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The Role Of Libraries In The Cultural Policies For Development Cooperation. A Study And Assessment Of The Management Model At The Spanish Agency For International Cooperation (AECI)

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ABSTRACT

The General Directorate of Cultural and Scientific Relations is part of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, an institution of the Spanish Public Administration which is the main responsible unit for the Development Cooperation goals, and which is dependent on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

Among the basic goals of this General Directorate are those related to the management of training and cultural resources at the same level than economic, infrastructural, and health-related ones, in order to be able to advance the development cooperation in an integral way. It is only through this integral development that the economic and democratic development of the peoples will be promoted, and that the ideological and cultural diversity that their citizens can provide will be respected and valued.

The Directorate has the following means to approach this issue: a Publications Department; a Deputy General Directorate in charge of promoting, assigning and administering postgraduate scholarships, teaching assistantships, exchanges, and other higher university education programs; a network of Cultural Centers that are spread all over the world –many of them with important libraries specialized on Spanish Culture-; and, of course, a Library at the

AECI itself, which covers all the information needs of such a big and complex organization, about which I will discuss later in greater detail.

Given the traditional cultural, commercial and sentimental relationships of Spain, this Library (which holds around 700,000 volumes) is divided into two Specialized Sections, each one with its own personality: the Hispanic Library and the Islamic Library.

The management model of this Library corresponds to one that is proper to an organization which is committed to both Development Cooperation and the Knowledge and Information Society. Its main objectives are:

- a) to accumulate a vast and significant bibliographic collection of the living culture of all the countries in Iberoamerica and the Muslim World in which it is specialized and with which it cooperates in Development Cooperation, and*
- b) to keep deep, wide relationships with cultural institutions from all these countries.*

One of the most prominent ways of relationship is established through bibliographical exchange operations with all those cultural Institutions: we offer them the specialized bibliography produced by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, and receive at the same time the bibliographies they create.

In the study proposed here, I will deeply analyze and assess its management model.

First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting me to participate in this conference that we are fortunate to hold, and which is so important for all professionals within library science and other information units. I also want to thank you for listening to me speak in my native language, Spanish. Be certain that I truly appreciate the effort many of you are putting forth in order to understand me with the aid of simultaneous translation. Our interpreters are doing a great job. Finally, without further delay, I move on to introduce the content of my presentation.

- 1. The role of libraries in the cooperation for the development of the peoples, according to international organizations. - 2. The role of the cultural aspects in the development of the peoples, according to the AECI. - 3. The role of culture and development strategies for the AECI. - 4. The Implementation of AECI's cultural policies. - 5. The Hispanic and Islamic Libraries. - 6. Conclusions. - 7. Bibliography.*

1. THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN THE COOPERATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLES, ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

Because of the large number of this kind of institutions, we will focus on the one that probably has the most emblematic role in the librarian field: UNESCO. Since its creation in 1946, UNESCO has promoted –generally speaking- the necessary multilateral perspective in culture and the contribution of culture to development. The first actions undertaken by this organization were basically oriented toward the protection of the cultural heritage devastated by the 20th century wars, as well as the protection of the cultural heritage of all groups in peaceful times. This process has been refined toward the study of the factors, parameters and cultural impact of development. Culture has started to be defined not only as a secondary dimension of development, but also as the network of society itself in its global relation with development and as an internal force within that society.

Due to its egalitarian, universal and democratic value, I will now focus on the public library, by which I mean a library “open to the general public,” because kind of library best represents cooperation objectives. UNESCO defines the public library as “a gateway to knowledge,” and adds:

“Freedom, Prosperity and the Development of society and individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

This Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.

UNESCO, therefore, encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries.”

