Library Employees' Perspective of Capacity Building through Continuing Professional Development in the Republic of Maldives

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Due to many factors, particularly developments in technology, LIS professionals need to continuously refresh and upgrade their knowledge and skills through participation in continuing professional development (CPD) activities. The objective of this pilot study was to understand LIS employees' perceptions, motivation, assessment, and preference for participation in CPD programs. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were used. An online questionnaire was administered, and 49 responses were received which was adequate considering the small size of the country. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom with four LIS employees representing national, academic, and school libraries and with three other LIS professionals in the country. Findings revealed that only 30.7% of the respondents had participated in any CPD learning programs. It was also revealed that LIS employees in the Maldives had access to a very limited number of LIS-related CPD programs. The CPD programs offered by the National Library of Maldives's (NLM) were mainly targeted at new entrants to the profession as a majority of them were without any LIS qualification. As a result, appropriate training programs were lacking for supervisory and middle management employees across all types of libraries. Data analysis also revealed that the top three barriers to pursuing CPD programs were lack of suitable training programs, too costly to pay from personal funds, and lack of opportunities for career advancement. Three areas of potential improvement pertaining to LIS employees' engagement in CPD activities were identified. The findings are expected to provide some basic data for developing a CPD plan and strategies for the LIS sector in the Maldives.

Keywords: Continuing professional development, skills upgradation, training and development, career development, Maldives

Introduction

Technology is transforming our learning, work, and daily activities. It is also transforming, reshaping, and redefining libraries, as well as the identity of the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession. Staying relevant is key to survival and progress. The urgency to accelerate the transformation of libraries is even greater as the digitalization process is being set on fast-forward due to outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Staffing requisites to operationalize transformations in libraries are being managed either by adding new responsibilities to existing job functions or creating new job positions and through organizational restructuring (Choi & Rasmussen, 2009). The new roles and responsibilities imply new competencies, upskilling and reskilling to embrace change and stay relevant. It is about avoiding a career plateau, employability, and surviving in the job market. LIS schools have been making efforts to prepare a new breed of librarians with a

new skill set to meet new demands. However, the reality is that many LIS programs are challenged as implementing changes to curricula takes time, planning, and curriculum development expertise. In the intervening years the shelf-life of LIS degrees have been getting considerably shortened. Many universities have reduced their LIS graduate programs to 30 to 36 credit hours without considering that LIS education is usually available at the graduate level (Majid, 2018). Thus, without undergraduate education, LIS students need more time to acquire the desired knowledge and skills. Due to the limited stay in the program students can only develop basic or "hard skills" in their academic programs and need to acquire "soft skills" including behaviour, attitude, and management skills through other means.

The most viable solution to bridge the skills gap is to establish strong continuing professional development (CPD) programs to enable LIS employees to keep up-to-date with emerging trends in the profession. Such programs can be offered by employing institutions, professional associations, library vendors, international donor agencies, and even by LIS academic programs. The need for CPD programs in the South and South-East Asian regions is even more pressing and critical given that not all LIS schools have well-trained faculty, up-to-date curriculum, and requisite resources to provide the desired competencies to their students (Majid, 2018). It is, therefore, desirable to investigate the availability, adequacy, frequency, and quality of CPD programs accessible to LIS employees in these countries. A bibliometric analysis of research output on CPD of librarians revealed low productivity which may inhibit informed decision making for developing a skilled LIS workforce to meet the needs of 21st century users (Shonhe, 2020). According to the *IFLA Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development: Principles and Best Practices* (Varlejs, 2016) only limited research has focused on professional development in South and South-East Asia, and, in fact, no comprehensive study has been undertaken since 2004 to determine the volume, quality and effectiveness of CPD programs offered (Majid, 2004; Varlejs, 2016). Exceptions are the Maesaroh (2012) study of library staff development in Indonesian academic libraries and Hamid and Soroya (2017) and Rafiq, Jabeen, and Areef (2017), two studies conducted on continuing education for LIS professionals in Pakistan. The literature survey carried out for the *IFLA Guidelines for CPD* (Varlejs, 2016) reveals less than five citations relating to CPD for LIS employees in the South and South-East Asian Regions.

In January 2019, the first author initiated a study on "Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Academic Librarians in Selected Asian Countries" to be conducted

KEY POINTS:

- Only around 30% of the respondents had participated in any continuing professional development (CPD) programs, basically due to the limited number of such programs offered in the Maldives.

- Most of the available CPD programs were for new entrants to the profession whereas hardly any appropriate programs were available for supervisory and middle-level library employees.

- The top three barriers to pursuing CPD programs were lack of suitable training programs, non-availability of personal funds to participate in training, and lack of opportunities for career advancement.

in collaboration with local library associations/library schools. The study aims to obtain the perspectives of both LIS employees as well as LIS training providers.

The Republic of Maldives was selected as a suitable site for the pilot study for the following reasons: (a) limited research had been done on the LIS sector at a national level (Riyaz et al., 2012a; De Alwis, 2019; Hickok, 2019), and (b) the absence of any research on CPD for LIS employees. It was also considered useful to first collect and analyse data from a single country to test the appropriateness of the survey instrument before undertaking a comprehensive study involving multiple countries. However, one key modification made to the pilot study was to extend the study population to cover all types of libraries because the Maldives library landscape is made up of very few academic libraries but more school libraries.

This article reports selected significant findings of a pilot study conducted on the status of formal CPD activities available to LIS employees in the geographically-isolated and dispersed island nation of the Republic of Maldives.

Literature review

CPD: Definitions

Literature abounds with many connotations of continuing education (CE) and CPD relating to LIS employees. The American Library Association (ALA), defines continuing education as follows and underlines that CPD activities include both formal and informal learning situations (ALA, 1988):

> Planned learning experiences utilised by individuals following their preparatory education which facilitates entry into the [LIS] field [and comprises opportunities which are] both formal and informal learning situations, and need not be limited to library subjects or the offerings of information schools. (p.14)

The *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto* (1994), published almost two decades ago, states that "The librarian is an active intermediary between users and resources. Professional and continuing education of the librarian is indispensable to ensure adequate services" (p.61). The *IFLA Guidelines for CPD* (Varlejs, 2016) expands further: "The individual library and information professional is primarily responsible for pursuing ongoing learning that constantly improves knowledge and skills" (p.8). The two statements from IFLA demonstrate the critical association between the individual LIS employee's ethical responsibility, commitment, and motivation to undertake CPD continually to enhance professional competencies and behavioural skills for career success and the realization of organizational goals for service delivery. The statements also imply the availability of quality educational opportunities for LIS employees to engage in CPD.

