library services for indigenous societies in Latin America

a summary of two decades of experiences

edgardo civallero
Dangerous Librarianship
Urban Librarians Conference
April 7, 2017 - Brooklyn, NY
Whatever you do for me but without me, you do against me.

Proverb from Central Africa.
Quoted by David van Reybrouck.
The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.
The use of labels (as “indigenous”) in libraries

Do we need to speak about “indigenous” services? Could it be considered as a way of “framing the Other”? May it be a way of widening instead of bridging gaps? Building instead of breaking down barriers? What does it mean to put one group of people under a label?
The identification of unique features and traits

Who decides what features make a community unique?
Are different criteria used to evaluate “minority” needs?
Do they perpetuate stereotypes and prejudice?
Libraries as colonial tools

Might some library services be considered as a form of neo-colonialism? Do these services assume that what is good for somebody is good for everybody, regardless their needs?
Library services for disadvantaged communities

Are library services respectful of their users' needs and possibilities?
Are they sustainable?
Photos: Piers Calvert
"The way we are now"
(2012)