

Calimera Country Report

**Cultural Applications:
Local Institutions Mediating Electronic Resources**

Azerbaijan

Information on Public Libraries,
Local Museums and Archives



calimera

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Organisation

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Public Libraries

Azerbaijan is located on the coast of the Caspian Sea and occupies 86,6 sq. km, 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan is occupied by Armenia. As per January 2004 statistical data the total population of the country is 8,265.700, 51,5% out live in regions and 48,5% in cities. Currently, approximately 1 million of Azerbaijanis are refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) after fleeing or having been forced by Armenians from their homes between 1988 and 1993.

Azerbaijan was a part of the Russian Empire from the early 19th century to 1918. The first Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was established in 1918 and was occupied by the Soviet Army after 23 months of its existence. In 1991 Azerbaijan re- established its sovereignty.

Azerbaijan shares all the formidable problems of the former Soviet republics in making the transition from a command to a market economy, but its considerable energy resources brighten its long-term prospects. The Country has only recently begun making progress on economic reform, and old economic ties and structures are slowly being replaced. The main obstacle for continuing and stable development of Azerbaijan is Armenian occupation of Azerbaijan territories and outcomes of this conflict.

The windfall of oil revenues brings economic growth of the country, accordingly to major financial institutions such as IMF, EBRD and ADB the GDP of Azerbaijan will be tripled in coming three years. This economic growth indicator is one of the highest in the former Soviet Union countries.

Potentially, this positive economic development will impact on development of other areas, including libraries, museums and archives.

Library Network

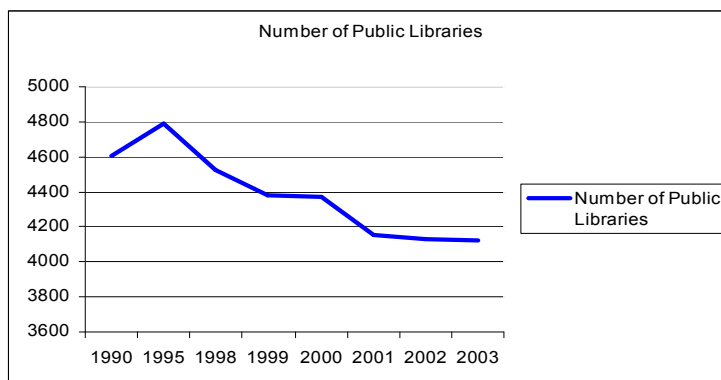
The Library system of Azerbaijan consists of different types of libraries, such as academic, public, and special, which belong to the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and other government and non-government institutions. As per 2003 statistical data there are 4,124 public libraries in Azerbaijan, 661 of them are located in cities. The libraries in Azerbaijan are facing the hardest time in their history, a number of them destroyed or occupied by Armenia territories and there is no information on the status and collection of these libraries.

The State Strategic Development Program of Culture in Azerbaijan (SSDP) for 2004-2007 outlines development of public libraries along other areas of the art and culture.

A number of international institutions provides various programs involving public libraries, such as Open Society Institute, The Eurasian Foundation, US Embassy in Baku, IREX.

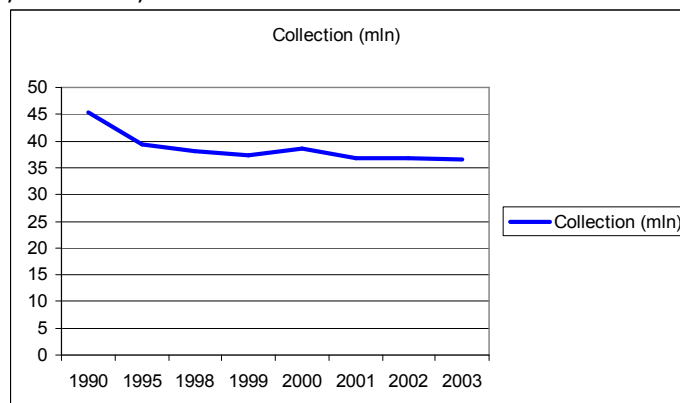
The system of public libraries can be considered as "traditional", which consists of a centralized network of city and regional libraries with their branches in villages. The Azerbaijan State Library after named M.F. Akhundov (National Library) serves as the methodological and coordination unit for regional public libraries. There are 3,989 regional public libraries serving over 1.2 mln. users.

The majority of public libraries due to budget constraints do not have up-to-date and current resources to serve their community, that is why in some places they were simply closed down. As per 2003 statistics, the number of public libraries decreased for the period of 1990- 2003 from 4,605 to 4,124.

