

Library Services and Minorities in Europe: The Roma Case in Spain

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Abstract

Many public libraries have developed standards to provide public reading services to minorities. Such a role has advanced the public library towards an informal, educational, and social work role, approaching traditionally excluded groups such as the Roma minority in Spain. However, developed initiatives in Spain are scarce; in addition, specific services do not abound and research and reflection on this reality from the library point of view is rare. The general objective of this text is the proposal of some librarian areas of work to serve the Roma minority from a multidisciplinary approach. The specific objectives are focused on revising library regulations and their adaptation to this minority and analyzing public library services existing in the European Union addressed to them.

To achieve all these objectives, this research work has used two main techniques: one is observation and analysis, and the other is the design of practical proposals. In the first part, the Roma community has been analyzed both nationally and internationally. Similarly, Roma European legislation has been considered together with the library regulations that affect it. The current functions of the library have been analyzed and, finally, different library services intended for this minority have been studied both at a European and at a national level. In the second part, different improvement proposals have been made both in normative aspects and in practical aspects. Observations and recommendations are made to evaluate and organize information about library actions with minorities.

Keywords: European Union; library services; public library; Roma community; Roma minority

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Introduction

Human beings live in diverse and multicultural societies, in an increasingly interconnected and global world. In this context, public libraries play a fundamental role as providers of education, training, information, and culture for the whole community, serving many different kinds of users. Libraries are places of connection, participation, knowledge, and communication. They provide free access to public reading, assistance, and research services.

The objective of this text is to analyze both the regulations and the library services developed for the Roma community of Spain, within the European framework, with special attention to the Spanish reality. Specific objectives for this work include the observation of those library services designed for the Roma community which constitute cases of good practice and thereby, offer a series of suggestions and multidisciplinary library lines of work for serving the Roma minority.

For this purpose, this paper has been divided into two different, but interrelated sections: firstly, an analytical one, which presents a thorough review of the general regulatory framework and European library practices on the Roma community in Europe; and secondly, proposed recommendations and considerations on which to enhance the library work with this minority.

The Roma Community: Characteristics and Figures

Roma are the largest ethnic minority in the European Union (EU). They number between 6,800,000 and 8,700,000 people and represent about 0.98% of the European population. They are concentrated in the East and South of the continent and the countries with the largest Roma population are Romania (2,000,000, 10% of Romanians), Hungary (over 570,000, 5.64% of the population) and Bulgaria (over 700,000, 4.7%) (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2019), although these figures are based on estimates, as there are no reliable records about the European Roma population. The biggest Spanish Roma communities can be found in Andalusia, Madrid, Barcelona, and the Valencia Community.

The stereotypical image of Roma people fostered by paintings, literature, and cinema, seems to follow a romanticized vision prevalent in works like those of Federico García Lorca, whose poetry presents the Roma as made of "bronze and dream"¹: free and sensitive people with a passion for music and dance. However, collected data suggests a reality that differs widely from this vastly idealized portrait. Thus, the main features that characterize the Roma culture, at a general level and according to different authors (Corsi, et al., 2010; González Enríquez, 2010) are the following:

- The Roma culture expresses itself through their particular ways of life and often become amalgamated and hybridized with the culture of their host countries.
- They can form nomadic or sedentary groups with Europeans belonging to the second category. They can lead an urban life (as in Austria or Germany) or rural (Ireland or Great Britain) and even share environments (Spain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, and Poland, mainly).
- In general, they practice Christian religions (Evangelists, Catholics, etc.) although they form Muslim communities as well.
- They speak Romani, but their knowledge and the use of this language is unequally distributed: in Estonia, Greece, or Sweden, Romani is spoken by 90% of the population while in Spain or Britain this language is only used by 1% of the population.
- The Roma groups tend to form patriarchal and endogamic family societies, in which there is a marked gender division. Their women are, in general, subordinated to their family men and preservation of virginity for unmarried young women is fundamental (González Enríquez, 2010). Frequently, their social conscience is not expressed through political participation, so they don't have institutional representation in the countries where they are settled.
- The Roma culture and traditions constitute the basis for their sense of identity, although both have been kept fundamentally oral until recent times, with no written elements preserved.

