
Voice, Eyes and Ears Social Accountability in Latin America

Case Studies on Mechanisms of
Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Discussion materials for the meeting organized by the “Civil Society Team”, World Bank



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Social Audit and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

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Preface

Over the past several years, Latin America and the Caribbean have been witnesses to the emergence of a number of important experiences in social accountability, in which citizens play an important role in the definition, monitoring and evaluation of government activities. Mechanisms such as participatory budgeting at the municipal level, evaluation of public services by users and the free access and analyses of the State's financial information have become more common throughout the continent.

The growing level of citizen participation in the continent, accompanied by a marked process of democratization in our countries as well as the lack of confidence in the institutions controlled by the State, has produced a range of experiences of varied importance that today are the focus of attention of the international development community.

This type of experience is reflected in the strategy of the World Bank for engaging with civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean, which focuses on the empowerment of the poor and the promotion of social accountability mechanisms. Of special interest has been the development of social control mechanisms that support strategies, policies and concrete actions to reduce poverty in our countries. The experiences that are presented in this book

served as discussion material for the Second Regional Forum on Participation and Poverty Reduction, which was attended by over 100 participants from civil society, government and international cooperation institutions from ten countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

The challenges that remain are many: How can the necessary capacities of the different actors be developed so that these mechanisms are successful? How is it possible to ensure greater sustainability of innovative experiences that have shown good results in the pilot phase? How can greater coordination be promoted between accountability mechanisms of the State itself and this new universe of mechanisms emerging from civil society? These and other questions should be the basis of a conceptual exchange to which we would like to contribute with the publication of this book, gathered from a number of rich experiences and whose backdrop is our region.

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Preliminary lessons from case studies

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In this section we wish to employ certain analytical concepts applicable to all the cases in order to frame a debate that incorporates conceptually all of the experiences analyzed. We will divide this section into three areas: contextual elements, elements internal to civil society, and theoretical conclusions.

This thematic division corresponds to three core aspects of an analysis of experiences with accountability and for the evaluation of potential innovations in this area: the nature of the regime and political actors, which we refer to as contextual elements; the nature of civil society, which plays a decisive role in the success or failure of accountability initiatives; and the theory we use to interpret these phenomena, and which is still evolving.

Contextual elements

1. The existence of innovative constitutional and legal frameworks promotes and facilitates experimentation with social audits.

As can be inferred from the theoretical framework described above, accountability requires enabling legal frameworks. This means, in the first instance, that national constitutions provide for some type of mechanism that ensures the ability to demand rights; that they create public entities whose mission is to

ensure accountability or to require that the government do so; and that, in addition to checks and balances, the branches of government share a common obligation to citizens to open themselves up to scrutiny and evaluation.

It is clear from the case studies that laws enacted in several Latin American countries require accountability from government agencies and facilitate the creation of mixed entities for that purpose. While the case studies do not provide many specifics on the legal set-up, it is clear that the most successful ones have appealed to laws regulating constitutional principles to ensure their development and survival. At minimum they have appealed to the right to petition and the right to information, or to freedom of information. In some cases they invoke a right to participation which may or may not be legally regulated. The only cases that fall into this category are: a) Participatory Monitoring of Land and Housing Policies in the Municipality of Quilmes, Buenos Aires. In this case the local legislature—the Deliberating Council—approved a grassroots initiative for the creation of a Community Council to monitor such policies. b) The Citizen Commission for Transparency in Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras. Here the municipal legislature—the Municipal Corporation—authorized its creation and assigned it wide-

ranging powers. c) To a lesser degree, the case of Totorá, Bolivia, illustrates this reasoning since the monitoring role of the traditional peasant organization is made possible pursuant to laws on transparency in information in Bolivia.

In the case of citizen audit of the quality of democracy in Costa Rica, interventions by the Office for the Defense of Inhabitants' Rights (the equivalent of an ombudsman's office) has played a critical role in conducting an evaluation of the quality of democracy throughout the country, although this experience is not explicitly premised on demanding a right. Elsewhere, the Initiative for Freedom of Access to Government Information in Guatemala is organizing a campaign to demand a right not contemplated in the constitution (freedom of information).

In contrast, the Independent Budget Analysis in Peru has received no support or endorsement from any government agency. It is therefore confined to a sort of academic exercise anchored in civil society. The same is true of the Bogotá *Cómo Vamos* [How are we Doing] Project: while the district and municipal governments have been cooperative, it lacks an institutional anchor and binding force under the law. The same can also be said, based on the available information, of the Application of the Report Card in Peru.

2. The political will of governments is a critical factor in implementing accountability initiatives.

Given the chasm between law and practice, or the absence of innovative laws, the political will of cer-

tain governments is the main factor that allows or encourages the emergence of social audit experiments. It could be argued that most of the case studies examined here are based on this political will, in the absence of appropriate legal frameworks. Such is the case of the Bogotá *como Vamos*, the State Counsel's [PGR] Transparency Project in El Salvador and the Citizen Commission for Transparency in Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras, at least at the outset. And the pattern also holds true to some extent in the case of Totorá, Bolivia. The Cantonal Road Committees [Juntas Viales Cantonales] in Costa Rica represent a direct government initiative. In all of these cases, government cooperation has played a critical role in promoting these experiences.

3. Civil society initiatives are essential to improving compliance with the law and facilitating horizontal accountability.

The case of the Sworn Affidavits of National Senators in Argentina shows that established means of intragovernmental and intergovernmental audit do not work automatically unless pressure is brought to bear by civil society. Therefore, the demand for transparency cannot be regarded as merely a way of establishing the social audit, but rather as an impetus for making horizontal accountability work. The same can be said of the case of the PGR in El Salvador, which facilitates the activation of internal controls, and of the creation of the Cantonal Road Committees in Costa Rica, where the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation and certain municipal governments want to involve the population to improve efficiency in public works.

On Civil Society

1. The autonomy of civil society organizations and movements vis-à-vis the government and political parties is a crucial factor in the success of social audit experiences.

The cases examined here indicate that the autonomy of the groups involved is a prerequisite for the very existence of citizen-based methods for social audit. Political dependency on the part of civil society organizations would destroy the legitimacy of such efforts. As the Totorá, Bolivia, case shows, the autonomous, indigenous organization has the strength and representativity required to carry out its responsibilities. The Bogotá Como Vamos project, the Independent Budget Analysis in Peru, and the State of the Nation Project in Costa Rica have a different kind of autonomy —professional autonomy— in other words, exemplary academic institutions that provide a springboard for evaluations. Every case study discussed the need to build legitimacy, and legitimacy is always based on autonomy.

2. Civil society's autonomy is contingent upon the availability of experts, the financial self-sustainability of the organizations, and the political will of its members.

All of the experiences presented include an intermediary role by some NGO or some individuals with the professional training required for the exercise. Social audit is a technically complex process and is not accessible to all citizens. Therefore, one of the keys to the success of these experiences is the availability of a pool of professionals which, in turn, requires having the means to hire them.

The need for technical expertise is more evident in projects whose explicit mission is the professional evaluation of public policy, such as is the case of the State of the Nation project in Costa Rica, the Citizens Initiative for Freedom of Access to Government Information in Guatemala, the Independent Budget Analysis in Peru, and the Application of the Citizen Report Card in Social Programs in Peru. For obvious reasons, these case studies required a large amount of funding and a degree of institutional stability that can only be provided by academic institutions. An exception to this is the Bogotá Como Vamos project, in which a press agency and a civic association provided both the funding and the institutional stability.

Nonetheless, even smaller projects such as the Community Information System in Primary Health Care in Arizmendi, Venezuela, demonstrate the need for technical know-how that is not available in the communities that benefit from the action. The cost-benefit of such experiences must be evaluated from the standpoint of the potential for citizens to acquire and develop ownership of the technical expertise used in the research and in terms of the potential replication of these experiences based on a technical package that has been developed.

3. The support of international financial institutions, foundations, and international NGOs is key to launching social audits.

In most of the experiences described, international funding emerges as a conditioning factor that made them possible. This is true of all national evaluation projects, such as the State of the Nation Project, the

Initiative for Freedom of Access to Information in Guatemala, the Independent Budget Analysis and the Application of the Citizen Report Card in Social Programs, both in Peru. Even some community-based experiences, such as those in Arizmendi, Venezuela, and Cochabamba, Bolivia, require such funding.

The only exceptions to this are cases of municipal governments that genuinely look for support in a pre-established civil society. Such is the case of Participatory Monitoring of Land and Housing Policies in the Municipality of Quilmes, Buenos Aires, and the Citizen Commission on Transparency in Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras. In these cases, local governments or certain government agencies fund the initiative, as is also the case of the State Counsel's office (PGR) in El Salvador. In cases where these entities are absent, or the government is unreceptive, international assistance is a must.

4. *The personal and group networks that make these experiences possible should be studied.*

None of the cases mentioned here discussed the networks to which the leadership of the civil society organizations promoting these experiences belongs. This is important because understanding these networks helps us to assess the viability of these experiences and the potential for expanding them. Networks help to locate financial and technical support, disseminate experiences, and convene social actors. We are talking about what is commonly referred to as "social capital." Another type of social capital has to do with legitimacy and the trust placed in the organizations.

5. *The success of social audit mechanisms depends on the strength and density of civil society organizations.*

The analysis of all the cases reveals that they are only successful to the extent that strong social and civic networks predate the project. As the case of Arizmendi, Venezuela and, to a lesser degree, San Antonio del Monte, El Salvador, demonstrate, projects are precarious in places where there is no local civil society presence. In contrast, the potential for success of experiences such as Quilmes, Argentina, and Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras, lies in the density of local civil society. At another level, the success of national checks and balances, such as that reflected in the State of the Nation project, is contingent not only on the academic quality of the participants, but also on their legitimacy in the eyes of civil society, which enables them to call upon and convene the latter. Social audits require a strong civil society.

6. *The most successful cases of social audit are those in which hybrid organizations (civic-government) are created; these are institutionally innovated and create forums for citizen empowerment.*

The cases of Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras and Quilmes, Argentina, demonstrate the potential for collective learning and citizen participation in the development, monitoring and evaluation of public policy through the creation of citizen councils vested with decision-making power. While these councils may be limited in scope, the fact is that their powers in the specific areas under their purview far exceed those of national advisory bodies. This path to citizen empowerment should be explored more thor-

oughly, even though their success depends on the existence of an organized, legitimate civil society that solves the problem of representation. Horizontal accountability mechanisms revolve around the legitimacy of citizen representation (even if it's only symbolic) and are contingent upon the genuine decision-making ability.

7. The potential durability of the social audit experiences appears to depend on their ability to transmit capacity, and citizens' ability to acquire technical know-how.

It is no coincidence that most of the experiences analyzed here include training as a core element. This issue is key to the democratization of public life and to keep audit entities from turning into mere bureaucratic institutions far removed from citizens. This need is most deeply felt in Totorá, Bolivia, where the large-scale training efforts are remarkable. This is also the case of the Cantonal Road Boards in Costa Rica, which anticipate a strong need for training. And the same goes for the PGR project in El Salvador, which trains public officials.

Theoretical Observations

1. The concept of social audit articulated in this effort seems conceptually and symbolically weak and polysemous, in that it includes a broad spectrum of very different types of case studies.

The notion of social audit invokes many different types of processes, ranging from casuistic encounters between citizens and authorities to institutionalized systems of consultation and decision-making regarding public policy. Transparency is understood as public information, while mechanisms for citizen control or oversight are not created. The conceptual frame of reference needs to be more rigorously developed.

2. The correlation between citizen audit and the new approach to public administration that views citizens as clients is problematic.

Regarding citizens as consumers weakens the symbolic and political potential of the social audit. In effect, social audit can only be understood in the framework of rights, as an integral part of the consolidation of citizenship in its broadest sense.

Monitoring and the Use of Public Information

Citizen Initiative for Freedom of Information in Guatemala Citizen Action

Edgar Alfredo Pape -Yalibat

Summary

Fifteen Guatemalan civil society organizations joined together to form a **Citizens' Observatory**. Its purpose is to initiate processes and activities that strengthen the democratic capacity to exercise the right to freedom of access to government information and to hold public officials accountable for their administrative actions. Structurally, the Observatory is a voluntary, multistakeholder council that has entrusted Acción Ciudadana [Citizen Action] to serve as its Executive Secretary for monitoring activities in the framework of the project entitled **Citizen initiative for freedom of information**. The project was implemented between April 2002 and June 2004 and divided into three monitoring phases: pre-electoral, electoral, and post-electoral. The case presented here is from the first phase and was implemented in Guatemala City, the capital, and in the municipalities of Chimaltenango and Cobán, Alta Verapaz. The most significant outcomes obtained in the first year of the project were: (i) consolidation of the Citizens Observatory as a civil society entity for the promotion of access to government information; (ii) collective design, editing, and publication of a Citizens' Guide to Freedom of Information [Manual Ciudadano de Acceso a la Información Pública]; (iii) outcome report based on the first pilot experience that put to the test the Guatemalan government's information system; and (iv) development of strategic alliances to use the Manual and the standardization of other instruments to be used in the search, processing, receipt, use, evaluation, and dissemination of administrative acts and government documents.

Background

The Guatemalan government is distinguished by the existence of clandestine records containing personal information that were used illegally to violate people's rights and by a tendency toward secrecy in public administration. The challenges of enforcing constitutional rights (Arts. 30 and 31 of the Political Constitution of the Republic) and break-

ing with the secrecy that limits democratic participation—both commitments adopted in the Peace Accords—are the keystones for advocating freedom of access to government information; this includes *habeas data*, publicizing administrative acts, and accountability.

This case study has to do with citizens' demands for accountability, the territory of the fifteen sectors associated with the Citizens' Observatory in recognition of the correlation between social audit and participatory evaluation and freedom of access to documents held by the government. In a country where secrecy in the conduct of public administration is the rule, creating instruments, processes, and entities capable of developing a freedom of information agenda can contribute to increased transparency and productivity in poverty reduction projects.

The outcomes of the access to information monitoring experience, which was applied in various categories to 67 government administrative units, confirm Guatemalan officials' tendency toward secrecy in providing government information and offers some clarity and input in how to deal with it.

Objectives

To contribute to building a legal and institutional framework that ensures freedom of access to government information through the organization of a civil society entity (Citizens' Observatory) with the following objectives:

- a) implement pilot projects to standardize instruments and procedures for access to public information (government spending, procurement and contracts);
- b) Lobby and advocate in favor of a Freedom of Information Law; and
- c) Establish strategic alliances with national and international actors on freedom of information.

Processes and Methods

a. Monitoring by the Citizens' Observatory

Fifteen organizations are responsible for monitoring activities, including associations, academic research centers, press agencies, and women's and Maya organizations. They joined forces in June 2002, to form the Citizens' Observatory for Freedom of Information. The direct beneficiaries of the project are the constituents of the organizations themselves.

These organizations came to the realization that they would not be able accomplish their particular sector-based objectives without information. They decided, therefore, to monitor the system for access to government documents and archives, and they chose Acción Ciudadana to lead the program. Acción Ciudadana is a civil society institution created in 1996 with a mission to promote transparency and democratic participation by creating links between the government and civil society.

In order to carry out this initiative, Acción Ciudadana hired a coordinator and assistant, both public policy specialists, as well as a monitoring team that includes paid employees and volunteers. Relations between Acción Ciudadana's team and civil society organizations are characterized by mutual respect and regulated by standards of conduct previously approved by the Observatory.

b. Testing the Freedom of Information system in 67 government agencies

The monitoring experience was based on selecting a set of relevant issues and information sources to

monitor the freedom of information system. In order to respond to the question: What will be monitored? the Citizens' Observatory consulted with its constituents regarding the types of information of interest and pertinent to their daily work. This was followed by a survey of government institutions, the development of a monitoring plan, and finally, the hiring and training of monitors.

The Citizens' Guide to Freedom of Information was developed simultaneously using feedback from the monitors' experiences and consultant services for issues relating to laws, and the design and procedures of government budgets, and procurement and contracting systems. Freedom of Information monitoring activities and the role played by the actors within the Observatory are summarized in the chart below.

CHART 1: MONITORING FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES	ACTORS	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (SUBACTIVITIES)	INDICATORS AND MEASUREMENT UNITS
Monitoring general information	All members of the Citizens' Observatory and Acción Ciudadana -AC-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify issues and agencies to be monitored - Monitoring Plan - Monitor and record the process - Design of notes and catalogue cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 180 freedom of information requests, each with their respective catalogue card - Monitoring register - Elements for use and feedback for the Citizens' Guide. - Records and reports
Monitoring Government Spending information	Acción Ciudadana Multistakeholder Roundtables Alta Verapaz y Chimaltenango.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of public spending instruments - Consulting services on budget and freedom of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of requests on capital spending, projects, and others. - Information denied and/or received.
Monitoring Procurement and Contracting	Acción Ciudadana Multistakeholder Roundtables Alta Verapaz y Chimaltenango	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulting services on government procurement-contracts - Specific manual on procurement-contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of requests on procurement and contracts and contractor records. Report (received/denied)
Monitoring Gender-based data	Women's organizations in the Observatory with support from AC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring inclusion of the gender perspective in public programs. - Validation of Monitoring Manual with women's organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requests for information - Information denied and/or received. - Petition for penalties against those who refuse to provide information.
Monitoring cultural diversity	Council of Maya Organization with support from AC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey of indigenous rights programs – - Monitoring inclusion of a multicultural approach in public programs. - Press campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of requests for information - Information denied and/or received - Consultation of the Monitoring Manual - Quekchi-Cakchiquel radio or TV spots

c. How was monitoring performed?

The pilot monitoring experience included approaching 5 information sources in 67 government institutions. There were three types of information requests: individual, institutional, and by the Citizens Observatory. The Citizens Observatory selected the issues and information sources, using the following instruments:

- Request forms (individual, institutional, and from the Citizens Observatory).
- Institutional catalogue card for monitoring and recording information requested and received.
- Workshops and focus groups with participants.
- Citizens' Guide to Freedom of Information.
- Specific guides to monitoring information on government spending, procurements, and contracts.

- Consultative workshops with women's groups and Maya organizations.
- Media strategies to advocate for freedom of access and publicize monitoring outcomes.
- Lobbying congressional deputies to move forward with the Freedom of Information Bill.
- Establishment of alliances with national actors, the Human Rights Ombudsman, and international actors like Article XIX and Transparencia Internacional.
- Advocacy strategy for the passage of the Freedom of Information Bill.

d. Budget

The budget is US \$250,000, 75% of which comes from USAID's Civil Society Program -PSC/USAID-

CHART 2: GENERAL BUDGET, FUNDING SOURCES AND BUDGET FOR FIRST YEAR OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROJECT, IN U.S. DOLLARS.

BUDGET CATEGORY	TOTAL BUDGET	PSC/USAID FUNDS	AC FUNDS matching	TOTAL YEAR 1
<i>Wages and stipends</i>	95,256	95,256		23,150
<i>Consultative sessions/monitoring experiences and payment of monitors</i>	34,630	21,340	13,290	16,130
<i>Monitoring Access to Public Spending and Contracts (municipalities)</i>	25,950	14,975	10,975	20,950
<i>Workshops and seminars</i>	14,866	11,841	3,025	4,070
<i>Press work</i>	17,800	17,800		1,850
<i>Training for Citizens Observatory</i>	15,082	15,082		2,630
<i>Training for Government officials</i>	4,100	4,100		0
<i>Publications</i>	8,796	7,606	1,190	2,196
<i>Press releases and dissemination in written press</i>	21,520		21,520	7,500
<i>Furniture, equipment and other overhead costs</i>	12,000	12,000		
TOTAL BUDGET	250,000	200,000	50,000	78,476

grant; Acción Ciudadana finances the other 25%. Assistance from PRODECA, Denmark, for launching the monitoring program in the municipalities is included in the latter. Acción Ciudadana funded the press releases at a reasonable cost thanks to in-kind contributions from one of the country's main newspapers. This fosters sustainability through matching funds for transparency and social accountability projects. More specifically, of the total amount allocated for the first year of the project, direct funding for implementation of the first monitoring experience is approximately \$41,000 annually, including publication of the Citizens' Guide to Freedom of Information.

Outcomes

The monitoring experiences have served to solidify the **Citizens Observatory's** reputation as an institutional reference point in the area of Freedom of Information. Its members acquired technical and organizational skills to advocate for respect for this right. As direct beneficiaries of this project, the Citizens' Observatory's stakeholders and constituents became familiar with laws and regulations, negotiating techniques, and instruments to enforce the right to freedom of information.

Monitoring in Alta Verapaz and Chimaltenango (carried out by the Multistakeholder Roundtables [Mesas de Concertación] created by the Peace Accords) has provided measurement units to monitor public spending at the municipal level and laid the groundwork for citizen mobilization and education regarding freedom of information. Besides raising aware-

ness about this right, which indirectly benefits all citizens, the Citizens' Guide to Freedom of Awareness represents a concrete contribution as a basic tool for activities to monitor public spending and particularly the social audit taking place in the provinces.

Another outcome of monitoring pertains to testing the freedom of information system in 67 government institutions. This process confirmed the persistent secrecy in public administrative actions. These were not only due to freedom of information restrictions, but rather to public officials who remain silent and ignore citizens, particularly when the requests come from everyday citizens. The most serious cases of secrecy were recorded in denials of information on government contracts and budget management.

On the positive side, the documents received during the monitoring process served as feedback for the Observatory's activities, particularly in the area of journalistic research and auditing of municipal projects. They also served other, internal purposes of the organizations such as institutional planning, budgets and reports to the government. Here the receptivity to suggestions displayed by some more open officials should be highlighted. For example, the Social Security Institute added to its statistics data on **female members and CEOs**. Thanks to the Citizens Observatory's petitions, other institutions are more sensitive to including data of interest to **indigenous populations** in the information they manage.

The experience has left advocacy lessons in terms of accountability, particularly because it has con-

tributed to pressuring officials who, in the case of Guatemala, remain trapped by a level of secrecy that impedes the effectiveness of anti-corruption programs.

In terms of alliances, one of the project's accomplishments was the monitoring conducted by other organizations such as the Mutual Support Group [Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo-GAM] and the National Council on Human Rights [Consejo Nacional de Derechos Humanos- CONADEHGUA] on the military budget; dissemination of the techniques used by the observatory contributed to their efforts to the national budget in general. Moreover, the sharing of experience with the Coordinadora Si Vamos por la Paz and its use of the Guide to Freedom of Information in social audit activities served to broaden project coverage in different municipalities around the country.

In addition, a **cooperation agreement has been signed with the Human Rights Ombudsman [Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos]**, to impose moral, and to the extent possible, legal penalties against officials who refuse to provide requested government documents. The Social Audit Committees that are currently being established in the municipalities pursuant to the new Decentralization Law and the new Municipal Code also will use the Guide.

Limitations and Opportunities

Two basic limitations were encountered: The first is the difficulty of maintaining the "cohesion" of a

voluntary civil society group, when its members do not see immediate results relevant to their interests. Because freedom of information is not a priority on the citizen agenda, greater effort is required to raise "consciousness" in the course of monitoring and clarify the game rules from the outset. This is to keep requests to "remunerate" members of the organizations from detracting from their commitment to work voluntarily for this right. The organizations began to participate more actively in the process as the benefits of monitoring became visible.

The second limitation was encountered in the area of lobbying for the freedom of information bill. After ongoing discussions over three years, and after negotiating a favorable vote with congressional deputies, the government party secretly and unilaterally proposed a series of amendments that distorted the spirit of the Bill. This led the opposition to refuse to move the bill forward and it was sent back to committee. The whole process had to begin all over, which is tantamount to "deadlettering the law."

This situation led to frustration in the Citizens' Observatory as it represented a lost opportunity have clear rules for gaining access to "sensitive" information about people found in public archives and for ensuring that data would not be manipulated and used for profit by private enterprise. It also meant a reversal for efforts to have in place a legal instrument to reduce secrecy in the custody, use, and release of information belonging to all citizens.

An opportunity for change for the future is the popular education edition of the Citizens' Guide, which

enables people to exercise this right, regardless of whether there is a law on the books. The consolidation of the Observatory as a reference point for promoting freedom of information is the best asset we have for shifting the strategy away from the original goal of enacting a specific law to focusing on the importance **of using the right enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic**. This shift stresses practical application by demanding that officials be held accountable for their actions; even in the absence of legislation, it enforces the law through monitoring, civic education, and citizen's use of the *amparo* law against government officials who deny information.

Lastly, in the context of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the outcomes of this civil society initiative could be strengthened and replicated with small supple-

mentary funds. However, it is important to take into account that there can be no social audit or participatory evaluation of projects without first consolidating institutions, processes, and instruments that ensure freedom of information.

Additional Resources

In order to ensure that the experiences of this project are disseminated and used by other organizations working for transparency, Acción Ciudadana's Web page is provided here (www.guate.com/acciongt). The Citizens' Guide to Freedom of Information [Manual Ciudadano de Acceso a la Información] is a practical guide to search, process, and evaluate experiences that facilitate citizen oversight and the accountability of public officials.

Social Audit in the Argentine Legislature: Obtaining and Publishing the Affidavits of National Senators

Center for the Implementation of Public Policies
for Equity and Growth – Transparency Division

María Baron

Summary

This social audit initiative was undertaken by the Transparency Division of the Center for Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth [Area de Transparencia del Centro de Implementación de Políticas Publicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC)]. Its mission was to obtain and publish the Affidavits disclosing assets and financial status submitted by national senators. In the broader framework of advocating increased access to information about legislators, a network of more than one hundred volunteers was formed to systematically compel Senators to release their Affidavits. The campaign lasted for four months and concluded with Senatorial Decree (419/02) signed by Dr. Juan Carlos Maqueda, Acting President of the Senate, who declared that the documents must be made available “to the citizens who have made this demand and to any person who should request them in the future.”

