

Involving Citizens in Public Budgets

MECHANISMS FOR TRANSPARENT AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING



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- Dominican Republic: Fundación Solidaridad, together with Asociación de Agentes de Desarrollo (AAD), and Federación de Cooperativas del Cibao Central (FECOOPCEN)
- Nicaragua: Grupo Fundemos, together with Asociación para la Promoción y el Desarrollo Integral Comunitario (ASPRODIC)
- Ecuador: Centro de Planificación y Estudios Sociales (CEPLAES), together with Asociación de Mujeres Municipalistas de Manabí (AMUMA)
- Argentina: Fundación El Otro, together with Foro Social para la Transparencia, Fundación Utopía, Centro para la Promoción Humana y el Desarrollo Social, and Fundación Desarrollo y Equidad
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PARTNERS *of the* **AMERICAS**

Founded in 1964, Partners of the Americas links U.S. states with Latin American and Caribbean countries in partnerships that use the energy and skills of citizen volunteers, their institutions, and communities to address shared concerns of social, economic, and cultural development. Its work covers areas as diverse as emergency preparedness, agriculture, cultural exchange, domestic violence, and local government strengthening. Partners is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with international offices in Washington, D.C.

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Preface

PARTNERS OF THE AMERICAS' CENTER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRACY NETWORK

Partners of the Americas' Center for Civil Society believes that a capable, committed, and engaged civil society is crucial to the consolidation and deepening of democracy in the Americas. The Center was created to promote broader participation in the social, economic, and political issues that affect the region and the daily lives of its citizens. The Center's core areas of capacity include: building networks and coalitions of civil society organizations (CSOs) and developing CSO organizational and technical capacity; promoting government accountability to citizens and strengthening government capacity; administering grants to community organizations; and serving as a clearinghouse for information and technical resources.

Since its creation in October 1995, the Inter-American Democracy Network (IADN) has become an important mechanism of civic cooperation in the

region. A hemispheric network consisting of over 350 CSOs, the IADN's mission is to encourage CSOs to work together in the public arena with the aim of strengthening participatory democracy and civic responsibility. The IADN works through cooperation, training, and information dissemination and mobilizes CSO participation in decision-making processes at the hemispheric level.

TRANSPARENCY IN THE AMERICAS GRANT PROGRAM

Over the past year, the Center for Civil Society designed and coordinated the regional grant program "Transparency in the Americas." The program, which was made possible with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), provided financial and technical resources to ten IADN member CSOs and their myriad collaborating organizations in nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. These organizations, in turn, worked to decrease corruption in public sector budgeting and increase government efficiency and responsive-

ness to the needs of the citizenry at the local level. They did so by working to improve transparency at all stages of the planning and execution of public sector budgets.

Projects funded were selected from among some 40 IADN-member CSOs that responded to an open request for proposals. A selection committee reviewed and ranked proposals based on organizational and technical capacity, viability and sustainability of the proposed project, membership in the IADN, and alliances with local governments and CSOs with whom they would work to advance their project's objectives, among other criteria. Partners' Center for Civil Society, Poder Ciudadano of Argentina, and the IADN provided technical support to selected grantees on a demand-driven basis throughout the life of the grant program. Because of that support, the program boosted the technical capacity of participating CSOs, fostered collaborations, and strengthened the IADN's capacity to support regional transparency and anti-corruption initiatives.

The Center also engaged in ongoing monitoring of the projects' progress and conducted an evaluation at the program's conclusion. This monitoring and evaluation process involved quarterly data collection, interviews, surveys of various target populations, and one or more site visits to each project. This publication highlights the methodologies employed, challenges confronted, results achieved, and lessons learned from these ten projects.

Partners of the Americas' Center for Civil Society believes that a capable, committed, and engaged civil society is crucial to the consolidation and deepening of democracy in the Americas.

Introduction

Participatory and transparent budgeting (PTB) is broader than participatory budgeting and can be adapted to a variety of local contexts. In addition to incorporating participatory budgeting, it includes improving access to and quality of information on local budgets, monitoring public expenditures, informing and educating the public on the budget process, and forming civic groups that participate in the local budgeting process.

A public budget is one of the most important policy documents any government can produce. In addition to designating money for projects and administrative activities, budgets establish clear priorities and set public commitments.¹ Budgets grow out of a politically contested process of identifying options, setting public priorities, making decisions, and allocating resources. Even after public budgets are implemented, monitoring and evaluation are necessary.

In short, public budgeting is a complex process that can be arcane, closed to the public and understood only by experts, or it can incorporate citizen participation in a way that enhances representative democracy.

Participatory budgeting (PB) appeared more than 15 years ago in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre as a solution to closed budgeting processes, thanks to its potential to increase accountability, transparency, and participation in government. PB involves implementing mechanisms that directly involve citizens in decision-making about how to allocate resources

and monitor public spending. PB has captured the attention of the policy world, with over 250 cities, mostly in Latin America, adopting some version of PB.²

Some assert that PB can also improve government efficiency, build greater trust between citizens and government, support collective decision-making capacity, and even generate more tax revenues. But despite PB's proven successes in the region, it is still just one step—and rarely the first—toward expanding the culture of democracy and making government more open and transparent.

Another concept, *participatory and transparent budgeting* (PTB), is broader than participatory budgeting and can be adapted to a variety of local contexts. In addition to incorporating PB, it includes improving access to and quality of information on local budgets, monitoring public expenditures, informing and educating the public on the budget process, and forming civic groups that participate in the local budgeting process. PTB helps establish the civic “infrastructure,” in addition to boosting the political will, necessary for institutionalizing

PB. The ten projects presented in this report demonstrate a broad range of activities that enable greater participation in and transparency of local budgets.

DEMOCRACY AND THE LAC REGION

Throughout the 1980s and '90s, a wave of democratization swept Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Authoritarian regimes crumbled, and were supplanted by new or revived democratic ones. Nonetheless, democratic institutions throughout the region remain weak and often unstable. Though elections have become generally fair and transparent, LAC citizens are increasingly ambivalent about these new democracies.³

Although “political citizenship”—the right to participate in government—may not be in jeopardy, “social citizenship”—inclusion, participation, and equality—has not been significantly expanded. The freedoms, economic prosperity, and egalitarianism associated with democracy have been slow to come and, as a result, public support for democracy has weakened.⁴ Recent polls show that, while citizens do not want a return to authoritarian

governments, unequivocal support for democracy has actually fallen significantly since 1996 in all but four countries.⁵ There are further concerns that the culture and practice of democracy—participation and reaching consensus through public deliberation—will erode if public institutions are not reinvigorated and reformed.

One reason for this erosion of support for democracy is that many citizens perceive little change between former dictators and democratic leaders as the misuse of power to obtain privileges and unjust advantages results in unfairly distributed resources and additional economic burdens.⁶ Indeed, corruption accounts for the loss of ten percent of GDP in the LAC region every year.⁷ High levels of corruption create an environment that investors perceive as unsafe, leading to lost foreign direct investment as well.⁸ Research conducted by Price-Waterhouse Coopers, Transparency International and the *Financial Times* estimates that Mexico alone lost more than \$8.5 billion in foreign direct investment in 1999 that was deterred due to concerns with corruption, and the economic

losses due to corruption equal almost ten percent of Mexico's GDP.⁹ The situation is similar in Colombia where 35 percent of the foreign direct investment that was lost was due to perceived corruption, and an estimated 12 percent of the country's GDP was lost to corruption and graft.¹⁰

Misappropriation of public resources also has undermined confidence in democratic leaders and institutions.¹¹ In recent cases, such as Peru in 2000, Argentina in 2002, and Haiti in 2004, corruption was a major factor in political destabilization, and corruption scandals continued to rock Brazil and Nicaragua in 2005. According to Transparency International's yearly Corruption Perceptions Index, Latin America has made only an inkling of progress, with a score of 3.6 in 2005 (on a scale from one to ten, ten being the “cleanest”), which was the second lowest regional score in the world (after Africa).¹² In countries such as Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Honduras, corruption is actually worsening.

Acutely aware of these problems, decision-makers within the LAC region as well as international funders are increasingly

interested in using participation and transparency mechanisms to address the region's public policy challenges and democratic deficits. Increasing awareness of corruption and lack of accountability has become intertwined with other trends in the region. For instance, the burgeoning of civil society has made CSOs a valuable partner in improving democratic governance, and fiscal and governmental decentralization in Latin America continues to raise the stakes of local reforms.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN BUDGETING

Budgetary mechanisms present the opportunity for governments to facilitate civil society participation in decision-making. Budgets developed behind closed doors are vulnerable to graft and corruption, and tend to benefit special interests. By contrast, involving CSOs and citizens in the planning and execution of public budgets, and local budgets in particular, fosters more sensible and accountable resource allocation. Budgetary mechanisms also present the opportunity for governments to facilitate civil society participation in decision-making in general.

Democratic legitimacy rests on decisions, policies, and procedures that are regarded as fair and participatory.¹³ Accountability helps engender this by subjecting leaders to criticism and consequences for illegal, unethical, or otherwise undesirable activities. Public actions must be regularly reported, and sanctions must be applied when rules are violated. In a democracy, the citizens are the principals who can require their agents, i.e., public officials, to provide information and justifications. Elections, courts, and the like provide citizens with opportunities to directly or indirectly sanction their agents. And transparency—enabling access to legislative voting records, campaign financing records, and budgets, for example—enables citizens to assess their leaders' performance.

This is especially true where public budgets are concerned. If budgeting processes are not transparent, public officials are less likely to support equitable and sustainable projects. Budgets then become ineffective in meeting the needs of the greater community.

Services for politically and/or socially marginalized groups are often neglected or redistributed to more politically powerful groups, leaving a void in services provided to the most vulnerable.

Transparency promotes social, economic, and political development by reducing the amount of public resources lost or misallocated as a result of corruption. Moreover, a closed model of budgeting can be quite wasteful, regardless of who benefits. Governments in the LAC region tend to pay up to 30 percent more than the market price for comparable goods and services.¹⁴ The loss and misallocation of resources hinders investment in government programs that could improve standards of living and address the population's expectations of democracy.¹⁵

A principal area for civil society intervention is ensuring transparency at the local level. The local budget, like other public budgets, not only is the basis for fiscal responsibility of the municipality, but determines local resource allocation and often the share of resources from national programs.

International agencies and CSOs increasingly consider transparency and accountability in government as integral to improving the region's social, economic, and political development.¹⁶ The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, has spearheaded efforts to mitigate corruption.¹⁷

DEVELOPMENT, DECENTRALIZATION, AND LOCAL INNOVATION

Democratization and local governance are increasingly important and inter-related issues in the development field, pushing PTB innovations to the forefront of the policy agenda. For one, participatory practices of governing have emerged amid the ongoing decentralization of government in the LAC region. Decentralization is crucial to advancing democracy by bringing government closer to the people and preventing power from becoming concentrated in corruptible or self-serving hands.

The process of decentralization is taking place in a now largely urban continent. The United Nations estimates

that 75 percent of the LAC population lived in urban areas at the turn of the century.¹⁸ As the population living in municipalities swells and as decentralization continues, the salience of local government practices increases dramatically.

In the early 1980s, elected officials controlled municipal governments in only six countries in the LAC region; today they do so in 23 countries. In 17 of them, mayors are now elected by citizen vote rather than appointed by the central government. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, the most decentralized of its borrowing countries are Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia, with sub-national governments managing over 40 percent of total government expenditures. Many of the smaller Central American and Caribbean countries remain centralized, with sub-national governments managing less than five percent of total expenditures.

The demands for democratization and reforms of the state, which have tended to come from civil society, particularly social movements, dovetailed with political pressures and international development

agencies' push for decentralization. The result has been that citizen participation, transparency, and decentralization advanced during the course of the 1990s in an increasingly unified agenda.

Decentralization of authority and responsibility tends to bring fiscal decentralization (and vice versa), which means local governments with little experience in openness and citizen involvement can count on handling larger budgets and more demands for public accounting. Thus, participation and transparency are key elements to any decentralization.

A prerequisite for the expanding role of municipal government, however, is that citizens must become better informed, more active and engaged, and more capable at administration of local government.

Once citizen expertise develops, it must be institutionalized. The participatory practices must then be channeled through networks to ensure sustainability. For that reason, reform advocates have focused on creating networks of civil society actors and on supporting

local institutions, so that the two become more integrated, more democratic, and more durable. Associations of mayors, networks of local CSOs supporting democracy and development, grassroots organizations, and neighborhood groups have become key players in the push to make decentralization and local democracy a functional reality for the LAC region.

The concept of good governance has gained considerable momentum. It is connected to the notion that development depends on accountable, transparent governing practices that follow the rule of law and allow for participation.¹⁹ The definition of governance has been modified over the years to include “the relationship between civil society and the state, between rulers and the ruled, the government and the governed.”²⁰ Participation is increasingly understood as a core component of good governance and therefore of development, which makes PTB all the more relevant.

Interest in good governance and decentralization has increased innovation, with municipal governments developing management policies and practices that are

participatory. With more localities experimenting, the possibility to learn from other localities and share successes has grown as well. A new round of participatory approaches to governing has built on these networks and partnerships.

For example, international agencies have supported programs that foster deliberation and citizen participation in decision-making. Now they are increasingly fostering the conditions for group decision-making by creating public spaces, or deliberative arenas, where citizens can establish public priorities and reach consensus. The Center for Civil Society’s “Transparency in the Americas” grant program (Transparency Program, for short) joined with this second-generation of efforts to recognize, support, and stimulate innovations in local governance.

UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPATORY AND TRANSPARENT BUDGETING

PTB practices are emerging as important innovations in local governance with the potential to address many of the challenges mentioned above.

PTB can yield savings for municipalities through its focus on transparency and monitoring, which also assists development. It can stimulate citizen involvement in decisions about public resources. PTB might also alter spending priorities in favor of socially excluded citizens, enhance social networks, and increase tax revenues.

Though it has multiple definitions, PB generally refers to “mechanisms by which citizens decide on, or contribute to decisions made about, how to allocate public resources.”²¹ But as indicated above, PTB encompasses a broader set of practices. In addition to traditional PB activities, PTB includes mechanisms that make information about public budgets clearer and more cogent, and more accessible and accurate. PTB also includes efforts to increase participation or the quality of participation in all stages of budgeting, not just allocation—i.e., additional participation in developing priorities and in monitoring how resources are allocated and spent. In short, PTB takes the concept of PB and amplifies the range of opportunities

in which citizens can participate; PTB includes enabling people to access public information and helping them make sense of that information.

To evaluate PTB projects, four considerations should be kept in mind: the context, goals, approach, and range of possible results. The many local and national factors that comprise the relevant *context* affect the design of PTB projects and should also contribute to understanding of what a PTB project can achieve. The overall *goals* of a PTB project supply a framework for defining success. A project's *approach* helps one understand how the activities were meant to achieve its goals, which finally enables *results* to be analyzed.

Context

The initial discussion of corruption, decentralization, and democracy is important for understanding the general context of PTB, but practitioners must also establish the specific context that bears upon their project. While PTB projects engage in similar activities, they are structured differently in response to

the particular political, administrative, legal, and social environment of each locality and country.

Thus the *political context* in which PTB programs operate matters because citizen budget councils and other new players can be seen to usurp the authority of elected officials—especially the elected city council members or members of a legislative body. PTB projects can also become closely associated with one particular political party and fall victim to partisan politics. Furthermore the relationship of the city or regional government to the central government affects local autonomy and priorities, not to mention the city's access to information and ability to innovate.

The *administrative context* matters because the size of the budget often determines the types of projects and the extent of oversight needed. Also, in most of these countries planned public budgets rarely correspond to implemented budgets. Additionally, the capacity of municipal governments to track and implement new projects and furnish new

information—as opposed to replicating the status quo—will also determine what changes can and ought to be made. Finally, the relation between locally collected taxes and the overall implemented budget determines the financial autonomy of a municipality.

The *legal context* matters because some countries, such as Peru, actually require cities to engage in participatory budgeting. While such a decree is not enough to bring PB into fruition in a majority of Peruvian municipalities, it is much different from a legal context that impedes PTB. Fiscal and political decentralization certainly enables PTB. At the same time, even with the establishment of broad legal frameworks, some cities have to alter their codes or pass decrees to recognize the community councils and other citizen groups that are necessary in PTB processes.

The *social context* is perhaps the most difficult to define. It depends on concrete measures like levels of citizen participation, poverty, and even population density. But it also refers to abstract

concepts such as the degree of social cohesion and the prevailing political culture.²² While much of this difference is observed at the national level, it is not uncommon to find that PTB practices differ greatly among municipalities within the same country due to their particular histories, political cultures, and modes of citizen participation.

Goals

PTB practices include three types of overarching objectives (though they are not mutually exclusive). Citizens and governments implement PTB practices in order to a) reform the administrative apparatus, b) achieve social justice through improved policies and fairer allocation of resources, and c) promote active and democratic citizenship.²³ The first goal is important because it addresses the *efficiency* of local government and public administration by increasing accountability and making corruption less common. The second goal encompasses a variety of *social* objectives, including efforts to involve socially excluded or under-represented groups in government, to improve social

cohesion and trust, and to alter spending priorities towards more egalitarian and sustainable objectives. The third goal serves *political* aims: to further decentralize democracy, open government processes, or inject more deliberation and civic participation in decision-making. Each of these goals helps to advance democracy, whether conceived of as simply procedural democracy or a richer idea of substantive democracy. Thus, these three objectives usually prove to be mutually supportive.

