



ELLA

Evidence and lessons
from Latin America

EVIDENCE AND LESSONS FROM LATIN AMERICA

LIST OF MATERIALS

The following is a selection of materials (briefs, guides, expert interviews, videos, podcasts, lists of organisations or publications, etc.) elaborated within the project [Evidence and Lessons from Latin America](#) (ELLA). These materials analyse and describe successful Latin American experiences on various governance themes, such as Budget and Public Policies, Transparency and Access to Information, Citizen Participation, Human Rights, Indigenous Rights, Violence Reduction Strategies, Gender Equity, and Gender Violence.

BUDGET AND PUBLIC POLICIES



Guide: Improving Policy Impact in Latin America through the Budget

Latin American countries are at the forefront of pushing through innovative budget reforms to improve policy impact. From results-based budgets, to transparency portals, to participatory budgeting, this guide presents an overview to Latin America's budget reform experience, emphasizing contextual factors enabling the design and implementation of these reforms and lessons learned.

Brief: Participatory Budgeting: Citizen Participation for Better Public Policies

Latin American countries pioneered participatory budgeting - an innovation to let citizens decide how public funds will be spent. First launched in Brazil in 1989, PB is now implemented in more than 2,500 local governments in 15 countries in the region. This brief analyses participatory budgeting experiences in Latin America and the factors underpinning success, all with an eye towards offering useful lessons for South Asian and Sub-Saharan African development actors.



Brief: The Latin American Approach to Improving Public Spending Oversight



In the last few decades, Latin American countries have increased oversight of public spending by strengthening Supreme Audit Institutions, including by implementing social control mechanisms to increasingly involve citizens in monitoring efforts. These reforms help ensure public funds are spent according to the law, on the policies for which they were designated, and in a way that make a concrete impact. This brief analyses the implementation of these reforms in the region, focusing on their design, outcomes, and lessons learned.



ELLA

Evidence and lessons
from Latin America

Brief: Mexico City's Innovation: Budgeting with a Human Rights Approach

Increasingly, the budget is being seen as an effective tool to promote human rights. In 2009, the Mexico City government implemented an innovative budgeting approach – the first of its kind – to specifically link the budget with human rights. This brief describes how the first budgeting process with a human rights approach was designed and implemented by the Government of Mexico City (GMC) (*Gobierno de la Ciudad de México*), analysing the process, initial outcomes and lessons learned.



Brief: Citizen Assessment of Budget Transparency: The Latin American Budget Transparency Index



Latin American civil society organisations have created the first budget transparency index, which measures not only if budget information has been published, but if that information is useful. What's more, it does so by surveying the users of budget information themselves. This Brief describes the distinctive features of this index, concrete changes it has achieved and the key factors underpinning the tool's successful use, all in an effort to offer useful lessons learned for other contexts.

List of publications: Participatory Budgeting

This selection highlights some of the latest and most relevant publications on Participatory Budgeting in Latin America, including country case studies, regional surveys and implementation guides.



List of publications: Social Control Mechanisms in Supreme Audit Institutions

This selection of publications documents some of the key social control mechanisms implemented by Latin American Supreme Audit Institutions.

List of organisations: Government Oversight and Supreme Audit Institutions

This list highlights key Latin American and international organisations working to support improved oversight of public spending, focusing on the resources they offer to development actors from other regions.





ELLA

Evidence and lessons
from Latin America



List of publications: Budgets and Human Rights

This selection highlights some of the key publications in this emerging field, including guides and tool-kits; methodologies for budget analysis of specific rights like health, education and the rights of children; and country case studies, that focus on specific countries but look at a variety of rights.

Video: Budget Transparency Portals in Latin America

This video prepared by Fundar showcases some of the main features of the Budget Transparency Portals of Brazil and Peru, which are considered best practices in the region due to the amount of budget information that they provide and the format in which they publish it.



Video: Citizens Budgets in Guatemala and Venezuela



Citizens Budgets are non-technical documents that provide to non-expert citizens a summary of governments' collection, distribution and uses of public funds. Its simple and friendly design makes it an interesting tool for budget transparency. This video presents two examples of citizens budget in Latin America: Guatemala and Venezuela.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Guide: The Latin American Approach to Transparency and Access to Information

By providing greater access to public information and promoting transparency, Latin American countries seek to improve social oversight, inform citizens about government policies and programmes, advance other human rights, reduce corruption and enhance overall accountability. This ELLA Guide analyses various initiatives implemented in the region, as well as the key role played by civil society in the Latin American experience, while shedding light on the contextual factors that enabled the design and adoption of transparency policies and practices, and on their lessons learned.





ELLA

Evidence and lessons
from Latin America

Brief: Building the legal framework to support transparency and access to information in Latin America



In the last two decades, Latin American countries – including Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay – have designed and adopted innovative Freedom of Information Acts (FOIAs). These FOIAs have helped to increase transparency in government actions, ensure citizens' right to request and access public information and enhance overall accountability. This Brief describes and analyses critical features of Latin American legal frameworks on access to information, highlighting their originality, design, preliminary outcomes, and the contextual factors that enabled their adoption.