CPD learning activities may be classified as formal or informal and structured or self-directed (Chan & Auster, 2005; Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014). Formal activities are centred on pre-defined guidelines and outcomes and are usually organized or managed in a rigorous way. Informal activities in comparison are more loosely organized and operate in an unofficial way. The digital environment has strengthened learning activities by facilitating the development and maintenance of personal learning networks (PLNs) (Cooke, 2012;

	Formal	Informal
Structured	Full education programs (e.g. diploma, certificate, etc.) Short courses Workshops or seminars Online learning modules	Community of practice Professional learning communities Mentoring
Self-directed	Mentoring/buddying Journal Clubs Publishing articles in the scholarly or professional literature Peer evaluation of teaching Delivering conference presentations or attending conferences Writing grant applications Participating in group funded projects Applying for teaching awards Staff development committees	Blogging Journal keeping Developing a teaching portfolio Reading the scholarly or professional literature "Following" relevant persons on Twitter Subscribing to blogs, RSS feeds, social sharing sites, etc.

Figure 1: Classification of CPD activities *(Source: Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014:179)*

Green, 2020; Moreillon, 2016). PLNs comprise formal (e.g., Podcasts, Online Book clubs/groups) and informal tools (e.g., Blogs, YouTube, RSS feeds) as well as social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and are built upon the theories of collective knowledge and communities of practice and customizable to an individual's work, research interests, and time constraints. They are also a means for continuous and affordable global learning and collaboration opportunities, especially in times of crises when physically attending formal CPD activities is not an option. See Figure 1 for a classification of CPD learning activities (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014).

Significance of CPD for LIS employees

The *IFLA Guidelines for CPD* (Varlejs, 2016) provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature and the Biennial IFLA Satellite meetings too have generated papers on many related aspects. However, according to the *IFLA Guidelines for CPD* (Varlejs, 2016), very little research has been conducted on professional development of the LIS sector and research on South and South-East Asia is limited to Majid (2004), Maesaroh (2012), Hamid and Soroya (2017), and Rafiq et al. (2017). The need for studies on CPD for the LIS sector is even greater in developing countries due to the lower standard of qualifications obtained as a first qualification for professional practice, the rapid rate of workplace change, the increasing trend for LIS employees to view their occupation as a career rather than a job (Maesaroh, 2012), and the need to close existing gaps between the unskilled and irrelevant workforce and the changing demands of the 21st century users (Shonhe, 2020).

Over the years the LIS profession has recognized the significance of CPD and the need for regular and planned upgrading at appropriate stages of career (Corcoran & McGuinness,

2014; Moonasar & Underwood, 2018). Majid (2004) affirms that CPD courses have the potential to assist LIS employees to close the gap between formal education and the needs of the workplace. Hence, participation in CPD is not considered an option, but a significant aspect of professional practice, a key driver to stay relevant and productive to fit into evolving jobs and critical for career advancement (Weingand, 1999; Broady-Preston & Cossham, 2011). It also helps in redefining the identity of the profession by expanding its boundaries (Fraser-Arnott, 2019).

The review reveals studies on CPD mainly from the perspective of academic library employees. These include LIS employees' perception of the value and interest in CPD activities (Adanu, 2007; Bury, 2010; Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Hornung, 2013; Machala & Horvat 2010; Tyrell, 2015) and willingness to take an individualized and self-directed approach to career-planning (Machala & Horvat, 2010). Competency-based training and development systems enable focused employee training on relevant behaviours and skills (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999, as cited in Chan, 2013, p. 10). LIS related lists of competencies not only emphasize occupational or job-specific skills but also general skills (Partridge & Hallam, 2004; Chan, 2013; Leong, Boonekamp & Woods, 2018). General/behavioural skills are personal or "soft skills" which are viewed as equally important by employers (Hallam & Ellard, 2015).

Motivators to attend CPD activities ranged from extrinsic to intrinsic benefits with former perceived to be more tangible and attainable than the latter (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Hornung, 2013; Machala & Horvat 2010; Moonasar & Underwood, 2018; Tyrell, 2015).

Literature includes many examples of barriers that inhibit individuals from pursuing CPD activities. Chan and Auster (2003) cite four types of barriers to participation in CPD which include situational, institutional, dispositional, and informational barriers (see Figure 2).

Today, due to technological advancements, LIS employees have the benefit of participating in a wider range of CPD learning opportunities from workplace or home. Some

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- Situational: Family commitments, lack of time, access to desired technology, and distance to training venues (Adanu, 2007; Chan & Auster, 2003; Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Maesaroh, 2012;);
- Institutional: Cost of registration, travel and subsistence (Bury, 2010; Moonasar & Underwood, 2018); budget constraints which limit employers from sending their staff to attend courses (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Cossham & Fields, 2007; Maesaroh, 2012); reluctance of management to allow staff time off from work due to possible impact on services (Moonasar & Underwood, 2018); lack of manager's support although the staff are keen to attend CPD activities (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Cossham & Fields, 2007); and, lack of rewards (Chan & Auster, 2003).
- Dispositional: Employees' low self-motivation and lack of interest in furthering their skills which employers perceive as waste of limited resources (Adanu, 2007; Varlejs, 2016); and
- Informational: Language limitations and a lack of knowledge of what is on offer (Maesaroh, 2012; Varlejs, 2016).

Figure 2: Barriers to participation in CPD

individuals prefer following CPD activities online as these facilitate learning at one's own time and pace and having reduced cost and other conveniences (Library Association of Ireland, 2017). In comparison, other studies suggest that the traditional face-to-face instruction is the most favoured mode for participating in CPD learning (Cossham & Fields, 2006; Lynn, Bose, & Boehmer, 2010).