The Spanish Roma Community

Spanish Roma number between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people and represent 4.6% of the total population (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2019). They constitute the main ethnic minority of the country, but there are no official figures, as Spanish legislation forbids any ethnic citizens recordings.

They have very low educational levels (Corsi et al., 2010): only 1.6% of the Roma population attained secondary education level compared to 19.5% of the general population. Illiteracy reaches 13.5%, much higher than the national average of 2.19% (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2012).

They live in urban areas, especially in outlying neighborhoods. But, over the last several decades, they have given up living in suburban ghettos and have spread through different city areas which is contributing to their social integration (González Enriquez, 2010).

They carry out precarious work such as street trading (García García, 2006), which means that only 51.5% of this population is salaried employees compared to 81.6% of the general population; underemployment, self-employment, family business, and temporal jobs are the dominant models: only 7.4% have permanent employment; and only 11% are retired, compared to 30% of the general population (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2012).

They are an excluded and marginalized group, the most discriminated one in Spain (SOS Racismo, 2018) which drives them to illegal ways of life (drug use and trafficking), denigrating their image and increasing their presence in prisons (Martín Palomo, 2002). It could be argued that, even after five centuries of coexistence, Spanish Roma are still a little understood and known community.

Legal Framework: European Minority Legislation: The Roma Collective

The situation of social minorities has been contemplated by the European Union since it was born. However, the specific European regulation in favor of the Roma community had a late development.

Among the first legal texts, *Resolución del Parlamento Europeo de abril de 1994 sobre los gitanos en la Comunidad* (European Parliament Resolution on Roma in the EU, of April 1994) (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 1995) stands out. This text called for the urgent definition of areas for improvement and recognized the responsibility of the Nazi government for the persecution suffered by Roma people.

Later, from 2005 to the present, different European institutions have issued communications, reports, and resolutions that recognize the reality of the Roma community, as shown in Table 1. All of them identify the discrimination and the legal, social, and cultural problems experienced by Roma people and propose remedial measures that involve all member states. Some of them have focused on specific problems (such as their difficulties in relation to the labour market), although according to European Parliament reports, these have not been successful yet in improving the employment situation of Roma people.

Table 1. List of European Union Roma Regulations

Year	Issuing Body	Form of Regulation	Name
2005 (28th April)	European Parliament	Resolution	Situation of the Roma in the European Union (EU)
2008 (31st Jan.)	European Parliament	Resolution	European strategy on the Roma
2008 (28th Nov.)	Council of Europe	Council Framework Decision	Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law
2009 (28th Jan.)	European Parliament	Resolution	Social situation of the Roma and their improved access to the labour market in the EU
2011 (5th April)	European Commission	Communication	An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020
2013 (9th Dec.)	Council of Europe	Recommendation	On effective Roma integration measures in the Member States
2015 (15th April)	European Parliament	Resolution	On the occasion of International Roma Day: anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II
2016 (13th Oct.)	European Court of Auditors	Special Report (n° 14/2016)	EU policy initiatives and financial support for Roma integration: significant progress made over the last decade, but additional efforts needed on the ground
2016 (8th Dec.)	Council of Europe	Conclusions	Accelerating the process of Roma integration
2017 (27th Jan.)	Council of Europe	Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2153	Promoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers
2017 (3rd April)	European Commission	European Citizens' Initiative	Minority SafePack: one million signatures for diversity in Europe
2017 (25th Oct.)	European	Resolution	Fundamental rights aspects in

	Parliament		Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism
2018 (4th Dec.)	European Commission	Report on the evaluation	The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020
2019 (12th Feb.)	European Parliament	Resolution	The need for a strengthened post-2020 Strategic EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies and stepping up the fight against anti-Gypsyism

In Spain, recognition of Roma as full-right Spanish citizens was made possible by the beginning of the political transition in 1975 and the establishment of democracy in 1978. After Franco's dictatorship, racial discrimination became a constitutional crime (Cabanés Hernández et al., 1996).

Organizations such as *Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano* (Roma People State Council) were created in 2005 for planning and promoting specific actions. According to recommendations given by European institutions, actions such as *Estrategia Nacional para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana en España 2012-2020* (National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of the Roma Population in Spain, 2012-2020) have been developed (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2012).