Brief: Civil Society's Regional Network for Advancing Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

The Regional Alliance for the Freedom of Expression and Information, an innovative civil society network, has had a major role in promoting freedom of expression and the right to information regionally. This brief describes this network's experience, achievements and lessons learned.



Brief: Using information for Accountability and Justice: Lessons from Latin American Civil Society

Using case studies from Mexico, Ecuador and Costa Rica, this brief analyses how civil society organisations are successfully using the right to information as a tool to improve accountability and social justice in Latin America.

Brief: Fighting corruption by improving transparency and access to information

Latin American countries – from Argentina, Brazil and Chile, to Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru – have aimed to tackle corruption by improving transparency and access to information in areas typically prone to corruption, such as public procurement or public officials' disclosure of personal assets.





ELLA

Evidence and lessons
from Latin America



List of publications: Design, Adoption and Implementation of Latin American Freedom of Information Acts

This selection highlights some of the key publications on Latin American FOIAs' critical features, the challenges and opportunities of their implementation and use, and the process for adopting them. These resources – offering access to the Latin American experience – could be useful for countries looking to develop, adopt or strengthen their own legal framework to guarantee transparency and access to information.

List of organisations: Key Civil Society Groups Using the Right to Information

The following selection highlights some of the key Latin American CSOs that are using the right to information to carry out independent assessments of policies and programmes in different sectors. CSOs from other regions could likely benefit from learning about the variety of creative ways these Latin American groups are using the right to information to push for accountability and reform.



List on Publications: Public Procurement and Disclosure of Public Officials' Personal Assets

The following selection of publications showcases how public officials and civil society organisations in Latin America have dealt with the challenges of opening public procurement procedures and public officials' personal assets to citizen scrutiny. These publications could be useful for those in other regions who are looking to tackle corruption by improving transparency and access to information in these two key areas.

Expert interview: The Current Situation of the Right to Information in Latin America

Karina Banfi from the *Alianza Regional por la Libertad de Expresión e Información*, a network of civil society organisations seeking to improve transparency and access to information in the region, gives her perspective on the current situation of the right to information in Latin America.



Document: The Role of the Inter-American Human Rights System in the Promotion of the Right to Information

The Inter-American Human Rights System has played a fundamental role in promoting the right to information in Latin America. This learning material describes the mandate and composition of this system and describes its two main outcomes regarding the right to information: the Model Inter-American Law and the Inter-American Court's paradigmatic rulings on access to information.



ELLA

Evidence and lessons
from Latin America

Video: The Process of Approving the Freedom of Information Act in El Salvador

Carmina Castro from the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development (*Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social*) describes the process of approval of the Freedom of Information Act in El Salvador and the relevant role that civil society played on it.



Podcast: The Process of Approval of the Freedom of Information Act in Brazil

Paula Martins for Article 19 describes the process for approving the Freedom of Information Act in Brazil and the contextual elements enabling this.

Video: From the law to practice: The Creation of the Mexican Federal Institute for Access to Public Information and Data Protection

Atzimba Baltazar, Program Officer of the International Budget Partnership, describes the process for creating the Mexican Federal Institute for Access to Public Information and Data Protection, the autonomous oversight body with authority to enforce the Freedom of Information Act in Mexico. She also analyses the critical features that guarantee this body's autonomy, its mandate, and the opportunities it offers.



Documentary: Opportunities and Challenges in Access to Public Information: Experiences in Latin America

Based on testimonies from civil society organisations in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico, this documentary explores the current situation of the right to information in those countries and the challenges and opportunities that this right is facing.

Video: Using Strategic Litigation to Enforce the Right to Information in Latin America: a case from Argentina

Álvaro Herrero, Executive Director from the Association for Civil Rights (*Asociación por los Derechos Civiles*) tells us about how this organisation has effectively used strategic litigation as a mechanism to enforce the right to information in Argentina.





ELLA

Evidence and lessons
from Latin America

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Brief: Citizen Participation in Evaluating Health Services: The Latin American Experience



Throughout Latin America, civil society groups are using report cards as a tool to gather citizen feedback on the quality and coverage of public services. This Brief focuses on the use of report cards to assess health services, in particular. Through these report card exercises, civil society has been able to highlight problems citizens face in accessing quality health care, such as lack of medical supplies or personnel, or long waiting times to see a physician. By then bringing these findings before public health agencies and the media, citizens have succeeded in achieving concrete improvements in both health care access and quality.

Brief: Citizen Participation in Local Governance: Latin America's Local Citizen Councils

Local citizen participation has long been acknowledged as a useful tool to enhance public policies. In the last two decades, countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru have developed new mechanisms to foster citizen participation at the local level by creating local councils. This Brief analyses the experience of local councils in Latin America, highlighting key outcomes, design features and contextual factors that enabled their implementation.



Brief: Community Participation in IFI-Funded Development Projects: Latin America's Experience



Throughout Latin America, citizens are using international financial institutions' own policies to demand greater participation and accountability in the large-scale development projects that affect their communities. Using a successful case from Mexico, this Brief reflects on the role of informed citizen participation as a crucial factor facilitating accountability within development projects with international funding.



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