

EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

SHARED BY SOME ACLIS STUDENTS 2017



Aminath Sukuma
Librarian

K. Maafushi School

Since 2007
11 years

Experiences

This course had been a wonderful journey to me in which I have gained numerous experiences. One of the most important thing I learnt was the true meaning of a library- not the stereotypical quiet place filled with bookshelves where people go for the sole purpose of reading, but also a place with a more diverse range of activities taking place. It was fulfilling to know about all those various types of activities that can be conducted inside a library apart from just reading books. Knowing about the proper ways a library functions along with all those different client groups, and how to deal with them in an appropriate manner using suitable resources is vital for a librarian. It was a pleasure learning all these from great, knowledgeable teachers who are equally friendly. However, one of the best experiences though out this course for me was getting to study with really nice classmates as great and friendly as a family, for they made every second of this journey memorable.

Challenges

The biggest challenge I faced during those days was studying during a pregnancy and having to travel from Maafushi to Male' to attend the classes, yet a greater challenge during a pregnancy. Also, it is worth to mention that it's emotionally stressing and equally challenging to stay away from my son whilst the block days. Additionally, it was a very tight-scheduling and inconvenient to be studying in block mode in which one week has to be spent in Male'.

Yet again there comes the inconvenience of accommodating in small rooms of Male' where proper resting is difficult, especially during a pregnancy. Furthermore, due to the tight scheduled class times there was literally no time to have a proper relaxed meal, shower or simply some rest. Often the night classes were really tiring. What's more is that after the end of each block comes the assignments which are really hard to do while going to job. But what matters in all these things is that I gave my best and tried really hard throughout this course.

Fun time

The classmates I got forced me to savor every bit of the moments I spent there. I got the best classmates I could ever ask for and they're all very friendly and caring. Every day spent was special so it's difficult to point out the best moment. But it's worthy to highlight the fact that they planned and organized a surprise baby shower for me. It was truly really heart-touching for me that day. I would fondly remember all those days I had with them and would never forget how those joyful days went by!



Shimla Mohamed
Assistant Librarian

A.A.Ukulhahu
School Library

The course was very useful for me, and I would recommend it to everyone who wishes to have a career in the library.

Challenges:

Having to spend too many days on every block. This increases the cost of food and accommodation; Difficulty in finding a place to stay during the blocks.

Fun time

Playing "Bahabo" game with Shaba miss was the greatest time I had during the course.

Getting to spend time with knowledgeable lecturers. I have benefited immensely from this. Also, it was great to spend time with people from different places with different backgrounds. The lecturers were all very friendly and approachable. The coordinator also helped us immensely, and she was the best coordinator a batch of students could ever have.



ACLIS (ADVANCE CERTIFICATE IN LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES) STUDENTS VISITED PARLIAMENT LIBRARY

Librarian

profile:

Zihuna Jabir

Librarian

S. Hithadhoo School

Addu City



1. Did you always aspire to be a librarian?

Yes

2. What is the defining moment that made you decide on a career as a librarian?

As I am a bookworm I felt that this would be the chance for me to be with books and spend my spare time in reading. This defiantly made me decide my career.

3. What is your long term goal for your professional life?

Having various degrees of success with other facility members ; Encourage students reading outside their comfort zone.

4. What is your biggest achievement to date?

Advanced certificate in library and information services.

5. What is your greatest struggle professionally?

No opportunity for career building by staying at Home Island.

6. Next biggest challenge?

Acquiring electronic books and establishing online library.

7.Regrets?

Lack of resources (books, data base and more training.)

8. What is your vision for LIS field?

My Vision for the library and information sector of the Maldives is integrating all the libraries through a network and functioning effectively, providing eBooks and other library resources to all the libraries.

An Established Academic Library VILLA COLLEGE LIBRARY



Villa College, established by the Chairman of Villa Group, Honorable Qasim Ibrahim, is the leading private higher education institution in the Maldives, providing educational opportunities for Maldivians at an affordable price within the country, and becoming the first private college in the Maldives.

The main aim of the Villa College Library is to provide comprehensive resources and services in support of the research, teaching and learning needs of the college, and high school community (of the co-located Villa International High School).

The library plays a vital role in supporting access to diversified, rich resources so as to shape a learning environment where the users have access to an extensive research facility. The library consists of a combined collection of approximately 10,000 records. In addition, the library provides access to a number of online databases.