The importance of the Spanish Roma community, one of the largest in Europe, forces Spain to assume leadership in European policies focused on this group.

Public Libraries and Cultural Minorities

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is an institution aware of the presence of cultural minorities in libraries and has sought for decades to respond to their education and information needs, as observed in IFLA's *Guidelines for public libraries* (IFLA, 1988).

Two decades later, the *Guidelines for Library Services in multicultural communities* (IFLA, 2009) reflected the principle of equality of any ethnic, linguistic, and cultural group in relation to library services. Its main contribution has been to establish that libraries should study and consider the information needs of any users equally and that the attention to cultural minorities should be part of library global service (Pinto & Sales, 2008).

Thus, during the first two decades of the 21st century, public libraries have been developing their work around two central focuses: educative and social (Nes, 2015). The library is one of the engines of unregulated education, preserving social memory, providing access to knowledge, and promoting continuous learning. This educational work is key in the current Information Society, since it determines the possibilities of access to better jobs. Thus, the IFLA/UNESCO *Guidelines for the development of the Public Library service* (IFLA, 2001) emphasize this role of the public library: contributing to this educative job. They recognize that with the current

volume of information available, access to information has been modified and difficulties with accessing information have increased.

The current concept of education includes both classical literacy and information literacy. IFLA (2001) warns about the gap between those who have and those who lack information. They point out that public libraries must be tailored to meet new educational and social realities. Well-prepared citizens bring about improvements not only for themselves but for the community as a whole, while societies with educational deficiencies must assume, as a fact, that part of their population will be marginalized, which also questions the real exercise of democracy.

The educative task carried out by public libraries is closely linked to social labour. Libraries must provide access to information, facilitate community education, and they must be a meeting place to promote social cohesion.

The public library adapts its services to the characteristics of its communities, identifying and studying its needs and developing strategies to assist them adequately (Felicie Soto, 2006). However, different researchers (Aabø et al., 2010; Salaberría, 2010) show that often enough public library users belong to homogeneous groups in terms of race, social class, age, and gender (white race, middle class, middle age, and women). It is also known that highly educated people use the library more than those with a lower educational level. But libraries must be also concerned with the needs of the so-called non-users or passive users, who must remain in the focus of interest (Pateman, 2000). This segment is composed by people and groups that are in danger of exclusion, such as minorities. There have been different studies that have analyzed the use of the library by immigrants, either as a meeting place, as a place for learning, or to access information (Aarhus Public Libraries, 2001). It has been pointed out, however, that although the library is a physical space that plays an important role in their lives (Durrani, 2000), immigrants, as a whole, make little use of library services: less than 25% have used any of the library services. The reasons for this are different: ignorance of the language of available materials in the library's collection, lack of education, work schedules, and so on.

Therefore, public libraries should take into account some basic aspects such as:

- The library institution must know the minorities that are part of the community and should look for interlocutors to establish and maintain contact. In this sense, it is significant that in some libraries, such as the British ones, the presence of ethnic minorities has led to some changes (Roach & Morrison, 1998).
- It is important to include the library staff belonging to the different minorities among the professionals, as they facilitate access to the library (Skot-Hansen, 2002); this helps to develop cultural competencies to respond to meet their needs (Overall, 2009).
- The library services intended for minorities must include bibliographic collections in different languages, as it is essential to provide them with material in their own language and to offer information services that reflect their culture (Miñarro, 2002).
- Multicultural programs help to preserve diversity and are part of library work (Romera Iruela, 2008). Therefore, they must be included in broader social integration programs as well as linked to NGOs or social and educational agents labour (Madrid Vélchez et al., 2008). Besides, they facilitate access to devices, information technologies and related

- activities, which are an important way to attract and create new users (Muddiman et al., 2000).
- On many occasions, and probably due to a shortage of resources and to inefficiencies in the specialization process, public libraries design and provide services for a highly standardized and homogeneous profile of users, not paying enough attention to the specific characteristics of their minorities. Nowadays, the emergence of new social realities is forcing the development of less conventional services, turning the library into a gateway to integration (Romera Iruela, 2008).

