The role of academic libraries and the need for librarians' competences to facilitate Citizen Science

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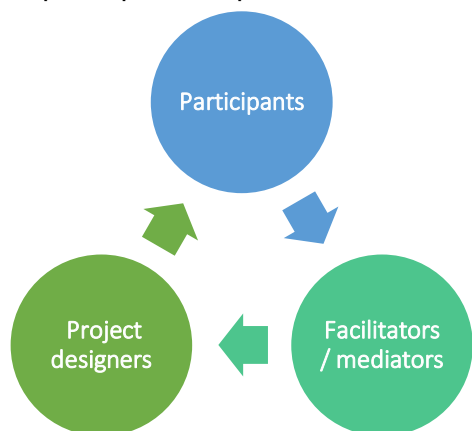
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The roles of librarians in Citizen Science projects

During the project initiation, design and implementation, librarians act as facilitators/mediators to represent the project to the participants and play an intermediary role between the participants and the project design team:
- ✓ to organize and/or lead a project team;
- ✓ to promote communication and exchange of knowledge between researchers and the participants/citizens,
- ✓ to assist or educate participants in collecting, analysing and storing data,
- ✓ to get, analyse and pass on feedback from the participants' experiences.

Librarians' skills and competences implementing Citizen Science projects

General knowledge and skills:
- ➢ awareness of citizen science projects and of different models of participation,
- ➢ teaching and learning competence,
- ➢ research skills,
- ➢ data collection and analysis skills,
- ➢ communication skills.

Competences related to a specific citizen science project:
- ➢ understanding of the nature of citizen science projects, the expected outcomes and the range of roles for participants in the project,
- ➢ understanding the research project protocols and procedures (data collection, geolocation recording, identification, classification and analysis protocols),
- ➢ training on the practical aspects of the project and any technical or scientific equipment.

How to strengthen the connection between academic libraries and citizen engagement

- ➢ to train the staff on data collection, management and curation,
- ➢ establish new positions in research libraries focused on citizen engagement and uniting citizen scientists with the university faculty,
- ➢ to increase the awareness among librarians about their roles in research and citizen science,
- ➢ to stress the need for stronger support from universities,
- ➢ to establish a central platform which unites information about how to participate, which skills are needed, and which projects are looking for volunteers.