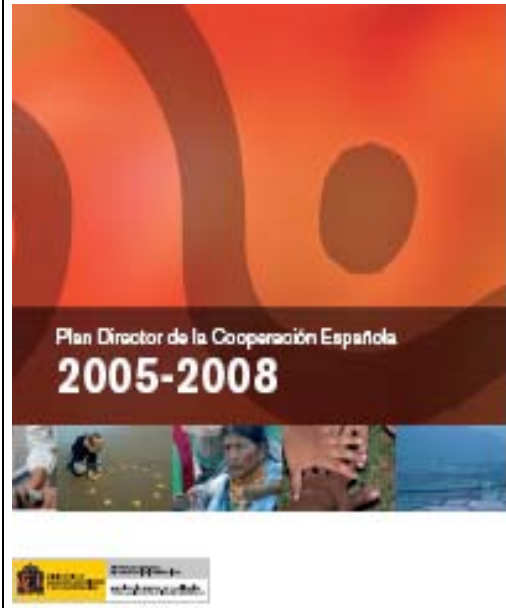
For a development cooperation agency such as AECI, with relevant goals regarding education and culture, supporting the public library is a priority. The public library is a successful tool for reaching out to citizens and, by implication, has an ability to contribute to their cultural and formative development, which will facilitate their development at all levels: as citizens, as workers, as producers of economic, cultural and social wealth,... and as human beings in general.

2. THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLES, ACCORDING TO THE AECI.

The Spanish International Development Cooperation Law, of July 7th 1998, establishes in article 8.2 that the Master Plan is the basic element for the planning of Spanish Policy for International Development Cooperation.

After the general elections on March 14th 2004, the president of the new Spanish Government -José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero- included in his investiture speech an urge for development cooperation, establishing the goal of “making development cooperation an essential element of international policy.”

In defining the international development cooperation policy, some basic competences are set:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The government's commitment to increase the resources assigned to development aid. - The alignment of the Spanish cooperation with the existing International consensus and doctrine regarding development aid. - The large description created for the development agenda, and the significance given to new issues such as gender equality, conflict prevention and the cultural dimension, recognizing the role of cultural diversity in sustainable and human development. - The definition it creates of the fight against poverty as the central goal of the Spanish cooperation. - The commitment established in order to devote 20% of its bilateral aid to activities related with the coverage of basic needs. - The new commitment regarding humanitarian aid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The more active multilateral commitment the Spanish cooperation assumes; - The open and participative nature of the Master Plan elaboration process. 
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The Master Plan, approved by the Council of Ministers in a meeting on January 28th 2005, was inspired by the Millennium Goals and is characterized by the following aspects:

- A commitment for multilateralism
- An effort to focus the maximum attention toward underdeveloped countries, with a special interest in African countries; and
- The incorporation of the countries that suffered from the South-East Asia tsunami on December 26th 2004.

The Plan also defines the **strategic goals** of the Spanish cooperation:

- An increase in institutional and social capabilities
- An increase of human capabilities
- An increase of economic capabilities
- An increase of capabilities to improve environmental sustainability
- **An increase of freedom and cultural capabilities**
- An increase of women's capacities and autonomy
- An increase of capabilities for conflict prevention and the construction of peace.

The Plan considers as **horizontal priorities**:

- The fight against poverty
- The defense of human rights
- Gender equality
- Environmental sustainability
- **Respect for cultural diversity.**

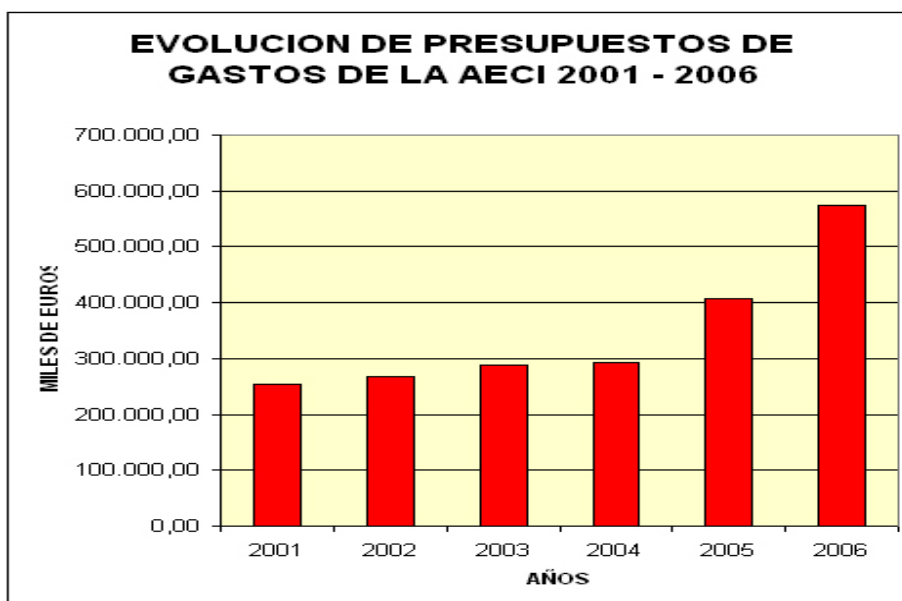
The Master Plan foresees reaching an Official Development Aid (AOD) amount similar to the 0.5% of the GDP in 2008, while complying, at the same time, with the commitments undertaken at the heart of the European Union and at the Monterey Summit.

