

# **Telling to Remain**

## **A Manifesto for Systematizing and Communicating Library Work in Bogotá**

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### **I. The Invisible Greatness**

Across Bogotá, libraries of all kinds — public, school-based, academic, community-run, mobile, itinerant, improvised — are engaged in one of the most meaningful and persistent forms of social intervention in the region. Far beyond their institutional definitions, they operate as cultural mediators, educational anchors, and platforms for civic participation. In neighborhoods affected by displacement, inequality, or urban abandonment, the library is often the last public space still open, still free, still listening.

Librarians facilitate literacy processes, accompany collective memory efforts, curate local knowledge, and invent pedagogical strategies on the fly. They negotiate with local power structures. They run programs for children, for elders, for people excluded from formal education. They adapt technologies to local needs. They provide access to silence, to connection, to dignity.

In many cases, this work is carried out with minimal resources, unstable contracts, and little institutional protection. And yet, it continues — sustained by professional commitment, community trust, and a profound sense of responsibility. It is difficult to overstate the pedagogical, social, and affective labor invested daily in these spaces.

But this labor is barely documented. Rarely shared. Almost never integrated into the broader institutional narrative of the city's cultural or educational policies.

This is not just a communication gap. It is an ecosystemic breakdown — a collective inability to retain, circulate, and learn from lived experience. Projects dissolve as funding cycles end. Initiatives are replicated without memory. Young librarians enter spaces with

no access to what others before them tried, achieved, or failed. Libraries operating just blocks apart remain unaware of each other's methods, tools, and trajectories.

Bogotá's library system is one of multiplicity: multiple logics, territories, and temporalities. Its richness lies precisely in that diversity. But diversity without dialogue becomes fragmentation. And fragmentation, over time, becomes entropy.

To build ecosystemic awareness is not to enforce uniformity, but to generate narrative continuity: a shared capacity to perceive connections, identify patterns, and acknowledge that each library is not an island — it is a node in a larger, interdependent network of knowledge and memory.

Such awareness begins with narration. Not marketing, not slogans, but situated, reflexive, purposeful storytelling. It is through the act of telling — honestly, consistently, and collectively — that Bogotá's libraries will begin to recognize themselves as an ecosystem worth defending, strengthening, and evolving.

## **II. Systematize or Vanish**

Systematization is too often misunderstood as a mechanical task: a report to fill out, a form to complete, or an obligation to an external funder or institution. In this reduced version, its purpose is compliance. Its audience is bureaucratic. And its result — more often than not — is forgettable.

But that is not what systematization was meant to be.

In Latin America, the concept of “sistematization of experiences” emerged not from administrative offices, but from the pedagogical practices of social movements, popular educators, and grassroots organizations. It was conceived as a way to reflect critically on lived experience, to recover the knowledge embedded in daily practice, and to generate tools for collective transformation. It is closer to ethnographic documentation and action-research than to a final report; closer to praxis than to metrics.

To systematize is to reconstruct a process: what was done, how it unfolded, with whom, in what context, with what tensions, with what outcomes — expected or not. It is to identify the logic beneath the actions, the questions that remained unanswered, the methods that emerged by necessity rather than design. It is, above all, to acknowledge that practice generates knowledge, and that this knowledge deserves to persist.

When we do not systematize, library work becomes disposable. Our collective learning dissipates. New teams reinvent the wheel. Errors are repeated, not because of negligence, but because of silence. What might have become a shared tool remains a private memory — until even that fades.

Systematizing is a form of memory work. It is a narrative infrastructure: a web of experiences, reflections, and lessons that other librarians can access, adapt, and contribute to. It is also a infrastructure of continuity. It turns a singular experience into a point of reference. It creates the conditions for dialogue across institutions, generations, and geographies. It resists the constant erosion of institutional memory caused by turnover, precarious contracts, and shifting political agendas.

