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**RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN
INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS OF CAUCA**

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Abstract. This article is the product of an investigation that aimed to identify the most relevant aspects of development projects in the indigenous context, mainly from the perspective of indigenous social organizations and their experts. It was based on the question: What is the situation and requirements in the formulation of projects in the current conditions of development of the indigenous population of Cauca? The research was carried out under a mixed non-experimental correlational cross-sectional approach, for the quantitative part a survey was conducted aimed at project formulators and for the qualitative part a semi-structured interview directed to experts was applied, the data was analyzed through the SPSS software and Atlas ti. respectively. As results, it was found that there is good knowledge at the conceptual level by the formulators, but that it is not enough to have the level of expertise required to formulate and evaluate public investment projects in the indigenous context, however, this situation has not been an impediment to the development of projects, since experts were sought to fill that conceptual and expertise gap. The use of methodologies of the National Planning Department (NPD) in Colombia is concerned, for example, a problem was found with the use of the General Adjusted Methodology (MGA), being a condition for the approval of public projects in Colombia.

Keywords: Planning, development planning, public investment projects and project theory.

**ASPECTOS RELEVANTES DE LOS PROYECTOS DE
DESARROLLO EN ORGANIZACIONES INDÍGENAS DEL CAUCA**

Resumen. El presente artículo es producto de una investigación que tuvo como propósito la identificación de los aspectos más relevantes de los proyectos de desarrollo en el contexto indígena caucano, principalmente desde la visión de las organizaciones sociales indígenas y sus expertos—Se partió de la pregunta ¿Cuál es la situación y exigencias en la formulación de proyectos en las actuales condiciones de desarrollo de la población indígena caucana? La investigación se desarrolló bajo un enfoque mixto no experimental de tipo transversal correlacional, para la parte cuantitativa se aplicó una encuesta dirigida a

formuladores de proyecto y para la parte cualitativa se aplicó una entrevista semiestructurada dirigida a expertos, los datos fueron analizados a través del software SPSS y Atlas ti respectivamente. Como resultados están la existencia de buenos conocimientos a nivel conceptual por parte de los formuladores, pero no es suficiente para tener el nivel de experticia requerido para formular y evaluar proyectos de inversión pública en el contexto indígena caucano, sin embargo, esta situación no ha sido un impedimento para el desarrollo de proyectos, puesto que se ha buscado a expertos que llenen ese vacío conceptual y de experticia. Preocupa el uso de metodologías propias del Departamento Nacional de Planeación (DNP) en Colombia, por ejemplo, se encontró un problema con el uso de la Metodología General Ajustada (MGA), siendo una condición para la aprobación de proyectos públicos en Colombia.

Palabras clave: Planeación, planeación del desarrollo, proyectos de inversión pública, teoría de proyectos.

Introduction

In Colombia, planning in the public context is defined by the National Planning Department (NPD), an entity that specifies methodologies and technical guidelines for the construction of plans, programs and projects for the entire Colombian territory (National Planning Department Normogram, 2017), thus to access public resources it is necessary to know all the tools made available by this body. Indigenous social organizations have to adapt to the NPD methodologies to access State resources, therefore, they must articulate the problems of their context with these tools and thus promote the development of their communities.

According to the 2018 National Census, the department of Cauca is made up of 1,404,205 inhabitants, of which 351,419 inhabitants belong to indigenous communities organized in 105 reservations, 70% belonging to the Nasa people, 9.4% to the Yanacona people, 6.4% to the Misak people and 5.8% to the Coconuco people, the remaining 8.4% are part of the towns of Totoró, Eperara Siapodara and other towns. The GINI index in 2018 for Cauca was 0.52 and people living in poverty was 50.5% and extreme poverty was 22.9%. When comparing these indicators with the most representative populated centers in the country, a GINI index of 0.446 is found, people in poverty of 36% and in extreme poverty of 15.4% (DANE, 2019); therefore, there is evidence of a gap between the department's indicators with the mean of the population of considerable populated centers. The proportion of people with Unsatisfied Basic Needs was 18.27% and 3.15% in poverty. (DANE, 2018). Geographically, Cauca is located in the southwestern part of Colombia, has an area of 30,169 km² and is divided into 42 municipalities (Government of Cauca, 2012).

Since the mid-twentieth century, the Colombian state has been implementing planning methods adapted from the experiences of other countries in its processes, through entities such as the NPD, these processes began being centralized and in recent decades they have sought to be participatory, in such a way that the population takes part in the construction of their own plans and participates in their own development. For indigenous organizations in the department of Cauca it is of great relevance to assume this responsibility to envision and build their own development, for this reason the question arises what is the situation and requirements in the formulation and evaluation of projects in current development conditions of the Cauca indigenous population? To answer the question, it was assumed that there is a sufficient degree of technical - conceptual knowledge on the part of the project formulators, but the knowledge of the environment and the expertise is not yet sufficient to achieve optimal results in the projects, also on how the identification of relationships between the vision of indigenous

organizations and the vision of the State are fundamental for obtaining more efficient results from development projects.

Among the different theoretical elements that based the research are the new instruments for world development that are proposed after the financial crisis of 2008, where failures are identified at the level of economic policy formulation and that have had a negative impact on employment, prices and quality of life; therefore, the new methodologies must be aligned under the concept of sustainability and the balance of material wealth, seeking the protection of the environment, equity and social justice. As a result, new development paradigms have been generated, some of which are contained in the Millennium Development Goals and, today, in the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2010).

