

CHALLENGES IN MAKING INCLUSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC POLICY ON ETHNO-EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of intercultural processes stemming from challenges in making inclusive and comprehensive public policies on ethno-educational matters based on the current public policies in Latin American countries, particularly Colombia. This qualitative, ethnographic research examined the perceptions of Indigenous educators vis-à-vis (sustituir por: in face of) the contemporary public policies on aboriginal communities. In doing so, this study employed individual and focus-group interviews and drew on a descriptive, analytical design that also considered a systematic review of antecedents to such policies. The findings evidence that the realities of Indigenous classroom practices and approaches are distant from those of urban settings and the principles and norms established in Colombia's legislation and other countries. Lastly, the study highlights the need for constructing public policies that benefit Indigenous communities in Latin America and Colombia.

Keywords: Public policy, Ethno-education, interculturality, inclusion, Indigenous communities.

Retos y desafíos en el marco de una política pública inclusiva e integral desde los procesos etno-educativos

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta los resultados de los procesos interculturales derivados de los retos para diseñar políticas públicas incluyentes e integrales en materia etnoeducativa a partir de las políticas pública vigentes en los países de América Latina, particularmente en Colombia. La

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investigación se sitúa desde (dentro de) un enfoque cualitativo, etnográfico, donde (en la cual) se abordan las percepciones de docentes indígenas, a partir del análisis de las entrevistas y el grupo discusión con una metodología descriptiva-analítica y revisión sistemática de antecedentes que vislumbran en la actual política que se establece para las comunidades indígenas. Los hallazgos evidencian una realidad alejada de las normas y principios que se establecen en la legislación colombiana en relación con las prácticas de aula y enfoques que se establecen en las diferentes instituciones educativas de la ciudad en correspondencia con las normas tanto a en el contexto nacional, como internacional. Finalmente, la investigación reconoce la importancia de la consolidación de una política pública para América Latina y Colombia (falta un conector: que) redundante (e) en beneficios a los territorios en donde se instauran comunidades indígenas reconocidas por los gobiernos durante siglos.

Palabras clave: Política pública, Etnoeducación, interculturalidad, inclusión, comunidades indígenas.

Introduction

Within the scope of public policy, ethno-educational matters are conceived as a preponderant factor in which it is necessary to consider (incluir) a clear and coherent legislation that makes such processes viable in a comprehensive manner. Since, the laws established by each country set an array of principles and guarantees for the enjoyment of rights. Likewise, ethno-educational processes should be aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, United Nations Organization [UN], 2015), especially with Goal N°4 about Quality education, in order to insert those processes into the provision of all members of a community and nation with an education that allows them to evolve integrally and develop skills according to their territories needs and the context in which they interact (UN, 2015).

Ethno-educational matters, from public educational policies, establish transformation processes at the curricular level considering traditional and ancestral knowledge. In doing so, it enables intercultural and multilingual education to foster communication between teacher-student-family and community. In the appropriation of contents in the appropriation of contents for meaningful and effective learning considering contextualized mediations (Roman-Acosta & Barón Velandia, 2023).

From this premise, interculturality should be aligned should be consistent with ethno-educational processes in Latin America, which have been transformed by current public educational policies as a response to the requirements of international organizations such as the UN and UNICEF. Nevertheless, in schools and classrooms, there is ambivalence between what the current public policy establishes and what the institutions or educational centers do with these aboriginal communities.

UN (2010) contends that Indigenous communities' self-identification is a transcendental factor since, the right to determine their own identity according to their customs and traditions must be protected. Likewise, the UN General Assembly, guided by the Charter of the United Nations, states that Indigenous peoples should be recognized for their cultural and social wealth, which contributes to the heritage of societies, nations, and humanity; furthermore, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) needs to establish as its mission the protection of children

within the framework of inclusive education with greater levels of equity and better opportunities for dispersed rural areas, in this case, for aboriginal communities.