My experience in NLM

Being employed in the National Library of Maldives as my first job, understanding the responsibilities of a library staff was an invaluable experience for me.

I was extremely fortunate to have had this experience in a professional and friendly environment, and the educational as well as professional benefits I have gained through it are unquestionably of a much higher degree than I expected initially.

Working in the Library Service Unit facilitated many learning opportunities and exciting challenges. My experience in the NLM was such a success because of the generosity and willingness of the management staff of the library.

My experience in Villa College Library

I have been working at the Villa College Library for approximately a month. My interactions with the staff at the library are very friendly, and my colleagues are welcoming and accommodating.

I am responsible for the supervision of the library and its daily operations. My current work focuses on the pending works. I noticed that the standardizing of library policies and procedures is an important task. It can make the processes faster and easier, as each library is different, with its own structure, organization, requirements and policies.

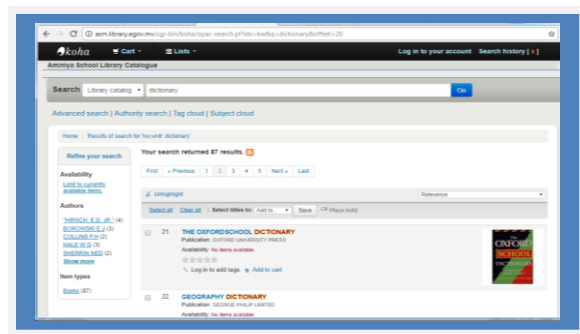
As I already have had some experience in this field, the concept of the work was not new to me; however, accessioning library materials is challenging as I have had very little experience of it.

I had absolutely no experience with the integrated system here, KOHA, but it has proved to be very interesting. I realized that this is an area I could see myself thrive in; and I am exploring and enjoying the options of acquiring more knowledge in this area.

*Haleemath Shahuda, Librarian,
Villa College Library, QI Campus*

KOHA ILS – LIBRARY AUTOMATION

MLA ACCOMPLISHED TRANSFORMING KOHA ILS RECORDS IN THE UNION CATALOGUE OF EXISTING 20 SCHOOL LIBRARIES, INTO A NEW SERVER AND ENABLING ACCESS PLUS DIGITAL LIBRARY CONTENT TO A NEW SERVER AS WELL, WITH GREAT SUPPORT OF MLA KOHA TECHNICIAN, AHMED SHAREEF AND NCIT (NATIONAL CENTER FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)



This is the biggest achievement of MLA's 2016-2017 term. All 20 schools will have access to their Catalogue. In addition, during this term, Koha is being installed and implemented in 7 libraries within their institution's intranet namely: Billabong High International School, Islamic University of Maldives, R. Rasmaadhoo School, A.A. Ukulhahu School, Rehendhi School, Taajuddin School, Attorney General's Office.

Dpspace, Digital Library Software was installed in Dhivehi Bahuge Academy library and 50 records entered into the system by MLA.

PRISON LIBRARIES: REHABILITATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF LIVES

Libraries serve people with their information need, no matter what type of library it is. One of these different types of libraries are Prison libraries. Working in a Prison library give opportunities not found in any other type of libraries.

According to Hart (2007) the mission of a prison library should cater for educational and recreational needs of prisoners. The library collection should include information in variety of formats including library programs designed for them. The purpose is to help them reform and also to occupy them with reading which would help them avoid problems in the prison. The main purpose of prison libraries is to rehabilitate and educate prisoners. According to Zybert (2011, p. 91) "... library resources are mainly focused on providing support for the following activities:

1. Reading as a constructive use of free time, as a method to reduce stress, and a means to minimize undesirable behavior
2. Meeting emotional needs and intellectual interests
3. Increasing basic and advanced knowledge
4. Developing positive personality traits
5. Developing aesthetic sensibility and appreciation of art and education
6. Developing cognitive skills
7. Preparing for life and work after release
8. Meeting the professional needs of prison staff

One of the things special for prison libraries are safety and security. Hart (2017) states that a security training has to be completed before working in a prison. It is essential to complete this training to handle dangerous situations and prisoners. Librarians have to be cautious and attentive to what is going around even when handling other tasks in the library. Therefore, security is the first and the most important thing to consider if anyone work in a prison library.