The new paradigms will influence planning methods, but this situation will be relevant if States take responsibility for the different processes as part of the functions of the relevant State entities and at their different hierarchical levels. In this regard (Escudero, 2014) considers that planning as an activity and process must directly influence the object of intervention based on conditions that will be clarified in the future.

In Colombia, the National Planning Department presents some guides that contain the methodologies and tools to carry out planning exercises and public investment projects, among them are theoretical elements of projects which are made up of the components of identification, preparation, evaluation and programming. For example, the (Department of Investments and Public Finance, 2015) presents the conceptual manual of the General Adjusted Methodology (MGA) where each of the items that are part of the identification, preparation, evaluation and programming modules are explained.

Regarding the identification component, its main purpose is to identify problems of the context to intervene; this exercise is carried out using the logical framework approach, which allows the analysis of the problem, the identification of objectives and the alternative solutions among others. The preparation component from the choice of the best alternative solution requires studies of needs, risks, income and/or benefits and economic evaluation; the results will be decisive elements in the execution and management of the project. The evaluation component focuses on the economic analysis of the alternative solution and on the programming component, the different indicators, assumptions and conditions are designed as follow-up tools to fulfill the proposed objectives (National Planning Department, 2016). All results must be documented and are required by the NPD in a software called General Adjusted Methodology (MGA), which is an online platform to upload the project summary with its respective annexes.

For the (General Department of Public Investment --DGIP, 2015), the MGA is so named because the methodology proposes an ordered sequence through some forms; general because it records the most relevant aspects of the project and adjusted because it must be improving as time goes by. This platform is regulated by Resolution 0806 of 2005, which stipulates that any entity of the national, departmental, local and district order must require it for the presentation of projects.

The indigenous population in Latin America in recent decades has achieved the attainment of rights, but it is still not enough, therefore, the challenges to be faced continue to be of great magnitude. The region has had economic and social development, but it has not been representative of the entire population. Furthermore, this growth has not been sustainable nor has it achieved the expected expansion; limiting a large part of these benefits to indigenous people, also because these communities have tended to resist the vision of general development and have fought for diversity, self-determination and

inequality. Having a fundamental role of struggle and resistance on the part of Latin American indigenous social organizations in social movements and acquisition of rights, such as the recognition of diversity, self-determination, human dignity among others, which are stipulated in the declaration of the United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1989, as well as the constitutional reforms (Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), 2014).

In this same sense, the Colombian Constitution recognizes indigenous territories as political and administrative territorial entities, in addition to a certain independence and where indigenous authorities have an autonomous government. Likewise and according to (Bolaños et al., 2012) in the department of Cauca, the indigenous organization of greatest importance is the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC), created from a movement of struggle that strengthened the defense of the territory, recovered the cultural traits and struggle for autonomy.

The development of the research allowed to reach results such as: the formulators have conceptual knowledge about theoretical elements of projects but they are not enough at the moment of making a practical application of them; knowledge of the environment is essential and participatory methodologies are being applied according to the guidelines of the National Planning Department by indigenous organizations. However, there are risks with certain desk formulators who, without knowing the environment, formulate projects; finally, it was found that the degree of use of the General Adjusted Methodology (MGA) is not adequate, but it is an unconditional requirement for the approval of public investment projects in Colombia.

Methodology

The results of the research are the product of a mixed approach, where qualitative and quantitative elements were contemplated, the purpose was the search for greater objectivity, understanding the causal relationships in a given environment. The combination of these two elements is important, according to (Ñaupas, Mejía, Novoa and Villagómez, 2014) the reduction of investigations to a single element is not conducive, since it limits the total quality, and it is important that the procedures complement each other.

The research design was non-experimental of a cross-correlational type; non-experimental because the variables were not manipulated and cross-correlational because causal relationships were sought between the variables at a given time. The variables that were studied were the degree of technical knowledge and the environment on the part of the project formulators and the difficulties presented in the process of formulating public investment projects. It was sought to identify the incidence of technical and environmental knowledge in difficulties when carrying out projects.

The research began with the identification of the indigenous organizations that group the indigenous ethnic groups in the department of Cauca, as well as the identification of the features of their vision of development, in parallel, the theoretical elements that support the methodologies proposed by the National Planning Department (NPD), to later find out what is the degree of knowledge of the methodologies and the

environment by the formulators of projects in the indigenous context and their difficulties when carrying out this type of exercises.

The quantitative exercise was based on a simple random sampling, (Hernandez, Fernández and Baptista, 2014) states that this type of sampling allows the possibility that any member of the population under study has the same chances of being chosen in the sample obtained, through a random selection of units of analysis. The total population was made up of 720 formulators, with a margin of error of 4.3% and a confidence level of 95%, in total we worked with a sample of 302 people.

For the qualitative part, a non-probabilistic sampling of an intentional type was used, since there are few indigenous but very relevant organizations such as the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca, which groups a significant number of indigenous people from Cauca, also experts who, due to their functions, know about public investment projects in the department; for (Hernandez and others, 2014) the advantage of this type of sampling is that it does not require representativeness but rather a careful and controlled selection of participants with characteristics related to the problem statement. The intentional nature of this type of sampling is due to the fact that essential subjects were chosen for the research because of their training and experience in formulating projects in the indigenous environment.