It also contains a larger expenditure of the bilateral AOD toward institutional strengthening projects, taking as a premise that poverty has also political causes. Fighting against the causes of poverty involves an institutional strengthening strategy that offers solutions to political weaknesses in those States characterized by the poverty of its population.

The following chart, showing the evolution and increase of the budget dedicated to development cooperation, gives us an idea of how important the current Spanish policy is with regard to this issue:

AÑO	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
MILES DE EUROS	253.640,71	268.415,26	289.238,25	292.800,51	406.995,43	574.829,56
INCREMENTO % AÑO ANTERIOR	7,78 %	10,58 %	7,75 %	1,23 %	39,00 %	41,23 %

(Rows: 1- Year; 2-Euros, in hundreds of thousands; 3- % increase from previous year. N. by the transl.)



(Evolution of AECI's Expenses Budget 2001-2006 in thousands of Euros; N. by the translator)

Among all the significant goals included in the Master Plan, I will focus on those with a cultural content, because they are the ones that include libraries as a central organization.

3. THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN THE AECI

The first antecedents of the Spanish cooperation can be found in the cultural activity inherited from what was known as the Institute of Hispanic Culture (ICH). The first transformation was made in 1977, changing its denomination from ICH to Ibero-American Center for Cooperation (*Centro Iberoamericano de Cooperación*).¹ It is the first time the word 'cooperation' appears in official documents of the democracy, and it does so hand-in-hand with culture. A year later, it again changed its name to the Institute of Ibero-American Cooperation (*Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana*)² (ICI). Ten years later, the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation³ was created. The Agency includes the cultural realm within its structure, in the form of a Deputy General Directorate.

The Cultural Centers, the Heritage Program, the Scholarship Program, the Training Workshops, the Training Centers, the Cooperation among Universities, the different courses and seminars in each artistic field and the different professors invited to a variety of conferences and seminars, have all been the breeding grounds of the first line of action.

One of the most important factors of social development within the last five centuries was the invention of the printing press, which could be compared nowadays to the effects of the Information Society, which allows a large population to access knowledge and information. Numbers regarding access to cultural heritage in the 20th century reflect the significance of cultural consumption and its relationship with the improvement of capabilities and possibilities of growth. The numbers from the cultural industry, endorsed by an infinite number of studies, are the ones that encourage us to insist on the importance of economic development through culture and on the contribution of this sector to the development of the economic factors. This entails an increase in the capabilities of societies and, consequently, in the possibilities to eradicate poverty⁴. Despite all these advances, there are still vast amounts of population and areas without access to diverse or modern cultural forms for their education and enjoyment.

The Foreign Cultural Policy of the Spanish Government works with culture as a development tool in their International Cooperation Agenda Plans.

1 R/D 2305 of 1977. BOE 27.VIII.1977

2 R/D 2411 of 1979 BOE n° 249

3 R/D 1527 of 1988 BOE n° 307

4 **Poverty**. According to the Master Plan it refers to a situation in which a person lacks opportunities and options in order to have a decent standard of living. It includes fields such as health, education, social participation, employment and the recognition of freedom and dignity.

The 2005-2008 Master Plan for Cooperation establishes, for the first time, that cooperation must insist on the increase of the capabilities to exercise -with autonomy- the cultural freedom of each country or community, and on the increase of the cultural capabilities as a development factor in all its dimensions and effects. It suggests that development cooperation has to integrate and incorporate within its contents the cultural perspective, while also suggesting the need to take the maximum advantage of a culture's own resources at the service of social change, government, well-being, and socio-economical development. In this sense, it demands locating culture's different potentials as a contribution to reach the Millennium Goals, and to incorporate us within the processes that different international organizations are carrying out in this field.