Ideally, PTB practices help communities dismantle the legacies of clientelism, corruption, and social exclusion. Fundamentally, PTB increases access to budgetary information and locates decision-making processes in more open and transparent public forums. By creating public spaces for participation and by establishing mechanisms of accountability, PTB programs also act as “citizenship schools.”²⁴ PTB programs teach citizens about their duties and rights as citizens, and empower them to make change through processes of deliberation and civic engagement.

Mindful of the various contexts, efficiency aims, social objectives, and political goals of PTB projects, it is worth identifying distinct types of PTB approaches as well, since these approaches grow out of both the different goals and needs. Below are three models based on the ten projects.

Three PTB Approaches

Each of the ten projects was substantially different, yet their activities still overlapped. For example, training, media outreach, and public education were essential activities in each initiative, and every project involved increasing participation and improving transparency as mutually supportive goals. Nonetheless, certain PTB projects emphasized different approaches over others, either because of strategic considerations (such as the strengths of participating organizations) or because of necessities arising out of their region (e.g., different levels of administrative capacity or divergent experiences with democracy in the recent past). Therefore, despite the projects’ overlapping activities, the projects can be grouped into three

loose and somewhat arbitrary categories. This tripartite grouping provides the reader with unifying themes in order to help organize the information. Each project falls into a category that:

1. primarily implemented strictly participatory budgeting practices (*PB*); or
2. primarily increased and improved access to information, and supported monitoring of public budgeting (*transparency and monitoring*); or
3. primarily strengthened participation and capacity among socially excluded or under-represented groups through targeted trainings and community organizing (*participation and capacity-building*).

It bears reiterating that these are not hard-and-fast categories, and that the goal of every approach is ultimately to advance participatory and transparent budgeting practices in the long run.

Having multiple goals means that PTB approaches will vary. Even the same approaches seek different types of outcomes. Consider the following near-universal PTB activities:

- Raising public awareness about the need for more participatory and transparent budgeting practices. The projects took different routes to achieve this goal, but common practices included encouraging the media to cover their events and activities, and training citizens.
- Training is another crucial activity common to the projects because, in most cases, both citizens and public officials must learn about the budget process and about PTB activities.
- The projects had to engage public officials or lobby the government in some way. Political will in support of budget transparency and participation is a crucial element and one of the variables that is most exogenous to the project and difficult to control. In other words, it is impossible to predict the outcome or impact of local elections and other political events, and elected officials and other public functionaries can often drive or derail participatory budgeting.
- As the projects enter the implementation and monitoring stages, it becomes especially important for those projects

to adapt to local realities so that organized groups of citizens become involved in a consistent manner.

Results

Given these diverse activities, the success of a PTB project can be gauged on a range of possible accomplishments.

As a starting point, consider the four dimensions identified by one expert: financial, participatory, territorial, and institutional.²⁵ The *financial* dimension speaks to the extent (or percentage) of the public budget that actually becomes subject to participatory decision-making processes. Cities with PTB practices can range from involving 100 percent of the non-administrative budget, such as Porto Alegre in Brazil, to 15 percent in more modest programs. The goal set for transparency, however, always should be 100 percent. For that reason, we think that it is important to add a fifth accomplishment to the broader scope of PTB projects, the *transparency* dimension, which gauges the extent to which budgetary information is made public and accessible and therefore open to citizen review.

The *participatory* dimension captures the extent to which people participate. In other words, to understand the impact of PTB, it is worth asking such questions as: How many people are participating? How often and for how long? Are they the same participants over time, or is the program generating new interest and involving socially excluded groups? Additionally, PTB is necessarily built around defined jurisdictions. The *territorial* dimension thus requires us to ask which regions, neighborhoods, or zones are benefiting and which ones are participating.

Finally, the internal dynamics of a PTB program depend on the political structure and budgetary rules of the game, or the *institutional* dimension. Some are institutionalized in the municipal codes and regularized as government practices. Other rules of the game are social understandings or loose initiatives that depend on CSO endeavors and citizen involvement.

Clearly, making public budgets that are fully transparent and that incorporate the active participation of citizens is not

a process of months, but of years. Furthermore, every locality in this program started at a different level in terms of institutional capacity and public participation. So Partners' Center for Civil Society evaluated and analyzed the results of the ten projects presented in this study with that in mind. These projects represent initial steps, and their success ought to be understood in terms of their goals and activities, and within their individual contexts.

In the conclusion, we present some of the Center for Civil Society's observations and findings regarding the Transparency Program's projects. Among the ten cases there was widespread success in terms of the *transparency* dimension, and this was achieved in part by educating citizens and public officials, as well as by making information more available. Gauging the *financial* dimension makes it clear that a one-year project is a very brief period of time to implement changes that result in increased portions of public budgets being submitted to PB practices. Nonetheless, those projects that were focused on implementing PB

mechanisms, particularly the Central American projects, made gains in the amounts of local budgets that involved PB practices in the allocation process.

Institutionally, the projects achieved important changes by getting laws and ordinances passed, but also by establishing channels of communication and practices of collaboration between civil society and government, which bodes well for the sustainability of PTB. In terms of the *territory* of PTB, that dimension, like participation, should take into account traditionally excluded or under-represented groups in the LAC regions—such as rural communities, people with few resources, and indigenous people—rather than measuring territory only by the amount of land area that a PTB jurisdiction covers. On that scale, the projects very successfully expanded the reach of PTB projects to new groups through focused trainings, public education, and outreach efforts.

Central to the goal of making public budgets more inclusive and representative is *participation*. On this last dimension, the projects probably had the greatest impact.

Thousands of people were trained and trained others, voted on and monitored budget projects, advocated, issued reports, and formed committees. The projects elicited extensive involvement of women, youth, and indigenous communities, thus increasing both the amount and breadth of participation. In terms of fomenting a democratic culture and supporting civic activism among citizens, the sheer expansion of participation has already had a notable effect.

¹ International Budget Project, *Latin American Index of Budget Transparency 2003*, <http://www.internationalbudget.org/themes/BudTrans/English.pdf>

² Yves Cabannes, "Participatory budgeting: A significant contribution to participatory democracy," *Environment and Urbanization* 16, no. 1, (April 2004).

³ Latinobarómetro, Summary Report Democracy and Economy 2003, <http://www.latinobarometro.org>

⁴ Latinobarómetro, 13, 38. "There is an ever increasing 16% in 1996 to 22% in 2003 indifference to regime type, between democratic and authoritarian leadership."

⁵ Summary of Latinobarómetro data, "Democracy's ten-year rut," *The Economist*, October 29, 2005, 39.

⁶ Paolo Mauro, "Corruption: Causes, Consequences, and Agenda for Further Research," *Finance and Development* 35, no. 1 (March 1998): 2. <http://www.worldbank.org/fandd/english/0398/articles/010398.htm>. Mauro estimates that corruption cuts growth rates by 0.5–1 percent annually.

⁷ Jose Eduardo Mora, "Central America: The High Cost of Corruption," *Inter Press Service*, October 27, 2004.

⁸ Shang-Jin Wei, "How Taxing is Corruption on International Investors?" *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 82, no. 1 (2000): 1–11.

⁹ Corruption Chart: How Big is Mexico's Problem? <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/mexico/chart3.html>

¹⁰ See the summary at http://www.cc.org.mx/s_prensa/kit/10ago.doc

¹¹ See the summary of Latinobarómetro data, 39.

¹² Maria Luisa Iriarte Alonso, "Latina, la segunda region mas corrupta a nivel mundial," *El Mercurio*, October 19, 2005. See also <http://www.transparency.org>

¹³ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, "Democracy, Accountability, and Global Governance" (working paper, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, 2001).

¹⁴ Transparency International, "Libro de Consulta de TI," 2000, 2. <http://www.transparency.org/tilac/biblioteca/consultas/index.html>

¹⁵ Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General in his statement on the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. December 9–11, 2003, Merida, Mexico, <http://www.unodc.org>; Paolo Mauro, "Corruption: Causes, Consequences, and Agenda for Further Research."

¹⁶ United Nations Convention Against Corruption; World Bank Group, "Governance and Public Sector Reform," <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/overview/htm#2>

¹⁷ One such effort in 2001 strengthened civil society capacity by sponsoring the IADN's Participation and Democracy Small Grants Program. Twenty-two, one-year grants were awarded to IADN members to promote citizen participation; about 25 percent of these grants supported the participation of civil society in transparency and anti-corruption initiatives. Building on this experience, Partners and the IADN, with the renewed support of USAID, focused on stemming corruption by addressing the

need for increased and more effective citizen and civil society participation in anti-corruption and transparency initiatives, out of which grew the "Transparency in the Americas" grant program.

¹⁸ United Nations, "World Urbanization Prospects: The 1996 Revision," 1998, 93, cited in Richard Stren, "New Approaches to Urban Governance in Latin America" (paper presented at the IDRC conference on sustainable urban development, Montevideo, Uruguay, April 6–7, 2000): 1.

¹⁹ Deborah Brautigam, "The People's Budget? Politics, Power, Popular Participation and Pro-Poor Economic Policy" (prepared for Expert Group Meeting on Participation of Civil Society in Fiscal Policy, UN, February 2, 2004).

²⁰ From Patricia McCarney, Mohamed Halfani, and Alfredo Rodriguez, "Towards an Understanding of Governance," in Richard Stren and Judith Bell, eds., *Urban Research in the Developing World*, vol. 2, *Perspectives on City* (Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 1995), 95; but a sharper definition would be "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences." (United Nations Development Program, "Governance for Sustainable Human Development," UNDP Policy Document, 1997, 2–3) from Stren, "New Approaches to Urban Governance."

²¹ UN-HABITAT, 2004, 20.

²² For more on these contexts, see Cabannes, "Participatory budgeting."

²³ Brian Wampler, "A Guide to Participatory Budgeting," The International Budget Project, 2000, 2, <http://www.internationalbudget.org/cdrom/papers/systems/ParticipatoryBudgets/Wampler.pdf>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Liberties were taken with the terms and definitions, but the original ideas can be found in Cabannes, "Participatory budgeting."

Case Studies: Participatory Budgeting

Dominican Republic *Fundación Solidaridad*



“Today we can say that Villa Gonzalez, a pioneer in this type of [PB] work, has been able to radiate some light to other municipalities that have been going forward in integrating PB processes, and there are lots of them that have... and they are doing the same things that we are doing today.”

—PARTICIPANT FROM
VILLA GONZALEZ

Lead organization profile: Fundación Solidaridad is a nongovernmental organization based in Santiago that promotes sustainable development in urban and rural communities of the northern region of the Dominican Republic. Solidaridad promotes a model of solidarity to generate material and spiritual development in the region and in the country. Solidaridad's mission is to promote democratic and sustainable practices of economic and social development and to contribute to improving the quality of life in impoverished urban and rural communities in the Cibao region. Solidaridad carries out its mission through education, training, and technical assistance.

Collaborating organizations: Asociación de Agentes de Desarrollo (AAD) and Federación de Cooperativas del Cibao Central (FECOOPCEN).

Project location: Cibao

Project title: Strengthening Democracy and Municipal Transparency

Other partners: City governments of Monción, Mao, Navarrete, Villa González, Altamira, Santiago, Villa Altagracia; Junta Distrital de La Canela, Tenares, Salcedo, Imbert, Luperón, Los Hidalgos, y Guanatico; Municipio de la Jaiba; el Distrito Municipal de Nava; Canela; CDEEE; Sub-Gerencia Forestal de Imbert; Secretaría de Agricultura Altamira; Secretaría de Estado de Salud Pública; Procurador General de la República; Casa de la Cultura de Mao; Comunidad Digna de Mao; Ayuntamiento Juvenil de Mao; Junta Municipal de Jaibón; Secretaria de Educación, Regional de Mao; Secretaria de Educación, Distrito 08 07 Navarrete; Secretaria de La Mujer, Navarrete; Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, Extensión Santiago (Cursa-UASD); Dirección Regional Norte de Patrimonio Monumental; Consejo Nacional para la Reforma del Estado (CONARE); Dirección General de Desarrollo de la Comunidad (DGDC); and Distrito Educativo de Altamira.



CITIZENS LEARNED TO MAKE DEMANDS AND PROPOSE IDEAS TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT. OVER 13,500 CITIZENS PARTICIPATED IN LOBBYING EFFORTS THAT WERE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE PROJECTS' GOALS.

CONTEXT

Participants in the Dominican Republic reported that citizens generally felt prohibited from participating in local government and that they were unaware of what the municipality did or how they could participate. As a result of that disconnect, citizens' perceptions of such things as why raising tax revenue is important, how public budgets are carried out, or how public works are paid for are often ill-informed. These gaps presented hurdles for the development of the PTB projects in many localities.

Fundación Solidaridad also found a marked lack of municipal expertise and training. Newly elected or appointed city officials and public functionaries are often unprepared to meet their responsibilities to develop and execute public budgets. Dominican officials have few mechanisms to provide them with the training they need, and many communities voice an abiding distrust of politicians. The widespread traditions of clientelism or “patronage politics” may be waning, but their endemic nature leaves a legacy of

suspicion and apathy that impedes municipal governance and social trust.

Solidaridad confronted the challenges of working within a varied geographic and administrative context and with a citizenry that had grown cynical about local government. Despite the fact that the country's second-largest city, Santiago, and other significant towns are located in the region, it is largely rural. As a result, previous participatory budgeting programs had not incorporated outlying communities that are accessible “only by mule.” The cities' administrative capacities also varied in terms of budgets, municipal codes, and administrative infrastructure.

Villa Gonzalez had six years of experience as the project began, while other municipalities had more limited experience with PTB practices or had never implemented any at all. Some cities needed assistance in formalizing and institutionalizing PTB practices, and most local officials lacked the knowledge or capacity to implement PTB. The citizens were more consistent, however, in doubting the capacity of local

government to achieve efficient and equitable outcomes through transparency and civic engagement.

OBJECTIVES

Solidaridad sought to increase municipal and citizen knowledge about its methodology of PTB—what it refers to as municipal participatory budgeting or PMP (from *presupuesto municipal participativo*). The project formed partnerships with local civil society organizations, consolidated public support, spread its PMP methodology to new municipalities, and institutionalized participatory budgeting practices through a number of seminars and publications.

Solidaridad set its goals based on the need for greater citizen education and participation and for innovative collaborations with local governments. The project sought to achieve these by:

- boosting the relatively low levels of technical capacity among municipal functionaries and the leaders of CSOs,
- increasing the number of citizens and CSOs involved in promoting transparency and participation in the public budget,

- generating the political will to advance PMP, and
- increasing the number of cities with PMP initiatives or CSOs advocating for PMP.

APPROACH

To achieve its objectives, Solidaridad adopted an approach focused specifically on participatory budgeting, or PMP. Solidaridad and its partners provided municipalities with necessary tools and technical assistance, created public spaces for continuous learning and sharing of experiences to strengthen PMP projects, and generated the broad public support to sustain PMP initiatives.

In terms of technical assistance, Solidaridad provided trainings to public officials, neighborhood groups, cooperative associations, unions, and other CSOs in multiple communities. The project also delivered informative workshops on PMP. Trainings focused on the implementation and follow-through of PMP and were often targeted at specific groups formed to implement PMP such as Navarrete’s Consultative Committee for PMP and

the PMP Monitoring and Guidance Team of Villa Gonzalez. Workshops provided information on PMP and opened discussions relating PMP to other municipal concerns such as gender roles and the fight against poverty.

Solidaridad also provided ongoing technical assistance necessary to get new participatory budgeting projects off the ground. As one participant in Altamira stated, “I don’t think it is a secret for anyone that we had no idea what PMP was. ... [Fundación Solidaridad] explained the budget to the community and through the workshops got us to understand participatory budgeting.”

In order to launch the PMP process, Solidaridad and its partners then presented the process and its benefits to municipal authorities and members of civil society in many communities, launching PMP in six municipalities. They also aimed to generate broad public support and interest among citizens and government officials by sharing information about past successes in participatory budgeting, explaining the

mechanisms, and helping municipalities adopt these processes and make them work in their own localities. They created a guide to PMP that was distributed within participating municipalities along with a regular newsletter on PMP.

Interviewer’s Question:
“Do you think that this project of the past year helped in the process of dissemination and diffusion of the idea [of PB]?”

Participant’s Answer:
“It definitely has. It has helped a lot, because it has permitted all of these ideas to reach even further so that others are doing what we are doing here. The interchange of experiences with other municipalities of other towns is very important.”





OVER 20,000 CITIZENS
ATTENDED OPEN EVENTS
THAT THE TEN PROJECTS
HELD FOR THE PUBLIC.

Solidaridad simultaneously worked to provide groups implementing participatory budgeting with spaces to share their experiences, learn from others' experiences, and create a continuous dialogue on the PMP process. This included systematizing the experience of Villa Gonzalez, which has been working on participatory budgeting for several years and sharing that experience with municipalities that had just begun the process.

In addition, Solidaridad helped launch the Local Democracy Network (*Red para la Democracia Local*) made up of representatives from local governments and CSOs that had supported PMP projects. The idea was to share their experiences, rely on each other for mutual support, and strengthen their commitments. The project also supported seminars designed to facilitate the exchange of experiences in PB at the municipal level through dialogues and planning meetings, such as four roundtable meetings in Navarrete.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The project achieved a number of concrete results that demonstrate its

success in spreading participatory budgeting and in habituating citizens and public officials to the practice of transparency and participation in public budgeting, in both the short and long term. As a result of its work, Solidaridad can point to active PB practices in six municipalities and the beginning of similar processes in two others. Solidaridad and its partners did this by helping to form committees of delegates to represent their communities' wishes in selecting projects in several municipalities and by helping to draft six new laws that were passed to institutionalize PMP practices. In addition, almost 3,000 citizens from these municipalities participated in project activities.

