
Out of Necessity Comes Unbridled Imagination for Survival: Contributive Justice in Spanish Libraries during Economic Crisis

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ABSTRACT

The call for this journal issue notes that “social justice in LIS/ services involves achieving action-oriented socially relevant outcomes via information-related work.” There is not a more fitting time and place for such action than in Spain, where the current economic crisis left more than 6 million (27 percent of the population) unemployed as of 2013. It is not just communities that are grappling with the pain of the economic downturn; libraries are also suffering from the crisis as a result of budget cuts due to reduced public funding. This article presents the case of Spanish academic and public libraries that have found solutions to keep themselves open, providing services vital to the economic and sociocultural needs of their communities. This case is an example of contributive justice, as evidenced in the actions taken by Spanish libraries and their communities as well as in the manner in which the research data were collected. Eight library-related actions were found: professional, community, social, political, digital, cultural/heritage, economic, and ontological. Despite economic hardships all around, these Spanish examples reveal the impact of libraries as social justice institutions, the role of librarians as agents of change, and the value of contributive and grassroots efforts when governments fail to provide. Moreover, these contributions to social justice illustrate actions appropriate to a contributive justice framework for libraries, as proposed in this article.

INTRODUCTION

The present-day economic crisis has affected libraries in many regions worldwide (see, for example, Guarria, 2011; Lloret Romero, 2011; and

Rooney-Browne, 2009). Shrinking budgets have led to reductions in acquisitions, services, and/or library staff. Spain is a country where the recession has been felt in a very stark way, resulting in a growing unemployment rate unprecedented in history, and causing major problems in public services and the welfare state. Spanish libraries have also been affected by reduced budgets and have had to adapt to a new context characterized by the lack of funding and the impossibility of providing adequate services (Hernández-Sánchez & Arroyo-Vázquez, 2014).

The economic crisis has been felt in Spanish libraries as in society in general since 2008, the year in which official statistics began to show declining figures in indicators such as the number of people who work in libraries or the funds available for acquisitions. The years 2012 and 2013 (the latest examined in this study) have been the most difficult for libraries, which have had to reconsider their models of operation, reorganize services, and assess their expenses, as reported in this article. Spanish public libraries count on 99 percent public funding, while university libraries are publicly funded at about 70 percent, according to the *Estadística de Bibliotecas* (Library Statistics) data from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) (National Statistics Institute) (INE, 2008). With the reduction in public funding, all public agencies have experienced decreases in service delivery, as has happened with libraries.

Spanish libraries found themselves with shrunken budgets during the years of the crisis. Funding was especially reduced in the years 2012 and 2013 (see table 7), when the government applied drastic measures, imposing a hiring freeze and a zero budget for acquisitions. Even so, libraries were able to fulfill their social role and developed various initiatives in order to provide services, based on citizen participation and creative strategies to tackle the budget squeeze. This article describes how Spanish libraries faced the crisis, provided services, and worked out solutions to their social problems, and reports initiatives of user communities to support the operation of libraries, all within the specific social justice framework of contributive justice. The goal of this study was to understand how libraries fared during Spain's economic crisis from 2008 to 2012, and in the process, to learn of the contributive approach adopted by libraries and their communities that other regions in the world can consider applying. Mixed methods, also applying a contributive approach, were used to address the two research questions:

- What financial, policy, personnel, and usage changes have libraries faced during Spain's economic downturn?
- How have libraries fared during Spain's economic recession?

From the findings, the lessons learned regarding contributive justice in libraries and their communities were gathered to create a contributive justice framework for libraries. The four areas of contributions that make

up the proposed framework are vital investments in the sustainability of all libraries and the social opportunities and benefits they provide to their communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The economic crisis and its impact on libraries were covered in the international literature in the early years of the recession. One of the authors who has addressed this topic the most is Guarria, in “The Recession, Budgets, Expectations and Realities” (Guarria, 2011) and “The Economic Crisis and its Effect on Libraries” (Guarria & Wang, 2011). The first article presents the results of two surveys of libraries in the United States that were conducted in 2009 and 2010 to learn about the effects of budget cuts. The second article is based on a survey of US libraries, especially university libraries. Both have the purpose of identifying the issues and providing guidelines to mitigate the consequences of the recession on libraries. Lloret Romero (2011) follows a similar tack in her article “Libraries’ Response to the Crisis: Measures to Mitigate its Impact,” in which she makes recommendations for managing the crisis. Rooney-Browne (2009) published one of the first studies based on statistical data, analyzing the situation of public libraries in the United Kingdom and the United States. Also related to Great Britain and the United States are two reports, “The Impact of the Economic Downturn on Libraries” (Nicholas, Rowlands, Jubb, & Jamali, 2010) and “The Economic Downturn and Libraries” (Rowlands & Nicholas, 2010), which presented data from surveys and focus groups with university library managers.

The Spanish professional literature on the impact of the crisis on libraries is very recent, and we can say that it is a topic of growing interest, with results and reports being published on a regular basis, along with discussions in social media and blogs. Prominent among the latter is the “Libraries 2029” blog, which reflects on the role of the library and its problems. Similarly, “Biblioblog, 4th Edition” has published several posts about the crisis and libraries, often reporting on a situation with statistical data and reports as they become available. Among the most recent reports, the one from FESABID, the Spanish Federation of Societies of Archivist, Librarians, Documentalist and Museology, stands out because of its focus on the economic and social value of libraries (Gómez-Yáñez, 2013). It is available in both Spanish and English. Also recommended are studies from the Grupo de Trabajo Estratégico para el Estudio del Impacto Socioeconómico de las Bibliotecas en la Sociedad (Strategic Work Group on the Socioeconomic Impact of Libraries on Society), which has published the report *The Economic and Social Impact of Libraries* (Consejo de Cooperación Bibliotecaria, 2013).

Gómez-Hernández is recognized as the primary author tackling and addressing the impact of the economic crisis on Spanish libraries. In his

first work in this area, published in 2010, he outlines the context at the time and reveals statistically proven trends, such as the increased use of library services, that correlate directly with the effects of the crisis (Gómez-Hernández & Selgas-Gutiérrez, 2010). This same author published an article about the situation in 2011 and the increase of the impact of the crisis on Spanish public libraries (Gómez-Hernández, 2012); this piece was notable for foreseeing the worsening of the crisis in public libraries in 2012, one of the most negative years for the Spanish economy and society. In this article, Gómez-Hernández describes the problems that libraries were beginning to face due to lack of funding, as well as the calls for action by librarians in defense of the common good. A year later, this author provided a state-of-the-art report that presented data on the reduction of public budgets for culture and analyzed possible solutions, going through what he calls adaptation and reaction for the survival and maintenance of services (Gómez-Hernández, 2013).

The relevant literature published in Spain can be divided into authors who have provided a strong rationale in the debate, or nonempirical work, and those presenting data and experiences, or empirical studies. An important document on the impact of the crisis on libraries was published by Anglada (2012) in the *Anuario Thinkipi* (Yearbook), an information resource in the Spanish-speaking world for library and information professional news and information. His article, “¿Podemos hablar de crisis desde las bibliotecas?” (Can we can talk about crisis in libraries?), is an excellent example of reflection that includes the debate on the role of the library in a digital society, and advocates for libraries using three arguments: libraries support personal growth, learning and technological literacy; libraries are not based on commercial consumption; and libraries help the disadvantaged.

