

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

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Transforming libraries in a sharing economy: “Ubuntu” as a professional leadership concept from/for Africa, Asia and Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean

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Abstract:

The way that individuals obtain and share information has changed in the current century and libraries need to consider their roles in the context of globalization, social inequality and the digital revolution. The library of today is in a favorable position to expand on its role as one of the original, effective and successful illustrations of a sharing economy. This paper will introduce the sharing economy as a model that provides opportunities for innovation by libraries, resulting in their transformation as leaders, their services to users, and the communities' use of libraries. First, it will introduce the sharing economy in practice in libraries that are responding to their community's increasing need to access information resources for everyday information needs with new media and formats that they can't easily afford, to have free and reliable internet connection, to access computers with licensed software, and to use spaces for meetings, social activities, cultural programs, conference calls, etc. To meet the needs of increasing vulnerable populations, public libraries will need more than ever, staff equipped with strong technical, pedagogical, and community organizing skills as today's libraries not only nurture the mind, but the soul. Confronting inequality is integral to the social responsibility of all libraries. Second, the leadership needed in the sharing economy is presented and parallels are drawn to the concept of “Ubuntu” as a professional leadership model for library and information professionals in Africa, Asia & Oceania, Latin America & the Caribbean. Rather than an individualistic, competitive model of leadership in international librarianship, a

collective approach is proposed that focuses on process and collective goals, and re-positions professional influence, success and transformation, not on individual leaders (i.e., singular voices) but on leaders, collectively acting in chorus on the global professional stage.

Keywords: Sharing Economy, Role of Libraries, Social Inequality, Collective Leadership, Ubuntu.

I. TRANSFORMING LIBRARIES IN TODAY'S SHARING ECONOMY

Historically, libraries were considered institutions reserved for the elite and educated, but in today's increasingly tech-driven society, libraries can do more and faster, and have evolved into anchors and nerve centers for cities in order to serve citizens from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Librarians are called to understand the future of humanity as a whole or system, the myriad of technologies causing it to change, and the social inequalities that continue to fragment and marginalize communities. Into the mix of solutions for libraries is to strengthen their 'sharing economy' role. The new 'sharing economy' refers to the sharing of goods and services via online platforms in a digital coordinated way. In the field of economy, some people call this new phenomenon of 'sharing economy' with different names (digital economy, gig economy, platform economy, access economy, or collaborative consumption, among others). The fundamental emergence of peer-to-peer digital platforms, is what is today allowing individuals to make use of under-utilized inventory via fee-based, exchange or free sharing; a way of obtaining, giving, or sharing access to goods and services.

Libraries have always been the best example of the meaning of 'sharing economy' because, regardless of whether they are free or membership libraries, users have access and share resources that are available to the user community at no or reduced cost; that otherwise would be too expensive to personally afford. Furthermore, *the whole idea of a library is essentially based on resource sharing*. The way that individuals get and share information has changed with the current century and libraries have to be a part of the 'new economy' as a result of a globalized new world and the digital revolution. It is important to pay attention to what information and related resources individuals need, and how, where and why they access information in order to ensure that libraries stay relevant and provide appropriate services to their communities, and moreover, in a globalized, digital world, to all of society. As the "sharing economy" has attracted a great deal of attention, it is important to evaluate the libraries' role in the challenging context brought on by the 21st century "digital revolution."

This new approach in economy, forces a re-imagination of the way we experience, own and buy goods and services. And, one relevant aspect to consider would be the digital or online environment perspective that provides new value to old resources. Stephany (2015) noted that the sharing economy creates the conditions of taking underutilized assets and making them accessible online to a community, and it is this value that reduces the need for ownership of these assets. The future agenda is focused on building trust in the electronic world by designing rich, innovative, compelling and secure new ways to pay and get paid across all potential channels and devices, redefining commerce from a global perspective in order to create deeper, more complex experiences to enhance how people live, how social services and goods are delivered, how businesses and organizations grow, how cities function and how to build trust in the growing digital world.

