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Leadership roles in international librarianship: how can information professionals from Africa, Asia & Oceania, Latin America & Caribbean be part of it?

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Global trend in entrepreneurial librarianship: A review of publications and best practices

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Abstract:

This article discusses the concept and best practices in entrepreneurial librarianship. It is argued that more innovation and entrepreneurial approach is the need of the hour as libraries are playing a vital role in preparing the ground for entrepreneurs; motivating them right from the start, and cultivating robust environment to facilitate entrepreneurial culture. The innovative characteristics of librarians and the organizational culture which inspires entrepreneurship ideas are elaborated.

The author is of the opinion that recognizing and celebrating entrepreneurial activities of librarians will support the idea that librarianship and entrepreneurship can go hand in hand. The author identifies individual library entrepreneurs who are taking proactive steps in solving information access problems and emphasizes on propagating entrepreneurial ideas adopted by libraries.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial librarianship, creative partnership, business literacy, entrepreneurship outreach, start-up support service, Social entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are known for knowledge creation and customization of data; they embrace innovative ideas and entrepreneurial activities for sustainable future. There are several examples to show how librarians are empowering people, propagating intellectual freedom, assisting with equitable access to information, democratic conversation, and creating networks of knowledge within communities. The term 'entrepreneur' originated in French economics as early as the 17th and 18th centuries....it came to be used to identify the

venturesome individuals who stimulated economic progress by finding new and better ways of doing things.(Dees, 2001)

In the context of this article “Entrepreneurial” is innovative strategies adopted by libraries for revenue generation, designing spaces, improving infrastructure and enhancing services for the community. Entrepreneurship in libraries is defined as the act of undertaking initiatives or providing leadership to meet library goals and cost saving through creative ways. The entrepreneurial skills are vital for librarians to create new ideas; today’s librarians are exploring new technologies in pursuit of excellence and embracing entrepreneurial spirit in order to survive in this competitive age. It can be stated that librarians and entrepreneurs share certain characteristics: namely creativity, persistence, and passion. The business entrepreneur generally measure performance in profit and social entrepreneurs like librarians take into account a positive return to society. In an innovation driven society libraries are not just addressing the needs but helping the community to achieve their dream/target. An understanding of intellectual property is essential for every business. The professionals serving in different libraries have knowledge of intellectual property; today’s creative economy stakeholders are approaching to libraries as a consumer.

In an innovation driven society libraries are not just addressing the information need, but helping the community to achieve their dreams/target. An entrepreneurial librarian proactively identifies opportunities to gain advantage through creativity and innovation. They enquire about users’ need and then hold them responsible for delivering through effective management in order to optimize outcomes. In this knowledge economy era users are consumer of knowledge and the professionals in libraries are propagating intellectual freedom, encouraging equitable access to information, promoting democratic conversation, creating networks of knowledge, and developing entrepreneurial skills. Many people think that innovation and entrepreneurship is related to business organizations, but libraries have the relevant resources and ideas for the community to support entrepreneurship ideas.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

This article examines how entrepreneurial librarians are advocating social change, designing client driven services, organising fundraising programs, applying business models to traditional library services, and stressing on developing a network of relationships, and ecosystem for entrepreneurship.

An effort is made to summarize the best practices in entrepreneurial librarianship and discuss how libraries propel entrepreneurship. The examples of entrepreneurship outreach/ creative partnerships are identified through this literature review. The innovative and cost saving strategies adopted by libraries to achieve financial empowerment and the status of education and training impacted entrepreneurial librarianship is narrated.

In addition to regular publications in journals and website information this article references information blogs, and conference presentations that have demonstrated successful entrepreneurship strategies for libraries.

DEFINING ENTREPRENEURIAL LIBRARIANSHIP AND RELATED TERMS:

Entrepreneurship is "a process of putting new ideas into practice" (Young, 1991). Austin et al (2006) identified Social entrepreneurship is to create social value for the public good, as opposed to business entrepreneurship, which aims at generating profit. Library entrepreneurship is an interdisciplinary and emerging field of study within library management. Entrepreneurial Librarianship offers specific techniques for creating an entrepreneurial environment in a library or information services organization or initiating such techniques where a less-successful operation is already in place (Clair, 1996).

Prato (2013) stated Social entrepreneurship refers to the practice of identifying a societal problem and using entrepreneurial principles, such as innovation, to create and implement ventures that achieve change... Social entrepreneurship provides an excellent model for libraries that are invested in the future. In this age of digital access, libraries are increasingly asked to justify their budgets, their services and their very existence... While business entrepreneurs typically measure performance in profit, social entrepreneurs and librarians, also take into account a positive return to society.

