

**Capacity Building through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Cambodia:
Perspectives of Library Employees and Training Providers**

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Abstract

The evolving information ecosystem is redefining the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession, requiring individuals to reskill and upskill to stay relevant and adapt to changes in their jobs and careers. The recent Covid-19 pandemic, where face-to-face interactions were restricted, highlighted the urgent need for library employees to acquire new skills to continue providing access to information resources and services. Continuing professional development (CPD) is one of the viable options for library staff to acquire new skills and to keep up to date with emerging trends and developments in the LIS profession. The objective of this paper is to present findings of a study conducted to obtain views of training providers and library employees on CPD opportunities available to LIS employees in Cambodia. The study population included library employees and LIS training providers. As a dominant number of libraries in Cambodia are school libraries, special attention was given to training efforts made by the Cambodian government and NGOs to upgrade school libraries to elevate them to the standards of 21st century learning centres. The study also explored the participants' perceptions of the possible barriers impacting training providers and library employees. Suggestions were also solicited for improving the range, variety, and effectiveness of CPD programs. A total of 26 semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom, 14 with training providers and 12 with library employees. The interviews were conducted from August to October 2021, during the peak of the pandemic. The interview participants were drawn from national, academic, special, and school libraries as well as Non-governmental Organisations involved in library development in the country. The findings revealed that a training gap already existed even prior to the pandemic. The paper will also identify key barriers that resonated strongly with both groups of study participants and areas of potential improvement in the provision of CPD programs. The findings of this study are expected to provide some background information for developing a comprehensive CPD plan for the LIS sector in Cambodia. These findings may resonate with other developing countries that may face similar scenarios.

Keywords: Continuing professional development, skills upgrade, training, career development, school librarians, Cambodia

Introduction

Technological developments have transformed how we live, work and study. It has also redefined the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession and the information ecosystem. Consequently, individuals have had to reskill and upskill to acquire new

competencies to stay relevant and to effectively meet changing user needs. The recent Covid-19 pandemic which acted as a catalyst to put the digitalization process in libraries on a fast track saw library employees scrambling to acquire requisite skills thus reinforcing the importance of continuing professional development (CPD). Attending CPD programs is one of the most viable ways to bridge the skills gap and to keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the profession. The *IFLA School Library Guidelines* (2015), *IFLA Guidelines for CPD* (Varlejs, 2016), *IFLA public library service guidelines* (2010) and *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto* (2022) highlight the criticality for LIS employees to participate in CPD to help realise organizational goals. CPD programs are usually offered by employing institutions, professional associations, LIS academic programs/schools, library vendors, donors, and other agencies. However, due to diverse constraints, the availability and quality of CPD programs for library employees in the South and South-East Asian region varies.

In January 2019, the first researcher initiated a research project on “Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Librarians in Selected Asian Countries” to be conducted in collaboration with local library associations and library schools. The main objective of the research project is to understand the overall situation of CPD programs in these countries from the two-dimensional perspectives of LIS employees and training providers (TP). However, the researchers also recognised that using the same data collection tools could be challenging given the diversity, unique situations, maturity level of LIS profession, availability of research collaborators, and intellectual capacity of potential respondents in these countries. The first country-specific study was undertaken in the Republic of Maldives (De Alwis Jayasuriya et al, 2021a; De Alwis Jayasuriya et al, 2021b).

The researchers subsequently reviewed some countries in South East Asia for this study. Cambodia was considered a suitable site due to the lack of research on this topic in the country (Hickok, 2020; Mao, 2011). The only exception was a report by Jarvis, Lalonde & Nhean (2006) which noted that data was collected in 2002 on libraries as part of a study on the publishing industry. However, the data was not adequately analysed or reported.

This article reports selected findings of a study conducted on the status of formal CPD activities available to library employees in Cambodia from the perspective of both library employees and training providers (TP).

Author biographies:

Gina de Alwis Jayasuriya is former head of the Singapore Institute of Management library (1991–2018) and an independent LIS researcher. Gina holds a PhD in Information Studies from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and her thesis was entitled *Information seeking behaviour of managers in a digital environment*. Her research interests include CPD, the evolving roles of librarians and competencies for the 21st century, international librarianship, information-seeking behaviour, and emerging trends and technologies impacting libraries. She conducted the first study on CPD for librarians in the Maldives (2019–2020) and has published the findings in *IFLA Journal* (2021) and the *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* (2022).