Ethno-educational practices occur in specialized institutions or organizations and have been underpinned by different epistemological positions. Thus, Sánchez Castellón (2018) proposes a significant experience from the following premise: "The experience in ethnic spaces must occur in synchrony with the respective intercultural practices that allow them to recognize their identities" (p. 168). Such practices ought to be inclusive and conducive to dialogue and encounter with the other, respecting differences; therefore, the role of the teacher, requires ethno-educational training following the principles of the native culture's communal autonomy (González-López & AF Astaiza-Martínez, 2023)

In the case of Latin America, different studies have been conducted on intercultural and ethno-educational processes as a latent need. Nations, including their rulers, are attributed the social responsibility they have towards these cultural, social, and educational processes in order to achieve high-quality and inclusive education for indigenous communities. Consequently, countries such as Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico aim to generate scenarios that promote social inclusion as a factor of change and consolidation in the preservation of ancestral culture and their privilege in the social, political, and cultural dynamics of these communities, (aligned with) in accordance with the existing policies in each nation, locality, and territory.

Similarly, ethno-educational matters are highlighted in public policies in countries such as Chile. They have examined ethno-educational processes, claiming that the identity of the territories is pivotal to strengthening institutional identity. Chilean Ethno-education is also relevant for the recognition of ancestral knowledge from the interethnic relational context of the region and the appreciation of diversity, considered an *identity competence* (Palet Araneda et al., 2020). Identity competence favors the exchange of knowledge and intercultural coexistence as opportunities for cultural revindication and political action, where education plays a crucial role in the development and progress of Indigenous communities. Yet, despite Latin American legislation, there is no synergy between norms and educational realities (Sandoval Forero & Capera Figueroa, 2021).

In the case of Ecuador, ethno-educational reforms have been made but only remain on paper since from the same reforms, educational practices disconnected from the reality of aboriginal communities are evident (Rodríguez Cruz, 2019). An example of this disconnection concerns the acquisition of a second language, where only English language is taken into account. Likewise, regarding bilingualism, the language of the dominant hegemonic society is established in official curricula and presumed to be intercultural. In no case are the native languages of these Indigenous peoples linked to the school context (Rodríguez Cruz, 2019).

In Peru, interculturality represents the recognition of the other as an integral being. Peruvian regulations assert that all citizens belong to an inclusive society where two important approaches stand out in educational policies: the cross-cutting and inclusive approach, which seeks respect for differences and equity in teaching, and the intercultural approach which emphasizes the recognition of identity through critical reflection to eradicate discrimination (Barón Velandia et al, 2017). Such reflection should encompass the acknowledgment of Other traditions, worldviews, imaginaries, and life projects, integrally equating collective and individual dimensions with high development and commitment to the nation's own and the preservation of cultural heritage (Peruvian Ministry of Culture, 2014).

In Mexico, educational models are anchored in paradigms of inequality where culturalism operates with a double logic, ethnicizing, thus confusing diversity with inequality (Antolínez Domínguez & Jorge Barbuzano, 2022). From this perspective and in a dialogical way, diversity should be understood as the way to include school practices from an inclusive curriculum where the other is built and shaped by the same conditions of inequality.

In the case of Colombia, multiculturalism increasingly produces a complex institutional framework marked by a jurisdictional overlap and legal plurality. Velasco (2018) emphasizes that "in the 1990s, Colombia decentralized politics and approved multicultural reforms as part of broader strategies to strengthen the State" (p. 530) with which the public policy could not be established clearly and specifically. This panorama has also led to Indigenous rights violations due to a lack of support for each of the territorial entities, which exponentially limits ethno-political autonomy. The latter provides clear guidelines on health, education, culture, and economy to support the cultural legacy provided by aboriginal communities to the territories and the Colombian State.

With the proposal of research and the contribution made to public policy from ethno-educational processes, actions can be taken to guide and energize intercultural processes in the Indigenous territories. This might also contribute to assessing the current educational policies established for the target population, ethno-educational issues.

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Table 1

Conceptions about Public Policy from the Comprehensive Approach.