Moreover, systematization is not limited to formal spaces. You do not need a platform, a title, or a budget to document what you've lived and learned. A community library working with recycled furniture and volunteer staff can still produce reflections of enormous strategic and epistemic value. A voice note, a field notebook, a simple photo essay can hold more truth than a dozen institutional evaluations.

Systematize not to fulfill a requirement, but to build archives. To write articles. To share insights at conferences. To teach others what worked — and what didn't. To leave breadcrumbs for the librarian who will inherit your space, your challenges, your hopes.

Because if we don't tell our own stories of library practice, no one will. And without those stories, the ecosystem forgets what it already knew.

### III. Communicate Without Applause

There is a moment in every librarian's practice — perhaps after a particularly meaningful program, a hard-earned lesson, or a difficult silence — when the impulse to share emerges. Not to promote, but to reflect. Not to seek attention, but to leave something behind. That impulse is not secondary to the work. It is part of it.

Communication, in the context of library ecosystems, must be understood not as publicity or visibility, but as a knowledge practice. It is the act of giving form and voice to what has been learned, so that it can circulate, resonate, and potentially be taken up by others. It is a gesture of generosity — and of responsibility.

In an age saturated with noise, spectacle, and performance metrics, librarians must resist the idea that their communication needs to be instant, constant, or optimized for engagement. What matters is not the velocity or visibility of a message, but its sediment: the trace it leaves in someone else's thought or practice. A line that stays. A question that echoes. A detail that opens perspective.

Not every message needs to be public. Silence, too, is a form of communication — especially in contexts where overexposure can be extractive or unsafe. Knowing when *not* to speak is part of the ethics of communication. But when one does speak, write, publish, or record, it should be with clarity, intentionality, and commitment to substance.

Communicating well requires slowing down — and even staying two steps behind. It requires articulating experience in language that others can access without simplifying it to the point of cliché. It also means accepting that recognition may not come — and should not be the point. Communication in librarianship is not applause-seeking. It is part of what it means to build a shared epistemic infrastructure.

Be wary of the performative. Choose the compostable over the glittering. Contribute to the commons rather than the trend. Because what Bogotá's libraries need is not more noise. They need meaningful stories that endure, provoke, and connect — even if quietly.

#### **IV. You Don't Have to Be a Writer. But You Do Have to Write.**

One of the most persistent misconceptions among librarians — especially those working outside of academic or editorial circles — is the belief that documenting experience requires literary skill. That to communicate meaningfully, one must first master “writing” in the formal, published, public sense of the word.

This belief is not only false. It is harmful.

The most insightful contributions to the memory of library work often come not from professional writers, but from professionals who simply take the time — and the risk — to narrate what they’ve lived. Librarians who sit down, however briefly, and commit their practice to paper: the challenges, the small breakthroughs, the moments of uncertainty, and the hard-earned knowledge that emerges in context.

What matters is not perfect language, but honest articulation. Language that reflects lived experience rather than masking it behind polished institutional prose.

Start modestly. A paragraph a day. A brief reflection at the end of each week. A log of decisions made and why. A description of the atmosphere in a reading club session. A quote from a user. A lesson drawn from failure. Over time, these fragments become a body of knowledge — one that is concrete, cumulative, and eminently useful to others.

Documentation is not just about writing what happened. It’s about developing a capacity for self-observation — noticing the how and why of what we do, and translating it into forms others can engage with. This is a habit, not a gift. It develops through repetition, reflection, and a willingness to write without waiting for the perfect words.

Moreover, documentation is not solitary. It benefits from exchange. Share drafts with colleagues. Write collectively. Use voice notes if writing feels distant. Adapt tone to your environment — formal, informal, reflective, descriptive. The point is not to perform, but to preserve.

Because every time a librarian writes down a piece of their process — however partial, however unfinished — they are participating in a broader, deeply needed infrastructure of memory and mutual learning.

And in a context where so much work is temporary, under-recognized, and at risk of disappearance, this kind of writing is not a luxury. It is a form of professional and ethical commitment.