The research instruments were the survey and the semi-structured interview; the survey questionnaire was created from 22 questions elaborated on the Likert scale and the questions of the interview questionnaire were ten, established from the variables, for both questionnaires the respective pilot test was carried out and presented to the judgment of experts to validate the instruments.

The data analysis for the survey was the SPSS version 20.0 computer tool, taking the descriptive statistics as a reference and the Atlas ti V 5.0 computer tool was used for the data collected from the interview.

Results

Degree of knowledge about the formulation and evaluation of projects in the indigenous context of Cauca

Product of the survey carried out and in relation to the degree of knowledge about the basic planning chain in Colombia by the project formulators on concepts such as planning, plans, programs and projects, the following was found:

In figure 1, regarding the level of knowledge on planning, it can be observed that formulators consider their level of knowledge good with a rating of 4 in 50.3%, excellent with a rating of 5 only 6%, 39.1% fair with a score of 3 and 4.6% deficient with a score equal to or less than two. It is important to evaluate this concept because in the planning hierarchy in Colombia, having a clear planning and its different methodologies will allow the good design of plans, programs and projects.

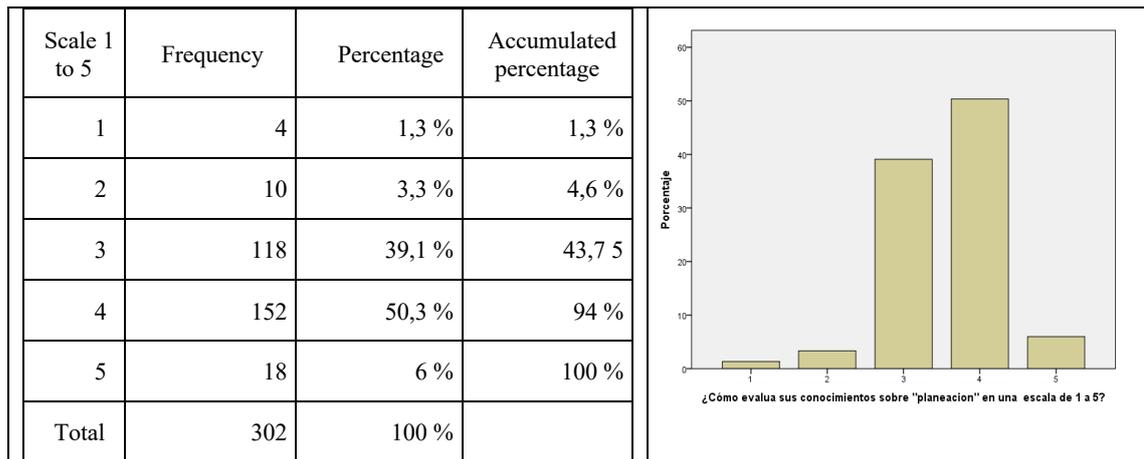


Figure 1. Level of knowledge about "planning."

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

Figures 2, 3 and 4 show common elements in terms of the level of knowledge about plans, programs and projects. For example, up to 6% of the formulators have a very high level of knowledge, 40% to 51% of the respondents have a high level of knowledge, 39% to 49% of those who know something, and 4% or less of those with low and very low levels of knowledge. Based on these data, it can be said that, although the entire population of formulators is not in a position to be experts regarding their knowledge, if a good part of the population, more than 80% have knowledge on this subject. The above could be seen as something positive, only that a more integral look should be taken, since it is not only technical knowledge, but also of the environment; moreover, how the knowledge and experience acquired is applied.

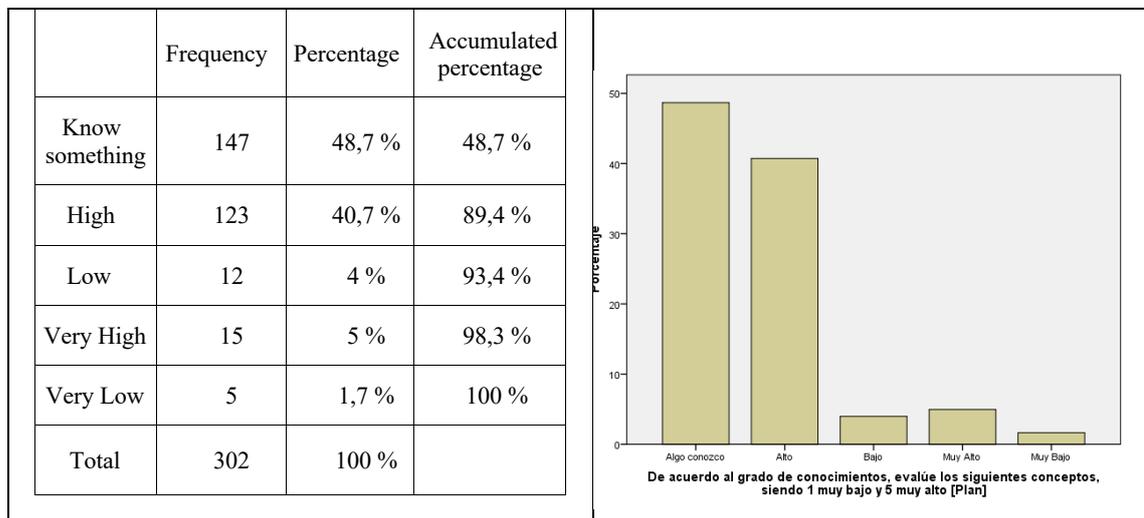


Figure 2. Degree of knowledge about "Plan."

