

BALIM / MLA



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR LIBRARIANS

24 to 28 July 2023, in
Singapore

Final session in Male' – 16 September 2023

Closing Ceremony

16 September 2023
MNU Seminar Room



TRAVEL-TRANSIT



Reached S'pore after an
unexpected stay-over in Colombo





Day I: Reference Library (NLB)





Day 1

library@orchard





Day 2: Nanyang Technological University Library





Day 3: Sports Hub Library



Day 3: Punggol Regional Library





Singapore University of Technology & Design Library





**Day 4:
Temasek
Polytechnic
Library**



Day 5:
Tanglin Trust School Library

Information Sessions



Discussions & Group Work







AJRA RAFAQ

Billabong High
International School

During my visit to Singapore libraries, I was truly impressed by their **commitment to knowledge and learning**. The libraries were not only spacious and filled with a wealth of information, but they were also **lively places where the community could come together**.

What stood out to me was their **modern and creative designs**, which were not only aesthetically pleasing but also highly functional. The staff members were **friendly, knowledgeable, and always ready to assist visitors**. They had a **strong focus on digital resources**, offering ebooks and online databases to ensure **easy access to information for everyone**.

The libraries also boasted **advanced technology, such as virtual reality experiences and interactive learning areas**. These amenities catered to people of all ages, **encouraging a love for learning and exploration**. It was an incredible experience, highlighting **Singapore's dedication to empowering its people with knowledge**.

Now, I am super excited about the inspiration I gained from my Singapore library visits. **I can't wait to bring this innovative approach to learning and creativity to our library**. By adopting best practices from Singapore's libraries, we can create a dynamic hub for lifelong learners to thrive, share knowledge, and embrace continuous learning. **Together with my colleagues and management, I'm eager to make this a reality and establish an exceptional place of knowledge and endless possibilities.**



DR AAMAAL ALI

The Maldives
National
University

1. Layout of the libraries, open plan. **Impressive use of space, colour schemes lighting**, added ambience, attractive and up to date
2. **Use of furnishings** such as easy chairs, discussion spaces and varying sizes of tables and other arrangements complemented the set up.
- 3 'Civica' - one body coordinates all public school libraries and staff of govt. libraries. **This body being a private company who provides this service along with other services for their clientele such as MoE was an eye opener.**
5. Sports Hub: A set up run by Civica, an excellent location well planned, providing **multilevel attractions, all sports related**. Drawing in sports enthusiasts to engage in reading and spending time in such a rich resource and space.
6. Polytechnic - **charges 10 singapore dollars max as the highest rate of fine on late returnees** (a symbolic gesture only)
7. **All libraries belonged to a Consortium** - i.e. Public Libraries, School Libraries. Polytechnic Libraries, Universities Libraries. Forming partnerships and sharing for mutual gain.
8. Was surprised to learn the **University of Design Technology was open access to the public so anyone young or old was allowed into the Library premises and they could spend time reading or on wifi.**

It's been an amazing trip. The libraries visited was interesting and very very beautiful. The services they provided and the **unlimited trust they have for their users** made me feel happy. The **library architecture left me mesmerised and overwhelmed**. The staff was so kind and **friendly and so polite** in clearing all the doubts i had. **The advancement of technology in the libraries made me realise how far behind our libraries are.** But nonetheless, I gained so much knowledge in how I can implement some services with the little technology that is available here. **The spaces in all the libraries made me realise that it's not only the books that matter..** it also is the **environment**, where one would feel comfortable and happy. A place where **one could relax and let go of all the problems of daily lives**. A place where friends could **hangout and talk about their favourite authors or subjects**. A place where early learners **learn while playing and enjoying**. The services provided gave me insights on how i can implement some services with all the budget constraints we have in our libraries. **This trip has made me realise what more could be done using the less resources we have in islands.**