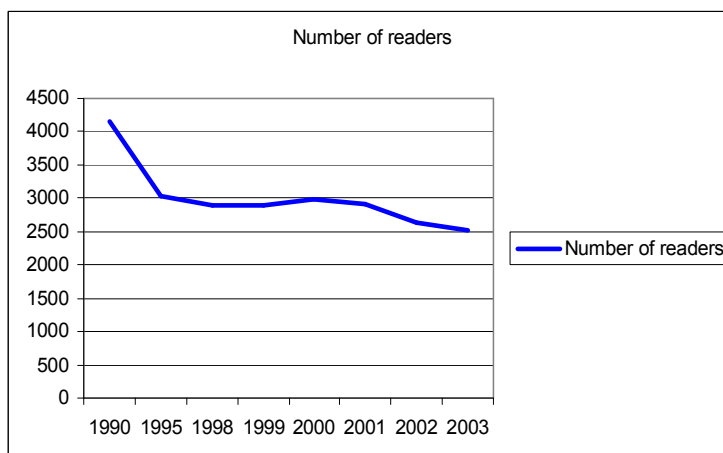


Collections

Due to scarcity of budget provided for collection development the majority of libraries have little to offer to their users. There is a centralized system of collection development, which mainly provides state published publications. In fact the budget of regional public libraries depends on regional executive bodies budget allocated to "culture", including museums, archives, theatres, and etc.



As the statistics show, there is poor collection affect on the number of users of public libraries: for the period of 1990-2003 the number of users decreased from 4,145 to 2,517.



In 2001 the Open Society Institute- Assistance Foundation Azerbaijan, launched a pilot project of the development of public libraries as community information centres, which has been expanded by the US Embassy to cover about 20 regions of Azerbaijan. Currently, it is the only program for public libraries that demonstrates their increasingly important role in the society.

In the "Culture and Art" chapter of "Poverty Reduction and the State Program on Economic Development 2003-2005" important measures for development of the infrastructures assisting in the expansion of libraries and museums are envisaged. According to this report, 1134.6 thousands US dollars has been allocated for modernizing the National Library, the Republic Library for the blind and the State Arts Museum

Jurisdiction Methodological Centers

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for the regional public libraries, wherein the budget is distributed through regional Executive Bodies. The program of the development of public libraries and up-to-date continuous education programs/trainings for library and information specialist has not been widely implemented yet.

The Azerbaijan State Library named after M.F. Akhundov carries out the responsibility of being the methodological center for regional public libraries.

Funding

Public libraries are funded from the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture and regional executive bodies. There are some alternative sources of funding which comes from grants, corporate and individual contributions. The library services are free of charge, but some of the libraries charge for using Xerox machines and printing.

Professional Development

The library staff consists of professionals with degrees in Library and Information Science and professionals with other related and none-related degrees. Since 1947 the Baku State University School of Library and Information Science had provided a degree program in Librarianship (<http://bsu-library.iatp.az/bsu-library>) The School of Library and Information Science provides two degree programs: Bachelor and Master. The Bachelor Program with two majors in Art and Book Science and Publishing, and Master Program with a major in Library Science and Bibliography.

There were three projects providing training for library and information specialists funded by the US Embassy in Baku, and Open Society Institute in Azerbaijan: Information Resource and Training Centre for Librarians, Azerbaijan State Library named after M. F. Akhundov training program for librarians and Khazar University Center for Continuing Education for Librarians and Information Specialists. Currently, there is no any training program provided for librarians. The Ministry of Culture within its Upgrading Center together with the Council of Europe and the UNESCO provides special training and retraining courses for professionals in Culture, including librarians and museum workers.

There are two library associations in the country:

**The Azerbaijan Library Development Association (<http://www.azla.aznet.org>),
and
Azerbaijan Library Society**

Museums

Museum network

At the beginning of 2004 Azerbaijan had 159 museums and 30 picture galleries. Of these, 150 museums (including 21 branches) operate under the Ministry of Culture, and 4 under the National Academy of Sciences, and other government institutions.

By type, these museums break down as follows:

Museums 01/01/2004

Memorial museums	33
Historical and local museums	79
Art museums	38
Other	9
TOTAL	159

In the years since independence, a lot of attention has been poured on the museums by the government, mainly as a way of weaving and reinforcing national identity.

Collections

As per statistics 2003, the collections in the largest museums of Azerbaijan held over 1,650 million cultural assets including such museum exhibits as The national museum, The State Museum of the Arts, The State Carpets and Applied Arts Museum, The State Historical Museum, The Shirvanshakh Palace Complex, The State Theatrical Museum, The State Museum of Musical Culture, The State Literary Museum.

