

**RECOVERY AFTER DISASTER : LESSONS LEARNED FROM ISLAMIC STUDIES LIBRARY'S
EXPERIENCES**

Juhaida bt. Abd Rahim
Librarian
University of Malaya, MALAYSIA
juhaida@um.edu.my

Abstract

After landslides struck the Islamic Studies Library, University of Malaya on 20th October 2008, now, the library has started its services as usual at the same building and at the same location as before the landslides. The main purpose of this paper is to share the library's experience on recovering the library's collection, planning the relocation of library and designing the new outlook for the library. The paper also discusses on the need of having a proper disaster management plan for a library as a guideline for efficiently action taken if any disaster occurred in the future.

Keywords: Disaster Planning, Library Collection, Natural Disaster, Preparedness, Special Library, Disaster Management Plan, Recovery After Disaster

Islamic Studies Library, University of Malaya

Islamic Studies Library, University of Malaya was established on 5th April 2000. The main purpose of the establishment is to serve students, lecturers and researchers needs on Islamic studies references.

The Library was located at Block D, Academy of Islamic Studies. This block also known as administrative block because the administration of Academy of Islamic Studies was centered here. The administrative block can be divided into two wings, a wing that is facing the hill, occupied by the Library (on first and second floor) while another wing accommodated administrative offices of the Academy.

Its collection quite unique from other libraries across University of Malaya Library network because most collections are in Arabic scripts and specifically covered works on Islam in various area such as Islamic finance, Islamic laws, etc. The Library also housed research works such as theses, dissertations and academic exercises written by University of Malaya students and academics which can be considered as the most precious for the Library. The total volumes of Library collection, before the landslide hit the Library on 20th October 2008, was about 22,979 volumes.

Overview on Landslide Incident

Flashed back on the disastrous event in 2008, the heavy rainfall due to rainy season at the end of the year contributed to unstable slope structure and caused the unexpected landslide. Luckily, the incident happened in the early morning before the library open for services. Otherwise, it might causing in the loss of lives as the impact left quite massive damages to the library building and the collections as well.

University of Malaya staff (especially library staff), volunteers, SMART team and cleaning contractor were involved in salvaged library collections from the affected building. The whole process took one month for completion.



The role of Preservation and Conservation Division at the Central Library after the post disaster undoubtedly very important in order to ensure that all damaged items get treated accordingly based on its physical condition. To avoid service disruption, the Library was temporarily operated on the 3rd floor of Za'ba Memorial Library. With still on good conditioned books on shelves, the Library reopened the services on December 2008.

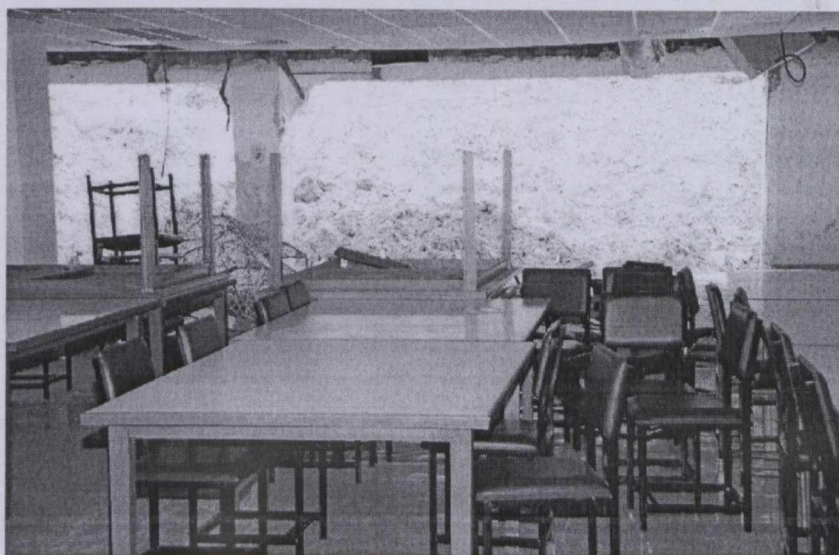
There are a lot of challenges during and after the disastrous event and recovery process still on going.

Responding to the disaster

On 20th October 2008, Islamic Studies Library experienced an unexpected situation when the landslide hit the Library and left severely damages on library building, facilities and collections.