For participants, however, the most important results were not the meetings but the public works themselves. Participants pointed to fire houses, rural electricity projects, remodeled public buildings, bridges, and public lighting—all public projects that grew out of PMP processes—as evidence of success. These examples suggest the re-ordering of public priorities as expressed in municipal budgets.

Participants also cited the Local Democracy Network as an important achievement of the project because, among other things, it engenders sustainability and diffusion. A coordinator from a Solidaridad partner, the Center for Grassroots Work, explained: “the most lasting, most important result is the Local Democracy Network. After all these years of building trust in Villa Gonzalez between authorities and CSOs, that relationship has started to develop and strengthen spaces where civil society and government work together.” The case of Altamira, where PMP processes were adopted at a surprisingly fast rate, demonstrates how networks of trust and information-sharing facilitated replication by other towns.

Fundación Solidaridad also strengthened relations with the Dominican Federation of Municipalities, which was officially designated a consulting body in the area of citizen participation. At the national level, Solidaridad's project advanced the agenda of PMP before the National Congress by sharing its

experiences and by working with legislators on a bill to improve decentralization and the feasibility of PMP. In addition, Solidaridad created the Coalition for Participatory Democracy, Municipal Transparency, and Local Good Government as a platform for civil society in partnership with public institutions and international partners to promote more activities for democracy and transparency at the local level.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

Solidaridad used its experience and contacts at different levels of government and civil society to introduce its PMP plans through synchronized, coordinated assistance on multiple levels. For instance, the Dominican Federation of Municipalities was an important partner at the beginning of the project because it had developed a Network for Decentralization to assist smaller local governments in developing their governance capacity. The Network worked closely with Solidaridad and understood the advantages of using PTB practices in conjunction with decentralization.

Solidaridad and its partners provided technical assistance and helped municipal governments develop a strategic plan. Project personnel put the local Association of Neighborhood Committees in touch with the Network for Decentralization. Working at these two levels of assistance meant that various groups of citizens were learning about PB from several sources, allowing them to become better able to demand it from their government officials, who in turn were more likely to comply. In its design of the PMP project, Solidaridad replicated the model of multiple overlapping partnerships and engaged both the municipal and neighborhood level as much possible for all of the localities in which the project was implemented.

Solidaridad's project was diffuse and decentralized. The staff responded to the localities' varying levels of need and preparation in a flexible way. Thus, some towns were making initial steps towards PTB mechanisms, while other municipalities were in a process of maturation or consolidating their gains.

The brick-and-mortar types of public works that some municipalities developed as part of the participatory budgeting projects might have been seen as humble progress. But public works selected through PMP gave citizens a “concrete” reason to get involved in the participatory budgeting projects in their towns if for no other reason than self-interest: a simple bridge could reduce the daily travel time to market or to schools significantly. Citizens realized that PMP activities benefited their communities. Tangible results of public works projects gave citizens something that they could visualize and refer to and thereby grasp the importance of civic engagement in municipal affairs.

In other towns where PTB practices were more in need of maturation than initiation, the project moved in the direction of establishing more formalized and institutionalized practices. For towns such as Villa Gonzalez, this meant finding their own meeting site, a rented building, where delegates of the budget committee could gather regularly. Other municipalities that had PB systems in place developed monitoring committees (*Comités de*

Seguimiento). Solidaridad also has continued to train local delegates and networks so that, as a president of one cooperative said, “We can be in a better position to support the municipality.”

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Solidaridad staff recognized the effects of public works achieved through PTB, and focused on the tangible benefits when presenting their PMP plan, such as how participatory budgeting culminates in public works that meet citizens’ needs. A drawback, however, was that some citizens and even municipal staff in some towns only understood PTB mechanisms in terms of being tools to produce public works while never grasping the broader implications and uses. In fact, one municipal official could not distinguish between the PMP program and the public works project that had been generated by it, taking both as one and the same.

Another lesson noted by Solidaridad was that, in trying to build trust between community groups and local authorities, a good way to cement that relationship is to encourage the municipality to choose

someone from the ranks of civil society (as opposed to patronage) to fill the local positions of community outreach coordinator or head of the office of community action. It becomes much easier for civil society and the municipality to work together after that.

Solidaridad, despite its obvious successes, identified areas of improvement. For one, it recognized that it is important to increase the percentage of the population that is involved in all stages of PTB, particularly the diagnostic phase of identifying needs. Related to that, it identified the need to expand trainings to include more community members, since the community leaders and public officials are currently benefiting the most from the trainings. There was also an emphasis on reaching farther into rural zones in the future.

Finally, it would like to see the areas of budget engagement expanded, and not focused solely on public works. One participant commented: “We know that budgeting should not be only about investment. The communities need

other things, like education, so that they can develop in conjunction with community development.”

PUBLICATIONS

- Flyers and pamphlets promoting the project
 - Training manuals for community leaders and public functionaries
 - Pamphlets on the “Red para la Democracia Local”
 - Results of systematizing the experience
 - Results of the research on best practices
 - Brochure with results from the seminar on exchanging experiences on municipal participatory budgeting
 - www.democracialocal.org
- *all publications are in Spanish*

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Peru Asociación SER



State and local officials are now more aware that the public is becoming increasingly active and will demand ongoing involvement.

Lead organization profile: Asociación Servicios Educativos Rurales (SER) is a Peruvian NGO established in 1980 to support efforts to help *campesinos*, or rural agrarian workers, organize, defend their rights, and promote rural development. Since that time SER has expanded its activities to include training, consulting, social outreach, and promoting and defending the rights of Andean and Amazonian peoples, always from the perspective of strengthening democracy and human development in Peru. Over the past decade SER has been increasing its activities in citizenship promotion and capacity building for local organizations, both public and private. A major goal has been to broaden access to information, increase participation, and improve dialogue and cooperation between the state and civil society.

Collaborating organization: Vicaria de la Solidaridad de la Prelatura de Ayaviri, Puno.

Project location: Carabaya in the region of Puno, and Cutervo in the region of Cajamarca

Project title: Citizen Participation in the Oversight of Participatory Budgets in Rural Andean Municipalities

Other partners: Mesa de Concertación y Lucha Contra la Pobreza, Rondas Campesinas, Rondas Urbanas, Asociación Juventud Agraria Rural Católica Cutervina, Asociación Derechos Humanos, Comités para Electricificación Rural, Instituto Superior Tecnológico de Cutervo, and Consejo de Estudiantes del Instituto Superior Pedagógico de Cutervo.



THE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED
IN GUATEMALA AND PERU
WORKED CLOSELY WITH
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES
IN ORDER TO ADVANCE
PTB AMONG POLITICALLY
EXCLUDED AND HISTORICALLY
MARGINALIZED GROUPS.

CONTEXT

In Peru, the national Decentralization Law (*Ley de Descentralización*) directs local and regional governments to consult citizens in the public budgeting process. Despite this mandate, most local governments have not instituted mechanisms that make budgets fully transparent or participatory. Peruvians therefore do not have sufficient information about public budgets or adequate confidence in public officials. This situation contributes to conflict, exacerbates distrust of government, and weakens the participatory nature of community development.

Asociación Servicios Educativos Rurales (SER) works in rural and often rugged areas that tend to be more isolated than the rest of Peru. SER identified in these areas five core problems that impede the implementation of participatory budgeting. First, public functionaries have little interest in providing the public with information on budgeting. Second, mechanisms are lacking that make information about public budgeting accessible or coherent. Third, the overall system of oversight and monitoring of the public

sector is inadequate. Fourth, the public misunderstands the legal framework and governmental procedures that are available to citizens to get and use public information. Last, public sensitivity to corruption often results in conflict and complications in governance, instead of increased civic activism.

The project was implemented in two distinct regions, Puno and Cajamarca. Both regions have rich social networks composed of *rondas campesinas* (rural security patrols made up of citizen volunteers), human rights groups, cultural associations, sporting groups, rural farming collectives, and youth and women's groups. However, the systems of municipal management differed in each province, specifically Carabaya in Puno and Cutervo in Cajamarca. Carabaya had a tradition of engaging citizens and incorporating participation, while Cutervo's municipal management was more distanced from the citizens. Like other lead organizations, SER was interested in using this distinction to evaluate the impact of the project and its strategic interventions.

OBJECTIVES

SER intended to make PB a reality in these two districts by providing support, training, organization, and ongoing assistance. More broadly, the project aimed to expand public spaces for citizens in order for them to organize and make their voices heard by local authorities. Finally, SER aimed to systematize the strategies used and the lessons learned from these two projects in order to disseminate information to other localities that might replicate the projects.

APPROACH

SER implemented a program designed around trainings, public education, and promoting the active participation of community leaders. The strategy included workshops for citizens, "vigilance committees" to monitor public projects, and a media strategy aimed at spreading information and building public interest and participation. Additionally, SER supported exchanges of vigilance committee leaders between regions, which functioned like externships.

Educating the public was crucial not only to introduce PB processes and demonstrate how they function within the communities, but also to keep the communities informed, raise awareness, announce events, and issue updates on the budget process and public works projects. Workshops focused on how to access public information, how PB mechanisms work, how to form vigilance committees, and how to generate citizen participation. In addition, local radio stations became hubs for information on the public budget and the PB projects. The vigilance committees held a weekly radio show to provide information and updates.

Since Quechua is the native language spoken in many of these communities, SER produced publications in both Spanish and Quechua. For example, SER produced a publication in both languages on how to use the Internet to access public information. This publication was distributed at citizen workshops on accessing public information.

In addition, bilingual radio spots (in Spanish and Quechua) were broadcast

to raise awareness and announce public events. These broadcasts were essential to the project since literacy rates are very low in some of the participating communities, and print media does not reach traditionally excluded citizens. The broadcasts also were significant because local radio stations often function like the morning newspaper functions in other regions—i.e., as a primary source of news and public information.

Besides public education and awareness campaigns, SER also helped these communities create vigilance committees to monitor the execution of the budget and implementation of PB projects.

The committees were independent, but they worked closely with the municipal government. They managed information on the budget and the progress of public works, which they shared with the community on a regular basis. The committees used this same information to publish reports that were presented to local governments.

SER also arranged for community leaders to conduct externships with other

municipalities in order to learn from other experiences and techniques and share lessons learned from their own municipality. These externships were intended to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise, and to develop the capacities and skills of local leaders who could then become more active in PB and other municipal processes. The externships enabled leaders working on the oversight committees in Carabaya to work with the corresponding committee in Cutervo and vice versa, so this method also improved the evaluation and learning process, making the final step of systematizing the project one that incorporated direct experience and diverse viewpoints.

Newly trained leaders bring greater knowledge, awareness, and interest in citizen participation to their localities.



THERE WERE 111 SIGNED AGREEMENTS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND THE TRANSPARENCY PROGRAM'S TEN LEAD ORGANIZATIONS. THESE SIGNED AGREEMENTS FORMALIZED WORK PLANS AND HELPED IMPLEMENT PTB PRACTICES.

RESULTS

SER's project was successful in training and encouraging community leaders in a sparsely populated and underdeveloped area. More than 380 citizens and government officials participated in trainings. Of these, 39 percent were indigenous. These newly trained leaders bring greater knowledge, awareness, and interest in citizen participation to their localities. The project also raised the level of awareness among local authorities about the need for public participation in municipal management and budgeting by clarifying the benefits of increased participation and dispelling some misconceptions and concerns.

More than 380 citizens and government officials participated in trainings. Of these, 39 percent were indigenous.

An important result was that mayors and representatives did not oppose public meetings or PB efforts instituted during the project, nor did they block the work of the vigilance committees. Instead, state and local officials from a variety of departments are now more aware that the public is becoming increasingly active and will demand ongoing involvement. In addition, the vigilance committees of Macusani and Corani were officially recognized by their respective mayors.

SER was also successful at spreading information on PB processes and budget transparency. Eleven radio programs were aired during the project, some on a weekly basis for several months. Over 8,500 publications on PB, access to information, and the importance of vigilance committees were produced and distributed. As a result, more than 1,000 citizens participated in advocacy, over double the number of citizens that participated in direct trainings.

Project participants benefited from exchanges of staff and ideas. The

externships enabled leaders to grasp national processes such as decentralization and the institutionalization of participatory processes, and participants became more cognizant of differences and similarities in each other's experiences and provinces. The participants unanimously reported that the exchanges increased their enthusiasm, sense of solidarity, and motivation to continue pursuing transparency initiatives at the local level. Some of these participants became new community leaders and have decided to compete in elections, which demonstrates commitment and emerging opportunities for political representation. SER believes that more diversity and better information in local politics will ultimately result in more efficient and democratic local governments that are both participatory and transparent.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

In the implementation process, SER and its partners were especially focused on identifying leaders of local CSOs, *rondas campesinas*, and other civic

groups to participate in trainings. This step was crucial because providing direct and ongoing support to the vigilance committees was only possible with the involvement and community presence of local leaders. Also, many of the residents in these districts live in small villages far from town centers. This required having local leaders who knew the terrain and local culture, and who spoke Quechua, to engage more citizens and not allow PB activities to be dominated by a small group. The local volunteers who participated in trainings and externships fit that profile and were extremely dedicated to this mission.

In Carabaya, where the *rondas campesinas* had been a strong force in civil society for many years, the project went more smoothly than in Cutervo. In addition to the participation of the local town mayors, SER and its partners received political support from the provincial mayor, who was willing to open government processes to citizen participation. Also, at the provincial level, public controversies surrounding the regional government's management of municipal

resources encouraged citizen participation and greater transparency.

The implementation process in Cutervo was more difficult due to a lack of political will, combined with a political culture that does not prioritize citizen participation. Nevertheless, the vigilance committees of Cutervo were able to get public information about budgeting, and participants credited city council members with helping to generate government support for the project. Project leaders were also diligent in their efforts to collect public information, presenting official letters to government representatives from CSOs and community groups to demonstrate public demand for transparency and participation.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

At the conclusion of the project, SER facilitated a meeting in Lima with project staff, experts on participation, public officials, and collaborating organizations from both project locations. The goal was to collect lessons and systematize those experiences into a methodology for future use in PB projects in rural

Peru. Participants in this event provided helpful insights. In particular, they cited trainings for local civil society leaders and public authorities on PB mechanisms, as well as the formation and support of vigilance committees, as essential to success.

In addition to identifying successful aspects of the projects, the project participants noted that the general public should be trained in the PB process if possible. This is because, while training leaders of CSOs and members of the vigilance committees was of primary importance, these leaders found it difficult to work with other community members who had not received training and therefore had limited knowledge of PB. The leaders replicated trainings for the community before implementing many steps of the project, placing an extra burden on their own, and the project's time. SER's organizers also suggested that municipal employees and other professionals who work on the public budget be trained in efficient management techniques to speed up and facilitate PB activities.

SER learned important lessons from the evaluation of its outreach strategy. Because of low literacy levels, SER's publications contained many pictures and drawings. SER found it was important that these pictures reflected local dress and communication styles to increase readers' understanding and acceptance of the message. The project staff discovered that this helped motivate citizens to participate. SER also observed that concise texts with concrete examples and succinct ideas were more popular than those that expressed broad concepts. Finally, SER noted that publications should be in color and use native languages if possible. Since women in Carabaya have lower levels of Spanish literacy than men, the bilingual radio broadcasts and publications were especially important in order to guarantee the participation of women.

PUBLICATIONS

- "Manual on Participation and Oversight in Participatory Budgeting"
- "The Public Budget and Citizen Oversight"
- "Access to Public Information from Local Governments"

**all publications are in Spanish*

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Guatemala *Acción Ciudadana*



“Participatory budgeting is not only the expenditure of money, but also the accompaniment that allows us to carry out these projects with the support of government, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. In that way we have a broader spectrum of possibilities in finding solutions to all our necessities.”

—MAYOR OF QUETZALTENANGO

Lead organization profile: Acción Ciudadana has been operating in Guatemala since 1996 to increase citizen participation and advocacy in public decision-making. The organization is currently the host of the Guatemalan National Chapter of Transparency International.

Collaborating organization: Centro de Estudios de la Cultura Maya (CECMA)

Project location: San Juan Comalapa and Quetzaltenango

Project title: Open and Participatory Municipal Budgets

Other partners: Comisión Presidencial para la Reforma, Modernización y Fortalecimiento del Estado (COPRE); Secretaría de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia (SEGEPLAN); Secretaría de Coordinación Ejecutiva de la Presidencia (SCEP); Instituto Nacional de Fomento Municipal (INFOM); Red Nacional de Instituciones de Capacitación Municipal (RENICAM); departmental governments of Chimaltenango and Quetzaltenango; Municipality of San Juan Comalapa; Municipality of Quetzaltenango; COMUDES of Quetzaltenango and San Juan Comalapa; INAP; ANAM; and Fundación Arias para la Paz.



THE PROJECTS HELPED
ENSURE THE PASSAGE
OR MODIFICATION OF
23 LAWS OR ORDINANCES
AT THE LOCAL, REGIONAL,
AND NATIONAL LEVELS.

CONTEXT

National laws in Guatemala provide a legal framework for PTB. In particular, Guatemala benefits from three laws that create a context where both municipal government and citizens have gained responsibility for decision-making on the public budget and public works. They are the Municipal Code, the General Decentralization Law, and the Law of Development Councils. The Law of Development Councils mandates the creation of five levels of development commissions—community, municipal, departmental, regional, and national—consisting of representatives from communities, CSOs, and the government. However, while it is significant that these commissions have been given legal standing, they have been weak or non-existent in most places. In addition, other forms of community participation and collective decision-making, especially related to budget development and implementation, also have been underutilized in many municipalities.