Categories	Conceptions	Authors
Ethnoeducation	In the context of the city, ethno-education entails schools regarded as microcosms of extensive diversity in customs and languages, entailing complex issues across various domains.	Davy and French (2018)
	The General Law of Education establishes, in Title III, the modalities of attention to the Indigenous population, which will be guided by integrality, interculturality, linguistic diversity, community participation, flexibility, and progressiveness.	Vidal et al. (2021)
Interculturality	Interculturality implies not only an approximation between cultures but also an equitable exchange of communication and learning among individuals with different knowledge and customs.	Barabas (2014)
	It refers to the exchange between cultures through symbolism and worldview, recognizing cultural diversity to promote inclusion in the social context.	Walsh (2005)
	Studies on low academic performance associated with ethnicity indicate that it is not due to lack of motivation but to the absence of motivational rewards equal to those of their peers, partly stemming from teachers' lower confidence in their academic future.	Fernández et al. (2022)

Indigenous	Indigenous communities have developed a conceptual educational framework, which distinguishes ethno-education directed towards ethnic groups.	Fayad Sierra (2021)
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(Connection is missing) Indigenous councils constitute communities that are distanced from lineage because of the lack of opportunities and a clear policy that allows the consolidation of a historical legacy contributing to the culture of nations and territories as minorities. These communities' cultural legacy, represented in their language, rites, and ancestral languages, is vulnerated although state-led entities should recognize them as populations worthy of social, political, cultural, and educational rights.

In the light of the aforementioned regulatory framework, the General Law of Education (Law 115, Congress of Colombia, 1994) establishes, in Title III, the modalities of attention to the Indigenous population guided by integrality, interculturality, linguistic diversity, community participation, flexibility, and progressiveness. In this regard, Vidal et al. (2021) reveal that, despite the existing public policies, intercultural education is still a challenge for both the educational sector and socio-political spheres. This is because of the lack of training in human resources, particularly, in intercultural competencies at the expense of social transformation.

In the Colombian context, the Embera Chami community has carried out ancestral practices that have been highlighted in rural communities thanks to the construction of their identity based on ancestral activities such as art, culture, and production systems derived from their own communities. From this perspective, Indigenous communities, especially the Embera Chami, have transcended cultural and ancestral realms to be recognized as a community contributing to the country's cultural legacy. In this vein, since the enactment of the Colombian Political Constitution (Colombian Constituent Assembly, 1991), intercultural education has allowed for the recognition of this cultural diversity within the territory. Thus, it is paramount to appropriate the territory with a knowledge that permeates different educational models to be visualized and applied in each territory, recognizing the other as a contributor to society (Fayad Sierra, 2021).

Methodology and Analysis of Interviews with Indigenous Teachers

This paper reports on a qualitative study with an ethnographic approach. (conectors) Cotán (2020) deems ethnography "a primary source that encompasses different sciences that relate to the human being as the center of study" (p. 95). For this reason, the first phase of analyzing the ways ethno-educational public policies have been adopted in urban contexts (verb is missing) through an information matrix. In the second phase, significant experiences are obtained via semi-structured interviews with four Indigenous teachers in Medellín. Therefore, this investigation sought to make a thorough review of the educational service received by the aboriginal community.

Population and Sample

This study was conducted at the headquarters of Darío Londoño from Héctor Abad Gómez School. The educational institution is renowned for its inclusive policies and for embracing all sorts of populations, including Embera Chami. In total, the school works with 57 children from classrooms such as Embera Preschool, Basic Processes, and Learning Acceleration, which

narrows down the scope of this research, accounting for preset selection criteria. The following are the most remarkable criteria:

- The acknowledgment of Héctor Abad Gómez School for being a referent for the city, considering its mission, vision, and philosophy that highlights inclusion and flexibility as key components of its educational processes in pedagogical and academic terms.
- The features of the sample. Since the population is migrant and Indigenous it was considered representative according to the guidelines and characteristics of the population.

The research process started in 2022. Data collection began in May 2023, the target population provided the information that would be analyzed.

With all the above, Table 2 describes the emerging categories related to ethno-educational processes and their management in the research setting.

