SPECIAL FOCUS

THE UNOG LIBRARY: A HUB FOR THE SHARING OF INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

“[T]he planning of the Library building is the result of the work of a committee of librarians from all over the world and represents the best thought that could be brought together ... Its potential effect on the international policy of the future could not be over estimated ... I do not think that any similar sum that you have ever spent is going to have a wider influence.”

Raymond B. Fosdick, a close aide to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., following his visit to Geneva in 1933

Founded in 1919 by the League of Nations as a centre of global research and an instrument of international understanding, the UNOG Library today has three core functions: library services, records and archives management, and cultural activities.

Among the many resources of the Library are the primary sources it stores and manages, which include millions of pages of United Nations and League of Nations Archives.

Clients of the UNOG Library are diplomats from permanent missions, conference delegates, civil society representatives, accredited journalists, external researchers and United Nations staff members.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE UNOG LIBRARY OFFERS OVER ONE MILLION VOLUMES OF BOOKS, SERIALS AND UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENTS, AND PROVIDES ACCESS TO 6,000 ELECTRONIC JOURNALS AND 60 DATABASES WITH 400,000 RECORDS.
A SPACE THAT BRIDGES TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Renovation projects, begun in 2012 to support the innovation of library services, were continued in 2013, including a comprehensive new design solution for the periodicals reading room. As the ideal spot to read the 700 magazines and journals in paper format, the user can also access the UNOG Library’s electronic collections. The room now offers optimal research conditions and a rich environment for learning and collaboration.

In-person reference services for the League of Nations and United Nations Archives at Geneva have been consolidated in the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. League of Nations and United Nations Archives Reading Room. The room is now a “one-stop shop” for working on international relations and diplomacy. The rising popularity of this archival material is also reflected in the 103 per cent increase in reference questions received in 2013.

NEW COLLECTIONS

Serving as a repository hub, the UNOG Library houses several new collections. Parts of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Library were received in 2013. The donations of the private books and documents of Jozef Goldblat, an eminent authority on arms control and disarmament, and Václav Kostelecký, who worked in UNECE as special assistant to four Executive Secretaries, have also enriched the collections.

While the traditional print material remains an important asset, advances in technology have altered the way the library manages its collections. Electronic resources and resource-sharing methods, such as interlibrary loan and library consortia, relieve the costs of maintaining duplicate collections and enable the library to improve efficiency while providing the most up-to-date information.

AT THE FOREFRONT OF TECHNOLOGY IN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Many improvements in information technology were implemented during the year to enhance the library experience. Among them were the upgrading of hardware and software on the 47 public workstations and the merging of the two catalogue databases, creating one point of access for all non-United Nations print material acquired since the inception of the Library in 1919.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO E-RESOURCES
SPECIAL FOCUS

DIGITAL NEWS

Discover “Global Search” at http://unog.summon.serialssolutions.com: a single search box gives access to all information resources from the UNOG Library’s print collections, databases and online journals.

NEW: Book to e-book service: the Library now provides its users with digital copies of more than 1,000 books published prior to 1850 and maintained at the Library.

The main tool for researching the League of Nations Archives, the Répertoire Général, is now available online at: http://libraryresources.unog.ch/leagueofnationsarchives

About 180,000 pages of digitized United Nations documents were added to the Official Document System (ODS), many of them General Assembly documents in Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

IN THE SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIIP

The UNOG Library extended and intensified its partnerships for resource-sharing and improving services.

To facilitate information retrieval, it created new online resource guides in collaboration with United Nations system libraries (United Nations Headquarters, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and UNHCR) and subject-matter experts, such as the UNOG focal points for women. The popular resource guides are web-based knowledge portals, presenting up-to-date and comprehensive information on specific subjects (see graph).

RESOURCE GUIDES PAGE VIEWS BY TOPIC – http://libraryresources.unog.ch

The use of these guides has increased more than twofold this year (from 13,380 page views in 2012 to 34,045 in 2013), proving they are valuable gateways to key United Nations and non-United Nations information sources.

Supporting UNOG staff members with their information needs, training sessions on library services are now available to all UNOG newcomers. Personal Knowledge Management sessions follow to sharpen research efficiency. The programme offers customized coaching and research support for individuals and project teams, such as the development of a specialized research tool for UNIDIR staff.

Records management support activities focused in 2013 on the partnership with OHCHR. The UNOG Library assisted the research staff of the Commissions of Enquiry, evaluated and prepared records transfers from the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa and processed records from the office in Timor-Leste.
The UNOG Library collaborated with OHCHR, UNECE and the UNOG Medical Services Section to enable standard-compliant records management for paper and electronic records.

Publicizing these and other activities, resources and services, the Twitter and Facebook pages of the Library and Archives have more and more followers. Two of the most popular posts in 2013 were “The smell of knowledge”, relaying a comment by a Geneva Business School student about the good smell of the Library’s stacks, and “The peacocks photo album”, a photo story informing on how to access the UNOG Library.

Expanding its position as a hub for knowledge-sharing, the UNOG Library hosted and supported practitioners throughout the year. One outstanding example of this kind of cooperation and professional leadership was the annual meeting of the United Nations Library and Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (UN-LINKS), chaired by the UNOG Library. The 2013 meeting was co-hosted by the libraries of UNOG, ILO, the International Trade Centre and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The Library Events Room presented a sophisticated backdrop to this event which assembled librarians and information managers from 30 United Nations system and associated organizations.
ANNUAL REPORT 2013
SUPPORTING A WORLD IN TRANSFORMATION

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