Acción Ciudadana carried out the project, selecting two cities with different profiles

to learn from different experiences. San Juan Comalapa is a medium-sized city (approximately 35,000 inhabitants) and has an annual budget of approximately 8 million quetzales (just over US \$1 million). It has a more rural population with a higher percentage of indigenous people. Quetzaltenango, by contrast, is Guatemala's second-largest city with about 130,000 people. "Xela," as it is known, has a budget of about 100 million quetzales (about US \$12 million). These cities, located in the highlands, have distinct cultures heavily influenced by the Mayan people, and are historically resistant to central authority. For this reason, Acción Ciudadana worked with another local CSO, the Center for the Study of Mayan Culture (CECMA), because of its experience in working in multi-cultural settings.

The project aimed to operationalize participatory budgeting practices within the two municipalities by increasing the technical capacity of the cities' development commissions. Acción Ciudadana worked specifically with the smaller, more neighborhood-

based Community Development Commissions (COCODEs—*Consejos Comunitario de Desarrollo*), which are the most grassroots of the commissions, and with the more encompassing Municipal Development Commissions (COMUDEs—*Consejos Municipal de Desarrollo*), which occupy the next level above COCODEs. The project helped these groups implement participatory assessments of community needs, prioritize potential projects, and advocate for the inclusion of those projects in the 2006 municipal budget. Acción Ciudadana also worked with local governments and local CSOs to facilitate cooperation, and to train them in transparent and participatory mechanisms related to public budgeting.

OBJECTIVES

Acción Ciudadana's project advanced a PTB project with a specific focus on participatory budgeting by providing technical assistance to local governments, COCODEs and COMUDEs, and the general citizenry. The project aimed to transfer the necessary tools

to those groups and to create sufficient political will within local government and the development commissions in order to guarantee a continuation of the PB process beyond the scope of the project.

APPROACH

The project was designed primarily to implement and adapt as necessary PB practices in Guatemalan municipalities. It was part of a seven-phase process that guided these municipalities from awareness-raising and advocacy, through organizational development, PB implementation, and budget oversight. Prior to the seven-phase process, Acción Ciudadana took preliminary steps to ensure that the proper environment existed for its methodology to work, and to help the various actors navigate the PB process from project development to oversight. Throughout the course of the project, Acción Ciudadana was able to complete four of the seven phases.

The project’s phases were as follows:

1. Municipal Awareness Raising and Recruitment

2. Organization and Training of Participants from Municipal Governments
3. Municipal Development Planning
4. Participatory Budgeting—Analysis, Development, Financing, and Prioritization
5. Participatory Budgeting—Advocacy and Lobbying
6. Participatory Budgeting—Implementation, Monitoring, and Auditing
7. Re-implementation of Participatory Budgeting Process

Phases 1 and 2 laid the groundwork for PB to function properly. In both municipalities, Acción Ciudadana secured the approval and cooperation of the current administration. The project leaders then invited the COCODEs and COMUDEs to participate in the project and began training these groups in PB, municipal development, and budget processes. In Quetzaltenango, before training the groups, Acción Ciudadana also helped form the COCODEs and COMUDE by inviting local citizens, CSOs, and local government officials to join the community commissions.

Although the COMUDE of Quetzaltenango was newly formed, it was comfortable implementing PB tools and mechanisms and felt confident that it would replicate the process in the future.

Phases 3 and 4 involved providing technical assistance and support to the COCODEs and COMUDEs as they implemented PB practices. COCODEs held forums to determine and evaluate community needs and develop projects to address those needs. The findings were then presented to the COMUDE, which organized the projects into a project inventory.



NEW GROUPS WERE FORMED TO MONITOR THE BUDGET, PROVIDE OVERSIGHT, LOBBY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND PRESENT PROPOSALS. IN TOTAL, 108 NEW CIVIC GROUPS EMERGED FROM PROJECT ACTIVITIES.

“In an interesting variation, it was the mayor in each municipality who created the political will to initiate the process and has participated actively.”

The inventory gives priority ranking to projects based on criteria developed and approved by the COMUDE. The projects are ranked based on the urgency of the situation for which the project was designed, the costs associated with implementing it, and the project’s location. Once a project is implemented, other projects in the same locality are given lower rankings in order to allow all localities to benefit from PB projects. Using the project inventory, the COMUDEs designated projects for inclusion in the 2006 municipal budget.

The final phases involve follow-through and oversight of the projects that became incorporated into the budget. Phase 7 re-implements the PB process in a new cycle of forums and projects.

RESULTS

Acción Ciudadana supplied technical assistance and transferred capacity-building skills to the COMUDEs, creating a more organized and productive space for cooperation among local government, citizens, and civil society. This is especially significant for the COMUDE of

Quetzaltenango, which was inoperable prior to the project. Acción Ciudadana trained 239 participants, of which 35 percent were indigenous. They also held over 40 events throughout the year, which more than 970 citizens and 330 government officials attended.

Participatory budgeting mechanisms—such as institutional coordination, project diagnostics, project prioritizations, and project banks developed and implemented by members of the COCODEs and COMUDEs—were strengthened throughout the process. Experience with these mechanisms allows the municipalities to verify and institutionalize participatory budgeting practices. Although the COMUDE of Quetzaltenango was newly formed, it was comfortable implementing PB tools and mechanisms and felt confident that it would replicate the process in the future.

The project also has a work plan to continue collaboration with municipal governments, the COCODEs and COMUDEs, and local, national, and international partners to ensure completion

of the participatory budgeting process. In addition to the work plans signed with the municipalities of San Juan Comalapa and Quetzaltenango, Acción Ciudadana is collaborating with the Presidential Commission for Reform, Modernization, and Strengthening of the State (COPRE). The project also used the media to spread information on PB processes. It held three press conferences resulting in 25 newspaper articles.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

During phases 1 and 2, Acción Ciudadana laid the groundwork for PB by inviting the COCODEs and COMUDEs to participate in the project. They trained these local community groups in PB, municipal management, and budget processes. In San Juan Comalapa, these phases progressed as expected. But in Quetzaltenango, Acción Ciudadana discovered that the COCODEs and the COMUDE were not fully operational, as mandated by federal law. Therefore, Acción Ciudadana not only had to train the commissions, but help bring them into existence as well.

The most significant design element of Acción Ciudadana's project had to do with the conceptualization of phases and the time allotted for each. The original proposal called for seven integrated phases that included the basic mechanisms of a complete participatory budgeting process. However, Acción Ciudadana quickly learned that in practice it needed to give greater emphasis to the initial phases, which determine the long-term success of a PB project. Therefore, Acción Ciudadana focused on the first four phases of the project and aimed to advance the community councils and representatives to the phase where they could propose budget projects to authorities.

During implementation, Acción Ciudadana found that it was necessary to engage in more intense lobbying, especially with the municipal councils. At the same time, project staff underestimated the amount of training that was needed to prepare citizens and public officials to engage in PTB practices. Since Acción Ciudadana had outlined an overarching strategy, these obstacles were surmounted by altering the project's overall emphasis.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Acción Ciudadana's experience taught them that it was not possible to publish training materials on PTB with a complete methodology for implementation in advance of the project or even at the very beginning. Instead, the project leaders found that developing a basic training manual as an initial tool was more viable. Such a manual could then be enriched and expanded as the project unfolded, adding practical lessons, reflections and adaptations from the experiences of each municipality involved. For Acción Ciudadana's

“One of the most important achievements was signing an agreement with the commission where they accepted the implementation of PB.... This is a way of institutionalizing PB.”

—PROJECT DIRECTOR

staff, the idea of not imposing a rigid, pre-defined methodology in its publications was consistent with its adaptive approach to community development.

Acción Ciudadana had success in its direct and personalized outreach approaches, which emphasized the advantages and benefits of its PB project. Its principal approach in encouraging public officials to adopt PB practices was not to pressure them, but to explain the importance of transparency in municipal government, emphasizing that open and accessible budget information could legitimize the work of public authorities. Acción Ciudadana also leveraged the three national decentralization laws passed in 2002; project staff argued that PB practices, because they incorporate the input of municipal councils, help the city comply with national mandates.

Acción Ciudadana found that Guatemalan citizens were most attracted to the PB concept of returning power to the people. They embraced the idea that participatory practices would help them

to reflect on and analyze their own needs and problems and to propose solutions. On the other hand, citizens showed substantially less interest in the more technical aspects, such as analyzing the financing of the budget projects, estimating costs, and prioritizing the proposed projects.

The diversity of the locations and the time limitation (the project lasted only one year) presented the most serious challenges. Nonetheless, Acción Ciudadana and CECMA were successful in establishing cooperation among mayors, city councils, and development councils. These groups worked together in a participatory way to develop proposals for municipal budget projects, which were presented to the municipal councils in each city for approval. Many of these projects will be funded.

Therefore the core goals of the project were achieved. Acción Ciudadana credited this success to the political will of the municipal authorities, as expressed in resolutions from both municipal councils. Acción Ciudadana's flexibility was

another factor in its success because it allowed the project to adapt to the different realities of each locality. Finally, Acción Ciudadana indicated that the capacities and diverse skills of the team members ensured that the training and technical assistance provided to the municipalities were high quality.

PUBLICATIONS

- "Municipal Participatory Budgeting Training Manual"
 - www.accionciudadana.org.gt
- *all publications are in Spanish*

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El Salvador *Probidad*



“As a government we had the will, but we did not have the methodology implemented. With this tool that Probidad has supplied, we have been able to achieve a real practice of democracy.”

Lead organization profile: In the fight against corruption, Asociación Probidad stands out in El Salvador as an organization using innovative strategies and techniques to increase citizen participation and decrease corruption. By working with different institutions and sectors of society, including the media, political parties, industries, and citizens, Probidad supports participatory anti-corruption initiatives.

Collaborating organization: Iniciativa Social para la Democracia (ISD)

Project location: Olocuilta and Cojutepeque

Project title: Citizen Participation and Transparency in Municipal Budgets

Other partners: Municipality of Olocuilta, Municipality of Cojutepeque.





TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE LEAD ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED THREE VIRTUAL COURSES ON ADVOCACY AND LOCAL BUDGETS. THESE COURSES WERE OPEN TO ALL CSO MEMBERS OF THE IADN.

CONTEXT

El Salvador, despite being a small country, is populous. Its 262 municipalities receive their funds from local taxes and from the national government—which allocates six percent of its budget to local governments. National laws regulate local governmental operations, and recent laws stipulate that citizens must have more budget oversight and access to public information, though most of these laws have not been implemented.

In addition to the national level, there is growing interest in transparency and accountability at the local level. For instance, the National Corporation of Municipalities (COMURES), an organization of mayors, recently approved a Strategy for Municipal Transparency that calls for information systems, accountability, more citizen participation, and mechanisms for citizens to monitor the local authorities' discretionary spending. CSOs and the National Legislative Assembly, moreover, have proposed reforms to the Municipal Code.

Although participatory budgeting practices have been attempted in El Salvador in recent years, several factors have impeded their full implementation at the local level. They include limited resources, poor enforcement of federal laws, citizen disinterest and mistrust, and a lack of reliable public information about budget projects.

In an effort to address these deficiencies, Probidad, in collaboration with the Social Initiative for Democracy (ISD), local governments, and local development councils (CDLs) implemented a participatory budgeting project in the municipalities of Olocuilta and Cojutepeque. Probidad worked to ensure cooperation, provided technical assistance, and supported mechanisms that prioritize, verify, and finance local projects.

Of the two municipalities, Olocuilta is smaller, with approximately 20,000 inhabitants, and more rural. Its mayor is the president of COMURES and a member of the National Conciliation Party (PCN). The city developed a municipal ordinance on transparency in 2001, but

it had not been implemented prior to Probidad's project. Nonetheless, the mayor was interested in expanding accountability.

Cojutepeque is a denser city of 70,000 led by a mayor from the FMLN (*Partido Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación*). The mayor had previously attempted to implement a PB process, but due to a lack of sufficient funds and resources, the project failed. Cojutepeque has an Office of Citizen Participation, but like the Municipal Council, it is structurally weak and under-developed. The CDL in that city, moreover, required training in themes such as management and organization.

OBJECTIVES

Probidad worked to promote focused participatory budgeting (PB) practices through CDLs, which are civic groups run by community volunteers that enable citizens to deliberate and present policy preferences to local governments. Probidad strived to strengthen the capacity of CDLs to incorporate citizens into the participatory budgeting process and to work with the municipal government in implementing diverse PTB initiatives.

APPROACH

Probidad incorporated the “learning” with the “doing.” Participants and municipalities not only learned how to implement PTB processes, but also carried them out. Technical experts provided oversight of and support for local municipal governments and CDLs. The comprehensive approach relied on training, public relations, and community organizing to institutionalize PTB practices.

Probidad organized public events with the municipal governments and CDL leaders to share methodologies and create joint work plans. Government officials and CDL members also attended trainings on democracy-related topics such as political culture, transparency, and citizen participation, as well as on more technical issues such as participatory budgeting, information systems, and evaluation. In addition, Probidad trained CDL personnel in leadership skills to strengthen their organizational capacity.

Probidad, and its partner, ISD, worked closely with the CDLs to implement the

stages of the participatory budgeting process. Community assemblies were held to conduct diagnostics and identify needs. At the discretion of the municipal governments, each municipality was divided into geographic or sectoral zones. Each zone prioritized one project for the 2005 budget. The CDLs, with assistance from Probidad and ISD, assisted with that prioritization and then verified that the project would address the community’s most pressing need.

The CDLs were responsible for oversight of the municipalities’ implementation of the budget projects. They formed and strengthened relationships with the municipal government, often establishing special working groups to liaise with municipal officials on a particular budget project. Probidad helped the CDLs to advocate for the allocation of more funds and the expeditious execution of the proposed budget projects. CDLs also kept the community informed through holding community assemblies regularly, and lobbied to ensure continuation of the projects in the following year’s budget.

Probidad and ISD themselves also engaged in advocacy with the municipal governments throughout the project, by forming relationships with each municipal administration and entering into informal agreements to support the PB process into the future. In addition, Probidad coordinated closely with local media to ensure a steady flow of information. Media campaigns were designed to stimulate citizen interest in the PB process and in the work of CDLs, as well as to provide

The Mayor of Cojutepeque notes that [PTB] methodology will help start organized PTB efforts where none currently exist and reinforce PTB in places where it does exist.



CITIZENS WERE NOT THE ONLY PARTICIPANTS AT THE PUBLIC EVENTS SUPPORTED BY THE TRANSPARENCY PROGRAM. OVER 1,270 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ALSO ATTENDED MEETINGS AND FORUMS.

basic information on public budgets and the role of municipal government.

RESULTS

In Olocuilta, the community prioritized 23 projects, and the municipal government allocated \$212,000 for their implementation. In addition, the government agreed to distribute popular versions of the “Transparency and Access to Information” ordinance to increase awareness.

The Cojutepeque project involved dividing the municipality into sub-groups, including four geographic zones and four disadvantaged sectors of the population (women, children under 15, youth aged 15 to 26, and senior citizens). Budget projects were prioritized and selected for each group, and the municipal government allocated \$200,000 for their implementation. The municipality also approved the “Citizen Participation Ordinance,” which includes new regulations on access to information.

The work of the CDLs has opened spaces within the municipalities for more communication and direct consultation

between the communities and the municipal governments. More than 650 citizens were trained in the municipal budget and participatory budgeting mechanisms.

One result that is hard to gauge but that is of paramount importance is the effect on public attitudes about democracy, participation, and transparency. According to the mayor of Cojutepeque, there was initial resistance among citizens to the project because previous governments had used the theme of “participation” but did not encourage citizens to make their own decisions. But, she noted, “There was a very good relationship between CSOs and citizens—one of respect and a desire to learn,” which led citizens to become more involved and enthusiastic. In both cities, the projects increased citizen trust and interest in PTB processes.

The project also improved the technical capacity of government officials and CDL volunteers both in managing budgets, and in integrating public participation. As the mayor of Cojutepeque put it, “With the experience of Probidad, the

technical aspect[s] [of the budget process] really improved. It improved the involvement of the people and reinforced the entire learning and technical process—now they have a tool to say why this project was categorized as priority one and the other was not.”

This improved technical capacity is due, in part, to the 31 workshops and another ten public events carried out by Probidad. In all, 87 elected officials and public functionaries attended the events, while 655 citizens attended the workshops. (It bears noting that some of these officials and citizens were inevitably counted more than once because of multiple participation.)

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

Probidad consciously implemented a program in cities with different-sized territories and populations and with different styles of political leadership. Probidad wanted to learn from the process, but also wanted to demonstrate to a national audience that its PTB methodology is applicable to any city. The mayor of Cojutepeque noted that

the methodology will help start organized PTB efforts where none currently exist, and reinforce PTB in places where it does exist.

Despite Probidad’s good relationships with the mayors of both cities, the mayors did not want to relinquish prerogatives that had been built into their management styles. Nevertheless, the mayors did cooperate after Probidad established a sufficient level of trust. This demonstrated how the mayors could assume aspects of responsibility for the PTB project without compromising their authority. Key techniques in achieving this trust included training local project leaders on how to negotiate with functionaries, and maintaining direct and constant communication with municipal officials.

Probidad engaged in public outreach and education through local media. Through interviews and other formats, project leaders’ messages were broadcast via radio, TV, and other means. The media became increasingly engaged, frequently responding with

follow-ups. Based on this gradual increase of media interest and the enhanced effect of public relations campaigns, Probidad found that dedicating a minimum of one full month to a media campaign was necessary.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Probidad noted that while its collaborations with the CDLs and mayors were fruitful, the project would have enjoyed greater impact had it involved the city councils more. These councils are important decision-makers, but do not have sufficient training and resources, and can become suspicious of PTB projects that might seem to enhance the power of the mayor’s office at their expense.