These studies provide a contextual framework that can be applied to LIS employees' CPD activities in general. However, they do not address the unique challenges that LIS employees in small and isolated geographical environments such as the Maldives may face. Literature on LIS employees working in isolated and semi-rural settings reveal that they may face unique and even bigger challenges in participating in CPD opportunities (Kendrick, Leaver, & Tritt, 2013; Varlejs, 2016). In addition to common concerns elaborated in the previous section, these employees are also challenged with stagnant salaries, small staff teams, inadequate management infrastructure including time off to attend CPD, lack of access to relevant technologies, inability to pursue CPD activities due to the non-existence of local CPD opportunities, a sense of isolation, and employers' negative perceptions of the profession (Kendrick et al., 2013; Maesaroh, 2012; Varlejs, 2016; Wilkes & Ward, 2016). Although there are many quality online courses and webinars offered, these are often costly and/or scheduled at inconvenient times because of time difference; or, these webinars and the bigger CPD events are generally targeted at larger libraries with different needs (Wilkes & Ward, 2016). As such, some librarians do not have a desire to engage in CPD, and, if they do so, may have to bear a fair amount of their CPD costs (Maesaroh, 2012).

The review also brought to attention the responsibility of LIS professional bodies, LIS schools, and other agencies with vested interest in advancing the LIS profession. Majid (2004) propositions that the professional associations in the individual countries are the best sources for hosting and implementing CPD initiatives. It is, therefore, important for LIS professional bodies to work closely to plan and implement CPD initiatives that offer greater flexibility for employees to participate (Lamptey & Corletey, 2011; Moonasar & Underwood, 2018).

The Maldives LIS sector

Maldives is an archipelago of 26 atolls and 1,192 low-lying small coral islands of which 188 (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020) are inhabited by a population of less than 400,000. Malé, the Republic's capital serves as the country's resource hub. The adult population (age 15 years and above) has a high literacy rate of 97.74% for 2014 and a literate youth population (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015 & NBS, 2020). The official language of the country is Dhivehi and the medium of instruction at primary, secondary, and tertiary level of education is English.

In 2012 there were a total of 294 libraries including the National Library of Maldives (NLM) which also serves as a public library for the entire country; 220 school libraries, seven academic libraries and 13 special/research libraries (Shiham, 2012a). Initially school libraries in Malé were managed by untrained librarians and "there [were] no qualified or trained technical staff to handle the work . . . except young school leavers" (Maldives Library Association [MLA] Newsletter, 1987, p. 6). By the early 1990s many of these libraries

had employed at least one professional librarian recruited mainly from Sri Lanka (Islam, Riyaz & Shiuna, 2012; MLA Newsletter, 1990). In comparison, today each of these libraries is manned by two local staff to support morning and afternoon sessions in most of the better-resourced schools. The library staff reports to the school principal or an assigned teacher (Sameer, 2005). Discrepancies in resources and manpower exist between Malé and island libraries mainly owing to geographic dispersion coupled with limited LIS professionals (Gross & Riyaz, 2004). The school libraries in the atolls may be limited to a single book cupboard, a few shelves of books or unorganized collections overseen by one staff, trained or untrained or in some cases left unmanned (Hickok, 2019; Sameer, 2005).

A majority of the librarians in the Maldives are employed in the Civil Services (CS) sector which includes the Public/National Library of Maldives, and government offices and school libraries. It is estimated that in 2020 there were 293 active library positions in the CS sector comprising 251 Assistant Librarians, 36 Librarians, and 6 Chief Librarian positions. Approximately 95% of these positions were in school libraries. However, around 32% of the CS positions were vacant in August 2020. An additional 31(estimated) individuals were employed in libraries in government and private higher education institutions.

The Maldives National University (MNU) established in 2011 maintains a main library and seven campus libraries. MNU and the NLM are the only two libraries in the country that have implemented a commercial library management system. The Maldives Digital Library Project launched in 2012 and enabled over 20 school libraries to implement the open-source Koha integrated library automation package and DSpace open source software for the digital repository at two libraries (MLA, 2017; Riyaz et al., 2012b). These forays into library automation and digitization were a key milestone in the progression of the LIS sector in the country and afforded LIS employees' exposure and training in the adoption of technology in libraries.

The first effort to introduce LIS education in the Maldives was in 1987 when NLM launched a 12-week *Basic Course in Librarianship* (MLA, 1987). In 1995 the first formal LIS education program was launched in the Maldives through a unique collaboration between MLA, the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), and NLM and was offered via distance education method (Yapa, 2004). LIS education reached a key milestone in the Maldives with the Maldives National University developing its own suite of programs comprising an Advanced Certificate (ACLIS) in 2010 and the Diploma in LIS (DLIS) in 2012 (Islam, Riyaz & Shiuna, 2012). The curriculum of these two programs were developed and taught by the senior university librarians with support from some expatriate academics. It was only in 2018 that a full-time LIS teaching faculty was appointed under the Faculty of Arts. A bachelor's degree program in LIS is scheduled for launch in 2021. The team which developed the ACLIS, DLIS, and BLIS programs were trained in Australia and South Africa. This training afforded them an opportunity to add more modern elements to the programs. MNU is likely to continue hiring part-time lecturers to offer certain modules. The curriculum development teams for the three programs were very mindful to benchmark these to LIS courses offered regionally and internationally. The recent COVID-19 lockdown brought attention to the need to review teaching and learning modes that could be adopted to reach out to the

LIS community dispersed on remote islands. The Maldives National University responded to this situation by adopting a hybrid of face-to-face teaching and asynchronous learning.

The first CPD initiative, a two-day event in 1987, was perceived as a key milestone in the development of the library profession in the country (MLA Newsletter, 1987; Riyaz et al., 2012a). In the subsequent years ad-hoc training programs were offered through MLA (Nashath, 2012). The Institute of Library and Information Services (ILIS), a unit of NLM approved by the Ministry of Higher Education in 2010, is mandated to oversee the professional development of LIS employees in the country. During the recent lockdown for the COVID-19 pandemic, NLM experimented with converting one event scheduled for 2020 into a webinar and have since offered other webinars as well. See Appendix 1 for list of courses conducted by both MLA and NLM for period 2016–2019. The MNU library has been conducting an annual in-house, five-day staff development program since 2005 (Riyaz, 2013).

The Civil Services Training Institute (CSTI), the training arm of the Maldives Civil Service Commission (Maldives Civil Service Regulation No. 2014/R-311, 2014) is mandated to oversee the continuing professional development of Maldives civil service employees, in general and offers a wide range of general/soft skills development programs. The *Maldives Civil Service Strategic Plan 2016–2020* (2015) highlights the organization's strong commitment to human capital development in the country with emphasis on digitalized human resources management and upgrading skills of civil servants. As government officials/civil service employees NLM staff as well as government school librarians are eligible to attend these personal development courses.