Write because it matters. Write so others don't have to start from scratch. Write so that the ecosystem can recognize itself. Even if your writing is imperfect, inconsistent, or quiet — write. Because silence, in this field, is too often mistaken for absence.

And you are not absent. You are part of the story.

## **V. From WhatsApp to Journals: A Narrative Continuum**

Where should you publish? Wherever you are — and wherever your community is likely to listen, respond, or remember.

Narrative work in librarianship is not linear. It does not begin with prestige or end in academic formality. It begins with presence — with the urgent and practical need to document, to communicate, and to share knowledge where it can do immediate good.

That might mean starting with a WhatsApp voice note sent to a colleague. A Facebook post about a recent program. A hand-distributed flyer summarizing a method. A printed bulletin. A blog entry written in the quiet hours after a long shift. These are not lesser forms — they are first forms, and often the most accessible ones.

From there, narratives grow. A voice note becomes a reflection. A Facebook post becomes a newsletter piece. A blog evolves into a toolkit, a small book, a recorded conversation. That same material, shaped and extended, can later take the form of an

article, a conference paper, even a contribution to an academic journal or a national policy recommendation.

The trajectory is not defined by prestige, but by relevance. It is guided by the question: who needs to hear this — and in what format will it reach them?

This is what we call a narrative continuum: a progression of formats, languages, and audiences, each adapted to a different moment, scale, and need. What matters is not where you publish first, but that you begin. That you anchor your story — however modestly — so it can evolve, circulate, and connect.

Importantly, each format carries different epistemic strengths. A flyer may reach a local audience that a journal never will. A tweet may provoke a conversation. A field diary may capture nuance lost in edited texts. Academic publication brings legitimacy in institutional arenas. Each medium has its place, and none should be excluded from the ecology of communication. To do so would not only be exclusionary — it would also be epistemologically narrow and structurally colonial.

To engage this continuum is to practice strategic storytelling. It is to understand that every narrative is a potential seed, and that even the smallest seed can grow into a tree if it is nurtured and allowed to travel.

Let your stories grow. Let them take root in unexpected places. From mud to mountain — what matters is that they live.

## **VI. A Symbiotic Ecosystem**

Bogotá's library ecosystem is not a singular entity. It is a constellation of different institutions, contexts, and voices often operating in parallel, occasionally in tension, and too rarely in coordination.

Some libraries are anchored in universities, supported by stable funding, professional staff, and formal infrastructure. Others operate from neighborhood houses, community centers, or improvised rooms, supported by volunteers and held together by sheer will. Some are built around policy frameworks. Others around necessity.

The differences are real — and should not be denied. But they should also not become barriers.

Systemic collaboration in this city cannot rely on uniformity. It must be built on asymmetrical alliances: partnerships that acknowledge difference, power imbalance, and uneven capacity — and work precisely through them. This requires humility, mutual recognition, and above all, the abandonment of defensiveness and rivalry.

The academic librarian brings tools for system-building, long-term thinking, and structured processes. The community librarian brings situated knowledge, cultural fluency, and proximity to lived realities. The school librarian understands rhythms of pedagogy and curriculum; the mobile librarian understands rhythms of geography and need.

Each holds a different piece of the ecosystem's intelligence. No single piece is complete. What matters is not sameness, but complementarity.

But complementarity requires more than goodwill. It demands a framework: for dialogue, for shared language, for credit and co-authorship, for resource redistribution. Without such a framework, collaboration collapses into tokenism or extractivism. With it, an ecosystem becomes more than a metaphor — it becomes a living structure of interdependence.

Because what Bogotá's libraries need is not a single model, but a mycelial network: decentralized, diverse, resilient.

Together, you make a forest. Alone, you make firewood.

## **VII. Closing: We Tell to Remain**

If we do not narrate what happens in our libraries — the choices we make, the knowledge we generate, the communities we accompany — no one else will. And if others attempt to tell it in our place, they will do so from outside, often without context, often without care.