Background

Argentina’s Law on Ethics in Public Service (Law 25.188) enacted in late 1999 requires legislators, among other public officials, to submit Affidavits disclosing their assets and finances. This law provides for the creation of a National Ethics Commission [Comisión Nacional de Ética] responsible for investigating, administering and publishing the Affidavits submitted by legislators. This Commission was never created, therefore impeding enforcement of the law in its application to members of Congress.

The Legislative Branch is a key actor not only in the fight against corruption but also in implementing national development policies. In the first instance,

it is empowered to consider and enact appropriate legislation for the prevention of unethical behavior and serves as a supervisory body over government entities and authorities.¹ In the second instance, its chief obligation is to draft and enact laws that provide new opportunities and tools for economic growth, social inclusion, political participation, eradication of hunger and poverty, and basic health

¹ Through entities such as the General Audit Office of the Nation [Auditoría General de la Nación], the State Counsel [Defensor del Pueblo], monthly summons to the Head of the Cabinet of Ministers or the Accords Commission, or its responsibility in promoting members of the Armed Forces, or appointing Justices to the Supreme Court of Justice.

and education. If it is to perform these duties in an effective and responsible manner, the National Congress first must establish clear standards of conduct and internal procedures. The reluctance of many legislators to submit their Affidavits to everyday citizens is just one example of the climate of secrecy prevailing in the legislature. Only 30 of the total of 70 Senators (there are actually 72 but 2 have yet to take office) voluntarily released their Affidavits. The rest did so only when the Acting President of the Senate decreed the mandatory disclosure of this information in response to the demands of civil society organizations and the pressure brought to bear by the volunteer network.

A Legislative Branch that lacks policies to ensure transparency and reciprocal communication channels with citizens allows and encourages corrupt practices that divert resources and distance the institution from its commitment to ensure the wellbeing of society. Moreover, the lack of information prevents the population from exercising rights of which it is unaware, and which are crucial to improving its standard of living. In the words of Joseph Stiglitz, “Access to information constitutes a fundamental component of a successful development strategy. If we are to think seriously about reducing poverty worldwide, we must guarantee freedom of information and improve its quality. (...) If the people in any country love and work for a country and for a more transparent economy, then we should fight for the right to know the facts just as they are.”²

² Diario Clarin, Buenos Aires, Argentina, January 3, 2003. The complete article can be found at www.clarin.com.ar

Objective

There were two reasons for obtaining the Affidavits that Senators must submit in accordance with the Public Ethics Law:

- To increase the amount of information that constituents currently have available about their representatives in the National Congress, a key factor in the ability to audit and evaluate the performance of these officials.
- To create incentives for changing legislators' habits and behaviors with regard to accountability for their actions under the law.

Processes and methods

The actors. The campaign began in February 2001, with the creation of the “Volunteer Network [“Red de Voluntarios”], a group of more than 100 individuals over 18 years of age. CIPPEC contacted people from all regions of the country and diverse backgrounds, who might be willing to volunteer to contact senators and request that they provide the Affidavits disclosing their assets and finances. The vast majority of those selected were university students pursuing different careers (law, medicine, political science, engineering, economics, etc.), in addition to professionals, housewives, the unemployed, and self-employed individuals.

CIPPEC's main contribution was to serve as the “command center” in organizing follow-up and evaluation of outcomes and disseminating these outcomes through reports to other civic associations and NGOs, and articles in the press. Drawing

on its experience in how the Legislature operates, CIPPEC, and particularly the Transparency Division, equipped and trained the volunteers with the tools necessary to understand the internal structure of the Senate, the characteristics of the legislators, and the ways and means to contact them. This established a fluid link between the organization and the volunteers that was maintained through electronic communications approximately every other day.

The campaign has trained 100 volunteers directly, equipping them with the basic tools necessary to access and audit the work and obligations of national legislators. At the same time, it provided concrete information about the assets of national senators before and after their term to journalists in the mainstream press and to citizens interested in monitoring the actions of their representatives.

Society as a whole benefited indirectly, since the information disseminated made it possible to bring more pressure to bear on members of the National Congress and reduce the potential for acts of corruption by legislators whose assets and financial status are now a matter of public knowledge. At the same time, a precedent has been set for obtaining any other type of information from the government such as might requested in the future.

Other actors reached by this initiative were the legislators themselves, who took note of the existence of the Public Ethics Law and their obligation to comply with it. As a result of the campaign, nearly one third of the legislators voluntarily and spontaneously provided information via the Internet.

Activities and roles of the actors. The volunteer network played a crucial role and lent legitimacy and civic relevancy to the process. The citizens themselves contacted the legislators, aides, and officials to pressure for their right to know the origin and amount of their representatives' income and assets. CIPPEC, meanwhile, served as coordinator, identifying appropriate mechanisms and timing based on the legislative agenda, in order to move from one stage to the next in the program. At first, all of the senators were contacted and informed of their legal obligation to present their Affidavits. When most legislators proved unwilling to comply, CIPPEC decided that a new strategy was in order: the Senate authorities should be contacted in a letter signed by the volunteers themselves. In this way, the initiative still came from the members of the citizen network, while the organization provided the technical know-how required to ensure that the document would be officially received and accepted by the authorities.

Specific methods and techniques used: Campaign chronology. The plan was to begin by focusing on obtaining the Affidavits disclosing assets from just two legislators, who would be selected randomly to assess their reaction. The legislators chosen were Eduardo Moro (UCR - Chaco) and Luis Barrionuevo (PJ - Catamarca). Every Tuesday and/or Wednesday for one month, the 100 volunteers called their offices, and sent e-mails and faxes requesting their Affidavits. To facilitate these contacts, volunteers were given an information sheet outlining how to contact the legislators, how to establish the initial connection, and how to insist if they were not

received (See Annex – Document A). When no immediate results were obtained from these two particular legislators, it was decided to expand the campaign to all of the senators in order to secure the highest possible number of Affidavits.

In the end, each volunteer sent a letter on March 4, to the Administrative Secretariat of the Senate requesting the Affidavits of approximately 40 Senators (See Annex – Document B), all of whom had personally refused to disclose the information in question. The Administrative Secretariat directed the petition to the Legal Affairs Office [Dirección de Asuntos Legales] under Dr. Guisado who, in turn, referred it to Dr. Lanata. Subsequently, file 762/02 was opened with all of the requests.

On April 4, the Legal Affairs Office issued a favorable opinion and submitted to the President of the Senate its recommendation that these documents be made available to the public. The Presidency of the Senate subsequently would resolve the issue by decree.

On April 8, the Presidency of the Senate issued Decree 419/02 authorizing the release of the Affidavits requested by citizens in the petitions in file 762/02. The President of the Senate, Dr. Juan Carlos Maqueda (PJ – Córdoba), organized a public event attended by the Notary General [Escribano General de Gobierno]. The latter was responsible for authenticating copies of Affidavits and drafting an act in the presence of national senators, civil society, and the press.

Once they were obtained, the Affidavits were published for the first time in Argentina in the “*Legisla-*

tive Directory: Who are our legislators and how do they represent us 2002-2003” [Directorio Legislativo. Quiénes son nuestros legisladores y cómo nos representan 2002-2003]”, edited by CIPPEC in May 2002 (www.cippec.org).

Once the Affidavits were published, the next crucial step was to disseminate them among key actors. CIPPEC publicized—and continues to publicize—the directory and the accomplishments of the Affidavit campaign, through electronic bulletins, conferences sponsored by Universities and other NGOs, submission of articles to the major national newspapers and news agencies, press interviews, and interviews with government authorities, including ministers from the Executive, electoral judges, and provincial legislators.

The resources used. CIPPEC’s Transparency Division provided all of the resources used during the voluntary network campaign. These were limited to member salaries and the basic administrative and overhead costs associated with contacting legislators (per diems, telephone, Internet access, printing, photocopies, paper, calculated at about \$2,640). Volunteers were able to make calls from home or work if they so desired, but CIPPEC also made its telephones and computers available whenever necessary.

The Sergio Karakachoff Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and the University of Bologna provided support for the publication of the “Legislative Directory” containing the legislators’ Affidavits and other information.

Limitations and Opportunities

Obviously the greatest difficulty was obtaining the cooperation of the legislators. Since this obstacle was foreseen, part of the project involved “educating” these representatives by encouraging changes in behavior through citizen oversight and pressure.

The project was dealing with senators, personalities with tremendous power in national politics in Argentina. This meant that their capacity for resistance was very strong, particularly in view of the fact that the information that was being demanded involved precise figures on their income and assets. At the provincial or municipal levels where the population has a closer relationship with its representatives and where authorities are more vulnerable to “every day” oversight, the creation of a volunteer network could achieve concrete results in a short time. Moreover, the network is a versatile tool and therefore its goal would not necessarily have to be obtaining information from the local government. Instead it could conduct organized advocacy in favor of public policies to improve the standard of living of local residents (waste treatment, improved medical centers, prevention campaigns in case of natural disasters, use of part of the local budget as emergency reserves, and so forth).

A second limitation worth noting is the media’s lack of support for this campaign. Ironically the press should be one of the sectors most interested in freedom of access to government information, since it contributes to their ability to publish substantive information and influence public opinion. Nonethe-

less, if projects with direct citizen support such as this one become the norm, the media undoubtedly will become more interested in covering them.

For all of these reasons, projects of this nature must have the unqualified support of the media for dissemination purposes so that the weight of public opinion is brought to bear on the political agenda and the “urgency” of citizen demands are conveyed to the authorities through diverse means. It is essential, then, to acquire accurate knowledge of how the government sector in question operates—in this case the National Congress—but it is equally essential to craft a coherent strategy that incorporates project characteristics and objectives and takes into account the underlying strategy of the mass media itself.

This social audit project could be strengthened by implementing other freedom of information projects to keep up pressure from the population in demanding transparency and efficiency from their representatives. Therefore, oversight pursuant to the Public Ethics Law should be extended to the rest of the government officials found in the Law, such as congressional deputies. Monitoring of the Legislature should be complemented by an analysis of the work it is doing, in addition to the characteristics of individual legislators. In this regard, CIPPEC publishes a monthly report on the work of legislative committees as well as an annual summary of congressional activities.

Outcomes

Until last year, never before had civil society compelled a senator to release his or her Affidavit

disclosing assets and finances. In the aftermath of this audit program, we can assert that:

- This initiative made it possible, for the first time, for the public to have access to 100% of these documents and familiarize itself with a fundamental aspect affecting the integrity of its representatives.
- Currently, anyone can request and obtain from the Senate authorities a complete list of its members with detailed information regarding the amount and origin of their income, assets, and financial situation.
- Because of this initiative, nearly one third of national senators chose to publish their Affidavits voluntarily on their Web sites.
- Training was given to 100 citizens, who now understand the internal workings of the Congress and are equipped with tools to conduct future auditing campaigns.
- Thirty press articles have been published in national and regional newspapers based on the information obtained from Affidavits in particular and on enhancing freedom of information in general.
- This campaign clearly had an impact on priorities on the political agenda; Six months after the Affidavits were made public, the Freedom of Information Law was partially ratified on Thursday, May 8, 2003.

In a broader sense, the publication and availability of Affidavits ultimately will raise citizens' awareness about their rights to demand this and other information as provided by law. This will lead to increased capacity for public participation and make it possible to monitor and control a potential increase in corrup-

tion levels. At the same time, it may increase the credibility of the actions of the authorities, as long as they are willing to act transparently and lawfully.

Additional resources and information

Project outcomes can be found on the CIPPEC Web site (www.cippec.org); this includes the Senate Presidential Decree 419/02 stipulating the mandatory release of Affidavits to any citizen requesting them and the publication of the affidavits in the "Legislative Directory" [Directorio Legislativo 2002-2003"]. Three manuals that also can be downloaded, explain in a simple, summarized format how the Argentine Legislature operates, its organization, schedule, how to access its work and information, and legislator contact information. These publications are important tools for undertaking any action involving the National Congress. Because the media is so important, another useful document on developing a press strategy for publicizing our issues in newspapers, magazines, radio and television, is "Periodismo Social" [Social Journalism], by Infocívica - Poder Ciudadano, Buenos Aires, 2002.

The CIPPEC Web site also contains information and other studies on the Legislature, transparency policies, and freedom of information including opinion polls, seminars, work of legislative committees, freedom of information advocacy, and annual summaries of congressional activity.

ANNEXES

Document A – Form with information and recommendations for contacting senators.

WHEN

DATE: Wednesday, February 27

HOUR: from 11:00 a.m. on

METHOD: e-mail / telephone / fax /in person (where possible)

RATIONALE: The Law on Ethics in Public Service (25.188) establishes the obligation to present Affidavits and to publish them. One of the Law's main requirements is the creation of a National Public Ethics Commission to oversee the National Congress. However, this Commission, responsible for drafting the Regulations for Public Ethics in the Congress, was never created since the 1999 law includes no provisions concerning the Legislature.

WHO

Legislator	Senator José Luis Barrionuevo (PJ-Catamarca)	Senator Eduardo Moro (UCR-Chaco)	Deputy Oraldo Norvel Britos (PJ- San Luis)
Secretary	Adrián	María	Ricardo or Gabriel
Telephone numbers	Direct: 4379-5694 Switchboard: 4959-3000 ext: 1080/82	Direct: 4379-5571 Switchboard 4959-3000 ext: 1230/31 (or operator)	Direct:4954-1082/1061 Switchboard: 4370-7100 ext: 3737/36/34 (or operator)
E-mail	luis.barrionuevo@senado.gov.ar	eduardo.moro@senado.gov.ar	obritos@diputados.gov.ar oraldobritos@yahoo.com.ar
Fax	Request tone	Request tone	Request tone
Address	(Palacio) Hipólito Irigoyen 1849 4º of. 648	(Palacio) Hipólito Irigoyen 1849 2º of. 58 "C"	(Palacio) Av. Rivadavia 1864 3º of. 332
BIO	Current President of the Club Chacarita Juniors; Leader of Epicurean Association, Author of the phrase (let's stop stealing for 2 years). Was in the Executive, CGT leader	Lawyer, Government Minister, Justice and Labor of Chaco Province (1995-2001) President of the Chamber of Deputies in Chaco Province (1997-2001).	Legislator since 1983. Vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies. Was Minister of Labor under the Rodriguez Saa Administration, E-mail chains ensure a rich retirement

METHOD

E-mail and fax: Copy and paste the "declaration letter" in the e-mail to avoid problems with attachments. Add names at the bottom before sending.

Telephone and in person: Possible excuses: "The deputy is not in;" "I'll have to ask the deputy;" "He submitted it, but I don't have a copy;" "She requested an extension;" "He won't be back until next month;" "She's in committee/session;" "Leave your number and we'll call you back;" "We will not give it to you."

Arguments to counter such excuses: "Please call him wherever he is and tell him that I'll come back tomorrow at noon to get it. She should leave it for me in an envelope with my name on it;" "Make a copy and I'll be over to pick it up shortly;" "Then give me a copy of the one presented to the administrative secretariat of the Senate;" "Call him because I urgently need his Affidavit."

In case of a direct NO: "I am going to consult with my attorneys to see what measures I can take to compel you to comply with the law;" "I am going to visit with the Notary Public so he can certify that you are infringing on the Public Ethics Law;" "I am going to contact the press;" "I am going to write a letter to the Editor;" "I'm going to include her in the next *cacerolazo* [public protest with pot banging]."

What to do if you get it:

1. Set a day and time to pick it up (within 24 hours because they might reconsider);
2. Find out who you spoke with so that you can return to that person;
3. If you can't go, send an e-mail or call the coordinators

Recommendations:

1. Be as courteous as possible to the intermediaries;
 2. Be assertive and try to follow-up on the conversation and with the person contacted, even if the time limit has passed;
 3. Don't get frustrated; remember that you are entitled to demand accountability from your representatives;
 4. Don't be afraid, don't give up. If the legislator is there, ask to talk to her;
 5. It may be that if the phone lines are flooded, the secretary will stop taking calls. If no one answers, keep insisting with e-mails and faxes, and try again the following week;
 6. After the fifth call, the secretary will be surprised and probably will ask: "What is this, a campaign?" Reply that you are citizens who want to hold your representatives accountable.
-

Document B – Letter delivered by the volunteers to the Administrative Secretariat of the Senate.

Buenos Aires, March 5, 2002

Honorable Senate of the Nation

Mr. Administrative Secretary
Accountant Jorge Horacio Amarfil

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have the honor of writing you to request that you provide me with a copy of the most recent Affidavit on assets submitted to this Administrative Secretariat by each of the following Members of the Honorable Senate of the Nation:

Nancy Avelín	Marcela Lescano
Raúl Baglini	Juan Carlos Maqueda
Luis Barrionuevo	Miguel Mayans
Mabel Caparrós	Ada Maza
Mario Colazo	Gerardo Morales
María Teresita Colombo	Eduardo Moro
Miriam Curletti	Mabel Muller
Mario Daniele	Raúl Ochoa
Nicolás Fernández	Mercedes Oviedo
Luis Falco	Jorge Pardal
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner	Juan Carlos Passo
Sergio Galla	Elba Azucena Paz
Carmen Gómez de Bertone	María Cristina Perceval
Ricardo Gómez Díez	Carlos Prades
Beatriz Halak	Marta Ethel Raso
Guillermo Jenefes	Pedro Salvatori
Carlos Juárez	Isabel Viudes
	José Zavalía

I make this request in my capacity as a citizen in order to acquire an accurate understanding of the state of the assets of my representatives in the National Congress. This request is based on the right to freedom of information enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 13.1 of the American Convention of Human Rights, and Article 19.2 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights incorporated into the National Constitution pursuant to Article 75 (22).

Moreover, the Law on Ethics in Public Service (25.188, Articles 4 and 5(b)) requires legislators to submit their Affidavits.

On the other hand, Article 10 establishes that “at any time any person may obtain and consult a copy of the sworn declarations presented with due intervention from the agency that has registered and deposited them, assuming a request has been presented”.

Similarly, Article 23 establishes the creation of, within the National Congress, a National Commission on Public Ethics. In Article 25, which enumerates the functions of the aforementioned commission, also confers upon it the task of drafting the National Congress Public Ethics Regulations.

Until now this legislative body has not complied with the obligations described above.

I have a complete knowledge of the content of Article 11 of the Law on Public Ethics, which refers to the undue use of sworn declarations and prescribed sanctions for those who solicit and illegally use these declarations.

I ask that you notify me once this information is available. I have included my telephone number where I can be reached during the day to discuss any aspect of my request.

Thank you for your collaboration.

SIGNATURE

Name

DNI

OCCUPATION

Telephone

Monitoring of Public Works

Participatory Mechanisms in the Formulation, Monitoring and Oversight of Cantonal Public Works Budgets in Costa Rica

International Transparency Costa Rica

Roxana Salazar

Summary

There is a law (Law 8114 on Tax Efficiency) that requires the Central Government to provide a certain amount of funds directly to the Municipalities for road maintenance. The Municipalities in turn create Cantonal Transportation Boards [Juntas Viales Cantonales] responsible for making recommendations to the Municipal Councils regarding the use of funds allocated for maintaining, upgrading, repairing, and extending the road network in each canton. For impoverished rural communities in Costa Rica, the absence or poor quality of roads is a significant social risk factor. The aim of our program is to use the participatory cantonal budget mechanism for local roads; design a model for training, implementation, and oversight of community public works; and improve the efficient use of funds allocated for this purpose to maximize the impact in the highest risk sectors. The program is scheduled for implementation in three cantons during one year. The program, which was presented to the diverse actors, enjoys the full support of the institutions involved, technical entities, and of the target communities themselves, which have expressed their commitment to participating in the program. The plan is to consolidate the use of user-friendly indicators that reveal the actual impact of public works in important areas such as distributional significance, increased production, improved marketing processes, and efficiency of increased vehicle traffic.

Background

Infrastructure spending, and primarily road development, has represented an obstacle to balanced investment in local roadways. Spending has been concentrated largely on national highways in poor condition, to the detriment of investment in local roads. On the one hand, the uncontained growth of cities has led to increasing use of local roadways near urban zones as alternative traffic routes, at lev-

els they were ill-equipped to handle. Moreover, resource allocation to improve the national highway network has led to neglect of rural, mostly unpaved roads, which have deteriorated to the point where they have become impassable.

The legal provision is an attempt to reverse this trend through increased central government budget allo-

cations to local governments for local roadways. The Cantonal Transportation Boards were created, with civil society participation, to reduce the deficit in material resources and address the lack of organizational capacity to make optimum use of resources; in other words, to contribute to the process of targeting these resources equitably and efficiently.

The program has chosen three cantons that, while different in composition, all have a significant percentage of people living in poverty. It aims to promote a methodology of citizen participation appropriate to each one's particular circumstances that could be replicated in similar communities.

The three selected cantons, Santa Ana, Dota, and Talamanca, are very different in terms of development, location, social composition, and the impact on local government of the poverty of their populations. They were chosen mainly for their history of community organization, a factor that would facilitate civil society participation.

Santa Ana, a canton located near the capital, is small in size, with good communication routes, and an underprivileged population created by urban growth. The public roads to be targeted are mainly urban and semi-urban roadways, sidewalks, and inter-cantonal roads.

Dota, a rural canton with low population density and a significant underprivileged sector due to limitations in the labor force and the characteristics of coffee growing, features significant gaps in local road maintenance.

Talamanca, a rural canton far removed from the center of the country, has one of the lowest levels of relative development, a high proportion of indigenous populations located on reservations, a vast geographical area, and a significant lack of road access. It requires routes into the area and [sic]

Program Objective

To create a broad alliance among public agencies, sectors, and organizations for implementation of a participatory budget system, efficient and equitable implementation of road projects, and effective oversight of the use of resources allocated for investment in local roadways. This will be accomplished by developing mechanisms for utilization of available resources and using training to foster principles of transparency and accountability, oversight and sanction, institution building and efficiency.

Processes and methods

Who

The main actors are the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation (MOPT), the Municipalities and the Cantonal Transportation Boards, and the organized community. The facilitators are International Transparency Costa Rica and Procesos, organizations with years of experience in implementing similar training and local empowerment projects.

MOPT will be responsible for providing the required technical elements so that the local governments and Transportation Boards can perform their tasks efficiently.

The **Municipalities** will contribute their organizational structure to strengthen the Transportation Boards so that the latter can actually influence processes, with the commitment to target resources based on guidelines developed using citizen participation and accountability methodologies.

The **Cantonal Transportation Boards** will work to establish organizational and operational methods consistent with their underlying purpose, particularly in terms of setting priorities and allocating limited resources based on the principles of need and equity at the local level.

The organized **communities**, particularly in underprivileged sectors, will be the most important actors in this process since its main focus is to provide training in implementing participatory planning methods, self-implementation of programs, and citizen oversight of the use of public resources.

Transparencia Internacional Costa Rica (TICR), the Costa Rica chapter of Transparency International, is an organization created to promote transparency and accountability in public activities, combat corruption in the public and private sectors, strengthen ethical values, and promote citizen participation. TICR has signed a Cooperation Agreement for joint project design and implementation with the Central American Sustainability Program [Programa Centroamericano de Sostenibilidad (**PROCESOS**)], a research, advocacy and consulting center founded with the support of the Central American presidents, to contribute to democracy-building in Central America and the Caribbean. PROCESOS has valu-

able expertise in the areas of participatory budgeting, analysis of government budgets, and institutional accountability.

Our organizations also have signed a Cooperation Agreement in the area of municipal development resources and programs, with the Institute for Municipal Development and Consulting [**Instituto de Fomento y Asesoría Municipal (IFAM)**], a public entity devoted to strengthening the municipal system. IFAM's role in the program is to facilitate the full involvement of municipal entities in tasks assigned to the Cantonal Transportation Boards.

What

The main objective is to apply participatory budget mechanism at the cantonal level to optimize use of funds earmarked for road improvements in rural and urban communities with high levels of social exclusion. To this end, a participatory budget model will be designed for government funds allocated to each canton. A guide will be developed to help the Transportation Boards identify local job creation opportunities through transportation infrastructure projects.

The program seeks to frame the issue of rural roads in the context of social policy in the country. It therefore will conduct social impact evaluations of the Transportation Boards in the selected communities.

Particular emphasis is placed on promoting citizen participation in overseeing implementation of transportation projects. To this end, a mapping and risk evaluation model for public contracts developed by Transparencia Internacional Costa Rica will be

adapted and transferred. Such models are designed based on identifying relevant international experiences that can be adapted into a successful model of participatory budgeting in the field of transportation infrastructure maintenance.

How

Program Implementation.

- a. For the pilot experience, select three cantons where a percentage of the population lives in poverty, through an assessment of socio-economic characteristics and participatory social organizations.
- b. Conduct activities to familiarize people with the project and establish agreements with the Municipalities and Transportation Boards in the selected cantons.
- c. Provide advisory services to the Transportation Boards, District Councils, and neighborhood groups regarding the participatory budget allocation process, taking into account individual cantonal policies.
- d. Conduct workshops to set priorities based on principles of citizen participation, equity, and sustainable, balanced development.
- e. Design a model for allocating resources for local corridors between communities in the canton. Include four indicators: social risk, vulnerability to natural disasters, vulnerability due to lack of access to services, and vulnerability due to lack of access to markets.
- f. Design and implement an impact evaluation model for local road projects in poor communi-

ties. Includes the same indicators used in the resource distribution model. Adapt the risk evaluation model used for corruption in public contracts and provide advisory services to the Technical Units, District Councils, and neighborhood groups.