The rapid development of online platforms-based services has marked the latest developments of new markets instead of the traditional ways. The ability to monetize underutilized assets, or to forgo buying those assets altogether, has promoted this consumer purchase behavior, particularly when it comes to big ticket items that before were so expensive or inaccessible. The sharing economy creates new potential sources of revenue and profit by expanding markets (new customers who cannot afford to own a product or do not have sufficient need to do so) and increasing a willingness to pay more (consumers would invest or be willing to pay higher prices for goods that could generate a revenue stream by being shared). This is a challenge which is faced by the private sector which focuses more on competition and efficiency, but there is also opportunity, ready to be explored by local and global governments in providing public goods and improving public sector management, and by libraries to drive new sharing possibilities.

II. SHARING ECONOMY: UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL ECONOMY CONTEXT

We have observed before this ‘new’ sharing economy, traditional forms of participating in the sharing economy, such as a student announcing review classes on their local library’s bulletin board, at the school or university; rides or seats offered to return home to San Diego or San Francisco for spring break at the University of California, Los Angeles (USA). Today, although you can still see these types of announcements, private digital platforms have replaced them as the main meeting point for service-providers and users, and they have become a business model in their own right. There is an opportunity for making profit, and in traditional non-profit environments, librarians and public servants can help their communities avoid these costs through innovative ways at the same time that many continue to maintain their role as ‘physical books storage.’

One of the most successful examples to illustrate the evolution in thinking about the sharing economy, outside of libraries, is ‘car sharing’. This is an old idea that gained potential with digital platforms; in fact, it was launched for the first time in 1948 in Zurich but much later, in the 1980s, was very popular in Northern Europe operated by many small and community-based not-for-profit cooperatives (Shaheen et al., 1999). Timeshare condominiums lowered the transaction costs of taking vacations as it replaced buying one’s own property, for example. Yes, this is not a new idea, but the transaction required to make them work are still large and risky in economic terms (e.g., sales staff, legal contracting, and marketing). By contrast, the new cost reduction in and technologies for transactions facilitate everyone getting into the timeshare business without the older transaction costs considered necessary until now. With the support of the necessary new liberal regulations they are able to flourish while old industries and suppliers are complaining about the negative effects and unpredictable changes in the market conditions. Every librarian of the world should be able to coordinate rides or car sharing locating the library as a destination, or other places of interest in their communities, perhaps reaching suburbs and helping members with special limitations, or inequalities. In this expanded role of libraries, we would need a non-commercial version of the sharing economy, with no monetary cost but the time and disposition of the librarian with the appropriate software for the specific purpose.

The sharing economy, which coordinates sharing of goods and services via online platforms, is a relatively new phenomenon and people still wonder if it is a temporary trend or is here to stay forever; and regulating the new economy is a difficult challenge. Supporters claim that creating room and light regulation for these new technologies will yield utopian outcomes

(empowerment of ordinary people, efficiency, and even lower carbon footprints); while critics denounce them for being about economic self-interest rather than sharing, and for being predatory and exploitative. Critics and detractors question whether the popular claim that the sharing economy is fairer, more transparent, participatory, and socially-connected is anything more than rhetoric for society at-large; moreover, the field of economics would have to address this argument before long. Furthermore, economic development would mean something different and better than it did in the past twentieth century; such as improving quality, for both rich and poor, rather than being about ever-greater quantity, inequitably distributed.

In fact, in the last few years, the sharing economy has become the domain of conflicting discourses, legal disputes, and at times, violent strikes (e.g., traditional taxi drivers with shared ride drivers in big cities worldwide). Currently, commercial ‘sharing’ platforms operate in an institutional vacuum and stand to some extent ‘above the law’, which makes it easy for ‘detractors’ to argue that they are simply thriving on ‘regulatory arbitrage’, rather than producing innovation. They add service delivery capacity, which should decrease prices and increase supply and consumer choice, thereby enhancing consumer welfare. Then, on the supply side, they put pressure on prices and sales of traditional businesses, reducing their revenues and potentially the number of jobs they offer. The ‘sharing economy’ is a paradigmatic case of a policy-relevant issue where facts are uncertain, values disputed, and the huge stakes grow increasingly high.

Cheaper prices or lower costs, and technology, have fueled an unprecedented consumer-driven movement, especially in certain particular sectors, such as the travel sector or the travel industry. The traditional accommodations sector suffers a competitive disadvantage, wondering how to adapt to this new scenario. Governments (at local, regional and national levels) are facing the dilemma of supporting greater participation in the tourism industry while ensuring their reputation is not compromised by inadequate standards. In the absence of clear and sufficient standards and regulations for this emerging sector, the reputation of destinations would be compromised. The sharing economy has created new micro-entrepreneurial opportunities for engaging more individuals in the tourism industry and broadening the geographic reach of options for the traveler. Having more stakeholders in the tourism industry would stand to benefit everyone; of course, notwithstanding the impact on climate change with so much more travel involved.

