Access to knowledge and the Economic Crisis - a chance for libraries?

Claudia Lux
Central- and Regional Library Berlin
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Knowledge

.....Is the first raw material, which is growing when it is used.

(Zucker/Schmitz, 1996)
Access to knowledge is restricted by tradition, culture, power, and economy.
Libraries and access to knowledge

- Library work in relation to tradition, culture, power and economy
- Libraries drive access to information and knowledge
- Libraries are often restricted in this goal
Access to knowledge supports

- individual education
- political freedom and democracy
- economic development
The number of scientists...

- 17th Century 1 Million
- 1950 10 Million
- 2000 100 Million

...is an indicator for the increase of knowledge

..........and the same for publications
Opportunity for Libraries

- From information to knowledge
- Current IFLA President‘s theme
- Easy access to knowledge through libraries
- Participate in the creation of new knowledge
The Current Financial and Economic Crisis

Gross domestic product - Fourth quarter 2008 / First quarter 2009
Percentage change on the previous quarter, seasonally adjusted data

OECD Total, European Union, Euro area, Major seven, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States

www.oecd.org/crisisresponse
More economic aspects are relevant for libraries

- Structural economic crisis in multiple regions
- Global Information-Society (WSIS)
- Free market and market protection
- GATS and WTO
Ambivalent situation

- State budget for bank support and investment (in libraries, too)
- Reduction of state and community general budget in (Re-financing credits)
- Reduced support of libraries in countries affected by the crisis
- But…
The Crisis is good for libraries

- Growing number of users
- More people going back to learn
- Need to support jobfinding activities
- Give bankrupt businessmen a home
- Provide business information
- and daily life information
Marketing libraries in a time of crisis

Economic development needs
  - access to information and knowledge
  - for free or very cheap
  - life-long-learning for the workforce
  - a place to be and communicate
  - libraries!
Libraries contribute to research and the creation of knowledge through:

- Repositories and document servers
- Open Access activities
- Licences
- Virtual services
- Enhanced search
and effectively to economic development

Inventions made on the Basis of open access repositories

Example: GPS Fertilizer machinery in Eberswalde, Germany
Business development supported by library repository

- Medium sized business developed from a university of advanced studies
- Free E-Repository of Goettingen University library leads to the key of the invention
Acknowledgement

- Library not mentioned
- Content is key
- Library as infrastructure
- Marketing of Success Stories
Public Library Services to Business Information

- Focus on small and medium enterprises
- NYPL fashion bags story
- Ukrainian Tomato business
- Russian Libraries‘ business information
Many more success stories

- Argentine, Bangla Desh, China – in difficult economic regions:
- Fisherman, peasants, other small business

Access to Learning Award of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Making cities stronger

- Research Project of the Urban Libraries Council in USA
- Public library contributions to local economic development – from manufacturing and service industries to information and idea industries
- Does this count for developing countries, too? Global economy.
Project findings

- Early literacy services contributing to long term economic success
- Library employment and career resources are preparing workers with new technologies
- Small business resources and programs are lowering barriers to market entry
- Public library buildings are catalysts for physical development
Library Services

- Access to current and comprehensive business product, suppliers and financing data
- Source for new online business information and databases
- Existing businesses strengthened and new enterprises created
Many Constraints

Library service – how to put this kind of service into practise

Library is not seen as a potential partner for business

Librarains are not aware or do not know how to support business
One solution

- Create services that are needed
- Market your library services
No matter how bad times are...

- Libraries will show their impact as
- librarians can make a difference to people’s life and
- improve their situation through information and knowledge
Thank you for your attention!

lux@zlb.de

and don´t forget to.... join IFLA (if you have not done yet)