In the absence of our voices, our work becomes invisible. And what is invisible is eventually erased.

To systematize is to resist that erasure. It is to affirm that library work is not just operational — it is epistemic, cultural, and political. It carries insights worth preserving and transmitting. When we document processes and reflect on them, we build a memory that extends beyond individual contracts, institutions, or administrations.

To communicate is to interrupt silence — not with noise, but with meaning. It is to make experience intelligible and portable. It is to participate in public discourse with dignity and detail, offering grounded stories instead of abstractions or slogans.

To write is to care. Not for prestige, but for continuity. It is to leave a trace that someone else — a new librarian, a policymaker, a teacher, a neighbor — may one day follow. It is to say: “We were here. This was done. This is how it mattered.”

To collaborate is to refuse isolation. It is to see the library not as a solitary service point, but as part of a living, complex, and interdependent system. Collaboration ensures that the strength of one space compensates for the vulnerability of another. It is how we weather instability — together.

Because in the end, the future of Bogotá’s libraries will not be built solely by new projects or programs. It will be shaped by the narratives we choose to preserve, the relationships we choose to strengthen, and the knowledge we refuse to let disappear.

We tell in order to remain. We write in order to endure. And we remember — collectively — in order to build what comes next.

# **Systematization, Communication, and the Ecology of Library Memory**

## **A Critical Reflection on Bogotá's Librarian Ecosystem**

Edgardo Civallero

Academic text that complements the previous lecture.

### **I. Systematization as Memory Work**

In the context of Latin America, the concept of *sistematización de experiencias* has historically functioned not as a bureaucratic tool, but as a critical epistemological and political practice. It emerged in the 1970s and 1980s in response to the need for grassroots organizations, popular education movements, and liberation theology-inspired collectives to reflect on their actions under conditions of urgency, scarcity, and systemic violence. The foundational premise was simple, yet radical: *practice produces knowledge*, and that knowledge deserves to be recovered, analyzed, and shared — not only for improvement but for empowerment, continuity, and transformation.

Unlike monitoring and evaluation frameworks imported from Euro-American development agencies, systematization in this tradition resists quantification and standardization. It privileges reflexive, narrative, and contextualized reconstruction of lived experience, often emphasizing processes over products, contradictions over achievements, and questions over answers. It belongs more to the lineage of Paulo Freire than to that of McKinsey.

Transposed to the world of libraries — particularly in Latin American urban contexts like Bogotá — this approach takes on urgent significance. Libraries operate within layered temporalities: staff rotations, short-term projects, shifting funding priorities, policy fluctuations, and community transformations. In such landscapes, the absence of memory infrastructure leads to repetition, disarticulation, and loss. Initiatives begin with enthusiasm and end in silence, often without a trace.

Systematization becomes, in this context, a countermeasure to institutional amnesia. It allows librarians to excavate not just what was done, but how, under what constraints, with what adjustments, and to what ends — expected or not. It creates space to narrate tensions, to expose what didn't work, to document improvisation, to name the unspoken variables that shaped outcomes. It is a tool for making visible the invisible labor of librarianship: relational work, emotional labor, ethical dilemmas, and epistemic negotiations.

Importantly, systematization shifts the focus from programmatic success to pedagogical depth. A well-conducted systematization is not a celebration: it is an act of situated learning. It acknowledges the embeddedness of librarianship in social, political, and affective territories. It renders librarians not just as service providers but as critical witnesses and narrators of their environments.

Moreover, when systematizations are shared — in any format — they begin to form what this text calls a *narrative infrastructure*: a web of experiences, reflections, and lessons that other librarians can access, adapt, and contribute to. This is not merely documentation: it is collective memory work. It allows knowledge to travel beyond the boundaries of specific institutions and to endure beyond individual contracts or political cycles. It enables what philosopher Miranda Fricker calls *epistemic justice*: the recognition of experiential knowledge produced in non-dominant or structurally precarious positions.