Though the mayors provided consistent support, Probidad found that political support had to be earned. In the end, two aspects of the project were decisive in that regard. First, Probidad and ISD brought to the project established reputations, some national prestige and prior experience within the community. Without that, Probidad concluded that the mayors would have been more

reluctant to participate and the project would not have been as successful. Second, the mayors’ support can be fickle for political reasons. Probidad assuaged concerns as they arose by maintaining constant contact with mayors, both through formal communications and through direct, personal contacts with them, and in that way kept their levels of trust and comfort up.

PUBLICATION

“Citizen Participation and Transparency in Municipal Budgets: The Experience of Cojutepeque and Olocuilta”
**publication is in Spanish*

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Case Studies: Transparency and Monitoring

Argentina *Fundación El Otro*



It is not uncommon for poor and generally marginalized citizens to be dependent on social programs without having knowledge of their rights, or how monies are allocated for these programs.

Lead organization profile: Created in 1990, Fundación El Otro works with the Argentine government and CSOs to involve citizens in public affairs, corporate social responsibility, and economic growth. By generating more active citizen participation, the group works to promote greater social equity, rights, and responsibility among citizens.

Collaborating organizations: Foro Social para la Transparencia, Fundación Utopía, Centro para la Promoción Humana y el Desarrollo Social, and Fundación Desarrollo y Equidad.

Project location: Santiago del Estero and Tucumán

Project title: Social Citizenship Initiative

Other partners: Organización ANDHES; Universidad Nacional de Tucumán; Fundación del Tucumán; Centro de Estudios Superiores Siglo XXI; Fundación Dudas; Centro de Altos Estudios en Ciencias Sociales, Fundación Capricornio; Fundación Fundapaz–Forres; Fundación Cumpas y Cumas; Fundación El Ceibal; Universidad del Salvador, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales; Instituto de Investigación en Ciencias Sociales–Universidad del Salvador; Universidad Nacional de Santiago del Estero; Universidad Nacional del Litoral; Fundación Línea Verde; Municipalidad de Yerba Buena; Secretaría de Políticas Sociales de la Nación; Concejo Nacional de Administración, Evaluación y Control; Subsecretaría de Políticas Alimentarias de la Nación; Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Territorial y Economía Social; Ministerio de Salud y Desarrollo Social de Santiago del Estero; and Defensora de la Provincia de Santiago del Estero.



NEARLY 300 PUBLIC EVENTS
WERE HELD IN ORDER TO
CONSULT THE PUBLIC,
DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION,
OR ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE
WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

CONTEXT

Fundación El Otro conducted a series of investigations with the aim of giving a collective voice to the economically and socially marginalized populations of the provinces of Santiago del Estero and Tucumán, Argentina. The project wove together the activities of various CSOs and universities to uncover inconsistencies in the provincial allocation of funds for social programs. The social programs the project monitored included an income transfer program for poor households with heads of families who are unemployed (*Plan Jefas y Jefes de Hogar Desocupados*), an assistance program for low-income households (*Programa Familia por la Inclusión Social*), a student grant program, a free medicine program (*Plan Remediar*), and a program financing community eateries, or “soup kitchens” (*FOPAR*).

Argentina’s social programs are intended to help the economically and socially excluded sectors of the population. These populations are generally dependent on the state for economic and social support and have few

resources for collective action, while the provincial governments have little incentive to create more transparent practices regarding the distribution and allocation of public resources for social programs. As a result, it is not uncommon for poor and generally marginalized citizens to be dependent on social programs without having knowledge of their rights, or how monies are allocated for these programs.

In addition to a lack of information available to citizens, there is a lack of communication within and between government institutions. El Otro found that little information was collected or shared on the implementation or results of social programs in these provinces, and that government officials, as well as citizens and beneficiaries, were in need of comprehensive information on the allocation of resources to social programs.

OBJECTIVES

El Otro’s project was a monitoring and transparency initiative. Though the project involved youth and provided training,

it focused primarily on promoting a culture of transparency and accountability among government officials working on social programs. To do this, El Otro facilitated the involvement of citizens and CSOs in improving the collection of information related to social programs, their operations, and implementation.

The process of gathering information was meant to elevate the level of public understanding in three ways: by educating the citizens who participated, in particular students and other socially active citizens; by providing the general public with information about social programs; and, ultimately, by presenting information about programs and their operations to government officials—both decision-makers and administrative public functionaries.

APPROACH

In executing this project, Fundación El Otro attempted to merge methodologies from academia and advocacy groups to advance a new form of social learning and activism. In essence, the research studies were conducted following

academic models and then, following an advocacy model, shared with the media and with local and national governmental institutions to advocate for changes based on the results of the investigations.

In order to create a network of organizations and individuals collecting data on social programs for the provincial and national governments, the project drew upon the expertise and research of CSOs in Santiago del Estero and Tucumán, where the project was implemented, and in Buenos Aires, where El Otro is headquartered. Fundación El Otro coordinated the work of these CSOs and of individuals involved in the project, administering tasks and providing assistance, including training. The organizations and individuals with whom they worked included a variety of local CSOs with prior experience and established work in areas related to social programs, such as specific population groups, laws, advocacy, and research. In addition, El Otro made key collaborations with scholars and universities. The University of Tucumán, the University

of Santiago del Estero, and the University of Salvador in Buenos Aires all participated by supplying office space and by incorporating their social work students in the data collection process.

The data collection process was implemented in two steps. The first, conducted in Buenos Aires at the University of Salvador, involved creating a free Contact Center where residents of Santiago del Estero and Tucumán could call to receive information on social programs available to them and also report any discrepancies or difficulties they encountered in attempting to access these programs. The Contact Center was publicized in both provinces through radio and TV spots.

Social work students from the university staffed the Contact Center, and a coordinator selected by El Otro managed it. The students were responsible for fielding all calls, providing information to the callers, and collecting information provided by the callers. The students complemented this work by conducting their own individual and

collective studies on social programs in these provinces.

In the second step, local CSOs and university students conducted more in-depth research in the two provinces. Additional local partners contributed to this part of the research including citizen advisory committees, many of the members of which were motivated by tax concerns, social programs, and transparency issues. To orient the students and other citizens involved in the project, El Otro conducted a number of workshops about the issues and techniques used in the research.

Findings from both steps were compiled into a database in order to process and analyze the information. The end product was a series of reports outlining discrepancies and problems with selected social programs in each province. The reports were distributed to public officials at the provincial level. Follow-up meetings were held with relevant government institutions to discuss the findings and to advocate for their consideration when planning and budgeting for the social programs.

For many of the young people, it was the first time that they had done any work with public issues or engaged social programs directly, though they were all students of social work.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The Contact Center and other research activities were in operation for eight months, from October 2004 to June 2005. Reports were updated regularly and processed in the database. The information compiled served to create standardized indicators and supplied necessary qualitative information, allowing for accurate analysis of the data collected from all sources. The final result was a series of reports that highlighted the most relevant findings, including the misallocation of public resources related to social programs.

These reports were shared with public officials in both provinces. At least 27 public officials attended project events, where they learned about public perceptions of and experiences with social programs. El Otro forged new contacts with eight governmental agencies. Direct presentations and consultations were limited to a handful of government officials. This was the area where El Otro's project encountered the greatest challenges due to the reticence or unavailability of such officials.

Efforts to disseminate the information more broadly included ten radio programs and two TV spots. There also were 13 stories on the project in the independent press. In a different sense of information diffusion, six people (five women and one youth) were trained as trainers to continue and replicate the work that El Otro started.

The project also increased El Otro's contacts within civil society. El Otro developed new working relationships with 15 CSOs and civic groups as a result of the project, and established nine collaborative agreements to work on projects together. El Otro counted a total of 205 people (citizens, youth, and public officials) who attended its workshops and public events during the course of the project.

Fundación El Otro was able to secure funding from the Inter-American Development Bank for the continuation of the project. El Otro plans to keep working in Tucumán and Santiago del Estero and intends to expand to other provinces in the country where there is a great deal of social and political exclusion.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

El Otro set up a program that was designed to tap into two types of resources related to the education system in Argentina. For one, the universities are independent from the state and possess a great deal of influence and many resources, financial and otherwise. Second, El Otro designed its program to use the energy, enthusiasm, and fresh ideas of university students, also with the thought that these young people might sustain a commitment to and interest in public affairs that would have a long-term impact.

While implementing the project, El Otro discovered that integrating itself with such government and academic institutions was sometimes difficult, as compared to working with other CSOs that share a common language. Also, working with students might not have had the direct impact that working with government officials could have had, but El Otro deemed it worthwhile because public functionaries and technocrats were not available and, more

importantly, because of what the students seemed to be taking away. For many of the young people, it was the first time that they had done any work with public issues or engaged social programs directly, though they were all students of social work. The student participants all attested to the value of the project to their intellectual development.

Although the Contact Center was successful in filtering and gathering information from callers, as well as in providing information to beneficiaries, it did not generate a large volume of calls, as was expected. The volume of calls depended on a number of factors, but mostly on the motivation of residents of these two provinces. As the political climate changes, so do citizens' attitudes towards their local governments. Thus a changing political atmosphere and mood may have affected the public's motivation to call in about social programs in their province in unpredictable ways. Also, citizens would have had to feel that they were not getting the proper services, and needed to have the information and number on hand to call the Contact Center.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Although the project did not motivate large sectors of the population or have quantifiable results within the provincial governments, it was able to generate interest among certain groups within these provinces and within Buenos Aires. Most notable of these groups were the university students, who were able to incorporate the project into their studies and degree requirements, and who expressed being motivated to continue this type of work as a result of the project. Also notable were the CSOs who found new ways to use their expertise to effect changes in the provincial government.

El Otro worked with provincial governments, but only to share the results of the research and to collect information on the social programs. The project would have benefited from greater collaboration with government. The CSO collaborators did lobby the government for information, but most of their findings came from citizen testimonials and experiences from the university students' research. As a result, El Otro

functioned as a supplier of information for certain governmental institutions that could in turn use this information to make their own work more efficient. This was a creative strategy, a useful service, and an important role for CSOs to play in advancing PTB, but it fell short of leveraging government resources and information for its greatest impact.

PUBLICATIONS

- "Citizen Monitoring of the Displaced Households Pilot Plan"

- www.prociudadaniasocial.org.ar

**all publications are in Spanish*

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Nicaragua *Fundemos*



“For the first time in the history of the municipality, we have a budget where the people can put forward all their needs. A democratic process is becoming consolidated because of this work.”

—PARTICIPANT IN BOACO

Lead organization profile: Grupo Fundemos’ mission is to promote democratic and participatory governance at both the local and national levels in Nicaragua. Its programs focus on two key themes: increasing state legitimacy and developing a strong civil society. Fundemos works to modernize political parties by encouraging new leadership and promoting democratic responses to public problems by strengthening commitment to solidarity and justice.

Collaborating organization: Asociación para la Promoción y el Desarrollo Integral Comunitario (ASPRODIC)

Project location: Boaco

Project title: Participatory Budgeting in Boaco

Other partners: Policía Nacional; Red MINSA; Municipio de Boaco; Profamilia; Cooperativa de Carga Pesada (COMADU); Cooperativa de Buses (COTRABU); Movimiento Comunal; Cooperativa de Taxis; Casa Boy; Asociación de Apicultores (APIBO); Movimiento Luis Alfonso Velásquez Flores (MILAVF); Fundación Solidez; Comisaría de la Mujer; Biblioteca Pública Fernando Buitrag; Red de Jóvenes; INPRU; Partido Conservador; Núcleos Educativos Rurales; Instituto Aura Sotelo; Instituto Nacional Autónomo de Boaco; Colegio Rubén Darío; Colegio Emilio Sovalvarro; Universidad UCAN; Cruz Roja; Instituto de Desarrollo Rural (IDR); Ministerio de Gobernación; Ministerio de Educación; MAGFOR; Administración de Rentas; Mi Familia; Ministerio de Salud (MINSA); Alianza por la República (APRE); Colegio Jordan; Fundación José Nebroski; Cuerpo de Bomberos; Asociación para el Desarrollo Municipal; Desafíos; Asociación de Ganaderos (ASOGABO); Cooperativa San Felipe; COCABO; and Ayuda en Acción.



THROUGH THE TRANSPARENCY PROGRAM'S PROJECTS, OVER 7,600 CITIZENS VOTED ON HOW TO PRIORITIZE PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROJECTS.

CONTEXT

In 2003, Nicaragua began a process of decentralizing the National System of Public Investment. The country also recently passed the law of “Municipal Transfers,” which requires an annually increasing portion of the national budget (starting at four percent) to be transferred to municipal governments. Both of these actions have provided momentum and a sense of urgency to the decentralization process and to initiatives that support transparency and participation at the local level. As a result, Nicaraguan CSOs are facing the challenge of helping municipalities manage budgets and increase participation and transparency, while overcoming the skepticism of a citizenry that views local government as corrupt and poorly managed.

Participatory budgeting is a new concept in Nicaragua, so Fundemos and ASPRODIC, along with the mayor of the municipality of Boaco, developed a project to implement the core elements of the PTB processes. Fundemos and its partners sought to incorporate citizens into municipal planning and decision-

making by fomenting civic activism in the development, execution, and monitoring of the local budget.

Fundemos strengthened the ability of diverse sectors of Boaco to define priorities for public spending through a participatory process that involved the Local Development Committee (CDM—*Comité de Desarrollo Municipal*), which meets regularly with groups of local volunteers to discuss public budgets, and which is formally recognized by the local government. Although Fundemos had worked with the CDM for three years before this project, the CDM had no experience with public budgeting or PTB. Fundemos therefore sought to train citizens in PTB, bolster citizen interest and trust in PTB processes, as well as in the CDM and other civic groups involved in the project, while also increasing citizen involvement in local government in general.

OBJECTIVES

In an effort to increase participation in public budgeting in Boaco, Fundemos and its partners sought to educate

citizens and CSOs on the phases of the local budgeting process. Community leaders worked with civic groups to define community priorities. Organizers of the project also set a goal of providing the citizenry with access to regular information on development projects funded by the local budget. Finally, Fundemos and its partners sought to have municipal government make the execution of the budget more transparent and accountable.

APPROACH

Fundemos began by holding workshops in 29 rural communities. The workshops were broken into geographic zones or specific policy issues (such as health workers or transportation workers). Participants were given information on the budgetary process and then engaged in discussions to identify public needs to be addressed through municipal projects.

After each group identified potential projects, Fundemos helped the groups prioritize those projects by identifying the most pressing concerns. The staff used a deliberative process to help

the groups achieve consensus. After the workshops were held and priorities established, Fundemos facilitated the development of a working group for each priority.

Fundemos and ASPRODIC then continued to build public awareness of budgetary processes through public workshops, TV and radio advertisements, and truck-mounted loudspeakers. These advertisements announced when and where public consultations would be held with the local government and provided other general information to the citizenry.

In the public consultations, organizers presented information about public resources and municipal spending. The working groups also presented the needs they had prioritized with Fundemos as well as projects to address these needs. The public then had the opportunity to vote on projects for implementation in cooperation with the municipal government. To provide oversight, Fundemos also helped the community create two committees to monitor the projects as they were implemented.

In all of these efforts, Fundemos worked closely with the CDM, which served as a kind of liaison between the community and the municipal government. Fundemos worked to improve the relations between the CDM and the government so that the CDM could continue to lobby for PTB processes, and to give the CDM the necessary resources to filter demands from the community.

RESULTS

Overall, nearly 1,650 people participated in the Fundemos initiative. Their activities included selecting and prioritizing budget projects and/or lobbying the municipal government for inclusion of those projects in the budget. Of these citizens, almost 1,200 received training. The project also worked with traditionally excluded groups. For instance, of the 1,650 participants, 55 percent were women.

The project successfully navigated a change in municipal leadership. Elections midway through the project resulted in a new administration. Despite a delay, the project secured an agreement from the new mayor to continue working with the CDM.

The municipal budget of Boaco incorporated two projects based on the priorities defined in the workshops and developed by the communities. The Fundemos project also resulted in the formation of two civic groups to provide follow-up and oversight of these two projects. Furthermore, the CDM of Boaco is prepared to provide input on upcoming budgets and lobby for its priorities. Most important is the now-solid working relationship between the municipal government and the CDM, which Fundemos helped to improve.

“Before, we didn’t know about the use of those funds and, as a result, the mayor’s office could do what it wanted, but not now.... Now we are ‘in the thick of it’ as they say.”



YOUTH PARTICIPANTS PLAYED AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE TRANSPARENCY PROGRAM'S PROJECTS, WITH YOUTH REPRESENTING 25 PERCENT OF THE PARTICIPANTS WHO ATTENDED PUBLIC EVENTS AND 24 PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS AT TRAININGS.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

A change in municipal leadership demonstrated the importance of advocacy in the Fundemos project. Because participatory budgeting was not an established practice in Boaco, Fundemos and citizens held meetings with the newly elected mayor and vice mayor in order to ensure continuation of the projects and to secure future cooperation. Community representatives then signed a formalized agreement with the new government whereby the latter agreed to continue financing the budget projects that had been selected by the community and given initial approval by the previous administration.

In addition to securing political support from public officials, challenges in implementing the project included getting citizens interested in PTB processes. The trainings turned out to be essential in this respect, because they raised awareness and gave citizens practical knowledge about how to address long-standing public concerns. Many participants said that the

trainings increased their knowledge of how to participate, particularly in getting issues on the agenda.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

In boosting participation and knowledge of public budgeting, Fundemos worked with a number of stakeholders (local government, existing CSOs, and loosely formed and sometimes new civic groups), which required different strategies. Fundemos' strategy for engaging citizens and civil society was effective because of its focus on different levels of policy concerns. The project included municipal-wide policy issues (such as education and health) as well as the more parochial concerns of neighborhoods. This diversity encouraged interest in many PTB mechanisms from citizens motivated by different issues. Some citizens focused on services and infrastructure in their local community, and others felt that the municipal budget did not address social services on a broader level.