Other articles have focused on the collection of data and experiences that demonstrate the impact of the crisis on libraries and the viable solutions that were implemented to reduce the effects of the cuts. A good example is the empirical study by the Andalusian Librarians Association (Gutiérrez Santana, Real-Duro, Bustamante-Rodríguez, & Guerrero-Salgueiro, 2010) that asked Andalusian libraries how and where the economic crisis had affected them. The survey was actually conducted from late January through April 2011, a period in which the effects of the budget reductions were beginning to be felt, given that 64 percent of the responders indicated that their budgets were reduced. The data can be verified by looking at the statistics that are published periodically. The main statistical resource is *Library Statistics*, reported every two years by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Spain. This report is mandatory and provides a true representation of all types of libraries. It was the source used by Hernández-Sánchez & Arroyo-Vázquez (2014) in their study on

the effects of the economic crisis on Spanish libraries. Their article is a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of libraries during the crisis and will be referred to later in this essay. Finally, it is necessary to highlight that the most complete bibliography and list of experiences thus far is the one published by Merlo-Vega (2012) in his article “Acción ante la recesión . . .” (Action in the face of the recession . . .), which was published in March 2012 and addresses many of the issues covered in this article as well as in the project report, *Bibliotecas en Acción* (Libraries in Action) (Merlo-Vega, 2014).

CONTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE: AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

The work presented here responds to the call for contributions to this issue of *Library Trends*, with a focus that “social justice in LIS/services involves achieving action-oriented socially relevant outcomes via information-related work.” A broad definition of social justice used here is the equality of rights for all individuals to benefit from social progress, without discrimination. When library and information organizations are engaged in promoting social justice, the emphasis should be on library and information services (LIS) providing equality of opportunities for both users and nonusers of any background to enhance their economic and social well-being, which includes their rights, dignity, and voice as well as economic, social, and political empowerment. There are various approaches to or types of social justice, such as distributive or utilitarian (see Mehra, Rioux, & Albright, 2009). The social justice approach found most appropriate for the work in this article is contributive justice. It is applicable to both the circumstances of Spanish libraries during an economic downturn and the process by which the data for this study were collected.

Although it is not a widely known or discussed approach to social justice, Gomberg (2007) introduces contributive justice in his book addressing racism and unequal opportunity; the structural negativity of unequal opportunity; and how, through understanding justice contributively rather than distributively, the challenges of unequal distribution of labor and opportunities can be overcome. In a contributive approach, Gomberg argues, it is not about the benefits people receive (*who gets what*, or distribution); rather, justice is achieved by what one gives to others (*who gives what*, or contribution). There needs to be both duty and opportunity to contribute, because without contributions there isn’t anything to distribute. In this manner, contributing to “others” increases what they get, making distribution primary; and this consequently enables “them” to contribute, making contribution primary. Four norms are at the core of contributive justice: a duty to contribute labor; an equal opportunity to contribute labor; a duty to participate in social decisions; and an equal opportunity to participate in social decisions. The shift in focus is on what

we DO rather than what we GET. Sayer (2011) further elaborates that “contributive justice can thus be about either the quantity or the quality of the contribution made by people to some project” (p. 9).

The notion of contributing is also the principle underlying crowdsourcing, which is the process of obtaining needed resources, services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people, especially from an online community, rather than from traditional employees or providers, immediate family, friends, or community members. When referring to the crowdsourcing of ideas, we talk about the wisdom of crowds or collective wisdom; in regard to financing, we name it crowdfunding (e.g., Kickstarter); and when speaking of services, we characterize it as the collective economy (e.g., libraries, Zipcar). Crowdsourcing was applied in our data collection.

METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods were used to obtain the data needed to address the study’s two research questions. First, in order to learn what financial, policy, personnel, and usage changes Spain’s libraries experienced during its national economic downturn, primary data sources were tapped. These included library statistical data from the INE as well as from REBIUN (Red Española de Bibliotecas Universitarias, or Spanish University Libraries Network), news (mass media, reports, and publications) received from subscribing to library news alerts, and published materials identified from literature searches.

Second, to understand how library services have been impacted upon during Spain’s economic recession, crowdsourcing was used to collect data from May to October 2013. An open call was made, requesting examples for a research project on “libraries in action” of how Spanish libraries were managing since the start of the economic crisis. The aim was to gather real-world cases to learn how Spanish libraries were helping user communities in these challenging times, and how user communities were helping libraries to maintain the continued provision of services. The sharing of experiences is not only of benefit for this research but more importantly for libraries and communities in Spain, as they can compare their experiences in order to learn from effective practices, and for those struggling in other regions that can try or model these practices. For the latter, they reveal the commitment, tenacity, and creativity of library communities in struggle because of the shared core value of libraries as a public good. The call for data/participation was distributed on lists and posted on social media, including the following:

- iwetel@listserv.rediris.es (<http://listserv.rediris.es/cgi-bin/wa?A2=IWE TEL;f0c3ddcf.1305A>). Launched in 1993, IweTel is the largest Spanish-language electronic forum on libraries, information science, and com-

munication, currently hosted by RedIRIS (Spanish Academic and Research Network).

- *publicas-l*, a Spanish-language list on public libraries
- José Antonio Merlo-Vega's Facebook account ([http://www.facebook.com/notes/jos%C3%A9-a-merlo-vega/bibliotecas-en-acci%C3%B3n-la-biblioteca-ayuda-a-su-comunidad-la-comunidad-ayuda-a-su/10152140832132788](http://www.facebook.com/notes/jos%C3%A9-a-merlo-vega/bibliotecas-en-acci%C3%B3n-la-biblioteca-ayuda-a-su-comunidad-la-comunidad-ayuda-a-su/)). Reposting was encouraged, and several subsequent reminders were made.
- The Facebook page "Yo amo mis bibliotecas" (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Yo-AMO-las-Bibliotecas-P%C3%BAlicas/164925590283378>)
- José Antonio Merlo-Vega's Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/merlovega>), which currently has over three thousand followers. Followers were encouraged to retweet, and several subsequent reminders were posted.

The call was distributed only once, at the beginning of May 2013, unless otherwise noted. The call instructed contributors to submit examples to an open Google document (<http://j.mp/biblioaccion>) that was organized into six action areas, which included descriptions and categories. To ensure anonymity, participants were able to contribute and edit without needing to register. The name of the library associated with an example was provided by contributors, but it was not possible to determine whether the contributor was a staff member or a user of a specific library, or of another. A few exceptions took place, of individuals directly emailing their experience/submission to coauthor Merlo-Vega. The confidentiality of these contributors has been maintained. Contributors did not receive any payment for their submissions.

Bibliotecas en acción (Libraries in Action) (2013) continues to be made available online, but instead of the raw data gathered, it now houses an edited compilation of the contributions to the study (Merlo-Vega, 2014). The Google document had the dual objective of sharing library experiences as well as participating in crowdsourcing research data collection that was fundamentally collaborative, simultaneous, immediate, and open. No attempt was made to confirm the veracity of every single detail, but as an open activity, there have been no contradictions in the data collected. Many examples were received, mainly from public libraries, with a few from academic and hospital libraries. The term "public library" is used here to define any library accessible to the public at no cost, regardless of whether its funding is from public or private sources. Privately-funded libraries, freely accessible to the public, tend to be referred to as "special libraries" in North America. Libraries covered in this study are listed in the appendix.

Content analysis was conducted to ensure that the contributed examples were coded into the appropriate action areas, and in some cases, contributions were moved to the category that was most appropriate. The

examples received by email were also added to the appropriate sections in the Google doc, which originally had six categories: professional action, civic action, social action, political action, cultural/heritage action, and technological action. At the same time that contributions were received, experiences from news alerts and social networks, identified in the research to address the first research question, were collected and added to the Google doc. In so doing, it was determined that two new categories were needed as noted in table 1, economic action and ontological action, and that two action areas needed to be renamed, from Civic to Community Action, and from Technological to Digital Action. These action areas have specific areas of focus and categorize a set of experiences or accounts submitted or identified in the data collection, as noted in the following descriptions of each action area (Merlo-Vega, 2012).