According to their complexion the collections could be classified in two main groups, with percentages:

- **Culture history** (memorability, ethnography, history and others) -86%
- **Art** (fine arts, folk art, carpet) - 14%

The social, political and ideological changes of the nineties also led to changes in museum activity: some museums were renamed, some museums devoted to various Soviet statesmen, such as the museums of Lenin, Phioletov, Kirov, etc., were closed down. In spite of the problems raised by the transition, the network is still growing. In the last decade 21 new museums have been opened.

Azerbaijan has great potential for the development of tourism industry - ancient cities, castles, palaces, mausoleums, mosques, forts, and caravan-sarays. Cultural tourism centres development is one of the priorities of the the State Strategic Development Program of Culture in Azerbaijan (SSDP) for 2004-2007

One of the important museum institutions is the International Council of Museums (ICOM), a National Committee was established in Azerbaijan in 1992, and has since played an active part in the life of the museum community.

Concerning the fate of museums and museum collections in the territories occupied by Armenia, the Ministry of Culture and the ICOM National Committee have repeatedly urged UNESCO to consider the status of museums. Two fact-finding missions were sent to Azerbaijan in 1994 and 1995, but no progress has been made on this matter.

Pursuant to the state programs on preventing disability and rehabilitation, the executive bodies have developed and carried out the system of measures in the framework of their authority in the field of the museums. Thus, the decree guarantying the free entrance to museums for disabled people has been issued.

As a whole, museums in Azerbaijan have serious problems in their development. Most museums have poor technical facilities, and lack temperature and humidity control, air conditioning and special lighting; many of them don't have security and fire emergency systems. They have no transport vehicles, and rarely have access to modern packaging materials. Their storerooms are often overcrowded, and they suffer from lack of equipment. Not all museums produce their own publications and promotional materials. Common problem for all museums is restoration and conservation of exhibits.

The medical-social aid can be supplied by the institutions of state and non-state healthcare systems, as well as by the social security systems for museums. Augmentation in 20% is intended for the employees of two institutions - the Scientific-reconstruction centre of museum wealth and memorial things and the State carpet and applied art museum attached to the Ministry of Culture where working conditions are considered as harmful and difficult.

Activity

The activities focused on exhibit organization increased slightly, but the main museum activity's indicators are getting better than the public libraries.

According to statistics of 2003, in Azerbaijan number of organized exhibits for the period of 1990-2003 increased by 9.3%.

Recently, new initiatives have been launched in the following country museums: The Museum of Musical Culture setting up a unique twelve-player ensemble, performing on reconstructed medieval instruments; the exhibits from the State Museum of Carpet and Applied Art's collections have been demonstrated in more than 50 countries; Azerbaijan State Museum Centre and "Qiz Qalasi" Gallery were the main venues of exhibitions and video-shows. "Watching Movement"- video art exhibition, etc.

Commemorative and other exhibits are mounted free of charge in galleries under the Ministry of Culture –28 galleries - 26 for pictures, and 2 for other exhibits, and 25 galleries in regional centres like Ganja, Shamakhi and Lenkoran.

Conservation is one of the most important directions of the museums. All the items in the National museum collection are recorded in standard inventories, which are kept by each museum. A total of 1,151,000 items have been registered. Currently, there is not a museum database. The range of services they provide (expert reports on works of art, souvenir sales, etc.) is expanding.

Private-sector services are also gathering momentum. New galleries, souvenir shops, design offices, etc. are springing up. Above all, such traditionally public aspects of culture as heritage conservation are facing "competition" from private museums.

The Museum of Miniature Book is the first private one which was officially registered in 2000. The collection of the museum (4000 mini books from 47 countries of the world) is well-known not only in the republic, but world-wide.

Museums can solve some of their problems by attracting donors. As a whole, this assistance is not significant and cannot make a positive affect on common development of museums.

Many projects have been accomplished, such as "Museums of Baku - Museum Centre "by ICON-Azerbaijan, "Project of Support of Cultural Heritage", "New Development Program" (2003).

Conservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage

One of the major priorities of the cultural policy in Azerbaijan is conservation and promotion of Cultural Heritage. Azerbaijan co-operates closely with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, and Baku's historic centre, with the Shirvanshakh Palace and the Maiden's Tower included on the World Heritage List in 2000.

Restoration and conservation works are mainly funded by the government, budget of local authorities and donations of individuals, foreign and international organizations.