ATHIYYA SHAKEEL

Villa College

The BALIM/MLA Professional Development Workshop for Librarians in Singapore was a fascinating experience. The library tours itself shows how modern libraries operate in this age and time. **This experience also motivated me to do more and better and most importantly, what I could bring back home which fits to the needs of our library users.** It was wonderful to learn the latest trends they have adopted, especially in terms of technology and the user needs. **The most wonderful things** I have noticed in the library are the **spaces, the technology they use and the design** each library adopted to attract the library users. **I believe there are things we could do immediately**, without funds and things in a shorter duration and also services or resources we can get with lot of planning and in a couple of years' time. The discussions we had with the participants of this PD workshop and with the staff of the libraries visited gave me new ideas, to reflect on works previously done and share my personal experience as well. I believe there are still more things we could do in our Maldivian libraries. **It was wonderful to know that the librarians we met during the tour were willing to answer our questions even after we return back home in Maldives.**

Fathimath Anoosha

Villa College

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ! What a beautiful journey. I got the **pleasure of witnessing such a beautiful, well-developed library for the first time in my life.** I eventually got the chance to visit them and investigate them.

The architecture and interior **decor of each library is the first thing I want to draw attention to.** The advancement of **technology and how it is used in libraries** Wow! It was incredible. My words failed me. Each library offers a variety of services to its patrons, such as **exhibitions, wellness programs, inter-library loans, open access, parent access, etc.**

The atmosphere in the library is remarkable. The **inviting furnishings, the view out the window, the research and archival work, the shelf reading robot, the shelf check-out system, the independent setting, the silent area, the drop-down box, and the activities** they did in the libraries, etc. I was very impressed by the staff's warmth, generosity, and sweetness. I never felt hesitant to ask any questions or share my own experiences with them.

I have a lot of suggestions for my workplace. Ranging from **remodeling of the library and the organization of the shelves.** Budgets are necessary for certain concepts but not others. We also have difficulties. such as those related to money, technology, human resources, lack of employees, etc. Furthermore, **I discovered that a budget is not everything. A fantastic team with originality, affordability, and responsibility is required to assist in the development of our libraries in the near future.**



AMINATH SHAZINA

Academy of Dhivehi Language



On July 24th 2023 I visited the National library of Singapore, National Archives and Library at Orchard. National library nurtures **Readers for Life, Learning Communities and a Knowledgeable Nation** by promoting reading, learning and history through the network of 29 libraries including 3 partner libraries across Singapore. The National Archive promotes **public interest in their Nation's history & heritage**. Library at Orchard offers design-focused collections in 5 clusters — People, Space, Visual, Product and Lifestyle.

I visited Canadian International school library, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) library on 25th July 2023. The Canadian International School (CIS) is a **leading international school** in Singapore. **They have separate libraries for primary grade and secondary grade**. NTU comprises 7 libraries in the Yunnan Garden campus.

On 26th July 2023 I visited Sports hub library and Punggol Regional library which is the biggest public library in Singapore. Sports hub library provides users **easy access to a rich array of information services and resources** focusing on sports and active recreation.

On 27th July 2023, I visited Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) library, & Temasek Polytechnic Library. The SUTD Library is located within the SUTD campus. The campus is situated in the eastern part of Singapore, near the Changi Business Park area. **Standing at ten storeys tall, the Temasek Polytechnic Library is open to current TP students, staff & members.**

I visited Tanglin Trust School library on 28th July 2023 which was established in 1925. It is the oldest British international school in Southeast Asia.

The visits to libraries are a delightful and enriching experience for me.

The recent workshop of Singapore library visits has left a profound impact, providing insights into various **innovative strategies and services that libraries are embracing to enhance the lives of the citizens in their country**. Giving an overwhelming picture of how to take these insights and apply them to our developing country.

The concept of "grab and go" for all-inclusive libraries of the National Library Board of Singapore struck a chord, streamlining accessibility to a diverse range of resources.

The prototype strategy for streamlined archives demonstrated the potential of efficient data management and accessibility. The **inclusion of citizen archivists for transcription and translation**, oral history collections, and resources for professional growth in archives underscored libraries' commitment to cultural preservation and professional development.