Libarypreneur is defined in a blog post about a librarian who actively searches for unfilled needs in his/her organization and assumes responsibility for meeting them, adding value to his/her position.

Library entrepreneurs play an important role in driving the economy and recognizing the need for libraries to promote and sustain entrepreneurship. Today librarians need to develop following skills to survive:

1. Relationship building;
2. strategic skills;
3. global focus;
4. entrepreneurship;
5. Enterprise-driven leadership

An insightful definition of entrepreneurship is a way of managing that involves the creation of opportunity without regard to the resources currently controlled... “though there are many examples of entrepreneurial librarians, the public doesn’t perceive the profession that way, nor is it aware of the innovations created by librarians. A common view of libraries includes the perceptions that they are ‘all about books’, essentially storehouses of past knowledge, and that librarians are gatekeepers to or guardians of the printed records of society and culture” (Scanlon and Crumpton, 2011).

It is opined by several authors that librarians are among the most innovative, as they provide needed resources and program for patrons and incorporate technology into their professional duties. Libraries are engaged in creative partnership which refers to projects involving non-profit organizations and other external partners who are committed to educational and economic development, with focus on quality of life and creativity.

The notion of entrepreneurial ecosystem (or ecosystem for entrepreneurship) is quite new and has emerged from diverse origins. In the context of libraries an entrepreneurial ecosystem consists of a set of elements namely leadership, culture, community, and clients combine in a complex way to develop the ecosystem.

The Entrepreneurship Outreach Network is a collaborative network of libraries and economic development organizations. In Arizona State University the collaborators support community members with access to continuing education in entrepreneurship, mentors, and community-based resources for SMEs.

ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT BUSINESS LITERACY AND REVENUE GENERATION

Business literacy includes business communication, spoken and written communication skills, negotiation skills, customer interaction, understanding the workplace etc. (Manu, 2018)

There are several examples of creative partnership show their promise towards social change. The professionals serving in different libraries are vital asset in supporting SMEs;

regardless of the type, libraries are pursuing entrepreneurial strategies, fiscal agility, and creative approaches.

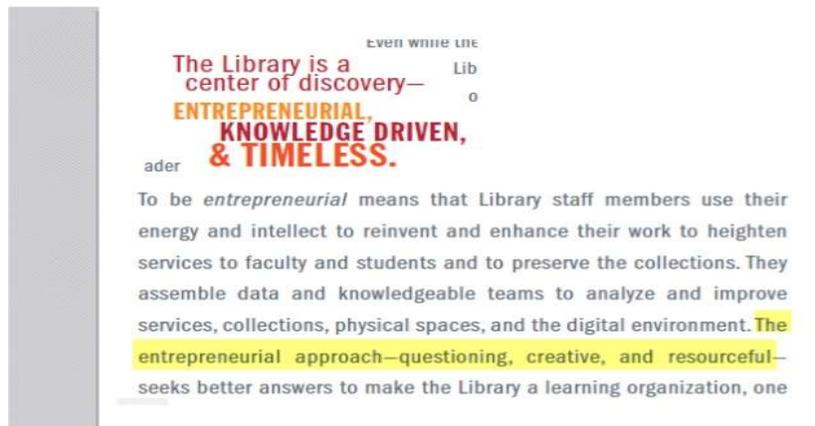
Figure 2: Snapshot view of library website displaying entrepreneurship



(Source: <http://www.jgu.edu.in/public/library/content/entrepreneurship>)

The Entrepreneurial Library Program (ELP) of the JHU Sheridan Libraries creates a wide range of customized library and information services for clients in the academic, corporate, allied-health, non-profit and other sectors.

Figure 1: Syracuse University library highlights importance of entrepreneurship in its Vision statement



The idea of human libraries had begun in Denmark and is spreading worldwide. The first Human Library event in India was held at the Indian Institute of Management, Indore in 2016. Hyderabad is the second city to treat humans as books from different backgrounds and experiences that can be ‘borrowed’ for short/ long period. This is an example of entrepreneurial strategy adopted by local community; the human books /human experts can be borrowed instead of books to understand a concept.

The feminist library in India is developed by Aqiu Thami- an artist and archivist aims to celebrate the contributions of creative women. It is known as ‘Sister Library’ showcasing a collection of works on women. This is not a conventional library, but an evolving and generative artwork that engages with the visual and reading culture. It has books from

Thami's own collection that focuses solely on works by women novelists, poets, designer, and zine-makers, sparking a much-needed conversation about the representation of women in literature. This project is an interactive work that travelled to various cities in India with accompanying talks and discussions. It has initiated fundraising campaign by hosting exhibition on clothes and artwork by local artists selling books, comics, and Brown Paper Bag etc.