The Maldives Library Association (MLA) was established in 1987. MLA developed a very ambitious strategic plan for the period 2012–2015 (Shiham, 2012b) which incorporated recommendations for "Education and Professional Development" through adoption of the following strategic actions:

- Carry out periodic training needs assessment of librarians.
- Carry out short-term courses and workshops for individuals and institutions.

However, due to resource constraints and the lack of a pool of professionals and leadership in the field, the association has been inactive at various times over the years and attaining these objectives has been a challenge (Riyaz et al., 2012c).

Problem statement and research objectives

To date, no research has been done on the state of formal CPD activities available to LIS employees in the Republic of Maldives. Sufficient data is required to properly develop and implement a comprehensive CPD strategy. This study is expected to bridge this gap by providing necessary data for this purpose. The objectives of the study were to understand and evaluate:

1. the state of CPD programs currently available to LIS employees in the Republic of Maldives;
2. LIS employees' motivations and barriers to attending CPD programs;

3. LIS employees' assessment of the range and effectiveness of available CPD programs through different stakeholders; and,
4. LIS employees' preferences for future CPD training programs—topics and delivery techniques.

For the purpose of this study, "Continuing Professional Development (CPD)" is defined as: Learning activities undertaken by individuals to fill-in knowledge gaps to enhance their professional development and career pathways.

Given that the LIS community in the Maldives is small and not all libraries have qualified professional librarians, the study population include all library employees, with or without formal LIS education, responsible to perform various library operations. The scope of CPD activities in this study was limited to formal learning activities.

Research methodology

Two data collection methods were utilized for this study, i.e., the self-administered online questionnaire and follow-up interviews. An online questionnaire was used as it was considered an effective tool to reach out to a widely dispersed study population and offered the respondents more flexibility to complete it at their own time and pace. Follow-up interviews with four LIS employees and in-depth discussions with three key senior LIS professionals provided an opportunity to delve deep to obtain rich and informative data.

The questionnaire comprised a total of 21 questions and 41 sub-questions grouped into six categories and designed to address different aspects of the stated research questions. A variety of questions were used, including multiple-choice questions, rating scale questions, and two open-ended questions. In order to solicit more appropriate responses, the neutral option was not included in the rating scale questions. Where relevant, an option was provided for additional responses under an "Other (please specify)." Instructions for completing the questionnaire, a definition of CPD and examples of formal CPD activities were provided to help respondents through the participation process. Identification of barriers to participation in CPD took reference from Chan & Auster (2003), Corcoran & McGuinness (2014), and Moonasar & Underwood (2018).

A letter inviting LIS employees to participate in the survey was circulated to a Viber group mailing list 189 Maldivian LIS employees and the 2019/2020 Advanced Certificate in LIS (ACLIS)/ Diploma in LIS (DLIS) cohorts who were practising librarians. The letter explained the objectives of the study as well as the expected amount of time required to complete the survey. The hyperlink to the survey was kept open from November 2019 to March 2020. Three reminders were sent to the potential respondents. The survey datasets were analysed using SPSS19. Thematic text analysis was applied to code responses to the open-ended questions.

The survey data analysis provided valuable insights to develop the interview guide. The respondents who had indicated their willingness to participate in the follow-up interviews were shortlisted by library type. The target was to conduct 12 interviews. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic reaching potential interviewees proved to be challenging. Given the circumstances, the number of interviews were scaled down to four; one representing

school libraries, two academic libraries, and one representing the national library. The local study collaborator assisted in scheduling the interviews and the first author conducted the interviews via zoom from Singapore. The semi-structured format was adopted for the interviews and comprised of five questions. The interviews lasted between forty minutes to one hour and were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

To make up for the shortfall in the number of interviews, in-depth discussions were held with three key senior LIS professionals which extended from one- to two-hour long sessions and covered all possible aspects of the sector. Additionally, data collected by the first author during a series of face-to-face interviews conducted with six LIS professionals during her first visit to the country in April 2019 were also used (De Alwis, 2019). One of the key senior professionals interviewed was the LIS faculty member at MNU who has regular interaction with many library employees.

Findings and discussion

After screening out duplicate and incomplete responses, a total of 49 responses were found to be usable. Given that Maldives is a small country, and the questionnaire was in English language, the response was considered good. This section focuses on some of the important findings of the survey and the discussion is substantiated with quotes from the interviews with four LIS employees and three senior LIS professionals.

Table 1 revealed that an overwhelming majority of the participants were female (97.9%) which was actually characteristic of the gender distribution within the profession. Some 59.2 % of the respondents were located in libraries in the capital city Malé and 40.8% in different island libraries. A majority (63.3%) of them were from school libraries followed by 22.4% in the National/public library. The distribution by library type was representative of libraries in the country (Shiham, 2012a).

An analysis of the respondents by position (Table 2) revealed that the highest number of responses were from non-management staff, followed by senior administrators. A majority of these respondents were from the school libraries.

Table 1: LIS workforce in the Maldives, respondent profile: (*n* = 49)

Demographic	Attribute	Count	%
Gender	Male	1	2.1
	Female	48	97.9
Geographic distribution	Capital Malé city	29	59.2
	Islands	20	40.8
Library type	Academic	6	12.2
	National/ Public	11	22.4
	school	31	63.3
	Research	1	2.1

As shown in Table 3, 63.2% of the respondents held a LIS qualification, and a majority of them were from the school libraries. The remaining 36.8% of the respondents held a non-LIS qualification and almost one-half of them were employed in school libraries.

It was also observed that of the 63.2% of the respondents who held a LIS qualification (Table 3), 77.6% had acquired their LIS qualification within the last 10 years (Table 4).