Economists insist that the economy must grow. Why? Well, so unemployment and poverty can be eliminated according to what they have been taught and is in line with disciplinary thinking. In Australia, the material wealth has nearly tripled, but unemployment is still there. In fact, unemployment is several times higher than half a century ago. The sharing economy creates new gainful employment for additional market entrants and employment opportunities for independent contractors; however, it has been shown that there are also costs in terms of job security and quality (Codagnone et al., 2016). The self-defined ‘sharing’ platforms increasingly cover important sectors of the economy such as transportation, accommodation and rental, retail, office space and logistics, finance and consumer credit, and the labor market. These platforms operate on factor markets (capital, labor) and on product markets (goods and services), having economic, social and environmental impacts, and therefore affecting the entire economy of our whole planet, in a global perspective.

III. TECHNOLOGY AS A DRIVER OF MODERN-DAY SHARING ECONOMY

As Greaves et al. (2012:11) argue, properly implemented technology saves money; the richer the technology implementation, the more positive the direct cost reductions and indirect revenue enhancements. They note that the education sector has often failed to experience transformation through the use of technology; in fact, an understanding of the financial benefits of technology is surprisingly absent in schools. This failure is due, in large part, to the challenge, being real or perceived, of allocating the necessary initial capital budget to start such initiatives. The investment, however, was done in libraries in recent years in order to digitize collections, manage resources and enhance access; such digital support enhances inter-library loan service and provides access just-in-time and without geographic limits.

The financial benefits of technology need to be understood in libraries. Software and computation making exchange among strangers possible, as opposed to the proposed local community-based exchange, is one of the salient characteristics of contemporary online ‘sharing economy’ platforms. Building trust continuously to get both sides of a market on board has been a key challenge and driver of success, while review ratings reduce information asymmetry and are a reliable form of self-regulation that ensures consumer protection and security without any form of regulatory intervention. The challenge is for platforms to share the wealth with users, or both the provider and user sides of the market. Librarians and governments can contribute to the widespread access of platforms, either participating in them or creating the necessary software for that purpose.

As we are living in the age of information — a dynamic and unending resource that affects all disciplines and all walks of life as education, research, or development—, resource sharing becomes more important and inevitable in developing countries, where information centers and libraries are short of funds and resources. Resource sharing, from its elementary concept of inter-library lending, now includes cooperative acquisition, coordinated collection development, shared cataloguing, centralized processing, exchange of content page of journals, sharing of bibliographical data, centralized periodicals collection, exchange of electronic documents and articles, etc. In the information age, libraries can use technology to contribute to development in society.

IV. LIBRARIES AND THE SHARING ECONOMY

While literacy and information resources/materials have traditionally been offered by libraries, there are other possibilities and responses from libraries in this ‘new world of sharing’ that challenges the traditional library model. While libraries exist that are innovating and provide services beyond books and other media resources, it is important to recognize all the “library” players in the sharing economy community. Other entities that self-identify as “libraries” are engaging in effectual practices of sharing possibilities and we present three examples for traditional libraries to consider as complementary or inspirational.

1. *Kitchen Library*, inside the Toronto Tool Library at Toronto (Canada), a non-profit library where small and medium-sized appliances and kitchen utensils can be borrowed. How did it work? In practice, those who need a specific cake design mold or that unthinkable fondue pot need do nothing more than go to the kitchen library and borrow them for a set number of days, worth a small fee. Kitchen Share Northeast worked as a public lending library for kitchen tools too, a community resource

dedicated to promoting sustainability, equity and self-sufficiency for residents of Northeast Portland (United States), and to build community through the sharing of tools, traditions, skills and food. It is a difficult business model, so volunteers and donations are always needed and only worked by appointment only. With such an attractive name, some restaurants are now called ‘Kitchen Library’ as libraries seem to provide knowledge.