Shaheen Majid is a retired associate professor of Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His research interests include LIS education, information literacy, CPD, information and knowledge sharing, and information-needs and information-seeking behaviour. He has authored more than 250 research articles, conference papers, book chapters and other publications.

The Cambodian LIS Sector

The Royal Kingdom of Cambodia, located in Southeast Asia has a long and rich history. Cambodia has undergone significant transition over the last two decades, reaching lower middle-income status in 2015, making it one of the fastest-growing economies in the world ([World Bank, 2021](#)). Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down the pace of this progress. Khmer is the official language and mother tongue of Cambodians. Despite English being the most widely learnt second language in the country, Cambodia is ranked 97th out of 112 countries in the English proficiency index (EF, 2021).

The library sector in Cambodia is still in the development stage and includes the National Library of Cambodia (NLC), school, academic and special libraries (Hickok, 2020). School library development in Cambodia is primarily associated with NGOs that have been engaged in advancing primary and secondary school education in the country (Mao, 2011; Hickok, 2019). The launch of the New Generation Schools reform in 2016, a collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and [Kampuchea Action to Promote Education](#)¹ saw the provision of 21st-century learning environments in schools including libraries (Kampuchea Action to Promote Education, 2020; Ministry of Education, 2016, 2020). The network of academic libraries in the universities are of varying capacities and quality although the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (2010) stipulates minimum standards. Hickok (2020) opines that the academic libraries in Cambodia are more developed than other types of libraries. The special libraries are mainly located in government institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Suon, 2009). The country's library system also includes prison libraries, library education centres in garment factories and temple libraries (Mao, 2011; Plathe, 1993; [Sipar, n.d.](#)).

A government supported public library system is non-existent in the country and the NLC, the Alliance Francaise Library and the Centre for Khmer Studies (CKS) Library in Seam Reap, have attempted to address this gap (Centre for Khmer Studies, 2004-2005; Centre for Khmer Studies, 2014-2015; D'Amicantonio, 1997; Hickok, 2019; 2020; Plathe, 1993). Many NGOs have also come on board to address this gap by establishing community and mobile libraries (Hickok, 2019; Mao, 2011; [Sipar, n.d.](#)).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Cambodia

During the decades from the 1980's to 2010 many funding agencies attempted to address library employees training gaps by awarding fellowships to study overseas and conducting in-country workshops (Plathe, 1993; Bywater, 1997; D'Amicantonio, 1997; Conference of Directors, 2001). The first in-country training program for library employees was conducted in English and French for the NLC staff to prepare them for reopening of the library in January 1980 (Jarvis, 1995). In 1987, Margaret Bywater (Bywater, 1997), a professional librarian from Australia with the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), conducted a workshop for teacher librarians. Since then, Bywater as Library Resources Advisor for the Asia Foundation offered training to staff of different types of libraries (D'Amicantonio, 1997; Jarvis, Lalonde & Nhean, 2006). Other in-country training initiatives were from the Cambodian Library Association (CLA) and the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) (Conference of Directors, 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009). At a regional level participation in workshops such as the IFLA Advancement of Librarianship in Developing Countries Programme (1994) were a means to garner exposure to and opportunities to network with regional librarians.

The establishment of the Cambodian Librarians and Documentalists Association (ABDC)² in 1996 and its relaunch in 2013 was recognised as a need for continued capacity building of library professionals in the country. The association has focused both on in-country training as well as sending members to overseas trainings (Hickok, 2019; 2020; Mao, 2011).

As early as 1993, it was recognised that school librarians were not receiving relevant training as the library at the Ministry of Education in Phnom Penh lacked trained librarians (Plathe, 1993). This drawback seems to have persisted over the years and capacity building of secondary school librarians showed little progress (Pedagogical Research Department, MoEYS, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2010). Two key developments implemented during this period included (a) adoption of the ‘Standards for Primary School Libraries’ (Ministry of Education, 2011), and (b) inclusion of clauses in the ‘Education Strategic Plan, 2014-2018’ (Ministry of Education, 2014) recognising the need to train school librarians. Despite these developments, a World Vision study (2016) highlighted that most school librarians did not seem to have received adequate training.