Table 2: Position of the respondents

Position	Count	%
Non-management (Employees who do not have a supervisory role or decision-making responsibilities)	28	57.1
Supervisor (Supervises staff but not a department head)	5	10.2
Middle manager (e.g., Branch head, department head)	4	8.2
Senior administrator (e.g., Head librarian, chief librarian, director or deputy/assistant head)	10	20.4
Other	2	4.1
Total	49	100

Table 3: Highest professional qualification

Highest professional qualification	Count	%
Master's LIS	1	2.0
Diploma LIS	20	40.8
Advanced Cert LIS	10	20.4
Master's (Other)	2	4.1
Bachelor (Other)	1	2.0
Diploma/Advanced Cert (Other)	8	16.4
GCE A Level/ O Level	7	14.3
Total	49	100

Table 4: Year highest LIS qualification obtained

Highest qualification	Less than 1 year ago	1–5 years ago	6–10 years ago	11–15 years ago	16 years or more	Total	%
Master's LIS	-	-	-	1	-	1	
Diploma LIS	6	10	3	0	1	20	
Advanced Cert LIS	1	3	3	3	-	10	
Other	3	5	4	5	1	18	
Total	10	18	10	9	2	49	100

Table 5: Highest LIS/Other qualification by number of years in the LIS profession

	Number of years in the LIS profession						
Highest qualification	5 years or less	6–10 years	11–15 years	16–20 years	21–25 years	More than 26 years	%
Master's LIS	-	-	-	1	-	-	2.0
Diploma LIS	3	6	5	4	-	2	40.8
Advanced Cert LIS	1	1	6	2	-	-	20.4
Other	10	3	4	1	-	-	36.8
Total	14	10	15	8	-	2	100

Table 6 revealed that 20.4% of the respondents were in the profession for less than five years and without any LIS education. Insights provided during the interviews reflected some possible reasons for this trend of new entrants joining libraries without a LIS qualification:

- They may have considered a library job as 'just a job,' a stepping stone to a job in another profession. Therefore, employees lacked commitment and interest to pursue a LIS qualification.
- The LIS courses were conducted in Malé and many LIS employees, especially those on the islands were unable to continue studying on the job.
- Individuals may not have firmly decided on a career at that juncture and perceived that pursuing a generic field of study would be more advantageous and offer a wider choice of job opportunities and prospect of securing a job.

It appeared that probably many new entrants to the LIS profession were not prepared to view their occupation as a career. Some mid-career LIS employees were also working in libraries without a LIS qualification probably due to the fact that the first LIS certificated programs were only made available in the recent past; the Advanced Certificate in LIS (ACLIS) was launched in 2010 and a Diploma (DLIS) in 2012 by the Maldives National University (MNU).

Membership of LIS professional association
As shown in Table 6a, only 28.6% of the respondents held a membership of the national professional body, MLA; and of the school library respondents, only 19.4% were members. Based on Table 6b it was noted that only 7.2% of the respondents with less than five years in the LIS profession were members. In comparison respondents with a greater number of years in the profession held a membership of MLA.

The interviews provided some insights into the low take-up rate of the MLA membership:

- Many of the library staff are from island school libraries and may not see much bene-fit in joining MLA. Many of these staff are also new to this field and may be studying

in another area. So, they may not give their full commitment to be part of the library professionals' network.
- I did not join because of family commitments. No time for professional activities.
- MLA needs to promote why it is important for island librarians, who live far away and are unable to participate in meetings, should get membership.

However, the most crucial observation came from a respondent who stated that the MLA constitution was revised during 2014/2015. But, due to lack of follow-through combined with phases of inactivity in the subsequent years, updating the membership register and the membership drive did not happen. Overall, it appeared that the higher membership rate amongst LIS employees with a higher number of years in the profession probably took place during a phase when MLA was comparatively more active.

The persistence of a hiatus in MLA (Riyaz et al., 2012c) is a phenomenon usually experienced by LIS professional bodies in developing countries that tend to be weak because of their small membership base (Sturges, 2012). The strong presence of the national library association is critical at this juncture not only for the development of the LIS profession in the country but specifically because it "is one that promotes and supports CPD" (Sturges, 2012, p.49).

Table 6(a): Membership of LIS professional association by library

Library type	Membership of LIS professional association
Academic Library (*N* = 6)	4 (66.7%)
School Library (*N* = 31)	6 (19.4%)
Research Library (*N* = 1)	1 (100%)
National/ Public Library (*N* = 11)	3 (27.3%)
Total (*N* = 49)	14 (28.6%)

Table 6(b): Membership of LIS professional association by years in the profession

Number of years in the LIS profession	Membership of LIS professional association
Less than 5 years (*N* = 14)	1 (7.2%)
6–10 years (*N* = 10)	2 (20.0%)
11–15 years (*N* = 15)	4 (26.7%)
16–20 years (*N* = 8)	6 (75.0%)
More than 26 years (*N* = 2)	1 (50.0%)
Total (*N* = 49)	14 (28.6%)

Participation in CPD programs

Based on Table 7a only 30.7% of the respondents had attended at least one CPD program during the last three years, and 19.4% of the respondents from school libraries had attended any such training. It was also noted that participation in CPD programs was low across all categories of respondents irrespective of the number of years in the profession and job position (see Tables 7b and 7c). Table 7c also revealed that 25% of the non-management staff had attended at least one CPD training program during the last three years. This finding is understandable as a majority of them do not have any LIS qualification and needed

Table 7(a): Participation in CPD programs by Library type (2016–2018)

Participation in CPD in programs	Yes	%
Academic Library (N = 6)	3	50.0
School Library (N = 31)	6	19.4
Research Library (N = 1)	1	100
National/ Public Library (N = 11)	5	45.6
Total (N = 49)	15	30.7

Table 7(b): Participation in CPD programs by number of years in the profession (2016–2018)

Participation in CPD in programs	Yes	%
Less than 5 years (N = 14)	4	28.6
6–10 years (N = 10)	3	30.0
11–15 years (N = 15)	4	26.7
16 years and more (N = 10)	4	40.0
Total (N = 49)	15	30.7

Table 7(c): Participation in CPD programs by position (2016–2018)

Participation in CPD in programs by position	Yes	%
Non-management (N = 28)	7	25.0
Supervisors (N = 5)	2	40.0
Middle manager (N = 4)	1	25.0
Senior administrator (N = 10)	3	30.0
Other (N = 2)	2	100
Total (N = 49)	15	30.7

to learn some basic library concepts and operations, as NLM's CPD programs are typically for beginners. It was also noted that participation in CPD activities was quite low among the supervisory and middle management staff. It was probably due to lack of suitable CPD programs available to them.

A list of LIS-related formal CPD programs offered during 2016–2019 by the two key training providers in the Maldives, that is, NLM and MLA (see Appendix 1) is indicative of the very limited range and number of CPD programs available to LIS employees in the country.

According to the NLM/school/academic LIS employees interviewed:

- Most of the trainings that NLM offers throughout the year are very repetitive because of resource constraints, budget, and trainers . . . NLM is mostly focused on beginners . . . they have very good courses on fundamentals and for refreshers . . . rarely do they have a course for experienced librarians . . . So, we have to find other places to do short courses and to build our skills . . . and if there is [a relevant program], there will be a lot of competition to apply for the course . . . So, there is a big gap in the training offerings beyond the courses for beginners.
- NLM short courses are free and usually cover topics like cataloguing and classification. But as school librarians we need to learn about conducting reading programs, online literacy classes, etc.