- g. Develop a guide to identifying opportunities for job creation for impoverished residents in the canton in local transportation infrastructure projects.

Complementary Activities:

- a. National seminar with representatives from all municipalities in the country to disseminate the outcomes.
- b. Assist MOPT in systematizing and disseminating a series of technical and operational recommendations on different aspects of participatory implementation of public works projects involving local roads, for replication in other cantons. These recommendations will discuss efficient frameworks for participatory implementation of public works involving cantonal road networks, quality control of public works on local corridors, and accountability in the implementation of public works for the construction, maintenance, and repair of local roads.

Specific mechanisms used to support participatory monitoring and evaluation and accountability

- Design basic participatory budget models for funds earmarked for local roads and citizen oversight tools to monitor implementation of investment budgets.

- Develop training programs including workshops for MOPT officials, municipal representatives and District Council members, and community leaders from municipal catchment areas chosen based on their relative importance.
- Develop program evaluation methods by putting them into practice, with respect to funds earmarked for each municipality, with the participation of the Cantonal Transportation Boards.
- Include gender equity criteria in the participatory process.
- Incorporate transparency and accountability criteria using simple, useful mechanisms to measure program performance, effective resource allocation and dissemination of outcomes in the community.
- Later stages will place priority on training the Cantonal Transportation Boards in management of larger amounts of money, using technical criteria and identifying needs and the tools to meet those needs.

How much

We estimate a total cost of \$150,000 for the three cantons, for one year, including cooperation from international financial institutions and the Central Government. The goal is that the use of National Budget funds allocated for cantonal transportation projects will feature improved channeling of resources from government social assistance institutions, donor organizations and development assistance funds.

Program outcomes

The following are anticipated outcomes:

In the area of ethical responses to citizen aspirations, contribute to the construction of a basic civic ethic to strengthen participatory democracy and promote alliances among different social actors, mainly the users.

In the area of use of public funds earmarked for transportation infrastructure, contribute to the use of mechanisms for allocating public funds and the development of citizen oversight bodies to monitor how such funds are used, with a view toward establishing effective accountability mechanisms.

In the area of economic development and fair distribution, put into practice activities leading to local job creation, promote the inclusion of low income citizens in activities with a high social value, and extend the positive impact of public resource allocations.

In the area of citizen training, design basic manuals or guides so that other interested groups can replicate the methodology and promote the human capital component in community efforts with high social impact.

The program aims to strengthen relevant experiences on a local scale that can be replicated in other cantons.

Limitations and opportunities

To date the program has enjoyed the positive support of the various actors involved. Potential problems are likely to emerge further down the road when it comes time to put into practice a systematic process of accountability between each community and municipal council. It likewise will be necessary to create an appropriate, efficient framework for allocating resource from cooperation sources so that the program's pilot experiences can be replicated relatively quickly.

Dissemination of program outcomes is essential to the success of replicable experiences. It is therefore necessary to design dissemination tools that are easily accessed by other communities and publications designed to achieve the unqualified support of national and international organizations. Including program information in the publications and infor-

mational materials of other public institutions could lead to greater commitment on their part. They might be more willing to include coordinated actions with other actors in their transportation programs in order to create more opportunities for the inclusion of impoverished citizens in national development.

Additional Resources

- Tax Efficiency Law Number 8114
- Use of the risk mapping methodology developed by TICC in contracting for transportation public works projects.
- Participatory budget models prepared by Procesos
- Use of the TICC and IFAM Web pages
- Use of tools designed by TI (codes of ethics, integrity agreements)
- Use of citizen participation manuals that TICC has available

Social Audit Program for the Local Road Construction Project San Antonio del Monte Municipality, Sonsonate, El Salvador

Otto Eric Vidaurre

Summary

This social audit experience was used in the project to build a six kilometer local road in El Salvador. The project benefited 500 families directly and an additional 1,000 families indirectly, all low-income. Project duration was eight months, including training community delegates in the social auditing process and conducting supervision, evaluation, monitoring, and control of the physical work. This project helped enhance the municipal administration's receptivity to greater participation by the beneficiary population and contributed to improved project administration. This experience has the potential for replication through synergetic learning processes. This is true because of the tangible savings in investment and use of resources.

Background

San Antonio del Monte is a municipality comprising urban, semi-urban, and rural low-income populations; most of its inhabitants live in poverty. Past attempts to implement federal and municipal government funded public works projects were characterized by the lack of local participation and poor government control. These projects resulted in products of minimal or poor quality—and therefore short-lived—or in products that benefited only a small number of people.

CREA used several criteria in selecting the community that would participate in a pilot social audit project: 1) international organizations were already

operating in the municipality and collaboration was possible; 2) the mayor's office exhibited the political will to allow citizen participation and oversight; and 3) the municipality had sustained damage in the 2001 earthquakes.

The social audit program was applied to the sole municipal infrastructure project being implemented in 2002: the construction of a local roadway that would improve the local and pedestrian access of some 1,500 families to the municipal seat. A Social Audit Committee [Comisión de Contraloría Social], named by the Local Development Committee, had chief responsibility for the project. The Committee

had access to budgets, bidding documentation, invoices, and receipts for construction materials used. The Committee achieved a high degree of acceptance and receptivity to its work, despite initial resistance from some municipal authorities.

Objectives

The objectives of the Social Audit Program for the Construction of a Local Road, Municipality of San Antonio del Monte were: (i) conduct observation, monitoring, follow-up, and control of public management, in order to prevent inappropriate acts that would adversely affect the project; (ii) monitor bidding, contracting, and implementation over the course of the project to ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards.

Processes and Methods

Who

The main actors in the social audit program are:

The Municipal Mayor, the chief of the Institutional Procurement and Contracts Unit [Unidad de Adquisiciones y Contrataciones Institucionales (UACI)], the Local Development Committee [Comité de Desarrollo Local (CDL)], the Social Audit Committee, the beneficiary population, and CREA International of El Salvador.

The direct and indirect beneficiaries comprise some 1,500 low-income families with an average of seven members. Average family income is approximately minimum wage, unemployment is 40%, and the illiteracy rate is 30% (and higher for women). The

population has access to potable water, but lacks access to sewage and waste removal systems. While it has access to electricity, access to education and health care requires a 40-60 minute walk from the place of residence to the municipal seat.

The specialists who provided technical assistance to the project had expertise and backgrounds in citizen participation, adult education, social organization, and transparency. This contributed to their awareness and understanding that the project belonged to the community and was for the benefit of the community.

There was always a good relationship between the technical team and the population in general, owing to the fact that the team had worked previously in this municipality.

What

The main objective was to achieve greater transparency in the use of funds by evaluating different levels of funding authorization and management and make it possible to pay attention to more details relating to the infrastructure of the public works project.

The project anticipated that, as a result of transparency, the local six-kilometer road would be built with improved standards of quality, would meet the needs of the target population, and would be durable, thus benefiting future generations.

The concerted participation of the actors was key to achieving the stated goals and is described in the paragraphs below:

The role of the Municipal Mayor's Office was to provide the institutional space for implementing the entire process, and to provide logistical and administrative support as well as the underlying legal framework for all audit activities. This was critical during the project's early stages since the other participants perceived a degree of political will to undertake this activity that was without precedent in the municipality.

The Local Development Committee (CDL) played a prominent role in identifying the most affected population and prioritizing needs, which made it possible to plan for the transparency with which the work was carried out; it also was the entity that identified local leaders in the area.

Community leaders organized in the Social Audit Committee were the eyes and ears of the entire process. They monitored the physical construction process and paid attention to everything from the receipt and quality of materials to their proper use. They approached this task with unswerving dedication, given that they were the direct beneficiaries of the project.

The municipal Procurement and Contracts Unit [Unidad de Adquisiciones y Contrataciones] prepared the final contract; this information was necessary to monitor the process from the administrative standpoint. It also served as a source of budgetary information and provided specific information to the Local Development Committee and community leaders.

CREA International, using one foreign and one national consultant, encouraged the organization of the Audit Committee. It conducted advocacy in the municipality and among local authorities on the need for a legal instrument, such as the Municipal Ordinance, to support audit activities. These consultants also trained the entire committee in the application of the Procurement and Contracts Law [Ley de Adquisiciones y Contrataciones], all of which contributed to the success of the audit process.

How

The process of auditing a local six-kilometer roadway was extremely complicated. It began with the selection of the beneficiary community out of a universe of communities, based on surveys conducted by the Local Development Committee (CDL) to identify the most needy community and population.

The second stage of the process involved the selection of community leaders to form the Social Audit Committee. The CDL selected these individuals based on the following criteria: honesty and integrity, no conflicts of interest, no pending criminal or civil procedures.

As a third step, which occurred throughout the process, the Audit Committee interviewed individuals and entities such as the Municipal Mayor, the head of the Institutional Procurement and Contracts Unit, project technical staff, and the population in general. The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain the project's budgetary characteristics, the quality and quantity of resources, time frames, and needs.

Guided by the Committee, the community at large conducted ongoing evaluation of the physical progress of the public works project, a task that required precise technical expertise. Throughout the process, and once it was finalized, the Audit Committee reported to the CDL, the Municipality, and the facilitating institutions on operational compliance.

How Much

The estimated cost of the local road project was approximately \$21,714.28 dollars, broken down into labor (\$ 6,348.59), materials (\$14,314.96), and transportation (\$22.86), for a subtotal of \$20,586.41.

A miscellaneous expenditure in the amount of \$685.02 and supervision in the amount of \$342.85 brought the grand total to \$21,714.28 (see Table 1). The Central Government allocates these funds from the General Budget of the Nation to the municipalities, which then invest them according to their needs.

TABLE 1 ESTIMATED COST OF THE LOCAL ROAD PROJECT

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Labor	6,348.59
Materials	14,314.96
Transportation	22.86
Miscellaneous	685.02
Supervision	342.85
Total	21,714.28

The budget of the technical assistance program for social audit came to a total of \$2,962.69. This includes the payment of stipends to a national consultant with expertise in municipal issues and citizen participation. Additional minor expenditures included lunch and breakfast during training sessions. In terms of a budget for follow-up, the community has planned for the self-sustainability of the process through self-training involving the various audit committees.

Outcomes

- Municipal authorities are more receptive to citizen oversight of other public works projects. One example is an \$80,000 potable water project that is soon to be implemented.
- Because of the positive experience of this local road project, the company that built the road was able to save money—due to transparency in the purchase of supplies and citizen participation—and therefore can extend the project even further.
- The project improved the social profile of the municipality to the degree that in the 2003 elections, the same party was reelected to the mayor's office and the outgoing mayor was elected deputy in the National Assembly.
- The number of active members of the Local Development Committee has increased by 100%, including an increase in women's participation.
- The increased number of days per year in which the road is passable and the decrease in travel time have fueled the population's interest in participating in future municipal public works projects.

Limitations and Opportunities

When the project began, there was a problem accessing information because the Procurement and Contracts Unit was opposed to releasing documentation such as the budget. This problem was resolved by raising awareness among these officials as to the benefits of the method, including them in training processes, and exposing them to other experiences in Latin America.

Another limitation was the need to train various members of the Social Audit Committee. Turnover among Committee members meant that training had to be ongoing. CREA has produced teaching materials for these training programs and it is hoped that the members themselves will transmit the knowledge they have acquired to new members.

Lack of financial incentives for those actually conducting the audit limited some Committee members' ability to participate, particularly since those individuals had to travel long distances to carry out their tasks.

In terms of opportunities, it is worth mentioning that the social audit method will be used in the future in the municipality in granting licenses, use of public property, contracts for ecosystem maintenance, environmental protection projects on public lands, and

in carrying out certain procedures, or implementing a participatory plan.

To strengthen the process, it is necessary to further develop the reporting and records-keeping phase, and the dissemination process (this was not done adequately). This will make it possible to disseminate findings, conclusions, and recommendations to increase public awareness. Another aspect that was overlooked, and that should be developed, is the capacity to take steps so that negative findings are investigated by oversight bodies and those responsible are punished appropriately.

Additional Resources

For more information, CREA International of El Salvador has a Web page (www.caii.net/participation) with information on its Transparency program and links to counterpart organizations. Information regarding the municipal ordinance for the creation of the Social Audit Committee, a final report on the Technical Assistance Consultancy for the Audit Committee, copies of ordinances in different municipalities in El Salvador, are also available by e-mail: (ottov@caii-dc.com). A guide is currently being developed entitled "How to Conduct Social Auditing at the Municipal Level" ["Como hacer Contraloría Social a nivel Municipal"], which will be posted on the Web page in mid-2003.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Services

Community Information System for Primary Health Care in the Municipality of Arismendi, State of Sucre, Venezuela

Paria Project Foundation

Josefina Bruni-Celli

Summary

The Community Health Program of the Paria Project Foundation [Fundación Proyecto Paria (FPP)] includes a capacity-building component in rural communities to enable them to take actions to improve the quality, quantity and impact of public health services. This is accomplished by obtaining information and using it effectively. This component, known as the Community Information System for Primary Health Care [Sistema de Información Comunitaria en Atención Primaria de Salud (SICAPS)], consists of simplified technology for the participatory collection and processing of demographic, epidemiological, and socio-economic data. Supported by FPP promoters, communities use these data to develop local health projects, support primary health care service provision in their communities, and negotiate with public agencies for the services and investments that they consider priorities. Since their creation in November 1998, Health Committees comprising volunteers in communities where the system has been installed, have successfully leveraged public resources and investments targeting high-risk areas in their communities. They likewise have contributed significantly to improving the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by “Simplified Medicine Aides” in their areas.

Background

SICAPS has been implemented in 15 rural communities¹ within the FPP’s sphere of action. In these communities, illiteracy is as high as 16%, and 29% of households lack access to potable water and 68% lack access to sewage systems. In addition, they present high rates of preventable diseases such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, malaria, and dengue fever. The problems in these communities are reflected at the regional level. Currently, 26% of malaria cases in Venezuela occur in the State of

Sucre, while 10% of deaths by dengue fever occur in the Municipality of Arismendi.

These communities have limited access to medical and hospital services provided in larger population centers because of the distance and the lack of

¹ Chaguarama de Sotillo, Chacaracual, Agua Dulce, Caraquita, Churupal, Medina, Caratal, Monacal, Paraíso, Guayaberos, Guarapiche, Nivaldo, Cocolí, Chaguarama de Loero and Puipuy.

adequate roads and transportation services. Ambulatory units run by Simplified Medicine Aides [Auxiliares de Medicina Simplificada] provide day to day health services. These aides lack the training and equipment necessary to carry out activities in the areas of prevention, health education and recovery.

Two well-documented problems in health services delivery are that “the majority of health outcomes are the result of behavior in the home,” and “because households present enormous differences in terms of their health needs, the best outcomes are obtained by building the client’s capacity to monitor and instruct the health care provider.”² In the context of 15 communities in Paria—which lack appropriate preventive behaviors in the home and have limited access to health services—a participatory information and epidemiological monitoring system such as SICAPS addresses the problems described by Devarajan in two ways. It informs and raises awareness among residents concerning habits that constitute risk factors and serves as a point of reference for behavioral changes. Organized community members involved in information gathering, processing, and analysis serve as intermediaries between public service providers and the home. They are in a position to communicate the specific needs of their communities to service providers, and to monitor and oversee their response.

Objective

SICAPS aims to provide rural communities with the wherewithal to become involved in managing epi-

demiological information as a tool for local empowerment in the health sphere. Through SICAPS, communities acquire the capacity to shape public policies that are more equitable and socially and culturally accessible.

Processes and methods

Who

The programs main actors are:

CIMDER Foundation (Center for Interdisciplinary Development Research [Centro de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias para el Desarrollo]): This Colombian organization, with thirty years of experience in health-related research and technical cooperation, created SICAPS in 1997 with UNICEF funding. CIMDER already had field-tested SICAPS in two Colombian municipalities when it signed an agreement with the FPP.

Paria Project Foundation [Fundación Proyecto Paria (FPP)]: Founded in 1989, the FPP designs and supports projects to improve the quality of life in poor cacao growing communities in the Municipality of Arismendi. One of its policies is to help strengthen, rather than replace, the government’s role in public health service provision; hence its interest in SICAPS. In 1998, the FPP entered into a technical cooperation agreement with CIMDER for technical training in the application of SICAPS and for the acquisition of software and support manuals.

² Shanta Devarajan, “Servicios que funcionan para los pobres,” [“Services that Work for the Poor”] World Development Report 2004 (first draft). Mimeo 2002, World Bank.

FPP Health Promoters: Two FPP health promoters support the Aides and Health Committees through weekly meetings in the 15 communities where SICAPS has been implemented. Both have at least two years of postsecondary education and have received ongoing training, with FPP resources, in areas relevant to their work, including training in SICAPS implementation. They likewise have received training in methodologies to facilitate decision-making processes and participatory planning. The FPP's leadership believes that the ratio of 8 communities per promoter is adequate. This ratio means that the Promoter can visit and conduct weekly meetings to support the Aides and the Committees.

Simplified Medicine Aides from the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance: These Aides serve 10 of the 15 communities. Although they received one year of training prior to beginning work, they are inadequately trained and ill equipped to carry out activities in the areas of prevention, health education, and recovery. For example, they frequently lack vaccinations and reagents for microscopes, they do not know how to determine the seriousness of acute respiratory infections nor how to treat them, and they present deficiencies in the detection and

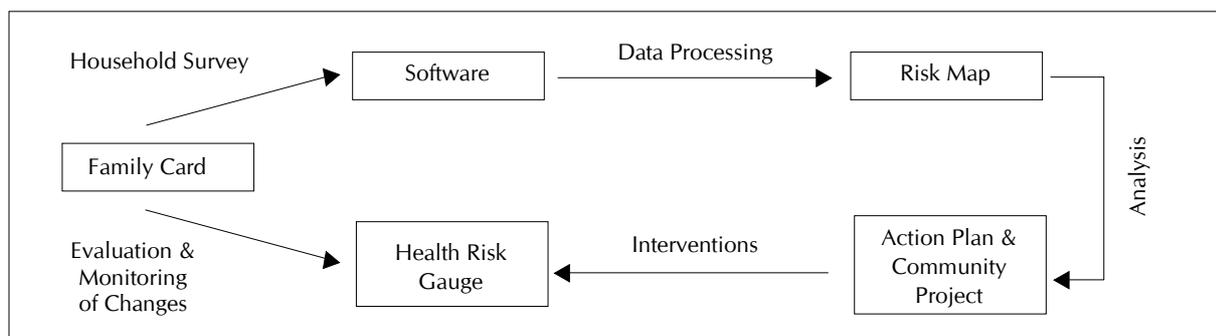
treatment of malaria and in examinations and check-ups for pregnant women. The Aides have been trained to use SICAPS and work jointly with FPP Health Promoters and the community Health Committees in its implementation.

Health Committees: All 15 communities have these voluntary organizations made up mainly of women, most with little formal schooling. The Committees and the Aides meet weekly with their Health Promoter to monitor and evaluate progress in SICAPS implementation and to receive necessary training and assistance. The Committees have between 4 and 15 members, depending on the community. Some Committee members are Voluntary Health Promoters who have been trained to work with the Aides in education and follow-up in the community.

Communities implementing SICAPS (beneficiaries): These 15 communities comprise a total of 1,262 homes and 5,076 inhabitants. The largest community has 165 homes and the smallest, 19.

What

SICAPS is a simplified technology for the collection, processing and participatory feedback of demo-



graphic, epidemiological, and socioeconomic information. Its diverse tools and procedures are used, with support and advice from FPP Health Promoters, in decision-making processes and activities to improve health service delivery in the communities. The diagram below illustrates SICAPS' composition, tools, and processes.

As shown in the diagram, the cycle begins with the **Family Card**, which is used to record epidemiological, demographic and socio-economic information from each household, and should be applied every six months. *This information is gathered by Health Committee Volunteers*, who have received 12 hours of training in this area from their Health Promoter. The Promoter provides support at weekly meetings held throughout the data collection period.

Once the data has been collected, FPP technical staff input it in the **SICAPS Software** installed in the FPP's central office, and produce reports. Once this is done, the cards are returned to the communities where they are filed in a location accessible to the community ambulatory clinic. Subsequently, the Health Promoter analyzes the information and creates a colorful, graphic presentation of the findings. Subsequently these findings are analyzed and discussed at community meetings.

The Health Promoter creates a sketch of the community on a large board. He or she meets with the Committee and the Aide to create a **risk map**. This is accomplished by inserting a colored pin for each house on the board, based on the information in each card. Each color represents a health risk, based

on a pre-established color code. The risk map is placed in a prominent location in the community clinic.

Based on an analysis of the risk map, the Committee and the Aide develop a **Plan of Action** and **Community Project**. The Health Promoter facilitates this process using a participatory educational approach. The **Plan of Action** details the main risk factors in the community, goals for reducing them, and a work plan to accomplish these goals. It includes actions such as, for example, an awareness campaign on trash and waste removal. The **Community Project** is a funding proposal focused on a particular health problem in the community, for example, the construction of water supply or sewage systems.

Subsequently, the Health Committee and the Aide carry out activities (interventions) to ensure the success of the **Plan of Action** and the **Community Project**. One such activity is to approach higher level government entities: the Committee writes a letter to the District Health Official requesting that a medical doctor from the District go to the community to perform necessary exams. The Committee then makes follow-up visits to this government office. It likewise introduces its Community Project to the relevant government agencies. The Promoter helps the Committee write grant proposals and identify the relevant government offices. The Committees also support and monitor the Aide in awareness campaigns and vaccination campaigns.

The cycle is completed with the creation of a **Risk Banner**, a colorful illustration of the evolution of

risk factors over a six-month period. Created following the second **Risk Map**, the banner allows the actors involved to see the results of their interventions, evaluate their performance and organization, and develop Plans and Projects for the next period.

How

Program implementation began with a November 1998 visit by CIMDER consultants. During that visit, the consultants trained FPP technical staff in the use of manuals and software and presented 16-hour workshops on "Participatory Education" and "Community Information Systems" for Health Promoters, Aides, and selected volunteers from the Health Committees in 7 communities. Other community leaders, including staff from the mayor's office, also participated in the workshops.

Following the training, the Promoters met with the Committees to explain the benefits of the system and train them in filling out the Card. The Committee volunteers applied this instrument during the ensuing months. In late 1999, CIMDER made a second visit and met with the local actors to ascertain any gaps and limitations in the Cards. After adapting the instrument to the needs of Paria, the consultants returned in mid 2000 to offer a workshop based on the new instrument. Work with the new instrument began that year and 7 additional communities were incorporated into the program.

The FPP made several modifications to the original SICAPS design during implementation. It produced

the community sketches without the benefit of services from the municipal land registry office because of the latter's characteristic slowness. It also decided not to create giant participatory sketches in the communities due to the lack of adequate materials and equipment for this purpose and the attendant need to haul huge boards back and forth between the communities and the FPP offices.

There have been obstacles to full implementation of SICAPS. The first Risk Banner still has not been created due to **software** failures that made it impossible to produce a second Risk Map.

How Much

Technical cooperation from CIMDER had a total cost of \$ 7,600, which covered air and overland travel of consultants, materials (manuals and software), and consulting fees.

The cost of maintaining the program has not been calculated exactly since it is closely linked to the other components of the FPP Health Program, such as training workshops on the causes of morbidity in the communities and other training workshops for school teachers. The FPP Health Program costs approximately 60 million Bolivares annually (\$37,500). This covers the salaries of the 2 Health Promoters, their driver, vehicle maintenance and depreciation, gasoline, materials, transcription of SICAPS data, office space and services, maintenance and depreciation of computer equipment, software maintenance, educational and office supplies.

Outcomes

- ***Changes in individual and family behavior.*** The communities became aware of the need to change behaviors after seeing and discussing their health risk factors. But the mere fact of seeing the information does not produce an automatic effect. SICAPS' success lies in the support that the Aides receive from Committee volunteers in consciousness-raising activities in the community.
- ***High-level service providers have responded to the Committees' request (development of public policy).*** Health district doctors have responded to the Committees' requests to perform medical exams and to send medications, albeit with some delays. Six of the 15 communities that presented Community Projects to government agencies in 2001, obtained the requested funding. There has been less success in the area of dental health due to lack of capacity in government agencies to address this area.
- ***Aides are better informed, trained, and supported.*** SICAPS offers them the opportunity to learn and to refresh their skills, and provides them with the information they need to set priorities in their work plan. Once they understand the needs of their communities, the Health Committees are better situated to influence the scheduling of Aides and to support their work. With community support and monitoring, the Aides have begun to carry out training and prevention activities that, while stipulated in the regulations, were not being put into practice.

Limitations and opportunities

The initiative faces three types of limitations: 1) the community is still dependent on the FPP in order to apply SICAPS; 2) technical difficulties with the software; 3) the distrust of high-level health officials. There are several explanations for persistent community dependence: low educational levels coupled with the complexity of the card; lack of computer equipment and dependence on the FPP for data processing; the tendency to become paralyzed when the Promoters are absent, due to lack of a sense of ownership over the process. The FPP has faced serious software problems, which have led to reporting errors and this has delayed program implementation. The FPP plans to develop its own software to solve the problem. Finally, high-level health entities have criticized the Family Cards as not "official." However, the Aides and communities have not let themselves be intimidated by this in view of the instrument's utility and the lack of alternatives coming from the official hierarchy.

