

Partnerships to improve the availability, quality and use of data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia



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**INDIGENOUS
NAVIGATOR**
Data by and for Indigenous Peoples



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Partnerships to improve the availability, quality and use of data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia

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Abbreviations

2018 Census	National Population and Housing Census 2018
CNTI	Comisión Nacional de Territorios Indígenas [National Commission on Indigenous Territories]
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística [National Administrative Department of Statistics]
IGAC	Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi [Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute]
ONIC	Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia [National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia]
Workshop	Workshop on Partnerships To Improve The Availability, Quality And Use Of Data On Indigenous Peoples In Colombia

Introduction

In November 2024, the “Indigenous Navigator Workshop: Partnerships to improve the availability, quality and use of data on Indigenous Peoples” took place in Bogotá, Colombia. Its aim was to foster dialogue among key actors and to identify how data from traditional and non-traditional sources on Indigenous Peoples can complement each other (hereinafter the “Workshop”). The objective was not only to explore the opportunities and limitations of these data, but also to improve the participatory production of official data.

This activity was implemented in the context of Phase 3 of the EU-funded Indigenous Navigator Project, which aims to disseminate the data and results of the Indigenous Navigator to national entities, mainly national statistical entities and National Human Rights Institutions. In this way, it operationalises the vision of the Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data by fostering stronger linkages between citizen-generated data and national statistical offices.

The Workshop was organised by the Danish Institute for Human Rights in collaboration with the Arte+ Foundation. Participants included representatives of the Colombian Ombudsman’s Office, the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), representatives of Indigenous Peoples and civil society organisations.

At the workshop participants identified the existence of a persistent data gap concerning Indigenous Peoples, resulting in their statistical invisibility and the absence of targeted public policies to uphold their rights.

The Workshop further outlined challenges, good practices and opportunities in collecting data on Indigenous Peoples. Firstly, the progress made by DANE in data collection was recognised, with the implementation of cultural adjustments, as well as self-censuses and the implementation of the Wayuu Census. However, the need to improve inter-institutional coordination, as well as access to information and the participation of Indigenous Peoples, was highlighted. This is crucial in order to guarantee other rights, such as cultural rights, security and personal freedom. Official data collection must strengthen its methodologies and quality, when it comes to data regarding the Indigenous population in Colombia, including the implementation of a human rights-based approach to data.

Finally, the need to strengthen capacities in the use of data was highlighted as a first step towards enabling its use in the development of differentiated public policies or strategic litigation to guarantee rights.

The Workshop ended by recognising the potential complementary nature of citizen-generated data and official data, by combining community-level insights and participation with nationally standardized statistics. However, it was clarified that compliance with quality standards and harmonization protocols is required for citizen-generated data to be recognized as official. Based on the above, an action

plan was drawn up to identify lines of action and those responsible for guiding the work in the collection of data on Indigenous Peoples.

This report reflects the discussions held in the framework of the Workshop and shares a roadmap with the objective of identifying possible areas of collaboration for strengthening data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia. Chapter 1 identifies and summarises available data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia, including official information and citizen data. Chapter 2 systematises the challenges and opportunities in relation to the collection and dissemination of data on Indigenous Peoples. Chapter 3 identifies the reasons for collaboration between state agencies and Indigenous Peoples' organisations in the production of data on Indigenous Peoples. Finally, Chapter 4 presents the main conclusions.



Note: Guajira, La Guajira, Colombia. www.pexels.com

1 Available data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia

1.1 Official information on Indigenous Peoples

1.1.1 National Administrative Department of Statistics

The National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) is the technical statistical authority in Colombia, in charge of producing and disseminating official statistical information as a public good, with high standards of quality and technical rigour for decision-making at national and territorial level. Therefore, the official statistics of the Colombian state are those produced and disseminated by DANE.¹

DANE indicated that its data-collection methodology has evolved, recognising the complementarity of quantitative data and narrative accounts. In other words, the oral traditions of Indigenous Peoples are increasingly being acknowledged as a valid and important source of information for evaluating the fulfillment of their human rights and guiding public policy development.

Efforts to include data on Indigenous Peoples in official Colombian state statistics date back to 1985. However, it was only in 2018 that a differential and intersectional approach was adopted to identify and characterise the population belonging to ethnic groups, with the aim of making them visible and contribute to the recognition of the country's population diversity.²

In 2023, the Coordination of Ethnic, Racial and Peasant Affairs was created to strengthen the ethnic approach in the production and dissemination of official data. This has highlighted the importance of having a differential approach to ensure that public policies and decision-making take into account the guarantee of Indigenous Peoples' rights.

The Coordination is responsible, among other functions, for generating and providing guidelines with a differential approach when defining methodologies for ethnic and rural identification in the different phases of the statistical operations carried out by the Census and Demography Directorate.

1.1.1.1 Censuses

Censuses in Colombia are conducted every ten (10) years. The last two censuses are the 2005 General Census and the 2018 National Population and Housing Census (hereinafter the "2018 Census").

The 2018 Census counted and characterised the people living in Colombia, along with their dwellings and households in the national territory, to obtain information

on the number of inhabitants, their distribution in the national territory and their living conditions. However, with regard to living conditions, the census was limited to showing information on the total number of households and dwellings, distribution by type, access to public services and access to water.

For the 2018 Census, a broad consultation process was implemented, including a permanent roundtable for consultation with Indigenous Peoples. As a result of this process, four (4) partnership agreements were signed with national Indigenous organisations to manage mobility, Census staff in their territories and communication. Two (2) additional agreements were also signed with a communication component.³

For this census, an investment of more than sixteen billion pesos was made in order to guarantee the quality of the information on the Indigenous population, which included the development of prior consultation processes, as well as measures for personal mobility and communications.