Prison library should replicate a school or public library. The resources should meet the needs of the prisoners which is targeted to their informational, educational, cultural, recreational and rehabilitative needs (Lehmann and Locke, c2005). Prison libraries mainly depend on donations. Prisoners get excited to have new materials to read and appreciate the work done by the librarian. This is good for the library promotion and makes the library a welcoming place (Hart, 2007).

Prison libraries are enforced to prohibit materials which teaches, provoke or support any kind of criminal offence including physical harm or breaking of go against the law.

However, the restrictions should be based on the principles stated in the Library Bill of Rights (ALA Council, c2010).

Services provided in a prison library include:

1. Reference and information service
2. Library orientation and user education
3. Interlibrary loan
4. Providing of special materials for patrons with disabilities (Lehmann and Locke, c2005).
5. Legal service is compulsory in all prison libraries. All prisoners have the right to legal counsel and access for legal materials in prison libraries. Prison librarians spent a fair amount of time searching for legal information for the prisoners (Geary, 2006).
6. Book mobile service: Book mobile service is given to prisoners, who have committed more serious crimes, and are not allowed access to the library. Therefore, the books are delivered to their confined cells (Geary, 2006).

The library should plan, organize and support varieties of activities and programs for the prisoners. The aim of these activities and programs should be to promote reading, literacy and culture. This helps the prisoners to use time wisely and develop quality of life. This also raises social skills and improved self-esteem. The library becomes a very important place to mingle with other prisoners who has same interests. Such programs conducted at the library are author readings, book club and discussions, Literary and "fact" contests that use library resources, creative writing workshops, music programs, art workshops and displays, literacy tutoring, spelling contests, holiday & cultural celebrations, job fairs (Lehmann and Locke, c2005) and broadcasting system (Zybert, 2011).

The existence of a prison library makes a huge difference to prisoner's life and to the whole community. Prison libraries help prisoners to rehabilitate and to transform through the library collection, services and programs. Positive impacts of a prison library includes, increase of literacy rate, self-esteem, social skills and information literacy. Therefore prison library helps prisoners to see the world in a different perspective, help them have a purposeful and meaningful life outside the prison.

References

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Ms. Athiyya Shakeel
Librarian

Maldives National University Library

Update on MLA activities 2017

✚ Koha Integrated Library System

- MLA accomplished transforming KOHA ILS records in the union catalogue of existing 20 school libraries, into a new server and enabling access. Plus Digital library content to a new server as well.
- Books data migration accomplished in August and October 2017 in Islamic University of Maldives library, approximately 17,000 records and in Rehendhi School library, 10,000 records respectively. Data migration for Aminiya School and Dhivehi Bahuge Academy Library are in progress.
- Koha training conducted for Villa College library in December 2017 and a second training session for Rehendhi School library staff in October 2017.

✚ MLA had a meeting with Mr. Anton Nallatamby, Director, Books for Asia and Administration, Asia Foundation, Colombo. MLA, goals, vision, mission and ongoing activities were shared. MLA pressed the need for books in especially school libraries.

✚ As a request from STELCO to digitize their official documents, MLA had a meeting with the senior staff members in October 2017 and assessed their needs and requirements. A quotation to install Dspace software and conduct training was proposed.

✚ IFLA Global Vision, Country Workshop held on 9th September 2017 and workshop report shared with IFLA

✚ WILD Workshop from 14-16 September 2017 held at A.A.Ukulhas

✚ Editing and layouting 4 Big Books plus obtaining a sponsor for printing, in progress.

✚ Constructing an official website of MLA, in progress

Upcoming Events

✚ Publishing and printing 4 Dhivehi Big Books

✚ Koha Integrated Library System

Explore Koha in order to continue & sustain Library automation plus conducting refreshing training sessions of Koha and developing a training manual.

✚ MLA General meeting

The next general meeting is scheduled to be held on 10th February 2018. New MLA Council for the 2018-2019 term will be elected at this meeting.

✚ MLA Newsletter

The next issue of this newsletter will be published 2018. Send us your news, feedback/comment relevant to the library association, libraries, and information gathering & dissemination activities in the Maldives to info.malias@gmail.com

Maldives Library Association

meet. learn. acquire

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