- *Professional action.* Libraries are able to maintain basic services with less funding. Libraries reported actions on operating the daily activities of the library that included collection development, user services, and cultural programs.
- *Community action.* Libraries engage users in their activities. The user community supported and participated in nontraditional library activities, such as those of a job-related, personal, or economic nature, including providing donations to support library activities that otherwise would not have been offered for lack of funding.
- *Social action.* Libraries help people in need. By focusing on social issues, they support disadvantaged community members and are leading or helping groups at risk of exclusion. Libraries are collaborating with social service agencies and other sociocultural groups to address social needs.
- *Political action.* Libraries contest cuts and antilibRARY policies. Libraries and their stakeholders engage in protests against budget cuts, imposition of borrowing fees, space closures, or downsizing of personnel. Libraries demand needed cultural services.
- *Digital action.* Libraries use free or low-cost technologies to deliver services. Libraries are catalysts of technology use, offering new services for interaction, virtual reading, organizing of virtual communities, and coordination of online learning.
- *Cultural/heritage action.* Libraries support local culture, particularly with free technologies. The library shares content with its community, coordinates activities to preserve local memory, disseminates open-access documents, etc. The library offers digital collections to its community and provides materials in order to make possible local memory preservation projects.
- *Economic action.* Libraries adjust and redistribute their budgets. With limited and uncertain budgets, libraries have had to develop collection reduction policies with new selection indicators, modified subscriptions,

Table 1. Library-related action categories

Categories appearing in call for data	Final categories (w/initial category)
1. Professional action	1. Professional action (1)
2. Civic action	2. Community action (2)
3. Social action	3. Social action (3)
4. Political action	4. Political action (4)
5. Cultural/heritage action	5. Digital action (6)
6. Technological action	6. Cultural/heritage action (5)
	7. Economic action
	8. Ontological action

renegotiated electronic resources licenses, increased or modified consortial purchasing procedures, etc.

- *Ontological action.* Libraries champion their role in the information society. The economic crisis has created an identity crisis in the library community, calling on LIS professionals and their associations to examine and defend the role of the library through research, publications, and professional dialogue.

A DECLINING ECONOMY AND ITS IMPACT ON SPANISH LIBRARIES: THE CONTEXT FOR CONTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

The Spanish economy has been in a recession since 2008, according to the majority of economic studies. It was in 2008 and 2009 that the country's economic indicators reflected the conditions of economic crisis, which has had a direct impact on social, educational, and cultural indicators as we will see in this section of the article. The unemployment rate has grown inexorably at a worrisome rate, reaching 26.1 percent of the population in 2013, the highest rate in the history of the country (see table 3). This statistic is associated with another even more dangerous one, which is the percentage of the population at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which stood at 28.2 percent in 2012.

Spanish government expenditures in public services have followed a steady annual growth. Spain is a country particularly committed to public services, which are maintained through direct and indirect taxes and compulsory contributions to the social security system (see table 2). The funding formula functioned effectively until the economy fell, and the governments of Spain at all levels have begun to implement policies of cuts in all areas. Table 2 shows an increase in general spending on public services, but a reduction in the specific areas of education and culture, where library budgets are situated. The data broadly include the indicators of the central government of the country, plus the budgets of regional and local governments. One can see that the education and culture budgets have reverted to the level of five or six years previously.

It is important to provide some social data that explain the current situ-

Table 2. General government expenditure by function (Spain)

	Year					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
General public services (% of GDP)	4.6	4.8	5.3	5.3	5.7	6.1
Education (% of GDP)	4.4	4.6	5.1	4.9	4.8	4.5
Education (million €)	46,088	50,137	52,902	51,651	50,278	46,030
Cultural services (% of GDP)	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	n.d.
Cultural services (million €)	7,007	7,732	6,947	6,971	6,155	n.d.

Source of data: European Commission, Eurostat (2014).

ation in Spain and serve as a context for understanding the worrying situation that the country is facing. As it has been said, the percentage rate of people without employment in 2013 was 26.1 percent, with an even higher percentage rate for women (26.7 percent) and the population under 25 years old (55.5 percent). Table 3 shows the evolution of unemployment in Spain and its distribution by gender and age. The overall unemployment rate more than tripled between 2007 and 2013, the years in which the economic crisis has been the most severe and where the results of government policies of cuts and lack of investment are most evident. A significant indicator of the precarious economic situation is that more than half of the population under 25 years of age is unemployed.

The lack of growth and investment policies is resulting in the Spanish population becoming progressively impoverished. As shown in table 4, the percentage of the total population at risk of poverty in 2012 was 22.2 percent. The data also show the difficult situation that is being experienced by Spanish households during the crisis. Increasingly, there are more people who are close to the poverty threshold, which is set at 60 percent of the national median equivalent of disposable income. One of every five Spaniards is on the threshold of poverty. In addition, 15.7 percent of the Spanish population in 2013 lived in households where the adults were working at less than 20 percent of their total work potential during the previous year. This situation has been noted by public libraries, which are supporting disadvantaged families and have begun to direct actions such

Table 3. Unemployment rate in Spain (%)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	8.2	11.3	17.9	19.9	21.4	24.8	26.1
Males	6.4	10.1	17.7	19.6	21.1	24.6	25.6
Females	10.7	12.8	18.1	20.2	21.8	25.1	26.7
<25-year-olds	18.1	24.5	37.7	41.5	46.2	52.9	55.5
25–74-year-olds	7.0	9.7	15.7	17.8	19.2	22.5	23.8

Source of data: European Commission, Eurostat (2014).

Table 4. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Spain (% of total population)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
At-risk-of-poverty rate	19.7	20.8	20.1	21.4	22.2	22.2	n.d.
Severe material deprivation rate	3.5	3.6	4.5	4.9	4.5	5.8	6.2
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion	23.3	24.5	24.5	26.7	27.7	28.2	n.d.
People living in households with very low work intensity (ages 0–59)	6.8	6.6	7.6	10.8	13.3	14.2	15.7

Source: European Commission, Eurostat (2014).

as collecting food or school supplies to donate to people without financial resources. The social commitment of libraries to their communities has been demonstrated in many Spanish cities, where libraries have coordinated initiatives of a social nature, such as those presented in this article. Table 4 brings together the most significant data of the worrying annual increase in the population at risk of exclusion.

Examining the data published by the Ministry of Education on education expenditure in Spain, one notes the results of the policy of cuts in education implemented by the government (see table 5). Investments in education have been falling since 2009, while the expenditures of families grow each year. Table 5 also shows how the average expenditure on education per student and per inhabitant has decreased every year since 2009. Behind the stark figures are policies of cuts in the number of teachers and scholarships that are traditionally funded. Education in Spain is managed by regional governments, which receive funding from the central government from taxes; thus the data in table 5 refer essentially to the investment in the autonomous communities, but also in national budgets.

The expenditure on culture in Spain has also been diminishing since 2008–2009 (see table 6). The different levels of Spanish government (central, regional, and local) are investing less each year in cultural services, which include libraries. The management of cultural services is very decentralized in Spain, with the town councils investing the most. Available data through 2011 clearly show the withdrawal of financing by the differ-

Table 5. Education expenditures in Spain

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Expenditure on education (% of GDP)	4.30	4.31	4.41	4.68	5.07	5.04	4.86
Public expenditure (billion €)	39.1	42.5	46.4	50.9	53.1	52.7	50.8
Expenditure of households (billion €)	7.9	8.2	8.5	8.5	8.8	9.0	9.2
Average expenditure per student (€)	5,189	5,566	6,073	6,441	6,546	6,427	6,273
Average expenditure per inhabitant (€)	24.8	25.0	25.9	27.0	28.5	28.2	27.7

Source: Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (INEE) (2014).