Based on the consultation and agreement process, the census form included four (4) questions on ethnic issues and eight (8) response categories in other questions agreed with the Indigenous Peoples to show their social and demographic reality through statistical information.⁴ To this end, 3,130 Indigenous People were recruited as census takers and supervisors of the census operation to ensure their participation.⁵ The 2018 Census was the first time that the participation of Indigenous Peoples was guaranteed.⁶

In order to include the ethnic approach, DANE used self-recognition to capture ethnic relevance. In this way, it was assessed whether a person expressed a sense of belonging to a collective according to his or her identity and ways of interacting in and with the world.⁷

In the 2018 Census, 1,905,617 people self-identified as Indigenous, an increase of 36.8% compared to the 2005 General Census.⁸ In other words, 4.4% of the Colombian population recognise themselves as Indigenous, of which 50.1% are women and 49.9% men. In this way, the population was identified as belonging to 115 native Indigenous Peoples, including the Wayuu (270,413 people), Zenú (233,052 people), Nasa (186,178 people) and Pastos (129,801 people).⁹

In terms of age groups, it was found that 33.8% were aged 0-14 years, 60.4% were aged 15-64 years and 5.8% were aged 65 years and over. DANE concluded that the Indigenous population is younger in departments with a high presence of Indigenous reservations and in areas that are difficult to access, such as Arauca, Chocó, Magdalena, Vaupés, Vichada and Guainía.

The 2018 Census identified 474,102 dwellings with Indigenous-headed households. Of these, 66% have access to electricity and 42.4% to water. However, only 25.5% have access to rubbish collection, 23% to sewerage, 15.3% to natural gas connected to the public network and 6.4% to the internet (fixed or mobile).¹⁰ Additionally, regarding the source of water used to prepare food in households headed by Indigenous People, it was identified that 22.4% obtained it from a public

aqueduct; 18.8% from a river, stream or spring; 15.3% from a well without a pump, cistern, pond or borehole; 14.8% from a local aqueduct; 12% from the community distribution network; 7% from rainwater; 5.1% from a well with a pump; 2.9% from a water tanker; 0.8% from a water carrier; 0.6% from bottled water; and 0.3% from a public fountain.¹¹

While these data provide a general overview of some rights, such as housing, health, access to water and other household services, it does not provide information on the guarantee of Indigenous Peoples' human rights under international standards. Some rights, such as self-determination, cultural integrity, land recognition and protection, were not considered when collecting data in the 2018 Census. Consequently, the 2018 Census indicators do not measure the state's compliance with its obligation to respect and guarantee human rights.

1.1.1.2 Wayuu Information System

Additionally, DANE has advanced different tools in order to produce accurate data on different Indigenous Peoples, mainly the Wayuu Information System.¹²

The Wayuu Information System is a tool designed to provide updated data for various national and territorial entities, with the objective of supporting the formulation of public policies that improve the quality of life of the Wayuu people.¹³ DANE indicated that publicising data on the Wayuu favours the enforceability of their rights.

The System is a tool designed to implement Constitutional Court Ruling T-302 of 2017, which declared a state of unconstitutional affairs due to the violation of the fundamental rights of the Wayuu community, particularly of its children. The resources available include the geoviewer, the data dashboard and the action viewer.¹⁴

The geoviewer provides geo-referenced and thematic data on the different rights protected by Ruling T-302 of 2017, including access to drinking water, health, food and mobility. The information presented in the geoviewer centralises and visualises data on the Wayuu people based on the systematisation of information from various national and territorial government bodies. The objective is to provide information that facilitates decision-makers in the formulation of effective public policies and programmes, while respecting the cultural identity of the Wayuu people.¹⁵

The geoviewer provides information on a cluster of dwellings with a grouping or range of dwellings, ensuring that sensitive data on the exact location of the dwellings is not shared. The information shared includes access to electricity, internet and literacy rates. In any case, according to some Indigenous Peoples' views, the type of information that is shared publicly needs to be assessed to ensure that it does not create security risks.

The data dashboard shows information from the municipalities of Uribia, Riohacha, Manaure and Maicao in relation to access to water, food, mobility, health and general information (population, unmet basic needs, areas of rural housing concentration and distances).¹⁶

Finally, the viewer allows consultations on the different actions of national and territorial government entities.¹⁷

The information contained in the Wayuu Information System will be updated based on the Wayuu Multidimensional Registry, which compiles detailed data on various aspects of Wayuu life, including access to basic resources, health conditions, deaths and livelihoods. Additionally, in accordance with the information provided by DANE, this includes active participation of the Wayuu community in the data collection process, ensuring that the data reflects their realities and needs. The multidimensional Wayuu register is being carried out in compliance with Ruling T-302 of 2017. However, DANE indicated that full implementation is subject to the availability of resources.

In the Workshop, Indigenous Peoples' representatives underlined that the Wayuu people's participation in the formulation of the questions was required, as well as the need to have access to information on the census, focus group, methodology and questions.

1.1.1.3 Geoviewers

DANE has been working on geoviewers where information on Indigenous Peoples obtained from the 2018 Census can be found.¹⁸ Specifically, DANE has made available the geoviewer of information on Indigenous reservations.¹⁹

It also has a viewer for Indigenous Peoples that allows exploration of data disaggregated by: (i) sex; (ii) age groups; (iii) department and municipality; (iv) ethnic class and territoriality; (v) native language; (vi) educational level; (vii) educational attendance; (viii) literacy; (ix) human functioning; (x) occupation; (xi) housing characteristics; (xii) household characteristics; and (xiii) unmet basic needs and multidimensional poverty measure from census source. There are also data viewers for specific peoples, such as the Wayuu and Wiwa.²⁰

1.1.2 National Human Rights Institution (Ombudsman's Office)

Given the multiplicity, geographical dispersion and low participation rate in surveys, the Ombudsman's Office has recognised the difficulty of obtaining accurate information on Indigenous Peoples from statistical operations other than the National Censuses.