Specific Library Services for the Roma Community in Europe

Roma people are the largest minority in Europe, however, library services for this group are limited (Nes, 2015). In this sense, it highlights that in countries such as Great Britain, services have successfully been developed for other smaller ethnic groups, such as Pakistanis (Weller, 2005).

In 2019, the census of library projects for the Roma community includes a set of initiatives located primarily in the Central European countries (Slovenia, Croatia and the Czech Republic). The libraries in which these projects are developed are the following:

Metlika Public Library (Slovenia). Slovenia occupies the sixth European position in terms of Roma population, and of the 8,000 inhabitants of Metlika, 300 are Roma. In 2003, its public library developed *Projekt Romi, povabljeni v knjižnico*, which has enrolled more than 60% of Metlika Roma as members of the library (Ljudska Knjiznica Metlika, 2014). Its aim has been to attract this group through courses, activities, workshops, and so on. At the same time, it tries to bring library materials and cultural activities to their settlements through direct contact and with the assistance of the Social Center. The project involves a large number of activities, but it is not supported by any social program (the library does not have an information point, meeting space, etc.) and it does not have the necessary institutional support.

Koprivnica Public Library (Croatia). Croatia occupies the ninth position in terms of Roma population; of the total of 31,000 inhabitants of Koprivnica, only 149 to 300 are Roma. Despite this, their local and European policies have been focused on this population. Fran Galović Public Library functions as a social, information, and educational support center (Fran Galović Public Library, 2014). The library has developed activities related to these areas since the year 2000. In 2010, its program *Jump in the train for a better world: ICT Support to Roma people*² was created to help Roma users develop technological skills. At the same time, it has implemented a training program for the library staff, intended to help them deal better with the problems that arise in connection with this group. It is an interesting educational and social program that has contributed to closing the gap between school and society in relation to Roma children.

Public Library of Ostrava-Vitkovice (Czech Republic). Czech Republic is the fifth country in terms of Roma population. Ostrava occupies the second position in terms of Roma population (350,000 inhabitants, between 20,000 - 40,000 are Roma). In 2004, the *Romaři kereka - Romský kruh project* (2009) was developed to turn the library into a multicultural dialogue space focused on the Roma population through activities to support reading and information literacy (Knihovna Mesta Ostrovy, 2009). The Vitkovice library, where integration activities are carried out, was created in 2006 in order to achieve the full development of the project (Vaclavikova, 2006). This

library has experienced municipal staff and is a collaboration between Ostrava University, Goethe Institute (Prague), Hermann Niermann-Stiftung Foundation, and local educational centers.

Romafuturismo Public Library (Prague, Czech Republic). This is a project that emerged in February 2018, with the intention of spreading the European Roma culture through meetings with Romani authors and figures, and through visits to locations where this ethnic group is present. Its objective is to involve the Roma communities in these meetings (Romafuturismo Public Library, 2018). Although it has the support of the Ministry of Culture, it continues thanks to the work of volunteers. Being a newly created library, it is difficult to foresee its future impact.

Finally, there are two outstanding library actions located in Croatia: The *Ivan Goran Kovačić Library* in Karlovac (Croatia), which has a mobile library that brings library collections to suburban settlements where individuals of this group can be found; and also the *Juraj Šižgorić Library* in Šibenik (Croatia), of which there is no information beyond a few references.

Library Services for Roma Community in Spain

The Spanish Roma community has a population similar to that of the populous city of Valencia, however, there are not many specific library initiatives.

Although there is available research on Roma and education, Roma and health, employment, or social problems, in the library field, actions and studies have been very limited (del Barrio García, 2002). The scarcity of studies around this community showcases the lack of attention, and still great ignorance, that permeates the greater public's understanding of this minority, foregrounding the nature of the rejection and marginalization that they commonly experience. Madrid Vilchez mentions the difficulty of starting up a library service of this kind due to the static concept of the Spanish public library, which caters to the majority, while in other neighboring countries, libraries are specialized (Miñarro, 2002). Thus, although these might be countries with less developed library services, nevertheless they have been aware of this issue due to their high percentage of Roma population, or a more social and inclusive concept of the library.