To summarise, CPD training in the early decades was ad-hoc and informal, except for a few years after the relaunch of CLA (Hickok, 2020) and highlighted the need for a more concerted approach to develop a resource pool (Plathe, 1993). However, the government’s priority at that time was on development and rebuilding of infrastructures after the years of Khmer Rouge rule and Plathe’s recommendations were not realised (Bywater, 1997; UNESCO Cambodia, 1997).

Current state of CPD and key barriers

The primary LIS continuing education providers in the country are the Cambodian Library Association (CLA) and the National Library of Cambodia (NLC). The literature review revealed the LIS CPD ecosystem in Cambodia has been ad-hoc and informal over the years, and inactive during the Covid-19 pandemic. The CLA has been on hiatus in the recent past and the NLC has not been able to take a lead role in training activities for many years due to severe resource constraints, both financial and unavailability of professionally qualified resource persons. See Appendix 1 for a list of CPD programs conducted in Cambodia between 2013 – 2021.

The only LIS training providers that have been actively contributing to capacity building of library employees and the CPD ecosystem over the last decade are the Centre for Khmer Studies (CKS) Library³, Sipar and certain NGOs that support school libraries. Since 2013 the CKS library has been conducting annual workshops targeted at the academic and special library sectors (Centre for Khmer Studies, 2021). Sipar (n.d.) is the only LIS training provider that currently offers fee-based training programs in the country.

Key barriers to the development of CPD for librarians include the absence of a professional LIS education program that could also take up CPD responsibilities in the country (Mao, 2011; Hickok, 2020). This has also led to a severe dearth of LIS professionals who could serve as resource persons. In 1997 there were only two librarians in the country with a master’s in Library Science (D’Amicantonio, 1997). Almost a decade later in 2010, the number of professionally trained librarians with a MLIS or equivalent had increased to just four (Hickok, 2019).

Almost all the school libraries are maintained by teachers or school staff members who lacked formal library training. However, the situation in private and international schools was better as they are more richly resourced.

Barriers to CPD that school library employees are challenged to include: the absence of a national training program for teacher-librarians (Hickok, 2019); lack of a component on libraries in trainee teacher' curriculum; short duration of training programs to one to three days due to lack of or limited funding; lack of funds to meet travelling and accommodation expenses of participants; and the inability to take leave on work days to attend training.

Research objective and design

The literature review suggests an absence of research on the overall LIS sector as well as the state of CPD opportunities available to LIS employees in Cambodia (Hickok, 2020; Mao, 2011). This study is expected to provide insights into the formal CPD programs available to library employees in the country as well as to contribute to the sparse body of knowledge on Cambodia's LIS sector.

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

The population for this study encompassed library staff responsible for different library operations. The scope of CPD activities in this study was limited to formal learning activities offered by different stakeholders. The semi-structured interview format was adopted for the research as it facilitated engagement with the participants to obtain their perspectives.

In order to develop an initial understanding of the local situation and to help frame the interview questions, a short Google doc survey was sent to six known training providers (TP). As the responses rate was slow due to Internet bandwidth issues, the survey was converted to a Word document. It was eventually discovered that Cambodians mostly use Telegram, a cross-platform instant messaging service for communication purposes. Thereafter, all communication with the study participants was done via Telegram.

Two sets of interview questions were prepared for two groups of the participants, i.e., training providers and library employees. The guiding research question for this study was "What are the views of training providers and library employees of the CPD opportunities available in Cambodia". The final question to both groups aimed to solicit suggestions for improving CPD programs for LIS employees in Cambodia. A simple interview guide was prepared for the school librarians to help them understand the scope and purpose of the study.

The interview schedule was pre-tested on a professional librarian/trainer via zoom and some questions were rewritten to improve clarity and comprehension. A purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of participants to ensure better representation. Sample population for the interviews comprised two categories of participants:

(1) Active LIS training providers (TP):

Trainers with state organisations, the private sector, and NGOs; academic librarians/trainers, Library Management System (LMS) consultants; and a CEO of a state organisation.