Such narrative infrastructures, however, do not arise spontaneously. They require intentional design: repositories, editorial strategies, access protocols, licensing choices, and cultural practices that value storytelling as professional contribution. They also require time — perhaps the rarest commodity in the daily life of a librarian.

Therefore, to advocate for systematization is not to add another task. It is to reframe librarianship itself as a knowledge-making profession: one whose sustainability depends on the circulation of situated intelligence.

Systematization, when properly understood and practiced, is neither nostalgic nor technocratic. It is strategic, political, and deeply humane. It transforms lived experience into shared possibility. It turns memory into infrastructure — and infrastructure into resistance.

## **II. Communication as Epistemic Infrastructure**

Within many contemporary library systems, communication is still treated primarily as an operational or promotional function; something to be managed by press officers, campaign teams, or social media staff. It is associated with outreach, publicity, and user engagement. While these tasks have value, reducing communication to visibility undermines its deeper function: the shaping and circulation of knowledge within and beyond the institution.

To reposition communication as *epistemic infrastructure* is to understand it as one of the fundamental ways in which librarianship constructs, organizes, and transmits meaning. It is not a supplement to technical tasks: it is constitutive of them. Without communication, there is no record, no sharing, no dialogue, no archive — and, eventually, no learning.

Communication in this sense includes a wide range of practices: storytelling, documentation, annotation, oral transmission, reflective writing, multimedia production, collaborative dialogue, public presentations, and scholarly publication. Each of these modes contributes to how library knowledge is expressed, contextualized, and rendered portable. Together, they shape the collective intelligibility of librarianship.

In precarious institutional environments — where contracts are short, funding is unstable, and priorities shift rapidly — communication takes on an even greater strategic function. It enables librarians to articulate what they are doing and why, to connect with peers across structural divides, and to document processes that may otherwise vanish. It becomes a tool for survival — not only of memory, but of institutional coherence.

Moreover, communication serves internal as well as external purposes. Within teams, it enables the development of shared language, alignment of intentions, and articulation of roles. It helps institutions retain memory across transitions. It cultivates a sense of identity. In networked ecosystems like Bogotá's, where libraries differ vastly in resources, mandate, and culture, this kind of communication becomes the glue that binds the fragments together.

Understanding communication as epistemic labor also calls for ethical reflection. Librarians must ask: What is being communicated — and what is not? Who speaks, and who is spoken for? What stories are being highlighted, and which ones are being silenced or simplified? What assumptions underpin the narrative? Are we speaking with our communities, or about them? Are we claiming space that isn't ours? Are we exposing people, or protecting them?

Such questions are especially urgent when libraries communicate about marginal, traumatic, or contested experiences. Sensationalism, appropriation, and erasure are all risks. Ethical communication requires slowness, reflexivity, and respect for context. It also requires acknowledging partiality: no document, no narrative, no video ever tells the full story. And pretending otherwise is a form of epistemic violence.

Finally, meaningful communication demands patience. It does not always generate immediate recognition. Its effects are often cumulative, dispersed, and slow-burning. But it is precisely this gradual sedimentation that makes it powerful: over time, well-constructed communication builds trust, generates legitimacy, and creates durable paths for learning.

To communicate well is not to amplify one's voice above others. It is to weave one's voice into a shared fabric — a commons of experience, reflection, and strategy. It is, in the deepest sense, to participate in the knowledge-making vocation of librarianship.

To communicate is not to promote. It is to plant.

### III. Media as Situated Continuum

Library practitioners operate across a broad spectrum of communicative media. From WhatsApp groups, community radio segments, and Facebook posts to internal bulletins, printed flyers, local podcasts, institutional repositories, and peer-reviewed journals, these formats offer distinct temporalities, audiences, levels of formality, and epistemic weight. Each comes with its own circulation logics and cultural expectations, and none is inherently superior.