Project organizers worked closely with the CDM, which consists of citizen volunteers who work as liaisons between

citizens and the municipal governments. CDM was strengthened as a result of the project as evidenced by its increased standing and legitimacy in the community and its clearer sense of purpose. One CDM leader commented: "We as directors have learned a lot from this project. We now have the opportunity to participate in the allocation of the funds that come to the mayor's office. Before, we didn't know about the use of those funds and, as a result, the mayor's office could do what it wanted, but not now. Now we participate in the designation of funds and we monitor where they go, and if they arrive in our community as we requested. Now we are 'in the thick of it' as they say. That is a major achievement."

The project did not implement PB as much as it demonstrated to citizens the virtues of PTB. Essentially Fundemos put mechanisms of PTB into practice with the support of CSOs and civic groups, rather than waiting for the municipal government to formalize the process. One member of the CDM reported: "This process...of participatory budgeting is like showing people

“This is a long-term educational process of changing citizens’ perspectives, so they are not so...passive, and of changing authorities’ perspectives, so that they open up and share and are not alone responsible...”

the way, because it's a way of saying to them, this is what they have to do to bring attention to the most important needs they have in their communities. But it's a process, so it's not something that will happen overnight."

Citizens' understanding of this lesson makes Fundemos' project successful in its goal to instill PTB practices in the existing community structures (such as the CDM) and in the minds of citizens. Another CDM member explained how citizens have changed their attitudes: "[Now] they demand more, because they know they have the right. And I think that this came out of the public budgeting.... As a result, the local government has to accommodate that."

The changes in attitudes suggest the project will be sustainable, but that depends on the PTB trainings continuing and both government officials and citizens becoming more involved in PTB activities. One participant noted, "This is a long-term educational process of changing citizens' perspectives, so they are not so...passive, and changing

authorities' perspectives so they open up and share and are not alone responsible for administration.... To synthesize, it seems to me that the solution for future sustainability is education."

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Argentina CIPPEC



“[The trainings on the public budgeting process] were highly useful because the average citizen does not know where the money comes from and is totally disconnected from where the funds to finance any project come from, so he or she is always at the mercy or discretion of a ‘good mood’ or a ‘positive impression’.... So this information is like basic training for citizenship.”

—PARTICIPANT IN PUBLIC
TRAINING IN MISIONES

Lead organization profile: The mission of CIPPEC (*Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento*) is to create a more just, democratic, and efficient state that works to improve the lives of the Argentine population. To achieve this, CIPPEC analyzes public policies to improve the accessibility and the quality of social services, and to strengthen fundamental democratic institutions for development in the areas of education, health, justice, budget allocation, transparency, political institutions, and local public policy.

Collaborating organizations: FIECE, Fundación del Tucumán, FAVIM, Participación Ciudadana, Grupo Sophia, La Usina, Foro Social, and Fundar.

Project location: Provinces of Buenos Aires, Tucumán, Tierra del Fuego, Misiones, and Mendoza

Project title: Establishing a Citizen Budget Monitoring System

Other partners: Grupo Ecologista Cuña Pirú de Aristóbulo del Valle; Centro de Especialización y Aplicación del Trabajo Social (CEATS);

Parroquia San Antonio; Asociación Civil Esfuerzo Misionero; Trabajo Fuerte; Misiones Crece; Comisión Diocesana Justicia y Paz; Asociación Misionera de Ciegos y Ambliopes (AMACA); Asociación Civil Servir; Jóvenes, Adolescentes Comprometidos y Activos (JOACyA); Asociación Amigos Contra la Discriminación (INADI); Caritas; Asociación Redes Nueva Frontera; OIKOS; Red Ambiental; Grupo Agora; Asociación de Promotores de Salud de Guaymallén; Alianza Mutualismo Americano; Parroquia Inmaculada Concepción del Tucumán; Pro-Eco Grupo Ecologista; Centro Ambiental Argentino Cambiar; Centro Atahualpa; FEDES; UNT; Fundación Fuentes; Fundación Juana Zurita; APAIM; Unión Tucumana de Ciegos; ANDHES; Centro Comunitario Santo Domingo; Centro Comunitario Ana Zumarán; Monitor Social; Fundación Humanitas et Sapientia; Centro Sargento Cabral; Eco-Vida; Defensa del Usuario; Fundación Cardiológico; Cottolengo Don Orione; Red de Asociación Civil de Tucumán; Fundación Conservar la Naturaleza; Club Villa Montoso; Por un Barrio Mejor; Caritas La Plata; Madres Solidarias; Centro Vecinal; Fundación Principios; Finis Térrea; FundaPyme; Asociación Civil Barrio Los Morros; Asociación Profesional Hospital Regional de Ushuaia (APHRU); Grupo Violencia Familiar; and Red contra la Impunidad.



TRAININGS WERE AN IMPORTANT PART OF ALL THE PROJECTS. ALMOST 6,500 CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS RECEIVED TRAINING OVER THE COURSE OF THE TRANSPARENCY PROGRAM'S YEAR-LONG OPERATION.

CONTEXT

Although the three levels of government in Argentina—national, provincial, and local—allocate resources for social programs, the funds assigned by the provincial governments make up the majority of social program spending. There is a shortage of public budgetary information, which compounds the fact that few CSOs monitor the allocation of resources within the provincial budgets. Given the lack of transparency, it is often difficult to determine if those funds are reaching the intended recipients or achieving the desired results. CIPPEC (*Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento*) recognized the need not only to provide greater public access to information on budget development and implementation, but also to analyze the provincial budget.

CIPPEC worked in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Tucumán, Tierra del Fuego, Misiones, and Mendoza to increase access to information about and understanding of the provincial budgets. Working in five provinces exposed CIPPEC to a range of local political

cultures, but lack of governmental openness and mechanisms for provincial governments to regularly report information to the public were common to all. “Corporatist” traditions, in which governments work primarily with special interest groups and not with the general public, dominated. To begin to change these preferential practices, CIPPEC promoted greater citizen participation in monitoring the allocation of resources designated for social services, particularly for the important issue of education.

CIPPEC confronted engrained government practices that presented challenges to PTB. Access to government information about the process and results of public budgeting was limited and unreliable. Because CIPPEC’s project focused on provincial budgets, which depend on federal allocations, poor communication between the national and provincial levels of government further impeded access to timely and accurate information. Project participants regularly reported on their frustrated attempts to obtain information from public officials. This inability to access

information contributed to citizens’ general lack of understanding of public budgeting processes prior to the project.

OBJECTIVES

CIPPEC designed this project to increase transparency in the use of public resources and to increase citizen participation in provincial decision-making related to the budget. The project encouraged citizens and local CSOs to solicit information about the provincial budget and use that information to exert more influence on future budget development and implementation. Though CIPPEC analyzed the entire provincial budget in each of the five locations, it focused specifically on the expenditure of education monies, an area likely to generate the most citizen interest. In addition, having a specific policy focus would enable the project to more easily demonstrate impact.

APPROACH

CIPPEC devised various strategies to increase access to information on the provincial budget, inform citizens on budget development and implementation, and promote a network of actors

working on budget issues within the provinces. CIPPEC collaborated with local CSOs, working with a partner in each province to oversee day-to-day activities. Although the local partners did not necessarily have prior experience in budget work, they had the capacity to coordinate project activities and to contribute their network of contacts within the community.

Throughout the course of the project, CIPPEC worked with these organizations to hold a series of workshops, collaborated with other civil society groups to share and obtain information, and lobbied the local and provincial governments for public budget information. The intent was to develop the capacity of the local partners to monitor the budget and lobby for greater transparency without the assistance of CIPPEC.

The workshops involved citizens, CSOs, and disadvantaged groups, and focused on provincial budget and budget advocacy. Participants formed working groups on health, security, the environment, education, persons with

disabilities, and other beneficiaries of social funds. The participants learned to advocate for greater consideration of their input in the provincial budgeting process and to monitor the implementation of social services. In addition, CIPPEC held specialized trainings on the education budget in each of the five provinces, bringing together different stakeholders in public education.

The working groups that formed as a result of these trainings and with the guidance of CIPPEC and collaborating partners also developed projects for inclusion in the provincial budget. The idea behind this step was to assist local groups in moving from *protesta* to *propuesta* (from protest to proposal), or help them come up with solutions to local needs instead of just demanding better services. Working groups developed their own projects focusing on aspects of the education budget, or on new topics such as HIV and public security. Trainings enabled these groups to better understand the budget and its components and to know how to lobby the government to consider their input and proposals.

In addition, CIPPEC produced a series of reports to accompany the trainings and to distribute to larger audiences, including local public officials, the media, and CSOs. Collaborating organizations and local partners worked with CIPPEC to collect information from the provincial governments, resulting in reports on budget execution, the education budget, and the National Budget Law. These reports were used to fuel public debate on the budget among citizens, CSOs, and local government institutions responsible for budget development and expenditures.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

CIPPEC's project led to the creation of a network of local CSOs with the training and experience to conduct analyses and share information on the provincial budget. These local partners have developed capacities that will enable them to continue to work as leaders in this area. For instance, CIPPEC trained 82 trainers and consultants to continue project activities after the project's end.

Most notably, the project transferred tools and information to citizens, CSOs,



CITIZENS, WORKING WITH CSOS, CONTRIBUTED TO ADVOCACY EFFORTS BY PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC MEETINGS, HOLDING CONSULTATIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES, AND PRESENTING MONITORING REPORTS.

and local officials that enable them to access and understand the provincial budget. Through 29 workshops and five public meetings, CIPPEC reached almost 400 people, the majority of them women and 41 of them youth. At least 42 public officials attended CIPPEC events.

In the process of bringing groups together to prepare for and host workshops in five provinces, CIPPEC sparked the creation of 23 councils and issue-based working groups that decided to work together to advocate for greater participation in the provision of social service resources. Although not every group was able to develop a project, many designed and presented projects to the provincial government for consideration in the upcoming budget.

CIPPEC's project achieved public awareness and some degree of institutional recognition. As an example of this, the government of Misiones declared the project "of interest," and in Mendoza legislators used CIPPEC's reports as references during their budget deliberations. The media also expressed interest,

and 75 articles on the project were published by local and national news services throughout the year.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

For PTB processes to work, citizens need clear and digestible information on public programs, their financing sources, what spending choices were made, and how their budgets will be implemented. For citizens to sift through that information and make sense of it, the information must matter to them. CIPPEC reasoned that public education would be a good policy area to begin working on because it is an important resource that nearly all Argentines have exposure to. Furthermore, the education budget comprises 30 percent of most provincial budgets, which makes it significant. For these reasons, CIPPEC selected public education as a topic that would generate interest and buy-in and be applicable to other provinces so the process could be replicated if successful.

CIPPEC approached its PTB project with an emphasis on transparency and

monitoring, but also by giving it a policy-specific focus. Though the proposed plan was ambitious and expansive, the planners believed that they could draw on their expertise in national-level budget monitoring to forge collaborative efforts in five regions. While CIPPEC and their collaborating partners were able to collect information from the provincial government, this process was a constant struggle. The impact would have been even greater had the various branches of government been more forthcoming with detailed, consistent, and reliable data.

CIPPEC realized while implementing the project that citizens and CSOs recognized the need for budget information and were interested in the budget process. Therefore, CIPPEC aimed to use the information to leverage citizen participation by developing advocacy strategies in its workshops and including strategies for citizen participation in each of its provincial reports.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

Through evaluating the process and results of creating a network of local organizations working on the same issues across

provinces, CIPPEC found that without CIPPEC staff facilitating communication, these groups were not likely to maintain consistent contact. That finding raised questions about sustainability.

In evaluating the progress of the project, CIPPEC drew other conclusions consistent with its experience managing the five sites. For one, the capacity of the partnering organizations, and their ability to work together, was decisive. While some partners, such as the Fundación del Tucumán, were well known in their provinces prior to the project, others were not. CIPPEC worked closely with collaborating partners to transfer the skills and methodologies necessary to implement the project. This was a long process, but CIPPEC saw it as a necessary and ongoing part of the project’s success.

CIPPEC worked in five provinces that were spread across the country. This created a range of experiences—some more successful than others, and for various reasons. CIPPEC’s work in Tierra del Fuego was very successful, though it was the project farthest away from

the central CIPPEC office. One of the factors cited by CIPPEC staff for that success was the province’s local political culture, which engendered more citizen activism—activism that bore a streak of rebelliousness tied to Tierra del Fuego’s history. One lesson, then, was that habits of cooperation and compromise are not the only political traits that matter; the will to challenge authority might also serve as a motivating factor in PTB work.

CIPPEC’s project in Buenos Aires was less successful mostly because mobilizing civic activism was difficult. CIPPEC reasoned that citizens, living in the seat of federal government, saw many budget issues as national and not provincial issues. In the end CIPPEC concluded that the conditions were not right for implementation of this project there. CIPPEC originally selected Buenos Aires because of its proximity to its own headquarters, but drew the lesson that proximity did not necessarily make for the best project.

CIPPEC held a final meeting with its collaborating partners in Buenos Aires as the project was closing. Participants

discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the project and what they had learned. They also tackled the issue of sustainability by creating a work plan for the next several months, determining the level of commitment each organization could provide, and brainstorming ways to continue activities without further funding.

PUBLICATIONS

- “Advocacy in the Budgetary Process”
 - “The Education Budget in the Provinces”
 - Report on the Execution of the Budget
 - Report on Budget Bill
 - Report on Provincial Budgets
 - Report on Provincial Education Budget
 - www.lupafiscalprovincial.org
- *all publications are in Spanish*

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Case Studies: Participation and Capacity-Building

Colombia *Acción Ciudadana*



Transparency Colombia ranked the Department of Boyacá as the second department in Colombia least vulnerable to corruption in 2005. This was an advance from 2004 when Boyacá was ranked 32nd.

Lead organization profile: AC-Colombia (*Corporación Acción Ciudadana*) works throughout Colombia creating strategies to promote active citizen participation and social cooperation, cohesion, and good governance. These strategies include institution building, training, and the promotion of new information technologies. In particular, AC-Colombia has focused on supporting the active participation of youth in public management and transparency.

Collaborating organizations: Programa Presidencial Colombia Joven; Procuraduría General de la Nación; Gobernación del Tolima; Gobernación de Boyacá; Secretaría de Salud Municipal; Secretaría de Apoyo a la Gestión, Asuntos de la Juventud; Personería Municipal de Ibagué; Cámara Júnior de Colombia, Capítulo Pijao de Oro; Fundación Vive; Asociación Semillas del Futuro; Fundación Pucura; Asociación Desafío; Asociación Juvenil de Ibagué; Fundación Proyecto Actuemos sin Violencia; and Arquidiócesis de Ibagué.

Project location: The city of Ibagué, in Tolima and the department of Boyacá

Project title: Institutional Action and Youth Social Monitoring in the Allocation of Public Health Resources

Other partners: Programa Presidencial de Lucha Contra la Corrupción; Congreso de la República de Colombia—Comisión Séptima; Contraloría General de la República—Gerencia departamental del Tolima; Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar—Regional Tolima; Procuraduría General de la Nación—Delegada de Familia Casa de Justicia de Ibagué; Defensoría del Pueblo; Hospital Federico Lleras Acosta de Ibagué; Instituto Departamental de Salud de Boyacá; Contraloría Departamental de Boyacá; Instituto Seccional de Salud de Boyacá; Fondo Mixto de Cultura de Boyacá; Procuraduría Departamental; Contraloría Departamental; and the Municipalities of Ibagué, Belén, Chiquinquirá, Chiscas, Duitama, Garagoa, Guateque, Miraflores, Moniquirá, Ramiriquí, Samacá, Socha, Sogamoso, Tipacoque, Puerto Boyacá, and Tunja.



BESIDES THE ORIGINAL COLLABORATING PARTNERS, AN ADDITIONAL 341 CSOS JOINED THE TRANSPARENCY PROGRAM'S PROJECTS BY PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES. SIXTY-FIVE FORMAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED BETWEEN LEAD ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER CSOS.

CONTEXT

Colombia's system of health subsidies (RSS—*Régimen Subsidiado en Salud*) which is for its most vulnerable citizens has a history of misuse and mismanagement. Due to a lack of training for federal and local employees, weak institutional capacity, political manipulation, and beneficiaries' lack of access to information, health subsidies do not always reach the populations they are intended to help. The limited health cards also frequently go unused because they technically belong to citizens who have moved out of the eligible jurisdiction or who are deceased. As a result, many of the neediest do not receive cards and therefore do not receive benefits. In addition, many are actually unaware of the program, and those who are aware are skeptical that the program can actually deliver the benefits promised.

In order to engage citizens in the issue of health subsidies, AC-Colombia set out to increase transparency and public knowledge of the health subsidy allocations and to involve citizens directly in oversight of that aspect of the public

budget. It did this by partnering with Colombia Joven, a federal program mandated by the president that works to incorporate youth participation and concerns into public policy, and by involving local CSOs and youth organizations in collective activities. Local youth worked with community members and local governmental institutions to find inconsistencies in the distribution of the health subsidy and redistribute misallocated resources.

