As not for profit organization, libraries are serving users on a free basis. Beside the typical resources, and services provided by the library staffs, it is the library obligation to organize special events and additional activities for the patrons. These activities will definitely costly for the library. Furthermore, for the limited number of staff would affect the success of the events. Therefore libraries need to create smart partnership with other organizations like the local government, clubs and associations as well as local schools and universities. Beside that the libraries could also build partnership with their own patrons. Thus volunteerism activities are being promoted in the libraries. By having volunteers libraries are able to share the responsibilities of organizing an event with their patrons. This paper will discuss the culture of volunteerism practised among the community in Nottingham, UK. Beside the Nottingham City Council as the main player, the Radford-Lenton Library plays a major role in coordinating and promoting volunteer activities. Besides discussing on the issue from a user’s point of view, this paper is meant to propose volunteer activities suitable for the library users.

**Keywords**: volunteer, library, patrons, activities.
Introduction

Volunteerism isn’t new. Country like Singapore, India, United Kingdom or United States of America (USA), have been using the concept of volunteerism in their private and public sector from a long time ago. The economic downturn has created the opportunities of having or using the volunteer in the organization. Volunteering is normally defined simply as being work for which no monetary reward is obtained by the individual (Lynch and Smith, 2010, Preston, J.B, 2014). The organization and the volunteers will get the benefits from the program created. According to Wai Yeen Valerie Siew (2007), “volunteerism is for everyone, and represents a good way to bring together the private, public, and people sector for a common cause. The government, companies and individuals are united to serve a common good for the community at large.”

As for Malaysia, the concept of volunteerism is about to grow. Despite the fact that the scenario is about to bloom, the organization name it as a private and public sector need to be ready to accept and fully utilize the volunteer in their organization. Volunteer is a unique resource available in library. Ironically, library or information centre have lots of plan to be implement, therefore the ideas of having a volunteer in the library could enhance the capabilities and efficiency of the organization. Lots of activities could be done in the public or academic library. To have them, the volunteer in the library, the organization should have a clear plan. Libraries can always divide the works into two main categories, such as library related works, like data entry or copy cataloguing and non-technical activities like storyteller for a children activity.

Smart partnership with volunteer to team up with the library will allow both organization and the person to increase productivity and creativity. Volunteers from different background, skills, competencies and expertise and walk of life could provide required support by the organization. By having great volunteer as part of the team, library will be able to stretch out the capabilities beyond the budget constrain. Volunteers will bring new ideas, new concept and new colours into the library.
Why Volunteerism?

Volunteering is great for the community and it could have a positive impact on the volunteer itself. Few names were given for the volunteer program. As for Undergraduates College in the city area of Mumbai, India the program was called as Students Assistance (SA) and friends of the library (FOL) in Singapore. As have been mentioned before, the program could have benefited both parties in their own way. According to Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service, there are five reasons to volunteer. People joined the voluntary program to build the confidence and make new friends. Besides that, the program will be able to help to improve the community as well as improve the volunteer’s health. Other than that, it was mentioned that voluntarily program will be able to boost their career options and not to forget that volunteering can be great fun.

According to Tikam, M., (2011), volunteers look for gaining career related experience (career), gain knowledge and skills and get an opportunity to utilize the same (understanding), seek to grow and develop psychologically (enhancement). Public libraries and academic library is the best platform for the students to gain new knowledge and skills. It was believed that volunteering will bring benefits to both society and the individual.

As for the libraries, before they could have the volunteer, few questions need to be analyse. Volunteer program is an ideal solution to help library to sustain and develop during the slow economic development. However, during the planning session, the management need to consider few basic questions. Evans, Edward G. (2009) mentioned the first question is should the library use volunteers? Besides that the questions of where, when, who will be in charge should not be fall off. The answer will help library management to organize the volunteers and the programs related to becomes more efficient. Furthermore the incorporation between the volunteers and library will help to enhance the understanding towards the services provided and used. The result, library could improve their services and it will help patrons to be happy and satisfied.
The idea

Monetary has always become an issue in order to organize an activity. Voluntarism is the key answer. There are lots of ideas on what should be done in the library or in any other public or private sector. The volunteers can be a young or teenager, senior citizens, retirees, students, a housewife or even employed people. Evans (2009) divided the volunteer into three main categories. Short term volunteer, “commitment volunteer” and the last one is volunteers who engage in the activity because of some outside pressure rather than any personal desire. The programs design for the volunteer should have benefited both volunteers and the organization.

To support the library, volunteer basis activities should be provide. As for the Nottingham City libraries, they have a program named “reading aloud”. The volunteers have the opportunity to read aloud to people with dementia, helping them to reconnect with their past, and enjoy the hearing prose poetry by their favourites authors. A part from that, they also have a program such as music and drama sets volunteering, conversation classes, language cafe, home library service, Asian library service, homework help session and many more.

Lots of activities could be developed for the benefits of the society. Library or organization should have a clear picture on what kind of activity they plan to have. Volunteers will play a vital role in engaging or connecting the library and the society. Depending on the types of library, activities or programs jointly organize with volunteers can be the local focus based on the society’s need such as reading awareness for young people, book delivery for the under privileged family and many more. Besides that, library can also have the volunteers in their daily routine. It will help to speed up the works and volunteers especially students will be able to enhance their soft skills. Given the insight, it shows that the library or any other resource centre could have implement and fully utilize the programs together with their volunteers.
Case Study: Radford-Lenton Library

Radford-Lenton library is a small public library located between the communities of Radford and Lenton in Nottingham. As for the community, the library roles are beyond the concrete wall. Community does rely on the library to gain access to information as well as a place to meet the society.

This library provides a service like any other library does and they also have few regulars’ activities that involved the volunteer. Among the activities conducted are “totstime”, tangle knits, homework help session, councillor surgeries, library community garden and the work club. These activities conducted by the library with the support of Nottingham City Council and as well as volunteers from the public. Those activities conducted in order to fully utilized the time and space that library have. Information related to the activity will be published on the internet as well as in a printed form.

Library patrons will always be informed regarding the activities and their participation are highly appreciated. Lots of activities design for young children, for an example the totstime is where there is volunteer to came and become the storyteller for the babies. It is fun to see the baby and their mother enjoy the session. This shows that the public library is the best platform for the community activities. The strong connection between the library, Nottingham City Council and the society allow them to endure fun, colourful and exciting activities in the library. This place is more than just a library; it has become a vibrant social learning space.
Figure 1: Radford-Lenton Library, Nottingham United Kingdom.

Figure 2: Library area for the activity like “tottimes”
Recommendation and conclusion.

Cost in managing a library has always become a debate. As mentioned before, volunteer is a unique resource available to be use. These volunteers are there to help and to give back to their society. The organization need to start in order to have the volunteers in the library. Promotion is the keyword. As the best platform in the society, library could promote the available opportunity for volunteers to walk in and be part of the team. In return, do acknowledge the volunteers for their contributions and effort.

We need to start the culture for a better future. Library has to broaden the horizon, go beyond in the building services, and enhance the values and capabilities. Embrace the new opportunity by engaging volunteers at all level. The outcome will surely benefit both library and volunteers.
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