In order to reach its goals, the Master Plan established two lines of work. Firstly, the Cooperation with Indigenous People through actions that encourage their participation in the development processes; and secondly, the Cultural Cooperation, linked to the development goals.

The action strategy is based on the following principles:

- Sustainable development requires taking into account a cultural dimension, understood both as lifestyles and as artistic process – creative or productive activity.
- Culture's main goal is to contribute to the communal well-being, and consequently, it has to participate and contribute with its impact on the processes of fighting against poverty and social exclusion.
- Human development has to be observed in a global manner, such that well-being and economic, social and cultural prosperity are included.
- Culture generates processes in which the population can participate (due to the nature of the activities it proposes: festivals, carnivals, concerts, cinemas, theatres, exhibitions, etc). Knowing how to use these potentials for the consolidation of the citizens contributes to social development and cohesion.
- The convention for the defense of diversity and artistic expressions seeks to preserve the collective memory, languages, forms of expression, relegated cultures, etc. that must be a priority for cultural policies and cooperation actions, so that human beings can develop in their own environment.
- Culture, as well as other fields that affect cooperation development, must seek synergies with other sectors, in order to reach an integral and sustainable development.
- Cultural policies must integrate the participation of all social agents, to guarantee their plurality and diversity as a form of democratic life.
- The citizens' access to culture becomes a right and a responsibility of the public institutions and civic society, as well as a way to transcend social

exclusion (an important dimension among the ones that generate poverty).


- Cultural cooperation must help in encouraging the different capabilities (spiritual, creative, material) so that they contribute to and participate in the improvement of the quality of life.
- Cultural cooperation must reflect and show its achievements, both in the impact it has on the improvement social life, and in the economic value obtained through a sustainable and rational utilization of its resources.
- Culture can contribute different elements to the peaceful coexistence of the peoples and the prevention of conflicts.

These principles are materialized in the following concrete lines of work:

1	Training of Human Capital for cultural management, focusing on cultural and development projects.	It is intended to facilitate and encourage the processes that contribute to the creation of human resources, promoting their autonomy on the management of the different dimensions of cultural life that have an impact on development.
2	Political Dimension of Culture in its contribution to development.	It is intended to insist on the different contributions that cultural policies can make to improve governing: promoting the development of cultural institutions, stimulating public participation and implementing better mechanisms for public participation (helping, in this way, to create a culturally active population).
3	Economical Dimension of Culture in its contribution to development.	It is intended to research the different contributions of culture to the development of the economic sector, through the promotion, creation and production of cultural and creative businesses, industries and institutions; promoting also cultural employment, stimulating its relationship with other productive sectors -such as tourism- in order to build a productive creativity.
4	Cross-relationships between Education and Culture.	It is intended to strengthen the cultural structures and contents of the processes on both formal and non-formal education, seeking students' participation in contemporary cultural and artistic phenomena.

5	Support for the processes of restoration, conservation, and research of the cultural heritage.	It is intended to support and work with the numerous processes taking place in the conservation, restoration and valuation of cultural heritage assets.
6	Relations between Communication and Culture with an impact on development.	Seeking the active participation within the Information and Knowledge Society through the active use of communication networks and information technologies.
7	The promotion of processes for the recognition of Cultural Rights.	It is intended to strengthen the sensibility of society towards issues related to Cultural Diversity and the development of Human Rights in a cultural field.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF AECI'S CULTURAL POLICIES

<p>4.1 Net of Cultural Centers. AECI's Cultural Centers are cultural equipments located in different countries in order to carry out the goals of the government's foreign cultural cooperation policy, and those of the cultural agents in our country. They vitalize the projection of Spanish cultural life's diversity and plurality through: the dissemination and information actions; programs within their spaces and services; the strengthening of a dialogic dynamic with their surrounding realities; offering public access to their proposals and offered activities; integrating local activities for a greater articulation with the civic societies of the host countries. They are seen as an open space for the citizens and civic society of the countries where they are located, favoring exchange and mutual understanding.</p>	
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4.2 National and international networks and connections. There is also a series of collaboration networks that have accumulated a valuable experience throughout several years. There exists in those networks a co-development in which, thanks to the effective use of the synergies, all countries collaborate by contributing their knowledge and experience, which are extremely beneficial to all of us.

