

'The Library of Alexandria'



The [new Alexandria Library](#) is already one of the Arab world's key drivers in the re-invigoration of its literature and learning. It works closely with the world's technology innovators and leading academic institutes including the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Library of Congress and the Wellcome Library. Its *Information for Africa* online programme helps researchers worldwide. It encompasses libraries for the arts and multimedia, the visually impaired, young people, rare books and maps as has one of the world's largest Francophone collections outside France. Museums cover antiquities, manuscripts and the history of science and permanent exhibitions show works by leading Egyptian intellectuals and artists, Arabic calligraphy, Arab-Muslim medieval instruments of astronomy and contemporary Egyptian art. Its conference centre with multi-lingual translation services can accommodate meetings of a thousand delegates. Its chamber orchestra performs regularly and it hosts visiting theatre groups and annual film festivals. In 2004, it coordinated the pan-Arab *Alexandria Declaration* (2004), the Arab world's most comprehensive statement on human rights.

SAFEGUARDING FRAGILE EGYPTIAN TREASURES THROUGH DIGITIZATION

The Centre for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage, CULTNAT, was set up in 2000 to document aspects of Egyptian cultural and natural heritage and document the tangible and the intangible including archaeology, architecture, manuscripts, music, folklore, caricature, plastic arts and natural resources. Massive amounts of data are digitally compiled and sorted, facilitating accessibility to data on CD-ROMs, books, guides and other printed publications. Training in preservation and documentation of cultural and natural heritage is also.

BRINGING THE WORLD TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The Alexandria Library's library for the blind and visually impaired is named after the great Egyptian writer Taha Hussein who was blind himself. Hussein greatly influencing cultural life in Egypt as well as the Arab world and was awarded the UN Prize in the Field of Human Rights in 1973. Utilising advanced concepts, the library enables users to access all its resources as well as the web.

PROJECTING FRANCOPHONIE, IN THE LIBRARY AND IN THE COMMUNITY

The City of Alexandria continues its strong tradition of francophonie, boasting primary and secondary schools for boys and girls and its francophone Université Senghor whilst the Institut Français a Alexandrie offers

a year-round programme of activities. The francophone collection of the Alexandria Library has now benefited through an exceptional gift from the Bibliothèque nationale de France, a collection of 500,000 French books published between 1996 and 2006 in different fields.

ALEXANDRIA, A VIBRANT CENTRE FOR HELLENISTIC COOPERATION

Since its founding by Alexander the Great, Alexandria was the cultural capital of the world, especially during the Ptolemaic period. The Hellenistic period –The Alexandria Centre for Hellenistic Studies is a collaboration between the BA, the Onassis Foundation, the Vardinoyannis Foundation and the University of Alexandria. It offers diplomas, Masters and Doctorates in Hellenistic studies in several disciplines.

DIGITISING ARABIC BOOKS BRINGS TRANSFORMATIONAL BENEFITS

The Alexandria Library's Universal Digital Library (UDL) project, initiated by Carnegie Mellon University, sets out to transfer books into digital format, working with other scanning centres to create a UDL. This will foster creativity and free access to human knowledge, especially in the Arabic speaking world. The Library is leading in scanning and digitizing 75,000 Arabic books and has now set up a database for the books, metadata and digitization status and set quality standards for scanning, processing, and OCR phases.

CULTURAMA: BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE



CULTURAMA, developed by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, comprises a huge 180° panoramic interactive computer screen of 10 metre diameter and nine separate flat screens arranged in a semi-circular shape and nine video projectors controlled by a single computer. The multi-media presentation of Egypt's heritage across 5000 years of history covers pharaonic, coptic and muslim heritage and its many data layers enable the presenter to access new detail instantaneously. Presentations can be arranged at the Egyptian Cultural Bureau.

BA OUTREACH PROGRAMMES IN CAIRO



The BA conducts many cultural programmes in the historic C18 Bayt Al-Sinnari, (Sennary House), in the historic neighbourhood of Sayeda Zeinab and once the home of a Sudani merchant. It is one of the principal cultural links between the cities of Alexandria and Cairo.

REVEALING THE RICH HISTORY OF ARAB MEDICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In cooperation with the Wellcome Library and King's College London Digital Humanities Department, the BA launched the Wellcome Arabic Manuscript Cataloguing Partnership (WAMCP) with a fund from JISC Islamic Studies Programme and the Wellcome Trust. Based on the Wellcome Library Arabic manuscript collection, this unique online resource includes well-known medical texts by famous practitioners such as Avicenna, Ibn al-Quff, and Ibn an-Nafis, lesser-known works by anonymous physicians and rare copies such as Averroes' commentaries on Avicenna's medical poetry.

NEW! RESEARCH METHODS LIBRARY OPENS FOR USE BY ALL AFRICA

The Serageldin Library holding one of the world's largest collections on research methods has recently opened. Visit it [here](#).

ALEXANDRIA, CRADLE OF ASTRONOMY



The planetarium, a popular attraction for schools and visitors, has now produced the first All-Sky production from the Arab and African worlds. *Alexandria, Cradle of Astronomy* revives the glory and civilisation of Alexandria in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It focuses on the contributions to science and astronomy of Hypatia, Hipparchus, Eratosthenes, Ptolemy and Theon. The 25 minute show encompasses 3D visualisation of the ancient library and the Museum, the Institute of the Muses. Duly impressed, the EU has agreed to support production of two more films by the Library's in-house planetarium team. We hope this presentation can feature in some of the UK's planetariums.

BA OUTREACH PROGRAMMES IN CAIRO THE BA SCIENCE SUPERCOURSE, WORLD'S LARGEST OPEN ACCESS NETWORK

The BA Science Supercourse, set up in 2002, enables scientists to network and empowers educators around the world through sharing scientific lectures online for free. The BA was the first mirror-site worldwide for the Global Health Network Supercourse project of the University of Pittsburgh WHO Collaborating Centre. There are now more than 200,000 lectures, providing a resource for teachers, professors, and other educators, all linked by the BA.

DEVELOPING NETWORKS OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGHOUT AFRICA AND BEYOND

Working with the Royal Tropical Institute of Amsterdam and the Elsevier Foundation, the Alexandria Library has set up the BA Information for Africa (BAIFA) which provides an information service for researchers and research institutions in African countries. Initially targeting 150 researchers in least developed & low-income countries', BAIFA will provide e-Resources and educational services and full access to the Elsevier's databases, Science Direct and Scopus.