Notwithstanding, there are several documentation centers that stand out: Centro de Documentación de la Fundación Secretariado Gitano (Fundación Secretariado Gitano Documentation Center) and Instituto de Cultura Gitana (Roma Culture Institute), a specialized library: Biblioteca del Pueblo Gitano (Roma People Library), belonging to Instituto de Cultura Gitana (Roma Culture Institute) located in Biblioteca de Trinitarios, Alcalá de Henares (Trinitarian Library, Alcalá de Henares). It has a collection of more than 1,000 bibliographic documents and a selection of activities (Biblioteca del Pueblo Gitano, 2018) and the Alcalá de Henares University educative program which offers an optional course related to this culture (Biblioteca del Pueblo Gitano, 2018) and a couple of educational classes: the Alcalá de Henares University, which offers an optional course centered around the culture of this community (Biblioteca del Pueblo Gitano, 2018) and the Navarra University, which offers a degree specialized on social intervention within this group.

It must be said that although there have been several national congresses on public libraries and interculturality, exclusion, or integration (i.e., 1º Congreso Nacional de Bibliotecas Públicas), there is no particular work focused on this minority: libraries recognize having numerous Roma users, but their specific actions are limited to individual cases located mainly in the Madrid

Community and in Catalonia, such as the following:

- **María Moliner Public Library (Villaverde, Madrid)**, with a center of interest dedicated to Roma Culture and complemented with informative activities (María Moliner Public Library, 2018).
- **Nord Library (Sabadell) (important Roma population council)**, with the first library collection accessible in the Catalonia Network Public Libraries. It is dedicated to the Roma people and composed by kinds of documents on or addressed to this minority (Sabadell Nord Library, 2018).
- **Font de la Mina Library (Sant Adrià de Besós)**. Although 70% of users are Roma, their services are aimed at all citizens (Espuga-Condal, 2015), collaborating with educational centers on the educational improvement of the neighborhood (Font de la Mina Library, 2019).
- **Bon Pastor Library (Barcelona)**. Framed within the network of Barcelona Public Libraries (Bon Pastor Library, 2019), it is the center that holds more activities focused on this community: it works with Roma mediators in specific actions and participates in programs that seek to establish links with the Roma community, organizing courses adapted to their needs. The success of these initiatives is reflected by the achievement of the Fundación Biblioteca Social Award (Fundación Biblioteca Social, 2019).

Analysis of Library Programs and Improvement Proposals

The library projects outlined above have shown different realities: highly developed services, and other limited or simple library actions which are not fully developed services. Despite this, in general, the library projects all have a number of characteristics in common: they serve a very young population, which forces them to develop activities and to have specific collections for these types of users. As well, they try to make the library an inter-group space and a support for educative activities: to be an information center about Roma people. Likewise, they lack enough library collections that reflect traditions and culture or on social and education issues such as social inclusion, lifelong learning. We must say as well that all library actions appear on the web, but they lack their own page or section, which means that the scope is limited.

Starting on the study of the basic characteristics of this group, the analysis of library legislation and regulations for multicultural populations and the observation of basic library functions, a set of considerations and proposals were put forward with a view to the development of services for the Roma community. These are organized around 3 basic axes: Roma culture aspects, regulatory aspects and library aspects.

Roma Culture Aspects

- a) In almost all European countries (Spain is an exception), the Roma community has its own language.
- a) It is a population with few aging members, in which children and young people predominate.

- b) Their social conditions are degraded, which implies prejudices, discrimination, and consequently, low education levels and high unemployment rates.
- c) Associations, social workers, and volunteer staff are fundamental figures. Likewise, collaboration with professionals of Roma origin is basic since many times a lack of references leads to a lack of job aspirations.
- d) The work of intercultural mediators is important although they may be controversial figures: on one hand, it maintains the idea of exclusion, but on the other hand, this facilitates relations with this minority.
- e) Women are a group needing specific attention within the Roma community, and activities focused on them should be developed.

Regulatory Aspects

The first outstanding detail could be that library regulations on minorities date from the 80s and 90s and give little value to information technologies, while our present society is increasingly technological. In the same way, the possible modifications of the current library regulations should give more weight to institutional and administrative responsibility, as a guarantee of the actions carried out. Thus, many of the cases seen previously are library activities with little government responsibility, which are due to isolated initiatives.

