

Voice of Academia

Academic Series of Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah

Special Issue: Information Management

VoA
Volume 12 (1)
2017

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Community Managed Library?

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 29 December 2016
Received in revised form
28 April 2017
Accepted 15 May 2017
Published 1 June 2017

Keywords:

Community, public library,
community managed library,
community development, community
empowerment

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ABSTRACT

Amongst the various kind of community library models that haven been developed around the world, it is said the only model that appears to offer the best prospect of sustainability, viability, and a suitable emphasis on users' service quality and needs are the library authority-led community library; also known as 'community managed library'. The term 'community managed library' emphasis on maintaining community private individual libraries that is designated for community intervention and management of different types. In theory, such arrangement exists in a very formal basis, which means a library authority should be able to include the services offered by such community [managed] libraries for such members of the community [users]. This paper will enlighten the pragmatism of the 'community managed library' notion in Malaysian setting and values. Several current Malaysian existing community managed library will be put forward as the foundation of the investigation on this 'new' community library model. The success and challenges faced by current Malaysian community library will be discussed.

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1.0 Introduction

Library is an institution which community members can come to access for information, read books, to relax or to obtain materials to improve the quality of work or get tips for improve how their daily lives (Child Aid, 2015). Library plays an important role in the lives of individuals and communities. Over the generations, the library serves as the route for access to knowledge, ideas and information as well as an open and democratic service available to anyone.

In a library context community development means building relationships By allowing the library to go beyond a simple consultation and support process and expand in to meaningful and inclusive collaborations. A strong relationships and partnerships will ensure that libraries engage in the sometimes complex process of listening to community voices and facilitating the expression of a community's needs within the library (Vancouver Public Library, 2014). Community development in the library context also includes community participation to the activities that are carried out by the library. Library services and activities which involve the community is a necessity. The biggest difference between traditional models of community development and community-based development model is the development of library developing library with the community and to collaborate with the community. Killmier, (2010) pointed out libraries and community development are a natural fit, and

libraries are increasingly recognizing the importance of using community development principles to engage with their communities.

2.0 Literature

Community and Library

Nowadays library services evolve very rapidly. Community engagement with the library always exist but with a reduction in finance from the government against a significant impact library services library. Services will be constantly changed to unveil space for involving communities in the management of the library. Clearly the community showed keen interest to serve the library (Locality, 2013).

Shrestha has carried out a research to highlight the success stories and challenges of the READ (Rural Education and Development) program, which has been active in the building and development of community libraries. In rural and remote areas in Nepal, and has established 53 libraries in different parts of the country. The findings of the opinion of the local community expressed that, they used to see the library as a storehouse of books, but now perceived it as a “social development organization”, a “backbone of society”, a “center of knowledge and information” and a “lifelong learning center”. They now see the library as their common “platform” where all the community members can get together to address communal problems. The group reported that they had learned about the scope and potential of the library through the development and offering of different programs (Shrestha, 2013)

Community development and library service for the purpose of development involved the community to share with them. It focuses on the community contribution to serve the the community. Community Service- Led Service Planning model support community participation from traditional Library excursions towards community involvement in the relationship among the community. It involves community development activities such as education, community relations and external education. The community with expertise will be identified to meet the needs of the local community to replace a service conducted by the staff of the library itself (Killmier C. , 2010).

Community libraries are internationally recognized as social institutions that can effect social and economic transformation in society and for the development of society (Mnkeni-Saurombe, 2012, Mnkeni-Saurombe & Zimu, 2015). The community libraries serve many diverse functions and needs, being both venues for the reading and lending of books, as well as community development centres with a strong focus on grass-roots education, empowerment and economic development, creating hubs for life-changing, community-based activities and programs (Shrestha, 2013). Community library is a local library facility or reading room in which books are located and opened to some extent for public use by members of the immediate neighbourhood and which is operated Without profit making intention, nor is it supported in any way by public funding (Cheunwattana, 2008).

Community libraries are built to serve the needs of rural populations outside the reach of standard information services (Goodman, 2008). They may be organized by a school, church or community group, but the needs of the community at large are of the utmost importance and the collection and services of the library represent those needs. These libraries also often provide informal educational services, such as literacy instruction (Dent & Yannota, 2005).

Library and community development are very closely connected. The public knows that the importance of the relationship between the library and community development was increased and interconnected. (Killmier C. , 2010).

Community Managed Library

Community Managed Library (CML) are community-led and largely community delivered, rarely with paid staff, but often with some form of ongoing Council support and often still part of the public library network. CML have shown success in reducing operating costs, increasing the involvement of community library in terms of library services, improve the quality of library services, diversify activities and innovation library and increase the efficiency of access to the service (Locality, 2011).

Woolley (2011) stated that CML is currently growing and is seen as a significant change for future library. This report highlights many efforts of many local authorities trying to involve their community. Indirectly they will work together with local community in innovative ways to help involve the community in order to create a community-managed library. As a result, community will be able to meet the needs of the community in creating a successful community and assist in community development. CML which supports the community development must have some characteristic that is public sector support (local authority or precept based), co-location, enterprise, asset transfer or ownership, specialist staff support and a clear sense of social purpose.