However, in the exercise of its mandate, the Colombian Ombudsman's Office has developed the Data Analytics Centre initiative, supported by the Inter-American Development Bank. The aim of this initiative is to systematise information gathered in the field, as well as the cases handled by the organisation. The Data Analytics Centre has a territorial, differential and gender focus, providing information on Colombia's 32 departments.²¹

The information is systematised in the VisionWeb information system, specifically in the Complaints Attention and Processing module. This system is being strengthened with a view to mainstreaming the differential ethnic approach in the recording and processing of data. The Human Rights Data Analytics Centre has made progress in the analysis of the information registered in the VisionWeb system, also incorporating differential approaches in its work.

For the development of the Analytics Centre's requirement, they have worked with data from official sources, such as the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (INML-CF) and the Oral Accusatory Criminal System (SPOA) of the Attorney General's Office. In reviewing these data, some of the findings from the report of the Indigenous Navigator have been confirmed, namely that the challenge of an absence of inter-institutional coordination persists. This is because when attempting to analyse data related to violence and access to justice for Indigenous Peoples, it is found that there is no uniformity in the data or variables. Even within the same entity, there are victimising events for which information on ethnic affiliation is recorded under different categories.

As an example of the above, the INML-CF data classify some events by ethnicity and others, like suicides and homicides, by racial ancestry.²² For the historical data, only racial ancestry is reported and no ethnicity information is identified.

The purpose of the Data Analytics Centre is to complement the work of the statistical activity for the benefit of communities. In this way, the aim is to identify the status of rights protection, instances of violations, possible perpetrators, and the affected groups. Data analysis will enable timely and effective institutional advocacy.

The Ombudsman's Office recognize the need to generate information on Indigenous Peoples from a statistical, social, demographic, cultural, political, and economic perspectives. The Ombudsman's Office has further emphasized the importance of information for monitoring and supporting public policies aimed at strengthening, defending, promoting, and protecting collective fundamental rights.

Based on the above, the Human Rights Data Analytics Centre has made progress in identifying and understanding the situations of human rights violations that affect ethnic peoples, including Indigenous Peoples, as well as recognising possible territorial, thematic or population patterns that allow better orientation of the Ombudsman's work.

The tool is expected to support strategic analysis and informed decision-making, allowing the Delegate Ombudsman's Office to prioritise territories and issues, focus support actions and strengthen institutional advocacy to guarantee the rights of ethnic peoples.

In addition, in order to guarantee an ethnic focus in the fulfilment of its mandate, the Ombudsman's Office plans to make adjustments to the Complaints Attention and Processing module of the VisionWeb information system, in which data on the entity's mission are recorded. Firstly, progress has been made in modifying the System in relation to ethnic peoples, including Indigenous Peoples. The modification is that in the information register ethnic peoples are registered as a population group. However, it is not possible to identify persons who are part of Indigenous Peoples and who also belong to other population groups, e.g. social leaders. In this sense, a registration module with differential approaches is being adjusted, with ethnicity as a cross-cutting category and not just a population group identifier. This is favourable, not only for registration, but also for consultation and reporting mechanisms, as more precise information on the human rights of the country's Indigenous and other ethnic peoples will then be available.

However, the Ombudsman's Office calls for the need to coordinate information with the different actors with an interest in the defence of ethnic rights, not only at national level, but also at regional and international levels. At the Workshop, Indigenous Peoples called for participation in the processes led by the Ombudsman's Office.

1.2 Citizen data in Colombia

Communities, civil society organisations and other non-state actors have generated, participated in or led the design or collection of data on Indigenous Peoples for a variety of reasons. Three models are presented below: the Indigenous Navigator; other initiatives by civil society organisations; and some government initiatives to generate citizen data.

1.2.1 The Indigenous Navigator

1.2.1.1 General framework on the Indigenous Navigator

The Indigenous Navigator²³ is a framework and toolkit developed by and for Indigenous Peoples to systematically monitor the level of recognition and implementation of their human rights. The Navigator is based on international human rights standards, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, universal human rights treaties, essential aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the outcomes of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

The Navigator aims to facilitate systematic generation of quantitative and qualitative data on the status of human rights guarantees for Indigenous Peoples. The process of data collection leads to raising Indigenous Peoples' awareness of their rights by actively involving them in documenting their own reality. It also strengthens their capacities to claim their rights, guides strategies for development and self-determination, enables monitoring of state compliance with human rights obligations in relation to Indigenous Peoples, and provides data on the human rights situation to international or regional human rights monitoring mechanisms. Using the Navigator, Indigenous organisations and peoples, rights defenders, civil society organisations and journalists can access free tools and resources based on data generated by Indigenous Peoples themselves.

The Navigator focuses on areas that impact the lives of Indigenous Peoples, including non-discrimination, cultural integrity, land and territories, self-determination, participation, education and health. To support monitoring, human rights indicators were identified for each of these areas. The indicators were translated into questions and a guide to facilitate data collection at national and community levels. The indicators were developed following the human rights indicators methodology of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The data collected through the Indigenous Navigator is an example of citizen-generated data. Indigenous Peoples generate and collect their own data on issues relevant to them, while improving recognition of their rights. These data strategically guide the design and implementation of policies, programmes and other institutional efforts based on a human rights-based approach to improve the lives of Indigenous Peoples and their communities.

1.2.1.2 Implementation of the Indigenous Navigator in Colombia

The Indigenous Navigator's national questionnaire has been conducted twice in Colombia, in 2018 and 2024. The results of the national questionnaire show the existence of a broad legal framework and public policies related to the protection of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, the implementation of this framework is subject to the political will of the government in power.