The integration of **MRT mini libraries as key public library elements emphasized the importance of making knowledge accessible in everyday spaces**. Creating a safe and trusted environment for parents to engage their children showcased the library's role beyond literature.

Age-grouped categorization, hybrid library approaches blending physical and electronic resources, and extensive offerings like hybrid programs and exhibitions, highlighted the dynamic nature of modern libraries.

Key insights were gained on systematic literature searches, data management, copyright guidance, research integrity, data visualization, reference management, and publishing. Librarian-verified journals and categorized **repositories underscored the importance of quality information** dissemination. Leveraging cloud-based storage and digital record-keeping proved pivotal for seamless operations.

Innovations such as student librarians, peer-to-peer messaging, classroom shelves, and late fee waivers foster engagement and accessibility. The concept of "**A Night of the Living Library**" introduced gamification, appealing to various services. **"TEMI" and "Robbie," the AI library assistants**, offer a glimpse into the potential of smart technology.

The notion of **libraries catering to diverse age groups** through interactive, audio-enhanced book libraries opens doors to inclusive reading. Encouraging parental participation in early libraries through storytelling and themed resources ensures a holistic learning experience. **These takeaways collectively reinforce the library's evolving role as a dynamic, inclusive, and knowledge-driven community hub.**

FATHIMATH
SHUMANY
SHAMIN

The Maldives
National
University



AMINATH SHUKUMA

Maafushi School

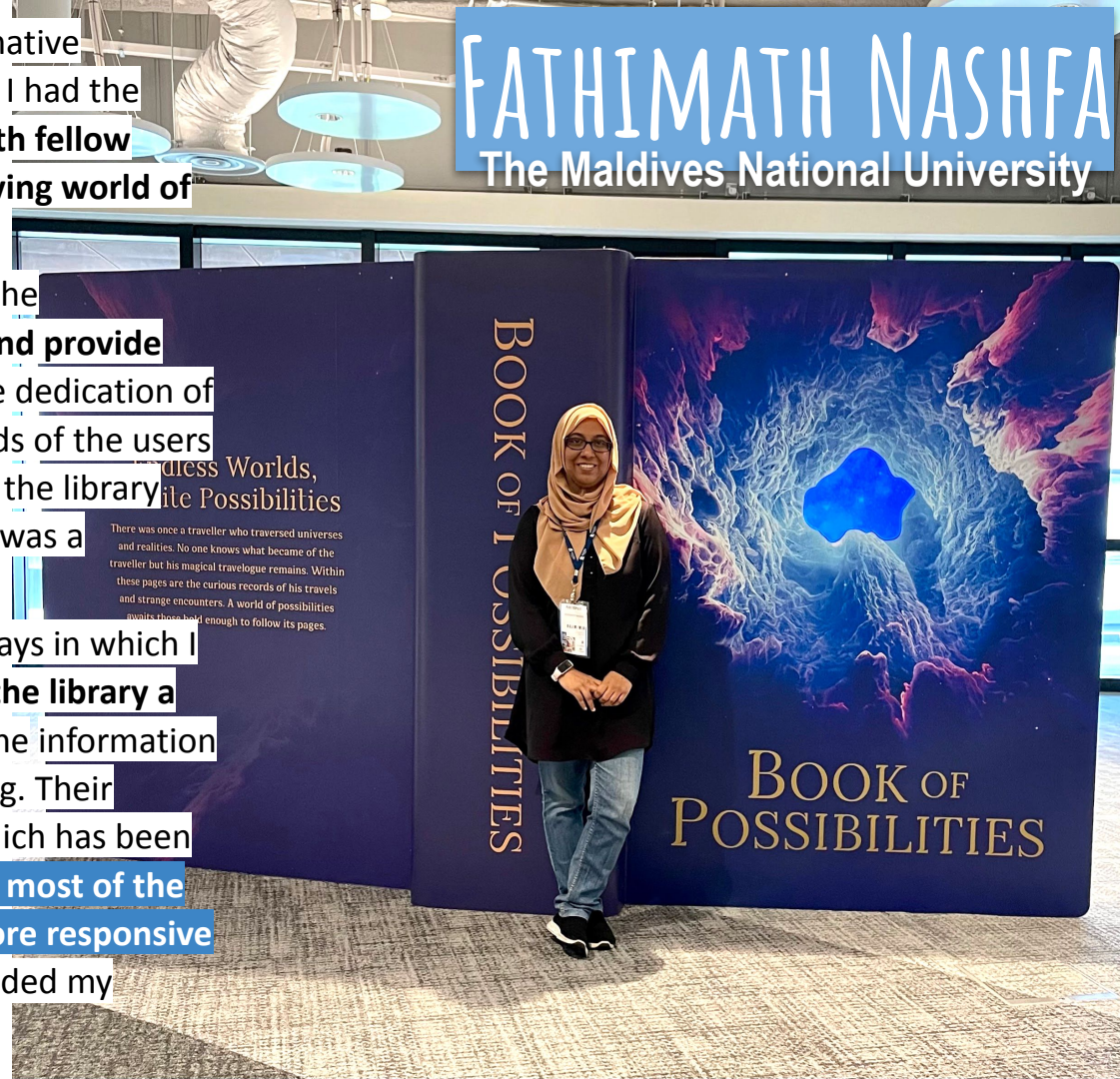


The tour of Singapore's libraries was captivating, with passionate professionals sharing **innovative ideas**. The **librarians' enthusiasm for their work was truly inspiring**, as they designed the library to meet the needs of their visitors, making it a **comfortable and inviting space for learning**. The study tour left a **lasting positive impact, revealing a vibrant literary culture in Singapore**. The modern buildings and state-of-the-art facilities showed their **dedication to education and lifelong learning**. **Now, with renewed purpose, we aim to transform our library into a hub of knowledge and discovery, providing an enjoyable experience for our patrons and fostering a strong sense of community**. I'm excited to share what I've learned with my colleagues and together, we'll create a space that **encourages exploration and learning**. With dedication, we'll