There are many opportunities ahead for SICAPS. The National Statistics Institute (INE) has displayed a serious interest in the system because it lacks mechanisms to gather statistical information in communities with less than 1,000 inhabitants. INE is considering the possibility of developing a program to validate the system, with support from the United Nations Population Fund, and using it in all population centers with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants.

Reliable software is essential in order to strengthen SICAPS and ensure its sustained impact, as is the

presence of Promoters committed to supporting the communities in implementing the system.

Additional Resources

For more information, please contact CIMDER in Cali, Colombia (Telephone 554-2377; 554-2491; 58-1948; Fax. 554-2488; e-mail: cimder@telesat.com.co) or the Fundación Proyecto Paria en Caracas, Venezuela (Telefax: 264-1054; 263-4660; e-mail: fproyectoparia@cantv.net).

ANNEX

Detailed description of sicaps instruments

Family Card. This instrument is used to record the following information for each household surveyed: 1) location; 2) characteristics of household members (e.g. names, ages, relationship, schooling, work status); 3) housing characteristics with emphasis on relevant aspects from an epidemiological standpoint (e.g. presence of animals, sources of potable water, trash disposal, etc); 4) condition of children under age 15 living in the home: growth, development, oral health, immunizations; 5) family planning habits in the household; 6) the situation of women of childbearing age, men between the ages of 40 and 60 years, pregnant and recently delivered women, adults over 60 with respect to immunizations and medical exams; 7) morbidity in the household; 8) family issues that constitute social problems (discipline of children, tobacco, alcohol, tranquilizer, and drug use); 9) mortality.

User-friendly Software. This software is “user-friendly” because it can be used by non-technical personnel after a brief training. It automatically generates the indicators used to create the risk maps. The communities themselves could use it, if they had the necessary computer equipment.

Risk Map. This is a sketch mounted on a large board where colored pins are affixed for each household based on the information in the Family Card. Each color identifies the health risks for each household based on a pre-established color code. An example of a risk map appears below.

Plan of Action. This is a document outlining a community’s main risk factors, the goals for reducing these factors, and a work plan to accomplish the goals. For example, some elements of a work plan are: 1) community training on water treatment; 2) awareness campaign on trash and waste disposal; 3) parasite treatment campaign; 4) cytology operations.

Community Project. A document that includes a funding proposal targeting a particular health problem in the community. Projects developed in recent years include potable water systems, paving the main road, solid waste collection systems, and sewage disposal.

Risk Banner. A colorful illustration of the evolution of risk factors in the community over a certain time period. It is created after the second round of data collection. The banners enable Health Committee to see the effects of their interventions during the

period, evaluate their own performance and organization, and develop Plans of Action and Community Projects for the following period.

period, evaluate their own performance and organization, and develop Plans of Action and Community Projects for the following period.

From Beneficiaries to Clients: Application of the “Report Card” to Social Programs in Peru

Instituto CUANTO – Multistakeholder Roundtable on Poverty Reduction – PCM

Miguel Antonio Rodríguez Cevallos

Summary

This program applies the Report Card methodology to Social Programs implemented by the Peruvian government. The Report Card essentially is a vehicle for people who receive goods or services from Social Programs to provide useful information to public entities so as to improve program implementation (design or performance). Its main strength lies in recognizing that, while users may not have a grasp of the “technical aspects,” they are the best suited to determine whether Social Programs meet the needs and fulfill expectations. Government agencies implementing Social Programs have made a commitment to use this methodology as a management tool, and certain civil society organizations will use the findings to demand improvements in project implementation in their respective areas of expertise. This experience is finishing up its first year.

Background

In the past decade, social programs generally have been implemented based on political partisan objectives and featured few technical criteria or participatory mechanisms. The current administration has initiated a concertation process with political and civil society organizations for implementation of a Poverty Reduction plan. This plan has three main components: equity in access to public services, dignified productive employment, and institutional development to place the government at the service of the people. In this context, spaces have been created for the design and implementation of new social reform projects, incorporating mechanisms for dialogue and concertation as a key component.

This component requires a greater degree of commitment and participation from users of Social Programs, transparency in the disclosure of information on public spending for these programs, and the development of participatory budgets.

Five social programs were chosen for the pilot project to implement the Report Card methodology: Glass of Milk [Vaso de Leche] (Municipalities), School Meals [Alimentación Escolar (PRONAA)], care provided in public health facilities (Ministry of Health), non-school-based Early Education Program [Programa No Escolarizado de Educación Inicial] (Ministry of Education), and the Rural Work [A

Trabajar Rural (FONCODES)] program. These programs were selected because they offer national coverage and are related to the population's basic needs in the areas of nutrition, education, health, and employment. Most of these programs, with the exception of Rural Work, have been operating for over twenty years.

The country was divided into five macro-areas in order to apply the Report Card: North, Center, South, East, and Lima. The two regions in each macro-area with the highest number of users of the social programs being evaluated were selected. Lima Metropolitana and Provincias were chosen for Lima. The studies domain (geographic areas where statistical inferences may be made) is as follows: North (Piura and Cajamarca), Center (Huánuco and Junín), South (Cusco and Puno), East (San Martín and Loreto), and Lima (Metropolitana and Provincias).

Users of the Social Programs were very cooperative in supplying all of the information requested and expressed satisfaction that their opinions were being taken into account. Most of the local directors of the Social Programs likewise demonstrated a positive attitude toward applying this instrument and asked to be informed of the findings in order to improve program implementation.

Objectives

1. Provide systematic, reliable information to public entities implementing Social Programs regarding the quality of the goods and services offered. This information will serve as feedback for their management systems with a view toward improving specific, relevant aspects of their programs.
2. Provide the government and civil society with a participatory evaluation tool that facilitates comparison of social program performance in different areas and over time.
3. Contribute to ensuring that users of Social Programs stop being considered, and viewing themselves as, "beneficiaries" with few rights and become CLIENTS with sufficient capacity to express their opinions and demand higher quality in the goods and services they receive from the government.

Processes and Methods

Who

The key actors involved in this pilot participatory evaluation experience in applying the *Report Card* were:

- Instituto Cuánto.- A research entity with fifteen years of experience in data collection, processing, and dissemination in Peru. It has conducted several studies on social issues, particularly in terms of developing baselines and performing impact evaluations of Social Programs.
- Multistakeholder Roundtable on Poverty Reduction [Mesa de Concertación Para la Lucha Contra La Pobreza].- Comprising public and private institutions, its objectives include improving efficiency in implementation of poverty reduction programs, institutionalizing citizen participation in monitoring government social policy, and

achieving transparency and integrity in social poverty reduction programs.

- Presidency of the Council of Ministers.- An administrative-technical entity in Public Administration that supports the President of the Council of Ministers. The latter coordinates intersectorial activities related to the government's administrative-political functions, and promotes participation and social and economic concertation in government administration.
- Users of Social Programs.- Urban and rural inhabitants who live in poverty or extreme poverty and therefore receive government services through Social Programs.
- World Bank.- Multilateral organization and one of the principal sources of development assistance funding, its core objective is to help the most impoverished sectors in developing countries.

What

The purpose of this experience is to have in place a participatory evaluation tool with which to assess user satisfaction with the quality of government goods and services for low income populations, and pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of each program, through direct data collection from the users of the main Social Programs.

The main activities were:

1. Select the Social Programs to be evaluated.
2. Conduct focus groups to identify the aspects of each Program to be evaluated.
3. Identify a representative sample for the survey.

4. Develop survey formats based on focus group outcomes.
5. Conduct a test run to fine-tune the questionnaires.
6. Train the staff responsible for conducting the survey.
7. Conduct the survey in the selected locations.
8. Process survey data to ascertain the findings.
9. Analyze the findings and prepare reports.
10. Prepare materials to disseminate the findings to different target audiences.
11. Present the findings to program implementation agencies, social monitoring organizations, users, and the media.
12. Evaluate the experience in order to make necessary adjustments to the methodology for the systematic replication of this experience.

The main actors played the following roles:

The Instituto Cuánto was responsible for implementing the *Report Card* methodology based on its experience in field data collection and its study of international experiences such as those in India and the Philippines.

The Multistakeholder Roundtable on Poverty Reduction acted as interlocutor for the ongoing exchange of views. It played a particularly important role in coordinating with the social organizations in the regions selected for data collection through focus groups and the survey.

The Presidency of the Council of Ministers was responsible for coordinating with public agencies

implementing Social Programs, disseminating the findings, ensuring the exchange of views, and obtaining commitments for the systematic application of the methodology employed.

Social Program users participated with much interest and enthusiasm in the focus groups and in responding to the survey. The information they provided was more than sufficient for the purposes of the instrument.

The World Bank funded this pilot project and provided valuable materials on similar experiences in other countries. World Bank officers collaborated closely with the project in most stages, particularly the development of the questionnaire and the dissemination of the findings.

How

The *Report Card* employs a combined (qualitative and quantitative) methodology for evaluation. The qualitative phase includes interviews with national and local directors of the Social Programs to be evaluated as well as focus groups made up of program users. The information gathered from both sources helps to define the criteria (also referred to as attributes or aspects of quality) that will be used to evaluate each program. Once the survey format has been designed based on these criteria, the quantitative phase begins. This consists of a client satisfaction survey applied to a statistically representative sample of Social Program users. This pilot project surveyed 5,672 users of five programs under evaluation in rural and periurban areas. It was representative for each of the nine regions and for the project

as a whole. The survey was conducted in the field in December 2002.

The *Report Card* has three parts. The first section is used to record personal information about the person surveyed. This information can be correlated to satisfaction levels. The second part evaluates the level of satisfaction with each criterion and with the Social Program as a whole. The first questions are designed to elicit the interviewee's concrete experiences, followed by an assessment of the level of satisfaction with each criterion. The interviewee is shown a card and is asked to select the category that best describes his or her perception: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, neither Satisfied nor Unsatisfied, Unsatisfied, and Very Unsatisfied. The third section is used to collect additional information; some questions are asked for all programs, while others are program specific.

Significantly, the language used in the questionnaires, particularly in the second part, was taken from phrases commonly used during the focus groups by the clients ("beneficiaries") of the various programs. Great care was taken to ensure that the questions, statements, and references could be easily understood in all of the regions where the survey was conducted.

Dissemination of the survey findings was a crucial phase of this participatory evaluation. Various means were used to communicate the findings, using language appropriate to each target audience. The findings were presented at formal meetings to the directors of the programs evaluated; in workshops to organizations of users, local program heads, and civil

society monitoring entities; and through the media to the population in general.

How much

The pilot project's total cost was US\$50,000, which included 9 of Peru's 24 regions, representing over 50% of the beneficiaries of the Social Programs

evaluated. Therefore, application of the *Report Card* nationwide using statistically significant samples in each region would cost approximately double that amount (US\$ 100,000). The World Bank provided all of the funding for this pilot experience. Its replication this year (2003) will be funded—at least partially—by the implementing agencies of the Social Programs to be evaluated.

BUDGET OF PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS (USA \$)

COMPONENT / ACTIVITY	FOCUS GROUPS	SURVEY	REPORTS	DISTRIBUTION	EVALUATION	TOTAL
Honorarium to Team Leader	2,000	4,000	1,000	1,200	300	8,500
Travel & Per diem	1,000			1,500		2,500
Remunerations (Field)		14,500				14,500
Lodging (Field)		17,300				17,300
Processing Costs		2,000				2,000
Materials		700	200	400		1,300
General Expenses	500	3,000	200		200	3,900
TOTAL	3,500	41,500	1,400	3,100	500	50,000

Outcomes

This pilot experience is now in the final phase and therefore it is premature to expect improvements in the Social Programs evaluated. Nonetheless, a significant achievement has been made in terms of developing a management tool for public agencies and a monitoring tool for the social oversight organizations that are emerging in Peruvian society. This represents improved capacity in public sector management and increased oversight capacity by civil society. The impact should be felt shortly in terms

of improvements in the services offered by Social Programs for low-income people.

Limitations and Opportunities

At first the institutions, both public and private had some difficulty understanding the instruments. First, the lack of experience with social oversight tends to generate doubts about its utility and distrust of the participatory nature of the instrument. Moreover, due to the natural resistance to new activities and to some public officials' fear of being evaluated, the initial

steps of the pilot experience progressed more slowly than anticipated. Nonetheless, ongoing meetings to discuss the methodology and findings have led to a better understanding of the instrument's benefits. Incorporating participatory mechanisms and putting into practice social monitoring is a time-consuming process. However, the social organizations' explicit demands for such tools lead us to believe that we are heading in the right direction.

Additional Resources

The final report of this pilot experience in using the *Report Card* for Social Programs in Peru should be available in July on the web pages of the Instituto

Cuánto (www.cuanto.org), the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (www.pcm.gob.pe), and possibly the Transparency in Public Management [Transparencia en la Gestión Pública] server (www.mef.gob.pe). Any other questions about this experience, its methodology and procedures, can be directed to the manager of the Instituto Cuánto, Moisés Ventocilla (mventocilla@cuanto.org) or the project head, Miguel Rodríguez (rodriguez.ma@pucp.edu.pe). The Social Monitoring Working Group [Grupo de Trabajo de Vigilancia Social (SIVISO)] serves as an ongoing forum for discussion of this and other instruments, and can be reached by contacting Mariela Guillén (mguillen@pucp.edu.pe) or Jenifer Bonilla (jbonilla@ombudsman.gob.pe).

Monitoring of Public Policy

Participatory Monitoring of Land and Housing Policy in the Municipality of Quilmes, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

Community Council on Land and Housing Policy

María Andrea Castagnola

Summary

The first experience in participatory planning and administration in the area of land and housing policy occurred in 1998, in Buenos Aires Province. The Deliberating Council [Consejo Deliberante] approved a grassroots initiative to create a Community Council for Land and Housing Policy. The Community Council, made up of 14 government and civil society representatives, has successfully introduced complaints from the poorest sectors of the population at the institutional level. Activities undertaken by the Council to reduce the housing shortage in the Municipality of Quilmes include: urban placement of marginalized sectors, establishment of a Land Fund for the purchase of lands and equipment, and the creation of a data bank to assess housing needs in the municipality.

Background

One of the most significant events associated with the issue of land takeovers in Buenos Aires Province occurred in 1995. During the night of September 11, more than 350 families occupied a 12-hectare property located in Quilmes municipality that had stood vacant for over 40 years. This action reverberated widely in the government and the press. The ongoing public visibility of the problems experienced by this group and the strong pressure brought to bear by social groups caused the provincial government to look at two serious problems in the municipality: 1) the legal irregularities associated with settlements dating back to 1980; and 2) the need to implement a different kind of housing policy to address the housing shortage in the municipality.

The housing problem in Quilmes reached alarming levels in 1995. A report prepared by the Council of Settlements in Quilmes revealed that 13,500 families live in settlements that year and did not own the lands, and 63% of those families lived in precarious conditions (lacking basic infrastructure such as electricity, potable water, and gas).

In response to these disturbing figures, the local and provincial governments proposed various policies aimed at addressing and reducing the housing problem, both legally and in terms of installing basic utilities in the settlements. They created a Subsecretariat on Land and Urban Issues, decreed a Housing Emergency, and implemented mechanisms for do-it-your-

self housing construction. These initiatives would develop sporadically over the ensuing years. In late 1998, the municipal authorities proposed a project entitled "Development Fund" [Tasa de Foment], which would be fed by voluntary monthly contributions from people living in settlements and emergency dwellings. The purpose of the fund was to use such contributions (requiring no adjustments to the municipal budget) for the exclusive purpose of carrying out development and construction projects in the neediest neighborhoods. The municipal government would be responsible for managing the fund. The proposal generated substantial discontent among the locals since it was based on a highly regressive form of financing. The community organizations, however, opted to capitalize on the government's interest in developing a housing policy. So hand in hand with their rejection of the municipal project, they presented a proposal of their own. The organizations' proposal included the creation of a Land Fund, but this time it would be managed by a Community Council for Land and Housing Policy. The Fund would be made up of 40% of the revenues from construction permit fees and the sale of municipal real estate and it would be used for the purchase of land and equipment. The Council would be responsible for social audit activities related to land and housing policy in the municipality. On November 30, 1998, the Deliberating Council of Quilmes authorized the project in Ordinance 8289/98.

Objectives of the Council

To promote social audit mechanisms that ensure dignified housing conditions for citizens. Through

these mechanisms, to influence policy-making on municipal land and housing issues.

Processes and Methods

Actors and Beneficiaries

Structure of the Community Council for Land and Housing Policy: The Council is made up of 14 representatives with honorary titles and a renewable three-year mandate. Its heterogeneous composition is derived from its founding principle which stipulates the following structure: 4 representatives from grassroots land and housing organizations; 2 representatives from the Municipal Executive Branch; 2 representatives from the Municipal Legislature; and 2 representatives designated by the Land Office of the Secretariat of Land and Urban Issues of Buenos Aires Province; 1 representative from the National University of Quilmes; 1 representative from the Social Ministries Office of the Bishopric of Quilmes; 1 representative from the Civil Association of Urban Management; and 1 representative from the Don Jaime de Nevaes Civic Association. The Council meets every two weeks and the civil society organizations represented on the Council meet prior to each meeting to develop an action plan and coordinate based on their interests.

Beneficiaries: The Council addresses the needs of more than 8,000 families (or 48,000 people based on an average family size of six) living in conditions of extreme poverty. Average monthly income per family is \$120 (US\$ 40) from provincial and national government assistance plans. Most of the beneficiaries are from rural areas. The Council's housing

policy targets sectors caught in the web of the provincial government's social welfare programs.

Relations: The Council operates at three levels of interaction. The first of these is *internal*, in other words, relations between representatives of the government and the social organizations on the Council. At this first level, relations have been satisfactory, despite the differences among members. The second level of interaction is between *council members and municipal and provincial authorities* who are not on the council but need to be involved in its activities. These two groups have a relationship of ongoing negotiation since the structure and interests of government agencies such as Infrastructure and Public Works may conflict with the methods and timelines of council activities. The third level of relations to note is between the *council and the beneficiaries*. Although there are differences in the community regarding types of housing construction and planning and lot measurement, community organizations support the Council's activities and appreciate the activities carried out by its members.

One aspect worth noting is the mediating role played by the Bishopric of Quilmes. This institution has played a key role in interactions at all three levels, because the parties regard it as a neutral actor. It therefore has taken on a mediating role among the parties when a problem arises.

Social Audit Activities

The Council is engaged in various activities related to monitoring and evaluation of the activities of public officials. The most important of these are:

- 1- Oversee of regulations and compliance with funds transfers from the municipality to the Land Fund.
- 2- Monitor planning and development activities relating to vacant lands carried out by the technical offices of municipal agencies such as Infrastructure, Social Action, Land and Housing Secretariat, and Public Works. This monitoring is to ensure that the agencies collaborate effectively with sanitation and urban service projects on such lands.
- 3- Develop a data bank to verify cadastral information on lands provided by the municipality that are heavily indebted or are about to be repossessed, and might serve as potential areas for housing construction.
- 4- Create an Emergency Housing Registry where local residents who lack the wherewithal to obtain a lot or dignified housing may sign up as potential beneficiaries of lots.

Program implementation process

Because the Council was a citizen initiative, the citizens of the Municipality of Quilmes played a central role in designing its structure and regulations.

The Council was created and put into practice through an inclusive, pluralistic and transparent process. In the first instance, all nongovernmental and grassroots organizations working in the area were invited to participate in the initiative. It was advertised in the neighborhoods and a list was drawn up of all the organizations willing to collaborate. Subsequently, local NGOs, the Bishopric, and a

representative of the National University of Quilmes conducted an evaluation of the civil society organizations that had expressed an interest in forming part of the council.

The evaluation was done to determine whether the organizations in question had the capacity to participate on the council and take on the attendant responsibilities. It is worth noting that this commission (to monitor the monitors) plays an active role in the election of new members every three years. The third stage of implementation included organizing ad-hoc committees to monitor specific government activities. Some groups were assigned to audit specific activities carried out by technical urban development agencies, while others were tasked with creating an emergency housing registry, and still others with engaging in press relations. The work of these committees is a core aspect of monitoring since other control mechanisms are activated based on the information they collect.

Monitoring mechanisms used by the Community Council mainly center around: (a) preparing reports on the status of land and housing policies developed by the municipality, (b) evaluating municipal policies that are put into effect, and (c) drafting project and policy recommendations and plans. Significantly, the Council's recommendations must be evaluated within 30 days of submission or else they are subject to automatic approval. Moreover, negative responses to recommendations must be justified at the level of the Secretariat of Public Works and Services, the Municipal Accounting Office, or the Counsel's office [*Asesoría Letrada*].

Budget

The Council is a community participation and oversight body under the jurisdiction of the municipal government and, therefore, the government provides the budget for its operations and maintenance. The Council receives most of its funding through government transfers, municipal budget allocation categories, and 30% of revenues collected by the municipality through real estate sales. The funds are allocated for the purchase of construction materials and acreage. Council members have honorary titles and are not paid, and the Council office is located in the municipal building in Quilmes in order to avoid overhead expenses.

Social, Economic, and Political Impact at the Neighborhood, Municipal, and Provincial Level

In five years of operation, the Council has achieved some significant outcomes. The most important of these are highlighted below:

1. Impact on the individual and collective capacity

of the beneficiaries: a) obtained the precarious tenancy of a total of 300 hectares where 15,000 families live (since 1980) b) rehabilitation of abandoned and dangerous zones in terms of citizen health and security, c) networking in the community, d) purchased equipment to level land and streets prior to housing construction and road paving, e) conducted a training program for 80 local leaders.

2. Impact on program management characteristics:

a) ability to articulate and channel social demands toward government institutions, b) offer community-

based planning proposals for improving conditions, based on the beneficiaries' needs, c) A stronger more credible Council since its recommendations must be evaluated within 30 days of submission, d) modification of the council's powers in the area of purchase of construction inputs.

3. New opportunities at the local and subnational

level: a) approval of the municipal expropriation law which creates new political and economic opportunities for the acquisition of lands in the province and the municipality, b) receipt of 30% of revenues generated through the sale of real estate in the municipality to increase the fund for the purchase of lands and equipment, c) creation of communal spaces for community use such as plazas, dining halls, medical clinics, and childcare centers which generate new social and economic opportunities in the neighborhood, d) establishment of micro-enterprises such as bakeries that increase economic opportunities in the neighborhood, e) potential to take part in the social and economic benefits available in the neighborhood such as electricity, gas, potable water, and paved streets (which brings transportation), f) urban development of unused lands, so that they become part of the dynamics in other local neighborhoods and therefore reconfigure the political, social, and economic scene.

Limitations and Opportunities

In the five years of the Council's operations, it has encountered two types of difficulties. One has to do with problematic interactions between Council members and government authorities and the sec-

ond, difficulties in disseminating the activities of the monitoring program.

It should be stressed that, despite the efforts of civil society organizations to move this project forward, very little written information is available about the different activities carried out by the Council. Activities are publicized by word of mouth and occasionally in the local press. There is no Web page where one can obtain information about these activities, background information, settlement characteristics, profiles of participating organizations, and other information that would facilitate replication of this experience elsewhere. This lack of dissemination of the Council's activities limits its influence as well as the potential to develop new projects in other zones.

The limitations mentioned here could be turned around and converted into an opportunity to strengthen monitoring work and achieve a sustained impact over time. To accomplish this, a series of activities would have to be developed to involve other sectors of society and increase citizen commitment to the Council's work. Among the activities that potentially could be developed are:

1. Conduct a cadastral, housing, and demographic survey in existing settlements
2. Design a web page to disseminate Council activities
3. Conduct training workshops in settlements on laws regulating the right to expropriation, citizen participation, and how the Council operates.

Such activities should be carried out in coordination with different sectors of society and the government in order to join forces and have a positive and lasting impact.

Additional Resources

No information is available on the Internet on the Council's activities. The Don Jaime de Nevaes Civic

Association (a civil society organization representative) prepared some internal reports on the origins of the Council, but they were not made public. The only opportunity to disseminate Council activities was during the Social Policy Congress held in Buenos Aires where the Association presented a paper entitled, "From land takeovers and the struggle for housing to participatory budgets and community urban planning," Community Council for Land and Housing."

ANNEX

Ordinance creating the Community Council for Land and Housing Policy

Quilmes, November 30, 1998

The Honorable Deliberating Council, in proceedings under File N° 4091-17375-S-98, has authorized Ordinance N° 8289/98, in its Regular Session on November 10, 1998, which states as follows:

ORDINANCE N° 8289/98

The honorable Deliberating Council hereby authorizes:

TITLE 1

MUNICIPAL LAND AND HOUSING FUND

CHAPTER I

ARTICLE 1°: This Ordinance is declared to be of public and social interest.

ARTICLE 2°: CREATING THE MUNICIPAL LAND AND HOUSING FUND.

ARTICLE 3°: The Municipal Land and Housing Fund shall be made up of a Data Bank and a Land and Housing Fund, for the following purposes:

- a) Systematization of ownership, technical, and debt status data pertaining to public and nonpublic lands in the district.
- b) La expropriation or incorporation of land tracts to the municipal patrimony in order to meet the requirements and

needs of the Community in the areas of land, housing, infrastructure, equipment, and environmental quality.