However, in professional practice, the hierarchy of media is often internalized unconsciously. Outputs published in academic journals or institutional reports are frequently privileged as the “true” artifacts of knowledge production, while everyday forms of communication — especially those embedded in oral culture, community vernaculars, or low-tech environments — are treated as marginal or secondary. This logic is not just exclusionary. It is epistemologically narrow and structurally colonial.

Reframing media not as a hierarchy but as a situated continuum enables a more nuanced, inclusive, and strategic approach to documentary and narrative work in librarianship. In this continuum, a casual voice note sent in a professional group chat can evolve into a more developed written reflection, be revised into a blog post or recorded conversation, and eventually crystallize into a conference presentation, co-authored paper, or policy brief. The knowledge does not ascend a ladder of legitimacy; it migrates through formats to reach different audiences and fulfill different roles.

Such movement is not about professionalization. It is about *epistemic mobility* — the ability of knowledge to cross boundaries of form, scale, and recognition while retaining its integrity. In fragmented ecosystems like Bogotá’s, where resource disparities are vast and institutional access is uneven, this mobility becomes a tool for democratizing the production and distribution of library intelligence.

Recognizing the value of informal and emergent formats is also part of a broader project of *decolonizing documentation*. Many forms of community memory and librarian

knowledge are shaped by oral culture, relational exchange, and local languages of description. These do not always map neatly onto the formal structures of the publishing world, nor should they be forced to. Instead, librarians should cultivate multilingual documentary literacies — not only in terms of language, but in terms of genre, medium, and context.

Moreover, engaging with the continuum of media invites an ethic of strategic storytelling. Each format has its affordances and limitations: flyers reach quickly but are ephemeral; blogs allow reflection but have limited archival persistence; academic articles carry institutional weight but often remain inaccessible to those most affected by the content. Effective communication does not rely on a single channel, but on weaving a layered narrative presence that ensures both relevance and longevity.

Building capacity for this mode of practice requires more than media training. It requires institutional recognition of informal documentation as legitimate labor, the creation of editorial infrastructures that support hybrid outputs, and the development of platforms — digital and analogue — that allow knowledge to circulate outside traditional academic or administrative systems.

Ultimately, treating media as a situated continuum is not only a strategy for more inclusive knowledge sharing. It is a defense against the erasure of local experience and a foundation for epistemic sovereignty. It allows librarians — regardless of context — to locate their voice, claim narrative space, and ensure that what they know does not remain locked in silence or reduced to formats that do not serve them.

Because in the end, every form of documentation is a decision: not only about *what* to say, but *where*, *how*, and *for whom* it becomes visible.

#### **IV. Ecosystem as Relational Practice**

The term *ecosystem* is frequently invoked in discussions of library networks, often as a metaphor for collaboration, diversity, and co-existence. But, unless grounded in

operational, ethical, and institutional realities, the metaphor risks becoming decorative, evoking an image of interconnectedness without specifying the mechanisms that make it possible.

To speak of a library ecosystem in a city like Bogotá requires more than symbolic language. It requires a conceptual framework that reflects the material asymmetries, social tensions, institutional boundaries, and epistemic pluralities that characterize the landscape. The ecosystem includes not only public libraries and school networks, but also university collections, rural initiatives, mobile services, community documentation centers, prison libraries, and informal reading spaces assembled out of necessity. Each node in this network responds to different publics, works with distinct logics, and operates under vastly different conditions.

What unites them — or should — is not standardization, but relationality: the recognition that survival, growth, and impact depend on their ability to connect meaningfully with others who do not look or sound like them. Ecosystems, after all, are sustained not by uniformity, but by diversity — by feedback loops, uneven flows of resources, and interdependence among radically different life forms. Translated into library terms, this means acknowledging that not all nodes in the system are equal — but all are essential.