2. *Toy Libraries* Australia (TLA) is an organization of over 280 not-for-profit toy libraries across Australia. A toy library lends or hires out toys, puzzles, and games, functioning either as a rental shop or a form of family resource program. Toy libraries have existed since at least 1935, with the establishment of one in Los Angeles (LA), being very successful in the United States; nowadays, the Koch-Young Resource Center branch, one of several operating in LA, is able to serve children and adults with developmental disabilities, providing family support, education, training, and assistive technology and is a lending library. The International Toy Library Association (ITLA) was created in 1990. International aid NGOs, active in assisting children from disadvantaged backgrounds, have opened toy libraries and turned them into extremely popular meeting places in their neighborhoods, helping to reduce the risks of delinquency and promoting learning.
3. A *seed library* is a place where community members can get seeds for free or for a nominal fee and is run for the public benefit. Many seed libraries are open in public libraries and community centers, and represent another way for people to interact with the library. Seeds, in this instance, are cultural memory and assets, and represent what the community needs to save and considers valuable, and libraries can contribute to sustainability and biodiversity survival. Preservation of unique adaptations to different environmental conditions, resulting in diverse heirloom varieties, especially when large companies control most food production and seed distribution, and work to hybridize and streamline agriculture, so those regional particular differences can disappear.

With these three non-book examples of sharing economy in libraries, we are able to learn that all forms of libraries are contributing to other ways of doing or learning, and help address the everyday life needs of individuals (kitchen tools library), to family and community (toys library), or even to global interest or the public good (seed libraries).

For the public benefit, from an economic thinking perspective, libraries have to maximize external effects and benefits to society as a whole, and the seed libraries example would be able to support and promote intentions and values such as the following:

- increase access to locally grown food
- social justice
- local resilience
- food security
- seed sovereignty
- promote seed saving
- community building
- preserve and increase genetic diversity
- pro-active response to peak oil and climate change
- desire to strengthen genetically honest seed

The sharing economy driven by “libraries” will not be about economic self-interest nor predatory and exploitative but focused on sharing and serving society. Many of the initiatives in the sharing space, such as tool libraries, seed banks, time banks, and food swaps, are non-profits. They do not seek the negative aspects of the sharing economy as growth or revenue maximization, but instead they aim to serve needs, usually at a community scale. Libraries must be an important part of this new sharing economy, being a reference for their communities with their role of anchor institutions of society. Libraries as education hubs or universities have access to the internet and knowledge, and their mission should be to serve in a modern and practical way their users and communities. Libraries, especially, instead of clients or customers, consider their target the community or even a whole city or town, more than single individuals, and have responsibilities to society.

Porter et al. (2002:12) originally developed and applied the idea of anchor in their report, specifically creating ‘A Strategic Framework for Leveraging College and University Assets.’ The idea was that as colleges and universities continue their expansion and real estate development, they can serve as anchors of local and regional revitalization. In particular, they can play a significant role in anchoring development in specific economic areas; and beyond catalyzing development around their campuses, urban colleges and universities can also anchor regional economic development and have the potential to anchor revitalization. The American Library Association (ALA) employed this concept in its ‘The State of America’s Libraries 2015’ report (Rosa, 2015), and recognized libraries as community anchors playing an integral role in their communities and in responding to them.

When libraries develop sharing economy activities, they share with neighbors, family and friends because we’re known and trusted social contacts; and now we can go further by attending needs and lending goods even to strangers of other communities as a network, because the internet has enormously decreased transaction costs between unknown others reaching even millions of transactions that could not happen in the past without digital platforms. Sharing economy websites are two-sided platforms characterized by strong network externalities, creating the tendency towards natural monopoly and allowing for high margins to be charged by the platform (Frenken & Schor, 2017) that can benefit libraries as mediators too. With a limited budget, organizations can create and coordinate peer-to-peer services with minimum cost and maximum impact.

As tool libraries were developed decades earlier in low-income communities, these earlier efforts tended to be small and local, in order to facilitate the transfer and use of heavy items as well as to solve the problems of trust and credibility which arise with lending schemes. A number of neighborhood sites attempted to replicate that functionality online, but with a local focus, by including durable goods sharing as one dimension of their efforts. Examples included Share Some Sugar, the Front Porch, Neigh*goods, Hey, Neighbor, and Neighborgoods. In 1999, Couchsurfing built a platform that matched people who had empty couches (or beds) and were willing to lend them to people looking for a cheap way to travel. Originally a non-profit, Couchsurfing is now a benefit corporation operating on a large scale and around the world. It reports having 6 million members hosting in more than 100,000 cities (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015).