- c) Make available vacant lots or plots of municipal lands for community uses, which are vacant and which, for health or safety reasons, affect the interests of the Community pursuant to Ordinance N° 5961/88 and Decree N° 1329/88.

CHAPTER II

ARTICLE 4°: THE DATA BANK: The Data Bank will record the following information:

- a) Ownership Data:
 - 1) Cadastral identification of all affected real estate.
 - 2) Complete data on owners.
 - 3) Registry data, file number, book and page of entry, book and page recording deed, notary used. Bill of sale, actual date, etc.
- b) Technical Data:
 - 1) Restrictions on ownership that stipulate the partial or total use of properties allocated to the Fund.
 - 2) Certifications of water capacity.
 - 3) Zoning and Urban planning indicators.
 - 4) Survey of sector industries recording the pollution levels that they generate.

- 5) Survey of urban equipment in the area.
- 6) Subdivisions.
- c) Debt status owing to the nonpayment of fees, fines, and taxes applied to the real estate.
- d) Decrees of precarious occupation and Ordinances of occupation in favor of Public Welfare Entities and/or adjudication to private individuals, and Ordinances concerning acceptance of donations.
- e) Foreclosure proceedings in process in the Municipality. Increases, decreases, and new information modifying the last known status will be recorded.

ARTICLE 5º: The Data Bank shall record data on land tracts that will be used for:

- a) Application of Ordinance N° 5961/88, articles 10, 11 y 12 enacted by Decree N° 1329/88.
- b) Acquisition of lands by the Municipality for the development of public housing and for public interest projects.
- c) Responding to petitions by any municipal agency or entity that should request it.
- d) The specific purposes of this Ordinance.

CHAPTER II – THE LAND AND HOUSING FUND.

ARTICLE 6º: THE LAND AND HOUSING FUND: The Land and Housing Fund shall consist of lands, construction materials, equipment and tools for housing construction, and cash.

ARTICLE 7º: The Land Fund shall be set up as follows:

- a) Through the allocation of lands owned by the municipality affected by a specific Ordinance.
- b) Through the purchase of lands with money from the Fund.
- c) Through donations.
- d) Through transfers effected in favor of the Municipality by the National and Provincial government, its companies or decentralized entities, or any other entity in which the National or Provincial Government holds the total or majority of shareholder capital or decision-making.
- e) Through expropriations.
- f) Through application of Provincial Law N° 11.622.
- g) Through expropriation of private land tracts pursuant to Ordinance N° 5961/88 and its Decree 1329/88.
- h) Through application of National Law N° 21.477 and its amendments.

- i) Through application of National Law N° 24.146 and its amendments.
- j) Through the purchase of lands put up for legal auction. To this effect, the Executive Department is authorized to appear at the public auction of real estate to offer up to the total amount of credit for debts of municipal charges applicable to the property.

ARTICLE 8º: CASH HOLDINGS

1-Cash holdings assigned to the Fund shall enter:

- a) Through the allocation of line items in the municipal budget, beginning fiscal year 1999, which shall be made up of:
 - a1) Contributions from the annual municipal collection of Construction permits in the percentage established by the Executive Department.
 - a2) Supplementary credits or additional amounts that, pursuant to the land and housing policy created and implemented by the executing organ, are necessary for its operation.
 - a3) Thirty-five percent (35%) of the total of accounts paid into by recipients of housing constructed by Plan ProCasa, Solidaridad, Do-it-Yourself Construction, reconstruction of Neighborhoods in the Municipality, and the like.
- b) Through the collection of fees for the sale of municipal lands for the purpose of developing social interest housing.
- c) Through the allocation of credits or subsidies from government agencies and national or foreign private entities.
- d) Through subsidies or grants obtained for this purpose.
- e) Through previous savings from beneficiaries of housing development programs.
- f) Through commissions that through the start up, managerial or administrative role are generated in the implementation of procedures for housing construction.
- g) Through the sale of municipal lands not fit for housing projects and other lands or real estate properties owned by the municipality, at a percentage rate determined by the Executive Department.
- h) Through credits or subsidies from national, provincial, and/or municipal programs and nongovernmental organizations for job creation and training related to social housing construction.
- a4) Revenues generated pursuant to Ordinance N° 5397/85.

2- Funds shall be assigned to a special account which shall only be used for expenditures for the sale, subdivision, processing,

and award of lands and the contracting of services related to the aforementioned tasks, as well as to fund necessary infrastructure and equipment works pursuant to the standards enumerated in Law 8912 and its amendments. It may also be used to grant socially recoverable loans to individual beneficiaries of this Ordinance for the purchase of construction materials and to cover costs related to training seminars or dissemination of activities that maximize achievement of the objectives outlined in the housing policy and for the payment of honoraria to experts contracted for the study or direction of projects pursuant to a bidding process, co-management or administration, when the corresponding Municipal technical office is unable to do this for well-founded reasons.

ARTICLE 9°: The lands comprising the Land and Housing Fund shall be used for:

1. Implementation of programs to develop social interest housing of the following types: social subdivisions, technical assistance, self-help, mutual assistance and the like, housing cooperatives, housing finished according to the procedures of the Provincial Housing Institute, National Housing Fund, National Mortgage Bank, or the procedures of any other government entity or similar entities, prior approval of the Implementing Entity [Órgano de Aplicación].
2. Community outfitting, infrastructure, and/or green spaces.
3. The application of Art. 11 of Ordinance N° 5961/88 and Decree N° 1329/88.
4. The acquisition of lands for housing projects for sectors included in the Emergency Housing Registry.
5. The regularization of lands currently occupied in an irregular manner.

ARTICLE 10°: The Implementing Entity shall submit to the Honorable Deliberating Council, for its approval, the list of lands and beneficiaries for the purposes of ACQUISITION, SUBDIVISION, AND ALLOTMENT to individuals of lands governed by this fund.

ARTICLE 11°: All real estate contracts and acquisitions or sales shall in all cases adhere to the stipulations of the Organic Law of Municipalities and the Accounting Regulations and Administrative Provisions for the Municipalities of Buenos Aires Province.

TITLE II

CHAPTER 1 THE IMPLEMENTING BODY

ARTICLE 12°: Creating the Community Council for Land and Housing, with the Municipal Executive Department as the implementing entity of this Ordinance.

ARTICLE 13°: The Community Council for Land and Housing shall be made up of:

- a) Two representatives of Casa de Tierras, or in its absence, representative of Buenos Aires Province.
- b) Two representatives from the Land Division [Dirección de Tierras] of the Executive Department of the Municipality.
- c) Two representatives of the Honorable Deliberating Council of the Municipality.
- d) One representative of the Catholic Social Ministries Office [Vicaría de Pastoral Social] and one representative of the National University of Quilmes.
- e) Two representatives from intermediary entities, with national or provincial corporate status and municipal recognition, that are involved in housing issues and are recognized by the Municipality and the Land and Housing Community Based Organizations.
- f) Four representatives of land and housing community based organizations from the district. They shall be elected using the following procedures:

A request for applications will be made to community entities interested in participating, with a period not to exceed forty-five (45) days following the publication of this Ordinance, during which the entities must submit their application accompanied by background information on their housing-related projects and experience, including: legalizing land ownership, do-it-yourself construction of housing through mutual assistance, community equipment, urban public interest development, etc.; they must also submit their legal corporate status recognized at the municipal and/or provincial level, organizational structure, number of beneficiaries, management capability in specific areas, sphere of influence in the district, and any other elements considered to fall within the framework of urban solidarity and community interest.

This list shall be received by an "Ad hoc" Commission created specifically for this purpose, whose four members shall be selected within fifteen days following the close of the registration process. This Commission shall be made up of a representative of the Executive Branch, a representative of the Honorable Deliberating Council, a representative of the University of Quilmes, a representative of the Social Ministries Office [Vicaría de Pastoral Social], and a representative proposed by the Nongovernmental Organizations, the Secretario de Enlace de Comunidades Autogestionarias (SEDECA), Asociación Civil Madre Tierra, La Asociación Civil para el Apoyo de Comunidades (APAC) y el Servicio de Paz y Justicia. This Commission shall elect a President and a Secretary and shall make decisions by a absolute majority vote, with the President having the tie-breaking vote should this become necessary.

This mechanism shall be repeated every three years for the selection of the representatives of the beneficiary entities, and the advisory representative proposed by the Nongovernmental Organizations shall be successively replaced by a departing member of the representatives of the beneficiary entities.

Once the four representatives of the community entities have been named, the Executive Branch shall convene the Community Council for Land and Housing within thirty calendar days, and determine the location and time of the first session, at which a president and recording secretary shall be designated, as well as the headquarters and operating procedures for compliance with its mandate.

ARTICLE 14°: Every representative on the Community Council for Land and Housing shall have voice and vote; it shall meet at least once a month and shall issue resolutions through an absolute majority vote. It shall record the minutes of the meetings, which shall be signed by the representatives following each meeting that is held with an official quorum comprising half of the representatives plus one.

All members shall discharge their duties in a voluntary capacity and shall receive no compensation for their work. Representation of the Council in all public communications and in the mass media shall be the responsibility of a commission made up of one representative of the Land and Housing Community Based Organizations, one representative of the intermediary entities, and one municipal official from the Community Council.

ARTICLE 15°: The Community Council for Land and Housing shall have the following functions:

1. Implement this Ordinance.
2. Plan and implement the community and public interest land and housing policy of the Municipality of Quilmes.
3. Systematize all information in the Data Bank, Land and Housing Fund, and the Emergency Housing Registry.
4. Take the necessary steps with any agency relating to procedures necessary to achieve the stated objective.
5. Manage any issue that should arise among beneficiaries and between them and Official Agencies.
6. Advise the parties in question on land and housing.

7. All of the attributes stipulated in this Ordinance. The powers granted to the Community Council for Land and Housing shall be limited to making recommendations to the Executive Department, from which the latter may not deviate except through a well-founded resolution based on the opinions and observations of the Secretariat of Public Works and Services, the Municipal Accounting Office, or General Counsel [Asesoría Letrada], and to oversight of the use of funds in the special account that is opened and the development of programs to be undertaken, with free and unrestricted access to the administrative actions that are carried out to implement such programs.

COMPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 16°: Creating the Emergency Housing Registry listing all residents of the district who lack the means to acquire their own property or dignified housing. This Registry shall be created by the implementing entity.

ARTICLE 17°: Authorizing the Executive Department [Departamento Ejecutivo] to create in the existing Resource Estimations [Calculo de Recursos] the category of "MUNICIPAL LAND AND HOUSING FUND."

ARTICLE 18°: Authorizing the Executive Department to create in the existing Expense Budget the category "MUNICIPAL LAND AND HOUSING FUND".

ARTICLE 19°: LET IT BE KNOWN to all interested parties, given to the General Registry and FILED.

Fdo.: Dn. FERNANDO D. GERONES, President of the H. D. C.
Dn. CLAUDIO GENTILUOMO, Secretary of the H.D.C.

Therefore:

THE MUNICIPAL SUPERINTENDENT
HEREBY DECREES

ARTICLE 1°: ENACT Ordinance N° 8289/98, approved by the Honorable Deliberating Council in its Regular Session on November 10, 1998.

ARTICLE 2°: LET IT BE KNOWN to all interested parties, given to the General Registry, and FILED.

Fdo. Don FEDERICO CARLOS SCARABINO,
Municipal Superintendent of Quilmes
Don EDUARDO O. SCHIAVO, Secretary of Government

Evaluation of Changes in the Quality of Life in Bogota, Colombia, from a Civil Society Perspective

Bogotá Cómo Vamos

María Fernanda Sánchez

Summary

The “Evaluation of Changes in the Quality of Life in Bogota from the Perspective of Civil Society” Project, known as Bogotá Cómo Vamos [*Bogotá How are We Doing*], is a citizen initiative that has been evaluating changes in the quality of life in Bogotá since 1998. Its evaluations are based on the impact of the development plan, taking into account citizens’ opinions. For the last five years it has recorded the main variations coverage and quality levels of basic services, gathered citizens’ opinions through an annual opinion survey, and created forums for debate on issues of wellbeing in the Capital District.

Background

Bogotá Cómo Vamos was created during the 1997 election campaign, based on the 1991 Political Constitution’s mandate calling for citizens to exercise social oversight of public administration. It was a response to the absence of a citizen-based accountability mechanism to monitor fulfillment of the campaign promises made by the candidate—by then the mayor elect—and their impact on the quality of life in the city.

In view of the changes experienced in the city from 1994 on, organized civil society developed an educational monitoring strategy to hold the District Administration accountable and, at the same time, to present clear and concise evaluation reports for the information of everyday citizens. In this way,

citizens could to assume an increasingly protagonist role in the collective construction of the city.

To develop this initiative, El Tiempo Publishing House, the Corona Foundation, and the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce forged a strategic alliance to develop evaluation and communication mechanisms, field test them on experts and on citizens from different socio-economic strata through focus groups, and ensure the political viability of the Project through the city’s Mayor and his team. Thus Bogotá Como Vamos was launched and has emerged as a forum for debate over city issues, due to the receptivity it has encountered among experts, students, citizens and, of course, the district government.

Objective

Evaluate changes in quality of life and wellbeing in Bogotá based on compliance with the District Administration's Development Plan.

Processes and Methods**Who**

The Bogotá Cómo Vamos Project is made up of a coordinating team that includes an expert in evaluation and local government and an assistant. Its work in the areas of data collection from the District Administration, preliminary analysis of findings, drafting of evaluation reports, consultation with experts, and the commissioning of an annual opinion survey, is supported by the Technical Committee [*Comité Técnico*] and the Steering Committee [*Comité Directivo*]. The latter is made up of El Tiempo, the Corona Foundation, and the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce.

The evaluation process involves the District Administration through the mayor, secretaries and directors of city government entities, who periodically submit information. Experts and research centers have a role in analyzing sector-based evaluations, and the general public participates as a source of information on city problems and as the target audience for the dissemination of evaluation findings in the mass media.

The main beneficiaries are the citizens. The final evaluations are targeted toward citizens, in order to make more information available to them concern-

ing changes in the quality of life. The City Administration likewise benefits from the evaluation findings, which can be used to to adjust its strategies and have access to information on the views of experts and, most importantly, the citizens themselves.

What

Bogotá Cómo Vamos is mainly engaged in examining and disseminating evaluation findings. It requests information from the District Administration every six months based on a series of outcome indicators and prepares evaluation reports. The latter process is supported by working meetings with experts, as well as the findings of the annual public perception survey. If more information is required from citizens on a particular issue then focus groups are organized with citizens from the six socio-economic strata.

Project evaluation areas include: health, education, housing and utilities, environment, public spaces, traffic, citizen responsibility, citizen security, public management, public finances, and economic development. Project coordinators consulted with a group of experts, held focus groups comprising citizens representing the six socio-economic strata, and held meetings with the heads of District entities, in order to identify these areas and design the indicators.

The mass media was chosen as the vehicle for disseminating the evaluation findings. El Tiempo was particularly key as the newspaper with the largest circulation in the city and nationwide, reaching 1,430,000 people from Monday to Saturday, and 3,040,000 on Sunday, as was the local television

station City TV with an audience of 2,905,900 people. Other strategies adopted included publishing a Quarterly Bulletin with 3,000 copies for distribution to grassroots citizen organizations, and distributing other publications, such as reports from seminars and forums, to experts, libraries, research and documentation centers, universities, and high schools, in order to strengthen institutional memory.

How

The main evaluation tool is the series of outcome, technical, and public perception indicators designed for each sector. The technical variables are nourished by information submitted by the district entities every six months. The public perception variables are fed by the Project's annual public perception survey of 1,500 individuals representing the various zones and social strata in the city, and both genders. The survey is further supported by focus groups held biannually with citizens representing the six socio-economic strata.

Sector evaluations are based on a preliminary report prepared by the Project coordinators. This report is presented to a group of experts for in-depth analysis and to develop conclusions and recommendations; it is also discussed at seminars or debates to which public officials and citizens involved in the issue are invited. Based on these inputs, the final report is prepared for dissemination through the previously established channels.

In addition, the project sponsors other types of forums and debates on specific issues related to quality of life in the city. These initiatives have focused

on issues such as street people, people who have been displaced by violence, and political reforms in the city. While these issues are not directly related to a particular evaluation area, they are considered germane to the Project's main objective.

The findings and outcomes from the evaluations and other forums and debates are published in the press entities mentioned earlier: El Tiempo, City TV, Quarterly Bulletin [Boletín Trimestral] and Forum Reports [Memorias de Foros]. In addition to publishing them in El Tiempo, a press release is sent to about 25 radio and TV stations and the printed media. The findings are also posted on the Project's Web Page, which was recently created in order to reach more people.

Since 1999, the Project has compiled additional information on the city, including a series of monthly statistics on accidents, security, health, citizen conduct, cultural activities and sports, economic statistics, and environment. One of these statistics is published on a daily basis in El Tiempo and the information is updated each month on our Web Page.

How Much

The total cost of the Project is around US\$ 75,000, of which 47% is used to pay personnel costs (coordinator and assistant); 24% is for supplementary activities to the evaluation: roundtables, forums and seminars, and the annual commissioning of the survey; 20% is for communications such as the Quarterly Bulletin and forum reports; and 9% goes to overhead costs.

Funding for the Project's activities each year comes from a contribution of US\$22,026 from each of the sponsoring entities, for a total of US\$ 66,078, or 88% of total funding. The remaining 12% comes from funds left over from the previous year and interest generated from the investment of contributions.

Outcomes

The Project's most significant outcome is the diffusion of knowledge in society based on the evaluations that have been conducted and disseminated on the impact of the performance of the administrations of Mayor Enrique Peñalosa and Mayor Antanas Mockus on the quality of life in the city. Prior to this, the only information available pertained to the most important projects and works, but lacked a synthesis of the impact of such activities on the coverage and quality of basic goods and services.

Moreover, the District Administration has acquiesced to a process of accountability by agreeing to collaborate with and provide information to the Bogotá Cómo Vamos Project. Before this Project, the Administration published a book at the end of its term detailing its most important accomplishments with an emphasis on management and process. Now it presents indicators on coverage and quality, which have to do more with outcomes and impact.

District entities also have improved the quality, relevance and timeliness of their information on service coverage and quality, in fulfillment of agreements signed with the Project. Before Bogotá Cómo Vamos, the information provided by these entities

tended to describe their many activities rather than the aggregate outcomes of those activities. For example, while previously they reported the number of social interest housing units built, currently they provide information on changes in the shortage of housing units.

Moreover, some district entities are using information from the Annual Public perception Survey as core variables for their performance indicators. The Secretariat of Education posts this information on its Web page: www.sedbogota.edu.co and public service providers are designing their service delivery indicator based on this information. The General Secretariat of the Mayor's Office also uses it to monitor the Administration's overall progress (see the Annex on Indicators).

The Project played an active role in the 2000 election campaign to elect Enrique Peñalosa's successor. It published its evaluation findings in two documents, "Bases for a Government Program for Bogotá" and "The Citizens' Agenda" in order to frame the most important issues for the city in terms of progress and challenges. These materials were used for special pieces in *El Tiempo*, a special Bulletin containing a voters' guide, meetings with candidates, and televised debates on City TV.

Bogotá Cómo Vamos has been recognized among the Best Citizen Practices for Improving Quality of Life by the UNDP-Habitat Dubai International Award for Best Practices for 2000 and 2002 Chapters. This recognition led Harvard University to contact the program with a request for more information. And,

it currently offers a course entitled “Bogotá: Public Policy” in conjunction the National University of Colombia’s Bogotá Network [Red Bogotá] which has been attended by 400 people to date.

One of this Project’s most significant fruits is the “Concejo Como Vamos” Project, launched in 2002 to evaluate the institutional performance of the Bogotá City Council [Concejo de Bogotá], with the support of Bogotá Cómo Vamos promoters. Replication of this project currently is under study for other interested cities such as Medellín, Cúcuta, Cali, Barranquilla y Bucaramanga, as well as the central government.

Limitations and Opportunities

One of the Project’s limitations has been the difficulties some district entities have had in producing relevant data that measure outcomes rather than processes, although this has improved gradually. In the area of dissemination, the Project hopes to reach more citizens from each social strata so that they have access to more information about the city. To this end, the project is seeking to involve radio stations in its activities.

In terms of opportunities, the Project is viewed as a forum for debate through which strategic issues affecting the city can be aired and examined. It is therefore important to strengthen it both technically and financially so that, in the medium and long term, it can serve as a barometer for quality of life in the city. This entails further strengthening Project links to experts and research centers so that they can make better use of the information produced. More funding also translates into increased dissemination to all citizens, as well as sustainability over time.

Additional Resources

Our Web site at www.eltiempo.com, presents all of the information from the evaluations, the annual survey, and the “Bogotómetro”:

www.eltiempo.com.co/bogotacomovamos/

The Quarterly Bulletins mentioned above can be found on the following Web sites:

www.fundacioncorona.org.co/gestion_local/publicaciones3.htm y www.empresario.com.co/portal/informes/bogota/bogota_como_vamos/index.html

ANNEX INDICATORS FOR BOGOTA COMO VAMOS

INDICATOR	WHAT IT MEASURES	VARIABLES
Como Vamos [How are we doing] in Education	Changes in coverage, quality and public perception of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Net coverage rates - Average scores on educational performance tests - Percentage of knowledge of values - Citizen scoring of the service
Cómo Vamos in Health	Changes in coverage, quality, and public perception of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health System Coverage Rate - Maternal Mortality Rate - Mortality Rate for Children under 5 by EDA and IRA - Citizen scoring of the service
Como Vamos in Housing and Services	Changes in shortages of priority housing and in coverage of potable water and sanitation services, and perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deficit in priority housing - Aqueduct Coverage Rate - Rate of coverage of sewage and drainage system - Citizen scoring of the services
Como Vamos on the Environment	Changes in pollution levels and perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of figures that exceed legal levels of each air pollutant - Percentage of water treated by industry - Level of reforestation and green areas - Citizen perception of pollution
Como Vamos in Traffic	Changes in traffic delays and perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Average time spent in traffic - Citizen perception of changes in traffic, quality of the service, road conditions, and traffic management
Como Vamos in Public Space	Changes in the per capita quantity of public pedestrian space and in the coverage of roadways in good condition and perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of roadways in good condition - Coverage of Rail service/tracks - Coverage of Bicycle Paths
Como Vamos in Citizen Security	Changes in homicide rates, victimization, and perception of insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homicide Rate - Victimization Rate - Rate of non-reporting - Citizen perception of insecurity
Como Vamos in Citizen Responsibility	Changes in citizen behavior measured by rates and consequences of infractions of the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accident rate - Number of summons issued - Alcohol related deaths - Evasion rates - Citizen perception of responsibility and solidarity
Como Vamos in Public Management	Changes in perception about public administration, public servants, and local mayors' offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizen perception of the image, management, trust of the District's public entities
Como Vamos in Public Finances	Changes in financial health indicators and international credit risk scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rates of capacity to pay and sustainability of the debt - Duff and Phelps, Fitch y Standar&Poor Indicators
Como Vamos in Economic Development	Changes in productivity, competitiveness, and job market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDP Growth Rate - Employment, underemployment, and unemployment rates - Export growth rates - Citizen perception of the family economic situation

Monitoring of Public Budgets

Independent Analysis of the General Budget of the Republic, Peru

Economic and Social Research Consortium

Pedro Andrés Francke Ballve

Summary

The project performed an independent analysis of the General Budget of the Republic of Peru, and distributed the findings to the general public and to civil society organizations in a user-friendly format so as to facilitate citizen participation and oversight in budgetary processes.

Background

Under the Fujimori dictatorship, opportunities for public information and citizen participation, including budget issues, were curtailed. For ten years, therefore, it was difficult to obtain data on the budget and budget performance and parliamentary debate was minimal and irrelevant. The discovery that hundreds of millions of dollars were missing from the national coffers revealed the reason behind this total secrecy.

Today Peru is undergoing a difficult process of democratic transition and decentralization in which economic issues play a crucial role. Under the administration of Dr. Paniagua, a transparency strategy was developed and played a key role in the activities of the Ministry of Economy and Finances where detailed information on budget performance was made

available on public Web sites (SIAF). The Peruvian government strategy includes expanding transparency in budgetary matters.

The Congress, however, has yet to take any significant initiative in budget matters. The Congress has not placed priority on debating the budget prior to approval or monitoring it afterward. It has demonstrated little capacity in economic matters and has focused its efforts more on constitutional reforms, investigation of corruption cases under Fujimori, and other laws. For its part, over the past decade civil society has gradually but effectively built its capacity to participate in decision-making processes. This has been confirmed by the creation of Multistakeholder Roundtables for Poverty Reduction [Mesa de Concertación de Lucha contra la Pobreza],

and by its active role in the National Agreement [Acuerdo Nacional]¹. The Ministry of Economy and Finances and the Multistakeholder Roundtables, have developed a promising joint strategy of plans and budgets at the departmental level that were introduced into the 2003 budget as a pilot initiative in 9 departments

Objective

The project's objective is to contribute to the institutionalization of a practice of independent budget analysis in Peru that can be used by different social actors at the national, departmental, and local levels, including organizations representing the most impoverished and excluded sectors.

Processes and methods

Who

The Economic and Social Research Consortium [Consortio de Investigación Económica y Social (CIES)]² of Peru is responsible for the project. This entity comprises thirty, mostly private research institutions. The project team includes a senior economist, two junior economists, and a research assistant. Additional support was received for creating a Web page to assist with dissemination (www.consortio.org/presupuesto) and press work.