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

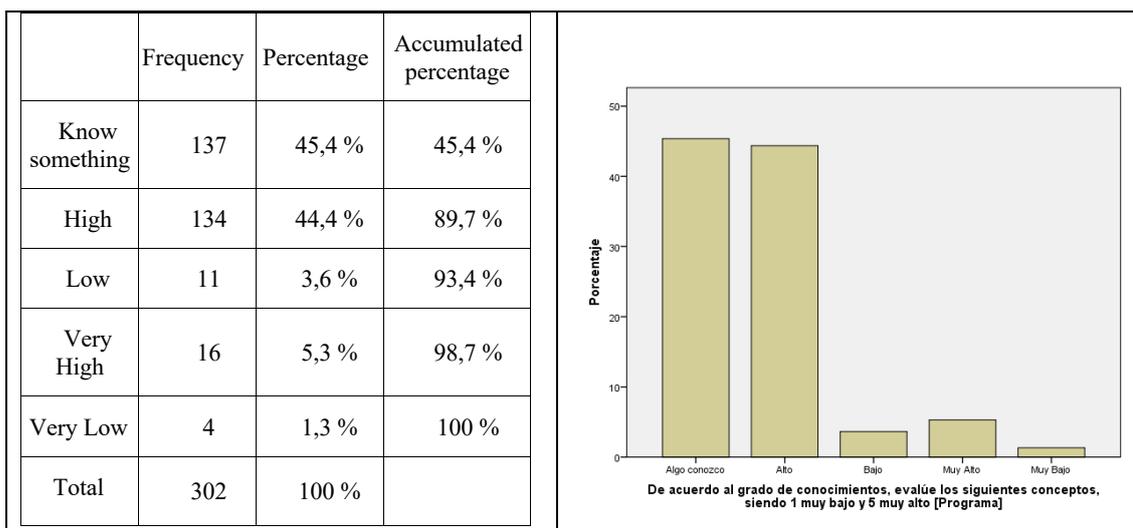


Figure 3. Degree of knowledge about "Programa."

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

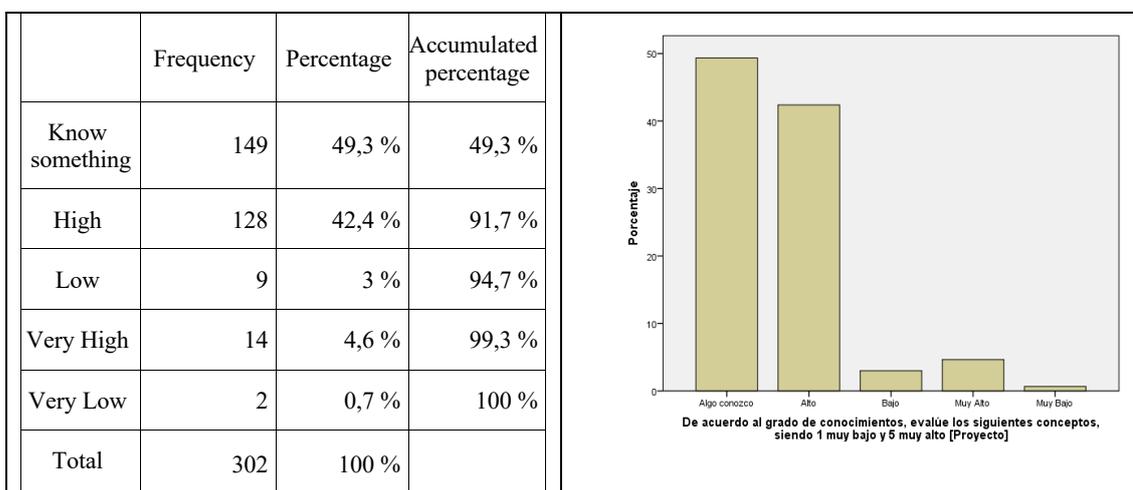


Figure 4. Degree of knowledge about "Proyectos."

Note: Source. Own authorship

Among the most relevant categories product of the analysis of the interviews and that support or contrast the qualitative studies are: “the degree of knowledge is considered good and/or acceptable,” ratifying the results of the surveys; this is due to the fact that every time experience has been gained in the formulation and evaluation of projects, it is also in a context where there are universities that are influencing at the postgraduate level in training regarding the formulation and management of social projects in the public sector. However, and as part of the results of the interviews, it is highlighted that the evaluation and approval of projects ends up having more influence on political aspects than technical ones, so it may happen that a poorly formulated project ends up being approved because politically there was incidence.

Another category that arises from the interviews is the "degree of knowledge of the environment is not always adequate," this category refers to the degree of understanding of the site to intervene through a project, taking into account the different

problems from social, cultural, economic among others. If the territory is not known, inappropriate alternative solutions can be proposed to solve problems; for which the experts stated that it usually happens that some of the formulators called by them "of desk" do the exercise of preparing a project without knowing the population under study and the territory in which they live, even taking a sample of another project and make changes to the wording, this must be unacceptable because the results to be obtained will be totally out of focus, thus wasting time, effort and resources.

