

Makerspaces and Contributions to Entrepreneurship

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Why did we select this research?

Entrepreneurship is essential to the growth and dynamism of countries and regions, forcing policy makers to search for levers to generate new firms within their municipalities. This paper studies the rising of maker movements (democratization of access to and information on using too), which became a predominant lifestyle with implications for public concern. The research explores makerspaces and how they theoretically contribute to business generation and sustainment.

Key findings

Each makerspace (defined as a place in which people with shared interests, especially in computing or technology, can gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge) is unique and how it contributes to its local community is shaped by its founders and members. Some makerspaces have a more entrepreneurial focus and offer services similar to incubators or co-working spaces with the additional benefit of onsite tools. Alternatively, others spaces emphasize the open access of tools and applying new learned skills to community projects. Many spaces fall between those two extremes. Others lie somewhere off that spectrum as well.

The challenge of all of these spaces clustering under common names is identifying a specific organization's purpose. In the future, there may be a need for greater refinement in the names used to identify whether a space caters to entrepreneurs

(perhaps IncuMaker), versus a traditional makerspace that caters to the public. The makerspaces contributions, according to the research, are said to be:

- generating entrepreneurs,
- creative environment, as makerspaces provide a flexible, creative environment to aid innovation and provide support as members transform products from idea to reality,
- prototyping, as makerspaces allows members to find design issues early through the active development of the product as its first users and make adjustments accordingly.

Contributing to entrepreneurship may not even be the primary impact of makerspaces, which also have the potential to contribute to community development, education, and sustainability. In the United states makerspaces are focused towards gender issues and the environment, while spaces opening in refugee camps likely have very different concerns. The strength of the maker movement exists in its openness and flexibility; its influence in all these areas is deserving of thorough theorization and study as well.

References

Van Holm, E. J. (2015). Makerspaces and contributions to entrepreneurship. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 195, 24-31. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815036460>.