Here are some quotes from the school librarians interviewed:

- My school is very supportive and allow us to attend short courses, free ones. But if payment is involved, we have to attend [these courses] outside school hours. I paid for the Koha training session and my school gave me leave. School librarians need IT skills as well. But some colleagues tell me that in the island libraries the school management is not very supportive.
- Every year MOE conducts two to three professional development sessions for teachers, and every year they need to have a total of 15 hours which can be completed in three sittings. But there is no professional development program for school librarians.
- NLM staff can attend six hours of training related to personal development through courses offered by the Civil Service Training Institute (CSTI).
- MNU library staff, in addition to annual in-house five-day staff development program, are allowed to attend 15 hours training per year. Based on alignment with the job, they may utilise it to attend a range of personal development courses offered inhouse by MNU solely for its staff. Staff who wish to follow other courses need to do so on their own time outside of working hours.

It was noted that whilst NLM and MNU library staff had the option to engage in personal development courses through their organizations, school librarians did not have access to CPD activities beyond the limited offerings from NLM and MLA. It was also noted that island school librarians faced challenges even when attempting to sign up for these limited training programs.

A key observation based on the survey findings and interviews was that LIS employees had access to a very limited choice of LIS-related CPD programs in the country and

those available did not match their actual needs. Some LIS employees seemed to be aware of the value of CPD learning and had adopted a self-directed approach to professional development and career planning, which was also advocated by some previous studies (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Fontain, 2018; Machala & Horvat 2010). This approach was further exemplified by the fact that only a few LIS employees, since completing their DLIS qualification, had pursued other work-related courses for their career progression, for example teaching skills, marketing, and so forth. On the contrary, a few interviewees expressed concern about LIS employees having a low or even no interest in CPD programs. They felt that some library employees were not taking full advantage of the limited learning opportunities available to them as they did not adequately perceive the value of undertaking CPD activities, and they only associated learning with salary increase or promotion. Other researchers have also identified similar concerns in their studies (Adanu, 2007; Chan & Auster, 2003; Maesaroh, 2012; Rafiq et al., 2017).

Barriers to pursuing CPD

The participants were asked to indicate the CPD-related barriers faced by them. These barriers were categorized into personal, organizational, CPD training provider, and online learning barriers.

Table 8 reflects the top seven barriers receiving the highest scores from the participants. More than one-half of participants felt the "Lack of suitable training facilities" (51.0%) was the most challenging barrier. This concern was probably due to a lack of suitable CPD training programs in the country (Robinson, 2019; Wilkes & Ward, 2016). The second highest was a personal barrier, "Too costly to pay from my own funds," picked by 48.9% of the participants. Previous studies too have alluded to funding as a key barrier to undertaking CPD programs (Maesaroh, 2012; Moonasar & Underwood, 2018). The "Lack of opportunities for career advancement in my present library" was an organizational barrier selected by 46.9% of the respondents. Other organizational barriers selected by a considerable number of the participants were: "Heavy workload at work" (32.7%), "Not many CPD activities are held during lean periods/semester break" (32.7%), and "CPD activities not offered in my country due to lack of knowledgeable resource persons" (32.7%). These barriers were also highlighted by Chan and Auster (2003) and Wilkes and Ward (2016). Similarly, certain personal, organizational, training quality, and learning-related barriers were identified by previous studies (Bury, 2010; Chan & Auster, 2003; Maesaroh, 2012; Moonasar & Underwood, 2018).

Barriers faced by the school libraries were reflective of their particular situation. These constraints were specifically applicable to the school library employees located at remote islands. They needed to travel to Malé city for available CPD opportunities, meet own transport and lodging costs, and were required to take personal leave. The interviewees also pointed out the problems of the absence of staff training and development policy and lack of management support. Some other studies have also highlighted similar barriers (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Cossham & Fields, 2006; Hornung, 2013; Moonasar & Underwood, 2018; Varlejs, 2016). Previous studies have also alluded to the challenges to career advancement that LIS employees working in a small and isolated geographic environment have to confront (Kendrick et al., 2013; Maesaroh, 2012; Varlejs, 2016; Wilkes & Ward, 2016).

Table 8: Top seven barriers to pursuing CPD *(Multiple responses)*

	N = 49	
Barriers	Total	%
Lack of suitable CPD training programs	25	51.0
Too costly to pay from my own funds	24	48.9
Lack of opportunities for career advancement in my present library	23	46.9
Heavy workload	16	32.7
Not many CPD activities are held during lean periods/semester break	16	32.7
Lack of knowledgeable resource persons	16	32.7
Lack of CPD topics on latest trends in LIS	16	32.7

The interviews also revealed a few barriers that prevented the respondents from participating in CPD programs originating outside the country. These included a lack of motivation, limited competency in English language, and limited access to IT at homes and workplaces (Adanu, 2007; Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Maesaroh, 2012; Varlejs, 2016). For example, a large proportion of school libraries in the geographically dispersed islands do not have computers (Kendrick et al., 2013).

Preferred mode of participation in CPD activities

The respondents were asked to indicate their preference for different CPD training methods. The training method "most preferred" or "preferred" by the majority of respondents was face-to-face training (Table 9). This finding was in line with the finding of Cossham and Fields (2006) and Lynn et al. (2010). Blended learning and online learning were the next "most preferred/ preferred" methods, an indication that the respondents were aware of the advantages of these modes of learning. The Library Association of Ireland (2017) highlighted a similar finding in their study as well.

Nearly a decade ago Islam, Riyaz and Shiuna (2012) recommended the need to introduce the distance mode or block-mode, a form of blended learning, to help working librarians address existing gaps in their LIS education. As highlighted in the previous section, transportation and financial constraints were the most daunting challenges and the island school librarians were the most affected. During the interviews it was revealed that a majority of the young LIS employees own a smartphone, were quite IT savvy and had access to Internet on their Islands. However, the key limitations of adopting technology for learning were the cost of data packages and home accessibility to computers due to living/sharing facilities with extended families.