In 1999 between the Government of Azerbaijan and the World Bank signed a long-term Credit agreement for reconstruction cultural heritage on the territory of the complex Shirvanshakhs' Palace (XIV-XV centuries).

Azerbaijani specialists in the field of preservation and restoration of historical and cultural monuments systematically participate on international conferences and sessions, conducted by UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICROM and other organizations.

One of the important latter trends is the intensification of the national ethical renaissance. In 2003 Azerbaijan mugam was included into the List of Masterpieces of the Oral Intangible Heritage of the humanity. In this regard UNESCO in cooperation with Azerbaijan is developing the Action Plan of protection and promotion of the mugam heritage for 2005- 2007.

One of the most urgent requirements in protection of heritage is the introduction and application of new technologies in museums and restoration. Comparatively little progress made in this area as substantial funds are required both in terms of equipment and qualified experts.

Professional development

Fundamental researches, preparation of training and methodical means are developed in the high educational institutions, such as University of Art and Culture, the Academy of Arts, Baku State University, the University of Architecture and Construction, also in the institutions of the Ministry of Culture, such as Scientific-Methodical Centre on culture, the Republic Scientific-Methodical Centre on Museums.

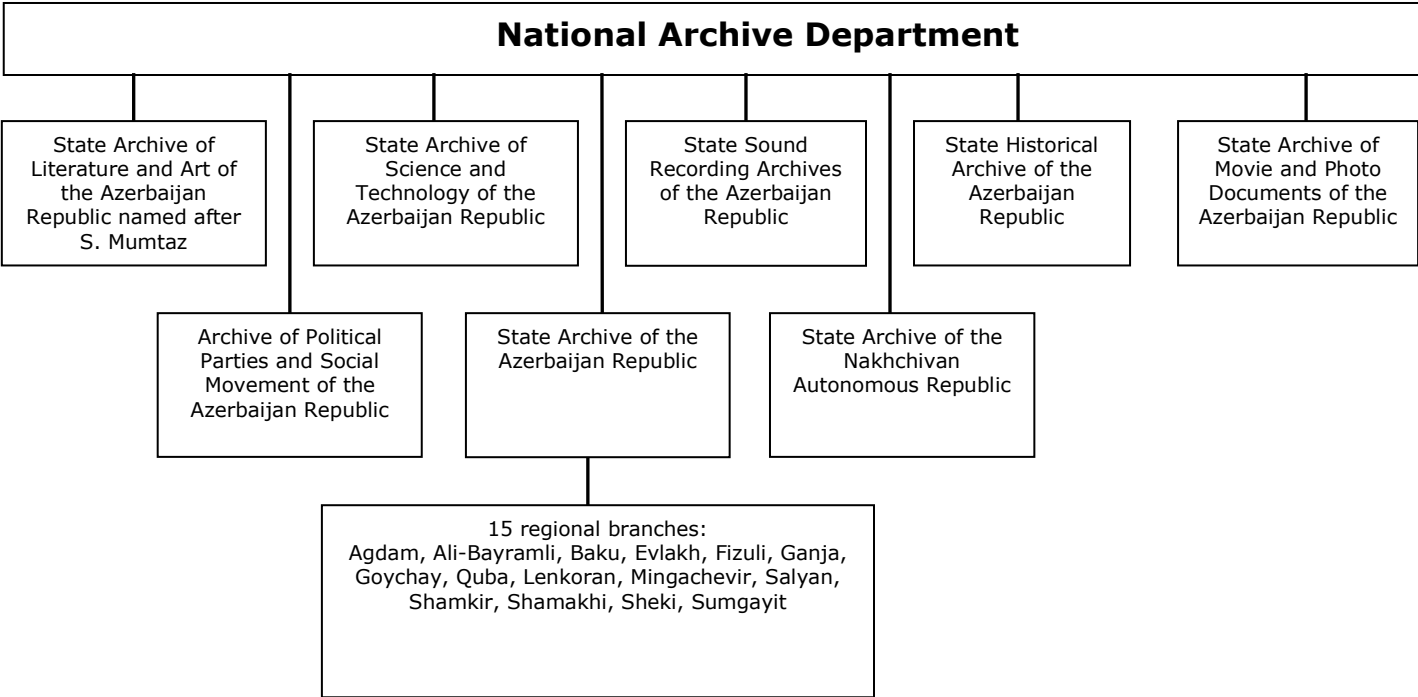
The State University of Art and Culture established the department of "Museum and Cultural Work" in 1991, and has started to provide courses on museum management and monument conservation.