To move from metaphor to practice, *asymmetrical collaboration* must be placed at the center of policy and strategy. Institutions with stable infrastructure, visibility, and professional capital must create deliberate structures of support and recognition for smaller, more precarious actors. This does not mean “helping” in a charitable sense. It means redistributing opportunity, visibility, and authorship. It means recognizing that knowledge is not produced exclusively in formal settings and that expertise exists in the field, in the barrio, in the periphery, even if it does not always speak the language of academic validation.

Such collaboration might involve co-authoring documentation and research outputs, opening access to publishing and archiving platforms, and sharing both physical and digital infrastructure. It can also include establishing protocols for mutual citation and

acknowledgment, hosting inter-institutional residencies or exchanges, and designing co-governed learning processes.

This is not a “nice to have.” It is a *resilience strategy*. A system that draws its intelligence from only a narrow segment of its components is epistemically weak. By contrast, a system that can draw from a wide pool of lived experiences, community innovations, adaptive methodologies, and local knowledges becomes stronger, more responsive, and better prepared for disruption.

Moreover, a relational ecosystem contributes to what scholars like Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren F. Klein describe as *data (or knowledge) justice*: the equitable distribution of capacity, credit, and control in knowledge production systems. In the context of Bogotá, this means not only recognizing the value of grassroots documentation or local archives, but also integrating them into the broader infrastructure of the city's memory institutions.

To sustain this model, we must design connective tissue: structured formats and recurring rhythms for interaction that are not extractive, not one-directional, and not limited to token representation. These may include co-curated public programs, shared cataloging initiatives, multilingual documentation workshops, joint editorial projects, and regionally anchored knowledge repositories. The connective tissue must support difference without dissolving it — allowing for friction, contradiction, and pluralism as generative forces.

Designing such structures is a challenge not only of logistics, but of ethics. It demands institutional humility, a long-term view of partnership, and a shift in how success is measured. It demands a politics of listening.

Because an ecosystem, unlike a system, is not designed from above. It is cultivated from within, through reciprocal relations — slow, uneven, and vital.

## **V. Toward a Political Narrative of Librarianship**

At the heart of this reflection is a call to reposition librarianship as a political practice of narrative construction. To work in libraries — especially in Bogotá, and more broadly in Latin America — is to operate in terrains marked by inequality, fragmentation, and silencing. It is not neutral terrain. And neither is our work.

Libraries — whether public, community-based, itinerant, school, or academic — hold the capacity to shape memory, to elevate or erase voices, to define what is kept and what is lost. In this context, documentation, systematization, and storytelling are not auxiliary tasks. They are political acts: they decide what enters the collective archive and what vanishes unrecorded.

A librarian who writes — about failure, about adaptation, about tension — is not simply "reporting." They are taking a stand. They are refusing erasure. They are contributing to a counter-memory that resists the institutional amnesia produced by precarity, bureaucracy, and cycles of neglect.

To write, then, is to remain. It is a wager against disappearance. And to remain is not a passive act — it is an epistemic and ethical stance.

In Bogotá, where libraries emerge in the cracks of systems that don't always see them, a political narrative of librarianship begins with narrating ourselves. Not through official reports, but through the layered, situated, conflictual, and often poetic accounts of what we do, why we do it, and what it costs us.

Such a narrative is not individualistic. It must be woven collectively — across library types, neighborhoods, practices, and epistemologies. It includes both institutional strategy documents and WhatsApp voice notes. It includes peer-reviewed articles and graffiti on the walls of a mobile library cart.

What we need is not only more documentation — we need a form of narration that acknowledges our contradictions, uplifts our micro-resistances, and refuses the polished version of reality offered by those who do not do this work.

This is not about romanticizing librarianship. It is about dignifying it — as a profession that produces not just access, but meaning; not just services, but structures of care.

If Bogotá's libraries are to build a future, they will not do so through better marketing or tighter performance metrics. They will do so through narrative continuity — through stories told, lessons written, and silences broken.

In that continuity lies our collective intelligence. And in our ability to sustain it, lies our possibility for transformation.