

Sisterhood Library Project: the Collaboration among Rangsit University Library with School Libraries and Community in Pathumthani Province, Thailand

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Abstract:

Rangsit University, one of the top private universities of Thailand, has emphasized to create and support the good and moral society development. The Goodwill Mission or in Thai “Dharmacratia Society Development Mission” is one of the strategic roadmaps. It is not only for corporate social responsibility but also to create good governance and accountability. The university aims to be reliable and dependable to all especially stakeholder. Rangsit University Library started the Sisterhood Library Project since 2010. With the purposes of professional & technical services and community networking, The Rangsit University Library has established the long term plan (2010-2015) following the roadmap of “The University’s Goodwill Mission”. The Sisterhood Library Project is one among those projects. The sisterhood’s concepts are implied from its initials SISTER as following: S-Social; I-Integration; S-Sharing; T-Technical Services; E-Educational; and R-Resources. The objectives of this project are to establish the cooperation with the school libraries, public libraries and communities around Rangsit University’s neighbourhood in Pathumthani province in order to support and share information resources and services. The variety of activities have been created and implemented. For the schools and school libraries, there are books, educational and sport equipment donations, children literature and storytelling program, workshops on computer and literacy skill, walk rally & tours, etc. The Library also does the professional supports on librarian-teacher training and workshop on information literacy skill and library automated system. One of the important purposes is to connect with neighbourhood communities. Although Pathumthani is much closed to Bangkok, the local community of Mon (ethnic group) is quite crowded and strong. As for local community networking, the Library has broadcasted the local radio program; organized Mon’s temple library; participated in community maintenance (temples, schools, public parks and areas) and offered a library membership program for villagers and community members.

Keywords: Rangsit University Library, Library cooperation, corporate social responsibility, academic library, school library, library and community networking, community relationship, library and social engagement

1. Introduction

1.1 Rangsit University

Rangsit University is one of the leading private universities in Thailand. The university was established in 1985. The main campus is located in the Lak-Hok sub-district of Pathumthani province. Currently there are total of 138 programs; 94 undergraduate programs for, 34

Master Degree programs, 1 Graduate Diploma and 9 Doctoral Degree programs. (Rangsit University, 2016)

Rangsit University has a vision of quality education for all. It emphasizes on the collective benefit of the whole and of continuously developing the organization to be more stable and to maintain high standards of quality.

“Rangsit University is firmly committed to producing highly skilled graduates who will be a benefit to both Thailand and the wider society where we live in. We expect our graduates not only to be fully equipped with up-to-date knowledge in their chosen fields, but also to be personally and socially adjusted, good and just people.” (Rangsit University, 2016)

The management of RSU, the academic workforce and all staff join in promoting RSU to achieve the ultimate goals of creating the best for society and a place for integrated learning for professional advancement and successful living which would further contribute towards national development and social well-being for all in the future.

1.2 Rangsit University Library

Rangsit University Library was established in 1985 at the same time with University Establishing Project. Two years after that, the expansion of the Library has been remarkable. The new library building was constructed in 1987 and finished in 1989. The new building occupies the total area of 9,300 squaremetres and can serve more than 2,000 users and contain 4,000,000 volumes approximately. At present, library collection consists more than 25 million pieces of books, periodicals, audiovisual materials and electronics resources. The materials cover the subject areas corresponding to the University's academic divisions and centers.

The library has the mission to give academic services to the users of the Rangsit University in order to enhance the quality in education and efficiency in teaching and research of the University.

With its philosophy to be a learning center for innovation, and its vision to be a digital learning center with excellent service, the Rangsit University Library set up the missions as following:

1. To provide and gather information resource covering all the courses and university disciplines.
2. To efficiently provide users with technologies.
3. To Support the development of research and innovation that are valuable to society.
4. To create the community and social services in lifelong learning promotion.
5. To create library partnership in order to share and use information resources and services together effectively. (Rangsit University Library, 2016)

2. The SISTERHOOD Project

2.1 Background

The initiative of The SISTERHOOD Project was brought up more than 10 years ago in 2002-2003 when Rangsit University Library was funded by Pathumthani Province in order to create the Bibliographical Databases on Pathumthani Province, Phase I-II (Malivan Praditteera, 2002-2003) and Mon (Ethnic group) Studies (Rattanaorn Gasosoth, 2003). The knowledge gained from those projects emphasized the scale and variety of communities of Pathumthani

Province. Pathumthani is not only one of the big industrial provinces but also the educational and unique one in term of population. With more than 20 higher educational and research institutions and hundreds of primary and secondary schools, Pathumthani becomes the educational city of Thailand beyond Bangkok Metropolis.