The community questionnaire has been deployed on five (5) occasions in the Sever and Chimurro Nendó Reserves of the Embera Katío People of Dabeiba, Antioquia (2018 and 2019); the Karmata Rua Cristiania Indigenous Reserve of the Embera Chamí (2018 and 2019), in the Guambia Reserve of the Misak People (2023-2025) Ovejas Katun Chack, Siberia, Caldono Council and in the Wayuu Community of Mauren and Maipasalu, Cabo de la Vela district (2023-2025).

However, according to data generated from the national and community questionnaires, it was found that Indigenous Peoples in Colombia face serious challenges in guaranteeing their rights to land, territories and resources, participation, food, health, access to public services and access to water. However, the Indigenous Navigator has only been applied by few communities. Therefore, it does not provide comprehensive information on the situation of all Indigenous Peoples in Colombia, which is why it is necessary for more communities to apply it.

Right to lands, territories and resources

Colombia constitutionally recognises Indigenous reservations as inalienable, imprescriptible and non-seizable collective property. In this way, Article 63 of the Political Constitution recognises that measures to protect autonomy, territorial rights and Indigenous territory must be contemplated. However, several violations of this right have been identified, mainly de facto appropriation by armed actors, as well as appropriation and use of lands and resources by non-Indigenous third parties that have not followed the procedures of prior consultation and free, prior and informed consent. In addition, cases of relocation associated with natural disasters or as a consequence of forced displacement due to armed conflict were not consulted on or resolved in a satisfactory manner for the Indigenous People.

Finally, cases of dumping of toxic substances and waste in Indigenous territories were highlighted, especially where gold-mining activities, illicit crops and state actions for the eradication of these crops have been carried out.

According to the results of the five (5) community questionnaires of the Indigenous Navigator in Colombia, in four (4) of the five (5) cases they have experienced conflicts related to land or natural resources, with the most frequent conflict being related to extractive industries.

In any case, the role of the Colombian justice system has been decisive in guaranteeing the rights of Indigenous Peoples, for example the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court and land restitution processes.

Since the implementation of the national questionnaire in 2024, there has been

progress in the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights to their lands and territories. For example, by means of Decree 1257 of 2024, Indigenous Peoples were recognised as environmental authorities. The Decree develops the competence of peoples to preserve, conserve, protect, use and manage natural resources in accordance with Article 15 of ILO Convention 169.

Right to participate in public affairs

Article 171 of the Political Constitution recognises that Indigenous Colombians have the right to a special constituency that guarantees their participation in the Congress of the Republic with two (2) representatives to the Senate and one (1) to the House of Representatives. In addition, they can hold seats by popular election. Thus, for the 2022-2026 parliamentary term, four (4) Indigenous Peoples were represented, equivalent to 2.5% participation in the legislative body.

There are three (3) high-level bodies: (i) the National Human Rights Commission (Decree 1396 of 1996); (ii) the National Commission on Indigenous Territories; and (iii) the Permanent Roundtable for National Consultation with Indigenous Peoples and Organisations (Decree 1397 of 1999). It has been identified that, as of 2023, there has been a greater guarantee of the right to participation in public affairs and a greater representation of Indigenous Peoples in different decision-making bodies. However, some peoples have indicated that participation in elections is low, mainly due to lack of organisation, access to information or political preferences of the council (cabildo) authorities that cause divisions within the community.

The community questionnaires show that in none of the five (5) cases are there people with a seat in the national parliament. Three (3) of the questionnaires report the election of men from the people/community to local government bodies, while only one (1) reports the participation of women at this level.

Right to food

Both the national questionnaire and the community questionnaires show violations of the right to food of Indigenous Peoples in Colombia. Some data show the complex nutritional situation and mortality of Indigenous children under five years old, mainly among the Wayuu people in La Guajira and the Embera and Wounaan people in Chocó. However, the lack of consolidated data on stunting cases with ethnic relevance is striking.

Findings from the five (5) Indigenous Navigator community questionnaires show evidence of reported stunting. Two questionnaires indicate rates of up to 30% of children affected, while three indicate figures of between 5 and 10% of children. It should be noted that these data are estimates made by the communities.

The communities highlight the food insecurity they face due to lack of economic resources, shortages in food production and difficulties in accessing land.

Right to the highest attainable standard of health

The Colombian state has developed specific health programmes for Indigenous Peoples, for example the delegation of care and programme development to the Indigenous health service provider network (IPSI). However, this health model and its resources are insufficient and do not respond to the social and cultural specificities and requirements of the communities.

This limitation is reflected in the results of the Indigenous Navigator's community questionnaire: in three (3) of the five (5) responses, health facilities were rated as "immediately accessible" or "accessible", while in the remaining two (2) they were considered "inaccessible" or "highly inaccessible", mainly due to distance and/or associated costs.

In addition, different Indigenous Peoples have identified that traditional healing practices and medicines have declined over the last twenty (20) years, related to the lack of protection and recognition of these practices.

Access to public services and access to water

Both the national questionnaire and the results of the community questionnaire deployed with different Indigenous Peoples reflect the difficulties in accessing water, mainly among the Wayuu people. None of the five Indigenous Peoples where the community questionnaire was deployed consider that they have access to drinking water services.

In any case, the national questionnaire (2024) reflects some progress in relation to the current government's initiatives in guaranteeing the right to water. Thus, it is mentioned that, under a human security and social justice approach, the government has been developing specific and differential proposals in the areas of housing, water and sanitation.