Table 2
Conceptions of Public Policy from an Inclusive Approach

Teachers' perceptions of ethno-educators??		
Institución Educativa	Category of analysis	Main findings
Héctor Abad Gómez, sede Darío Londoño	Ethnoeducation	<p>The institution provides differential attention to the Embera Chami indigenous population. It has three indigenous classrooms: Embera Preschool, Basic Processes, and Learning Acceleration, catering for children aged 5 to 12 years old. This setup allows for meaningful organizational structures in the pedagogical processes to address the needs of children children's needs belonging to native communities with an intercultural education focus or modality, as established by in Article 1 from Law 1381 (Congress of Colombia, 2010) which mandates "ensuring the recognition, protection, and development of the linguistic, individual, and collective rights of ethnic groups with their own linguistic tradition, as well as the promotion of the use and development of their languages" (Congress of Colombia, 2010, p. 1).</p> <p>Likewise, within the framework of inclusive education, Article 7 from Decree 1421 (Presidency of Colombia, 2017), which regards the responsibilities of entities such as the Ministry of National Education, Education Secretariats, and educational institutions, stipulates that the educational sector and affiliated entities must develop plans, programs, projects, and indicators for inclusive education, taking into account the guidance of organizations (connector) representing educational institutions to achieve inclusive and quality education for all. This involves the consolidation of a public policy that significantly contributes to the intercultural offer of educational service with the necessary and contextualized support for this population.</p>

	Interculturality	Since all students are Indigenous, intercultural relationships are not marked by interaction between people from different cultures; however, interculturality is evident through the use of two languages: Spanish and Embera, which the teacher promotes in the development of topics and in the classroom. There is a relationship of trust between the teacher and the students, as well as among the students themselves. Additionally, the institution requires ethno-educators to include Spanish in classes as well. "In language contact, and even within a language, there is always a component of conflict, meaning that language contact produces strong linguistic disputes and negotiations."
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Analysis and Discussion of Results

This section presents the analysis and discussion of results in light of the two objectives of the research (You never talked about 2 objectives). The first one was to analyze national and international ethno-educational laws, where the initial focus was on the relationship of the current public policy in Colombia with other Latin American countries. The second aim was to study the subjectivity that exists among the public policies established for Indigenous peoples, territories, and the educational community. In this framework, three major categories will be discussed.

Interculturality Viewed from a Comprehensive Approach in Ethno-educational Processes

According to García Araque (2017), public policy for aboriginal communities has been incipient due to the absence of an educational system equipped with tools and foundations of diverse cultures. This hinders the implementation of ethno-educational mechanisms in institutions through a clear educational policy consistent with the traditions of Indigenous communities (Arciniegas et al. 2020). Guidelines addressing educational attention to ethnic groups are evident within the Colombian normative (e.g., Decree 804, Presidency of Colombia, 1995). This decree emphasizes the appropriation and direction of indigenous curricula in educational institutions, including native languages, and the selection of ethno-educators by native communities. However, there is still a lack of coherence between what the norm proposes and what is visible in the institutions.

Considering the aforementioned normative framework, Law 115, Title III (Congress of Colombia, 1994) establishes attention modalities to indigenous population, guided by integrality, interculturality, linguistic diversity, community participation, flexibility, and progressiveness. Interculturality entails the integration of ancestral languages' teaching, prioritizing its recognition in educational institutions catering for aboriginal populations. As indicated by teachers interviewed at Héctor Abad Gómez School, the institution receives support from Indigenous teachers but lacks counseling from experts to guide curricular frameworks according to the requirements of the Colombian Ministry of National Education (MEN). Between 2019 and 2020, support from a professional belonging to the program *Todos a aprender* was available to organize educational projects specific to Embera Chami culture into the school curriculum. However, after the professional left the institution, gaps hindering the proper direction of study plans and curricular frameworks became notorious. Continuity of processes is required so that programs

offered in the city are coherent and relevant as demanded by the norm and the General Law of Education 115.

Chapter 3, Articles 55 to 63, establishes education for ethnic groups, addressing important aspects of ethno-education and its principles, notably linguistic diversity, interculturality, and community participation. Article 57 mentions that "teaching for ethnic groups with their own linguistic tradition shall be bilingual, with the respective group's mother tongue as the school's foundation, prioritizing the development of curriculum in concert with communities" (p. 18).

