries of Research forms when they embarked upon new areas of research and to send these to the librarian.

The policy addressed the problem of new staff and students who had no formal introduction to the library, by making it the duty of the Human Resources Department to notify the librarian of the arrival of new staff. It would then become the duty of the librarian to offer a conducted tour of the library.

To overcome the problems arising from the lending arrangements, the policy states that as from 1 April 1994 the INP library would be for reference only. It was felt that writing this into the policy would provide the librarian with some authority. It was planned to hold an amnesty week in the library. During the amnesty week scientific staff and students will be asked to hand over all library materials which have been borrowed and would not be charged for overdue materials.

Lack of opportunity for professional development through training was seen as a problem by both the librarian and the consultant. It was therefore written into the policy that the Director should provide funding and permission for the librarian to attend appropriate courses.

A Library Guide was written by the librarian and arrangements have been made to have copies printed.

A visit was made to the library at ES POL and a useful contact with the librarian was set up. As a result of this meeting, a further meeting to discuss inter-library lending
arrangements, local training courses, and professional organisations was held with the head of Guayaquil Public Library Services.

**Stock and Routines**

References to various species identification manuals were supplied (Pacific species of fish, seabirds and plankton). The librarian was advised to make contact with publishers who supply scientific materials in Spanish.

Written instructions were given (at the request of the librarian) to provide guidance on compiling a bibliography and budget management and acquisitions.

Discussions were held regarding classification using Dewey Decimal Classification Version 20. Version 20 has been donated to the INP and although this is in English, it was suggested that the new subject headings be translated.

**Computing**

No real actions were taken since it was felt that the more fundamental problems need to be addressed first. However, the library management system CDS/ISIS was discussed and during a visit to CENDES, the INP librarian was able to see CDS/ISIS in operation. The librarian was advised to explore the possibility of installing CDS/ISIS which is supplied free by UNESCO.

No progress was made with ECUANET since the technology had not been installed.

**Staffing**

Staff training and guidance was given as described in Stock and Routines.

**Summary**

The problems of the INP library are not insurmountable. The library has the potential to operate as a small but efficient centre of information, meeting most of the needs of its users. However, such a transformation will only happen if there is a commitment by the librarian to make the changes, on by the Directorate to ensure that long-term funding is available.

There is great networking potential for the INP within Guayaquil. I was impressed by the standard of library provision at some of the larger organisations and by the progressive

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3 CENDES is a government agency for statistics in Guayaquil which supplies mainly technical information to clients. It has a reasonably well stocked library, and on-line access to various databases. It is a legal deposit library for FAO.
attitude of their librarians. The way forward for the INP library is to address its fundamental problems and move forward into the wider community.

Further Progress

During the year which followed the consultancy visit, I maintained contact with the project coordinator, and the following were achieved.

The project supplied funding for four journal titles (*Aquaculture, Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, ICES Journal of Marine Science, Journal of Fish Biology* and *ASFA on CD-ROM*). These subscriptions were renewed by the Institute, which took out a further subscription to *Current Contents Agricultural, Biological and Environmental Sciences* on CD-ROM.

The project supplied a CD-ROM reader to work with the new 486 PC and printer which the institute had bought. ASFA was installed on this and was reported to be working satisfactorily.