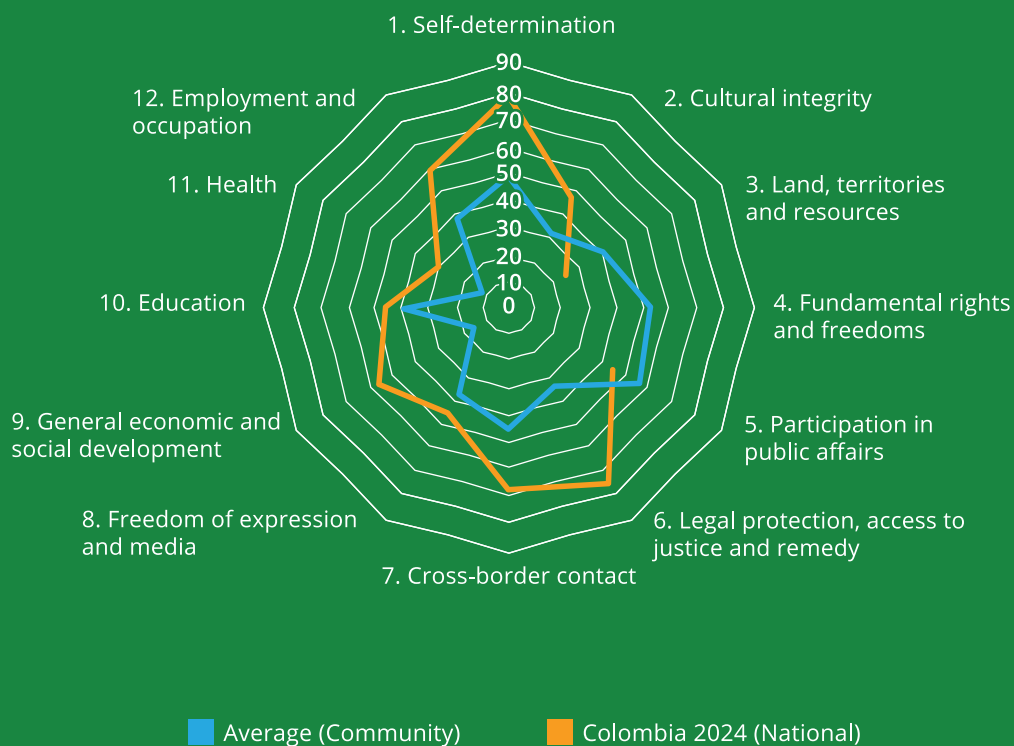
Implementation gaps

The Community Index and the National Indigenous Navigator Index are tools that assess the recognition and implementation of Indigenous Peoples' rights. Each is based on key questions within twelve (12) areas of rights, which are evaluated numerically (from 0 to 100) to facilitate comparison and visualisation of performance.

A high score indicates a higher level of recognition and fulfilment of rights, while a low score – located in the centre of the graph – indicates that these rights are not being adequately fulfilled. When both indexes are generated in the same country, comparison reveals whether the actual experience of communities is in line with what is set out in national laws, policies and programmes.

In Colombia, communities report less recognition of their rights in almost all areas except “Lands, territories and resources” and “Participation in public life”. The biggest differences are in “Legal protection, access to justice and redress” and “General economic and social development”. In addition, there are no national data available to assess the index for the area of “Fundamental Rights and freedoms”.

Comparison between Indigenous Navigator Community and National Index in Colombia



1.2.2 Other initiatives by civil society organisations.

1.2.2.1 Territorial Monitoring System

The National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia (ONIC) is working on the Territorial Monitoring System, which aims to monitor information in a geo-referenced manner on issues such as population, life plans, education, health, own economies, natural resources and biodiversity, public policies, human rights, prior consultations, territorial rights and territorial impacts.²⁴ This would rely on proprietary and freely accessible software, guaranteeing that ownership of the data is in the hands of the Indigenous Peoples themselves in order to guide their decision-making as well as evaluation of the implementation of their own and the state's public policies.

ONIC is promoting the recognition of data generated by Indigenous Peoples as official data due to the constitutional recognition of the self-governments of Indigenous territories (Articles 246 and 330 of the Political Constitution of Colombia).

1.2.2.2 Indigenous Geographic Information System

The Indigenous Geographic Information System of the National Commission of Indigenous Territories (CNTI) is a tool developed in coordination with the Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute (IGAC) designed to consult and analyse spatial data from the country's Indigenous territories.²⁵ It is a free and open-access tool.

The system includes information related to formalised Indigenous reservations, formalisation requests, community and census data, base mapping, areas of special regulation, environmental protection zone and land use planning. In addition, it includes information on public policies as well as extractive, mining, hydrocarbon, investment and infrastructure projects. This provides a broad overview of the state and problems of Indigenous territories and territorialities in the country.

1.2.3 State initiatives for the generation of citizen data

DANE is leading the project "Data in Action, Citizen Data Framework for Colombia and Implementation Pilots" with the objective of developing recommendations, good practices, guidelines, mechanisms and partnerships for citizen participation in the generation, validation and use of statistical data.

This project involves the participation of civil society organisations, academia, other state bodies and international partners. The Framework is organised by themes and actors: water quality, air, climate change, human rights, discrimination, peace. However, DANE indicated that to date there is no information on Indigenous Peoples or partnerships with organisations on this issue.

One of the achievements of the project is the first version of the document “Citizen Data Framework for Colombia”, which is the result of the participation of civil society organisations and is currently in the socialisation and validation phase. The Framework is expected to be published in 2025.

In addition, some developments in the regulatory framework have recognised the possibility of using citizen-generated data as a source for decision-making. By way of example, based on Decree 724 of 2024, it will take into account the self-censuses or own censuses for issuing the certification of information for the distribution of the resources of the Special Allocation of the General System of Participations.



Note: Leticia, Amazonas, Colombia. Woman Holding a Red Bag in Harbor. pexels.com

2 Challenges and opportunities

2.1 Challenges

Improving the availability and quality of data on Indigenous Peoples requires overcoming some practical challenges. This chapter systematises and analyses some of the main challenges identified by the participants in the framework of the Workshop, mainly: (i) distrust in the institutional framework; (ii) weaknesses in installed capacities; (iii) lack of participation and representation; (iv) lack of inter-institutional coordination; (v) data security and confidentiality; (vi) funding; (vii) research fatigue; (viii) quality; and (ix) type of data.



