

Newsletter No. 57 (January 2011)**Report on a Visit to Libraries in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, July 2010****Aline Scott-Maxwell****Senior Asian Studies Librarian
Monash University Library**

University libraries in Australia and many other countries are preoccupied with such matters as juggling competing space requirements of users versus books, responding to ongoing rapid changes of the electronic age, and facilitating user access to material from massive print and electronic collections. But in Indonesia, academic libraries face different sets of problems, for example, finding the funds to provide A-C climate-controlled conditions for book-stock, devising innovative ways of retrieving books borrowed on 'permanent loan' by staff, or encountering an ancient Hindu temple when digging foundations for a new library building!

I gained a better idea of these and other challenges in July when I was in Yogyakarta as a participant in a workshop on Cultural Performance in Indonesia, and I took the opportunity to visit four university libraries, as well as the 'city library' and a village community library. Yogyakarta is a city of around half a million people in the heartland of Central Java, located on the rich volcanic plains immediately to the south of a massive and spectacular active volcano, Mount Merapi, that recently exploded into life. As well as being a major centre for Javanese culture, ancient and modern, Yogyakarta is also a centre of education, with more than 100 higher education institutions, including 22 universities, that attract students from throughout Indonesia.

Mostly, the university libraries I saw were not particularly modernised or well-resourced by our Australian standards. Library buildings are fairly spacious but conventionally laid out, with separate rooms dedicated to lending collections (for second copies only), non-circulating collections, serials, theses, etc. They all provided computers for students but in very small numbers, although wireless was widely available and promotes laptop use. Collections and book budgets are generally small. For example, one university of over 20,000 students had a collection that was probably not much bigger than Monash University's Berwick campus library, and a book budget equivalent to under A\$50,000 p.a. Libraries rely substantially on donations. They also rely heavily on their students' theses as core research resources and these are allocated a large amount of floor space. All had online catalogues, but the cost of subscription databases is prohibitive and the Ministry of Education provides all Indonesian university libraries with access to Proquest, EBSCO and Gale. Staffing costs are low, on the other hand, but library staff tend to be

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concentrated in technical areas. Indonesian libraries are not strongly service-oriented.

Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) is the second largest and most prestigious university in Indonesia. I had meetings with the head of the library system, Mr Ida Priyanto, and his staff, and also met the Rektor (Vice-Chancellor). Like most other Indonesian universities, the library is highly decentralised with a multitude of small faculty and study centre libraries. UGM library is proud of its special collections (called 'corners') in dedicated spaces with sponsorship provided by the World Bank or the Ford Foundation. These include the American Corner, the Nation-Building Corner and the World Bank Indonesia Development Information Service. The much more limited library of the adjacent Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (State University of Yogyakarta) does not have the benefit of the sponsorship that UGM is able to attract.



Caption: Librarian Safirotu Khoir, in front of the Perpustakaan (Academic Resource Center) of Universitas Gadjah Mada

The library of the Catholic university, Universitas Sanata Dharma (USD), is regarded as one of the best in Yogyakarta. Besides its general collections, it holds some important special collections, including the former library of the renowned Dutch scholar of Old Javanese and former Yogyakarta resident, P.J. Zoetmulder. USD library is regarded as a leader in librarianship and provides training to librarians from other institutions. From a customer-focus perspective, I was particularly interested in the hand-written feedback notices in the library's stairwell and the

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user of the month profile.



Caption: 'User of the month' profile in the Universitas Sanata Dharma library stairwell. The 'info perpustakaan' [library info] on the right lists forthcoming librarianship training sessions.

Universitas Islam Indonesia(UII) is an Islamic university and the oldest private university in Indonesia. Situated on the northern edge of the city where urban growth meets padi fields and the slightly cooler air of the lowest elevation of the volcano. My visit was facilitated by Anita Dewi, a lecturer at UII who is currently a PhD student at Monash and also a casual employee in Monash Library's Asian Studies Research Collection. On my arrival, I was asked to give a presentation to the librarians and university administrators and this was followed by many questions and a guided tour. A hot topic for library staff was the 8th century Hindu temple discovered while digging foundations for their new library building. The library will now showcase its new cultural asset which, appropriately, includes a statue of the elephant god Ganesha, the god of learning. That this Hindu god would be celebrated by an Islamic university was not an issue.

The City library (Perpustakaan Kota), housed in an old Dutch building, was similar to our public libraries but on a very small scale, partly due to space limitations. It included a wireless hot spot area outside and activities for children. A 'book bank' at the door, for people to donate books, underlined problems with book acquisitions. Most of these donations are distributed to small

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libraries in Yogyakarta's kampung (urban communities), for which the City Library provides support.



Caption: The Bank Buku (book bank for donations) in front of the Perpustakaan Kota (City Library). It invites people to deposit books in the slot.

Lastly, I visited a community library established in mBrosot, a village in the Bantul area south of Yogyakarta, by writer (and former Monash Library user) Hersri Setiawan as a facility for local villagers and especially children. Bays of books ranging from cookery books and childrens' books to Indonesian fiction and books on politics, sociology and culture, all organised by Dewey, were covered by plastic to protect them from the dust coming in from the dirt pathways outside the open, glassless, wooden-shuttered windows. A 'loans book' where borrowers noted their loans testified to the gratitude of the local community for such a wonderful resource. This community library is a member of an alternative library network in Yogyakarta and vicinity called Biblio, which

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promotes community literacy, knowledge creation and reading. Members of the network meet regularly to share information.