	<p>4.3 Cooperation Technical Offices. They must undertake the work of identification and management of the programs and monitoring of bilateral agreements according to their structure and possibilities.</p> <p>4.4 Training Workshops. Of all the Spanish Cooperation efforts to generate employment and professional insertion, these are the most constant and successful, as they take advantage of previous knowledge, experience and connections.</p>
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4.5 Scholarships for Foreign Countries. They are a great traditional and successful tool of the Spanish Cooperation. Currently, the MAEC-AECI Scholarship Program has a chapter devoted to scholarships for cultural management in cultural centers and Spanish embassies abroad, along with the post-graduate scholarships for library science to study in Spain.

4.6 Publications and Dissemination of Information. The Spanish Agency has, among others, an editorial line devoted to “Culture and Development.” The complete catalog of publications is made available for the bibliographic exchange between institutions, which can serve as a way to spread our work throughout the world and receive what other centers offer us.

4.7 Academic Cooperation. The international academic cooperation policy by the General Directorate of Cultural and Scientific Relations of the AECI constitutes an outstanding aspect of the cultural and scientific relationships between Spain and the rest of the world. This policy takes effect by means of:

-Scholarships in Spain: There is an offer of university education at postgraduate, doctoral and post-doctoral levels, through annual announcements of the different scholarship programs by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation with Ibero-

America and the Mediterranean Arab countries (though it is being expanded to new regions, such as Asia-the Pacific). It is also intended to develop basic and applied research in relevant issues for our development policy, enabling a group of researchers and experts to make an impact on development processes.

-Teaching Assistantships: The position of the Spanish teaching assistant in foreign universities, apart from being an instrument of promotion for the Hispanic linguistic-cultural studies abroad, is also an agent of the cultural action of the Embassy of that region. For the development of this program, the agreements with the Instituto Cervantes, both from the General Directorate of Cultural and the Scientific Relations of the AECI and between the Embassies and the Instituto Cervantes' Centers abroad, are an essential element.



4.8 Libraries. The AECI has a net of libraries abroad, composed of the different libraries integrated within their cultural centers. Their characteristics, sizes and methodologies differ, but they all have the common goal of providing to all interested citizens easy access to Spanish culture in those countries in which the libraries are operating.

The Hispanic and Islamic libraries constitute an indispensable support in the management of AECI's cultural policies. Given their significance, they deserve their own section.

5. THE HISPANIC AND ISLAMIC LIBRARIES.

5.1 The Hispanic Library

The Hispanic Library was born as a bibliographic collection of the Council of Hispanidad, whose goal was to preserve and promote the Hispanic heritage in the American countries and the Philippines. The central topic of the first historic collection consists of the literature of the discovery of America, the Catholic Monarchs, and the Evangelization of America.

In 1945, the Institute of Hispanic Culture (ICH) was created, serving as a Consulting Institution for the Department of Foreign Affairs.

In 1947, its organic regulations were approved and its library was formally created, adding also the books from the Council of Hispanidad.

In 1949, the library of the Institute of Hispanic Culture was inaugurated, named as the “Library of the Hispanic Peoples,” with the initial purpose of becoming the national center for the exchange of publications with American institutions devoted to teaching and research.

The ICH started publishing its magazine *Mundo Hispánico* in 1947, and *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* in 1949. The Library made use of the institution’s entire editorial catalog to establish exchange relationships with universities, national libraries, official institutions, and other research centers with editorial production. These exchanges facilitated the acquisition of materials impossible to find in the market.

In 1979, the ICH became the Institute of Ibero-American Cooperation. The Library evolved and included topics related to economy and cooperation.

The institution’s editorial line selects its exchange agents and the maintenance of the publications program guarantees the continuity and development of the collection for years to come.