The recent pandemic again brought attention to the need to review teaching and learning modes that could be adopted to reach out more effectively to the LIS employees dispersed on various islands. The interviews shed light on a few changes that had been introduced to cater to new norms driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. These included the availability of lower

Table 9: Preferred mode of participation in CPD activities

Preferred mode of participation in CPD activities	Most preferred/ Preferred	Somewhat preferred	Not preferred	Total
Face-to-face learning sessions	38	6	5	49
Online learning *(Virtual platform & involving single/ multiple sessions)*	32	12	5	49
Webinars *(1–2 hours)*	22	20	7	49
Online training sessions *(involves single/ multiple sessions*	27	17	5	49
Blended learning *(Combination of face-to-face + online learning)*	35	9	5	49
Recorded lectures *(e.g., YouTube tutorials, lectures, etc.)*	22	18	9	49

cost data packages in the country and Maldives National University's shift to teaching LIS programs through a combination of face-to-face teaching and asynchronous learning. NLM too endeavoured to adapt this new norm by experimenting with offering webinars during the lockdown period which were well received by the LIS employees. The positive outcomes have inspired NLM to explore the possibility of replacing the face-to-face mode with online CPD programs. However, the timing of these webinar sessions need to be reviewed as the island school librarians may not be allowed to access these during school hours. If the program scheduling is to be outside of office hours, the concern of accessibility to technology will persist. Maesaroh (2012) too highlighted similar concerns in the study on academic libraries in Indonesia. Given the funding constraints, exploring the deployment of technology to administer structured CPD activities is worth considering although online learning will require a high degree of self-motivation by LIS employees. However, the advantages of online delivery outweigh the challenges as the island school librarians would be able to overcome the bigger problems of transport and accommodation costs as well as the need to utilize their personal leave. From the training providers perspective, the budget to get a Zoom subscription or another suitable online platform could be a challenge, especially given the additional budget cuts implemented lately due to the pandemic.

Responsibility to conduct CPD programs
The respondents were asked who in their opinion should be responsible to conduct CPD programs. As shown in Table 10 a majority of the respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that MLA and NLM should be responsible for offering CPD programs to the LIS employees in the country. Some respondents also "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the MNU library should be responsible for offering CPD programs, probably because this is the only library in the country with a pool of professionally qualified staff and have adopted automation and digitization. Several previous studies have also reported that national professional bodies and other organizations with library development responsibilities were considered

Table 10: Organizations considered suitable for conducting CPD programs

Rating	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
National Library Association	32	12	1	4
National Library	27	17	2	3
University Library	14	26	6	3
Other Training Providers	14	22	7	6

more appropriate for conducting CPD programs (Varlejs, 2016; Lamptey & Corletey, 2011; Moonasar & Underwood: 2018).

In response to an open-ended option for this question, a considerable number of the respondents suggested other possible training providers. More than one-half of the respondents, mostly belonging to school libraries, felt that the Maldives Ministry of Education should also be responsible for conducting CPD programs. It appeared that a majority of the respondents drew attention to the fact that the Ministry of Education had a role to play in this context. It could be deduced that the school library employees were expecting their Ministry to conduct CPD programs as well as implement HR policies supportive of staff development programs. Previous studies too have highlighted that support of parent institutions is crucial in motivating staff to participate in professional development programs (Chan & Auster, 2005; Varlejs, 2016).

Suggestions for improving CPD programs in the country

Through a final open-ended question, the respondents were invited to provide three suggestions for improving CPD programs in the country. Thematic text analysis was applied to code the responses. Table 11 provides the key themes, subthemes, and the frequency of their occurrences. The suggestions resonated with the survey findings and interview responses. Given that a majority of the respondents (41%) were school library employees, 61% of the suggestions were from them.

A majority of the suggestions were notably focused on improving the CPD planning/delivery processes and ranged from conducting a training needs analysis to determine type of programs preferred to creating awareness of the benefits of CPD to LIS employees. Other suggestions included better marketing of training programs, scheduling CPD programs on a wide range of topics, utilizing a varied range of delivery modalities; and, releasing an annual calendar of events in advance to allow employees sufficient time for planning. Respondents also suggested the need for reaching out to a wider market to source for resource persons, offering access to more resources, and providing equal opportunity by holding more CPD programs on the islands.

Other topics that garnered high scores included the need to strengthen aspects of planning interventions such as:

- Creating stakeholders' awareness of the needs of LIS sector and the limited opportunities available for engaging in CPD activities, specifically for school library staff.

Table 11: Suggestions for improving CPD programs in the country

Suggestions for improving CPD programs in the country *(Simplified groupings based on the open-ended responses)*		Total
Collaboration	All LIS bodies should be involved; networking among librarians; staff exchange programs	5
Planning/ Interventions	**Advocacy:** Stake-holder awareness (Policy makers/employer/ management) (a) About LIS (b) Need for CPD for LIS employees	16
	Career path: For LIS employees	
	Funding: Government funding for training	
	HR Policy: Paid leave/sponsorship for librarians to participate in training/free sessions/CPD sessions for school librarians during school professional development days/international opportunities	16
Planning processes	**Instruction modalities:** Face-to-face/online/interactive CPD/more practical sessions/use more visual aids other than presentations	
	Programming: More short courses/regular CPD programs/annual calendar of CPD programs	
	Program topics: More current topics/school related topics/variety of topics/custom designed programs for different groups	
	Resource persons: Professional trainers; better incentives for trainers	
	Resources: Better internet connectivity; better resources	
	Scheduling: Weekends	
	Venue: Conduct programs on the islands/atolls	65
	Awareness: Benefits of CPD for LIS employees	
	Gap analysis: Conduct training needs analysis	
	Marketing: Better marketing of CPD programs	14

- Reviewing HR policy for school library employees (e.g., provision for school librarians to attend CPD sessions during school professional development days; leave/time off to attend CPD programs, especially for school librarians; and funding to meet travel/ accommodation expenses). Several previous studies have also made such recommendations (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; Cossham & Fields, 2007; Hornung, 2013; Maesaroh, 2012; Moonasar & Underwood, 2018).
- Enabling sufficient funding to facilitate training providers, NLM and MLA to conduct LIS related CPD programs.

The VSO Maldives report (2005) stated that "Training and professional development is key to improving the quality of education being delivered in the Maldives" (p.18). The Government of Maldives *Strategic Action Plan 2019–2023* (2019) identified the following key priorities for Education which relate to the LIS profession:

Policy 4: **Enhance the learning environment to ensure provision of a holistic education:**

Target 4.3: By 2023, all public schools have library facilities with learning spaces.

Strategy 4.3: Ensure provision of adequate library services and independent learning spaces in all schools.