Archives

The system of state archives in Azerbaijan is organized on a centralized basis.

The state archive services are comprised of the National Archive Department under Central Directorate of Archives at the Cabinet of Ministers of Azerbaijan Republic, 7 state archives, State archive of Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan and fifteen regional archives.

System of State Archives



Azerbaijan archives system is responsible for ensuring the preservation and access to the Azerbaijan Archival Fund in order to secure the lawful interests of citizens and state institutions, to grant provision of information to the public and to preserve national identity in cultural heritage entities. The activities of state and regional archives are funded mainly from the State budget.

Azerbaijan did not have any archives until the beginning of the 20th century, which is the main attribute of state administration. The state archive fund was established in 1920.

Despite origin, security place and property forms archive documents of Azerbaijan Republic are included into National Archive Fund. Archive funds of state property and archival documents compose the part of National archival fund of state. Archive funds and documents, which don't belong to the state, form the part of non-governmental National Archive Fund.

In 1993, the Government of the Azerbaijan set up the State Film Archive, allocating premises and budget. One of only two film archives in former Soviet countries is joined to the International Federation of Film Archives in 2000.

Policies and Strategic Activities

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The Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic states citizen's rights on freedom of thought and speech, freedom of information, including its gathering and dissemination. The State guarantees the freedom of mass media, art, scientific and other kinds of creative activities. (Article 47).

Public Libraries

The Law on Libraries was passed in 1999. The law sets principles of library system, defines financing and state regulations, and determines relations between libraries and international cooperation. The law states citizen's right to freely use libraries. It also stipulates provision of free depository copies of each printed item to designated libraries.

A Law on Copyright and Related Rights was introduced in 1996. Librarians as intermediaries should ensure that the rights of authors and users are met.

Other relevant legislation includes: The Law on Culture, The Law on Information, Informatization and Protection of Information, Law on Authors and Related to its Rights.

The Ministry of Culture defines the strategy of public library development. **The Ministry of Culture** (<http://www.culture.az>) is the institution authorized to regulate state administration of culture institutions, including public libraries in Azerbaijan.

There is a Department of Cultural Policy within Ministry of Culture defining strategic areas of development of culture in Azerbaijan, such as: National Profile on Cultural Policy of Azerbaijan at the web site (<http://www.culturalpolicies.net>), Culture industries in Azerbaijan: present situation and development prospects, Cultural pluralism in Azerbaijan, The State Strategic Development Program of Culture in Azerbaijan (SSDP) for 2004-2007, National Information and Communication Technologies Strategy for the Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2003 - 2012) and National Action Plan for ICT development for 2004-2012 (culture applications).

Nowadays, "the State Strategic Development Program of Culture in Azerbaijan (SSDP) for 2004-2007" has been developed by the Ministry of Culture. SSDP covers legislation, funding, scientific-methodological support, etc. in the field of library and museum system modernization.

Museums

Basic law **"On museums"** in Azerbaijan was adopted in March, 2000. It aims to facilitate the preservation and enlargement of museum collections established since 1919, improve museum activities, promotes the protection, conservation, development and enrichment of museum collections, and encourage the creation of new museums, including private ones.

The Constitution and the Culture Act both proclaim that every citizen has a duty to preserve the country's monumental heritage. More specifically, the Act on Conservation of Historic and Cultural Monuments regulates the listing, study, conservation and use of these monuments. In 1998 a special law **"On Preservation of historical and cultural monuments"** was adopted.

The rules on conservation based on relevant international conventions – the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954), the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972), the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Paris, 1972) – and of recommendations and other texts adopted by UNESCO and other international organizations (ICOM, ICOMOS, ICCROM).

Big problems in the sphere of monuments' protection have been caused by lack of protecting system, although its necessity is underlined in the law. The Ministry of Culture deals with defining protecting monuments' zones, which is a very complicated issue due to local specific peculiarities.

Archives

Regulations, concerning management of records and archives, issued by Azerbaijan Archives Department, are obligatory for all public institutions.

Legal Basis is Azerbaijan Republic Law **"On National Archive Funds"** (1999). According to this law all juridical and physical individuals of Azerbaijan Republic have right to use documents stored in State Archive.

New requirements concerning the keeping and use of national archives, the need to determine the ownership status of state and non-state archives and documents, and the absence of any legal basis for management and use of this immense intellectual resource were the main inspiration behind the National Archives Act, which regulates all aspects of their compilation, preservation and use, and improves the social security position of archive workers.