(2) Library employees:

Included participants from institutes of higher education and schools, both in the public and private sectors, and special libraries operated by some NGOs.

The interview questions were emailed to the participants ahead of their interviews. A total of 26 one-on-one interviews were conducted by the first author via zoom from August to October 2021 and typically lasted from 45 minutes to one hour.

The participants were assured at the beginning of the interviews that their identities and responses will remain anonymous and they are allowed to withdraw from the study anytime without any consequences. None of the participants withdrew. Given the very small number of professionally trained librarians in the country and the fact that the same individuals could hold a few different portfolios, some variations were incorporated into the interview questions to cater to the nature of the organisation/s represented, portfolios held and individual experiences, etc. However, each such interview was counted as one regardless of the number of portfolios held by the interviewee.

With participants' permission the interviews were recorded to help in transcription. The thematic analysis technique was used to categorise and develop common themes from the interview transcripts. However, formal coding practices were not adopted as the study was more like applied research to understand the landscape and not to develop a theory.

Findings

The sample of 26 study participants included 14 training providers and 12 library employees. One participant, a library employee was a non-Cambodian academic librarian who had been researching the Asian LIS sector for over 15 years. It was perceived that his perspectives would add value to the research.

An analysis of the participants' characteristics revealed that the highest academic qualifications of the TPs included 13 individuals with a Master or a higher qualification and one participant with an associateship of a foreign national LIS body. Their years of work experiences extended from less than 10 years' to over 30 years. Eight TPs held a membership of the Cambodian Library Association (CLA), either institutional or personal.

Of the 12 library employees, seven held a masters and five a bachelor qualification. Their library experiences ranged from less than 10 years' to over 30 years. Membership of the Cambodian Library Association (CLA), either personal or institutional, was held by six employees. The remaining interviewees did not hold a CLA membership.

Barriers to undertaking/organising CPD programs

Library employees and TPs were asked about the barriers they have faced when undertaking or organising CPD programs. Table 1 reflects responses of both groups of participants which are grouped thematically by category.

Table 1: Barriers to CPD: Perspectives of Library employees and TPs

Theme	Barrier	Library employees	Training Providers	Reasons for barriers
CPD	Absence of /few training activities	✓	✓	Trainings are mostly on the same topics; Lack of topics on latest trends in LIS

Theme	Barrier	Library employees	Training Providers	Reasons for barriers
Availability	Lack of awareness of the training needs of LIS employees	✓	✓	Training needs assessments not conducted
Professional Association	CLA as a primary CPD provider is inactive	✓	✓	Hiatus of the CLA due to lack of volunteers with a strong commitment and lack of annual budget
LIS education	Lack of a professional LIS education program/school to act as CPD advisor and training provider	✓	✓	Lack of resource persons in the country to offer CPD programs on latest LIS trends
Personal	Not convenient as attendance involves travelling	✓	-	Inability to travel to distant provinces or Phnom Penh for training as employees need to pay for accommodation out of their own personal funds
	Challenges when trying to learn/teach online	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees: poor internet connection; lack of conducive space for learning in office due to difficulty of finding suitable alternative learning space at home; inability to attend live online sessions due to time difference; and difficulty in understanding foreign accents - TPs: unable to offer live online learning programs as teacher library employees lack required skills to use mobile technology for learning
	Lack of proficiency in the English language	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees: lack of English language proficiency; unfamiliarity with technical terms often used in online and in-person local programs. - TPs: language barrier when overseas speakers are deployed
Institutional Funding	TPs unable to attract aid agencies/ other organisations to fund CPD for LIS employees	-	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Duration of training programs and content offered are affected. - Inability of teacher library employees to attend training due to lack of funds for accommodation/ travel, etc.
	TPs tied-down due to limited financial resources	-	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inability to recruit resource persons from outside the organisation as honorarium is not attractive
	Employers do not fund CPD activities	✓	-	Employees unable to pay for travel/accommodation out of personal funds
Institutional	Lack of employer/ library management commitment/ support	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees: lack a formal staff development program - TPs: unable to offer training on weekdays as teacher library employees are unable to get leave/time off
	Inability of employer to recognise the value of CPD activities	✓	✓	A formal qualification is not awarded
	Heavy workload	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees: unable to get a substitute colleague to fill-in while attending training - TPs: bogged down with their regular work assignments
	Disruption of projects due to the Covid-19 outbreak	-	✓	Unable to hand over completed projects, book distribution and training programs disrupted.