The project was based in 15 municipalities in Boyacá (a "department," which is a regional level of government like a state), and in one municipality, Ibagué, which is in the department of Tolima. Although most of the municipalities are within the same department, different challenges arose due to their different locations and political cultures. Approximately two-thirds of the 16 municipalities were willing to implement the process and receive training. However, another three municipalities, located in the north of Boyacá, were often occupied by guerrilla or paramilitary troops. This reduced the effective presence of the local and

departmental governments, creating difficulties in coordination and limiting citizens' interest in the project. In another two municipalities, citizens were skeptical of participatory mechanisms because previous administrations had manipulated the term and not delivered on their promises.

OBJECTIVES

The project implemented by AC-Colombia was intended to monitor the distribution and management of the health subsidy through the creation of more active and concerned youth organized into "youth monitoring groups." AC-Colombia sought to achieve greater transparency by monitoring the health subsidy, institutionalizing transparent practices in government through the increased and informed activism of local youth, and forming more collaborative relationships between civil society and local government. Additionally, AC-Colombia intended to leave behind a legacy of engaged citizens and socially active youth by giving them a positive experience in leadership and effecting change in local governance.

APPROACH

AC-Colombia's project coordinated the participation of several actors including municipal and departmental governments, local CSOs, youth groups, and other citizens. The project's organizers brought these groups together to work cooperatively to train youth participants, educate the public, and help in investigating inconsistencies in the health subsidy.

AC-Colombia secured the participation of important government entities such as the governor's office in the department of Boyacá, and SISBEN, the government institution that certifies families and individuals as eligible for Colombia's various subsidy programs. AC-Colombia also used CSOs as technical advisors and coordinators in municipal "base teams." The teams were established to provide technical support on the monitoring of the health subsidy and to coordinate the various organizations working on the project. Several meetings were held to organize the base teams with representatives from these CSOs and youth groups, which then coordinated the roles and responsibilities of the various actors.

Citizens and youth also were trained on themes related to the health subsidy and citizen participation. AC-Colombia utilized local media resources, such as radio, television, and print, to distribute information on the health subsidy and to promote community activities related to the project.

The youth participants, largely high school-aged students, were instrumental to the project because, in addition to other activities, they helped educate the general public on the health subsidy program and policies. The youth used their creativity and energy to communicate in ways that were easily understood. For example, youth groups developed artwork, theater performances, poems, and songs that explained the health subsidy programs and the importance of finding and correcting inconsistencies. In one instance, AC-Colombia worked closely with a local rap group, *Son Pijao*, which wrote and performed as well as recorded and distributed informative songs to the public regarding the health subsidy. Such communication strategies made hitherto inaccessible information available to an

often excluded segment of society, while conveying the message in an engaging and easy-to-understand way.

Youth also played a crucial role in that they provided the principal means for collecting and verifying information on the health subsidies. Through partnerships with local youth organizations and with the technical assistance of the base teams, AC-Colombia created youth monitoring groups. These youth groups held community assemblies and made house calls to resolve any discrepancies in the health subsidy program, and to directly confirm that a health subsidy card had expired or become invalid. This process identified waste, fraud, and mistakes in the health subsidies program, so that the funds were subsequently reallocated to needy citizens with first priority given to infants, children, and pregnant mothers.

The youth monitoring groups held two different types of community assemblies. In the first type, the group members publicly read the names of the current beneficiaries of the health



ALMOST 45,000 PUBLICATIONS WERE PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED TO THE PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THESE PRODUCTS INCLUDED REPORTS, NEWSLETTERS, MANUALS, PAMPHLETS, AND BROCHURES.

subsidies. Citizens were then able to confirm their eligibility or call attention to beneficiaries who they believed had moved outside of the district, were deceased, or were ineligible for coverage. The second type of community assembly functioned as an accountability meeting, in which the youth groups presented the discrepancies they had discovered in their research to the community and local government for confirmation. The accountability assemblies also served as a venue for the youth monitoring groups and AC-Colombia to formally present their findings to the local government. Both types of assemblies included the community in assessing the accuracy of the health subsidy list.

AC-Colombia documented the efforts of the youth monitoring groups to share with other municipalities across the country. In Boyacá, AC-Colombia held a departmental meeting with mayors to share the methodology and results in order to encourage the implementation of similar projects. AC-Colombia plans to continue to work with Colombia Joven to use the youth monitoring groups to investigate

discrepancies in other federal subsidy programs, such as education.

RESULTS

As a result of the project, and especially of the labors of the youth monitoring groups, 1,511 health subsidies were reassigned within the 16 municipalities to new beneficiaries meeting the correct requirements. This represents savings equal to US \$131,993. It was accomplished through 142 public events, including the assemblies held by the youth monitoring groups. In the 16 municipalities where the project was implemented, over 12,600 citizens and nearly 550 government officials participated in these events.

The project also appears to have given strength to the process of increasing government transparency. Transparency Colombia, which monitors transparency levels in Colombia, ranked the Department of Boyacá as the second department in Colombia least vulnerable to corruption in 2005. This was an advance from 2004 when Boyacá was ranked 32nd.

The project helped demonstrate the value of youth to the community. Of the 1,000 participants who received training throughout the course of the project, 44 percent were youth. Not only did the youth help correct discrepancies in the health subsidy program, but the training they received and their greater participation in government programs increased their sense of civic responsibility and volunteerism. Moreover, involving the youth in municipal administration increased their interest in public affairs, which AC-Colombia hopes will have a long-term effect.

In addition, the project helped increase and solidify relations between the public and private sectors, increasing not only political will and institutional capacity, but also citizen participation in monitoring and public management. One of the findings of the project is that the active participation and cooperation of all actors is necessary to implement changes toward greater transparency. In total, AC-Colombia worked with more than 80 governmental institutions from the local, regional, and national levels.

It signed formal agreements with 74 of these institutions, which established work plans and cooperation for the duration of the project.

AC-Colombia also cited as a major success agreements with the municipalities of Tipacoque, Chiscas, Sogamoso, Miraflores, and Samacá to apply the project's model to more communities. In addition, the governor of Boyacá was supportive of the project and encouraged other regions within Colombia to replicate the methodology. AC-Colombia counted these, along with the dedication of youth groups, as an indication that the project's activities would be sustained and diffused.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

AC-Colombia found that working with youth facilitated the project's operations in some ways, while presenting challenges in other ways. The youth were energetic and enthusiastic in taking on tasks, and suggested ideas and developed new proposals with relative ease. Because they were eager to transform

their surrounding conditions and their social and political institutions, they assumed an active role in the project. On the other hand, leaders found it difficult to capture and maintain their attention, particularly during discussions on the investment of public resources.

The project involved the formation of a Technical Committee at the national level and a Technical Operations Committee at the local and regional levels. The committees had distinct and clearly defined functions, but the separation of the two committees was unnecessarily formal and not productive in practice. AC-Colombia soon found that dual layers of management did not facilitate the project's functioning.

AC-Colombia and its partners also formed the base teams, which were well-organized and advanced the project's overall implementation. An important contribution of the teams was to identify youth organizations and the forms of cultural expression common to youth (e.g., the way young people in the region communicated colloquially and their

preferred forms of entertainment, such as popular music). The base teams also verified that the neighborhoods were appropriate locations to carry out the project, in terms of their experiences with participation in civil society and the socio-economic conditions of their residents. AC-Colombia noted that it would have been beneficial to complete these steps even before the formation of the base teams, considering the short, one-year duration of the project.

Not only did the youth help correct the discrepancies in the health subsidy program, but the training they received and their greater participation in government programs increased their sense of civic responsibility and volunteerism.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

One of the most important successes was the development of well-articulated projects that linked public institutions and civic organizations. Previously, such collaborations had been rare. The project gave municipal governments and public administrations the practical experience of working directly with CSOs and youth organizations. These experiences demonstrated to participants how cooperating with multiple partners can boost impact and strengthen social cohesion.

The public meetings had an even bigger impact than AC-Colombia had anticipated. The community assemblies held by the youth monitoring groups, where names of the people officially designated to receive the health subsidy were read aloud, were very well received by the public. AC-Colombia concluded that citizens valued these events because they provided a space to discuss the health system's failure to help poor and vulnerable citizens. In addition, the accountability meetings had a positive effect on the public's perception of civil society's ability to work effectively with government,

because it was the first time citizens had ever presented a report on municipal management directly to authorities.

AC-Colombia's methodology was successful for this project, but the possibilities for replicating it are uncertain. There is a great deal of interest in sustaining the project by implementing it in other departments, and the governor of Boyaca has advocated this approach in policy meetings with other governors. Applying the methodology to other programs or in other countries, however, could be more difficult. Of particular concern is the privacy of the individuals on the subsidy lists. AC-Colombia's methodology has no preliminary steps to obtain general consent of the beneficiaries of the health subsidy program prior to announcing their names in public. While this did not become a problem in the Colombian case, it may be more difficult to use the same process in other countries or regions. Finally, with the health subsidy program being quite unique, replicating the AC-Colombia project for other programs would require a subsidy or income transfer program of a similar structure.

PUBLICATIONS

- "Guide for Budget Oversight"
- Promotional Video

**all publications are in Spanish*

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Paraguay *SUMANDO*



“[The neighborhood commission] is only 20 [people], but they talk with other people and carry their knowledge to other neighbors and families, ...doubling or tripling the effect.”

—COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

Lead organization profile: SUMANDO works to create sustainable human development in Paraguay by actively promoting the construction of a “new Paraguay” through education and coordinated action with other private and public actors. SUMANDO seeks to improve the quality of life for Paraguayans through three program areas: The Paraguay Bank of Volunteers, Distance Education, and Community Participation.

Collaborating organization: Transparencia Paraguay, chapter of Transparency International

Project location: Villarrica, Eusebio Ayala, and Caacupé

Project title: Adding Transparency to the Development of Municipal Budgets

Other partners: Comisión de Mujeres de Aquino Cañada, PRODEPA de Yhaca Roysa, Comisión de mujeres San Alberto, Escuela de Agromecánica, Escuela de Suboficiales de la Policía, Instituto de Formación Docente “El Maestro,” Instituto de Formación Docente “Ramón Indalecio Cardozo,” Instituto de Formación Docente de Eusebio Ayala, Comisión Vecinal Tuyucúa, Comisión Vecinal General Bernardino Caballero, Instituto de Formación Docente de Eusebio Ayala, Instituto de Formación Docente “Ramón Indalecio Cardozo,” Instituto de Formación Docente CRENT, Instituto de Formación Docente Ética, Comisión Vecinal “Tres Fronteras,” Comisión Vecinal Sor Vicente Méndez, Comisión Vecinal Callejón Yhovy, Centro regional de Educación, Colegio Nacional de Villarrica, Comisión Vecinal El Portal, and Centro Regional de Educación.



INSTEAD OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM LOCAL ACTIVITIES, WOMEN PARTICIPATED AS FREQUENTLY AS MEN IN ALL PROJECTS. FIFTY-FOUR PERCENT OF PEOPLE ATTENDING EVENTS WERE WOMEN, AND 48 PERCENT OF PEOPLE TRAINED WERE WOMEN.

CONTEXT

SUMANDO and Transparencia Paraguay worked with community groups and municipal governments in the municipalities of Villarrica, Eusebio Ayala, and Caacupé to increase understanding of budgetary laws and mechanisms. In communities within the municipality the project sought to increase participation by training students, youth, and neighborhood groups in municipal and budgetary management, while in municipalities it increased awareness of laws and regulations pertaining to transparent resource allocation. Villarrica is the largest of the three municipalities with approximately 55,000 inhabitants, Caacupé the middle with approximately 42,000, and Eusebio Ayala the smallest with 18,000. SUMANDO's executive staff selected the three precisely because of their different sizes and contexts; they reasoned this would give project coordinators greater exposure to a range of challenges and learning opportunities.

In terms of the contextual factors identified as relevant, the three municipalities had significant rural populations, and

great distances exacerbated by poor infrastructure caused some communities to be quite isolated. The local governments received a substantial portion of their budgets from the central government, which supplied municipalities with a portion of the royalties generated by hydroelectric dams. Those distributions, combined with a low rate of local tax collection, meant the cities' financial autonomy was limited. Finally, the local governments had not been able to keep pace with the technical resources and training necessary to modernize public administration.

SUMANDO identified a number of challenges. First and most widespread, it noted a general lack of information and knowledge about public budgets, and about the specific budget-related duties of local authorities, in addition to mechanisms that citizens can use to influence or lobby a municipal government.

Second, SUMANDO noted that the largely rural areas where it worked had long suffered from weak governmental institutions and ineffective administrative systems.

This had crippled the capacity of local governments to function effectively.

Third, some participants were of the opinion that elected officials and public functionaries who reached their positions through patronage and the exchange of favors (even if legal) were likely to resist PTB programs because it would challenge their very job security. Logically, more transparency would reduce the number of rewards that elected officials had to offer political supporters.

Fourth, there was the problem of passivity compounded by political inertia. In the town of Eusebio Ayala in particular, the project encountered a citizenry that was relatively unmotivated to engage the municipal government and a mayor who likewise was not supportive of the project. The project coordinators concluded that a sort of complicity existed between the mayor, who did not enforce local tax collection on properties, and the citizenry, who expected fewer services in return but felt fortunate not to pay the taxes.

Fifth, elements of the Paraguayan political culture impeded progress toward transparency and citizen advocacy. Among the many loosely defined legacies of undemocratic rule is a practice of *amiguismo*. Favoritism (a rough translation of *amiguismo*) can be considered a passive form of corruption that is similar to nepotism in that it bestows perks on friends, allies, or family members, but it also involves turning a blind eye to the strict enforcement of rules and regulations when it involves those same favored groups. SUMANDO staff observed that amiguismo was more common in the less-populous regions.

OBJECTIVES

The project’s primary objectives were social and political—to make public budgeting more open and democratic and to involve the youth groups and the relatively poor, rural neighborhood groups, which are often excluded from public decision-making. To do so, SUMANDO organized and trained both the youth and neighborhood groups to influence the municipal budget. The project also trained local public functionaries in the technical components of municipal budgeting.

SUMANDO also had the complementary objective of increasing general knowledge of the municipal budgeting processes. Ultimately, SUMANDO wanted to improve municipal administration by incorporating a more participatory and better informed citizenry. SUMANDO sees helping citizens understand and appreciate the importance of exerting social control over municipal management as a long-term goal.

APPROACH

SUMANDO and Transparencia Paraguay coordinated the project using two different strategies: SUMANDO concentrated on training citizens and supplying them with needed information to participate in the budget process, while Transparencia Paraguay worked with municipalities to train government officials and help local governments understand and assess their own transparency mechanisms. In this sense, the overall approach was one of capacity-building and boosting participation through attention to particular groups.

Interviewer’s Question:

“I am curious to know if after having formed this commission, if other people in the community developed more interest in what you all are doing?”

Participant’s Answer:

“There are lots of people who realize that the important thing is to get organized, and that they can do this, and they can achieve lots of benefits by having an organization.”



OVER 150 RADIO PROGRAMS
AND 19 TELEVISION SPOTS
AIRED DURING THE PRO-
GRAM, REACHING A TOTAL
AUDIENCE ESTIMATED AT
MORE THAN 300,000.

SUMANDO developed and implemented its trainings in a way that allowed for diffusion, flexibility, and decentralization. For its first step SUMANDO collected materials and selected and trained a group of community organizers (*agentes multiplicadores*), or staff members whose main purpose was to work in dispersed locations, organizing groups of citizens and replicating trainings that SUMANDO provided. All of the organizers were members of the community where they worked. This method guaranteed

“Now the town—this community—knows what the municipal council ought to be doing; it knows what the mayor ought to do; it knows what its own obligation is—that it has to get organized, in commissions such as this, so that they can keep working with the municipality.”

that organizers had a prior relationship with citizens, that they would be available to the citizens throughout the training, and that they would remain a local resource for the community once the trainings were complete.

Although SUMANDO originally designed trainings that would focus solely on high school students, it quickly recognized the value of training older youth and adults. In total, SUMANDO trained six groups in each of the three municipalities: two groups of high school students, students studying for their teaching degrees, and neighborhood commissions made up of local citizens. Each group received six trainings over three months, consisting of two-hour trainings every two weeks.

These groups learned how to develop projects—that is, specific budget proposals for how the municipality should allocate money—based on local needs, and they were taught about the functions of local government and the mechanics of the budget. The groups also were given ongoing assistance in how and when to present these proposals to the

municipal government for consideration. SUMANDO and the community organizers supported these groups by attending public meetings with municipal authorities, developing projects, and presenting them to the municipalities.

Concurrently, Transparencia Paraguay held trainings with local government officials in each of the three municipalities. Of the officials who participated in the trainings, most worked with the budget or with a department that was heavily involved in budget execution. These trainings provided information on budget expenditures, as well as on their duties and responsibilities as municipal representatives. The trainers responded to questions and the need for information from officials concerning particular laws, public contracting, and expenditure regulations.

In addition, Transparencia Paraguay developed “risk maps” for each municipality, based on the model developed by Transparency International. The risk map, as a tool, essentially evaluates and ranks reported levels of transparency and

corruption in different areas of public affairs and municipal management. Public officials who attended the trainings helped Transparencia Paraguay by completing anonymous surveys that were analyzed to assess cities’ vulnerability to corruption. These findings were shared so that participants could better understand weaknesses, strengths, and their role in building more transparent practices.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Results varied among the three municipalities, but each established a framework for community participation and increasing knowledge within the community and the municipal government. Government officials learned their legal obligations and requirements and were able to constructively analyze institutional functions. A total of three trainings were held in each municipality on a regular basis with municipal officials.

The neighborhood and youth groups that were trained throughout the project not only increased their knowledge of municipal management and budgetary

matters, but also improved their ability to organize and make collective decisions. They strengthened and created new relationships with municipal authorities and learned how to develop and present projects within their communities. A total of 866 people participated in trainings, of which 668 were youth. Groups from the three municipalities developed a total of five project proposals for consideration by municipal governments. In Villarrica, some elements of these projects are now being implemented.