With the aforementioned, it is essential to have comprehensive project formulators, who have theoretical knowledge, but also knowledge of the environment to intervene; or at least that possible participatory strategies are proposed so that together with the community they can carry out the exercise of identification of problems and/or needs and at the same time analyze possible alternative solutions. There must also be a formulator who has had not only academic but also professional training processes, where he has gained experience in putting his knowledge into practice and really, with the conjunction of these elements, acquires the condition of expert; without forgetting that in the world of projects each new exercise must be considered a new challenge, in addition that knowledge must be constantly updated and more so in the public sector when adjustments are made to methodologies constantly.

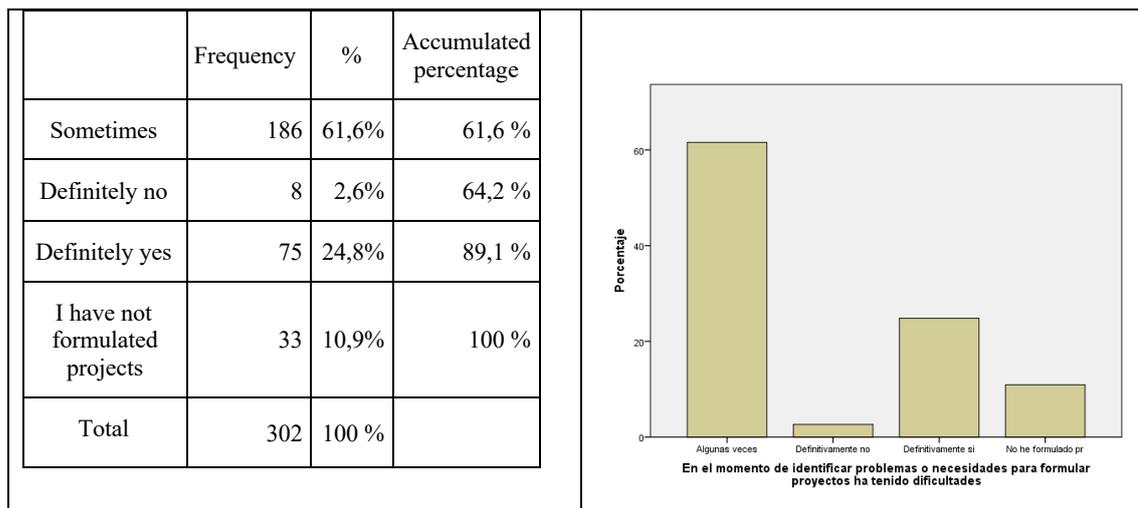


Figure 5. Difficulties in identifying problems or needs.

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

Figure 5 has a relevant aspect at the level of public investment projects in the Cauca indigenous context; this is because having a clear problem is one of the most important success factors at the level of project formulation, evaluation and management. In addition, this category is directly related to the degree of knowledge of the environment. It is interesting and at the same time worrying to identify that 24.8% of the formulators have had difficulties at this stage and that 61.6% of them have had difficulties at times, which becomes a high percentage of formulators with problems when identifying problems and/or needs and should call attention to a prompt solution to reduce these percentages to reduce the risk of inefficient project results in the Cauca indigenous context.

Another category that emerges from the interviews is the "analysis of the environment in a participatory manner." In the indigenous context, mainly in the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC), presenting a project implies meeting several times with the different actors that have a relationship with the project, through an exercise that is called "the mingas of thought" and where the profiles of the projects are constructed, prevailing the previous community work and agreeing on the decisions. The Universidad Indígena also participates in this process by forming three councils (political, pedagogical, and administrative). On the other hand, care must be taken with those so-called "desk" formulators who, without knowing the context, pose problems and/or needs with the risk that they will be misunderstood, in addition to only concentrating on obtaining resources that are not really required.

The National Planning Department (NPD) promotes the development of participatory work in planning exercises, and indigenous organizations have not been immune to these calls. In addition, community participation is a very characteristic of indigenous communities in the department of Cauca and in Colombia in general.

At the level of technical studies (figure 6), the fact that 19.5% of the formulators state that they do not know about technical studies and that 28.5% have always had difficulties in carrying them out is a very worrying situation; this indicates that a large percentage of the projects are built with unreliable technical studies or that there is a need to go to the experts, who according to the survey are few, being represented by only 6.3%.

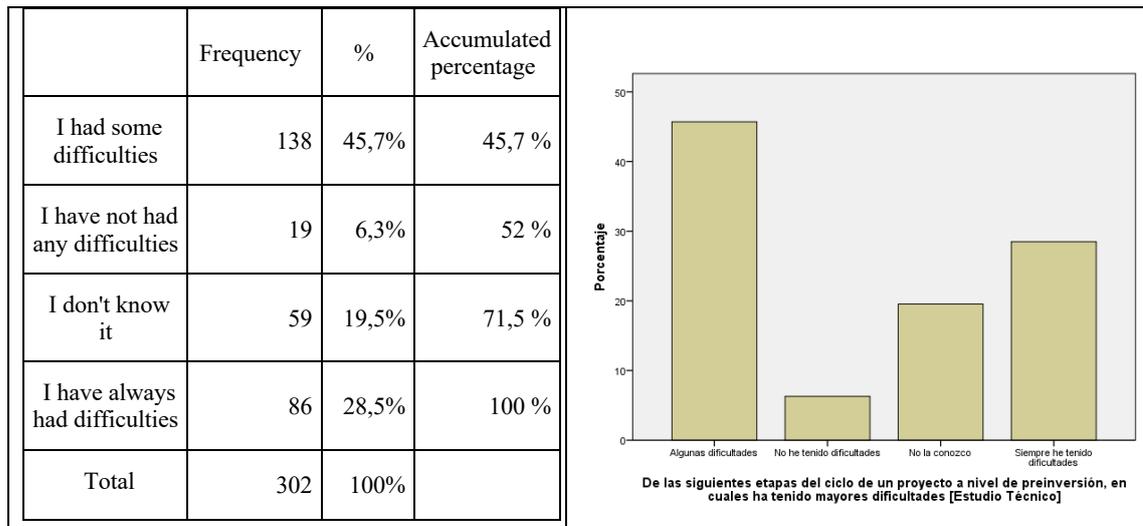


Figure 6. Difficulties at the Technical Studies level.