Crowdsourcing is another possibility, allowing libraries to provide goods and services, or coordinate ways of obtaining information or input into a task or project by enlisting the services of a large number of people, either paid or unpaid, according to goals and mission. Forms of crowdsourcing have been used by not-for-profit organizations and to create

common goods (e.g., Wikipedia). Libraries are already proficient in the first step in crowdsourcing (social engagement with individuals), and need to get proficient in the second step, which is defining and working towards group or community goals. The power of anchor institutions to leverage their resources for the long-term benefit of their communities has begun to capture the attention of city officials and policymakers nationwide, and librarians could play an important role in creating and promoting them. They can organize themselves to work together to achieve big goals for libraries and make their information even more accessible, accurate and interesting for everybody from a global and holistic perspective.

V. “UBUNTU” AS A LIBRARY LEADERSHIP CONCEPT: IMPLEMENTING SHARING ECONOMY IN AFRICA, ASIA & OCEANIA, LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

Libraries are considered one of the original, effective and successful illustrations of a sharing economy, the idea of *‘sharing’* is connected with collective conscious action and economic cooperation; both referring to the concepts of human generosity and harmonious interaction in one’s community, an approach similar to one of the original translations of Ubuntu (Oppenheim, 2012). The Bantu people of sub-Saharan Africa live by a humanist African philosophy referred to as Ubuntu, where the idea of community is one of the integral parts of society, a theory of shared humankind, and togetherness. The word *Ubuntu* comes from the Xhosa/Zulu culture, the community into which Nelson Mandela was born, and can be summarized in the following phrase: “Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” (in the Nguni language of Xhosa, Zulu, or Ndebele) and translated as: “A person is a person through other persons,” or “I am because we are” (Oppenheim, 2012).

We draw on the concept of Ubuntu as inspiration to provide a professional library leadership model that corresponds to the conditions of a sharing economy. We wish to make a case for Ubuntu as a leadership approach for applying the sharing economy for library and information professionals in Africa, Asia & Oceania, Latin America & the Caribbean (Division V Regions). To illustrate how this may be applicable, we reference a story found on the internet albeit the original source is uncertain:

An anthropologist proposed a game to the kids in an African tribe. He put a basket full of fruit near a tree and told the kids that whoever got there first won the sweet fruits. When he told them to run they all took each others’ (sic) hands and ran together, then sat together enjoying their treats. When he asked them why they had run like that as one could have had all the fruits for himself they said: “UBUNTU! How can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?” (Talk:Ubuntu philosophy, n.d.).

Rather than an individualistic, competitive model of leadership in international librarianship, a collective Ubuntu approach is proposed that focuses on process and collective goals, and repositions professional influence, success and transformation, not on individual leaders (i.e., singular voices) but on leaders, collectively acting in chorus on the global professional stage.

Why is this approach appropriate for Division V regions? Countries in Division V Regions range in their state of economic development, history of self-governance, social equity, etc., and in nations where competition and capitalism have not served them well in, alternative strategies for progress, library development and sustainability need to be tried. The Ubuntu approach of library leadership in a sharing economy is presented for consideration for lifting

all libraries by virtue of their library leaders, not just those in developed economies, in Division V Regions and beyond. The following four elements make up this Ubuntu approach:

A. **Process and Collective Goals** – Institutions are successful and effective when they achieve their missions, but they can achieve more when the institutions that share the same goals or missions collaborate in order to leverage their limited resources and augment their efforts, rather than duplicate them. This mode of working, inter-institutionally or cross-institutionally, toward collective goals to address challenging social issues is referred to as collective impact (<https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/what-collective-impact>). While libraries are not new to collaboration, the specific application of collective impact by libraries is being implemented with effect and having a more profound and longer-lasting impact on the community (Vecchiarelli, 2018). Five conditions are needed to ensure that collective impact initiatives are successful and result in more collaborative transformation:

1. *Common Agenda*: All participants have a shared vision of change including a common understanding of the problem or issue and a joint approach through agreed-upon actions.
2. *Shared Measurement*: All organizations agree on what data to collect and which indicators to measure and report, in order to share accountability, understand the results and identify areas of improvement, as needed.
3. *Mutually Reinforcing Activities*: The participating stakeholders coordinate their collective activities which may be different, but are aligned with a mutually reinforced plan of action.
4. *Continuous Communication*: All stakeholders engage in consistent and open communication to build trust, affirm mutual objectives and methods, and create common motivation.
5. *Backbone Support*: A separate, organizing entity is established and funded with staff and resources dedicated to advancing the shared vision and agreed-upon actions, and to centralizing ongoing support for the participating organizations, advocacy and other activities for the success of the initiative.

