



International Educational Support

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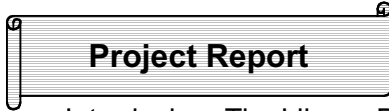
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Project Report

Information about recent project activities

Introducing The Library Project for the L. Asatiani Georgian State Children s Library in Tbilisi

Beginning this fiscal year, we initiated a new project in Georgia, the Children s Library Improvement Project, intended to support books written in Georgian and renovate two rooms in the L. Asatiani Georgian State Children Library, located in the capital Tbilisi.

For the last five years in Georgia, we have been engaged in activities centered on the distribution of Japanese language teaching materials. Although this library project is an initial experiment, it has been going smoothly, thanks to the relationship of trust that we have established in Georgia and the experience we acquired from our library projects in Thailand. We would now like to tell you the whole story of the details, the background, and the current status of the library project.

About the L. Asatiani Georgian State Children s Library

The L. Asatiani Georgian State Children s Library has been taking a central role in the field of children s reading activities in Georgia. To encourage children to read, the library has engaged in many activities across Georgia such as holding seminars for children s libraries and events for children, as well as the operation of a mobile library. The mobile library circulates books to 22 schools in Tbilisi. Not only children but also college students and adults use the mobile library, since there are no libraries nearby.

How the Project Began

Although the L. Asatiani Georgian State Children s Library has been playing an important role, the building itself had been neglected and left to deteriorate, and they were unable to purchase new Georgian books for a long time because support from the government was reduced after achieving independence from the former Soviet Union. As a result of this uncongenial reading environment, children lost interest in reading and became disinclined to go to the library in spite of the staff s great efforts to increase use of the library by children.

Rusudan Pirveli (known as Rusiko), a local staff member, visited Thailand last February to study library operations. Through her experiences she proposed this project to improve the situation in Georgia. She noticed the zeal of the library staff when she met with them, and thought that improving the reading environment could increase children s interest in reading so that more children would use the library. Thus the project was designed last autumn.

Project Activities

In this project, after renovating the two dilapidated bookrooms, we plan to purchase books and furniture such as book shelves and desks. Books will be provided not only for the bookrooms but also for the mobile library.

At this point the renovation of the bookrooms has been completed, and we are preparing to purchase books and furniture. 450 of the 1,600 books that have been ordered arrived already. The library staff is preparing to reopen the bookrooms. They are very pleased and excited with these

Voices from the Field

The director of the L. Asatiani Georgian State Children s Library spoke about the project as follows:

A wonderful thing happened in the history of our library in May of this year. Renovation of two bookrooms began with support from Nomad International and two Japanese foundations.

In the bookrooms located in the buildings in Didube and Digomi respectively, the ceilings and the floors were replaced and the walls were repainted in colors pleasing to children. The most important thing is that we purchased new books. The bookrooms that used to hold only old books are now filled with colorful encyclopedias, fairy tales, and literary works.

With these books and the new environment of the bookrooms, the library is now very suitable for meetings and seminars. We can also satisfy the children who speak to the librarian or who are interested in the world of books .

(Ms. Roza Argutinskaya, Director of the L. Asatiani Georgian State Children s Library)

The reading environment in the past was unaccommodating. Now we can imagine the smiling faces of the library staff and the happy children with books in their hands.

beautiful new books. The furniture and books will be installed during August, after which the bookrooms will be reopened. Also, we plan to continue the mobile library and hold events to give many children the opportunity to be exposed to books.

This autumn, we will send our staff to Georgia from Japan to audit the library project and to communicate with local children. Based on their reports, we will keep you informed about the condition of the library, and the response of the children after the project is completed.

* The Library Project for L. Asatiani Georgian State Children s Library in Tbilisi has been carried out with the support from The Peace Stone Foundation and The Japan International Cooperation System.

Pictures of Georgia are displayed on our homepage.

<http://nomad-int.org>

From the Project Site

Report on the social and educational situations of the regions with which we cooperate

Educational Conditions in Thailand

As in Japan, the educational system in Thailand is 6:3:3:4. In accordance with the New National Education Act passed in 1999, 9 years (3 years of junior high school in addition to 6 years of elementary school), are set as compulsory education: this has been enforced since the year 2002. According to the statistics in 2002, the percentage of school enrollment in elementary school is over 100%, and for junior high school it is 82% (*).

The percentage of students enrolled in junior high school has increased by 30% or more during the last 10 years. It seems that this growth is strongly related to the growth of industry since the end of the 1980s. Keeping an eye on economic growth, the government has built a large number of junior high schools as extensions to existing elementary schools around the country in order to train the necessary workers. Also, people want to work at factories with a guaranteed minimum wage and holidays. They have started seeking the junior high school diploma that is required for these jobs: this has stimulated people's motivation for education.

However, although junior high school is set as compulsory education, more than 20% of children are not able to go to junior high school. This is because even though school is constitutionally free of charge, lunch fees and the cost of commuting can weigh heavily upon some families. Also in mountain areas, many children do not advance to junior high school or dropout because there is no school within walking distance. This tendency is especially noticeable in low-income farming areas: there is a disparity in education between urban and rural areas. The question now is how to get rid of this disparity and make it possible for all children to complete their compulsory education.

* This data is based on the "Thailand Millennium Development Goals Report 2004" (National Economic and Social Development Board/United Nations Development Programme. The percentage of school enrollment includes overage students due to late enrollment or class repetition.

Message from Local Staff: The Daily Life of Local Staff in Thailand

I visited Phitsanulok to study the operation of the mobile library. What I noticed during the meeting with participating schools is that teachers from other schools in the vicinity, outside of the participating schools, attended the meeting. They said that if they could observe our library activity and meeting, they would like to develop their own library activities for their own schools based on ours. The library activity has started to show signs of spreading to surrounding areas. I believe that such development would lead the activity to success in the true sense of the term.

(Bangkok: Yagi)

From the Office

Information from the executive office

Please Support Our Library Project = In Thailand, only 250 yen is needed to buy one book =

In Thailand, where we carry out library projects, many people demand our continuous support for the project. However, keeping up our activities has become difficult amid the current economic situation and limited funds from public entities.

The Thai government's library budget for small schools is as little as 3,500 yen annually, which does not allow schools to purchase interesting books for children. This year we are planning to send about 1,000 books to eleven schools in order to improve the situation. However, under the current situation, our funds are limited.

We suppose you yourself might have had the experience that a book you read in your childhood gave you some inspiration for the future. In order to let Thai children share such experiences, we ask for your kind cooperation. We accept gladly donations from units of 1,000 yen.

<Account transfer information>

1 Postal Transfer, account number: 00100-2-14174

Account holder: Nomad International

1 Mizuho Bank, Shibuya Branch,

Account number: 3507509

Account holder: Nomad International

*Please write your name, address, and a note stating it was a donation to the library project. If you transfer into Mizuho Bank, please notify us by E-mail, Fax, or postal mail.

Notes from the Staff

• There has been strange weather such as heavy rain and heat waves in Japan. In Thailand they also had heavy rains, and it caused floods. I hope that the damage from the floods remains at a minimum. (Fukatsu)

• We have finally started the project in Georgia. Although Georgia may not yet be a familiar country to Japanese people, we plan to tell you more about it. Please look forward to it! (Tajima)

• How are you spending this summer? I am quite exhausted because of the summer heat. Our new pamphlet and homepage are to be introduced soon. (Ito)

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