Related EU documents:

- Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R (2000) to the Member States on the policy concerning the access to the archives. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers during the meeting No.717. July 13, 2000.
- Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec (2002)2 to the Member States concerning the access to the official documents. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers during the meeting No.784. February 21, 2002.
- Council of the European Union Resolution 2003/C 113/02 on Archives in the Member States. May 6, 2003.

Public Libraries

The State Statistics Committee provides yearly statistical data on public libraries. Since reestablishing independence the statistics of public libraries is diminishing, obviously, the occupation of territories by Armenia and situation in the country impact on the status of public libraries.

According to statistics (1/01/2004), almost all indicators of library activities fall down in comparison with 1990s, as mentioned above.

This tendency is characteristic to children libraries too. For 1990-2003 number of children libraries decreased in 8, 2% and readers – in 10,1%

In fact 1/3 of public libraries buildings have bad technical conditions.

The main indicators of public libraries activities in Azerbaijan. 01/01/2004

Libraries	Urban libraries	Rural libraries	Total
NUMBER OF LIBRARIES	661	3463	4124
Collection mln. Copies	18,3	18,2	36,5
Readers mln. Persons	1,3	1,2	2,5
Loans mln. Copies	21,6	23,3	44.9
Loans per reader	17	19	18
Staff	3867	3867	8047
Technical conditions of public libraries buildings			
need capital repair	189	952	1141
being in emergency	7	48	55

The allocations from the state budget for culture is 2,5% of the state budget (for 2003 it comes to approximately 1,3 billion US dollars.)

In the country the high percentage of centralised expenditure went on four libraries and fifteen museums of national importance, subsidies to restoration of the cultural monuments, creation of new monument, other cultural organizations and events.

It is up to higher officials to approve or turn down library budget.

Varying from library to library, 64% to 70 % goes to salaries and other social payments, and 18-28 % for maintaining. And only 7-12 % goes to collection development.

Having the very small budget allocated for acquisitions and the high price of books and resources, the majority of libraries cannot update their stocks. Poor material-technical base and staff shortages due to low wages are causing serious problems in libraries.

Museums

Some positive and negative tendencies are keeping museums activity under observation during 1990-2003. On the one hand, number of museums increased by 22%, number of articles of museum main funds - by 18%. On the contrary, numbers of visitors, number of lectures in the country museums and number organized excursions decreased accordingly to 2%, 44%, and 16%.

Museum in Azerbaijan are losing their attraction to the public, because they are slowly adapting themselves to new policy requirements, i.e. programs that would correspond to public needs. This happens in spite of the fact that many new museums have been opened in the last decades.

The country's museums employ a total of 2,297 people, of whom 963 are curators, scientific assistants and guides.

The most important statistical data reflecting the Azerbaijan museums activity indicators are as follows:

The main indicators of museums activities in Azerbaijan. 01/01/2004

Museums	No of museums	Number of main museums fund articles (thsd)	Visitors (thsd)	Staff
History	14	334	150	331
Memorial	33	82	176	348
Local lore	65	267	488	782
Art	38	202	265	544
Other	9	151	52	292
TOTAL	159	1036	1131	2297

At the beginning of 2004 , museums in Azerbaijan attracted more than 1,1 million individual and group visitors, 4,248 lectures given and 1,583 exhibitions mounted.

Total area of museums is 98 mln .sq.m. Allocated area for demonstration of exhibitions is up to 51% and for reserved collection 10,2%.

Above mentioned period number of employees increased in 31%, mainly by considerable growth of the specialists approximately in 1,8 times in 2003.

From total number of main museum funds restavration required only 8% and demonstrated during the year -18%.

Archives

At the beginning of the 2004 system of archives of Azerbaijan consists of 13,357 collections, including more than 8,4 mln. documents.

The largest archive of the country is the Archive of Political Parties and Social Movement of Republic of Azerbaijan, consisted 4,884 collections, but per number of documents the first place is taken by The Archive of State movie and photo documents of Republic of Azerbaijan.