The Bibliographical Databases on Pathumthani and Mon Studies were widely distributed to universities, schools, and government offices in Pathumthani whereas the connection has been created. The Rangsit University Library has behaved as an agent helping researchers and educators in finding the information resources. Therefore the collaborations between the Rangsit University library and other libraries and institutions have been continuously established.

The other important factor that facilitated this collaborative initiation was the Rangsit University's Goodwill Mission or "Dharmacatic Society (in Thai สังคมธรรมาธิปไตย) creation Mission." This University strategic roadmap is not only for corporate social responsibility but also to develop good governance and accountability. The university aims to be reliable and dependable to all stakeholders (Rangsit University, 2010). With a strong believe that to create the best for the society is the Rangsit University's mission, the Library shall be part of it. Regarding to that goal, the SISTERHOOD Project has been approved and granted.

2.2 The Purpose of the Project

With the purposes of professional & technical services and community networking, Rangsit University Library has established the long term plan (2010-2015) following the roadmap of "The University's Goodwill Mission". The Sisterhood Library Project is one among those projects. The sisterhood's concepts are implied from its initials SISTER as following:

- S-Social;
- I-Integration;
- S-Sharing;
- T-Technical services;
- E-Educational;
- R-Resources

The objectives of this project are to establish the cooperation with the school libraries, public libraries and communities around Rangsit University's neighbourhood in Pathumthani province in order to support and share information resources and technical services. The better understanding and better image are identified as benefits from this project. Although the project was focused with the school libraries, the collaboration with university libraries in Pathumthani and other provinces were also included.

3. The SISTERHOOD's Plans and Activities

3.1 Strategies

With the aims to create the corporate social responsibility, good-will, and community connection, the Sisterhood Library Project has been implied by the following strategies:

- 1) Social and community engagement and integration by creating the connection and relationship among school libraries, local public libraries, community

libraries/learning centres, villagers and community members in Pathumthani Province and other areas

- 2) Sharing and supporting information and educational resources
- 3) Services offering to collaborative partners including professional development and technical training

3.2 Activities

Strategies	Activities
1. Social & Community Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community service events 2. Open house event 3. Library walk rally/Tour 4. Smile library radio program
2. Sharing & supporting information and educational resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Book and educational resource donations 2. Book exchanges 3. Interlibrary loan service
3. Services & Professional and Technical development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External Membership Program 2. School librarian training 3. School teacher training

Examples of Project Activities



Figure 1. Community service events – Organizing and cataloguing books for North Saladeang Temple where acts as a Mon’s community library



Figure 2. Library Open House for Pathumthani School Students



Figure 3. Activities for Villagers, Reading Promotion for School Students



Figure 4. School students walk rally to the Library



Figure 5. Smile Library Radio Program on FM 97.25 MHz



Figure 6. Book Donations to School libraries and community libraries



Figure 7. Librarians and Teachers' Trainings

4. Project Evaluation and Conclusion

The SISTERHOOD Project has been implemented during 2010-2015 with more than 50 activities. The activities emphasized on the 2 target groups: 1) villagers and community in Pathumthani; and 2) schools and their libraries and public libraries in Pathumthani. There were 20 schools, 12 school libraries, 5 community and public libraries, 10 academic libraries and more than 500 villagers engaging the activities. The results of the project have created the value-added perception of traditional library services.

Firstly, the villagers and other neighbourhood members recognized the Rangsit University Library as a place where providing life-long learning resources as far as a common for community events. The villagers who are familiar with library services also bring their family members to the library. These can be identified from the increasing number of non-membership visits and usage statistics.

The very interesting result found the family sent their children to study in the University. Moreover, some present students revealed that they were familiar with the Rangsit University Library since being in their secondary schools because their schools had connection with and created learning activity with the Rangsit University Library.

Secondly, the collaborative activities among the other school and public libraries have been increased and tightly. Not only with Rangsit University but the schools and their libraries around Pathumthani Province jointed together for book donations, information resource exchanges and interlibrary loan practices. Rangsit University Library has connection with other academic libraries on an interlibrary loan service. Therefore the information resource exchange and interlibrary loan for SISTERHOOD Project has been widely established.

All year round Rangsit University Library worked together with the schools creating the student learning activities such as Reading Promotion, Library Walk Rally and Tours. Additionally, the programs for technical and professional development have brought librarians and teachers to the University Campus. These could create better understanding and image among those teachers who in the future could guide their students in selecting the college and university.

In conclusion, Rangsit University Library continues the SISTERHOOD Project in its strategic plan during 2016-2020. The project will expand its goal, scope, target groups and numbers of schools and libraries.

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