The direct beneficiaries are civil society organizations interested in participating in budget matters, and the general public. The main organizations involved, in this case, were the Citizen Proposal Group (*Grupo Propuesta Ciudadana*)³ comprising a

dozen NGOs and currently working on a large project to monitor the decentralization process), the National Association of Centers (*Asociación Nacional de Centros – ANC*, which includes a wide range of NGOs and holds an annual conference on social development), and the Health Forum (*Foro Salud*, an association of NGOs, and health professionals and researchers). In addition, the public in general has become increasingly aware and has been able to increase its participation through the project.

The Citizen Proposal Group has used its Web site and quarterly bulletin to disseminate the analyses and outcomes of participatory workshops on decentralization. The budget analysis process has been useful to them in their process.

The analysis of the 2003 budget was presented at the ANC's National Conference on Social Development, attended by more than 2,000 people. In this way, a broad spectrum of civil society organizations was able to participate in the discussion on this issue.

Finally, the Health Forum has been monitoring health policy, and this work was nourished by the analysis of the 2003 budget and the performance of the 2002 budget for the health sector.

¹ The National Agreement includes the government, the main political parties and the main civil society organizations and has achieved consensus on a long-term policy for the country.

² www.consortio.org

³ www.participaperu.org.pe

What

The project was engaged in activities in three main areas:

- Analysis of the Budget of the Republic 2003 in macro economic terms and with respect to the budgets for health, education, and social programs. This was the first activity, since project initiation coincided with the congressional budget debate (September-November), and one of the project goals was to support civil society's influence over this process. Reports were prepared and discussed with groups of experts and disseminated through presentations and conferences, electronic communications, and printed materials.
- Analysis of the 2002 budget performance in health and social programs.

This analysis was conducted during the first months of this year to compare actual government spending with the congressionally authorized budget. The goal was to provide the means for civil society to conduct oversight on compliance, or failure to comply, with the authorized budget. The findings were disseminated through articles in the press and the project's Web site.

- Analysis of budget management and performance with an emphasis on transparency and opportunities for citizen participation.

Building on lessons from the previous experiences, this last analysis focused on identifying the main problems with the current budget format, development, and authorization, and proposed citizen participation in this process.

How

The analysis was based on supporting information provided by the Executive to the Congress in support of its 2003 Budget of the Republic, and on budget performance information posted by the Ministry of Economy and Finance on its Web site.

The 2003 budget analysis is based primarily on comparing 2003 totals with those established in past years, and with those in other Latin American countries. It looked at the issue of equity in budget distribution among the country's departments. In the areas of health and education, certain key projects were chosen, and the proposed budget was compared with service-provision goals; here several instances of insufficient funds were found.

The project used existing networks for dissemination purposes, including the Health Forum and CONADES networks, as well as the mass media and printed publications produced by CIES.

How much

The project budget is US\$ 35,000, funded by the World Bank for activities during the period between July 2002 and March 2003. Project activities are virtually completed; only the final report is pending and in process.

An estimated annual budget of US\$ 60,000 would make it possible to maintain the project, improve dissemination and advocacy, expand the issues examined, and enable a more thorough examination of each issue.

Outcomes

The project's principal outcomes were:

1. Made available relevant, user-friendly budget information to a broad range of people and civil society organizations, including:
 - a. The 2003 budget as it was being debated in the Congress;
 - b. The 2002 budget performance and its programs related to government social policy.
2. Created a method for analyzing budget issues incorporating the following areas:
 - a. Proposed budgets that should be in force the year following the year in which they were authorized.
 - b. Budgets executed during the year, and how they compare to the budgets that were initially authorized.
3. Inform public opinion in critical areas relating to the 2003 budget and 2002 budget performance.
4. Draw some conclusions about the main problems in the budget process with respect to transparency issues and technical coherence.

The project has had the following impact:

1. Increased civil society's knowledge of budget problems in general and with the 2003 budget and 2002 budget performance in particular.
2. Introduced this as a relevant issue to a broad range of NGOs and civil society organizations.

3. The team acquired expertise in analytical methods and techniques for successfully influencing budget matters.
4. Brought critical budget issues for 2002 and 2003 to the attention of government authorities; this led to a changed approach to the budget, requiring greater transparency and consistency between plans and budgets.

In particular, the debate raised awareness that the 2003 budget for Comprehensive Health Insurance [a recently created government insurance] was insufficient to accomplish its goals, and this has spurred the Ministry of Economy to allocate additional funds. Civil society has raised questions about excessive spending levels for health administration while spending on individual treatment was reduced in 2002.

Limitations and opportunities

The independent budget analysis project was the first effort of its kind to provide civil society with the tools to participate in these matters. The main difficulties encountered have been:

1. difficulty in obtaining reliable past information and in creating a database of the 2003 budget to facilitate processing;
2. the costs inherent to learning a new activity;
3. weaknesses in civil society organization and in links between researchers and activists in this sphere;
4. difficulties in terms of journalists and press executives' understanding of this issue.

The main lessons learned were:

1. Key elements in maximizing the effect of an independent budget analysis include:
 - a. continuity in the analysis of the budget cycle (it is not enough to conduct an analysis for two months out of the year, when the budget cycle lasts for two years),
 - b. broad access to the analysis (which has to do with its presentation),
 - c. timeliness (look for the best moment to maximize impact).
2. Join forces on the issues that are most important to citizens and in which civil society organizations are interested.
3. The importance of developing alliances with different civil society organizations, including them from the outset in identifying issues and methodologies.

This process is about to conclude and, while positive outcomes have been achieved, it is necessary to ensure the continuity of the project in order to achieve greater, and more sustainable impacts.

Additional resources

The project's Web site is www.consortio.org/presupuesto. It contains all of the reports and the methodologies used, as well as useful links relating to the budget debate in Peru.

The Experience of the Transparency Process in the Municipality of Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras

Citizen Commission for Transparency in Public Administration

Jorge Armando Calix

Summary

The Citizen Commission on Transparency [Comisión Ciudadana de Transparencia] is an entity with civil society representation that advocates for the honest, transparent, and efficient management of public interest resources in the Municipality of Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras. To achieve this end, it promotes the development of a culture of transparency and accountability. Formed in April 2001, the Commission has obtained tangible results in the following areas: influencing the policies and administration of the Municipal Mayor's Office, monitoring subsidies from the National Congress, conducting social audits and supporting the establishment of Administrative Boards for Supplementary Funds in educational centers, among others.

Background

In view of the municipality's declining credibility with the public because of poor management and inappropriate treatment of tax payers, carried over from the previous administration, in June 2000, the Mayor proposed to the Municipal Corporation the creation of a Transparency Commission. This was in the spirit of the public commitment he expressed during the Fifth Town Meeting [*Cabildo Abierto*] for concertation in the area of cadastral and property tax reappraisals, held in December 1999.

The Municipal Corporation debated the political viability of creating such a commission since it represented a form of criticism of the authorities. It was ultimately created to include maximum participa-

tion of diverse social sectors. Article 80 of the Constitution of the Republic and Article 59 of the Law of Municipalities and by-laws, approved in March 2001, constitute the legal basis for its actions.

The Commission has earned credibility through its aggressive role in accountability processes. This aggressiveness has been more evident in cases involving the central government and community organizations and, more recently, in the discovery of tax evasion by 8 members of the Municipal Corporation. At first, institutions and organizations were reluctant to be held accountable to the Commission in the absence of a specific legal framework. Gradually, however, the Commission has earned their

respect by promoting accountability as a moral imperative more than a legal one.

Objective

Reduce acts of corruption and optimize public resource management by the central government, local governments, and institutions and organizations that request and implement such resources on behalf of the population.

Operational framework

The Actors

The Commission is made up of an assembly of 21 organizations, each of which designates its representative. At a town meeting, the Municipal Corporation selects five representatives to form a Steering Committee. These representatives are elected by a three-quarters vote of the Corporation members to ensure their acceptability to the majority of political forces. The following Civil Society representatives belong to the Commission's assembly:

- Three representatives of the community councils [patronatos comunitarios] (1 per zone of the 44 existing councils)
- Four representatives of Professional Associations (Doctors, Nurses, Experts, Lawyers).
- Three representatives of the teachers associations (PRICPMAH, COLPROSUMAH, COPEMH)
- Four representatives of the labor unions (SITRAHMEDYS, SITRAHONDUCOR, SITRAINA, SITRATELH)

- Three representatives from social clubs (Rotary, Lions, Vincentians)
- Two representatives of the Churches (Catholic Church ministries, Clergy association)
- A representative of the Cooperatives
- A representative from private enterprise (Chamber of Commerce)

The Commission has broad representation, comprising a range of social sectors, labor, professionals, community groups, teachers associations, unions, the church, the cooperatives and organized private enterprise. The entire population of Santa Rosa, approximately 40,000 inhabitants, benefits from the Commission's work. Some benefit directly through guarantees that their dealings with public agencies will be handled lawfully, while others benefit indirectly due to the improved management of scarce public resources.

Based on negotiated agreements, the Commission opened an office with basic equipment and a mid-level public accountant. An assistant was later hired because of the workload. Initially, managerial and technical staff alike had trouble performing their duties because of their inexperience in the field. Gradually, and with technical support from cooperation agencies, they were able to improve their performance to the degree that the population now demands their services precisely because of the results they have obtained.

Planned activities

The Commission's work plan can be summarized in the following areas and activities:

1. Strengthen the Commission's institutional capacity:
 - Consolidate the Commission's organizational structure
 - Raise the funds necessary for its operations
 - Train resources based on the needs
2. Promote honesty and transparency in resource management
 - Understand the institutional utility of public interest
 - Investigation and follow-up on complaints
 - Implement social audits
 - Public information about institutional actions
3. Promote the values need to create a culture of transparency
 - Publicize the Commission's regulations and role
 - Develop a values education program
 - Install mechanisms for ongoing communication

A strategic plan was designed to promote a culture of transparency in Santa Rosa. It includes 19 project categories and the following common vision:

"Santa Rosa de Copán, a model of efficiency and effectiveness in public resource management, based on the law and broad citizen participation, and created to promote ethical and moral values through education and the establishment of a culture of transparency."

The Steering Committee [directive] plays a key decision-making role in all areas, mainly the investigation and follow-up of complaints and social audits. Responsibility is vested exclusively in the Steering Committee in these cases: analyzing complaints,

deciding whether to investigate, and issuing an opinion once the technical team has presented its well-founded report; sensitive cases will be referred to the Assembly.

Processes and mechanisms

1. Complaints (by petition of a party): received in the office, analyzed by the Steering Committee and if warranted, investigated; the technical team conducts the investigation and prepares a report; the Steering Committee examines the report, issues an opinion, and refers the case for consideration by the appropriate entity; this entity responds, procedures are exhausted, and if the outcomes satisfy criteria of legality and efficiency, the case is closed; if not, it is referred to other entities for legal proceedings, in this case the public prosecutor's office [fiscal] and the National Commission for Human Rights (CONADEH).

2. Social Audits (officially): The Steering Committee decides to conduct the audit and refers the case to the Technical Team. The latter visits the entity to be audited and begins its work (for example: verify an account, performance compliance in a department, the way in which a tax was calculated, etc.) The Technical Team prepares its report and submits it to the Steering Committee. The latter examines the findings and remits its opinion to the entity being audited. The Technical Team then monitors compliance with the observations. In the event of more serious irregularities, the affected parties are convened with CONADEH to arrive at agreements to resolve the issue. The matter is referred to the public prosecutor only if such action is warranted.

3. Accountability (voluntary): The Municipality, institution, or organization managing public resources presents an official report to the Commission. This report is referred to the Technical Team, which examines it and presents comments to the Steering Committee. The latter then examines this report and issues an opinion. The technical team may later close the case if there are no observations. If there are observations the social audit process is followed. The Commission promotes other mecha-

nisms and processes including training programs, publicity campaigns, resource management, and public reports, the Citizen Council for Municipal Development (COCDEM) and the Municipal Commissioner.

Costs and funding

A summary of the costs and funding is presented below:

COSTS AND FUNDING (IN USD)

DESCRIPTION	START-UP AND 1 st YEAR	ONE YEAR	UNDP/ASDI	CONADEH	MUNICIPALITY
Administrative costs	15,685.0	12,100.0	30%	55%	15%
Furniture and equipment	2,530.0	-0-	90%	-0-	10%
Training	1,695.0	850.0	45%	15%	40%
Communication	3,370.0	1,700.0	45%	40%	15%
Total	23,280.0	14,650.0	39.8%	44%	16.2%

The Municipal Corporation, the Commission, and the Technical Team received technical assistance in drafting the regulations, promoting, and negotiating the process, methods, and instruments to be used, regulatory and strategic planning, funding proposal and fundraising activities and negotiations, and accompaniment of the process. The UNDP/ASDI decentralization project and CONADEH providing funding assistance during the first year and a half, at the request of the Municipality and pursuant to an agreement negotiated with the Commission.

Some relevant outcomes

- As a result of the investigations conducted, 8 out of 12 Corporation members paid their arrears from past years into the Municipal Treasury.
- Identification of improper use of two grants: one from the Patronato San Miguel in the amount of \$2,450.00 for a sewerage project and the other from the Patronato Prado Alto in the amount of \$650.00; played a key role in recovering these

- resources through commitments made in proceedings to drop the charges [*audiencias de descargo*]; in both cases the leaders were removed and are making payments.
- Two cases that were not sufficiently justified by the supporting documentation were referred to the Auditing Board [Tribunal Superior de Cuentas], CONADEH, and the National Anticorruption Council.
 - Citizen's have more trust in the municipality (86.1% / Oct-2002). Since figures from previous years are not available, the only point of reference is the negative opinion expressed by members of civil society in survey workshops conducted in April 1998.
 - Average 68% growth in the municipality's regular income in recent years.
 - Improvement in previous indicators is attributable to the local government's receptivity to participatory processes and the oversight of the Commission, which has enhanced its credibility.
 - CONADEH, the National Anticorruption Council, and the recently created Official Auditing Office [Tribunal Superior de Cuentas] regard the Commission as a model for the nation.
 - The population's perception of the existence of corruption in the municipality fell from 18% (August 2000) to 8% (October 2001) and only 1.5% of the population (October 2002) reports being personally aware of an act of corruption.

Limitations, measures, and opportunities

LIMITATIONS	MEASURES
- Lack of experience and the population's distrust of authorities have required building the process gradually.	- This has entailed volunteer time: the Steering Committee meets every Monday from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m., and volunteer additional time during the week.
- Lack of a specific legal basis has created difficulty in a couple of cases of refusal to disclose information for accountability purposes, leading to a debilitating struggle.	- Mobilize citizens and authorities to force them to disclose information, but they respond with delay tactics resulting in wasted time and resources.
- Some Municipal Corporation members are not satisfied with the Commission's role, because the latter has criticized them and they are not used to oversight of their actions.	- It would be useful if the Official Auditing Office's regulations and organic law could extend legal coverage to this type of entity, pursuant to articles 69 and 70 of the law.
- Insufficient human resources to respond to the demand.	- Raise funds with cooperation agencies and commit government and municipal funds.

Opportunities

- The population and the media consider the Commission's role to be relevant, as do its own member organizations; this creates the potential for its social sustainability.
- The credibility the Commission enjoys in the eyes of CONADEH, the National Anticorruption Council, and the Official Audit Office is important in terms of backing up its actions.
- The accomplishments made demonstrate the importance of entities of this nature and therefore the immediate response is to promote and legitimize them institutionally.

Recommendations

- Define the role of this type of institution in the regulations attached to the organic law of the Auditing Board [Tribunal Superior de Cuentas].
- Obtain specific commitments from Civil Society Organizations to contribute to the financial sustainability of the commission.
- Reform municipal law to include this type of entity, with municipal contributions to ensure its sustainability, and assign a percentage to the commissions for each project to be audited.
- Negotiate with society a municipal tax rate to fund its operations.

Additional Resources

Additional information on this experience can be found on the following Web site:

www.santarosacopan.org,

to send an e-mail transparenciasrc@yahoo.com or call Telefax (504) 662-3377.

Glossary of Terms

- *PRICPMAH*: The first teachers' professional association in Honduras
- *COLPROSUMAH*: Professional educators association of Honduras
- *COPEMH*: Association of middle school teachers of Honduras
- *Sitrahmedys*: medical workers Union of Honduras
- *Sitrahonducor*: post office workers union of Honduras
- *Sitraina*: National Agrarian Institute workers union
- *Sitratelh*: telecommunications workers union
- *CONADEH*: National [Governmental] Human Rights Commission
- *COCDEM*: Citizens' Council for Municipal Development
- *UNDP*: United Nations Development Program
- *ASDI*: Swedish Agency for International Development
- *CNA*: National Anticorruption Council
- *TSC*: Audit Board [Tribunal Superior de Cuentas]

Monitoring and Social Mobilization

A Traditional Peasant Organization Engaged in Social Monitoring in the Municipality of Totora

Carrasco Province, Cochabamba Department, Bolivia

Juan Carlos Escalera López

Summary

Since 2001, 3600 peasant families from the municipality of Totora—traditionally organized into 83 rural unions comprising 13 subcentrals and the Agrarian Central of Moyapampa (CAM), have delegated a representative to receive three days of training per month on social monitoring of local government (the Mayor's office). The mayor's office currently receives funds from taxpayer contributions [coparticipación popular], HIPC, the National Treasury [Tesoro General de la Nación (TGN)] and the Productive and Social Investment Fund [Fondo de Inversión Productiva y Social (FPS)]. The peasant delegate has been given the title of *trainer* and in four 6-hour sessions a month provides culturally and linguistically appropriate training to men and women from each community. This has made it possible to overcome the rhetorical, standardized approach of training only a few peasant leaders using a strongly theoretical approach, while failing to achieve the full exercise and practice of verification and oversight of funds managed for specific periods by an administrative unit, in this case the municipal government and the mayor.

Background

The Totora municipality has a population of 13,995 inhabitants. Quechua is the native language of 97% of the population and only 3% are fluent in Spanish. In addition, over 50% of the population is illiterate and of the remaining 50% (that is supposedly literate) 40% can only write their signature¹, but cannot read or write, 40% can read but lack comprehension skills, and 20% have average basic reading and writing skills, although the figures are lower for women than for men.

In this context, peasant participation in the development of the municipal PAOs has been minimal. The legal content of the 2000 National Dialogue Law and other laws is incomprehensible and seems removed from the social context: "rural peasants can do little or nothing if they are ignorant of the laws that allow and

¹ The signature has become a sort of social status indicator, and because of this it can be observed that 80% can sign their name.

empower them to participate, monitor, exercise oversight, and ultimately report infractions.”²

After a thorough analysis of their situation, the peasants living in the municipality of Totora concluded that “if we wait for the government to educate and train the peasants, then they will already have died of poverty, and condemned future generations to the same fate.”³

In order to reverse this reality, they decided that all families in the communities should learn how to participate in municipal life through peer training. Someone needed to decipher the difficult language used by government technical personnel. And that someone is a trainer delegated by the community itself who, in conjunction with other committed experts from the Services and Technical Assistance Center, analyze and design training curricula. In doing so they have changed the path of history. A history in which, for over 150 years, rural inhabitants have not been familiar with the first articles of the Political Constitution of the Bolivian State, much less recent laws providing for the participation of excluded sectors, or the latest laws on social accountability of those responsible for managing civil society’s economic resources.

At the moment, peasant organizations are collective actors. They express their interests and values within a legal and institutional framework; they make demands of the government and this eventually becomes their *raison d’être*. By creating their own mechanisms for representation and leadership, they are at a disadvantage in their interactions with the

government. It is therefore appropriate that they be considered genuine representatives of civil society.

Objective

Build individual and collective skills in legal participatory mechanisms among rural peasants, men and women, for social monitoring of municipal administration in the Totora Municipality.

Processes and Methods

Who

Three institutions support the initiative: CESAT, the Central Campesina de Moyapampa Totora, and the Municipal Government. Work is coordinated, although each entity retains its individual identity and objectives.

CESAT, is an institution whose mission and vision is to strengthen marginalized rural peasant organizations to promote integral natural resource management.

CAM, The Peasant Central of Moyapampa [Central Campesina de Moyapampa], is a civil society organization with traditional demands in the areas of education, health, production, and the integral development of all of the communities.

The Municipality, The highest local administrative and political authority

² Conclusions of Congresses of Peasants.

³ Totora peasants in general, who also confirmed that the government is not interested in adult education, much less in legal frameworks.

PARTICIPATION OF TRAINERS		POPULATION PARTICIPATING IN THE TRAINING SESSIONS	
Local Unions [Sindicato Comunal]	Women's Organizations	Local Unions [Sindicato comunal]	Women's Organizations
64	12	2820	248

Quality of Relations: A project steering committee has been formed made up of the mayor, the men and women peasant centrals, the president of the

training committee (yuyal pacha).⁴ The objective is to evaluate technical and methodological modifications.

What

GOALS	ACTIVITIES / COURSES
Allocation of funds from tax contributions to peasant communities; improve peasant participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tax co-payments - HIPC - Participatory planning - Peasant demands
Increase social participation in decision-making for equal access and control over municipal resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social oversight mechanisms - Rights and citizenship
Improve mechanisms and techniques for planning, monitoring, and evaluation of PAO Municipal Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social oversight mechanisms - Peasant monitoring - Peasant Interchange - Peasant Evaluation
Recover and restore the balance of peasant life strategies with equity and reciprocity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing of experiences and new knowledge about social oversight
Strengthen and consolidate women's and men's peasant organizations in the area of social oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation conferences - Coordination mechanisms between peasant organizations and local government

Monitoring and evaluation (Three strategic phases)

- The peasant central and its organized entities will evaluate municipal projects during their quarterly assemblies and annual congress.
- Meetings to develop the PAOs, where peasant participation is vital.

- Reports by the Municipal councils and oversight committees to the CAM peasant organization.

⁴ Yuyal Pacha is a name used by peasants involved in the project. In Quechua it denotes producing knowledge by examining the past and taking the present into account when planning for the future.

Accountability

The financial and technical reports that the mayor presents to the peasant organization are the focal point of information sharing between trained

peasants and the municipal government seeking to increase transparency in municipal management.

The project was implemented in four phases, which are summarized in the chart below.

PHASE	PROCESS	METHOD AND PARTICIPATION
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diagnostic survey and dissemination - Agreements - Definition of scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peasant workshops - Interviews
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreement on objectives - Project design - Agreements - Tripartite pacts - Cofinancing and resource leveraging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peasant workshops - Interviews - Peasant congresses
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project initiation - Trainee selection - Thematic validation - Validation of monitoring and evaluation tools - Validation of evaluation system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peasant workshops - Interviews - Seminar congresses - Training sessions
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience sharing - Sharing of findings/outcomes - Modifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peasant to peasant - Peasant, institution, mayor's office, municipal council.

Resources

We have identified monetary and non monetary costs

▪ Dollars

NOVIB HOLLAND	MANOS UNIDAS SPAIN	MAYOR'S OFFICE TOTORA	TOTAL/ ANNUAL
7,340.00	20,000.00	2,660.00	30,000.00

- *Nonmonetary*: **145,000.00 dollars**, funded by Totora peasant families, (the trainer contributes work days for peasant training)

Outcomes

Individual capacity-building

- 60% of peasant families in the Totora municipality have increased⁵ knowledge of the existing legal framework, citizen participation laws, and HIPC resources.

⁵ It is more useful to be familiar with operational articles rather than the law in its entirety.

- 60% of peasant families in the Totorá municipality participate in municipal planning meetings, mainly POAs.
- 50% of women, through their organization, participate in proposing topics of interest in the municipal POA.

Collective capacity-building

- The peasant union has moved from making demands to articulating proposals
- The peasant subcentral understands the weaknesses and strengths in its territory.
- The peasant central invites the mayor to report on management issues on a monthly basis; the mayor is not resistant, but neither does he feel obligated.
- The mayor's office is experiencing a crisis in terms of structure and composition (normal disputes over space) but there is no management crisis.

Technical design or characteristics of program management

The technical design consists of the dual management (peasant-technical personnel) of various concepts: for the peasants of Totorá these include coordination, concertation (not sell out or be associated with) civil society (peasant organizations, CAM), local power (territorial management), social participation (meetings, peasant congress to define mu-

nicipal proposals), social oversight mechanisms (monitoring committees, peasant organizations), conflict viewed as the collective construction of two types of conduct (one peasant and the other nonpeasant).

New social and economic opportunities

- Each community has organized to present new projects to entities such as the LIL INDIGENA.⁶ Although only one has been approved, the impact of this has to do with the mere fact that basic initiatives have been presented.

Limitations and Opportunities

- The fact that peasants have become more knowledgeable has created social resentment politically and in urban areas of the municipality.
- The peasants' reading and writing skills are incompatible with the technical discourse found in official government information on *resource use* and, therefore, peasant organizations require ongoing support.
- The creation of national and departmental level social oversight mechanisms represents an opportunity that requires future links and coordination between rural and urban areas.

⁶ Project funded by the World Bank to reactivate local economic initiatives.

Additional Resources

Given the opportunity and interest, this experience could be replicated elsewhere. CESAT and the peasants of Titora could share experiences with others in similar situations. CESAT has manuals and thematic teaching aids for peasants.