Archives 01/01 04

#	Title of archive	Collection	Documents
1.	State Archive of Republic of Azerbaijan	1736	547438
2.	The Archive of political parties and social movement of Republic of Azerbaijan	4884	1120317
3.	State Historical Archive of Republic of Azerbaijan	756	244367
4.	Archive of State science and technology of Republic of Azerbaijan	149	173619
5.	The Archive of State movie and photo documents of Republic of Azerbaijan	20770	303527
6.	The State Archive of Voice recording of Republic of Azerbaijan		29712
7.	S.Mumtaz Archive of State literature and Art of Republic of Azerbaijan	695	88641
8.	State archive of Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan	741	260992
9.	Regional branches of State Archive of Republic of Azerbaijan	5134	941096
10	Total	34124	3448717

Information and Communication Technology in Local Institutions

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Public Libraries

Today, Information and Communication Technology along with electronic resources are the main components of library. There is still a lot to do to bridge digital divide in Azerbaijan. The majorities of public libraries do not have neither Information Communication Technologies nor provide access to electronic resources. There are several pilot projects of international institutions bringing technology and access to the Internet to public libraries covering about 20 out of 59 regions of Azerbaijan

One of the successful public libraries in regions is The Centralised Library System of Ganja (CLS) <http://ganjacomcenter.aznet.org>.

Library automation

In 2003 the Azerbaijan State Library after named M.F. Akhundov (National Library) acquired library software with the assistance of the US Embassy in Baku, Open Society Institute and the Eurasia Foundation. There is no integrated library system in the country. Yet there are academic and special libraries having their electronic catalogues, such as Khazar University (<http://www.khazar.org>) which is pilot of library automation in the country, Caucasus Research Resource Center- Azerbaijan (www.crrc.az), Library of The Azerbaijan Republic President's Administration (<http://www.arpiik.az>) and International School of Azerbaijan-TISA (<http://www.tisa.az>)

All automated libraries have been using various library standards, such as RUS MARC, UNIMARC, US MARC. There is no united standard adopted in the country.

Access to the Internet

Access to the Internet is provided mainly in academic, special and corporate libraries rather than public libraries. In 2000 Open Society Institute launched project of developing public libraries as Community Information Resource Centers, within this project 8 public libraries were provided with computers and Internet access (<http://www.aznet.org/ictprojects/cirrcs.html>). This project was administered by local NGO Madat with further involvement of 8 more public libraries with the support of other donors (<http://www.madad.net/001.html>). Currently, this project is expanded by the Regional Development Project of the US Embassy in Baku covering 20 regions in Azerbaijan. <http://www.rlic.org/az/index.php>

Specialized Library-Center on Information Technologies was opened in 2000 under of the Information Technologies Organization in Azerbaijan "Galacak Namina"

Users are charged for the Internet services in libraries where there is no budget to cover Internet expenses.

Electronic resources and services

In 2003 Azerbaijan Library and Information Consortium was established (<http://www.azlic.aznet.org>), providing access to electronic resources for all types of libraries in the country. Due to poor infrastructure of public libraries, there is no public library providing access to online full-text databases. Unfortunately, public libraries lag far behind in providing up-to-date services even in comparison with other libraries of the country. Due to budget constraints the majority of public libraries are in very poor condition.

Digitization

In 2003 the government of Azerbaijan adopted the National Communication Information Technologies Strategy for 2003-2012, which was developed with the assistance of UNDP. This strategy undertakes the development of ICTs in culture, including public libraries.

There are several digitization projects in Azerbaijan, mainly project of Gutenberg (<http://gutenberg.aznet.org/index.shtml>), Kitab.az (<http://www.kitab.az>), Azeribooks (<http://azeribooks.aznet.org/azeribooks/>), Virtual Library under Azer web portal <http://www.azerweb.com/en/lab.php>, National bibliography <http://natbibl.aznet.org/eng/main.shtml>, Childbook childbook.aznet.org, Musigi Dunyasi musbook.musigi-dunya.az

These projects were developed by National Library, academic and none-governmental organizations with the support of international donors.

Professional development

In 1999- 2002, the U.S. Embassy in Baku funded the Information Resources and Training Center for Librarians (IRTCL), which was very successful in training Azerbaijani librarians in modern techniques and in helping to start the process of automation of libraries in Azerbaijan. During this period, 1,058 librarians from 138 libraries have taken part in IRTCL training courses. Because no public library in Azerbaijan has electronic catalogues, in FY 2002 the IRTCL initiated, with the National Library of Azerbaijan, a joint program to establish OPAC of the National Library. This program will lay out the foundation for future automation projects throughout the Azerbaijan.

Museums

The most important aspects of the national ICT strategy related to the culture are: protect and popularize broadly people's historical, literary and cultural heritage including wide application of ICT in museums and archive work.