Interculturality Viewed from An Inclusive Approach in Ethno-Educational Processes

One of the most significant contributions to the research has been the voices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers. They argue that public policy is not aligned with the policies established within educational institutions through their curricula, subject plans, and curricular frameworks. In this vein, a participant in the experiential workshop claimed,

"Interculturality is sometimes taken for granted as an inclusive phenomenon, which is not the case. Children come to school with valuable knowledge, beliefs, wisdom, and customs; this knowledge must be taken into account, shared, and related in the classroom for true interculturality to occur. Children are not blank slates, like blank sheets of paper, where the teacher arrives and imparts knowledge. Interculturality is built, it is not spontaneous; it is not about arriving at a space and sharing it, it is a way of life".

Based on the above, Medellín is committed to the development of a foreign language such as English, but it does not create spaces for transformation within educational institutions for teachers to be trained in other dialects or ancestral languages. Yet, for the first time in the city, there is a public university that, within its educational policy, offers courses in ancestral languages with lectures and plural formative strategies that consolidate and appropriate the community in the epistemic diversity and culture of education for students, teachers, and the public.

The university at issue is Universidad de Antioquia. It includes aboriginal groups such as Wayunaiki (that is the language no the gruoup. The group is wayuu), Embera Chami, Ye'pá mha'sá, Guna Dule, Kriol, and Minika. It generates pedagogical strategies that help ancestral knowledge be consolidated, sharing knowledge, experiences, food, dances, and songs, allowing the indigenous and Afro communities to integrate with researchers and students from other cultures and places in the territory.

A Public Policy that Embraces Interculturality and Diversity

From the interviews, valuable information has been gathered regarding the perspectives of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers. Especially, during the experiential workshop, a participant emphasized,

"childhood is a stage of life where sometimes labels are attached to children. We work with children based on their needs, paying attention to their particular needs. We have seen Embera teachers' practices in class, and they share activities. The child is a leader and should live in an environment of freedom, with spontaneous, not exposed,

participation, in full exercise of autonomy and awareness of community solidarity within the process. However, freedom is not something given" (Participant 1, entrevista personal, personal interview, May 12, 2023)

This pursuit of equal rights aligns with Law 21 (Congress of Colombia, 1991), which seeks to ensure equality of rights and opportunities, granted by national legislation while respecting their social and cultural identity, customs, and traditions.

Furthermore, in the same workshop, another participant highlighted the importance of a thorough understanding and investigation of cultural processes, and the dismantling of stereotypes or false behaviors and concepts perpetuated throughout history:

"The clear example of interculturality is experienced by the people of Chocó, where everyone is welcomed regardless of whether they are Afro-descendants, indigenous, or mestizos; their own cultures are fully lived. It does not matter the color there, as well as in each territory where all these races, all these lifestyles converge" (Participant 2, personal interview, May 12, 2023).

Within the normative framework, it is essential to establish consistent, relevant, coherent, and fair public policies for ethnic communities. As Ferrer (2021) suggests, such policies should focus on multiculturalism to legitimize ethno-educational policies, addressing significant challenges such as Indigenous participation in decision-making at political, social, cultural, and educational levels.

In line with the previous ideas, and considering the educational practices taking place in the educational institution, it is evident that pedagogical practices addressing the aboriginal population are outlined in the curriculum, aiming for inclusive education from diversity. However, in the workshop, a participant referred to the central role of teachers in this regard:

"Teachers are the main resource to carry out the ethno-educational process in the institution, as they are in contact with the situation. While the institution champions ethno-educational processes, it is emphasized that the Indigenous community, although in separate classrooms with ethno-educators, should also favor interculturality rather than isolation and integration into regular classrooms"(Participant 3, personal interview, May 12, 2023).

At the institutional level, efforts are made to ensure management based on inclusion and diversity. Héctor Abad Gómez School has been recognized for assisting all populations coming to the city, facilitating equitable and equal access to education. However, there is a need for training strategies for teachers attending aboriginal populations in ancestral languages, as there are only three Indigenous teachers to assist one headquarters. When Indigenous students ¿transition? to the main campus, they encounter an educational situation that does not align with current public policy.

(It is not recommended to start a sentence with a number) The 2022 public policy outlined by the Educational Quality Observatory in Medellín establishes components directly related to the provision of educational services at the city level. The Public Policy for Teacher Training in Medellín, articulated with the MOVA Innovation Center, specifies comprehensive teacher training objectives, integrating innovative pedagogical actions. Indigenous teachers

participate in these spaces to enhance their educational practices through qualification courses offered by MOVA and the Medellín city government.