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Towards Greater Transparency in the Salvadoran State Counsel

Association for the Organization and Education of Women in Business of El Salvador

Carlos Miguel Sáenz Rojas

Summary

The project was implemented between July 2002 and February 2003, by the Association for the Organization and Education of Women in Business of El Salvador [Asociación para la Organización y Educación Empresarial Femenina de El Salvador (OEF/ES)]. It consisted of a diagnostic survey to evaluate the levels of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality in services provided to the public by the Family and Juvenile Protection Units of the Salvadoran State Counsel's Office. The survey's findings were used as inputs in the design of a plan to improve the quality of services provided by the PGR.

Background

In El Salvador, **the status of children's rights is marked by poverty** (1.5 million children live in poor households, and 737,000 of these children live in extreme poverty¹) **and paternal irresponsibility**, (1 million children live in households with absentee fathers and half of these children receive no support whatsoever from their father²).

The Government of El Salvador signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. This momentous event led to the creation of a new legal framework and new institutional law enforcement mechanisms, including Family Courts and Juvenile Courts.

In this context, the **Salvadoran State Counsel's Office [Procuraduría General de la República-PGR]**, through its **Family and Juvenile Protection Units [Unidades de Defensa de la Familia y el Menor -UDFM]** is responsible for defending, monitoring and providing assistance and/or representation in cases of recognition of minors, child support, minors traveling abroad, divorce, and domestic violence. In such cases, **out of court concilia-**

¹ UNICEF: Situation of the Rights of Salvadoran Children and Adolescents: Ten years After the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

² Gender and Society Foundation [Fundación Género y Sociedad]: Estudio sobre Paternidad Irresponsable en C. A. [Study on Irresponsible Fathers in C.A.]

tion is the preferred method of resolving conflicts, and this contributes to consolidating democracy.

Despite significant progress in the PGR's performance, mechanisms for "social audit and participation" that ensure public access to information, and accountability in matters under its jurisdiction remain inadequate.

Objective

Validate a pilot methodology to improve levels of transparency and efficiency in services provided to users by the PGR's Family and Juvenile Protection Units.

Processes and Methods

Who (*Actors involved in the process*)

Implementing Entity: The Association for the Organization and Education of Women in Business of El Salvador, a non-profit organization founded in 1985 with the mission to improve the quality of life of women and children, is responsible for project implementation. The OEF implements programs in the areas of training, support for economic development, maternal-child health, and support for formal and informal education for women and children. It is widely recognized by Salvadoran government agencies for its work on behalf of women and children. Over the past two years, OEF has developed advocacy projects for legal reform and monitoring and transparency in public management. In particular, it has worked in the area of policy, laws, and institutions responsible for ensuring legal recogni-

tion and child support for children living in homes with absentee fathers.

A permanent team is in place to implement the monitoring and transparency program (one coordinator and one technical staff person), in addition to a staff of consultants in various areas (research, public administration, and children's rights).

Project implementation has included alliances and coordination with other organizations in the women's movement (Las Dignas and CEMUJER); these organizations are interested in the issue themselves and are natural allies of the OEF.

The agency targeted for monitoring is the Salvadoran State Counsel's Office (PGR), which is responsible for protecting the rights of women and children.

The beneficiaries are approximately 40,000 women annually who turn to the UDFM to solve problems such as legal recognition of their children, child support, divorce, and domestic violence. These are low-income women, from 20 to 40 years of age; 68% of them are single mothers or are living with someone outside of marriage. Because of the OEF's long history of working on projects to support women and children, it has a solid relationship with the project's beneficiary population.

What (*Project goals and main activities*)

- Determine how the UDFM are currently operating and the quality of services that they offer to users in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and caring.

- Improve the system for follow-up, monitoring, and oversight of the work of the UDFM.
- Implement a complaints and grievance procedure that citizens can use to demand the quality of services to which they are entitled.
- Improve mechanisms for citizen access to information.

How (*Project implementation*)

The diagnostic survey on how the UDFM are currently operating and the quality of services they provide to their users was conducted using the following procedures:

- An opinion survey of a representative sample of users (women), which used closed questions.
- A focus group with representatives of women's organizations and other government institutions linked to the work of the PGR (National Civilian Police, Attorney General's Office, Family Judges).
- Two focus groups with operational and executive-level staff of the PGR.

The findings of the opinion survey and focus groups were processed and a draft report was prepared. This report was used as a basis for an analytical workshop held for PGR executive-level staff members.

A final report was prepared based on the conclusions of the analytical workshop. It includes specific recommendations and measures to address the problems encountered. This report was submitted to the State Counsel's Office, which then approved it.

A plan was developed to improve monitoring, follow-up, and control that included training and redesigning the PGR's internal systems. The State Counsel approved the plan and designated the Coordinator of the Institutional Quality Unit to supervise implementation.

A Complaints and Grievance Procedure is a mechanism that ensures that citizens requesting services from the PGR can file complaints if the services they receive are inadequate. Although such a procedure has been created, in practice it does not function appropriately, due to the resistance of PGR officials coupled with an uninformed public. A workshop on implementing this procedure was held with PGR officials. There, the reasons for the system's breakdown were examined in depth and a work plan was designed for putting this procedure into effect. The plan is based on three strategies: PGR staff trainings to raise awareness and overcome resistance; disseminating information to the public on the right to file a complaint; and, creating a mechanism for monitoring and control under the Institutional Quality Unit.

The research showed that many UDFM users do not receive complete and adequate information regarding the requirements and procedures they must follow in order to resolve the situation that brought them to the PGR in the first place. To address this problem, a guideline was developed requiring PGR employees to provide citizens with clear, complete, and sufficient information. Presentations were offered in rural communities in two departments to promote children's rights, encourage a culture of

active citizenship, and provide information on the services that the PGR is required to provide.

A Technical Committee was responsible for project design and implementation. The team was made up of 3 executive level officials of the PGR appointed by the State Counsel and 2 representatives of the OEF (Coordinator and Technician). Independent consultants provided additional support in specific areas (diagnostic survey, workshop design, redesign of internal procedures, and so forth).

The Technical Committee became the focal point for project implementation and for creating an atmosphere of trust and teamwork. It is worth noting that El Salvador has no prior experience with civil society monitoring of public management.

Despite the receptivity and political will demonstrated by the State Counsel, the project initially encountered reluctance and resistance from PGR officials. This was gradually overcome as the project continuously demonstrated its impartiality, objectivity, and a professional ethic. Moreover, the PGR viewed the monitoring process as an opportunity to strengthen itself and gain social and political support.

How Much (Program costs)

The program was implemented with a total budget of \$18,200. CREA International's Citizen Engagement and Governability Program provided 75% of this total. The remaining 25% represented direct contributions by the OEF and the PGR.

With an annual budget of \$45,000, it would be possible to deepen the processes initiated in the Family Units and extend them to other units of the PGR, as well as conduct a dissemination and awareness raising process targeting other government entities and the general public.

Outcomes

Principal achievements:

- A methodology for monitoring and correcting PGR procedures was validated. In this process, the OEF acted as a facilitator and supervisor of government business.
- The PGR's has improved its procedures for providing services. An example of this is the implementation of the Complaints and Grievance Procedure, whereby citizens can file complaints when services to which they are entitled do not meet legal standards in terms of quality and conditions.
- Public access to information has improved. To this end, a guideline was developed for the Family Units requiring officials to provide clear and complete information to users regarding the documents and procedures to be followed or the status of their cases.

Impacts:

- The outcomes of the monitoring process generated an internal review process in the PGR aimed at adjusting procedures certified under ISO 9002 standards. To this end, an internal audit and training in areas deemed deficient by the monitoring

process were established (for example: the public servant ethic, mediation and conflict resolution, team work, effective management, etc.).

- PGR officials have demonstrated increased understanding, interest, and political will regarding the participation of Civil Society Organizations in oversight and monitoring. One example of this is that the OEF has been invited to participate in the Institutional Quality Committee (the entity in charge of the quality control system).

Limitations

- **Resistance of officials to citizen oversight and monitoring.** Substantial progress has been made in this regard with executive level staff. A training and awareness plan has been designed to help administrative staff understand the importance and meaning of promoting citizen monitoring and oversight.
- **Passive citizens with little culture of participation.** The community presentations motivated many women to file complaints with the PGR or in the Family Courts. Assistance and monitoring is being provided in these cases to ensure that they are resolved. PGR field offices have made a commitment to offer presentations, hold meetings, and conduct similar activities to inform and approach citizens.

- **Lack of resources to continue the process and increase its impact.** A second phase was designed to continue the program. It includes developing work procedures certified under ISO standards, which should lead to transparency in the actions of PGR officials. To date, however, no resources are available for its implementation.

Opportunities

Implementation of this project strengthened the PGR's political will to develop a systematic process for ongoing improvement of its work procedures, with participation from civil society. To this end, the PGR has instituted a policy of establishing cooperation agreements with NGOs and developing a training plan for its staff in the areas of awareness and skills building.

Since this was a brief pilot project, a second phase should be developed to expand on implementation of corrective measures for the problems identified and extend project coverage to other PGR units and government institutions.

Additional Resources

Detailed information about the project and the instruments used are being prepared and will be posted on the organization's Web site:

www.oefdeelsalvador.org

Citizen Audit of the Quality of Democracy in Costa Rica State of the Nation Project

Miguel Gutiérrez Saxe

Summary

The Citizen Audit of the Quality of Democracy is a method for citizen participation, deliberation, and evaluation of public affairs (*societal accountability*)¹ and for in-depth study of democracy. It seeks discernible outcomes in public life such as modifying the agendas of political and social actors. The entire process, from planning to publication and dissemination, took approximately three years. (1998-2001).

Background

The Audit began in 1998 following the publication of the first three State of the Nation reports² on sustainable human development in Costa Rica. These reports, together with recent surveys on citizens' perceptions of public agencies and the government, revealed two phenomena common to all Latin American countries: the first is the growing public

disenchantment with politics and the second, economic precariousness, inequality, and poverty. In activities organized by the State of the Nation Project [Proyecto Estado de la Nación], representatives from different social, academic, and political sectors of Costa Rican civil society belonging to the project's Advisory Council [Consejo Consultivo]³ reaffirmed

¹ On the concept of societal accountability, see: Peruzzotti y Smulovitz, 1999.

² The State of the Nation Report is an annual publication on issues relating to sustainable human development in Costa Rica. It was first published in 1994 thanks to a consortium between the National Council of University Professors, the State Counsel for the Defense of Inhabitants, the United Nations Development Program, and the European Union. The latter withdrew from the consortium in 1999 and the UNDP withdrew in 2002. Currently the report is sponsored by national counterparts and international donor agencies for specific subprojects. The reports examine different areas of human development: economic opportunities and solvency, social equity and integration, harmony with nature, social relationships and values, and strengthening democracy. This report is produced based on a participatory research strategy. (www.estadonacion.or.cr)

³ The Advisory Council is a mechanism for social consultation in which the State of the Nation Project has delegated substantial responsibility for the process of drafting the annual report. Its main features are:

- a) It is made up of people with well-known backgrounds in issues relevant to human development.
 - b) They are leaders of social organizations, political parties, or high level government officials.
 - c) They participate in their individual capacity and as volunteers.
- In general the Councils objective is to serve as a quality control entity for Project activities. Its main responsibilities include:
- a) Review and approve the annual research strategy,
 - b) validate research findings, and
 - c) validate the final versions of Report chapters.

this phenomenon and the need to examine it closely from a citizens' perspective. They created the project's initial mandate. Conversations with Notre Dame University's Hellen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, and particularly Professor Guillermo O'Donnell, contributed to the development of the study's premise, purpose and methodology, and all the way through implementation of the citizen's audit of the quality of democracy.

The State of the Nation Project is a joint initiative with the National Council of University Presidents [Consejo Nacional de Rectores—CONARE] and the Ombudsman for Inhabitants of the Republic [Defensoría de los Habitantes de la República], with sponsorship from the European Union and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The latter was interested in providing funding for a citizen audit as part of its focus on governance and democracy in Latin America. Swedish cooperation (ASDI) also provided financial assistance to the project.

The Advisory Council for the citizen audit, made up of 41 people representing different social sectors, served as a "steering committee" and quality control mechanism for this process. In addition to these entities, hundreds of people participated in different phases of the audit (see endnote 3).

Costa Rica was considered an ideal location for the first endeavor of this kind for a number of reasons: it is a small country (approximately 51,000 km²) with a population of just under 4 million; it has a consolidated democracy and a network of research centers involved in the issue; and, there are no overt or

polarized political conflicts that would impede dialogue among different sectors. Even so, it should be noted that there are marked differences in the quality of democratic coexistence at the subnational level.

Objectives

A citizen audit that contributes to building skills so that citizens can participate in a critical and informed manner in how their society is governed. To accomplish these objectives, the audit established:

- A system to monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in democratic life, with citizen participation at each phase of implementation. This participation helped to ensure the legitimacy and social relevance of the initiative.
- A different way of deliberating about public affairs. Data collection and analysis about "what is going on with our democracy" led to in-depth dialogue among people representing the diverse social and political perspectives in the country.
- An exploration of the relevance of the concept of democracy in order to understand people's day to day experience of living in a democracy and deepen the understanding of democracy as a way of life.

Processes and Methods

Who

The Citizen Audit of the Quality of Democracy involved a wide range of sectors, since democracy is a matter that concerns all of us. Nonetheless, the methodology used, the outcomes and the conceptual framework that was created, may be

useful in the development of future citizen audits on more specific social issues (for example, a citizen audit of the impact of a poverty reduction plan in a specific region).

Although hundreds of people are involved in the citizen audit, the core coordinating team comprises a small group of 3 or 4 people from different fields. They must have expertise in research management and social methods in order to maintain quality control over the outcomes. It is important to note that the technical team and the Advisory Council are considered impartial, trustworthy, and academically rigorous. And while different social and political actors may participate in this initiative, none control it. The acknowledgments section of the final audit report reflects the number and variety of participants who contributed to this process.

The direct participation of low-income sectors is encountered first in the definition of democracy used in this project, which includes a particular concern for sectors with lower skills levels. The definition of democracy includes an aspect referred to as “basic citizen empowerment.” This introduces into the debate the need to ensure that the entire population has at least the basic skills they require to exercise their rights and responsibilities.

Second, the Advisory Council for the Citizen Audit of the quality of democracy was made up of 41 Costa Ricans from different backgrounds. Some are leaders of social organizations or workers’ associations with constituencies from across civil society, such as the National Association of Public Employees,

the National Peasant Roundtable, the Confederation of Workers Rerum Novarum, The Assembly of Workers of the People’s Bank, representatives of the women cooperativist movement. This Advisory Council was responsible for overseeing the substantive conduct of the Audit, from the identification of research issues to the validation of findings and quality control of the process.

Last but not least, the use of several participatory methods in the fieldwork meant that citizens were able to become information sources and evaluators of their own democratic practices. Specifically different socioeconomic groups participated in the following research methods: observation sites, national survey, ethnographic exercises in experimental observation and focus groups.

What

The Audit is a method for deliberation and citizen capacity-building in the areas of participation, evaluation, and identification of democratic challenges. It truly became a forum for deliberation throughout the design process, which included a series of participatory methods and direct consultations with citizens. But in addition to deliberation, the Audit also has accomplished its objective of strengthening citizens’ ability to participate in governance through the collection and dissemination of objective information of various kinds. Using an evaluation method designed for this purpose, the strong and weak points of the quality of democracy were identified and citizens could observe the areas where more effort was required (see Chapter 1 of the final report for the conclusions).

How

The Audit was a three-year process divided into four phases: planning, fieldwork, evaluation, and dissemination. Different citizen consultation and participa-

tion methodologies were used in each phase, from the definition of research issues to evaluation of research findings (Table 1).

TABLE 1 CONSULTATION MECHANISMS

PHASE	PLANNING	FIELD WORK	EVALUATION	FINAL REPORT	DISSEMINATION
Specific mechanism	1. Civil Society Advisory Council 2. Consultations to identify issues	1. Participation of 64 researchers 2. National survey 3. Focus Groups 4. Observation site 5. Ethnographic exercises 6. Group court	1. Ten citizen panels to evaluate field research findings using an evaluation tool	1. The Advisory Council and citizen panels critiqued draft chapters	1. Presence in the media 2. Presentations to civil society and government institutions 3. International workshops to present findings 4. Book to be disseminated across the continent (forthcoming)

A number of methods were employed in the field research for each issue addressed. The result was improved understanding of how democracy works in the country. The study, which used 10 research methods (table 2) produced a list of indicators for previously overlooked political variables. The adaptation of methods from other disciplines, such

as health observation sites, anthropological experimental observation, and legal analyses, opened up new frontiers of information about each standard of quality in democracy. Areas in which it was impossible to obtain information were noted, for their inclusion in future research by universities and specialized centers.

TABLE 2 RESEARCH METHODS

TYPE	METHOD
Consultation methods	National survey Focus groups Observation Sites Balanced group court
Experimental methods	Ethnographic exercises of experimental observation Collective observation in the media
Interpretative methods	Specialized presentations Thematic research Legal Analysis
Document collection	Collection and systematization of administrative records Bibliographic search including previous research

How Much

The estimated budget for the entire process is approximately \$350,000. Swedish cooperation (ASDI) and the UNDP provided most of the funding. One fourth of the total budget was spent on planning activities including: consensus-building (viability), preparation of the project proposal, fundraising, conceptual design, setting up the technical team and other project entities, preliminary research, and determining the mandate and research issues.

Approximately one fourth of the funds were used for the fieldwork phase. This covered designing the field research strategy, terms of reference, selection

and hiring of researchers, establishing networks of collaborators, and research administration.

The evaluation phase used 9% of the funds. This included preparing evaluation materials, setting up committees, introductory session, support for the work of individual evaluators, processing of individual findings, organization of group meetings, development of reports and feedback to the process.

Lastly, publication and dissemination accounted for the remaining 40% of the budget. This phase included designing a dissemination strategy and timeline, a media awareness campaign, and international promotional activities.

TABLE 3 ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR EACH PHASE

PHASE	ESTIMATED COST IN USD	PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL	IDEAL PERCENTAGE FOR A SECOND AUDIT PROCESS
Planning	\$ 81,638	23.5%	25%
Field work	\$92,436	27%	35%
Evaluation	\$ 34,556	9%	20%
Dissemination	\$141,217	41%	20%

Outcomes⁴

The Citizen Audit Final Report sketches a map of democratic coexistence in which citizens, aware of the texture of their political life, have a useful tool for debating new paths in the democratic adventure. The image of democracy elicited in the audit is richer and more accurate than that found in previous studies.

The introductory paragraph of the final report uses the metaphor of a relief of Costa Rica's furrowed terrain to synthesize the response to the question, What is the quality of democracy in the country? This metaphor was used to describe three things.

⁴ This section is based on an essay by Vargas-Cullell, J. et al., written for the book *Desarrollo, democracia y ciudadanía* [Development, Democracy, and Citizenship]. Editorial Homo Sapiens. Argentina. 2003.

First, that an examination of the quality of democracy goes beyond democracy as a political regime. Second, the image of peaks and dips and valleys reflects the multidimensional nature of democratic coexistence. And third, the strengths and weakness of Costa Rican democracy are not distributed uniformly among different areas.

The main strengths of Costa Rica's democracy are concentrated in its political system. The Audit documented respect for the rule of law in electoral campaigns and the public's broad access to information to evaluate electoral options. Effective constitutional safeguards are in place to protect civil rights and democratic standards are observed in the enactment of laws and administrative regulations. Targeted research at the subnational level found solid democratic practices in local governance in some areas. These municipalities have established mechanisms for citizen consultation and participation in relevant community matters and are accountable for their actions. These findings have served as demonstration models for other municipalities.

There are substantial variations in the quality of democracy in aspects that go beyond the political sphere. For example, there are both success and failures in the area of democratic rule of law. On the positive side, the audit found broad public access to the administration of justice system, political and administrative independence of the Judiciary, and a rigorous legal and institutional regime for the protection of individual rights. In 2001, nearly 800,000 cases were filed with the administration of justice system in a country with a population of 4 million people. On the negative side, the study found that legal services

were overwhelmed by the caseload, which is an obstacle to the swift and effective administration of justice. It likewise documented weaknesses in legislation and oversight entities responsible for control of corruption in public service. In effect, more than 35% of agrarian, labor, and civil cases delay two years or more. In the labor sphere, which is critical to protecting workers rights, labor courts issued verdicts in no more than 40% of the cases received each year, between 1993 and 1998. (PEN, 2001b: 64-76).

The citizen audit found areas of poor democratic quality. One such area is evidence of widespread mistreatment of people by government agencies—cases in which people's rights or dignity are violated in the course of conducting government business. The survey⁵ found that one in six people have been asked for a bribe in exchange for accomplishing their business in a public agency, while nearly one in four reported being discriminated against by a public servant because of their characteristics (PEN, 2001b: 208-22). At the same time, a review of the legal and administrative regime led to the conclusion that, despite progress made over the past decade, significant weaknesses persist in safeguarding people against institutional mistreatment. Some entities that have been created lack independence from the institutional hierarchy. Others, such as the Ombudsman, have a legal framework guaranteeing its independence and establishing its specific jurisdiction, yet lack the means to make its resolutions binding.

⁵ The sample used in the survey conducted by the citizen audit was larger than usual to ensure that the findings would be representative at the regional, as well as the national level.

The citizen audit identified controversial issues in which the evidence offered led to intense debates that were not resolved. The legal regime governing freedom of the press is controversial since in Costa Rica, people must prove the veracity of a complaint, media directors have objective oversight over what is published or transmitted and, up until 2002, *desacato* [contempt] laws were still in place. Journalists argued that because of such regulations, they engage in censorship (and self-censorship) while other evaluators asserted that such legislation was necessary to protect people's reputations. The fact that this is a controversial issue in Costa Rican society was reaffirmed later: of the eight reforms to legislation concerning the press submitted to the Congress in late 2001 (after the report was published) only one, pertaining to the *desacato* law, was enacted. Media scrutiny of public affairs and protection of journalists vis-à-vis their employers was equally contentious. The audit documented cases of reprisals by public institutions in response to reports (basically resorting to the court of public opinion) and threats against journalists. It also documented cases of journalists who were fired or had to leave off an investigation under pressure from their agencies. (PEN, 2001b: 383-489).

The audit was able to identify problem areas where, despite a dearth of information, worrisome signs were detected. This includes private contributions to political parties and antidemocratic practices among civil society organizations in their capacity as representatives of social sectors. In the first instance, the law establishes minimum controls on private contributions (essentially voluntary report-

ing). In 1998, political parties declared that under 10% of their campaign expenses came from private contributions. This is inconsistent with advertising norms and the activities carried out (PEN, 2001b: 184-189, 285-297). An examination of civil society organizations and leadership revealed the lack of safeguards of the rights of members and few mechanisms for holding leadership accountable. (PEN, 2001b: 319-333).

The final report contains general and specific public policy recommendations aimed at influencing the agenda of different political and institutional actors.⁶ The general recommendations were:

- Simultaneous improvement of political representation and citizen participation mechanisms The audit suggested a combination of short-term measures in response to premises that equate "participatory democracy" with "representative democracy."
- Inclusion of the democratic perspective in government reforms, an issue currently dominated by debate over the government's economic role and incentives for private investment. The audit suggested developing process and impact evaluation systems for public policy and specific mechanisms for the detection and punishment of acts of corruption in public service.
- Gradual and selective government decentralization. In view of the variations in democratic

⁶ Policy recommendations are found in Part 1 of the final Report.

quality among local governments, the audit proposed that the transfer of resources and powers from the central government to the municipalities be subject to compliance with minimum standards of democratic local governance (PEN, 2001a: 65-7).

Limitations

The main challenge faced in conducting the Audit was the fact that this was a groundbreaking process and therefore new experiences and methodologies were encountered at every stage. In some cases the methodology was improved along the way as a result of trial and error and the feedback received from experts. In other cases, the original design did not reflect what actually happened, mostly in terms of the duration of each stage of the audit process. The evaluation phase was typical in that it turned out differently from what was originally planned. In response to these changes, the project had to extend scheduled timelines and increase the human resources involved in certain phases.

In general, the citizen audit's limitations are inherent to the nature of the exercise, a social and technical process that is highly dependent on the immediate environment. Prior to implementation, there must be a thorough evaluation of the political, technical, and social conditions in the immediate environment and time and effort must be invested to create a climate for this initiative to work. We can identify three types of conditions that should be evaluated as relevant to the citizen audit. The first are restrictions on design, the presence (or absence) of which

influence the initial decision to move forward or completely discard the initiative. Second, the nature of the political regime, since evaluating the quality of democracy implies that democracy is a pre-existing condition. Third, the size of the country, since the extensive use of citizen consultation in the research, evaluation of findings, and in-depth study of a series of issues limit the scope (territorial and population) in which the audit can be conducted fully.

The second type of conditions has to do with the political viability of the mandate to conduct the citizen audit. In other words, building a climate of legitimacy and support for the initiative among different social sectors. It was essential that this audit create a favorable social pact, ensure its autonomy from the government and ensure voluntary compliance with the citizen audit so that it would take on a quality of self-evaluation.

Lastly, the technical conditions must be considered. These conditions ensure the effective implementation of the initiative. Such conditions include basic procedures and resources (human and logistical) necessary for the organization and application of the citizen audit.

The Audit had anticipated contributing to a pilot project to conduct this exercise in other areas. At this time, we do not know whether this exercise has been replicated in another area with similar characteristics. The conditions outlined above may prove to be a limiting factor in this regard.