make our library a sanctuary of endless possibilities, where ideas can take flight and dreams can come true. **This journey has taught us how important it is to embrace innovation and nurture knowledge for a better future**. We are committed to improving our library's services and redefining its role, creating a lively space where ideas flow and knowledge empowers generations. **I'm excited to visit more libraries and learn even more in this field.**

This workshop has been an enriching and transformative experience for me. Over the course of several days, I had the **opportunity to expand my knowledge, connect with fellow librarians, and gain valuable insights into the evolving world of libraries** and information management.

One of the key takeaways from this workshop was the **importance of identifying the needs of the users and provide services and design allocate space accordingly**. The dedication of the library staff, to be available to meet the demands of the users was commendable. Additionally, the trust between the library staff and the users, in all of the libraries we visited, was a wonderful surprise and admirable.

The workshop experience has made me consider ways in which I want to make changes to my workplace and **make the library a more welcoming place for users**. The speakers of the information session were incredibly knowledgeable and inspiring. Their success stories and insights opened up my mind which has been very narrow, and has **made me want to implement most of the suggested positive changes to make our library more responsive to the needs of the users**. The workshop has expanded my horizons, both professionally and personally.





Singapore libraries showcase **modern designs, self-checkout systems, RFID, mobile applications, and diverse spaces for reading, dining, and quiet zones**. The Punggol Regional Library caters to individuals with impairments and features a community wall. The teacher librarian approach of **reading stories in Tanglin Trust School** was among the striking experiences. The National Library Board (NLB) Singapore **exhibition, maps, and rare books display** were outstanding. The **preservation and conservation lab** as well as the oral interview room of the National Archives of Singapore were very noteworthy. **The video wall at the Library@Orchard** and custom-designed shelving for certain things, such as a pull-out drawer cabinet, are two examples. **The spherical cushioned seats in the walls** and genre logo in the spine were a great innovation from Canadian International School (Lakeside Campus), and the fact that they **enable parents to use the library was outstanding**.