Findings revealed some commonalities and differences regarding barriers faced by the two participating groups. Some common key barriers included: a lack of or limited availability of CPD programs which may be repetitive; lack of awareness of training needs of library employees; inactivity of CLA; and the lack of a professional LIS education program/school to act as CPD advisor and training provider. On the contrary, although barriers such as trying to learn/teach online and lack of proficiency in the English language; limited institutional funding; lack of employer/ library management commitment/ support; lack of employer recognition of the value of CPD activities and, heavy workload were identified by both groups they put emphasis on slightly different aspects. For example, the institutional funding barrier– reflected the divergent concerns of the two participant groups. Whilst library employees spoke about those employers who did not allocate funds for CPDs, the TPs outlined that shortage of funds usually result in reduced training duration, and inability to recruit external resource persons due to unattractive honorarium.

Suggestions to improve CPD programs

The final interview question asked the participants to offer up to three suggestions for improving CPD programs Cambodia. Whilst many of the suggestions were repetitive, indicating their importance, others were unique. The suggestions are grouped thematically with their frequency of occurrences. Table 2(a) represents suggestions targeted at improving CPD for library employees in general and Table 2(b) is specifically aimed at the teacher library employees.

Table 2(a): Suggestions for improving CPD program in Cambodia

Theme	Suggestions
CPD Program development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise regular CPD programs for librarians in Cambodia (7 participants) Provide trainings appropriate to the current needs (3 participants) Conduct a needs assessment to develop a capacity building framework (2 participants) Conduct CPD programs in Khmer language (1 participant) Government should assign one public higher education institution to provide regular CPD training to library employees (1 participant). Offer CPD programs to LIS employees in all ministries in Cambodia (1 participant)
Library Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cambodian Library Association should offer regular training programs to library employees. (10 participants) Invite external trainers with an understanding of the situation in Cambodia to conduct training programs. Use overseas trained local librarians who can speak Khmer to help with translation (4 participants) Establish strong partnerships with regional and international LIS related organisations to offer regular CPD program to library employees (1 participant).
Improve resource base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a partnership between a university in Asia which has developed strong LIS CPD programs and RUPP or another university in Cambodia (1 participant) Offer Cambodian LIS professionals who have the potential to become good trainers, scholarships to study abroad (1 participant) Source for international experts to develop Train the Trainer programs (1 participant) Train NLC staff so that they can train the local library employees (1 participant).
Improve other resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget to support travelling to attend training (4 participants). Establish a training facility for LIS employees (1 participant).
LIS Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a professional LIS education program (as a major or a minor) and later as an independent department in a university (16 participants)
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain support of institutional management (6 participants) Support and encouragement of employers to motivate their librarians to participate in library training (3 participants).

Table 2(b): Suggestions for improving CPD program for teacher library employees

Theme	Suggestions
LIS CPD Program development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoEYS should establish a department to support school libraries and school librarians (2 participants) • Prepare a training schedule (2 participants) • Provide IT skills to teacher librarians to facilitate participation in online learning and digital initiatives (2 participants) • Start training at a basic level to facilitate the acquisition of fundamental library skills (2 participants) • The approach/model for training should be as simple as possible (2 participants). • Develop a Training Manual (1 participant) • Duration of the training should be maximum of four (4) days, adopting the adult learning approach. (1 participant) • Introduce a pre-Service program to train teacher librarians in the next 4-5 years (1 participant).
Library Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLA or other relevant organizations should consider creating training videos to support library employees based in the provinces. As an alternative consider recruiting volunteers who can produce such training videos (1 participant).
Improve other resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate budget for travelling to attend training at least once a year (1 participant). • Announce the training program schedule once or twice a year (1 participant) • Provide teachers leave for training rather than asking them to attend training during their vacations (1 participant)
LIS Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support NGOs to develop LIS academic courses (1 participant).