Table 6. Government expenditures on culture in Spain (million €)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Central	784	880	991	1,075	1,135	1,051	957
Regional	1,466	1,807	1,976	2,129	2,046	1,769	1,483
Local	2,925	3,245	3,623	3,886	3,837	4,043	3,397

Source: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (2013).

ent types of governments in all cultural fields, not only in library services. The central government (General Administration of the State) dedicates its cultural budgets to publishing, archives, libraries, museums, cinema, theater, etc., both for infrastructure and concrete projects. In the case of libraries, the central budget is also targeted for the purchase of information resources. Moreover, the contribution of regional and municipal governments also includes the payment of the salaries of the cultural heritage personnel, including librarians.

The national General State Budgets also clearly reflect the cut in funding for libraries, which table 7 shows to have declined by 60 percent between 2008 and 2014. The line item for libraries in the General State Budgets is dedicated to infrastructure and the cooperative purchase of information resources. The tragic decline of the General State Budget means that it has stopped investing in library buildings as well as in the purchase of books and magazines for public libraries. The policy of cuts by the central government included measures that curtail funding of some items to regional governments, which in turn then fail to meet the deficit targets established by the central government. This policy has resulted in no receipt of funding for the purchase of books and magazines for public libraries in some regions. In 2012 and 2013, many public libraries had no budget for the acquisition of collections.

Spanish libraries data are collected every two years for the *Library Statistics* report, which is coordinated by the National Institute of Statistics (INE). All library types are required to complete the INE's questionnaire, which collects data for libraries overall as well as by types of libraries and autonomous communities. In Spain there is a National Library, and a central or regional library for each autonomous community. Public libraries may depend on the different levels of administration: central, regional, and local. The data summarized in table 8 provide an overall number of libraries and service outlets, as well as the number of libraries available per capita and the number of registered users (i.e., those who hold library cards).

Table 7. Library services funding in Spanish General State Budgets (million €)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Library budgets	106	111	97	77	61	47	43

Source: Estadísticas de los Presupuestos Generales del Estado (2014).

The Spanish population has grown from 42.7 million in 2003 to 47.1 million in 2013. The number of libraries has had a sustained growth; however, a slight decline has been observed in the number of service outlets, which indicates that 63 library branches were closed between 2010 and 2012. An important fact that can be seen in table 8 is the increase in people who have a library card and the number of visitors to libraries. This table brings together data from the central and public libraries. The Spanish library system corresponds to the administrative organization system, with a central library for each autonomous community or region, which in all cases is a public library. Therefore, the data from the public libraries (local, regional, or national) are combined with those of the central libraries, which, as has been said, are also public libraries. The number of visitors to public libraries doubled in the ten-year period 2002–2012, especially in the years of the crisis, where the growth rate was higher than expected. Also, there has been a steady increase in book circulation, which shows that it is a service still widely used, and which has grown in this period of crisis.

The economic data on Spanish libraries clearly reflect the declining investment in the years of the crisis. Growth has been consistent, but table 9 shows declines in expenditures for staff in 2012 and for acquisitions in 2010. Staff expenditure fell because economic policies applied measures that impeded hiring new civil servants, even when staff retired. Similarly, the labor reform carried out in Spain led to the firing of staff and lowering the wages of civil servants. In Spain, 86 percent of the libraries are public entities, and 99 percent of public libraries belong to a public administration, meaning that the staff in public libraries are considered civil servants. Table 9 compiles important data about the decrease in acquisitions expenditures, producing the crash in 2010, the year when one begins to

Table 8. Statistical data on Spanish libraries

	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Libraries	6,371	6,585	6,523	6,601	6,608	6,835
Service outlets	7,939	8,099	8,066	8,263	8,963	8,900
Libraries per 100,000 population	15.6	15.6	14.9	14.6	14.4	14.8
Total registered users (millions)	12.60	13.88	14.79	16.29	18.07	20.38
Users registered in central and public libraries (% of total population)	21.66	23.87	24.83	26.33	30.08	34.72
Total library visitors (millions)	152	186	195	204	216	216
Total public and central library visitors (millions)	72	83	85	94	109	115
Total book circulation in libraries (millions)	41.78	44.19	43.82	47.78	53.65	54.85
Book circulation in public & central libraries (millions)	26.86	29.63	29.36	32.41	37.44	38.18

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Estadística de Bibliotecas) (2008); y CulturaBase (2014).

Table 9. Economic data on Spanish libraries

	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Personnel costs (million €)	374.4	440.4	508.8	581.0	645.9	610.8
Acquisitions costs in all libraries (million €)	153.9	177.9	213.3	238.3	211.7	206.6
Acquisitions costs in public & central libraries (million €)	33.3	38.8	52.5	66.9	53.5	42.3
Acquisitions costs in university libraries (million €)	76.0	89.3	111.8	112.5	114.9	104.3
New book additions (volumes) in all libraries (millions)	5.45	5.66	6.88	7.41	6.44	5.06
New book additions in public & central libraries (millions)	2.97	3.14	3.71	4.39	4.10	3.01

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Estadística de Bibliotecas) (2008). Reporting by 77.3% of libraries.

notice the effects of the economic crisis. A significant fact is that after peaking at 7.41 million in 2008, the number of new works registered in public and central libraries in 2012 (3.01 million) is virtually the same as that in 2002 (2.97 million), a symptom of the damage that the economic crisis created in the development of collections and the purchase of new publications. The data in table 9 were prepared with information submitted to the INE by 77.3 percent of Spanish libraries.

Another indicator of the effects of the crisis is the number of personnel in libraries. Library staff data are calculated by determining the number of people who work full time in a library or its equivalent; for example, two part-time workers are the equivalent of one employed full time. The latest data available on the number of full time equivalent (FTE) professionals in Spanish libraries, as shown in table 10, give a figure of 20,926.02 persons in 2012, a 2.6 percent decrease from the peak of 21,477.55 in 2010, since the economic crisis has caused layoffs and nonreplacement of library staff. Table 10 shows overall library staff data as well as those pertaining to staff in public (excluding the National Library and the central libraries) and university libraries. The number of professional librarians is also reported, and shows a decline of 27 percent from 2006 to 2012. Again, the data in this table refer to 77.3 percent of Spanish libraries.

Table 10. Full time equivalent (FTE) personnel in Spanish libraries

	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Total	17,139.54	18,387.57	20,165.47	20,321.00	21,477.55	20,926.02
Professional	5,544.42	5,854.52	9,344.16	6,497.00	6,983.22	6,802.14
Total in public libraries	7,112.46	8,169.64	6,476.67	10,023.00	10,666.20	10,072.62
Total in university libraries	5,186.02	5,339.84	5,962.64	5,631.00	5,856.03	5,702.26

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Estadística de Bibliotecas) (2008). Reporting by 77.3% of libraries.

Table 11. Number of Spanish public libraries and their average open service hours

	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Number of public libraries	3,832	4,043	4,115	4,125	4,164	4,211
Open up to 10 hours	668	636	579	526	531	564
More than 10 and up to 20 h	1,253	1,278	1,302	1,239	1,193	1,210
More than 20 and up to 40 h	1,463	1,641	1,734	1,775	1,788	1,767
More than 40 h	439	482	500	585	652	670
No data	9	6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Estadística de Bibliotecas) (2008). Reporting by 77.3% of libraries.

The analysis of the average number of hours public libraries are open is also an indicator of the impact of the crisis. Looking only at public libraries, which are neither educational nor central or national libraries, one can see in table 11 the increasing number of libraries offering fewer service hours per week. Since 2008, which is considered the beginning of the crisis, to 2012, there is a slight increase in the number of libraries that are only open less than 10 or between 10 and 20 hours per week. The main reason is the lack of staff and funding for hiring them, so many small public libraries hire librarians for a few hours to provide a minimum level of service. The data on the decrease in library hours as an indicator of the effects of the crisis was noted by Hernández-Sánchez & Arroyo-Vázquez (2014), who also related the recession to an increase in the number of libraries with major reductions in service hours.