The library at Nanyang International University (NTU) a wellness center, citation report service, and TEMI, **the librarian assistant robot**, which is a fantastic innovation. The Sports Hub Library included large chess titles and a chess board area, which was an appealing notion. It was notable how they attempted to pique individuals' interest in sports. **The locker for interlibrary loan books** at Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) Library and Temsak Polytechnic Library is far more sophisticated. **The most intriguing concept was seeing "Robbie" the robot.**

The Singapore Libraries have been thoroughly established, and some of the principles can be replicated in the Maldives with or without money.

This tour of visiting different Singapore libraries has been enlightening and inspiring, as we were able to see the **beautifully designed libraries with wonderful spaces for different uses of the libraries**. And most importantly, from the librarians, we gained a lot of valuable knowledge about how they provide the different library services. **A striking observation made was that the libraries we visited always continued to identify the student's or patron's needs and provide or improve services.** One of our visits to Punggol Regional Library we saw that the library served diverse needs of the local community such as people with special needs. This experience enriched our understanding that **we need to develop ourselves as librarians to modernize and reach out to patrons by starting with the small things in the Maldives.**

FATHIMATH SHAHUNEEZ
MANSOOR

Full-time
student at MNU



I'm so glad that I decided to participate in this trip. I had so much fun and a great time visiting libraries in Singapore! I had an amazing experience learning and exploring the resources there. **The storytelling, robbie, and self relaxation area of the university library and the interior of those libraries are really interesting.** And the passion and commitment of the librarians is really inspiring. **It's wonderful to see people who are so dedicated to sharing knowledge and helping others learn.**



Khalidha Ali
People's Majlis



MARIYAM SOBEEHA

National
Library,
Maldives

Singapore libraries are **dynamic and versatile institutions that go above and beyond their traditional roles**. They embody the **nation's dedication to education, innovation, and community development**, making them **invaluable assets in shaping a knowledge-driven and progressive society**.

Innovation is emphasized, as libraries offer advanced technologies, digital resources, and makerspaces to **promote creativity and entrepreneurship**, encouraging individuals to experiment with emerging ideas and collaborate on projects. The libraries serve as **inclusive meeting places** for people from diverse backgrounds, engaging in various activities and workshops that promote **social cohesion and community building**.

Most of the libraries are an **architectural marvel, combining sleek design with a conducive study environment**. With its abundant natural light and spacious study areas, it provides an **inspiring atmosphere for students and researchers to immerse themselves in their work**.

Each library stands out with its **welcoming ambiance and an impressive range of resources**. They cater to the diverse needs of the community, offering a diverse collection of books, multimedia materials, and **interactive learning spaces for children and adults alike**. Its vibrant programs and events foster a strong sense of community and promote a love for reading.

Sports Hub **Library complements the active lifestyle of Singaporeans** with its unique focus on sports-related materials. From sports science to biographies of athletes, this specialized library caters to sports enthusiasts, athletes, and fitness seekers, making it a treasure trove for the health-conscious.

Reflecting on our training trip fills me with immense gratitude and inspiration. The collective energy and enthusiasm brought to each session were remarkable, fostering a strong sense of unity and fellowship. **The diversity of workshops and experiences expanded our horizons, pushing us to think innovatively and collaborate effectively.** The trip highlighted the power of collaboration, encouraging us to support one another in embracing challenges and seeking growth. Our shared dedication to learning and personal development was evident in every interaction. As we get back to work, let's incorporate these lessons learned and a stronger sense of community into everything we do. **This experience has served as a platform for larger accomplishments, and I'm interested to see how we'll use these lessons to guide our future work.** Our growth is a continuous journey, and the knowledge we've gained there is a powerful tool that we can leverage to overcome challenges and achieve our goals. Let's remain inspired by the memories we've created and the connections we've established, using them as a driving force to reach new heights of excellence. Thank you all for your enthusiasm, dedication, and positive energy throughout this training trip. **I look forward to seeing the incredible impact of our shared experiences in the days and weeks to come.**