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

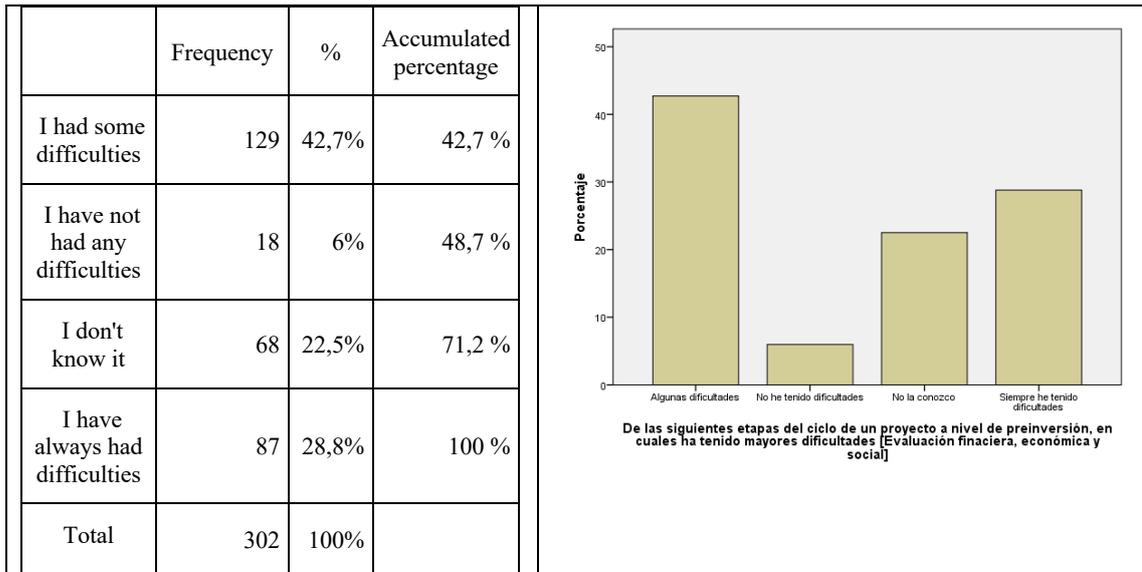


Figure 7. Difficulties at the level of financial, economic and social evaluations.

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

Figures 6 and 7 referring to difficulties at the level of technical studies and financial, economic and social evaluations, denote equally worrying situations; for example, it is not conceivable that a percentage of formulators who are between 19% and 23% state that they do not know this type of studies; furthermore, that 28.5% of them state that they have always had difficulties, and that between 42% and 46% have had some difficulties. These are worrying figures for the formulation, evaluation and management of projects in the indigenous context of Cauca.

In general terms, the previous results show a contradiction between the knowledge at the level of plans, programs and projects with the different studies in the investment stage of public investment projects. On the one hand there are figures that show that there are good levels of knowledge, but at the time of doing the previous studies, they are not enough to be able to reduce the degree of difficulty that each one of them implies; turning this situation into a considerable risk for the resources that are invested at the level of public investment projects and obtaining efficient results.

Indigenous organizations have at some point lacked people with the appropriate knowledge to carry out technical, financial and economic studies, among others, but according to interviews, this situation has not been an obstacle for the formulation, evaluation and management of projects since experts have been used to solve this type of situation, recognizing by the evaluators precisely the quality of some of the projects presented by the CRIC, but it must be recognized that in this environment there are people who claim to be experts in the elaboration of projects without actually being one.