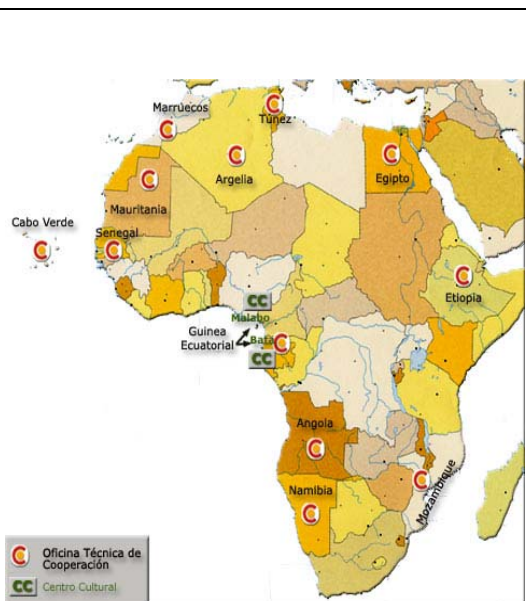
5.2 The Islamic Library

In 1954, the Hispano-Arabic Institute of Culture was founded. A library was established within this institute in order to serve as documental and bibliographic support for the Spanish and foreign researchers of the Arab-Islamic field.

The growth of the Islamic Library was possible thanks to the contributions by Spanish Cultural Centers established in Arab countries, which sent relevant books for the development of the library’s bibliographic collection.

In 1974, the Hispano-Arabic Institute of Culture became an autonomous organization from the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Library received its own budget, which allowed it to carry out an acquisitions policy, as well as the opportunity to hire permanent staff members to support the management. An exchange of books and magazines edited by universities and research centers in Arab countries was established.

The Institute for Cooperation with the Arab World replaced, by the end of 1988, the Hispano-Arabic Institute of Culture.



When the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI) was created in 1989, all the institutions of the Department of Foreign Affairs dedicated to International Cooperation were integrated within its structure. Therefore, the Institute of Ibero-American Cooperation and the Institute for Cooperation with the Arab World became part of the AECI. Both Institutes brought with them two specialized libraries: The Hispanic Library and the Islamic Library.

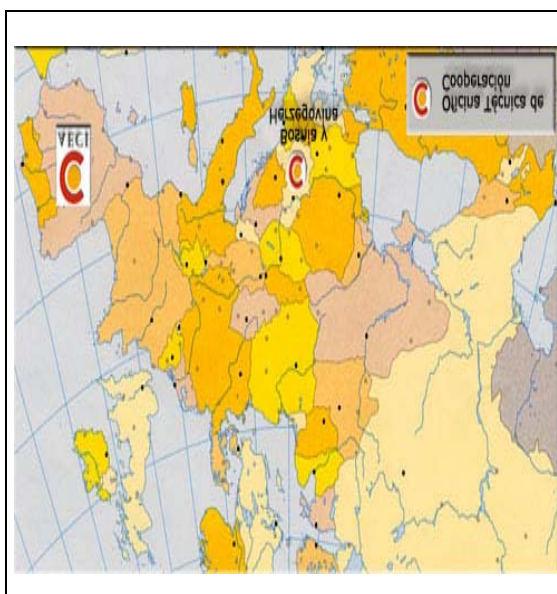
5.3 Goals of the AECI's Libraries

Currently, the Hispanic and Islamic Libraries share facilities, resources, and common services, keeping the independence and identity of their collections. Between the two libraries they hold approximately 700,000 volumes of books and magazines.

Their primary **general** goals are:

- 1) Collecting and organizing the largest and best collection of books, magazines and all kinds of documents, related to their specialized focused areas, that is, Ibero-America, Development Cooperation, and the Arab World.
- 2) Teaching their readers to search and manage information through the organizational systems used by these libraries.
- 3) To offer the requested materials for their study and consultation.
- 4) Making the bibliographic collection known to the scientific and research community.

Their **specific** goals are:



1) Maintaining an attitude of cooperation and collaboration according to AECI's goals. **Cultural cooperation** is the basis for all cooperation, as information is the key for development.

2) Through its Libraries, the AECI contributes to the **dissemination of the** Spanish, Ibero-American, and Arabic **research** included in the publications and launched to the market by the exchange, and it also facilitates the distribution of publications and their use wherever needed.

3) Cooperation is also reflected by the decisions of **participating in inter-institutional type plans**, such as collective catalogs, technical collaboration in research and dissemination projects, programs for the exchange of duplicated books and magazines, donations of books and magazines without use in highly specialized libraries, etc.

4) The **attention to researchers** and readers in general, both those on and off-site, taking advantage of the new information and communication technologies.