**Rishfa
Ibrahim**

The Maldives
National
University





In a world of Kindles, iPads and ebooks, you may think public libraries are diminishing. Well, not in Singapore. Along with fantastic bookshops and comic book treasures, the city is home to 26 public libraries, each with special amenities and inviting settings to spice up your reading time. **The libraries have a number of services, including the Toy Library, which promotes sensory play in kids, Calm Pods, accessible resources, assistive technology gadgets all across the building, and an entire level dedicated to learning more about cutting-edge technology. The interiors are really gorgeous.** Expanded offerings for both passionate readers and those eager to learn, including **welcoming reading and learning spaces for kids, teens, and adults, learning pods, and books with augmented reality.**

By offering dependable, accessible, and internationally connected library and information services, the National Library Board **fosters reading comprehension and information literacy. This is done through a vast public library network and the National Library.**



SANFA HASSAN
Maavashu School

It was indeed a wonderful trip. Everything was well organised. I am really grateful for the opportunity and glad to be a part of this trip. **Visiting advanced libraries, connecting with professional librarians inspired me to develop my skills and knowledge. Learned a lot and got many creative ideas that can be implemented in our libraries.**

The trip to the libraries during our visit to Singapore was truly an amazing opportunity that left an indelible impression. **It provided a wealth of knowledge and an enriching experience that exceeded all expectations.** The tour offered an eye-opening insight into the world of libraries and their role in fostering learning and innovation. Exploring the libraries in Singapore was like stepping into a realm of limitless possibilities. It was a journey of discovery, where each library presented unique ideas and approaches to enhance their services. From the breathtaking architecture of the National Library to the specialized collections in school and university libraries, every stop offered a new perspective on the power of information dissemination.

Throughout the tour, I learned invaluable lessons on how libraries can evolve and adapt to the changing needs of their users. **The emphasis on creating welcoming spaces, promoting digital literacy, and fostering community engagement was truly inspiring.** The trip not only broadened my views but also ignited a spark of innovation. **It was like walking through a dreamland of knowledge where books, technology, and human interaction converged harmoniously.** The memories of this trip will forever serve as a wellspring of inspiration as we work towards elevating our own library offerings.

The visit to Singapore's libraries was an incredible journey that left a lasting impact, igniting a desire to bring positive change and implement novel ideas in our own library services.



SHAMOONA MOHAMED

Majeedhiya

School



My trip to Singapore has given me remarkable experiences and memories. The **high-tech and modern libraries** I have visited have made me speechless as I was not aware of the contemporary technological advances. The **hospitality and friendliness of librarians** have made us feel at ease and made it easy for the students to ask whatever inquiry they need to clarify in every library we visited. **This opportunity has led me to expand my knowledge** in this field and enhance the personal growth of my career.

Further, I will highlight the most interesting things I have encountered. I have seen that **all the libraries have software, book drops, self-borrowing**, and lending services. The **interior design of the libraries is outstanding**. Likewise, I have seen that librarians are not always there to monitor the students, instead, most of them are **self-learning students**. In all libraries, I have seen **study areas** and shelves arranged in the Dewey classifications system. The **auto-classifying machine and self-reading robot** was one of the most high-tech machines I have seen.

Through this trip I have gathered **many wonderful ideas to apply in our own libraries**. Some of them are the classification methods, book drops, the library designs, book reviews from students, and the elderly services given by them.

I couldn't stop comparing the library resources we have and the services we as librarians are providing. Yes, it's true that we are lacking the technological advancements, budget, and space that some libraries have, **I was truly impressed by the innovative ways they utilized their resources and catered to the users' needs.** The level of trust they placed in their users, the thoughtful design of the library, and the creation of spaces to the users left a lasting impact on me. As a librarian, I gained invaluable insights into enhancing the services I provide and improving user interactions. **I realized that a library is more than just a collection of books; it should offer a conducive space, thoughtful design, and a welcoming atmosphere, ensuring that every visitor can enjoy a quality experience.**

The sense of calmness I experienced in each library was truly remarkable, and it's essential for us to create such spaces where users can have a similarly enriching experience. Moreover, I came across innovative ideas like the Dropbox concept that can be implemented with minimal or no budget.