The effects of the economic crisis on libraries can be seen very clearly in Spanish university and research libraries. The statistics from the Spanish University Libraries Network (REBIUN) show the decline in investment in collections and resources, as well as in the expenditure on staff. All of the Spanish university libraries work cooperatively in REBIUN, so these statistics are very significant for understanding the reality of university libraries. On a yearly basis, REBIUN collects statistical information, which provides both data and indicators. A first fact that can be objectively observed in table 12 is the reduction in staff expenditure in university libraries. From 2010 to 2012 the cost of staff is shown as decreasing due to staff layoffs and attrition. This same table also provides an important fact, the decline in the expenditure of financial resources, which in 2012 was 5 percent less than in 2007, after peaking in 2010. The lack of funding for universities has caused the cancellations of electronic material subscriptions and the

Table 12. Expenditures in Spanish university and research libraries (million €)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total personnel costs	173.8	195.6	206.3	217.5	211.2	207.5
Cost of professional librarians	83.4	94.0	99.1	103.8	101.9	98.5
Expenditure on information resources	121.8	128.0	129.3	131.4	122.1	115.4

Source: REBIUN (2014).

Table 13. Economic indicators of Spanish university and research libraries (€)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Expenditure on acquisitions (per capita)	84.60	91.00	86.76	81.58	77.90	77.25
Expenditure on journals (per researcher)	391.62	401.82	342.65	321.57	100.27	100.85
Expenditure on personnel (per capita)	118.56	121.85	122.81	125.46	117.41	118.99
Expenditure on total library services (per capita)	192.55	201.94	200.41	194.49	185.39	185.26

Source: REBIUN (2014).

decline in purchases of new monograph titles. Throughout the country, license fees for the use of electronic resources have been renegotiated and reduced.

The REBIUN statistical indicators are reported in table 13, where one can see very clearly the spending that takes place in Spanish university libraries. For example, in 2012 the average spending per user for acquisitions was €77.25, when this amount was €86.76 in 2009 and €84.60 in 2007. Similarly, the decline in staff costs and in libraries in general shows in the expenditure over time in Spanish universities by user, whether students, teachers, or staff. The negative growth is evident from 2009 to 2010, which is the turning point, as university libraries began to feel the negative effects of the economic crisis a bit later than did public libraries.

The preceding paragraphs provide the context to show the negative evolution of Spanish libraries. The economic, employment, and social conditions affect libraries, as it could not be otherwise. The question now is how libraries have faced the economic crisis, to which another question can be added; how have libraries supported communities at risk of exclusion? The following section describes the results of the project of collecting information on initiatives that respond to these questions.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND COMMUNITY: SPANISH LIBRARIES SURVIVING IN AN ECONOMIC CRISIS

Spanish public and university libraries and their communities were found to have taken actions that maintained basic levels of service; coaxed more from existing resources; tapped and embraced the material, financial, and intellectual resources of their communities; and leveraged free and low-cost technologies. The examples of Spanish library actions are contributions that emerged out of necessity and evidence of resilience in order to persist.

The spectrum of actions was organized into the following eight categories: professional, community, social, political, digital, cultural/heritage, economic, and ontological. The main categories of each particular action

area, along with examples, are described below. See *Bibliotecas en acción* (Libraries in Action) (2013), an edited compilation of the contributions to the study, for more details on the experiences libraries reported.

Professional Action

Libraries are able to maintain basic services with less funding. The research findings identified actions to keep the daily activities of the library operating, including collection development, user services, and cultural programs. The examples of professional action reported by libraries are categorized into the following five main areas.

User Community Supports the Development of Library Collections. Examples include the following:

- Librarians select resources and users purchase or donate the new materials or maintain journal subscriptions, e.g., Guadalajara Public Library (Camacho-Espinosa & Calvo, 2012), Salamanca Public Library.
- The library sells deaccessioned materials and proceeds are used to purchase new works, e.g., Salamanca Public Library.
- The library pursues/accepts donations to purchase new works, e.g., Salamanca Public Library, Cantabria Central Library, Orihuela Library, and the Montequinto Municipal Library (Dos Hermanas), which also lends its materials to groups and associations. The Public Library of Cuenca, a regional library, developed a donations policy, which in 2012 resulted in gifts from an effort that targeted users, organizations, publishers, local authors, and others, and in turn benefitted the municipal libraries in the region.

The Library Staff Reviews Its Policies for Efficiency in Practice. The lack of funding has compelled libraries to maximize their cooperative services, such as in 2012 with the library network of Castilla y León, which improved its interlibrary loan services as a solution to the difficulties in acquiring new books. Libraries have also found it necessary to employ strict indicators in making acquisitions in libraries, such as at the Civic Library (Caja Navarra Foundation, Pamplona), which has raised restrictive criteria before new purchases can be made, such as the availability of a work in nearby libraries, the diversity of subject content and publishers, or the purchase in multiple languages.

The Library Staff Performs Cultural Activities. Although librarians' duties are varied, during the recession they have taken on tasks that are usually performed by other collaborators/personnel, such as storytelling, skills training, or coordination of groups. The Central Library of Cantabria maintains a stable weekly schedule of storytelling for children, which is led by librarians, as well as four book clubs and a biweekly film forum. Skills training in information use, technology, career development, or sociocul-

tural topics is now offered by library staff: at the Torrejón del Rey Library, for example, library staff offer a course on information technologies.

Collections are Maximized/Reused to Develop Activities. Librarians have made conscious efforts to maximize the use of collections, even though they may be dated, by developing resources or programs that entail the use of existing bibliographic resources, such as new topic reading guides (e.g., Civic Library), book exhibits, or author programming (e.g., Alfo Public Library). The Cantabria Central Library, for example, offered the “Blind Date with a Book” program, in which readers were surprised with wrapped works.

The Library Uses Free Resources. Whether material, technological, or personnel, available free resources are tapped to deliver library services.

Community Action

Libraries engage users in their activities. The user community supported and participated in nontraditional library activities, such as those of a job-related, personal, or economic nature, including providing financial contributions in order for library activities to be implemented that otherwise would not have been offered due to lack of funding. The experiences of community action reported that were not related to collection development (the focus of Professional Action, above) coalesced into the following five main areas.

The Library Expands beyond Informational Training Workshops. These included job search workshops and language training. Libraries have been aware of the need to support their community members in search of employment and have increased these activities during the economic crisis. For example, since 2010 the Regional Library of Murcia has operated the Biblioteca Punto de Empleo (Job Source Library), which provides job training, information, and mentoring. The job search tutorial offered by the Grupo de Trabajo de Alfabetización Informativa del Consejo de Cooperación Bibliotecaria (Information Literacy Working Group of the Library Cooperation Council) has been used by different libraries in providing users with advice on job interviews, resume writing, and job searching. There is evidence that these sessions are offered periodically at the public libraries of Castilla y León, the UNED Library, and the Public Library of Cuenca and are becoming a programming staple in public libraries due to the growth of the unemployment rate in Spain. Collaborations with other agencies and administrations responsible for the promotion of employment were also reported, such as the Entrepreneurship Workshop in which the Civic Library of Pamplona participated.

