EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2009, Nghe An Public Library (NPL), in coordination with The Asia Foundation, The National Library of Vietnam, and the Ministry of Information and Communication, did a training needs assessment and conducted a training program: the pilot project “Improvement computer usage and public internet access ability in public library in Vietnam” funded by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The main target of this project was focusing on the training skills in IT for staffs libraries and Cultural Post Offices and peoples in threes provinces of Vietnam. But the female gender is limited to attend these courses, because of the gap between women and men. The women and girls still were not convinced in choosing to participate in this project.

Understanding of this situation, on 31 March 2014, through of the sharing information on Facebook’s Beyond Access Initiative, Nghe An Public Library obtained a notification about the calls for Internet Society’s Community Grants Programme. Nghe An Public Library decided to apply to the call and on 6th June, NPL got an Award for the project: “Training computer usage and Internet access for women and girls”. It was a big honour for Nghe An Public Library. The project compose two parts: i) a Training needs assessment including interviews with 96 persons and ii) a Training IT skills program to benefit 100 women and girls.

On June 15th Nghe An Public Library, in coordination with The Department of Culture, Sports & Tourism, had a meeting to establish a project team including:

1. Mr. Dao Tam Tinh – Director of NPL – Leader of project.
3. Dr. Duong Duy Tien – Dr. in IT, Deputer Director of NPL – Responsible of the training program, specifically the teacher and supporter of technology of the training program in districts libraries.

4. Mr. Nguyen Trong Luc – An engineer in IT, the teacher of the training program in NPL.

5. Mr. Nguyen Thai Van – An engineer in IT, assistant of the training.

6. Mr. Nguyen Anh Tuan, BA in library and information – supporter of technology.

7. Ms. Tran Thi Mai Huong – Accountant.

8. Ms. Phan Thi Huong – Responsible of activities for training.


These persons are the department heads of Nghe An Public Library. They also have many experiences in managing the training IT program from the pilot project. With their experiences and knowledge, the project has run smoothly, will finish successfully on time, and on the right target. They are responsible to also ensure that the project will be continued.

1. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam’s citizens have a great passion for reading, and public libraries in Vietnam are free for users, open for long hours and have relatively well-qualified personnel to support patrons. Some public libraries also provide training to interested readers. However, trainings in IT skills tend to focus only a small portion of the public and not specifically on women/girls. There is a noted lack of IT skills among women and girls who need more information in order to improve their lives.

In this context, Nghe An Public Library in cooperation with The Department of Culture, Sports & Tourism and other local libraries are implementing a project designed to strengthen Internet capabilities for the community. The project is funded by the Internet Society. The main objective is to conduct a training program through using computer and Internet for women and girls. To help them enhance the capacity of women and girls step by step using computer and internet as well as a useful service for jobs, the daily life of women and girls locally. Such a program will
improve the skills of women and girls in using computers and accessing the Internet. Favorable access to improved knowledge and skills and in the long term, to improve their well being.

The project is supporting the following activities:

- A comprehensive training needs assessment (TNA) conducted at some sites in Nghe An province. The TNA reviews the capacity of any services provided by NPL, which will serve as the basis for the design and content of the training program to enhance the capacity of NPL.

- Training and educational materials will be developed based on the results from the TNA and a review of existing training materials. The newly developed training will focus on service provision to users and will help staff of NPL to provide support and guidance for users including:
  + General assessment on services provided by NPL;
  + The current state of facilities, IT infrastructure;
  + Based on these general recommendations, developing a training plan to provide knowledge and skills relevant to the NPL’s capacities.

2. BACKGROUND

The rapid development of Internet technology and communication brought about significant changes in the world at the end of 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century. Its development was the first step in the establishment of a new social model: an IT society vary and require time – sensitive responses. Its development also makes information and data management task more difficult and challenging for global library systems in general, and Vietnamese library systems in particular. Thanks to the speedy advancement of technology and the Internet, the traditional library model is being transformed into a modern library model – one that provides new products and services. Today, library activities are linked through the use of computers, access to the Internet, online databases, and e-journals. The Internet has become an indispensable tool in the work of libraries.

The aim was to “Build and strengthen the use of computers and access the Internet for women/ girls in library system in Nghe An province”. From that, NPL can
build an electronic/digital library and help women coming to NPL each day to use computers and the Internet freely. From that, the women can improve their lives and we can also make evaluation for project and enhance the impact of project. After they complete one class, NPL gave them a library membership card. As a member of NPL, they can freely access all of our services such as reading and borrowing books, computers, Internet and other activities as training, storytelling, etc.

I. TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (TNA):

From July 1st to 10th 2014, the training needs assessment team included: i) Mrs. Nguyen Thi Tu Anh, vice director of NPL, with more 20 years of professional experiences in library, as in the training needs assessment. ii) Ms Ngo Thi Quynh Van, less than 10 years of experience, and a member of group of training needs assessment for the pilot project “Improvement computer usage and public internet access ability in public library in Vietnam” funded by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. iii) Ms Tran Thi Mai Huong, is accountant with more then 15 years of experiences in fief of library. iv) Ms Phan Thi Huong, is a head of administrative department, more than 10 years experiences. On the first day, the group prepared and discussed reasonable ways of approaching the needs assessment. It was agreed that the interview format would be based on the modified form that we used with The Asia Foundation in coordination with Mass local Organisations, conducted a field survey at all sites to assess the training needs at district and commune levels.

The training needs assessment (I) analyzed the effectiveness of services provided at the public library and defined training needs; and (II) included face to face interviews of users at local place in order to define the training needs and targets.

Survey Methodology and participation

In addition to collecting and researching available data, the NPL research team included a core group four staffs for their strong library science and information technology skills, and for their good relations with the local districts and communes.

The team spent two weeks working at the communes or districts conducting interviews with individuals and training library staff on interviewing skills. The team
was divided into two separate groups to fan out among different parts of city for interviews.

On the last day, the two small teams met together to share experience and agreed on the common findings of the survey results, as well as suggestions to further refine the questionnaires and interview sheets. In total, in-depth interviews were completed with 100 individuals in Nghe An province. The interviewers were categorized in term of class, gender, and age, such as government officers, retired officers, farmers, students, pupils, business owners, and housewives. Multidimensional information, as a result, was collected.

Findings
Some results of the training needs assessment were not unexpected, while others provided new and useful insights for the next project activity, which would focus on developing appropriate training materials and conducting training programs to strengthen the capacity of the public library institution. Below are the key findings of the TNA:

- 86% of all the interviewed users said they have heard about NPL and through of mass media 36%; information of NPL 25.5%; friends and colleagues 40.4%; passing by and see 25.5%; and 0.21% difficult to say. 10.6% said they had no idea of their existence

- When asked “How do you think about NPL?”, 45.7% of the interviewed said library was where they could study or do exercises; 48.9% though as a place to borrow and use multimedia; 56.3% knew that NPL was also a place to acquire information from the books & documents, while 28.7% was also place to access internet. Only 7.4% said it was difficult to them to say that.

- When asked “Where have you borrowed books/ magazines and used multimedia and use internet access services?”

+ For reading & borrowing: There was 19.1% of all the interviewed said they have never read or borrowed books/ magazines; at home was 39.3%; at other library was 39.3%; 24.4% at work (office/school); at friend’s home 21.2%; 11.7% for at Center for study; Café internet was 1% and other places were 10.6%.
+ For Internet: 27.6% of all the interviewed said they have never used Internet; 50% said they have used internet at home; 8.5% for other library; and 19.1% at work (office/ school); at friend’s home was 3.8%; for at Center for study was 5.6%; while only 2.8% for both of at cafe internet and other place.

- The reason why they haven’t used the services of NPL as Internet access, 15% all of interviewed said that they have had internet at home, 12.8% said because of the limit of speed Internet.

- When asked “Have you been used internet for what purposes in the past years?”, Purpose for work and study was 46.8%; contacting friends & families were 51%; and 67% for searching information on economics, social, health, culture, banking & related to your locales…; And we have been so surprise about 0% of the interviewed said no with access information from the central & local level; Only 13.8% have been used internet for download computer software; while 12.7% for business online.

- “If NPL has internet service, do you want to use?”, for this question there was 79.8% said “Yes” and 11.7% said “No” and the reason that they have given were they have been used internet at home and had no time.

- When asked “In the coming times, NPL will improve services provided including internet services (or improved existing internet service) can you suggest some solutions to attract users?”, there was 12.7% of all the interviewed said that we have to improve infrastructure: areas, arrangements of reading rooms, PCs, chairs & tables, equipment, books & documents (quantity & types…); 51% for IT infrastructures quality/ quality of Internet services; 23.4% for how service should be organized, opening hours, etc.; and 24.4% for librarians: quality & quantity (knowledge IT skill, services attitude when provide supports to users…).

- When asked “NPL will provides training IT skills & Internet access, what do you want to attend?”, 54.2% said that they wanted to follow the skills in basic IT; 19.1% of all the interviewed wanted to study about the searching information on directory; and 40.4% for using online database; 46.8% wanted learning about searching online information; 11.7% said it was no need; and only 4.2% said that it was difficult to say.
- When asked “How do you want to improve your internet and PC skills?”, 27.6% of all the interviewed said that they wanted improving by librarians; 48.9% for by via training courses; 12.7% wanted training by printed materials; just only 2.1% for by via e-documents at libraries; and 7.4% for online documents for library Website; for all above forms was 20.2%; 6.4% was for difficult to say.