The hard impact of the landslide cruelly damaged the library's walls on first and second floor. The Library office also got affected. All shelves that placed open shelved collection were completely broken.



Day one of the incident, nobody was allowed to be close to the affected building. The University of Malaya Management visited the scene to get the latest information on the incident and started to plan for the response and recovery. Day one ended with the collections still remained inside the building.



The Library started to salvage its collections on day two which took a month for completion. Library Management had decided that the 3rd floor of Za'ba Memorial Library to house Islamic Studies Library salvaged collection, the staff and the office as well. In order to give sufficient space for Islamic Studies Library, Za'ba Memorial Library's collection on the 3rd floor had been shifted to the 1st and the 2nd floors of the Library.



On this stage, the salvaged books were sorted based on physical conditions. The good conditioned books had been transferred to Za'ba Memorial Library, while the bad conditioned had been sent to Preservation and Conservation Division for further treatment based on its conditions. The extremely damaged books were kept aside for disposal.



Islamic Studies Library necessity such as furniture, computers and other needs was taking care by the Central Library and was fulfilled immediately. In December 2008, the Library started to operate on the 3rd floor of Za'ba Memorial Library and reopened for users to avoid longer service disruption with minimum services offered at that time.

After the salvaged books completely transferred to Za'ba Memorial Library, the stock taking was conducted by Islamic Studies Library staff to get current update on total loss of the collection. The items were physically counted in order to get the right figure. The table shown below summarized the result of stock taking exercise conducted by the Library.

Description	Number of Volumes
Total collection generated from system before 20 th October 2008	22,979
Total damaged books taken from the location	1,154
Total destroyed books (undetected)	2,269

Stock Take Report

Based on the stock taking report, the Library concluded that it loss 15% of its Islamic collections due to the landslide incident and estimated the loss cost was around hundreds thousand of Malaysian Ringgit. Generally, the damaged or destroyed books were classified under sub-class BP and it might take years to redevelop the collections.

A list consist of damaged and destroyed books titles were prepared by Islamic Studies Library librarian. Based on this list, the affected books were replaced either with the same title or similar subject phase by phase and still ongoing.



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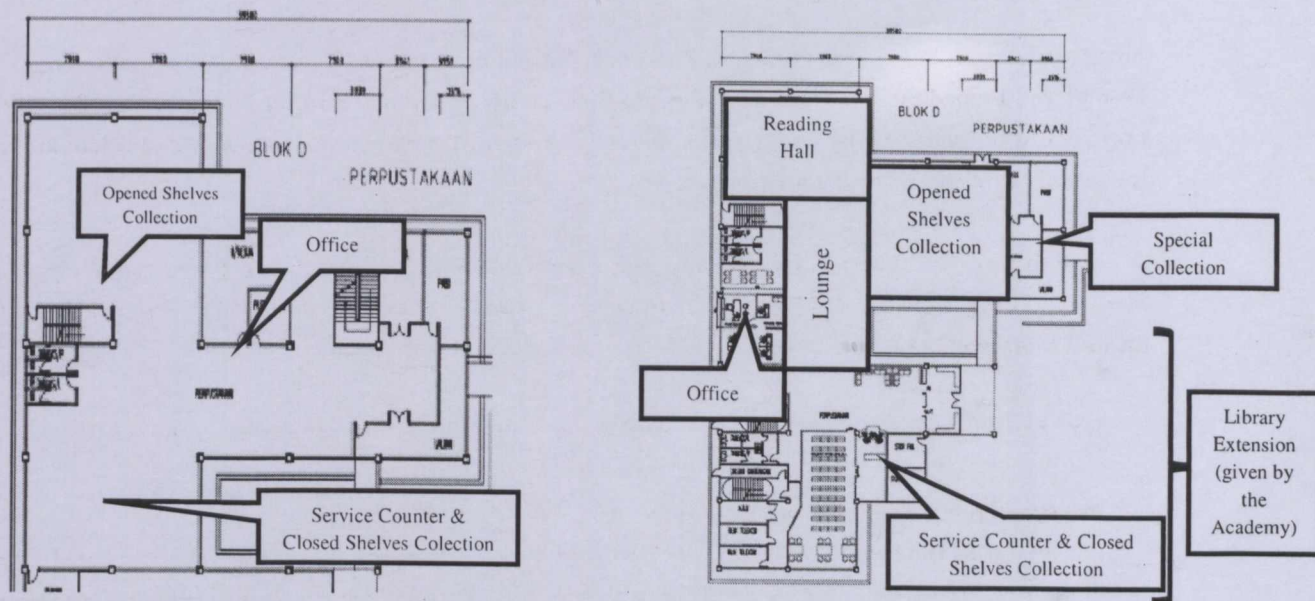
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The Library's space has been expanded as the Academy generously handed over the whole first floor, that previously placed the Academy undergraduate office, to the Library.