The Library Increases or Opens Up New Space for Community Group Use. Library spaces are not solely dedicated to library purposes but are being extended to provide space for meetings or activities: joint programming, popular-interest talks, outreach, and promotion of initiatives. Typically, the libraries not only provide space but also participate in the organiza-

tion and dissemination of activities. In many cases, collaboration is done through Friends of the Library groups, which have been a great support in the years of the economic downturn. A notable example is the Friends of the Casa de las Conchas Library of the Salamanca Public Library, which provided support for cultural activities because the library did not have the necessary funding. Some university libraries are also offering their space and resources to their communities, such as the “open space” at the Reina Sofia University Library of Valladolid or the exhibit equipment loan program offered by the University of Extremadura Library for not-for-profit organizations.

Community Members Share Their Knowledge and Skills at the Library. Professors and other community members volunteer to present workshops and lectures. Significant examples are the Huelva Public Library and the Civic Library, whose members have volunteered as storytellers, and the Villarrubia de los Ojos Library that offers the “What do you know?” program, whereby users give lectures on topics within their expertise. Similar programs have been developed in the Murcia Regional Library, the Hellín Public Libraries, the San Javier Municipal Library, the Cuenca Public Library, and the Montequinto Municipal Library (Dos Hermanas). A final example is the “TLEO” (Read to You) program of the Peñaranda de Bracamonte Municipal Library, in which volunteers visit the homes of people with mobility problems. This program is part of a broad range of activities this library coordinates, including El Club de la nubeteca (Cloud Resources Club) and the Human Library.

The Library Pursues External and Community Funding. Microfinance activities have resulted in libraries receiving generous public support through financial contributions made on public financing/crowdfunding systems. Local business sponsorships provide another way in which libraries have secured financing for cultural events or services.

The Library Is Saved by the Community. The link between user communities and libraries has been demonstrated by their defense of their libraries to the authorities (see examples under Political Action, below). Community support extends to reopening libraries. The Las Palomas Library (Granada), which was closed by the City Council, was reopened after several months of community pressure. A local group has self-managed the library when it was impossible to maintain the municipal library services. A similar situation occurred in the España neighborhood in Valladolid, where community members took over the municipal library service outlet that was closed by the city. The community/ neighborhood association collected and organized donations of books and was responsible for the cultural programming of the library.

Social Action

Libraries are sensitive to the problems caused by the recession and are helping people in need. By focusing on social issues, they are supporting

disadvantaged community members and are leading or helping groups at risk of exclusion. Libraries are collaborating with social service agencies and other sociocultural groups. The following four main areas emerged from the social initiatives reported by Spanish libraries.

The Library Supports Food Collection and Other Social Action Initiatives. Libraries have facilitated the exchange/donation of food and material needs among users. The most significant example, which has been replicated in multiple libraries, is the Regional Library of Murcia program called “Biblioteca Quitapesares: te quitamos las penas y tú se las quitas a otro” (Library Boost: we take away your worries and you can take away someone else’s), which collects food and school supplies. These initiatives are based on the elimination of fines for overdue materials in exchange for donations of nonperishable food or school supplies. In the winter of 2012/2013, the program collected more than 2.5 tons of food; in spring/summer 2013, 300 kilos of school supplies were received, showing the success of this initiative. There are many public libraries that have implemented similar initiatives, while examples of university libraries include the University of Extremadura Library (Operation Kilo), the University of Salamanca-Ávila (Books for Food Campaign), and the University of Castilla-La Mancha Libraries (Iniciativa Colaborando ganamos todos/Winning through Collaboration Initiative).

The Library Offers Its Facilities as a Social Space. The library has been used as a meeting space, training facility, and hygiene area.

The Library Is Developing as an Outlet/Point of Social Assistance Information and Service. Fundraising initiatives coordinated by the library are becoming common. Libraries develop specific programs or work with fundraising programs for the care of the disadvantaged. An example is the Noain Library’s “El valor añadido de leer” (The added value of reading) campaign, which sold donated books to raise money to support social issues related to the public library community. In the academic community, University of La Rioja Library’s “1000 libros solidarios” (1,000 books in solidarity) campaign sold duplicate or weeded-out books from its collection to raise funds for the Comprehensive Care for Immigrant Children and Youth Project. There are also many examples of individual or collaborative fundraising campaigns supporting social assistance and relief in other countries, including Brazil, Nepal, and Ethiopia. A final example is the Civic Library, which collaborated on the “Móvil solidario” (Cellphone in Solidarity) Action Against Hunger Campaign that collected discarded phones for reuse or recycling to raise funds for research on diseases or projects combating hunger.

The Library Offers Services and Programs in Support of Its Disadvantaged Community members. Libraries have offered literacy, e-reading for seniors (Peñaranda de Bracamonte Municipal Library, located in the Germán Sánchez Rui Pérez Foundation), and Spanish-language programs for im-

migrants and refugees. The extent to which these programs are offered by volunteers has increased with the economic crisis. For example, the Virgen de la Victoria University Hospital Library in Málaga is a library for patients that is supported by volunteers, and the University of Salamanca Library has a volunteer program of students and alumni who collaborate with schools in organizing school libraries.

Political Action

Libraries contest funding cuts and antilibrary policies. The findings show libraries and their stakeholders involved in protests against budget cuts, imposition of borrowing fees, space closures, and downsizing of personnel. Libraries are demanding needed cultural services. The examples of how libraries and library professionals have faced the institutional decisions that damage library services are summarized into the following three main areas.

The Library and Its Stakeholders Protest Budget Cuts and Antilibrary Policies. A variety of activities to protest against library budget cuts have been conducted by libraries and their stakeholders (e.g., Castilla-La Mancha libraries' protests to its regional government). A significant example is the national "yellow tide" social movement (see a fuller description under Ontological Action, below), which is fighting against restrictive policies on budgets and cultural rights (see Noalprestamodepago.org). The collection of signatures (electronic and handwritten petitions) has taken place in Cordoba, Seville, and Cuenca. Professional associations of these communities (ANABAD-Castilla-La Mancha, ABIBA, ABITO, BAC, and BICRA) published a manifesto on October 23, 2013, Library Day, denouncing the situation of public libraries in the region. Actions taken included a minute of noise in public libraries that day to protest the precarious situation in Castilla-La Mancha. Another symbolic protest of the zero-acquisition budget was developed by the Muskiz Library, whose news section was covered with cobwebs. Other examples of the various anti-library legislation protests include asking city councils to obtain approval from the Government of Spain to exempt libraries from paying a loan fee (related to copyright) for items checked out from their collections. Such requests were made by libraries in Arroyo de la Luz, Azuqueca de Henares, Lalin, Concello Foz, Grado, Oviedo, Mieres, Eskoriatza, Errentería, Valley Batzan, Auritz-Burguete, Erroibar, Zaragoza, Alcaniz, The Casar, Torrejon del Rey, Guadalajara, Las Rozas, Madrid, San Fernando de Henares, Villamalea, Villanueva de Córdoba, Castro del Río, Benalúa, Granada, Málaga, Vicar, Arta, and Palma de Mallorca. In fighting this loan fee policy, the professional associations FESABID and REBIUN developed a draft reform of the Copyright Act.

The Library and Its Stakeholders Protest against Reductions in Services. Branch closures, layoffs, and space reduction have been fought with demonstra-

tions, writings, and community demands. Different libraries participated in the “Love Letters to the Library” campaign, in which users wrote about the importance they attached to libraries. Neighborhood/community protests have been successful in reopening libraries such as Los Serrano Palace Library in Ávila, the Agolada Library (with the support of the professional association ANABAD-Galicia), the Jerez de la Frontera Municipal Library, and the Zaidín Library in Granada (reopened after months of protests, but without contracted staff). The “Biblioteca de casapuerta” (Library Porch) protest was held periodically at the Cadiz Provincial Library, with neighbors/users sitting reading outside the library during the times when it should have been open, but was closed due to budgetary problems.