5) **Training for Library Professionals**, thanks to scholarships granted to students graduating in Library Science in Latin American and the Arab World countries, so that they get postgraduate practical training in the Hispanic and the Islamic Libraries.

6. CONCLUSIONS

After my exposition, I can conclude that the Spanish cooperation model is generous, as it devotes a large sum of money to this issue. It is also well-structured, as it takes into account every relevant aspect of development. One of those aspects regards cooperation in the cultural field, the one in which librarians, with our work, can become further involved.

Nevertheless, if we look at cooperation specifically regarding the librarian realm, things start to be not-so-clearly manifested. And this happens despite the fact that in Spain, even before the term –even the concept- of “development cooperation in the cultural field” existed, there were libraries working in many cultural centers in a multitude of countries, as well as scholarships granted to librarians in those countries for postgraduate practical training in Madrid -not to mention the scholarships for advanced university studies in Spain, to which their students in our libraries are so indebted.

Regardless of this significant presence and work, neither in the AECI's Master Plan nor in the “Strategy for Culture and Development” are the libraries' possibilities of action within cultural cooperation completely defined –or, at least, not as much as we librarians would like.

It is my belief that if libraries played a more leading and active role in cooperation programs, then these programs would be more effective, and it is this belief that leads me to share these ideas with you, librarians and colleagues from around the world, in this privileged conference.

The above-mentioned effectiveness would be possible by taking the maximum advantage –through librarian and cooperation policies- of the intrinsic qualities of the librarian world: proximity to the public; availability for everyone to access information and knowledge; vocational and highly-qualified professionals; scientific working routines that have been proven to be efficient through the years; undeniable bibliographic heritage and assets; sensibility towards the preservation of the indigenous heritage; enjoyment in keeping

cultural diversity as a precious gift; a significant presence of women and children in the libraries, etc. To all those we have to add that, thanks to the new information and communication technologies, our capabilities can increase and expand.

Our conference motto is: "Libraries: dynamic engines of the Information and Knowledge Society." My question is: Can Information and Knowledge Society and Underdevelopment coexist? It is clear that they cannot, as it is only through solving the fragilities that many countries suffer from, that we can guarantee their active presence, by their own right, in the Society we advocate.

But if libraries are "dynamic engines" of that Society, they should also be so in the fight against inequalities, which are the main obstacle that impedes the inclusion of all individuals into that Society.

We, as librarians, must join forces. Apart from the good professional work we do, we must be present at the head of cultural cooperation from our libraries. We must convince our politicians to "use" us more, as we can be very profitable. We can make the money devoted to development have greater profits. How is that possible? It is quite simple: making our users increase their opportunities in life, in an autonomous and mature way, by taking advantage of the information and knowledge we can offer them.

And I say this here to all of you: librarians from affluent countries, developing countries and underdeveloped countries. To the first ones: You must actively participate in your countries' development policies. To the second ones: You must carefully review the aid you receive, and get the maximum yield out of it with your work. To the last ones: You must claim that aid in a dynamic way, because you are the ones that will benefit the most.

We live in an economically difficult time. Even the most powerful of countries has to make an effort to cooperate with all of the other countries. We must acknowledge their generosity, because they want –without any doubt- to improve the world we live in and make it more egalitarian. Well then, let us make this economic effort get the highest profitability with our professional activity. Let us participate with our knowledge to build a fairer world.

And let IFLA lead our fight. Programs such as IFLA/ALP show they can do it, and that they do it very well. But we can still request that they do more: more propaganda with this kind of program; "pestering" even more those institutions that can help; a greater presence of cooperation topics in many of the IFLA sections that could contribute very interesting aspects and from different points of view.

And we can also request that those Cooperation Agencies with the greatest success in librarian cooperation teach us, because we want to benefit from their knowledge and experience. I could mention here the Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency (SIDA), whose extraordinary role in IFLA/ALP I know first-hand, due to my participation at the IFLA/Latin America and the Caribbean Committee.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your attention and consideration, from IFLA to the Social Science Libraries Section, which have so generously reserved for me a part of its valuable space so that I could be with you today. But I cannot leave without also thanking our host members, our colleagues from Seoul, for their kindness and professionalism, and the Korean authorities for their intelligence by supporting the future and progress that libraries represent. I congratulate you for your support, and for the success of this Conference. Thank you very much.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me. I will be more than happy to answer them.

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