SIPA Center to Assist in Transition To Independence for East Timor

By JAMES DEVITT

On May 20, East Timor exulted over its independence from Indonesia. But while the national celebration was a jubilation by Portugal followed by more than 20 years of occupation by Indonesia, it meant a great deal to celebrate, hard work lies ahead.

In the past 20 years, a fifth of the population has been killed, and in 1999, Indonesian troops destroyed 80 percent of East Timor's infrastructure. In addition, life expectancy is 57 years, more than half of the population is illiterate and nearly half live in poverty.

To help East Timor in its newly attained independence, Columbia's SIPA Center for International and Public Law (CICR) is administering a $885,000 grant intended to assist in bringing about a peaceful transition. The grant will fund local initiatives to improve understanding, political, confessional and educational developments, increase public access to information, and help to strengthen local communities in their capacity to realize common goals.

The grant comes from the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, on behalf of the World Bank, following a request from East Timor's President and Prime Minister. The goal of the program is to foster the development of the CICR, organization and administration of a center for the study of the activities of East Timorese non-governmental organizations and communities through sub-grants from project funds.

"Levels of local participation in the actual democratic development of the country are low and frustration with the slow pace of reconstruction, including the lack of broad East Timorese involvement in decision-making, is seen as the more urgent," said Andrea Bartoli, director of CICR, part of the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). "Long-term stability depends on the development of local communities." According to project organizers, work will be sensitive to local conditions while raising an understanding of the language and standards of the international community. A team of East Timorese facilitators will guide local communities through processes of public engagement, with the assistance of the SIPA and CICR, and attempt to bring the collective broker between the local and international communities.

This is intended to ensure that issues of concern to the East Timorese community are identified, recognized and addressed both locally and by the international community.

Implementation of the planning process began in the spring of 2002. It is particularly important now to focus on the future of the East Timorese people. "We must ensure that what happens in East Timor in the future can be sustained to promote and sustain communities," said Professor Marc Lévy, director of the International Research Unit of the University, and research scientist in the Department of Computer Science.

$825,000 from NEH supports Preservation of Special Collections

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded Columbia University more than $250,000 in preservation grants. The A$267,000 grant will enable the preservation of 240 three-dimensional stage models created by Joseph Urban for New York theaters between 1914-1933, including productions for the Ziegfeld Follies and the Metropolitan Opera. The fragile set models will be stabilized and reset so that they can be safely examined by researchers. Digital images of related stage design documents and drawings will be created and linked to the existing online finding aid as a part of the project. Janet Gertz, director of Columbia's Preservation Division, will oversee the project.

The NEH granted $122,401 for the Preservation OHLs, which will result in the preservation of almost 800 unique tape recordings and oral history interviews that encompass almost every aspect of post World War II American politics. Many interviews contain first hand testimony from those who played major roles in such crucial developments as the Cold War, the career of Richard Nixon, McCarthyism, and the early civil rights movement. The tapes, conducted in the 1950s and 1960s by the Columbia Oral History Research Office, were chosen from the Oral History Research Office collections of over 17,000 hours of interviews. The grant is directed by University Librarian Patricia Reniero.

$100,000 from "The New York Times" Neediest Cases Fund supports September 11 Response and Recovery Oral History Project

Columbia's Oral History Research Office (OHRO) was awarded $100,000 from the New York Times Neediest Fund to build upon its September 11th archives, which include four hundred oral history interviews for its September 11, 2001 Oral History Narrative and Memory Project. The new project, the 9/11 Response and Recovery Oral History Project, will focus on the response to 9/11 and the efforts of those who contributed to the recovery.

The funding will be used to conduct 40 new interviews with leaders in the fields of mental health, law, employment, education and philanthropy. An additional set of interviews will be conducted in family settings with people directly trauma-supported by proximity to the disaster or loss connected to the attacks. OHRO will also work with youth and adolescents in schools and after-school programs, using oral history to help define and interpret the experience of 9/11 and its aftermath and will develop an interviewers training program focusing on how to document trauma and publish the results.