2.1.1 Mistrust of institutions

Participants voiced their mistrust of state institutions, highlighting state neglect leading to the invisibility of Indigenous Peoples, as well as instances of data manipulation by some institutions for political purposes. In addition, it is unclear to Indigenous Peoples how entities are using the data to guarantee their rights.

In this sense, Indigenous Peoples value the possibility of collecting data themselves and having this data recognised by the Colombian state, as in the case of their own self-censuses or censuses that allow them to have sovereignty over the data collected.

One of the main problems in terms of data collection and use identified by the Ombudsman's Office is the perceived distrust that Indigenous Peoples have of state authorities. The mistrust in official data arises mainly from the asymmetries generated between official statistical data and the measurement of data generated by Indigenous Peoples. For this reason, data systems concerning Indigenous Peoples must include indicators and variables that reflect their specific historical, social, political, legal, cultural, and economic contexts. The above is conducive to a genuine dialogue between the state and peoples' organisations such that the production of data and information is coordinated and in line with the policies of the state and ethnic peoples' organisations. In other words, it is a shared responsibility that must be monitored between the two actors - the State and Indigenous Peoples' organisations - in order to eradicate inequalities in data access and recording between the parties involved.

Mutual cooperation in the management and use of data highlights the importance of coordination between the state and Indigenous organizations, grounded in the principle of free, prior, and informed consent. This coordination must legally ensure that access to statistical information respects the participatory rights of the communities or Indigenous Peoples involved.



2.1.2 Absence of an ethnic and human rights-based approach in data collection, systematisation and dissemination

Participants identified weaknesses in the capacities of state entities to apply an ethnic and a human rights-based approach to data collection, systematisation and dissemination.

In relation to the installed capacities of the competent entities, it was indicated that the methodology used for data collection does not have an ethnic focus. For example, surveys are not inclusive and do not recognise the different worldviews of Indigenous Peoples, interviewers do not speak Indigenous Peoples' languages, nor is the storytelling (audio) taken into account as an authoritative source. The use of standard surveys does not include variables or indicators that reflect the reality of the peoples.

The participants expressed that, in the working groups involving communities and state entities, the communities provide information and training. However, due to the high turnover of civil servants, these capacities do not remain within the entities. Participants mentioned the need for the selection of suitable people and their long-term involvement.

In addition, participants made reference to the absence of a territorial approach that would support the presence of state entities throughout the national territory. Indigenous Peoples emphasised the need to understand the context and internal dynamics of each people, ensuring that information is shared with the communities. Entities should enter the territory with prior knowledge of where, how, and with whom to communicate in order to avoid conflicts with the communities where socialization or data collection activities will take place.

Indigenous Peoples, for their part, are generally not informed about the roles and responsibilities of these entities. In addition, there is a knowledge gap regarding their rights and the institutions tasked with guaranteeing them.



2.1.3 Lack of participation and representation

One of the biggest challenges in terms of data on Indigenous Peoples is ensuring their participation in the collection process. This difficulty is twofold. Firstly, the entities do not guarantee the full participation of the peoples in both questionnaire design and data collection.

Secondly, state entities face a challenge in identifying who represents the communities. The multiplicity of recognised authorities within the same community has hindered the participatory processes and mechanisms led by DANE. In this sense, state entities must get closer to Indigenous Peoples' forms of governance in order to guarantee due representation and participation in data collection processes.

By way of example, participants expressed their concern about the lack of effective participation of Wayuu peoples in the formulation of the Wayuu Census questions. In addition, it was reported that the calls did not reach the entire Wayuu territory, which meant that they were not adequately representative.

In this sense, the participants identified the need to guarantee access to information, generate roundtables to guarantee representation and discuss the needs of Indigenous Peoples.



2.1.4 Lack of inter-institutional coordination

Participants highlighted the absence of a mechanism to ensure interoperability between systems. There is no robust and comprehensive system to ensure the uniformity of data held by different state entities.



2.1.5 Data security and confidentiality

One of the issues addressed at the Workshop was data security and confidentiality. Some organisations, such as ONIC, expressed their concern about the Wayuu System's geoviewer tool, as it could generate security problems due to the geo-referencing of the clusters. The exposed elements and the economic elements in these territories make this data a risk for Indigenous communities.

In any case, DANE has established rules and protocols to ensure statistical confidentiality. Therefore, it cannot share individual information about any person who participated in the census. However, under the principle of publicity, DANE must guarantee public access to the information it collects to support the development of public policies in the territory.



2.1.6 Funding

Indigenous Peoples' data is not being sufficiently funded; there is a need for stronger coordination among Indigenous organisations.



2.1.7 Research fatigue

Participants expressed concern about Indigenous Peoples' fatigue with data collection processes related to the lack of clear information about the objective and process as well as an absence of feedback or follow-up mechanisms. The information obtained does not go back to the communities, reflecting a lack of feedback from the data and low use of the data to defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples.



2.1.8 Data quality

Participants from Indigenous Peoples highlighted the gaps in the official data. For this purpose, it was identified that there are no methodologies and data to differentiate between Indigenous Peoples and other peoples. In addition, participants indicated that there is no rigorous, updated or contrasted information with Indigenous Peoples. As an example, the Misak people pointed out possible inconsistencies in the 2018 Census, which reflects 2,400 fewer people than those identified by the same people.

Participants indicated that there is a lack of data on Indigenous populations in the city context, which generates invisibility and a lack of knowledge of the guarantee of their rights. Finally, publicity and therefore access to information is limited.

2.1.9 Data types

Participants indicated that one of the biggest challenges is access to information on the guarantee of Indigenous Peoples' rights. As an example, participants highlighted that official data fail to capture the situation of land rights, an area largely documented by Indigenous Peoples themselves, with little examination of the constraints on land access and other human rights violations.