**Recommendations**

Based on the TNA results, the research team proposes recommendations to improve the performance of NPL, and the Internet service provided, in particular:

- NPL should provide more rational and well organized space for Internet services to attract more users.

- Comprehensive training for the interviewed is required. Training should include: basic through advanced IT skills, and simple Internet access skills through more advanced skills in assessing and analyzing information needs to identify the most effective information strategies. Specifically, training needs to be more in – depth for those users without any computer skills at all.

- Provide supplementary training on services and communication skills, as well as training on appropriate professional guidance skills in order to strengthen capabilities in assisting on the use of library services, which will satisfy and attract more users.

- Local authorities, leadership at all levels, schools, and mass organizations also need to be trained and familiarized with the important role of NPL in providing public internet and computer access, in coordinating and promoting services, and in managing Internet usage in the localities for sustainability and social security.

**II. THE TRAINING PROGRAM**

1. **Background**

   Vinh City is a small city located south of Nghe An province with an area of 104.96 km² and a population of 480,000. As the center of economic, political of Nghe An province. On September 5, 2008, it was upgraded from Grade-II city to Grade-I city, the fifth Grade-I city of Vietnam after Hai Phong, Đà Nẵng, Can Tho and Huế. It
is the important city in the North Central Coastal region. The service sector comprises the largest part of Vinh's economy, with around 55% of the working population being employed in this area. This is followed by the industrial sector (around 30%) and the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors (around 15%). Vinh is an important transportation hub, having a key position on the route between the northern and southern parts of the country, and is also a notable port.

Con Cuong District is in South-central Nghe An. It is a mountainous area with 1744.51km², with 154,179 ha (88 percent of the total area) of forest. The district is populated is 68,000, by three main ethnic groups: Thai, Khin and Dan Lai. The poverty rate in Con Cuong is at 37 percent in 2010 with a decreasing trend. However, in some communes the rate remain as high as 42 percent.

After analyzing the data from the TNA, Mr. Duong Duy Tien – Dr. IT, Deputy Director of NPL designed the training program on based on the ability levels of participants. The content of materials composed three parts:

**Part I:** Introduction of information technology
- Hardware
- Operating system
- Application software
- Internet
- Printing
- Updated technology

**Part II:** Network administrator
- System computers access to community
- Operating system
- Computer networking
- Network security
- Application software
- Printing
- Updated technology

**Part III:** Internet
- Summary about Internet
The two first courses for girls about 8 to 20 year olds in Nghe An Public Library and in Con Cuong district library were organised, there were also a few small trade, staff government, and retirees who wanted to attend the course. There were 46 students from the schools around Vinh city and Con Cuong district. On television, we had an advertisement to encourage participants. These 46 participants were selected from the registration lists because of the limited availability of computer and Internet access on site. It means that they are in weak of IT skill in schools. Before the training, we had to check again the ability of our students. Firstly, mostly of the students could use a bit computer and Internet access when we checked about their knowledge on computer hardware and RAM they didn’t know about it. We assumed that they would know how to use Word or Excel to support their studies. But contrary, they had no experience in using it. From this situation, we could teach more on areas where the students were really weak. A big honour for NPL, a lot of persons came for registration and the students were very enthusiasm with the training program. They followed regularly everyday through all of course. Luu Thi Tra My, an 8 year old pupil in the first class at NPL said: “I am very happy to participate in this training, it’s useful for my studies. Before, I am very weak in it. I don’t know how to use Internet to do the test in there. But after the training, now I have an account user on website of violympic to do the test. If there are another course, I want to register for my maman. Thanks sincere to NPL, thanks to Internet Society.” This was really a very nice gift for us.

In this step, the course in NPL was organized from 27th August to 7th September. And in processing of training, we documented some challenges with the participants: i) with differences in age comes a difference in ability to acquire the content; and ii) some of participants were still passive while others were very active.

On 27th September started the Opening Ceremony, then the first class started with 26 students with girls aged 8 to 23 years old. There was also one retiree, one small business owner and one staff government. The course lasted 12 days, from 27th
September to 24\textsuperscript{th} September at NPL and the second started on 20\textsuperscript{th} September to 2\textsuperscript{nd} October with 20 participants from some communes of ConCuong district. Most had used a computer but they were not familiar with hard or software. When we taught them about it, all of them were very keen to the lesson. By applying research theory to practice, the pupils understood the content. For these two classes, we focused on Internet and Word, Excel. As pupils and students we introduced them to how to search information on useful websites about educations and jobs. We also taught them how to install software.

After the lessons, we evaluated them on test subjects such as hard and software components, using of Word and Excel, creating an account, etc. We also had them evaluation themselves, now having received the training. The evaluation results will be attached to the final report. All of the participants successfully passed the texts because they had the skills in using computer and Internet access.

In November 2014 we will continue the training modules for women in NPL and in Quy Hop district library, a mountainous district of Nghe An province.

Thanks you very much.