In the Ubuntu library leadership approach, a focus of Process and Collective Goals asks library leaders in Division V regions to implement collective impact in order to tackle issues and goals that advance their libraries' shared mission or goals by acting with other institutions and in the process taking down barriers of competition and mistrust. This shift to Process and Collective Goals can have a significant impact in developing countries in Division V regions as a strategic approach that allows scarce resources to go further. Library consortia is an example practiced by libraries that meet the conditions of collective impact.

B. **Professional Influence** – In the Ubuntu library leadership approach, library leaders share their power to sway outcomes. Power may be in the form of tangible or intangible assets. In a sharing economy, resource sharing of library materials may come to mind, but in the case of leadership the focus is on sharing the personal assets that the library leader holds. These include sharing the people one knows and has access to (social capital), and the advocacy and persuasive communication knowledge and skills one has. When working in the same system or region, library leaders discuss and coordinate strategies to bring about change, and invite others from the

same system or region to advocate in unison for change, argue the case for budget increases, or negotiate purchases, exchanges or contracts, etc. When working in different regions, library leaders share best practices through intentional means such as by establishing networks, communicating information through email lists, instant messaging chat groups or other means, and sharing resources through a shared repository. Collective professional influence results in better financial, labor and service conditions for the library.

- C. **Professional Success** – The essence of Ubuntu “I am because we are”, is specifically applicable when considering professional success. For Division V library leaders, this means contributing to, sharing in, and honoring each other’s success. Contributing means being an ally, supporting formally or informally, and emotionally or materially to the wellness and professional fulfillment of colleagues in Division V regions. Sharing is acknowledging, internally and externally, that success is not an independent act but made possible with the conscious or unconscious support and actions of others. Honoring is acknowledging in a formal or informal manner (e.g., social media, newsletters, staff meeting, etc.) the achievements, contributions or efforts of staff at all levels; nominating colleagues or staff for honors and awards, and celebrating colleagues and staff when they are recipients of honors and awards.
- D. **Professional Transformation** – Division V leaders have the potential to grow personally and grow the profession. First, professional transformation with personal benefits occur when library leaders contribute to the knowledge and skills (e.g., informal or formal training, courses, etc.) of professional colleagues, staff or students, and share their wisdom, expertise and experiences (e.g., formal or informal mentoring, etc.). In all these cases of learning, hierarchies of young/old or novice/expert need to be erased as mentors and mentees are considered both, learners and teachers. Those who are young and new open up possibilities to re-imagine library and information practices, education and systems, and have facility with new technologies and paradigms, and those who are older and experienced fill in knowledge and skill gaps. Peer mentoring, an addition to traditional mentorship, is prescribed in Ubuntu library leadership where two library leaders with similar positions, career progression and/or age have equal accountability and commitment to one another, and develop a relationship of trust and friendship. Second, professional transformation benefitting the profession occurs when Division V leaders work in service to professional associations and hold leadership positions in their institutions, civic governance or professional associations, and participate in peer mentorship to assume such leadership positions. In the context of IFLA, gaining a leadership foothold requires a coordinated strategy, identifying potential leaders, grooming them, establishing a system of rotation of representative leadership by region, and developing an election strategy to garner votes.

The sharing economy in libraries is essentially a collective and additive practice that positions libraries to address equity of information access that, in turn, opens up opportunities not only for users and society but also for librarians. While the benefits for service have been discussed and published in the profession, the type of leadership that is needed to implement the sharing economy library has not received the attention needed. The introduction to the Ubuntu library leadership approach presented here also includes an emphatic call for library leaders to act, and to measure the success of their leadership by the extent to which they collaborate, contribute to the common good and share in each other’s successes. We invite

librarians in Africa, Asia and Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean, and beyond to apply sharing economy and Ubuntu library leadership practices to open up to boundless possibilities for library innovation and transformative leadership in a globalized, economically and politically distressed, digital world.

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