2.2 Opportunities

The Workshop provided a venue for sharing experiences and good practices in data collection, systematisation and dissemination by different state and civil society actors. During the Workshop, information was shared on the different mandates and initiatives on data on Indigenous Peoples, identifying potential complementarity between official and citizen-generated data.

2.2.1 Complementarity of data from official and citizen sources

2.2.1.1 Processes

One of the identified opportunities to strengthen the mandate of national statistical agencies is to include processes with a human rights-based approach in the collection of data on Indigenous Peoples.

As an example, the process of implementing the Indigenous Navigator in Wayuu and Misak communities was brought up. The process included a socialisation of the Navigator, approval by the authorities, and preparation of a community team to conduct the surveys with the necessary skills to ensure an ethnic approach. In this way, questions can be applied with a territorial approach taking into account the needs of the specific context, including that the interviewer speaks the same Indigenous language as the interviewees.

In addition, the process enabled intergenerational dialogue and the participation of different groups within the community, such as women and young people. In this way, the implementation of the surveys promoted dialogue within the communities, the transmission of knowledge from elders to youth, and the preservation of oral traditions.

DANE clarified that the data gathered through the Indigenous Navigator cannot be considered official statistics, since population data require adherence to specific methodological and temporal criteria. For the same reason, DANE cannot recognize the self-census data conducted under the Ministry of Home Affairs as official, which hinders data interoperability. Still the Indigenous Navigator could complement official data, provided there is willingness from Indigenous Peoples.

2.2.1.2 Data types

One of the main themes of the Workshop was the type of data collected by DANE, as it should go beyond demographic data to include qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess the state of the guarantee of Indigenous Peoples' human rights.

It should be noted that the participants identified the Indigenous Navigator as a tool that allows them to define their own priorities on what they want to measure, guaranteeing the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples under international standards for the protection of human rights. The implementation of the Indigenous Navigator in Colombia has strengthened respect for self-determination and autonomy of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that data is by and for them.

Based on the above, DANE was invited to engage in a dialogue so that, based on the identification of the needs of Indigenous Peoples, a new paradigm of citizen data can be approached.

2.2.1.3 Confidentiality system

An opportunity for improvement in the collection of official and unofficial data lies in the information protection and data confidentiality systems.

DANE's mandate is governed by two principles: confidentiality and public production. In relation to the principle of confidentiality, under the guidelines established by the United Nations data must be published in aggregated form so that individual persons cannot be identified. Confidentiality entails statistical secrecy, under which confidential data referring to natural or legal persons must remain confidential.²⁶ On the other hand, the principle of public production refers to the fact that statistical information must be public; therefore, the producers of such information must guarantee its public access and establish systems that allow users to easily find and consult the data.²⁷

In relation to the confidentiality of the data generated by citizens, it was emphasised that ownership of this data lies with the Indigenous Peoples themselves. Accordingly, they decide at any time what information to make public.

3 Collaborative work for a better production of data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia

Different organisations and state entities in Colombia involved in data collection and dissemination face significant challenges in improving the production of data on Indigenous Peoples. As shown in the previous chapter, these challenges include a lack of coordination and distrust of state institutions. Overcoming these challenges requires strengthening coordinated efforts between state entities and Indigenous organisations. Based on the above, this chapter identifies the need to strengthen collaboration between state entities and Indigenous organizations in data production and presents the work plan agreed upon as a result of the Workshop.

3.1 The case for strengthening collaboration in the production of Indigenous Peoples' data

Collaboration to improve data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia is crucial for several reasons. Primarily, it can improve the methodologies and type of data collected by including an ethical and a human rights-based approach to data collection.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the methodologies and processes used by state entities can be strengthened by including an ethnic and territorial approach that allows data collection based on the needs of Indigenous Peoples and respecting their human rights. Coordinated work could open up the possibility of including qualitative data in the analysis of the guarantee of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples in Colombia. It also opens up the opportunity to harmonise tools, criteria or standards for data collection between official and citizen-generated processes.

Secondly, a coordinated approach would improve relations between the parties with a view to overcoming the distrust that has developed between Indigenous Peoples, their organisations and state entities, promoting dialogue and strengthening the spaces for participation and representation of Indigenous Peoples before the national statistics authority and the National Human Rights Institution. In addition, collaboration between the different actors allows better use of data to monitor the design and implementation of public policies.

Finally, a coordinated approach could promote capacity building of the different actors with a view to exchanging experiences at community, national and international levels.

According to the Ombudsman's Office, collaborative work must take into account the current dynamics of how different Indigenous organizations and collectives manage and access information, including:

1. Exercise of data sovereignty by Indigenous Peoples so that the usefulness of data concerning these populations can more broadly inform the development of public policies by the state aimed at their materialisation, implementation and fulfilment;
2. State of the fundamental, collective and integral rights of Indigenous Peoples;
3. Control of data on Indigenous Peoples' lands;
4. Situation of collective ownership of Indigenous territories;
5. Strengthening data governance as a right of Indigenous Peoples so that the scope and implications of the information they hold is disseminated with the endorsement of Indigenous Peoples and organisations;
6. Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in open data policies as a principle of peoples' self-determination in their right to exercise administration, management, governance and sovereignty over their data; and
7. Generation of Indigenous Peoples' information focused on, among other things, economic and social development, housing, health, employment, education and culture.

The areas identified in the work plan designed jointly by the different actors who participated in the Workshop are reflected below.

3.2 Action Plan

Effective coordination and collaboration among all relevant actors are essential to develop solutions to the challenges and barriers that hinder improvements in data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia. To initiate this collaboration, the Workshop participants identified four main areas of collaboration and responsibilities:

3.2.1 Data collection: official data and citizen-generated data

Work is needed to identify Colombia's Indigenous Peoples so that their worldviews, cultures, and human rights realities are made visible from a territorial approach. This includes information related to who they are, what they do and where they are located. This data should be **about** Indigenous Peoples, but also generated **from within** their own communities.