A majority of the suggestions from both groups of participants was notably focused on measures to improve CPD programs in the country. Some key suggestions that stood out were the following:

- Identify a public higher education institute to take on the role of administering LIS CPD programs.
- Strengthen the national library association to act as a primary LIS CPD provider in the country; and,
- Establish a professional LIS academic program to offer an accredited and state recognised qualification which will help develop a LIS resource pool.

Suggestions to strengthen the CPD for teacher library employees included the following:

- Identify a public education institution to coordinate planning and execution of CPD programs.
- Encourage and support NGOs interested to develop LIS academic programs.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study, the first to be conducted on the state of CPD for LIS employees in Cambodia revealed that the CPD ecosystem in the country is very sparse.

Based on the findings the following are some potential areas for improvement:

- (a) Conduct training programs on a regular basis on a wide range of topics with emphasis on latest trends via different delivery modes;

- (b) Organise an annual national-level meeting to discuss library staff development issues; and
- (c) Conduct a training needs assessment study to tailor training programs more effectively.

It is also recommended that library employees should be encouraged to take measures to develop a basic proficiency in English language. This would boost their confidence and participation in CPD programs offered by international training providers, motivate them to network with professionals in other countries, and read professional literature in English language. Additionally, encouraging employees to acquire IT skills would enable them to perform more effectively at their work places. The importance of acquiring IT skills was also reinforced during the Covid-19 pandemic when face-to-face training was not an option. The Cambodian government has recognised the existence of the digital skills gap (Wiley, 2022) and has taken steps to address the issue (Korea International Cooperation Agency, 2014; National Economic Council, 2021). The Cambodian Library employees also need to pay attention to developing soft skills such as communication skills, problem solving, team building, etc.

One critical factor holding back the development of Cambodia's school library program is the availability of a pool of trained teacher library employees. A first step to address this gap would be to establish a department under the Ministry of Education to coordinate all matters pertaining to school libraries. This department could be tasked to prepare a training and development plan, policies, and procedures to facilitate capacity building of school library employees; and the inclusion of a component on libraries in the trainee teachers' curriculum. Regular training is likely to motivate school library employees to enhance the quality of library resources and services, thus supporting overall student teaching and learning.

However, a strong CPD ecosystem cannot be developed in isolation as it needs a strong LIS support system: a well-developed LIS education program, a dynamic LIS professional body, and support from the National Library. Such a strategic collaboration would enable the LIS profession to advocate support more effectively. In addition, activities of NGOs interested in library development need to be properly coordinated to address the existing gaps and to avoid duplication of efforts. The Cambodian Library Association and the NGOs can work together for this purpose.

For the overall development of LIS sector, it is desirable that the LIS community should conduct advocacy campaigns to showcase the critical role of libraries in a progressing society. In this regard, Cambodia can take advantage of two useful models from the ASEAN region: the Republic of Indonesia where community literacy is decreed a national priority under the National Mid-term Plan 2020-2024 and implemented through socially inclusive library programs. Having the National Library of Indonesia report directly to the President of the country helps too (Bando, 2019). Similarly, the Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation⁴ established by a group of committed librarians and other individuals associated with the field has successfully collaborated with local and international NGOs to assist local libraries with donation of materials, capacity-building through training programmes, provision of mobile information literacy training through approximately 90 public libraries, and, lately, developing a data literacy curriculum. One other model that decision makers may want to take note of is by PRASAC Microfinance⁵, a Cambodian company, which extends school library facilities to the general public in the locales under the purview of their library

projects. This model may be considered to address the absence of a government supported public library system in Cambodia.

The study identified many gaps in the CPD ecosystem and the LIS infrastructure. However, it was encouraging to note that the situation has been improving in the recent years. Some individuals, recognising the importance as well as existing gaps in the CPD provision have taken certain initiatives to improve this situation. For example, the Institute of Buddhist Studies has adopted an innovative approach to address the staff’s skills gaps by implementing an annual in-house staff training program. Similarly, a few motivated library employees have made use of certain learning resources available in the public domain or signed up for programs available free of charge. At a national level, steps taken by the Cambodian government to increase its investments for the development of the school libraries as part of the five-year project between Kampuchea Action to Promote Education, MoEYS and The Asia Foundation (KAPE, 2020) is seen as a step in the right direction. A recent “Workshop on Digital Library Development” organised by the CKS Library demonstrated the participants’ motivation and commitment to advance the LIS sector in the country.

