

Annual Report to CDNL 2005 – 2006

Name of Country : Trinidad and Tobago
Name of Library : National Library of Trinidad and Tobago
Name of Chief Executive : Patricia Zephyrine, Executive Director

National Library and Information System Authority

The National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) was established on September 10, 1998 with the mission to provide an international standard of service that delivers equitable access to information in all formats through highly capable and motivated staff, utilizing state-of-the-art technologies and facilities to support the developmental and recreational needs of Trinidad and Tobago. NALIS oversees the management of the National Library of Trinidad and Tobago, 23 public branch libraries, 640 primary and secondary school libraries, and 23 libraries in government ministries.

THE NEW NATIONAL LIBRARY

The new state-of-the-art ultra modern 7 storey library facility with easy access for the physically challenged is situated in the capital, Port of Spain. It is the administrative headquarters of NALIS' libraries and information service centers in Trinidad and Tobago. The building houses the following libraries – Children's, Young Adult, Adult and the Heritage Library with the Trinidad and Tobago Collection, Caribbeana and special local collections. It also houses an audiovisual cinema, media centre, seminar rooms, and an amphitheatre.

Services

For the Differently Abled

- For Blind and Visually Impaired Persons (VIP) – These services are available in the Children's, Adult and Heritage Libraries at the National Library Building. The assistive technology includes JAWS, voice synthesizers, screen magnifier, Braille Embosser, and Poet OCR. The assistive technology will be offered at 5 public libraries by the end of 2005.

The Library won the 2004 Prime Minister's Innovating for Service Excellence – the Social Inclusion Award, for its services to the VIPs.

- The Dragon Naturally Speaking software is available for those unable to use a mouse or manipulate a keyboard.
- A power driven scooter is available for use by the physically challenged.

Preservation and Conservation Centre (PAC)

- The Library is the PAC Regional Centre for the English-speaking Caribbean libraries. A preservation and conservation needs assessment of NALIS was conducted in February 2005 and the equipping of the PAC laboratory at the National Library should commence in late 2005.

Partnerships

- The Office of the Prime Minister, Social Services Delivery has opened a telecentre at the Princes Town Branch library. The objective is to enhance individual and community development through the use of information technology. Services include free access to the Internet and to information on Government programmes and services.
- The Adult Literacy Tutors Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ALTA) conduct literacy classes at several public branch libraries and at the National Library.
- Virtual Health Library (VHL)
NALIS in collaboration with Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and other health institutions is hosting the VHL server and participating in the development of the VHL to promote the universal and equitable access to health, scientific and technical information.

Electronic and Digital Library Services

- NALIS is participating in an UNESCO sponsored Ibero – American (Caribbean) Digital Library. A workshop facilitated by NALIS staff, will be held in Jamaica in July to train the English-speaking Caribbean librarians.
- NALIS has embarked on a pilot digitization project in which some of its rare heritage materials are to be digitized and made accessible from the website.

- NALIS, as a member of Caribbean Digital Collection for the Blind and Print Disabled (CDCBPD) Committee, is involved in a project to digitize local material for the blind and print disabled utilizing the DAISY format.

Events

- NALIS in conjunction with the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago (LATT) and University of the West Indies (UWI) hosted in May 2004 ACURIL Preconference on Disaster Preparedness and its annual conference, 'Mitigating the Consequences of Natural Disasters for Caribbean Libraries and Archives'.
- 10 books by local authors have been launched at the National Library from January – June 2005.