The Library Works with Not-for-Profit Groups in Support of Culture and Education. Libraries joined social movements and protests to fight against reduced access and funding for culture and education.

Digital Action

Libraries use free or low-cost technologies to deliver services. Libraries reported providing leadership in technology use in libraries with zero or very low budgets to offer new services for interaction, virtual reading groups, creating virtual communities on social media, coordination of online learning, etc. These initiatives show libraries as catalysts for their communities through the adoption of technologies and provision of new technology-based services, which coalesced into the three main areas below. It should be noted that there is no study that objectively concludes that the development of technology-based library services has grown in parallel with the economic crisis, or because of it, but the truth is that many libraries are offering services and resources and developing programs based on free or low-cost technology tools.

The Library Reading Groups are Organized Digitally. Libraries are using social media and web-based tools to support their reading and literacy activities. The online reading club Cloud of Tears, which pioneered cloud-based reading, started in December 2012 at the Peñaranda de Bracamonte Municipal Library and includes readers from five libraries in Badajoz province: Azuaga, Cabeza del Buey, Don Benito, Montijo, and Siruela.

The Library Coordinates, Participates in, or Supports Virtual Learning Communities. Examples include online participatory systems for employee training, courses on open platforms, massive open online courses (MOOCs), shared virtual spaces, and digital literacy.

The Library Coordinates/Supports Communities Using Social Networks and Streamlines Library Services and Information Resources on Local Life. Libraries are organizing community information and serving as community network managers using digital technologies, but their efforts and successes are uneven. These digital activities include bulletin boards, forums, blogs, and information-sharing portals to disseminate news, activities, and resources.

Job-search virtual desktops have been created by Netvibes Zamora Public Library and the Contruences Library in Gijón, offering both resources and practical guides. Other examples of the expansion of library services using technologies are virtual exhibits (e.g., the UNED Library and the the University of Extremadura Library). The presence of Spanish university libraries in social networks has been studied and appeared in a report from the University of Las Palmas Library (Martín Marichal, 2013).

Cultural/Heritage Action

Libraries support local culture, particularly with free and low-cost technologies. Experiences are reported whereby the library altruistically shares content with its community, coordinates activities to preserve local memory, disseminates open-access documents, etc. The library offers digital collections to its community, whose members in turn provide the materials for local memory preservation projects. Many of the contributive actions are related to sharing knowledge and documentary heritage, and are grouped into the following three main areas.

The Library Offers Open-Access Cultural Heritage Collections. The library emphasizes access to free or low-cost digital content such as local newspapers, photographs, special-interest areas, and reading guides.

The Library Coordinates and Participates in Projects to Preserve Local Memory. The library is working on creating digital collections of local issues, history, and culture that include collecting and digitizing relevant materials. Examples include the Peñaranda de Bracamonte Municipal Library, which digitized local residents' personal photo archives; the Andratx Municipal Library, on the occasion of its eightieth anniversary, created a digital version of the local publication *Andratx*, published between 1920 and 1971; and the multimedia digital history of the town of Agora was developed by the Agora Library in A Coruña using blogs and Pinterest. Examples of library-community collaborations include the Sant Antoni-Joan Oliver Library in Barcelona, which is collecting oral histories from neighbors about the evolution of the neighborhood and is noted for including its senior voices; the Amarauna project of the Amara Library Network Municipal Library in San Sebastián, which is creating a neighborhood identity from a digital collection of photographs and documents of various types, donated by neighbors; and the project of the Palafrugell Library, which is organizing a photographic journey using Wikipedia. A significant experience of digitization is the Manes Project of the UNED Library, which is creating a digital repository of textbooks from Spain, Portugal, and Latin America published between 1808 and 1990.

The Library Provides Open Access to Its Own Edited Books or Periodicals and to Publications from Authors Who Have Provided Copyright Access. The creation of participatory spaces to support publication on local issues and digital repositories of open-access works are new services offered by the library that are based on free technologies. Libraries are leading in the use of social

networks, converting them into tools for information, communication, and interaction with their communities, and in turn, becoming leaders in their localities.

Economic Action

Libraries adjust or redistribute their budgets. Limited and uncertain budgets have required the development of collection reduction policies with new selection indicators, subscription modifications, license renegotiation of electronic resources, increase or modification of consortial purchasing procedures, etc. The reported examples are from publicly funded academic and special libraries that work with very costly information resources. The actions reported by libraries regarding budget management are summarized in the following three main areas.

The Library Management Reviews Its Budget. During the years of the crisis, libraries received reduced budgets; however, in some libraries the situation has been more dire because the budgets promised were not always fully honored, resulting in the receipt of even less actual funding than initially allocated. Libraries are thus frequently reviewing their budgets so that spending adapts to any progressively diminished revenue.

The Library Audits Its Collections. The drastic measure of canceling subscriptions has required libraries to review journal subscriptions with actual-use indicators, which university libraries have incorporated into their collection development policies. In the case of electronic resources, such data are readily available and can be combined with expenditure data for use as the basic method to measure performance/efficiency. To counterbalance the reduction in subscriptions, libraries have created digital repositories of open-access research works.

Libraries Cooperate to Leverage Resources. Libraries have engaged in cooperative services, increased consortial purchasing, and negotiation of licenses for electronic resources as cost-effective measures in an economic crisis. In the case of university libraries, they have always worked in consortium, primarily for the acquisition of specialized resources. The recession has led to increased cooperation in acquisition in recent years, which resulted in a constant exchange of information among consortia members or buying groups and, above all, a common negotiating position in licensing electronic resources. Thus university libraries have stopped the constant increase in prices of specialized resources and have even managed to see general reductions in subscription prices, resulting in maintaining their collections despite having reduced budgets. Public libraries have suffered a 36 percent decrease in spending on acquisitions (see table 9), which has been the reason that many Spanish public libraries have had to seek the cooperation of their members to maintain a current collection. Libraries have also streamlined interlibrary loan procedures, enabling users to quickly receive works available in their library networks.

Ontological Action

Libraries champion their role in the information society. The economic crisis has also led to an identity crisis in the library community. It has become necessary to advocate for libraries in society, even in times of crisis. Different groups have produced documents defending the role of the library, and professional conferences have been devoted to this topic. The actions in defense of the role of the library in times of crisis and a digital society coalesced into the following three main areas.

Professional Associations Champion the Role of the Library. Library professionals have been forced to justify both their work and the existence of libraries. Through the efforts of Spanish library professional associations, documents have been produced and disseminated defending the role of the library, including those from the Col.legi Oficial de Bibliotecaris and Documentalistes de Catalunya (Association of Librarians and Documentalists of Catalonia) and the Murcia Regional Library. The latter adopted on February 19, 2010, during its conference, the “Declaration of Murcia on the social and educational activities of public libraries in times of crisis.” Of note is the manifesto, *12 razones para amar las Bibliotecas Públicas* (12 Reasons to Love Public Libraries), which is a collective campaign not just to defend the role of libraries but also to reject copyright fees for public library book loans (Colectivo Bibliotecas Públicas, 2012).

Shared Support of the Need for Libraries. The public has actively engaged in the library support campaigns and social media initiatives. Many protests have been staged by the so-called yellow tide, a group that chose this color as a symbolic representation of the defense of public libraries. Other Spanish social movements have used colors for their campaigns, such as green for the defense of public education or white to advocate for public health. In addition to the color (yellow) recognition, a slogan and a logo, the latter designed by artist Fist, have been developed in the fight for libraries: “Libraries are not an expense, they are an investment,” accompanied by a heart-shaped book with open pages.