Finally, the role of administrative staff and faculty at the institutional level in ethno-educational and intercultural processes should be centered on the constitutional principle of favorability for the student. As Cassiani et al. (2021) propose, from a global project where society assumes interculturality, ethno-educational processes should shape the formation of individuals holistically. Doing so, the ethno-development process based on social, historical, ethnic, and cultural references for collective work would have the meaning expected and would prioritize collective needs for societal development.

Conclusion

Based on the findings discussed before it can be interpreted that there is evidence of a utopia between what the law enshrines and the realities of indigenous communities concerning their education. Although these groups are crucial for the preservation and conservation of historical and cultural heritage, their right to ethnic and cultural diversity has been violated. Aboriginal people are subjects of rights and possess an ancestral political tradition and legacy, and from educational processes, a methodological proposal in line with their sociocultural and linguistic customs must be guaranteed. It is relevant that cultural actions are established within the school curriculum to articulate these communities with educational practices from the angle of diversity and social inclusion.

Ethno-educational processes in Colombia are mechanisms of inclusion that achieve the opposite goal because of its disconnection with the realities and needs of the aboriginal population. Thus, these lead to exclusion from the formative activities established for the non-Indigenous population. As Blanco-Figueroa & Arias-Ortega (2022) state, "the formation of intercultural pedagogical thinking should develop from counter-hegemonic conceptions to Western culture that broaden the beliefs and social representations of teachers to a multidisciplinary and intercultural worldview of content, its teaching, and learning".

Diversity in education also considers pedagogical practices that adjust to the specific needs of the school and the subject or subjects participating in the academic activity. This should occur through the management of inclusive learning where the logic of the ethnic and intercultural is built from the experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, allowing for learning of different languages, cultures, and rituals that make interculturality possible (Barón Velandia & Cancino Peña, 2023).

At the institutional level, in the research setting, there is evidence of how an axis of articulation of the Embera Chami community is proposed; however, it is far from what the regulations propose. Inclusion also consists of teachers being able to learn about that ancestral language. They were unaware of the possibilities offered by Universidad de Antioquia to offer courses in ancestral languages, which they considered relevant not only for mastering the dialect of aboriginal teachers but also for strengthening the ancestral culture in that sense. According to Tobar Gutiérrez (2020), "An educational public policy for Indigenous peoples has as its starting point or emergence the urgency to rescue and strengthen the cultural, territorial identity, and autonomy of peoples. An educational process of their own is required to contribute to the permanence and survival of peoples within a multi-ethnic and multicultural state" (p. 147).

There is a gap between the provisions of the Education Secretariat of the city regarding interculturality and what happens in educational institutions. It fosters the idea that students are welcomed into regular classrooms, with all kinds of differences (i.e., linguistic, cultural, and others) without proper training in the subject or effective tools, which ends up in practices of exclusion and domination, of which teachers are aware from their professional training and ideological preferences.

Ethno-educators are a reference for the needs of interculturality in the city; their experience is crucial for the sake of the local and regional agendas. Thus, from public policies and especially from the perspective of ethno-education, interculturality responds to hegemonic models, which are designed for a pluralistic and diverse education that aims at the legacy of these communities for their effective development in educational, social, ethical, and political improvement and development of their communities.

On the limitations of the study, it is pivotal to examine the plans different governments have concerning the unification of legislation oriented to ethno-educational processes in Latin America and Colombia. It is necessary to train educators that become referents to face intercultural challenges in urban scenarios, drawing on their knowledge and link to their communities. In this vein, further research on intercultural processes in public policies, particularly, on ethno-education, could stress the interpretation of intercultural models that problematize hegemonic outlooks. Future studies can also posit the analysis of a pluralistic and diverse education that aims to preserve the legacy of communities and their educational, social, ethical, and political development.

Declaración de Conflictos de Interés

No declaran conflictos de interés.

Contribución de autores

Autor	Concepto	Curación de datos	Análisis/ Software	Investigación / Metodología	Proyecto/ recursos / fondos	Supervisión/ validación	Escritura inicial	Redacción: revisión y edición final
1	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
2	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

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