For this purpose, it was proposed to establish a dialogue roundtable with the different actors and to analyse possible areas of improvement for the collection of official and citizen-generated data, as well as their interoperability. Dialogue can open up spaces for teaching about data collection and management. It was also

indicated that protocols for the exchange of information and a comparative analysis of existing information could be developed within the framework of the dialogue roundtable.

The actors identified as responsible parties included:

- National, regional and local institutions. In addition, other responsible parties are communities, from the territory, the national Indigenous organisations and spaces for consultation such as the permanent roundtable for consultation, etc.
- National Human Rights Commission and the National Commission on Indigenous Territories.
- Other civil society organisations working for Indigenous Peoples' rights.
- The Colombian Ombudsman's Office.
- DANE.

3.2.2 Use of data

Another area of joint work is the use of data as the main input for the design and monitoring of public policies. In this regard, it was noted that it is necessary to define the purpose of the data: why it is needed, how it will be used, and with whom it will be shared. In this way, teams should be created from the Indigenous Peoples that can coordinate with state entities. Finally, emphasis was placed on the need to establish mechanisms that safeguard data generated by Indigenous Peoples and to strengthen their archiving and data management capacities, so that such data remain under their own control rather than that of external authorities.

Responsibility rests with whoever collects the data—state entities, Indigenous Peoples, or civil society organizations—while the community determines its use. Data collectors must ensure communication and respect the right to information.

The Ombudsman's Office called for coordination between the census entity and Indigenous Peoples in relation to the production and dissemination of statistical data on social, economic and demographic issues of Indigenous Peoples. In this regard, it was identified as a priority to determine the public nature of the data, as well as those of a reserved nature.

3.2.3 Exchange of experiences at national and international level

The exchange of experiences was identified as an essential activity to strengthen the processes of collection of data on Indigenous Peoples, recognising the areas of experience of the different actors. Potential areas for knowledge sharing include methodologies for data collection and analysis, qualitative approaches, as well as knowledge on human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights. In order to develop this area of work, it was agreed that it was necessary to identify the actors who would participate, manage resources and organise the events.

The Ombudsman's Office drew attention to the need for training in the territories of Indigenous communities to strengthen, among other things, Indigenous self-censuses or own censuses, construction of variables and indicators, and data storage.

Participants identified various relevant actors and their roles:

- The consortium that manages the Indigenous Navigator plays a fundamental role in the exchange of experiences, both nationally and internationally, by helping to build capacities on human rights standards and the construction of indicators.
- DANE may participate as a technical statistical authority.
- The Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute plays a key role in identifying land access issues.

3.2.4 Harmonisation of collection tools and/or standards and methodologies

One of the main needs that was identified throughout the Workshop is to have clear guidelines to determine the quality standards for citizen-generated data to be considered official data. In this regard, it is a priority to discuss harmonisation of tools and standardisation of data with the various actors involved in the collection of data on Indigenous Peoples.

Thus, it is a priority that harmonisation standards are shared by DANE. Due to the absence of a system that guarantees the interoperability of the data generated by the different state entities, it is necessary to first create a working group for this purpose.

The Ombudsman's Office called for support of Indigenous Peoples' initiatives to improve data quality, adopt technological tools, and apply technical standards, strengthening their data sovereignty despite the diversity among Indigenous Peoples. Among the actors identified as being able to develop this activity are:

- DANE in consultation with the communities. Other state entities depending on the needs of the peoples, e.g. the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Sustainable Development.
- Community leaders when it comes to data collection and own methodologies. It is important that, while harmonising with the state, the autonomy of the peoples is maintained.

3.2.5 Other possible areas of work

Participants identified other possible areas of work:

- **Funding:** financial and technical support is needed to strengthen work on Indigenous Peoples' data in a cross-cutting manner.
- **Data collection processes:** including methodologies with an ethnic and territorial approach, guaranteeing the participation and representation of Indigenous Peoples.
- **Data protection:** working together on security-sensitive data protection systems using a territorial approach.
- **Inclusion of more Indigenous Peoples:** Although some citizen-generated data initiatives represent progress in identifying and raising awareness of the problems faced by some communities in relation to the guarantee of their human rights, these experiences need to be extended to other Indigenous Peoples and communities.
- **Raising awareness on the role of data governance for Indigenous women:** the Ombudsman's Office recommended raising awareness of this issue in order to promote the principles of equality in public policies for the realisation of their social and fundamental rights in accordance with differential approaches.

4 Conclusion

The Workshop “Partnerships to improve the availability, quality and use of data on Indigenous Peoples in Colombia” reflected on the efforts and progress made in data collection in Colombia. The discussion focused on the need to strengthen the processes and types of data collected through a human rights, ethnic and territorial approach.

Colombia’s technical statistical agency, DANE, has been advancing in citizen-generated data initiatives, where it is imperative to strengthen the participation of Indigenous Peoples and their organisations. Still DANE faces challenges with ensuring greater participation of Indigenous Peoples in the design of interviews and data collection processes. Moreover, DANE needs to include qualitative data that can inform the design and monitoring of public policies.

The National Human Rights Institution has made progress in the implementation of the Data Analytics Centre initiative with the aim of systematising information collected in the field and from the cases handled by the institution.

Data generated by Indigenous Peoples themselves has demonstrated how indicators can measure the protection of their human rights and their exercise of self-determination. However, these initiatives need to be expanded throughout the national territory to cover as many Indigenous Peoples and communities as possible.

Coordinated work between state entities and Indigenous Peoples is necessary to strengthen data. To this end, it is necessary to open channels of dialogue to establish protocols for harmonising data and ensuring interoperability. Only through quality data and participatory processes is it possible to influence the design and implementation of public policies that have an impact on guaranteeing the human rights of Indigenous Peoples.