	Frequency	%	Accumulated percentage
Doesn't know, doesn't answer	3	1%	1%

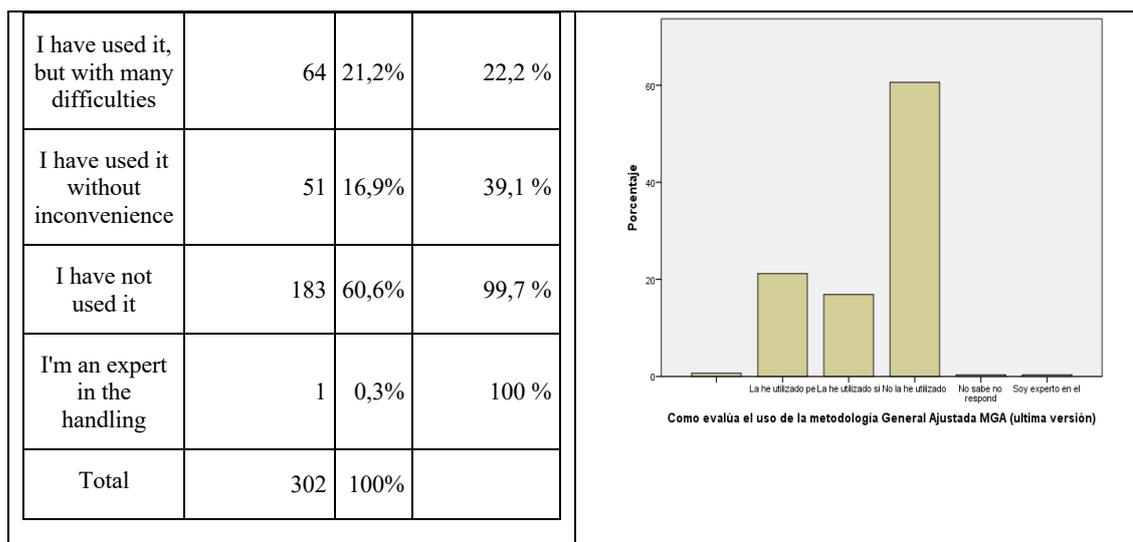


Figure 8. Use of the General Adjusted Methodology MGA (latest version)

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

Figure 8 referring to the use of the General Adjusted Methodology (MGA) indicates that of the formulators surveyed, 60.6% of them have not used the web platform, 21.2% have used it with great difficulty and only 16, 9% have used it without difficulty. These figures are also of concern, since the MGA is mandatory for the presentation of any public investment project in Colombia and requires a summary of each of the previous studies of the pre-investment phase.

Although in the department of Cauca there are more and more people with knowledge in project methodologies of the National Planning Department (NPD), there is still a knowledge gap that is evidenced in the results of the survey on the use of MGA, such as a planning official of the Cauca governorate states when he says that in the review several of the sections of the MGA have various inconsistencies from the identification phase to the programming phase. For example, projects based on problem situations that are not real or incoherent to the context where the project will be elaborated, objectives and goals that are unreal, projects with a too short evaluation horizon, among others.

Formulator's level of expertise

One of the elements of the research was to analyze the relationship of knowledge in projects with the level of expertise of the formulators for both the social and productive sectors, this need emerged due to the fact that the technical knowledge and the environment linked to a validated experience will give greater probabilities of success in the formulation, evaluation and management stages of the projects; the following results were found:

	Frequency	%	Accumulated percentage
I have some experience	155	51,3%	51,3 %
I do not have experience	98	32,5%	83,8 %

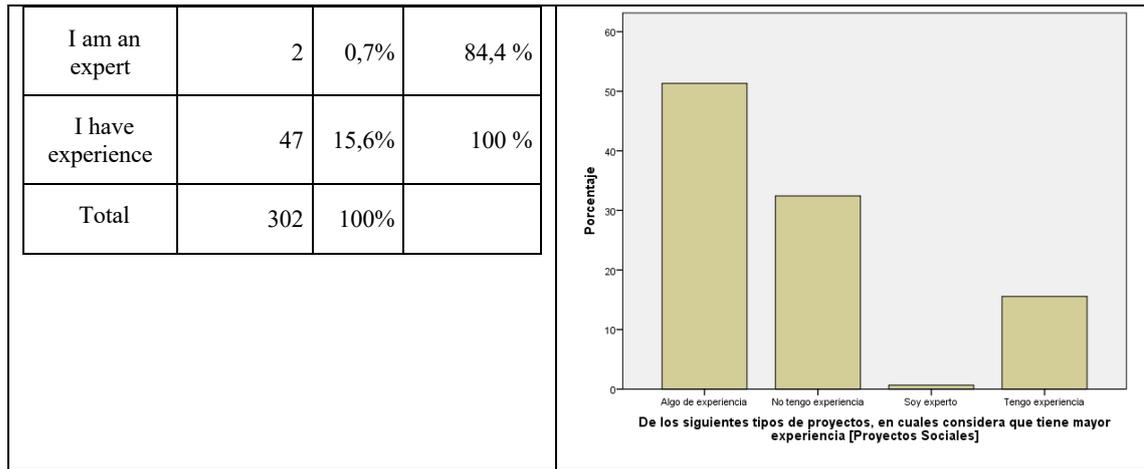


Figure 9. Experience at the level of Social Projects

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

According to figure 9, the formulators considered experts are minimal represented with only 0.7%, while those with experience represent 15.6% and with some experience 51.3%. In addition, a high percentage of formulators who have no experience at the level of social projects is seen with 32.5%.