From a broader perspective, staff development would enable library staff to demonstrate their preparedness and usefulness to effectively contribute to organisational progress and development. It would also facilitate stakeholders to view the library profession more positively, get recognised by other professions, and eventually have an improved professional identification. This would help to overcome the stigma and low esteem currently associated with the library profession.

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Appendix 1 CPD Programs Conducted in Cambodia, 2013 - 2021

Date	Event	Organiser
May 2013	Workshop on Preservation and Conservation of Archival Material conducted by Y. Dari, Deputy Director, National Archives of Cambodia	Centre for Khmer Studies (CKS) Library, Siam Reap
27 Nov 2013	Beyond Google: cool ways to find information besides Google John Hickok, California State University, Fullerton, CA, USA	Cambodian Library Association & US Embassy Phnom Penh
March 2014	Workshop on Information Literacy conducted by Greg Bem, iSchool, University of Washington, USA & Mao Kolap, VP, CLA	Cambodia Library Association

28-29 Jun 2014	Basic Library Management	Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia, Phnom Penh
8 June 2015	Best practices of libraries in South East Asia by John Hickok, California State University, Fullerton, CA, USA	Cambodian Library Association & US Embassy Phnom Penh
21 July 2015	Collection development in Cambodia by Greg Bem, iSchool, University of Washington, USA	Cambodia Higher Education Association (CHEA)
2015	Workshop on Library Management and e-Libraries	Centre for Khmer Studies Library, Siam Reap
2016	Role of Libraries in Promoting Reading presented by Nancy Perle, Former Librarian, Seattle Public library	Centre for Khmer Studies Library, Siam Reap
19 March 2016	e-journals and eBooks	Cambodian Library Association
14 Jan 2017	Workshop on “Library’s Role in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”	Cambodian Library Association & CamEd School Phnom Penh
25-27 March 2017	IATUL Directors’ Summit	Cambodian Library Association & IATUL
12 July 2017	Conducting Story Times for Children at Cambodian Children’s Fund by John Hickok,	US Embassy, Phnom Penh
5 August 2017	Workshop on “The Library’s Role in the Quality and Excellence in Higher Education”	Cambodian Library Association & University of Puthisastra.
13 September 2017	Workshop on “IFLA Global Voice: Together We Create the Future”	Cambodian Library Association & Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia, Phnom Penh.
12-16 February 2018	Library study tour, Thailand: Sukothai Thammathirat University, Chulalongkon University, and Kasetsart University	Cambodian Library Association & Thai Library Association.
24 March 2018	Cambodian Network for Electronic Information for Library (CamEifl) by Wanna Net	Royal University Phnom Penh Library.
March 2019	Workshop on Library Preparedness – How to Protect and Preserve Library Collections (one-day)	Centre for Khmer Studies Library, Siam Reap
September 2019	Workshop on The Next Generation in Libraries	Centre for Khmer Studies Library, Siam Reap
October 24-25 2019	Workshop on Cataloguing & Cataloguing Rules and Information Literacy conducted by Wyn Thomas, Librarian AUPP & Mao Kolap, VP, CLA	Cambodian Higher Education Association
22-23 February 2021	Workshop on Open Access and Copyright Issues	Centre for Khmer Studies Library, Siam Reap
23-24 November 2021	The Role of Libraries in the Digital Era	Centre for Khmer Studies Library, Siam Reap

Notes

1. See Kampuchea Action to Promote Education (KAPE) website at: <http://www.kapekh.org/en>
2. See Cambodian Librarians and Documentalists Association (ABDC) website at: <https://www.ccc-cambodia.org/en/ngodb/ngo-information/3271>
3. See Centre for Khmer Studies library website at: <https://khmerstudies.org/library/>
4. Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation at: <https://mbapf.org/>
5. See PRASAC Library Project website at: <https://www.prasac.com.kh/en/news-and-event/prasac-library-project-contributes-to-students-cognitive-development-research-and-innovation#>

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