It is evident that even with limited resources, we can establish various dedicated areas such as silent reading zones, discussion spaces, and cozy corners for children using creative and cost-effective solutions.

Thuzuhath Ahmed

Hithadhoo School





ZAFOORA ZAHIR

The Maldives

National University

1. **Mind blowing interior design.** Libraries are designed in a way that attracts the focused group. They make sure that the library is a comfortable and a silent place. They have open spaces for individual study, group study, and for certain discussions/ sessions. These libraries have been designed in a way that the extra noise is blocked. A very good signage system which provides effective information and direction for users.
2. **Library is not only about books.** There are so many things going on in the library like organizing events, **conducting sessions and having exhibitions**, providing relaxing areas and having engaging games and activities
3. **Advanced Technology.** Using self-check-in and checkout machine reduce the workload of staff. **The Robot they use for the shelf reading is an excellent equipment** that can be used for stock take. It is able to locate misplaced items or missing items.
Senior Citizens are taught to get familiarized with technology.
Only one copy of the book is kept in the shelf and rest are weeded and digitized. In this way we can utilize the space for some productive work.
4. **Engagement with the users.** Feedback from users are considered important and improvements are made according to the user need. Showcase of user work is in fact accepting and appreciating their work.
5. **Connection with the parent organization.** They have a very well managed connection with the parent organization and relevant institutions where they have clear common goals to achieve.

Embarking on a captivating journey through various libraries in Singapore, one couldn't help but be impressed by the city-state's unwavering commitment to knowledge and intellectual enrichment. From the inviting and contemporary spaces of Library@Orchard, **which ignites a passion for reading and learning**, to the comprehensive initiatives led by the National Library Board (NLB) Singapore, the dedication to serving the public's informational needs was apparent. The National Archives of Singapore offered a profound glimpse into the **nation's historical legacy**, preserving invaluable records that tell the story of the past. Meanwhile, the Canadian International School (Lakeside Campus) emphasized a **global perspective through its focus on international education and access to diverse learning resources**. Nanyang International University (NTU) Libraries stood as **beacons of knowledge**, supporting higher education and research endeavors. The Sports Hub Library **uniquely integrated leisure and learning, promoting a balanced lifestyle**. Punggol Regional Library, with its **community-oriented approach, fostered a sense of belonging** and engagement through tailored programs. The Singapore University of Technology & Design (SUTD) library **nurtured innovation and creativity**, aligning with the institution's tech-driven focus. Temasek Polytechnic Library catered to **practical learning needs**, while the library at Tanglin Trust School instilled a **passion for literature and lifelong learning** among its diverse student body. **Overall, the diverse array of libraries in Singapore showcased a society deeply committed to promoting education, culture, and the continuous pursuit of knowledge, solidifying Singapore's position as a hub for intellectual growth and progress.**

ZIHUNA JABIR
Hithadhoo School



WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

A collaboration between
Maldives & Singapore / MNU-FA & MLA

Dr Aminath Riyaz

Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, MNU.
Course coordinator of Bachelor of Arts in Library & Information Management program at MNU

Dr Gina de Alwis Jayasuriya was head of the Library at the Singapore Institute of Management from September 1991 to December 2018.
Current independent researcher.

Gina, in collaboration with Aminath, conducted a research study on continuing professional development (CPD) of LIS professionals in the Maldives during 2019 to 2021.



Further details of the project and links to the dissemination of the findings can be viewed from <https://librarylearningspace.com/continuing-professional-development-cpd-for-lis-professionals-in-selected-asian-countries/>



Fathimath Nashath, currently serving as the Training Officer of MLA
Chief Library at the Islamic University of Maldives



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR LIBRARIANS

In Singapore, 21-28 July 2023

**Collaboratively organised by
Faculty of Arts (MNU),
Maldives Library Association, &
Dr Gina de Alwis from Singapore**

22 PARTICIPANTS

LIBRARIANS

- 8 from Academic libraries
- 2 from Special libraries
- 2 from National Library
- 9 from School libraries

17 students from the
MNU Bachelor of Arts in Library &
Information Management program