Opportunities

The recommended approach is to confine the exercise to the provinces (departments or states) and even cities. The experience has shown that a medium sized city (Santiago o Bogotá) or a small country (Panamá, Uruguay) represent the geographic and population limit for an exercise such as the audit. It might also be possible to conduct thematic audits related, for example, to a particular public service or a problem in a particular region or institution. Some entities have requested technical assistance for the application of this method in other areas, such as quality of employment or quality of public services. At this time, the State of the Nation Project is taking steps to implement a citizen audit on the environment in Costa Rica.

It should be recalled that the two components of this project, citizen audit and the concept of quality of democracy, are independent and each one can be used without the other. The citizen audit methodology can be applied in other issue areas; and the quality of democracy can be studied using other approaches such as academic research.

The Audit's impact is divided into two broad areas: a) academic and b) civic. In the academic sphere, the proposal and the findings identified issues that are theoretically and methodologically relevant for comparative policy research. In the civic arena, the audit had a strong impact on the debate over relevant national issues.

TABLE 4 OUTCOMES OF THE CITIZEN AUDIT

ACADEMIC POTENTIAL	CIVIC POTENTIAL
- It help to systematically respond to the question, "How democratic is a democracy?"	- It raised the profile of relevant issues for public administration (e.g. treatment of citizens).
- It proposed revisiting and adapting existing notions of democracy.	- It is a point of reference for debating laws and public policy (e.g. the Public Administration Law).
- It established a reflection process on the links between democracy and human development.	- It had a visible profile in the debates over public affairs (for example, a significant presence in the media).
- It developed new ways of measuring the concepts of quality of democracy.	- It stimulated new research (e.g. the State of the Nation Report, World Human Development Report 2002, Report on democracy in Latin America).

Dissemination activities included the organization of two workshops with international experts, which produced a paper that contains a self-evaluation of

the audit process, incorporating the main criticisms that have been received in the two years since the report.

Additional Resources

Complete versions of the final report of the Citizen Audit of the Quality of Democracy and all of the final reports on the research and methodologies used

by the Citizen Audit can be found in PDF form at the following web site: www.estadonacion.or.cr.

Governance and Social Accountability in Latin America: Challenges of Implementation and Replicability

World Bank Institute

Jairo Acuña-Alfaro and
María González de Asís*

*“Civil society is probably the
most important factor in development ...”
James D. Wolfensohn, President, World Bank*

The government/civil society relationship has taken on increased importance in development processes over the past ten years. Case studies presented in this publication show how citizens are increasingly demanding corruption-free governments and public policies that promote development and equality. They are also demanding more involvement in the process of making decisions and establishing public policies, as well as their implementation and monitoring.

The cases show a consensus in two areas. On one hand, they indicate failures of governments to effectively provide public goods and services, and on the other, weaknesses in social programs aimed at reducing poverty. Indeed, they strengthen the argument that the greatest challenges facing Latin American rulers today are increased inequality, high levels of poverty, unemployment, insufficient education, healthcare and housing for their citizens and how to reduce corruption. To be able to deal with these challenges, governments have realized they need the support and participation of civil society in the development process and in the provision of public goods. Civil society for its part has understood that it has a fundamental role in strengthening and improving the ability of the State to provide these

services, which cannot occur without the political will of the Government.

As has been established on other occasions, “practical experience has shown that no Executive Power in any advanced democracy can operate in and of itself as an isolated entity. It requires the support from other sectors, such as the legislative and judicial branches, the civil society, entrepreneurs and labor unions” (Acuña, 2003).

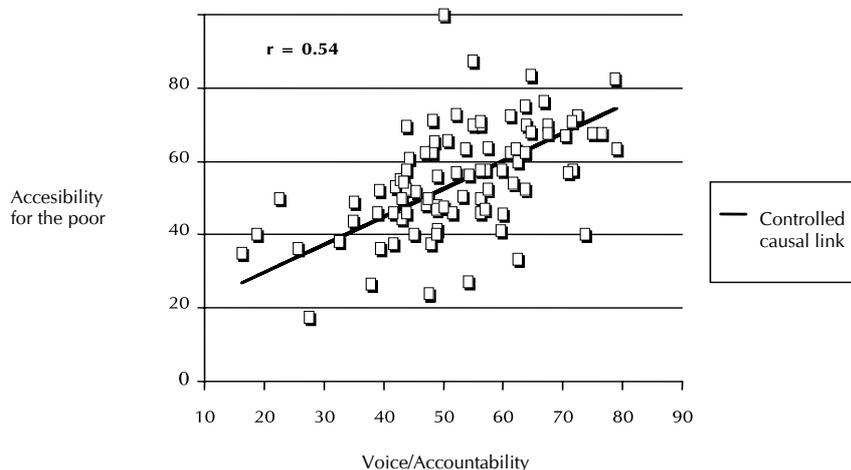
However, both parties –the Government and the Civil Society– perceive that problems of governance, poverty and inequality can be dealt with more effectively by creating alliances between them and the private sector. Moreover, they are beginning to understand the need for more transparent, efficient and participatory governments open to public scrutiny and social accountability, in order to improve the results and impact of social programs and to reduce poverty.

In this regard, recent empirical research has shown that when information on social programs is available to public access in a transparent and credible manner so that the public can become aware of the

government's decisions and citizen participation, there is a substantial improvement in the quality of social services. A key message of *The Quality of Growth* (Vinod Thomas et al., 2000) is that the supervision and participation of civil society in the process of making decisions and running the public sector have constituted a crucial system of checks

and balances for improving governance (Thomas et al., 2000, p. 165). The following chart suggests the correlation between social accountability and accessibility to public services by poor people. This demonstrates that more social accountability mechanisms there are in a given society, the more access poor people have to public services.

CHART 1: THE VOICE OF CITIZENS IMPROVES ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES TO POOR PEOPLE



Source: World Bank Institute (2000) *Survey of Public Officials in Bolivia*. The sampling of institutions includes 44 national, departmental and municipal institutions which in principal were supposed to be accessible to poor people

As shown in the case studies presented herein, the most noteworthy examples for guaranteeing social accountability include the following: (i) ensuring public access to government information; (ii) requiring transparency in governments to enable the flow of information; (iii) holding public hearings and referenda on decrees, regulations, laws; (iv) publishing judicial, legislative and other decisions and keeping a record thereof (making it so there are no restrictions to public information); (v) ensuring

freedom of the press, preventing public workers from using libel and defamation laws as means to intimidate journalists, and promoting diversity in the ownership of the media; (vi) involving civil society in the monitoring of the government's performance in areas such as accountability and large-scale public procurement bids, and (vii) using the new Internet-based tools for transparency, disclosure, public participation and distribution of information.

Governance

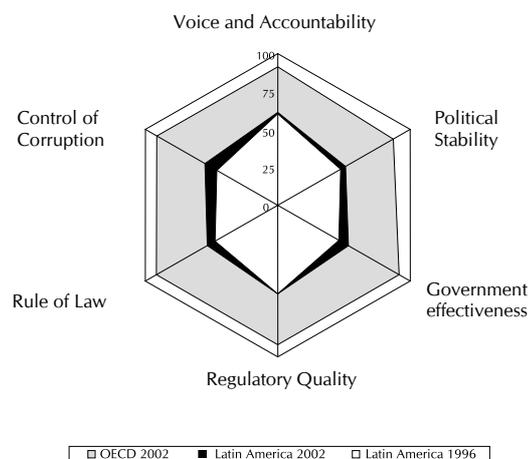
Since the 1980s, the focus on governance has attracted national attention to the issue of the governance crisis and the so-called lost decade in Latin America. During the 80s, the concept of governance was limited to its being defined as an efficient method of establishing policies, more suitable for dealing with the complex of issues and the large number of public and private parties that participate in the decision-making processes, than the form of traditional hierarchical government. Currently, after intense debates and a gradual evolution, as the term governance does not appear to have a single accepted definition, it can be synthesized as the *traditions and institutions whereby authority is exercised in the country for the common good*. This is the way power is exercised in the handling of a country's economic and social resources. Governance is made up of three elements; (i) the process whereby authority is selected, monitored and replaced; (ii) a government's ability to effectively manage its resources and implement certain policies; and (iii) a government's respect of its citizens and the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them (Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido, 1999).

Moreover, each of these components can be further subdivided into two components. The first, or process of selecting and replacing authorities can be divided into (i) voice and accountability, and (ii) political stability and absence of violence. The second component, the ability of a government to handle its resources, has two subcomponents: (i) the

government's effectiveness, and (ii) the regulatory quality. Finally, the third component, respect for citizens and the laws that govern their interaction, includes two additional points: (i) the rule of law, and (ii) the control of corruption.

In this sense, recent empirical studies on the quality of governance in the world (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2003) and that have been acknowledged as the most efficient system for measuring countries' performance in this area critical for development, indicate that in spite of advances made in controlling corruption and increasing governmental efficacy in Latin America and the Caribbean, improvements concerning the "voice and accountability" indicators have been practically non-existent (see chart 1); this is even more true with regard to the indicators of countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) between 1996 and 2002¹.

GOVERNANCE INDICATORS:
REGIONAL AVERAGES



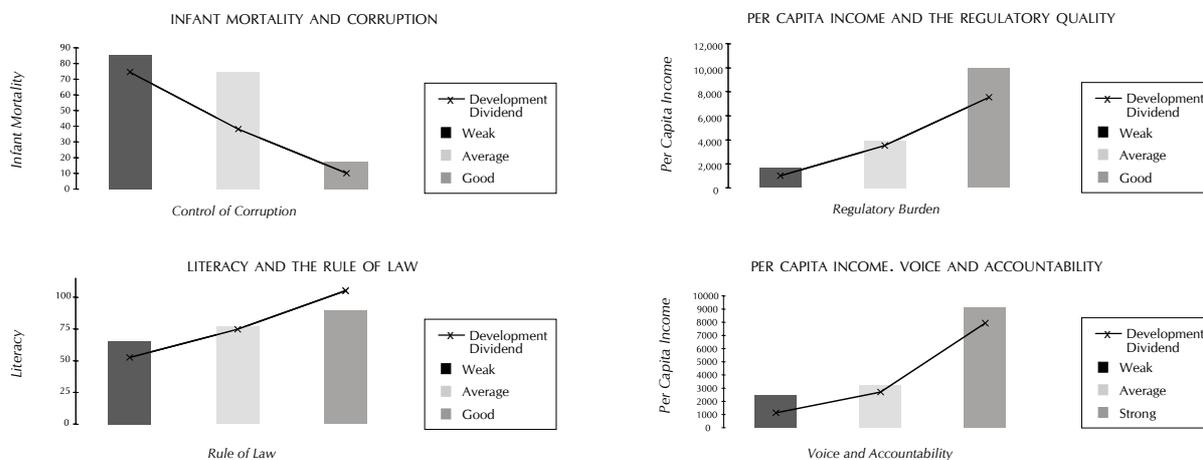
Source: D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2003: Governance Matters III: Governance Indicators for 1996-2002.

As can be seen, governance includes the State, but it also surpasses it when including the civil society. The State, in order to create a political and legally conducive environment, needs support and approval of the civil society to facilitate political and social interactions, such as the mobilization of groups into economic, social and political activities.

Recent research has shown that governance has a significant importance for development and the economy, and new empirical evidence regarding the relationship between governance and development shows that improvements in the latter reaps signifi-

cant benefits when compared with governance indicators (Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido, 1999). The following charts (see Chart 2) suggest that “improved governance has a strong negative impact on infant mortality, of proportionally the same magnitude as for per capita income. Improved governance also leads to significant increases in adult literacy, with a one standard deviation increase in governance leading to between a 15 and 25 percent point improvement in literacy” (Kaufmann *et al.* 1999, p. 17). The following charts suggest the relationship between good governance and a reduction in infant mortality, a reduction of the regulatory burden and the control of corruption.

CHART 2: CIVIL SOCIETY MATTERS FOR GOVERNANCE. GOVERNANCE MATTERS FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE DIVIDEND FROM GOOD GOVERNANCE



Source: Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay and Pablo Zoido-Lobaton (1999). “Governance Matters”. World Bank Policy Research Department Working Paper No. 2196. [www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance]

Social Accountability and its Relationship with Governance

Social accountability refers to processes whereby citizens (organized into a civil society organization or individually) establish mechanisms by means

of which they demand the public administration to provide services efficiently and satisfactorily in accordance with their social demands and the government’s promises of development plans. In short, this includes elements of citizen participation, but goes beyond this concept when the parties

involved in topics of greater importance for the community jointly establish channels of communication and collaboration.

Participation can be considered as a two-way communication process between the government and the citizens, with the common goal of making better decisions, supported by the public and that foster the increased well-being of the population with a reduction in poverty. Accordingly, participation is a “process through which the interested parties influence the initiatives of development and the decisions and resources that affect them, and share control over the same” (Apprenticeship Group of Participatory Development of the World Bank). Effective social accountability supposes the existence of three interrelated elements: (i) an open and transparent government, that incorporates citizens into its complex activities and decision-making processes; (ii) a consistent and ongoing flow of information from the government to its citizens and vice versa; and (iii) efficient ways of a government’s being accountable to its citizens so they understand their roles and demand public officials to carry out their responsibilities effectively and transparently, to participate as associates on the same level.

Social accountability is the combination of these three elements. It refers to spaces for participation in the decision-making process, the formulation of policies and implementation processes. It also refers to the execution and monitoring of governmental activities, in order to improve people’s quality of life. Currently, accountability contributes to the public agenda not only in fighting corruption, but in

examining the public services that a government owes its citizens. Social accountability also contributes to the development process to achieve better standards of living.

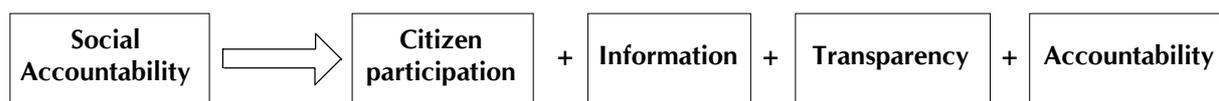
Perhaps one of the most relevant questions is: *How is it possible to achieve participation in matters of governance and to ensure social accountability process? or even more important How does social accountability and participatory monitoring and evaluation processes help to improve the institutional context of governance and vice versa?*

The case studies presented indicate some practical approaches to these questions, and illustrate that citizens become involved when they realize that they are an integral part of the process, when they have the necessary information, and when they see that their demands are being implemented. For more impact, there must be transparency and the sense that government officials are sincere and are trustworthy. Accordingly, in order for social accountability to be really effective, within the context of governance and for it to elicit participatory monitoring and evaluation processes, it must include the following four elements; (i) a high degree of consistency and organization as witnessed in the civil society, (ii) a high level and quality of information; (iii) information that is accurate and transparent, and (iv) the mechanisms whereby national authorities are made to be accountable.

In this sense, social accountability takes place within a process of checks and balances, that prevents governments from taking over the process. Social

accountability provides organized citizens with the tools and mechanisms to make their demands known and actively contributes to the development process.² As is well-known, the government/civil society relationship in each phase spans a wide array of interactions. Civic participation goes from a one-way flow of information, in which the government creates and delivers the information, up to active participation, in a relationship based on an association with the government, where citizens actively participate in the policy drafting process (OECD, 2001).

Any civil society group can have access to information, but if that information is neither accurate nor transparent, it is virtually impossible to determine whether any irregular activities are going on (activities that moreover may not be reported). Furthermore, there may be transparent information, but if it is not monitored and if accountability is not demanded, then a good level of governance cannot be achieved. Accordingly, social accountability comprises participation, but transcends it and also includes information and transparency.



Participatory monitoring and evaluation require a joint problem resolution process that includes different levels in all groups interested in disseminating, controlling, gathering and analyzing data and in identifying corrective actions. In order for social accountability to be effective, participatory monitoring and evaluation are necessary where the planning and management process is carried out by local people, project employees who are directly affected, whose role is to gather, analyze, share findings and act jointly. Success is measured by means of qualitative indicators defined within, instead of qualitative indicators determined by others.

In this sense, the monitoring and evaluation process within social accountability has taken on a great deal of significance in recent years due to its transition and role in the governance processes as we have previously seen. Traditionally, accountabil-

ity includes elements of social inclusion, citizen participation involving the complete policy drafting cycle, institutionalization of mechanisms of participation and a focus on citizen rights. Currently, it includes these same elements, but it goes beyond them from the micro to the macro level, from beneficiaries to citizens, from needs to choices and from inquiries to accountability and social monitoring systems. However, the question that remains to be asked refers to the phrase *qui custodet custodiet* i.e., “who shall watch the watchdogs”. Here once more, the case studies have presented various conclusions that are worthwhile recalling.

Lessons learned from case studies

As stated by Ackerman (2003), democratic states need to strengthen four basic areas of power (insti-

tutional, technical, administrative and political) and fight corruption, cronyism and monopolization. To this end, they must establish honest, efficient and effective (in other words “responsible”) administrations. Case studies shown herein provide important lessons on how governments can improve the provision of services by permitting a ground swell of pressure to be exerted to establish healthy relations between Governments and the Society, “in order for both social players and individual citizens to assume powers to force the government to maintain the rule of law and to keep its promises” (Ackerman, 2003, p. 7).

Moreover, as noted by Olvera, the preliminary lessons derived from case studies, with regard to contextual elements can be divided into various categories. These include (i) the validity of innovative legal and judicial frameworks that are crucial for enabling and fostering social accountability experiments; (ii) the political will of those in power is crucial to move ahead with this type of exercises in social accountability; (iii) civil society initiatives are an indispensable element to move forward in the fulfillment of the law and to facilitate social accountability (Olvera, 2003).

However, all the cases present different variables in common that have been briefly discussed in this article. They can be divided into (i) the political will for social accountability to be carried out; (ii) access to information; (iii) transparency, and (iv) accountability. The cases under these topics are grouped below and some lessons learned in each of them have been pointed out.³

The cases regarding the “Community Council of Land Policies and Housing” of the Quilmes District in Argentina and “Bogotá How are We Doing in Colombia” stress the importance of the **political will** to achieve positive social accountability results. These cases remind us of the importance of public monitoring policies to improve community development strategies and the value of including high-level public officials from the onset of the process. Moreover, they indicate the need to strengthen and support inclusive social groups, to help the community in accessing basic information that enables them to make decisions regarding their own development and foster opportunities through political and institutional reforms.

The participatory monitoring experiment in Argentina presents a case of planning and controlling participatory management regarding earth policies and housing. It indicates how it is possible to make demands on behalf of the most needy sectors of the population in government institutions. The urban placement of marginal populations, the creation of a Land Fund to buy land and equipment and the creation of a databank to fulfill the housing needs of the municipality, are some of the activities that the Council has carried out in order to offset the housing deficit that plagues the municipality. The other case involves the evaluation of the changes in the quality of life in Bogotá: an evaluation is conducted based on the impact of the development plan by taking citizens’ opinions into account. To this end, the evaluation records the main variations in the rates of coverage and quality of basic services and citizens’ opinions by means of an annual survey and it generates forums for debate on the problems of

well-being, in which the participation of the political elite and the civil society and media of communication of Bogotá is included.

Another relevant case regarding this topic refers to the application of scorecards to social programs in Peru. Even though at the start it was assumed that this was essentially a means through which people who receive goods or services from the social programs could provide useful information to the public entities to improve the execution (design and/or performance) of said programs. The main advantage is in recognizing that though users cannot handle “technical matters”, they are the best placed for determining whether the social programs correspond to their needs and if the programs satisfy their expectations. This is a clear example of the importance of the political will to use the information collected in the scorecards and to adjust the direction of public policies in accordance with the concerns and needs of the beneficiaries.

Access to information with no restrictions has been signaled out as one of the most important conditions in order to be able to execute effective social accountability. In this sense, the cases point to concepts, tools, step-by-step processes to develop and implement strategies that affect community development. They illustrate participatory planning structures not only to influence the processes, but also to strengthen citizen participation and establish relations with people who are part of the decision-making process for increased social accountability, inclusion and participation of the poor and marginalized. In this area, three cases deserve to be

mentioned: (i) citizen initiative for free access to public information in Guatemala; (ii) obtaining and publishing sworn financial disclosure statements of senators in Argentina; and (iii) the community primary healthcare information system in Venezuela.

In our opinion, they provide tools and techniques created to foster good governance at the national and local level. The citizen initiative for free access to public information in Guatemala shows how fifteen civil society organizations combined to form a Citizen Observatory to generate processes and activities geared at forming democratic skills to exercise the right to access public information and demand that state officials be held accountable for their administrative actions. The second case in turn refers to an accountability initiative undertaken in Argentina to get and publish the sworn financial disclosure statements of Argentinean senators. Within the broader framework of working for more access to information on legislators, an organization was created from a network of more than one hundred volunteers which has systematically motivated senators to have their sworn financial disclosure statements made public.

For its part, the case of Venezuela refers to a community healthcare program that is strengthening the skills of rural communities in taking actions aimed at improving the quality, quantity and impact of public healthcare services that they receive by getting information and using it effectively.

Another relevant topic that comes up in case studies refers to **transparency**. Here, it is worthwhile

highlighting experiments of how traditional rural organizations can take control with the help of local activists so they can perform complete and practical audits of the economic resources managed by an administrative unit in Bolivia. Another experiment involving this topic refers to a troubleshooting project aimed at determining the levels of efficiency, efficacy and quality of the services provided to the citizens in El Salvador by the Units for the Defense of the Family and Minor Children (UDFM) of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic (PGR).

Another case in point refers to the experiment regarding participatory mechanisms for formulating, monitoring and auditing regional public works budgets in Costa Rica which is intended to strengthen the application of easily useable indicators that make it possible to demonstrate the actual impact of the works as relates to their respective importance, such as increased production, improvements in the marketing of goods, efficiency of the increase in vehicle traffic , etc.

Along this same vein, the social accountability experiment applied to a local road construction project in El Salvador shows how it is possible to directly benefit some 500 families (and indirectly 1,000 additional families), all with meager resources. This includes training delegates from the community regarding the social audit process, and putting the supervision, evaluation, monitoring and control of the actual project work into practice.

Finally, another subject that comes up when reading the cases refers to the processes of **accountabil-**

ity and participatory monitoring and evaluation. In particular, it has been stated that evaluations have generally been good, but putting them into practice can be complicated, problematic and expensive. As indicated, participatory monitoring and evaluation are tools that are used to meld the various segments of the community, community organizations and public officials and offer them the opportunity to negotiate the outcome of a project and what indicators are needed.

One case study refers to a project for conducting an independent analysis of the General Budget of the Republic of Peru, and to disseminate to the citizens and the civil society's own organizations the results of that analysis in a way that can be easily understood so as to facilitate participation and citizen surveillance processes with regard to the budget. The other experiment refers to the Citizen Transparency Commission, a socially representational body with jurisdiction in the Municipality of Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras that is responsible for checking whether resources affecting the public are handled honestly and efficiently. The Commission then indicates the importance of the participatory monitoring and evaluation of the municipal plans issued from mayor's office.

Finally, the third experiment refers to Citizens' Audit of the Quality of Democracy in Costa Rica. This audit presents a methodology for citizens' participation, deliberation and evaluation of public affairs and for an in-depth study of the democracy with discernible impacts on political life such as the modification of agendas of social and political players.

Conclusions

Within the processes of governance, social accountability plays a fundamental role in getting institutions that provide public services to fulfill their role of effectively serving the common good. Starting with political will, it is essential for civil society to serve a pivotal role in providing services and in making public decisions. This means that the civil society in its broadest sense through social accountability can influence political agendas, lobby government for public information and demand the provision of public services.

Even though social accountability is fundamental for governance, the cases presented here show that it is not possible for civil society to be seen as the antithesis of the Government or vice versa. They do not represent antagonizing, but rather complementary powers with a shared responsibility. The government has the duty of implementing public policies and of responding to the services demanded by its citizens. Civil society has the duty of examining whether the government is fulfilling its functions.

The purpose of the cases presented here has been to see how government and civil society interact to provide tools that can be used jointly to lead to an improvement in governance. These tools are political will, information, transparency and accountability through citizen participation. All these elements are key factors for economic development and for reducing poverty. These elements make it possible to obtain an efficient, transparent governance and one that is at the service of the citizens.

Notes

* The authors are exclusively responsible for errors and opinions in this article. Opinions, data and findings from research do not necessarily reflect the official opinions of the World Bank or its Board of Directors. The margins of error in the data of governance (and other) errors imply the need for caution in the interpretation and in particular argue against the inference of classifications of countries apparently based on the data. For more details on governance and the data dealt with, visit <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance>

¹ The figure of the diamond illustrates the 6 variables/indicators of governance. Among the furthest are the indicators of the center, better is the governance. Chart shows the countries of the OECD (2002) in the grey zone, which is the broadest, while countries of Latin America are closer to the center (white edges for 1996 and black for 2002). As can be seen, changes in Latin America between 1996 and 2002 are null with regard to the indicators of voice and "accountability" and regulatory quality, and very slight –though positive– with regard to the control of corruption, rule of law, political stability and governmental effectiveness.

² A large number of participation and model mechanisms can be identified, that go from information, to the development of the consensus, national dialog, monitoring, citizen and municipal monitoring offices and the focuses of collective action. Though each of these instruments is different from the others, their practical and contextual focuses are similar and interrelated. All of them appear to seek increased social participation and citizens taking on

a role in the making of decisions that govern their development process.

³ It is worthwhile stressing that this grouping is done only for the purpose of focusing discussion around the areas that have been previously analyzed and in some cases, the experiments can be limited to some of these topics and not to any one topic in particular.

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