4.3a: Prepare physical facility development plan and library development plan for provision of library.

4.3b: Conduct a human resource need assessment and develop a HR plan to employ trained librarians. (p. 135)

The lead implementation agency identified to achieve the targets is the Ministry of Education. Two other agencies assigned to partner in the implementation of 4.3a are the Civil Service Commission and the National Library.

On a broader note, the development of staff competence is intrinsically linked to organization development (Konrad, 2010). Therefore, it is in the interest of organizations to address the CPD needs of all LIS employees and specifically the school library employees, who face the most challenges. Encouraging LIS employees to undertake CPD learning would enhance the quality of libraries and librarians leading to improved service delivery (Moonasar & Underwood, 2018). It would also enable the LIS profession to get stronger, be perceived more positively, be recognized by other professions; and, ultimately be positioned as a promising profession (Hornung, 2013). Eventually it would lead to the redefinition of the identity of the profession and expansion of its boundaries (Fraser-Arnott, 2019). But the one most critical underlying prerequisite to make it a reality is the presence of a strong national library association which "is one that promotes and supports CPD" (Sturges, 2012, p.49).

Conclusion

This study, the first to be conducted on the state of CPD activities available to LIS employees in the Republic of Maldives revealed that the LIS as a profession is still in its initial development stage as LIS academic programs were launched just over a decade ago. The current CPD landscape in the country is very sparse and many LIS employees are yet to comprehend the importance of personal responsibility of continuing learning. The school library employees comprising the majority of the LIS sector and mid-career employees across all library types are the most affected by the minimal access to CPD learning opportunities. Hence there is a need to address this problem by providing ample CPD opportunities to school library staff, which would uplift the LIS profession in the Maldives as a whole.

The two principal LIS training providers operating in the Maldives are NLM and MLA. However, due to limited resources, NLM has restricted its CPD offerings mainly to the new entrants to the profession. The Maldives Library Association, a voluntary organization, has not been very active lately. Given the funding constraints, it would be worth exploring deploying technology to administer CPD programs to the LIS community, particularly

to school library employees. However, online learning would require a high degree of self-motivation of the LIS employees.

NLM's core function is to manage and preserve the national heritage. It is quite common for organizations in resource strapped small countries to oversee other functions. In 2010, NLM was given the additional mandate to oversee the professional development of LIS employees in the country with the establishment of the ILIS. If the CPD training gaps are to be addressed, NLM and MLA need to collaborate very proactively under the aegis of ILIS to strengthen CPD activities in the country as well as pay attention to policy matters.

The findings of this study are expected to provide some basic data for developing a CPD Plan for the LIS sector. It will also inform future training and development strategies that will meet expectations of the LIS community. Based on the findings three areas of potential improvement pertaining to employee engagement in formal CPD activities were identified.

LIS employees need to embrace the right professional attitude to CPD. As currently only limited CPD programs are available in the Maldives, LIS employees need to explore other avenues for refreshing and upgrading their professional, management, and soft skills. In addition to attending local training programs, they can also use public domain education sources such as YouTube videos, lectures, conference presentations, webinars, and others to learn new knowledge and skills. Similarly, as it is usually difficult for library employees working in the islands to in-person attend CPD programs in the capital Malé, they can come up with a plan where a nominated person can attend the training and share the newly acquired knowledge with the island colleagues.

Similarly, it is in the interest of employers to help their library staff improve their knowledge and skills to provide better library services. Some small steps, such as providing time off, and sponsoring travelling and lodging to attend CPD programs, would help their LIS employees to more actively participate in continuing professional development activities. In addition, employers can arrange in-house trainings for their library as well as other staff to learn certain management, IT, and attitudinal skills. Such efforts can improve the overall institutional functioning and performance.

As a substantial number of LIS employees belong to school libraries, the Ministry of Education needs to take a proactive approach to improve professional competence. MLA and NLM need to jointly initiate a dialogue with the relevant stakeholders to facilitate a conducive organizational climate for school librarians to pursue CPD opportunities. Two measures that should be considered immediately are (a) establish a training policy which encompasses MOE professional development days, and (b) adequate training hours to facilitate attainment of LIS competencies. The Maldives *Strategic Action Plan 2019–2023* (2019) offers an ideal platform to initiate a dialogue.

Limitations of the study included the inability to reach library employees who were not part of the Viber group and a member of MLA. Language limitations may have also hampered the study as, due to resource constraints, the questionnaire was not translated into local Dhivehi language. Similarly, interviews were also conducted in English language due to interviewer's inability to speak the local language. Despite these limitations, this study provides the first ever insights into the state of CPD opportunities available to LIS employees in the Republic of Maldives.

With the conclusion of the pilot survey, the scope of this study will be extended to certain other South and South East Asian countries. Some minor changes are likely to be made in the survey questionnaire to suit local situations in the selected countries.

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Appendix 1: CPD learning activities conducted by National Library of Maldives & Maldives Library Association, 2016–2019

Year	Month	National Library of Maldives	Maldives Library Association
2016	Feb	Reference Inquiries Workshop	-
	Mar	Information Literacy Workshop	-
	May	-	Workshop on Island Library Development
	Aug	Advanced Classification and Cataloguing Workshop	-
	Nov	Fundamentals in Library and Information Services	Training on Essential Skills in Library Science, Oct to Nov (5 Saturdays from 0900 to 1300) (for new recruits)
2017	Mar	Hazard Recognition, Assessment and Control Workshop	-
	Apr	-	Dhivehi big book writing skills workshop.
	May	-	Grant proposal writing workshop
	Sept	Information Literacy Workshop	IFLA Global Vision, Country Workshop.
		-	Workshop on Island Library Development

(*Continued*)

Year	Month	National Library of Maldives	Maldives Library Association
	Oct	Library Activities for Pre-schoolers Workshop	-
	Nov	Fundamental in Library and information Services	-
2018	Mar	Library Display and Promotion Workshop	-
	Apr	Dhivehi Bahuge [language] Training	-
	Jun	IFLA Global Vision Conversation 2018: Workshop on United Library Field. (Initiated by MLA in partnership with the National Library) https://infomalias.wordpress.com/page/14/	
	Nov/ Dec	Fundamental in Library and information Services	-
2019	Apr	Workshop on Library Development and Library Management (Initiated by MLA in partnership with the Maldives National University and the National Library)	
	Jul	Research 4Life Training	-
	Sep	Library Management	-
	Nov	-	Koha Training (3-day program)