According to this policy certain steps in utilization of ICT were taken in Azerbaijan museums and archives. On the Internet, the main of Azerbaijan museums is represented by the website: <http://www.azerivista.com/artculture/museum/>

Some of the main museums and popular exhibitions have websites, such as The Azerbaijan State Museum of Arts (<http://www.azeriman.com/artmuseum/>),

Azerbaijan Music Museums (musicmuseum.aznet.org),

Arms and Armor collection of Azerbaijan History Museum (<http://members.fortunecity.com/shahink/arms.htm>),

Archeology collection of Azerbaijan History of Museum (<http://members.fortunecity.com/shahink/collect.htm>),

The State Museum of Musical Culture (<http://www.citisight.com/baku/musculture.html>),

The Shirvanshakh Complex (<http://www.azerivista.com/shirvanshah.html>),

Exhibition of the Modern Art (<http://www.colour.aznet.org>),

Ganja Decorative Center of Applied Art (<http://www.gdim.aznet.org>).

Recently was designed virtual museum- Museum of Miniature Book (<http://www.minibook.aznet.org>) and now have been implementing Virtual Carpet Museum.

There are some famous people museums web sites, such as Nariman Narimanov's museum (<http://www.narimanov.aznet.org>), Abdulla Shaig's Apartment Museum (<http://www.shaig.aznet.org>)

According to the State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Economic Development in Azerbaijan (SPPREDhttp://www.economy.gov.az/PRSP/Index_PRSP.htm) in 2003 was started work on improving the State Art Museum of Art. An electronic catalogue is being compiled as part of modernizing the museum.

Electronic information resources and services in museums are based on CD-ROMs services under support mainly of Open Society Institute and UNESCO.

Nowadays one of the main priorities is to create a centralised computer database, and increasing usage of resources of other museum over the Internet.

Archives

Azerbaijan state system of archives is needed adopting new technologies. There are no special programs on ICT implementation in country archives.

Now only one of the country archives - the State Sound Recording Archives of the Azerbaijan Republic is available through multimedia web-site the "Discography of Azerbaijan (1900-1941)" <http://diskografiya.musiqi-dunya.az>

The State Sound Recording Archives have more than 50,000 recordings related to Azerbaijan, including audio cassette tapes, CDs and videos.

State Archive of Movie and Photo Documents of the Azerbaijan Republic have been creating own database and provides electronic services for public users.

Outlook

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Public Libraries

Due to the aggression of Armenia, occupying 20% of Azerbaijan territory, development of the country is comparatively slow facing problems of about 1 million refugees, demolished infrastructure, weak system of enforcement laws and so on. Although, economic development of the country shows stable grows and based on IMF report GDP growth expects to triple in coming three years. Although, flow of oil revenues bring certain development of the country and government develops program of fair diffusion of benefits developing all areas of the country.

There are still problem with independent mass media, and Azerbaijan lags far behind in relation to international standards providing freedom of speech and expressions.

Private publishers are became fair players in publishing business, along with those owned by the state.

Azerbaijan integrates into Europe, develops market economy, promote democracy, and achieve European standards. These changes demand appropriate changes in the library development.

On the whole, Azerbaijan has an extensive network of libraries, which help to raise the general educational level, train their staff, and promote democracy, civil society and the rule of law. Radical improvements are also needed, however. They include the basic steps: providing fair budget to public libraries, allowing development of collections, setting up computers and Internet, and developing updated continuous training for librarians. These initial steps of development would revive public libraries and bring about its further development.

Museums

The perspective for museums development foresees the concrete measures to be taken to improve the condition of their infrastructures. They consist in preparing the development conception for museums, providing the museum funds and expositions with installations and equipments that will meet world standards and promote museums, computerizing the museum systems, establishing a network – state e-catalogue for protection of country museum funds, constructing new buildings to ensure the protection of art works, improving the professionalism of museum staff and services in the museums.

By focusing on all aspects of the country's cultural heritage and mounting exhibitions, which reflect and clarify its people's collective experience, museums can help to forge a sense of community, encourage the public to get involved, and promote a positive image of Azerbaijan.

In the near future improved conservation depends on such important factors as: reviewing monuments currently listed, and preparing a new, up-graded list matching international standards; completing registration of historic and cultural monuments; setting up a specialised conservation network; working out program of utilization of monuments which ensure their preservation and protection; developing a purposeful preservation and restoration plan.

Archives

Reposing on current situation in Azerbaijan system of the State Archive has selected the following problems and needs:

- Formation the national archival description systems to the highest international standards
- Automation of documents acquisition, maintenance, use and preservation in the state archives;
- Formation of archival information resources assisted by the unified exchange formats;
- Archival preservation of electronic records.
- Definition the provision of online access to computerised systems and information resources related to archival funds and documents
- Reparation, processing and presentation of archival materials in the Internet.