National Entrepreneurship Librarians (NEL) group in Canada formed in March 2016, and the group has members from colleges and universities in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia; not all of them are officially Entrepreneurship Librarians but from a variety of backgrounds. University of Toronto Librarian is providing leadership and incorporating entrepreneurial strategies to library services. UTL has Entrepreneurship Librarian at the Gerstein Science Information Centre at the University of Toronto.

In Bangladesh, Polan Sarkar started a social movement of reading books named as 'Walking Library'. He was also called "Alor Ferrywala,"- the distributor of light as he used to distribute books during his daily walks to increase reading habits of the rural community.

Today Libraries are using Makerspaces for collaborative learning where people come together to share materials and learn new skills; Makerspaces are not necessarily born out of a specific set of materials or spaces, but rather a mindset of community partnership, collaboration, and citizens' inclusion and participation.

Much less recognized is that many libraries are also making important contributions to the nation's economic recovery by assisting the job creators in small-to-medium-size businesses (Collins, 2012).

The recent article in NY times by Krueger (Aug 10, 2019) described how library architecture and facilities are helping in income generation. She mentioned about high-profile libraries with sophisticated building with advanced, quirky amenities like rooftop gardens, public parks, play spaces, teen centers, movie theaters, gaming rooms, art galleries and restaurants offering free space for growing numbers of entrepreneurs. The business librarians are offering help for the financial challenges and trying to determine what other role they could play.

Oodi Central Library in Helsinki, Finland has a meeting place with wide range of facilities for the local community such as pop-up information desks where organizations can inform visitors about their work, pop-up markets for entrepreneurs who can rent out work stations to meet with colleagues or clients.

One of the most popular activities in Qatar public library is a knitting group for Women, who come every Thursday and stay for four hours. There are lab for music, broadcast rooms with green screens, and play spaces for children. The entire family can come to library and spend entire day.

Innovation supports in a unique way with the ideas to generate funds; libraries have a diverse staffing pattern which includes trustees, information professionals, security personnel, trainees, volunteers etc. who can bring a wide range of expertise to contribute in promoting entrepreneurship in libraries.

Martin (2019) talked about the Mulanthuruthy Public Library in Kerala state of India has started farming, making cloth bags and home-made soaps to generate fund. The library had also taken initiatives in assembling and selling LED lighting systems and repairing them. The winner of the State Library Council's Best Library Award for 2017-18 providing local community with organically- cultivated food. The library is also organizing training to the

local community for hand- made soap using pure coconut oil to spread Gandhian ideals and reduce plastic use. There are six brands of soaps is released under the aegis of the library.

Libraries helping in Start-up

Budding Entrepreneur program at Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore is aimed at fostering entrepreneurship talent and give holistic idea about start-up ecosystem, nurture entrepreneurs and recognise their mutual interest in influencing the technology start-up ecosystem in India. Libraries attached to these institutes are playing an important role in the process.

Manu et.al (2018) stated the Startup Support Centre (SSC) in libraries to empower entrepreneurs to face challenges like inadequate knowledge of doing business, financial difficulties, lack of professional networks, innovation and market knowledge etc. The SSCs are combining the power of data (proprietary information including government data) and analytics tools (which are not available in any other places) combining with the expert researching skills of trained library professionals to boost the business.

The Start-up Library (<http://startuptools.ca/>) is a crash course on entrepreneurial thinking, and identifying opportunities, taking smart risks, worked with start-ups to solve information related issues. This is a platform started by a faculty at University of Guelph, Canada to find collaborators for different purpose.

On Start-up day in September 2016 the British Library invited the Londoners with a business idea to use library and achieve their entrepreneurial ambitions. The British Library Business & IP Centre has been helping entrepreneurs from all walks of life to start, protect and grow successful business.

In a blog post (Aug 4, 2015) University of British Columbia describes library's collaborative activities to build a central hub of information, and termed the librarians as business information consultant. The libraries have developed partnership with reputable organizations or fellow entrepreneurs to help to business start-up process. For example, one may consider connecting with an organization that specializes in funding support.

The libraries can play a big role in connecting business with researchers. Feldmann (2015) discussed small business development centers (SBDCs) are working with libraries to provide assistance to entrepreneurs.

Librarians are playing an active role in promoting patent information. Seneviratne and Botejue (2017) elaborated the Library's effort towards creative partnership and facilitate prior-art searching in University of Moratuwa in Sri Lanka. The Prior Art Search detects all existing developments or inventions and concepts that are similar to an idea that an individual want to patent or manufacture.