A working paper has been submitted to the University's Management to get a budget for the Library. An approved budget of RM490,000 was given to the Library. The budget was used to fulfill the essential library needs such as office furniture, tables and chairs for library users, shelves.



Before (left) and after (right)

3) Planning the relocation

It took almost 5 years for the library to move back to the location. The Library had to wait for quite long time as authorized people ensured that the slopes became stable and got repaired. The renovation acquired more time before get completed and a little bit difficult for the Library to set the schedule for relocation when the contractor kept postponing the handover due to certain circumstances.

4) Disposing the damaged books

Another challenge is on disposal of damaged books. Most of the damaged books have al-Quran verses printed inside. Islamic Studies Library staff had to look sheet by sheet to identify either the books had al-Quran verses or not because the books could not be treated as ordinary books during disposal process. The books that had al-Quran verses were kept aside for special type of disposal.



The budget for disposal also part of the challenges as the disposal cost is quite expensive. The disposal books that consist of al-Quran verses required special kind of disposal because it have to go through a quite complicated processes. So far the Library has identified that there is only one company has the permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs to conduct this special kind of disposal. The disposal process require approximately RM50,000 in order to dispose all the affected collection. A paperwork will be out soon to request the budget for disposal.

The delayed on disposal due the lack of knowledge on how to deal with damaged with al-Quran verses. The online reading on this matter help a lot on solving this problem.

Reopening the Library

Almost 5 years after the disaster, the Library finally announced temporary closure to prepare for the relocation. The Library staff worked in tight schedule to ensure that everything settled within the time frame and the Library must be ready to welcome new students for semester 2013/2014.

On 26 August 2013, the collections and furniture had been moved back phase by phase from Za'ba Memorial Library to the location at Block D, Academy of Islamic Studies. Once again, the moving process was assisted by library staff from across the library networks. They gave their full cooperation and help for the Library which were really appreciated by Islamic Studies Library.

On 2 September 2013, the Library reopened the services at the same location as before the landslide incident with new look and improvement on facilities.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

There are so many lessons have been learned from the landslide incident. But, this paper will only highlight about the disaster management plan and the importance of recovery plan. These two points have been discussed in details as below:

Disaster Management Plan

On the date of the incident, Islamic Studies Library did not have disaster management plan. The Library found that it was difficult to take any action when there is no guideline to be followed. The salvaged process of library collection also has to be looked into when library starts to prepare a disaster plan.

Thus, it is recommended for library to have disaster plan because library also is subjected for unexpected disaster event which puts collections at risk. As a preparation for this unexpected event, library must provides a disaster plan that includes in detailed on what steps should library follow during the salvaged process of library collection.

Although there is a view that the disaster plan might not be useful when the actual disaster occurred. As mentioned by Corrigan (2007) from his experience on the disaster stated that, "*when the actual disaster occurred, very little in the plan could be used*". But, based on Islamic Studies Library experience on this issue, at least by having a formal written plan enables a library to react accordingly towards the event rather than do not have any idea on where to begin with.

In developing a disaster plan, there are four phases that should be discussed in details and planned the suitable actions for each phase. These phases as recommended by UNESCO (1999) are prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Queensland Government (2014) briefly defined each phase as below:

- 1) Phase 1: Prevention
Take actions to reduce or eliminate the likelihood or effects of an incident.
- 2) Phase 2: Preparedness
Take steps before an incident to ensure effective response and recovery.
- 3) Phase 3: Response
Contain, control or minimize the impacts of an incident.
- 4) Phase 4: Recovery
Take steps to minimize disruption and recovery times.