The characteristics of success for community managed libraries are: public sector support (local authority or precept based), co-location, enterprise, asset transfer or ownership, specialist staff support and a clear sense of social purpose. With a genuine partnership arrangement with a local authority, opportunities around scale – increasing the number of community managed libraries that target social change, creating economies of scale, and involving more communities in ownership and influence over services – can be achieved. The door is open for local authorities not to simply transfer libraries to community management to save their own money, but to work with communities to transition the process in a thoughtful and strategic manner, to create shared benefits for local government, local community and local user. The difference between the CML and community library (CM) was in terms of administration. In Malaysia, CM is a library which is administered by public libraries while CML is under council support.

Community Development

Community development is defined as the employment of community structures to address social needs and empower groups of people and the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural) (Mendes, 2009, Frank & Smith, 1999). According to Ariffin (2013) community development is a comprehensive effort from all parties involved by engaging key elements such as cooperation, tolerance and maximize use of resources. It also refers to the participation of all parties and agencies in order to achieve a common goal, namely to improve the quality of life of the community involved. Most researchers agree that the participation of the community to work together with the Government is the key to the success of the comprehensive community development (Marsh & Buckle, 2002; Coghlan, 1998; McCamish, 1998; McDowell, 2002). Community development also will make smarter communities. It will allow the involvement of the community as a whole by learning through a part of the activities chosen by them. The ability of the

communities to build skills which are related to learning will take them directly to the actual experience through which they run. Indirectly, the community will be more confident and ready to face the changes. With this community will be more daring to engage in all activities carried out by the community.

3.0 Methodology

This study applied a qualitative research method, by using Yayasan Pembangunan Masyarakat Kubang Pasu (YPMKP) as its case study design. Yayasan Pembangunan Masyarakat Kubang Pasu (YPMKP) was launched by Dato Seri Dr. Siti Hasmah Bt Hj Mohd Ali on 10 October 2003 at Marriott Hotel, Putrajaya. YPMKP has a number of facilities such as ICT services, lecture hall, computer lab and dining hall. Hence, YPMKP also provides Resource Centre services with quite a big number of collections – 2000, including leisure reading – magazines and books, and academic materials namely reference books for SPM, PTS, UPSR and PMR. Its materials also covers all ethnic languages. Yayasan Pembangunan Masyarakat Kubang Pasu (YPMKP) funding comes from its own local businesses and the supported by state grants.

The respondents of this study consist of:

1. Teenagers (Age 13 – 17 years)
2. Youth (Age 18 – 40 years)
3. Adult
4. Senior Adult (Age 41 – 50 years)
5. Elderly (Age 51 – 60 years)

A total of 1871 respondents have answered the survey conducted by the researchers which included eight selected districts. It has answered a survey conducted by researchers include 8 districts in Kubang Pasu such as Air Hitam, Changlun, Jitra, Kerpan, Kodiang, Padang Sera and Tunjang.

This study has been being carried out through two stages. The stages are:

Stage 1: to investigate how community library can support the local community development - process of identifying current available material and resources in the selected community library – YPMKP, will be organized

Stage 2: to identify what is the best forms of intervention can be used to support the community library in fulfilling the needs, engagement and empowerment of local community members? - Investigation on the information needs of community library stakeholders namely teenagers, youth, adults and special local community members.

4.0 Result and Findings

Based on the analysis of interview questionnaire to 1871 respondents, most of the respondents have suggested activities which are related to economic household other than activities involving ICT and entrepreneurship. The activities which involve in economic household are activities such as sewing and cooking courses. 467 respondents (25%) suggest sewing courses while 901 respondents (48.2%) suggested cooking courses. Activities involving ICT suggested by respondents were 783 respondents (41.8%) while entrepreneurship suggested by 709 respondents (37.9%) respectively. The majority of respondents are interested in engaging in activities organized by YPMKP. 408

respondents (21.8%) were very interested while 1025 (54.8%) were interested. Otherwise is indicative of respondent is not interested in the activities carried out by YPMKP. Data analysis shows the 289 respondents (15.4%) less interested, 119 (6.4%) were not interested and 30 (1.6%) is very not interested. This survey shows that community of the surrounding area are keen in using CML and they sees the library as more than just a place of reading and learning. It is a platform for lifelong learning for in according to all the activities they are interested. Interesting about the result of this study is about the views of the respondents against CML. Results from the views of the respondents against CML seen so contradict with the use and awareness of CML by respondents. Although the use and awareness of respondents against CML is so low (68.1% do not know about CML, 87% never used CML and 92.7% never participated in any activities in CML), 1771 respondent (94.7%) gave the opinion CML are important in supporting community development. This clearly shows that communities are aware of the importance of community development. Indirectly they also realize the significance of CML.

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VOA - ISBN: 1985-5079