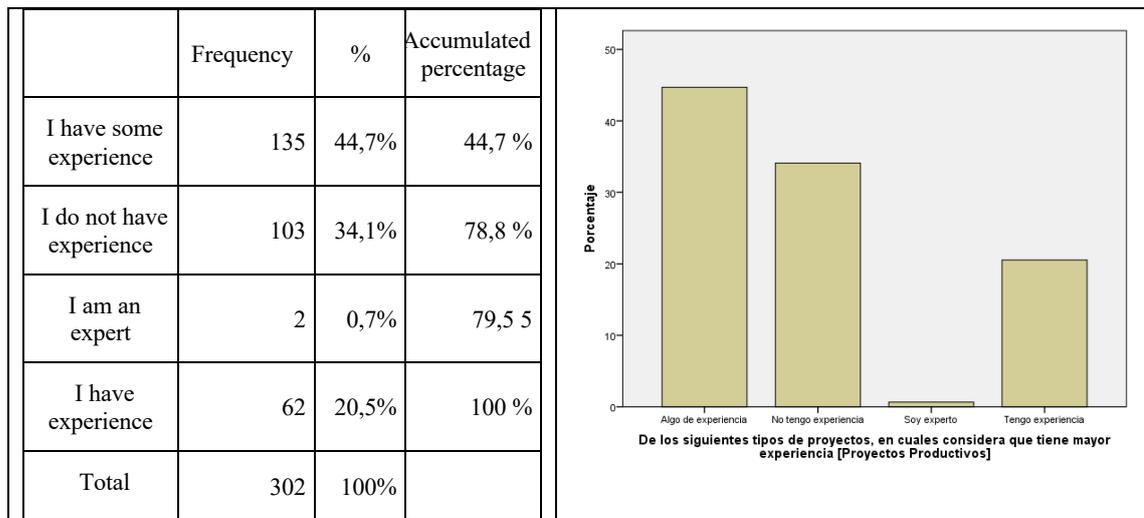


Figure 10. Experience at the level of Productive Projects.

Note: Source. Own authorship, 2019

Regarding productive projects, the figures are higher, but neither with the expected relevance. In figure 10, it is evident that the experts are still very few with 0.7%, and those with experience in this field already rise to 20.5% and 44.7% with some experience. Those formulators without experience in social projects are represented with 34.1%.

The results at the level of experience validate the fact that when it is not known about technical elements, experts are usually sought, who in turn in the indigenous Cauca context are not many, seeing the need to look for them in other settings. Furthermore, there is a gap between what the formulators have learned from the conceptual academic

point of view and the practices of the same knowledge. This is due to the fact that it is evident that the formulators, according to the surveys, claim to have knowledge in the formulation and evaluation of projects, but when they are faced with real practices such as previous studies, the percentages of those experts or with experiences are lower.

Discussion and conclusions

The degree of knowledge about planning concepts, plans, programs and projects by formulators in the department of Cauca, and who are part of the hierarchical planning chain in Colombia, could be established and in a common way that it is sufficient generally speaking, this is because 50% of this population have high knowledge and 49% know something about it. This result was ratified by the interviewees who stated that the knowledge should be good and/or acceptable. It is considered that the academic environment helps this situation because the professional programs have project subjects, but above all because the universities in the context offer postgraduate degrees in project formulation, evaluation and management from the public perspective.

Regarding the degree of knowledge of the environment, it is not always adequate, in the survey when asking about the difficulty in identifying problems and/or needs, 24.5% have always had difficulties and 61.6% sometimes, turning this situation into high percentages. Knowing the environment implies having clarity and understanding the problem situations and the unsatisfied needs of the population or at least being very close to their understanding. Some reasons for this situation may be occurring because there are some formulators called by the "desk" interviewees who carry out projects from their office, but they do not do field work that allows them to know first-hand the situations that indigenous communities experience. Another reason for the problem of knowledge of the environment is presented, because there are projects that sometimes end up being viable more for political reasons than technical, therefore, despite being poorly formulated, it is still accepted.

It was established that conceptual and theoretical knowledge is not enough when applying it. According to the surveys, it was found that a large percentage of formulators have had difficulties when conducting technical, financial, economic and social studies. Finding a contradiction because the degree of knowledge about projects established that it was good or acceptable. It follows that theory without proper practice is not enough to have a greater chance of success in the world of projects. This situation serves as a call for postgraduate programs related to projects offered by universities, review and strengthen their curricular plans, pedagogies and didactics to deliver professionals with practical and not just theoretical capacities.

In relation to meeting points regarding the formulation, evaluation and management of projects: "the analysis of the environment in a participatory way"; on the one hand, participatory planning is a requirement of the National Planning Department (NPD) and is contained in Law 152 of 1994, Decree 2284 of 1994 and sentence C-524/03; on the other hand, it is interesting to observe that the planning processes in the Cauca indigenous context are participatory and are carried out in what they call mingas of thought, meetings with project actors and creation of councils, among other practices. It is important to mention that the participation of the community allows a greater commitment and degree of motivation in the achievement of the defined purposes.

The General Adjusted Methodology is one of the web tools required by the NPD for the presentation of public investment projects throughout the Colombian territory, it summarizes the generalities of the project and allows it to be monitored, in line with other platforms. In the context of Cauca, it is common to hear about the difficulty of using this platform and indeed the results of the surveys corroborate it, finding that 60.6% of the formulators have not used it and 21.2% have used it with great difficulty. This indicates that both the academy and the territorial entities must deepen their efforts in the correct handling of this tool, otherwise this situation will continue to be a bottleneck in the approval of projects.

It is important to strengthen the concept of integral formulator, which is characterized by those professionals who not only have theoretical knowledge, but have also acquired skills to put into practice the different knowledge learned. Also, of being the one who understands and comprehends the environment where the project will be carried out; in this way, he will be able to have an expert status and thus have a greater probability of success with good management of resources, time and efforts. In addition, this type of formulator must be able to identify problems and/or needs and, based on them, propose coherent solution alternatives so that they are later discussed. On the contrary, the territorial entities should avoid those desk formulators who do the exercise of doing projects without a reliable knowledge of the environment.

The integral formulator must not only be the product of the efforts of the territorial entities and the academy, it must be an attitude of the person, which must be empowered and self-taught; The responsibility it has is of great magnitude, many of the achievements of the development of the indigenous population will be the result of well-formulated projects and in accordance with the real needs of the environment, in addition to complying with the NPD guidelines.

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