A disaster plan prepared by a library, as suggested by Eden & Matthews (1997), needs to be carefully considered and properly planned, and all staff need to be made aware of the various risks to the items in their care and what is expected of them in a disaster situation.

The Importance of Recovery Plan

If a library already prepare for the prevention, preparedness and response phases, the next step is to plan for the recovery.

The recovery plan is very important because it helps the library to respond effectively during emergency. It also aims to shorten recovery time by planning an outline of the reasonable frame time for a library to resume the services.

Buchanan (1988) stated that the recovery component of the disaster plan must be organized and prepared very carefully because this plan will determine the success or failure of the recovery effort.

There are seven benefits of having recovery plan as highlighted by Hawkins, Yen & Chou (2000) which are:

1. Eliminating possible confusion and error
2. Reducing disruptions to operations
3. Providing alternatives during a disastrous event
4. Reducing the reliance on certain key individuals
5. Protecting the data of the organization
6. Ensuring the safety of company personnel
7. Helping an orderly recovery

These benefits should be considered by a library in order to develop the best recovery plan ever.

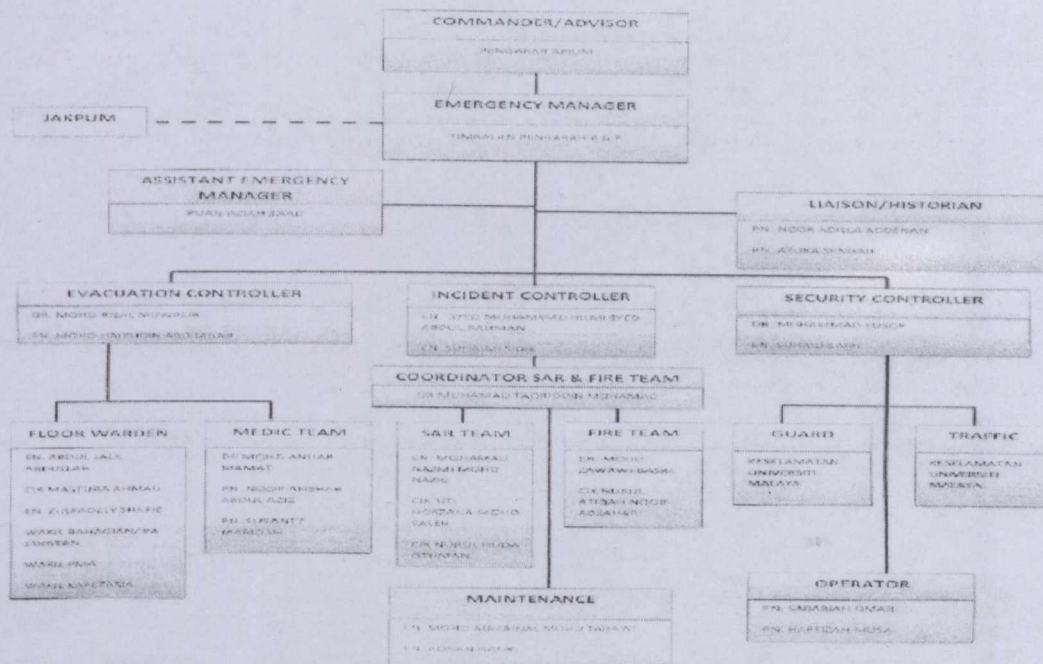
Based on the experience, it was agreed as mentioned by Bucknell University (2005) that the disaster recovery should contain necessary information about the techniques and methods that can be employed for recovering a variety of damaged collection materials.

Current Situation in University of Malaya

In 2013, University of Malaya started an effort to establish Emergency Response Team in each department in the University due to the awareness of disaster management plan.

This Emergency Response Team in Academy of Islamic Studies was established in 2014. The organizational chart shown below indicates persons in charge during and after emergency.

CARTA ALIRAN E.R.T AKADEMI PENGAJIAN ISLAM



Perhaps by having this team in the University, the effective disaster management plan will be discussed and planned well. It also should be in place as a guideline when disaster strike.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on observation, there is no matter when the disaster occurred, an organized disaster plan and recovery plan should be in place for reference and guidelines during and after emergency. Last but not least, by having a disaster plan might helps library if not in all aspects, at least the library can visualize the next steps that could be taken.

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