The 9/11 Response and Recovery project is directed by Mary Marshall Clark, director of the OHRO. The September 11, 2001 Oral History Narrative and Memory Project was co-founded by Clark and Peter Bearman and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

CU Libraries Receive Several Major Grants to Support Activities

By LAUREN MARSHALL

Columbia University Libraries have received a range of grants to support a range of library activities, including research, preservation and the expansion of oral history archives. They include the following:

$12 Million from Mellon Foundation funds The Cliburn Project

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded Columbia University Libraries a $12.5 million grant to support a new Computational Linguistics for Metadata Building (CLiMB) project, which will bring together the most recent developments in natural language processing to make digital library collections, including images, easier to search.

The project is headed by Judit L. Klavans, director of the Center for Research on Information Access (CRIA), an interdisciplinary research unit of the University Libraries, and research scientist in the Department of Computer Science.

$325,000 from NEH supports Preservation of Special Collections

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded Columbia University more than $250,000 in preservation grants. The A$267,000 grant will enable the preservation of 240 three-dimensional stage models created by Joseph Urban for New York theaters between 1914-1933, including productions for the Ziegfeld Follies and the Metropolitan Opera. The fragile set models will be stabilized and reset so that they can be safely examined by researchers. Digital images of related stage design documents and drawings will be created and linked to the existing online finding aid as a part of the project. Janet Gertz, director of Columbia's Preservation Division, will oversee the project.

The NEH granted $122,401 for the Preservation OHLs, which will result in the preservation of almost 800 unique tape recordings and oral history interviews that encompass almost every aspect of post World War II American politics. Many interviews contain first hand testimony from those who played major roles in such crucial developments as the Cold War, the career of Richard Nixon, McCarthyism, and the early civil rights movement. The tapes, conducted in the 1950s and 1960s by the Columbia Oral History Research Office, were chosen from the Oral History Research Office collections of over 17,000 hours of interviews. The grant is directed by University Librarian Patricia Reniero.

$100,000 from "The New York Times" Neediest Cases Fund supports September 11 Response and Recovery Oral History Project

Columbia's Oral History Research Office (OHRO) was awarded $100,000 from the New York Times Neediest Fund to build upon its September 11th archives, which include four hundred oral history interviews for its September 11, 2001 Oral History Narrative and Memory Project. The new project, the 9/11 Response and Recovery Oral History Project, will focus on the response to 9/11 and the efforts of those who contributed to the recovery.

The funding will be used to conduct 40 new interviews with leaders in the fields of mental health, law, employment, education and philanthropy. An additional set of interviews will be conducted in family settings with people directly trauma-supported by proximity to the disaster or loss connected to the attacks. OHRO will also work with youth and adolescents in schools and after-school programs, using oral history to help define and interpret the experience of 9/11 and its aftermath and will develop an interviewers training program focusing on how to document trauma and publish the results.

The 9/11 Response and Recovery project is directed by Mary Marshall Clark, director of the OHRO. The September 11, 2001 Oral History Narrative and Memory Project was co-founded by Clark and Peter Bearman and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

PEOPLE

Political Science Professor Sharyn O'Halloran received a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to study how directing of legislative seats can affect the ability of minority groups to pass legislation at both the state and national levels. O'Halloran, also program director at Columbia's Institute for Social and Econom- ic Research and Policy, will study the period 1975-2000.

Sidney Pestyka, adjunct professor of pathology in the Molecular Genetics Department, will receive the National Medal of Technology, the nation's highest achievement for technology, in June in an award ceremony at the White House.

Melvin Mencher, professor emeritus at the Graduate School of Journalism, has been designated “Distinguished Educator for 2002” by the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Commu- nication for his contributions to journalism education. The ninth edition of Mencher’s “Newspaper Reporting and Writing,” its Silver Anniversary Edition, will be published this summer. Melcher taught at the School from 1963-1990.