Coverage and Examination of the Role of the Library in Periods of Crisis. A crisis is usually a good time for self-examination, which can take the form of publications or scientific and professional meetings and conferences. For example, FESABID released its 2011 report *Estudio FESABID sobre los profesionales de la información: prospectiva de una profesión en constante evolución* (FESABID study on information professionals: A forecast of a constantly evolving profession) (Merlo-Vega, Gómez-Hernández, & Hernández-Sánchez, 2011), which collected expert opinions on the evolution of libraries, including questions on the economic crisis and the future of libraries. The economic situation and the damage to libraries have also been addressed at various professional conferences, such as the Sixth Forum of Information and Documentation Specialists of Andalusia, “Libraries in Times of Crisis” (Seville, May 20, 2011), and the 17th Andalu-

sian Conference on Libraries (Jaén, October 25–26, 2013) (Merlo-Vega, 2012).

LESSONS LEARNED: A CONTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK FOR LIBRARIES

The social actions taken by Spanish libraries and their communities are lessons in social justice—or, in this case, contributive justice—that are not just applicable to the country in question but should be considered in an international context, to be practiced globally at all times, not just in those of economic exigency. The many examples are clear evidence of the value of libraries as a public good and a vital lifeline for the community, and that a contributive approach was appropriate in solving the economic challenges encountered by the Spanish libraries. The need to keep libraries open, both as a community space and as an information and technology resource, was not even in question.

The social actions described above revealed the critical areas that need to be addressed or the needed contributions that are essential to the survival of the Spanish libraries and, possibly, libraries in other regions. These social actions reveal four lessons learned regarding contributive justice in libraries and their communities. These lessons constitute four areas of investment or contribution that make up the following proposed contributive framework. They are vital to the sustainability of all libraries and the social opportunities and benefits of communities.

- *Community-wide commitment and action:* The efforts of both librarians and communities, separately or jointly, reveal the value of libraries on both sides. Librarians understand that their services are needed by their communities and must continue to fight for support while finding creative ways to sustain services. Community members recognize their own need for library and information services and have stepped up to partake in the delivery efforts in monetary and nonmonetary ways. This symbiosis is affirmed through contributive action and the synergies that evolve.
- *Advocacy:* Communication and promotion should exist on the availability of libraries as a public resource, their role as the main public source for individual and community information and engagement, and the need for appropriate levels of funding to support them. Libraries have been taken for granted by those who work in and use them, while many who need library services are not familiar with them. The value of libraries needs to be expressed to funding agencies in terms of return on investment (ROI) and stories of individual and community impact, i.e., contributions to social development.
- *Public lifeline:* Communities are sustainable when they collectively share in the costs and delivery of services important to their development, especially to ensure that the information that can create opportunities is accessible across all economic sectors. Libraries are the heart of a com-

munity. The inequality that would occur without them would create a larger digital, economic, social, and ontological divide. A contributive approach reduces inequalities of opportunity.

- *Identity*: Libraries as the heart of the community are dynamic. This identity is not always translated to or understood by the public because in many cases librarians in Spain have been a constant presence, but with funding cuts, they have been able to take action toward claiming their role as a public good. Librarians are reaching out to each other and to their communities by using social media and other technological tools freely available on the web. It is this collective and contributive approach that is solidifying the identity of libraries for themselves and their communities.

Despite economic hardships across Spain, Spanish libraries reveal that the pulse of communities is sustained with functioning libraries. The libraries' investment in their communities and vice versa, the community's agency in safeguarding an essential public good, and the value of grassroots efforts when governments fail to act affirm the role of libraries as social justice institutions and of librarians as change agents. Spanish libraries found that their resilience exposed an increased opportunity of contributing, not just of themselves but also with and by their communities. Librarians, by empowering themselves, and their communities, found their solutions to the economic crisis from within and without, and libraries, as a result of contributive justice, recognize that they are an asset-based organization.

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APPENDIX. LIST OF LIBRARIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE STUDY
(MERLO-VEGA, 2014)

Agolada (Pontevedra). La biblioteca iba a ser cerrada
 Ávila. Petición reapertura de Biblioteca Palacio de Los Serrano (Caja Ávila -
 Bankia)
 Biblioteca Central (Benidorm)
 Biblioteca Central de Cantabria
 Biblioteca Centro Asociado UNED-Asturias
 Biblioteca Civican (Fundación Caja Navarra, Pamplona)
 Biblioteca de A Coruña. Biblioteca Ágora
 Biblioteca de Amara (San Sebastián)
 Biblioteca de Andratx (Mallorca)
 Biblioteca de casapuerta, Cádiz
 Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha
 Biblioteca de Contrueces (Gijón-Asturias)
 Biblioteca de Chinchilla (Albacete)
 Biblioteca de Ermua, Bizcokia
 Biblioteca de La Rioja
 Biblioteca de la Universidad de Extremadura
 Biblioteca de las Palomas (Granada)
 Biblioteca de Noain (Navarra)
 Biblioteca de Orihuela
 Biblioteca de Palafrugell (Cataluña)
 Biblioteca de Sant Antoni-Joan Oliver de Barcelona
 Biblioteca de Torre Pacheco (Murcia)
 Biblioteca de Torrejón del Rey (Guadalajara)
 Biblioteca de Villanueva del Pardillo (Madrid)
 Biblioteca de Villarrubia de los Ojos (Ciudad Real)
 Biblioteca del Hospital Universitario Virgen de la Victoria de Málaga
 Biblioteca Municipal de Burgos
 Biblioteca Municipal de Caldas de Reis (Pontevedra)
 Biblioteca Municipal de Montequinto (Dos Hermanas)
 Biblioteca Municipal de Peñaranda de Bracamonte (Salamanca)
 Biblioteca Municipal de San Javier (Murcia)
 Biblioteca Pública Arroyo de la Miel (Benalmádena, Málaga)
 Biblioteca Pública de Allo (Navarra)
 Biblioteca Pública de Guadalajara
 Biblioteca Pública de Huelva
 Biblioteca Pública de Salamanca
 Biblioteca Pública de Zamora
 Biblioteca Pública del Estado en Cuenca
 Biblioteca Pública Municipal de Baiona (Pontevedra)
 Biblioteca Regional de Murcia
 Biblioteca UNED
 Biblioteca Universidad de Extremadura
 Bibliotecas de Badalona
 Bibliotecas de Castilla y León

Bibliotecas de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha
Bibliotecas de L'Hospitalet
Bibliotecas Municipales de A Coruña
Bibliotecas Municipales de Santander
Bibliotecas Universidad de Salamanca en Ávila
Castilla y León Región (Bibliotecas por el préstamo interbibliotecario)
Castilla-La Mancha. Las asociaciones profesionales ANABAD CASTILLA LA MANCHA, ABIBA, ABITO, BAC y BICRA, que representan en el ámbito de Castilla-La Mancha a bibliotecarios, archiveros, museólogos, arqueólogos y documentalistas
Centro Internacional del Libro Infantil y Juvenil, Salamanca
COBDC (Col·legi Oficial de Bibliotecaris-Documentalistes de Catalunya)
España. Alegaciones de FESABID y REBIUN al borrador de reforma de la Ley de Propiedad Intelectual, contemplando las excepciones de préstamo de documentos en bibliotecas
España. Las universidades y las bibliotecas universitarias en las redes sociales
España. Marea amarilla. Acciones de reivindicación de la necesidad de las bibliotecas públicas
Huesca. Bibliotecas Ibercaja y Universidad de Zaragoza
Jerez de la Frontera. Reapertura de bibliotecas tras la presión vecinal
Madrid. La Plataforma COABDM (para la creación de un Colegio Profesional de Bibliotecarios, Archiveros y Documentalistas de Madrid)
Mediatecas de Alcobendas (Madrid)
Red de Bibliotecas Municipales de Hellín (Albacete)
Universidad de La Rioja
Universidad de Salamanca
Universidad de Valladolid. Biblioteca "Reina Sofía"

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