DEVELOP@YOUR LIBRARY - MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH INFORMATION LITERACY

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“For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

- Nelson Mandela

Greetings from South Africa
South African Library Week 2012
17 – 24 March 2012

On Monday 19 March 2012, read all about South African Library Week in the following newspapers:
- Cape Argus
- Star
- Pretoria News
- Diamond Fields Advertiser
- Mercury
PRESENTATION OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

STATE OF LITERACY AND DEMAND FOR INFORMATION LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

LITERACY AND ILLITERACY RATES IN SOUTH AFRICA

SKILLS GAP EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COLLABORATION INITIATIVE

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

TOOLS INVESTIGATED

CONCLUSION
INTRODUCTION

- Pioneering work

- Between public and academic librarians working for organisations in the City of Johannesburg /south region of the Gauteng Province in South Africa.

- Joining of talent and knowledge against the threat of illiteracy

- Aim is to design an information literacy blueprint for use in public libraries in eight regions.

- The need was raised in an informal conversation.

- A presentation was done to the Head of the City of Johannesburg Public Libraries and her eight regional library managers.

- A formal meeting of stakeholders followed, and a workshop to discuss and shop for way forward.

- The conversations were held in the spirit of the SALW celebratory theme of ‘DEVELOP @ YOUR LIBRARY.'
The state of literacy and demand for Information Literacy in SA

- After the 1994 democratic elections literacy enshrined in the SA Constitution as a Basic Human Right.
- SA is a very fast developing country.
- Demand for Information and the capacity to search, find and use information are high.
- Information explosion in SA.
- Advances in technology.
- Increase in poverty - Increase in the haves and have-nots.
- The role of the librarians even more pronounced and demand for their knowledge and services much more needed.
- High unemployment rates created an urgency for access to and use of information for development of entrepreneurs and just general well being of SA citizens.

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DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

- Literate person – recognizes information is needed, knows how to locate, evaluate, and use the information effectively to solve a problem/decision making.

- Literacies - various literacies – all depict a level of literacy which requires a set of skills in order for a person to be rated as literate

- An information literate person in the context of this presentation: skill which informs the person when the information is needed, the person knows where to go for the information, knows how to search for the information, finds it, evaluates it, and uses the information beneficially.

- (Erasmus, 2000:2)
LITERACY/ILLITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION

- In 2006 only 12% of grade 6 pupils scored 52% in literacy and numeracy assessments.
- 2011 – 86.4% literacy rate in adult population older than 15 years.
- Current threat - is the high unemployment rate, increase in poverty levels, and the decline in the educational system of the country.
- Media and educational state reports reflect that SA is heading towards a literacy crisis.
- Primary education learner rates indicated high levels of illiteracy in reading, numeracy, and writing skills.
- In a study of 40 countries grade 4 and 5 learners came last in an international reading literacy study.
- Grade 6 learners results surveyed in 2011, were found to be the second worst readers from a group of 15 countries. (Van Vuren, 2011; Kruger, 2010)
INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS GAP IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Public libraries in Johannesburg are highly developed and well equipped hubs of educational facilities
- Well organized and serve huge public audiences
- Relevant programmes for schools and adult learners
- Does a lot of advocacy for reading
- Big skills gap in information literacy, information literacy program design, training, and impact evaluation.
- Need expressed for partnership with academic librarians to transfer knowledge around the information literacy skills so well organised and developed in this sector.

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BASIS OF PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

- Exchange of knowledge.
- Skills transfer.
- Tap into the legacies and strategic capabilities of three well established residential and one distance learning institution – high levels of expertise found in these environments.
- Academic librarians are comfortable with innovation, and information explosion – used to an adapt or die situation.
- Public librarians – access to SA public, close to citizen social needs.
- Public Libraries have insight into needs of schools, communities, and literacy demands.
- Public librarians have creative ways of approaching reader literacy.
- Empowerment/capacity building partnership
COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE

• Business case for honing and sharpening the intellectual capital of public librarians around information literacy

• This skill is vital for the continuous development of South Africa as a hub of economic development in AFRICA

• The information/knowledge explosion demands this skill development of SA Citizens

• Eradication of social problems demands this skill to be transferred.

• The democracy and freedom in SA require citizens to know how to access, process, and use knowledge meaningfully to enhance their lives.

• Librarians – tacit and explicit knowledge hold the key.
PRACTICAL APPLICATION AND POSSIBLE TOOLKIT

- Needs assessment tools
- Open online literacy forum
- A formal mentoring program
- Training of the trainers program
- A blue print information literacy skill manual
- A Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit for measuring effectiveness and impact
- Balanced Scorecards for planning and progress monitoring
AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR COLLABORATION

Possible Academic and Public Library Matches

• Faculty of Art Librarians matched with Public Library ART Librarians.

• Faculty of Business Management Librarians matched with Entrepreneurship public library programmes.

• Faculty of Education Librarians matched with Children reading programmes in public libraries.

• Faculty of Humanities Librarians matched with the General Reading and Writing programmes in public Libraries.

• General Reference Academic Librarians matched with computer literacy, digital resources literacy, and multi-media literacy information literacy programmes.
FORMAL CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT REQUIRED

- Formal agreement is required.
- Terms of reference
- Baseline study must be done.
- Series of workshops between the sectors of librarians
- Information literacy toolkit development
- Training programmes
- Monitoring and Evaluation of training material, training and training impact.
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS…

- Organisational cultures
- Organisational policies
- Rules of engagement
- Target populations
- Project planning
- Modes of skills transfer
- Funding required
- Timelines
- Reporting
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THANK YOU.