Library Aspects

Using the work of multiculturalism scholars as a reference, the good practices observed and the IFLA recommendations, an array of several different actions are here proposed:

As a starting point, multiculturalism must be acknowledged and taken into account, instead of assuming that the Roma minority ought to become one with the majority group, with the consequent process of acculturation that would entail. In order to achieve this, the library must respect their cultural and social reality, offering positive references and representation by championing and promoting the Roma community (Saurin Parra, 2016).

On the other hand, given how little society at large knows about Roma culture, it is not surprising that many Roma have grown up largely unaware of their own roots, a fact that forces us to envision libraries as spaces in where Roma should be able to find information and learn about themselves, with an *ad hoc* Roma culture library collection. At the same time, libraries must respond to the Roma community's informational needs through specific information and reference services; these would benefit them not only with administrative paperwork issues they may have, but in their daily needs as well.

When it comes to the provision of specific services and documentary collections, it is a must to offer bibliographic collections in the Romani language and, at the same time, bear in mind that theirs is largely an oral and therefore non-written culture.

Cooperation and collaboration with Roma associations and groups is fundamental and, in cases where social integration is a problem, the figure of the mediator becomes essential in library work. Libraries will also make visible and empower Roma women as the axis of family groups and

give credit to their ability to mobilize the social promotion of their community.

It will be necessary to develop programs that include extracurricular activities, homework clubs, study support sessions, and so on, all of which should be supported by programs that have, at their core, the education of children. This entails close work between libraries and educational institutions, in order to better manage possible literacy problems and offer lifelong learning opportunities at all levels, especially in the use of information and communicative technologies.

For Roma people, the community stands as their basic reference. The absence of the Roma community in all professional levels (teaching, librarian staff, etc.) has a negative impact. Therefore, increasing the presence of staff from this ethnic group is a positive measure. Equally, in the matter of representation, it is necessary to offer activities and meetings that involve personalities belonging to the cultural and social world, as the protagonists and leaders of these meetings, exhibitions, and workshops.

In order to make all these ideas readily accessible, ideally, platforms aimed at the exchange of models and good practices on the Roma community should be created both at the state and international level.

Finally, and above all, libraries must change their behaviours. They must open up, offer specialized attention, and provide a cohesive framework of equality and familiarity among its users so that it is perceived as an inter-group and community space entirely accessible and without restrictions: a reliable space in which everyone is welcome.

Conclusion

In Europe, public libraries provide the public with information, training, and reading services for free. They are also spaces for participation in cultural activities, access to new information technologies focused on people, and community socialization. They try, to the extent of their resources, to meet the demands of the actual multicultural society we live in.

However, the main result of the analysis shows that, nowadays, the Roma minority is not receiving the attention they need and deserve, probably because European library regulations and Roma library services have a very limited scope; as such, the latter mainly manifest as exceptional, sporadic, poorly funded, and generally isolated initiatives.

The reality of the Roma community requires specific library services that serve as tools to fight discrimination, to facilitate integration and to increase social cohesion. It is also necessary to have an overlap between individual library initiatives and new, far-reaching social and educational policies developed through inter-institutional and community dialogue.

The proposals made in this paper are focused on implementing specific actions for Roma people and follow the European Parliament recommendations. They are aimed at promoting specific library actions that are part of national Roma inclusion programs. It is also recommended to include objectives, timelines, and indicators to monitor and evaluate the achievements. The purpose of these library services is to contribute to improving the living conditions and future opportunities of the Roma community.

Endnotes

¹ From Federico García Lorca's (1898-1936) poem, "*Romance de la Luna, Luna (Ballad of the Moon)*," originally published in *Gypsy Ballads (1928)*, most recently translated by Jeffrey B. Frazier, 2017.

² This project received several international awards, the main ones being: the EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) International Award (2013) *Knowledge without boundaries* (EIFL, 2014); *The World Summit on the Information Society Award* (2015) (World Summit on Information Society, 2015). As well, it has been mentioned by IFLA in *1001 Libraries to See Before You Die* (IFLA, 2014) and awarded an ALA Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects in 2014 (American Library Association, 2020).

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