ROLES FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LIBRARIANS:

The entrepreneurial skills are vital for librarians who develop new ideas for clients' benefits and transform them into reality. There are several examples that librarians are actively participating in community development, championing intellectual freedom, providing equitable access to information, enriching the understanding about innovation and entrepreneurship.

Today librarians' non traditional jobs are appreciated and supported by higher authority and administration in majority of the cases due to innovative nature and value adding services. Librarians have passion for public good and displaying their entrepreneurship skill by undertaking additional responsibilities as:

1. Chief Information Officer (CIO)
2. Academic teams advisor/ MOOC developer
3. Database expert for record keeping
4. Newsletter editor
5. Chairman, complaint committee/grievance cell
6. Book fair/Tech fair host
7. Special events/programs planner - campus-wide celebration organizer etc.

There are libraries who are exploring new ways of generating revenue by leveraging their diverse resources to support entrepreneurs in business start-up process—from writing a business plan and fund raising to performing market analysis etc. Libraries are not only addressing needs of the community but also fostering community development.

Libraries are helping in raising awareness and make services useful for entrepreneurs; they have essential resources to support entrepreneurs and start-ups. They are collaborating with business assistance organizations, business development centers and technology based institutes to transfer knowledge for economic development or outreach activities.

Entrepreneurship Development in India is an Institute for Entrepreneurship Education, Research, Training & Institution Building. The library and information centre at Entrepreneurship Development Institute in India understands the nature and information needs of entrepreneurs and supports Academic programs, skill building and creating knowledge base. The aim is to provide value added services and capacity building to help the community to set up independent enterprise.

Entrepreneurial librarians are advocating social change, responding to patron demands, designing new services, and developing exciting fundraising programs. One of the many examples is SCLSNJ's Warren Township Library, which has unveiled a "business space" to support the aspirations of the small business owner and business professional by providing online business resources, notary services, fax services, librarian-curated business materials, and a dedicated working space and conference room.

(<https://sclsnj.org/business-services/business-center/>)

Entrepreneurship avenues in Librarianship

- ❖ Fee Based service(information brokerage)
- ❖ Identify and tap donors
- ❖ Help users to bring projects
- ❖ Library-as-Publisher
- ❖ Involve in organization's strategic goals
- ❖ Develop entrepreneurial spirit
- ❖ Data Driven decision making

There are new models of scholarly publishing one such is the library publishing to support the creation, dissemination and preservation of scholarly and creative works; also an opportunity to build an economic framework for organizing, accessing, and archiving the scholarly record.

The role of publisher is increasingly assumed by academic and research libraries, usually inspired by campus-based demands for digital publishing platforms to support e-journals, conference proceedings, technical reports, and database-driven websites (Skinner et.al, 2014)

Campus entrepreneurship through programs and maker spaces is fast-growing at Canadian universities; the University of Waterloo Library has created a position of Engineering & Entrepreneurship Liaison Librarian.

Bell (2009) given the following tips for aspiring librarian entrepreneurs

- Accept hard work/be client driven
- Listen/Observe- what the clients biggest pain point are?
- Break a few rules
- Ask open questions/ ask for complaints
- Set aside time for thought and reflection
- Balance Risk and evolution
- Be a problem Finder/value creator
- Keeping up (disruptive technology)

Lesneski(2015) identified five ways a library is perfectly primed to support innovation namely: Inspiration, Resources, Proximity, Variety and Freedom.

Entrepreneurial library is not just a library that has fee-based services or a strategy of generating the revenue. On the contrary, it is a driving force in the library that offers value added services and empower its users with nominal fee or free of charge.

Conclusion:

Information is a marketable commodity and libraries' traditional role is becoming insufficient in the array of entrepreneurial opportunities open to librarians. Their role in entrepreneurship development has significant implications for the education and training of information professionals. To effectively address the needs and provide full support for business research, the information professional must have knowledge of data management and digital preservation, fund raising awareness and grant writing. They should also possess the skills traditionally associated with business librarians, including expert searching, information literacy instruction, and support the research needs of the institution.

There is a boom in entrepreneurship education globally; and university librarians are working with business schools and using non-financial resources such as idle capacity, donated goods, private donor/funder, coaching, accounting, marketing, or logistics assistance to build skills and capacity. The greatest benefits are building the confidence and skills as a leader, developing new relationships, gaining significant exposure to serious issues challenging the society. The program for re-branding the libraries as community hubs and offer much more than book-depot is the need of the hour. Much less recognized is that many libraries are contributing substantially to economic recovery by assisting the job creators in small-to-medium-size businesses.

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