Another major impact of the project, which is difficult to measure, is the sustained sense of efficacy, the importance of collective action, and in particular the utility in having active social organizations. In a site visit to Caacupé, a local organizer hired by SUMANDO said in a public meeting: “Now the town—this community—knows what the municipal council ought to be doing; it knows what the mayor ought to do; and the community also knows what its own obligation is—that it has to get organized, in commissions such as this, so that they can keep working with the municipality.”

Another example of this result is the closer relationship between the community and the government, as well as the citizenry’s more active and direct participation in local government. Participants reported having a clearer understanding of why paying taxes was important and having a stronger sense of investment in how public monies were spent. An elderly woman commented that she attended the training workshops because they made her feel “motivated” and that after years of paying taxes on her land, she never was sure how it was used.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

At first, the project had not considered working with neighborhood commissions; the plan was to work with youth. But SUMANDO’s staff later thought to expand the project to include the neighborhood commissions. In short, the positive response from the community indicated to them that there would be synergies and possibilities for generating greater impact. They readjusted their program design to take advantage of this opportunity. The expansion of targeted

participants not only appears to have been successful, but it made economic sense since community organizers in the field had already spent money traveling to these areas and could train more people without incurring many more costs. Expanding the scope of work to engage other under-represented groups (particularly the women who dominated the neighborhood commissions) appeared to amplify the program's impact without significant costs or effort.

Because SUMANDO is located in Asunción and the project operated in rural areas of Villarrica, Eusebio Ayala, and Caacupé, there had to be some degree of decentralization. SUMANDO was affirmed in its approach of selecting community organizers from the rural areas where the project was implemented. Even where they were unknown to start, these individuals won the trust of residents by understanding local conditions (not to mention by communicating in the Guaraní language) and by having an appropriate disposition and cultural sensitivity that would be impossible or time-consuming to teach.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

SUMANDO and the community participants learned that, for a number of reasons, the existence of commissions themselves may matter more in the long run than whether or not their immediate requests were addressed. Not only do organized groups provide continuity and sustainability, they enable the community to identify priorities collectively and communicate their preferences and concerns more effectively and convincingly to the municipal government. One participant reported that she learned that a community should organize itself into neighborhood councils so that, "through these councils, [the community] can channel its requests. ...We are well aware of our many needs, but within these necessities, it is still necessary to determine which are priorities."

A recurring theme in the quest for sustainability, which SUMANDO noted, was that knowledge itself leads to continued participation. In Caacupé, participants reported that now that they understand the mayor's and city

council's responsibilities better, they will continue to "pressure authorities to comply with their obligations."

SUMANDO's original implementation plan did not include developing and presenting projects for inclusion in municipal budgets, but several community groups and youth participants advanced in their cohesion, training, and consensus so that they were able to present actual project proposals. In total, five projects from three municipalities were presented to municipal governments, and Villarrica's municipal government is now implementing elements of some of these projects.

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Ecuador CEPLAES



The training provided to female council members enabled them to lead projects and advance public policies that addressed women's needs and equality.

Lead organization profile: CEPLAES (*Centro de Planificación y Estudios Sociales*) is a pioneer organization in Ecuador, working on social research related to knowledge management in the public and private spheres. CEPLAES' work includes applied research methods, project planning, knowledge sharing, tracking development planning through to implementation, and evaluation. CEPLAES also works with traditionally excluded groups, including a women's cooperative dedicated to women's issues, a youth cooperative, and a network of associations committed to sustainable and equitable human development.

Collaborating organization: Asociación de Mujeres Municipalistas de Manabí (AMUMA)

Project location: Manabí

Project title: Strengthening Democratic Practices in Local Governments in the Province of Manabí

Other partners: Municipalities of Manta, Portoviejo, Chone, and San Vicente; Fundación de Nuevos Horizontes; and Universidad Técnica de Portoviejo.



ADVOCACY WAS A CRUCIAL STEP IN THE APPROACHES OF THE TRANSPARENCY PROGRAM'S PROJECTS. OVER 1,500 CSOS HELPED LEAD AND COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS IN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS.

CONTEXT

The involvement of women in local government is a relatively new phenomenon in Ecuador, which implemented a gender-based quota system for candidates on party lists in 2000. As a result, a growing number of women are joining the ranks of municipal governments, yet often without the same level of government experience and technical training as men. CEPLAES saw working with female municipal council members as an opportunity to transfer new skills and capacities to them, while at the same time endeavoring to increase government efficiency and transparency.

CEPLAES involved female members of municipal councils in the canton (similar to a U.S. county) of Manabí, where the women had formed an association to support policies that advance gender equity (*Asociación de Mujeres Municipalistas de Manabí*—AMUMA). CEPLAES worked with AMUMA members, other council members, public officials, and communities to design and implement projects that address community needs and social problems.

The four municipalities in Manabí where the project operated (Manta, Chone, Portoviejo, and San Vicente) presented special challenges because of their variation in size, level of economic development, lack of transparency and municipal management capacity, and budgetary approach. Chone and San Vicente are small and rural, and have limited, less flexible budgets. Manta and Portoviejo are larger and have more active economies—the former being more dependent on tourism, the latter on industry. The municipalities had a propensity to fund only public works projects and infrastructure development, giving less attention to social needs such as education, public health, small business development, and social justice. Despite a federal law mandating that 15 percent of public budgets be spent on social programs, this is rarely the case.

OBJECTIVES

This project had several objectives. First, it sought to strengthen the social and human capital of female council members in order to expand

participation and integrate women into local government administration. Second, it set out to effect change in local public policies by promoting women's participation. The project specifically aimed to help women develop projects using participatory mechanisms, incorporating gender-sensitive projects and concerns in the public agenda. Third, the project aimed to institutionalize mechanisms of transparency and accountability that would enable civil society to exercise a role in social control.

APPROACH

CEPLAES designed a capacity-building approach to PTB that focused especially on increasing the participation and governing ability of women in government. CEPLAES and AMUMA began by selecting four municipalities in which to implement the project. They then established working groups consisting of female council members, citizens, and CSOs. These groups worked together to identify problems and needs as well as conduct research and policy planning in a way that integrated members of the community.

In each of the four municipalities, social needs related to gender were discussed, and participants selected themes around which to design local projects. In Chone, participants selected sexual health; in Manta, domestic violence; in Portoviejo, micro-credit; and in San Vicente, micro-credit and the development of small businesses related to tourism.

CEPLAES and AMUMA guided the four groups in the process of participatory planning, and provided training that focused on the principles of gender and social equity, participation, transparency, sustainability, and effectiveness. Together with the working groups they carried out strategic analyses of each problem, including causes and effects, and the municipality's comparative advantages in successfully finding solutions.

To begin developing a plan, each of the four groups conducted a baseline study that presented the current situation, listed community resources, and provided a general analysis from which to approach the problem. The project

contracted specialists to help the four working groups in important steps, such as gathering quantitative and qualitative data on their chosen issues. They also worked closely with local civic groups and established CSOs with interest in the selected issues or with experience working with sectors of the population affected by the issues. To complete the planning process, the participants generated policy ideas and proposals for projects that addressed the problems.

Finally, the organizers of working groups identified potential funding sources, within and outside of the municipal budget, to execute these plans. The groups drafted several funding options, and decided on one option to incorporate into their plans. In some cases, the municipal government was not a viable option for these local development projects as municipal governments in Ecuador are struggling to fulfill basic services and needs. Projects therefore looked to international organizations and other alternatives in order to secure the appropriate funding.

The female councilors leading the working groups facilitated contact with the municipal governments, which remained involved in the projects. Through holding large assemblies, the groups also presented the projects to the community and the government. Citizens, the local mayors, and municipal councils each had an opportunity to review the projects and discuss their implementation. In each case, the groups came to an agreement that the projects would benefit the community, and municipal leaders agreed to support implementation of the project in the municipality to the extent that funding limitations would permit.

Throughout the process, CEPLAES offered extensive training in order to build the capacities of female council members and community leaders. In addition, project staff trained a small group of female council members to replicate trainings with other council members throughout the province. CEPLAES also established temporary exchanges, or externships, so that female public officials could work with and learn from neighboring municipalities.



FIVE NEW WEBSITES
DEDICATED TO PTB
AND SPECIFIC PROJ-
ECT ACTIVITIES WERE
CREATED AND MADE
ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE
ALL OVER THE WORLD.

RESULTS

That each of the four municipalities successfully created project plans that focused on a particular need for its community, and that were developed through a collaborative process guided by female council members and CSO leaders, was a major achievement. Each municipality incorporated initiatives that address the needs of women. In doing so, municipalities recognized the role of women and civil society activism in the community and in governance, and learned from the process of research and consultation.

By and large, funding remains the main obstacle to implementing the projects, as local budgets are limited. Despite this, two municipal governments have already decided to incorporate some of the policy recommendations and institute transparency mechanisms. In addition, CEPLAES cited more than 15 towns in Manabí where new ordinances and laws have opened the way for public policies that support women's equality.

The impact on individuals was also significant. Female council members

and community leaders acquired and utilized new skills in municipal development, learning not only from their own projects but also from others' projects. CEPLAES and partner organizations succeeded in training more than 90 council members, all women, and 120 civil society leaders. CEPLAES counted over 270 women attending trainings and workshops. Further, 25 leaders were trained to replicate the trainings among other women and community leaders. CEPLAES noted that the women trained have taken on leadership roles and have been proactive in working on budgets in their municipalities.

The process of outreach was not limited to the women leaders. There were 135 men and 58 youth attending workshops. Moreover, CEPLAES estimates that over 100 public functionaries attended its public events. The project also put CEPLAES in contact for the first time with 58 loosely formed civic groups and more established CSOs. The general public also heard about the projects thanks to a short TV spot and at least seven articles in the independent press.

The process of gender-equitable participatory planning that CEPLAES implemented has received national attention. For example, the National Council on Women (*Consejo Nacional de las Mujeres*—CONAMU), an office of the Presidency, has worked with the project to develop a provincial plan for the prevention of domestic violence. CEPLAES also held a final seminar with a local university to expand the discussion on citizen participation within Manabí. In sum, the lessons learned are being diffused within Manabí and transferred to other provinces as well.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Design and Implementation

In many ways, the process of implementation confirmed for CEPLAES that a holistic approach is essential to introducing PTB and engaging in community development in general. For one, CEPLAES noted that trainings and deliberative decision-making processes were important in areas that had clientelistic traditions. Often such communities do not request anything of authorities, or they present demands without offering solutions, rather than analyze social

problems and create collaborative projects to address their needs. CEPLAES also noted that strengthening the social capital of citizens, especially of women, was extremely important in achieving long-term change. One example of how CEPLAES pressed for this was by seeking permanent training and by directly involving national and international agencies in these smaller communities.

San Vicente has a young population compared to other municipalities in Manabí, and many of the youth got involved in the project from the outset. CEPLAES staff noted that the youth had an invigorating effect on the community. While political culture traditionally has been more passive, the youth became very active in making demands and working with the local government. Having observed the impact of youth activism on the community, CEPLAES focused more attention on the role of youth participation in other cities, where young people came to play an important role as volunteers in the prevention of intra-familial violence and spreading information about sexual health.

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

CEPLAES, like many of the other organizations leading PTB projects, found that working with public officials was challenging. In addition to some reluctance to participate on the part of public officials, the municipalities' lack of technical capacity (in terms of both skills and information management equipment) often impeded progress. CEPLAES suggested that targeted training could improve that working relationship in the future. In particular, it recommended that public administrators be taught tools and techniques that facilitate the budgeting process, such as the formulation of annual operating plans and how to negotiate and collaborate with citizens.

CEPLAES concluded that the project's greatest success came from capacity building. The training provided to female council members enabled them to lead projects and advance public policies that addressed women's needs and equality. CEPLAES also reported that the participatory design of the projects was important to sustainability. While CEPLAES sought to engender

participation on principle, it also became clear that participation created community "buy-in," which led to the formation of citizen support committees that advanced the projects after CEPLAES' activities and support ended.

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Conclusion

“To fight corruption undoubtedly takes idealism. It takes the strength of the ideas; and the capacity to understand that freedom, equality, and solidarity are vital for the existence and the peaceful co-existence of any given society.”

—JORGE EDUARDO LONDOÑO,
GOVERNOR OF BOYACÁ, COLOMBIA

CRUCIAL FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The ten projects presented in this report are more than the sum of their parts. Taken together, the cases bridge the aspirations of participatory and transparent budgeting (PTB) and the practical efforts to make sure these projects achieve results. In reflecting on the promise of PTB to enhance democracy (which was laid out in the introduction) and in reviewing the case studies, certain themes emerge as important to both practitioners and theorists. These themes represent what advocates of PTB projects strive to achieve: transparency, participation, accountability, re-ordered public priorities, deepened democracy, stronger governance, and more efficient government.

Rather than just summarize findings, this concluding section paints the bigger picture of the “Transparency in the Americas” grant program (or simply, the Transparency Program). This section also draws broad lessons by connecting the goals of PTB with the process of implementing it.

INFORMATION

Perhaps the most essential ingredient to helping PTB achieve its promise is information. Full democracy requires that citizens have access to information so that they can make informed choices when they vote and participate in civic affairs. Simply put, PTB improves governance and democracy by giving citizens the information to be better able to choose wisely.

All ten projects excelled in directly increasing the amount of information available to citizens about the local and provincial budgets and budgeting processes. Almost 45,000 publications were printed and distributed to the public and government officials. These included brochures, reports, manuals, booklets, newsletters, and other media. They ranged in themes from participatory budgeting and investigations, to methodologies and best practices. Projects also utilized local and national media outlets to advertise activities, motivate participation, and share and distribute information. Over 150 radio programs and 19 television programs

aired during the course of the program, reaching audiences totaling more than 300,000. Five websites were created explicitly for the projects and PTB. In addition, more than 150 news articles highlighted the projects and their achievements in local, national, and international media outlets. The projects also worked to create better access to public information. For instance, Fundación El Otro and CIPPEC in Argentina lobbied local and regional governments for better and more access to information, and trained citizens and CSOs on how and where to find information.

Information in raw form, such as reports on budget allocations and actual expenditures, does not make for an informed citizenry on its own. In many cases, citizens have to be taught how to make sense of more information. Many of the projects, such as that of SUMANDO in Paraguay, provided detailed workshops for public functionaries to improve their management of information. Most of the grant recipients, such as Fundación Solidaridad in the Dominican Republic, also held trainings for citizens to help

them understand various aspects of the public budgeting process and the budget itself. Almost 6,500 citizens and public officials received direct trainings in topics ranging from citizen participation to local budget laws to advocacy. Of those trained, 48 percent were women, 24 percent were youth, and about four percent were indigenous.

PARTICIPATION INCENTIVES

PTB not only aims to increase citizens' participation in government, but requires that they take advantage of transparency and information. Citizens who understand public budgeting processes are better able to propose and advocate for budget projects that benefit their own communities and interests. Thus, in theory, a principal way PTB processes achieve participation is by providing citizens with an incentive to become engaged. Democracy requires citizens to participate in a variety of ways and usually there is no direct benefit for doing so. For example, a citizen who steps into a polling booth cannot expect that her one vote will be decisive. In that sense, participation is sometimes

called “irrational,” though recognized as essential at the same time. PTB partially solves this dilemma by rewarding active citizens with projects that benefit them and their communities. The experience of the Transparency Program's projects lends some credence to this claim.

Some of the participating towns in the Dominican Republic reported funding public works projects for roads, bridges and lighting to benefit neighborhoods that previously had been overlooked. Municipalities in Peru where the SER project operated reported that local budgets had ceased funding ostentatious projects like redecorations of the main plaza and instead addressed more serious needs.

The Transparency Program mobilized citizens and CSOs and engaged local government, so it was bound to have some effect on public spending priorities. The question is, how much and what type of effect? It is difficult to say with certainty what the long-term impact on public spending will be or what the pre-project priorities were, but the CSOs that led the projects clearly indicated



THE TRANSPARENCY PROGRAM
HELD TWO WORKSHOPS FOR
PROJECT DIRECTORS THAT INCOR-
PORATED TRAINING AND THE
SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES.
THESE WORKSHOPS CREATED
LINKS AMONG CSOS WORKING ON
PTB ACROSS THE AMERICAS.

that priorities in the public budgets were altered to provide real gains for poor and rural people.

DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Many hold out the hope that PTB will enhance democracy and improve governance. Increased participation and information clearly improve the practice of democracy, but for PTB to help consolidate or advance the substantive value of democracy, it must also alter the political culture. As a set of shared beliefs and practices about how government functions and how power operates in society, political culture is not easy to assess, much less to change. Nonetheless, the PTB projects provided some evidence that a democratic political culture at the local level was indeed enhanced. The most encouraging of these indications comes from the altered patterns of participation, new relationships among citizens and government and civil society, and more positive attitudes towards democracy.

Information is empowering, especially when knowledge leads to action or

a change in behavior. The Villarrica neighborhood commission in Paraguay is one example of new action taken by citizens as a result of SUMANDO's work. These citizens developed proposals for projects such as waste treatment and chicken incubators, presented them to the local government, and had two of them incorporated into the municipal budget. Although the citizens had little or no interaction with the government before, they learned the timing and techniques of approaching the government, and lobbied with success. With what they saw as victories for their communities, the citizens decided to strengthen their neighborhood commissions in terms of their personal commitments and by getting municipal recognition. As a result, project staff and citizens reported having a better relationship with local government and a more sanguine view of what could be accomplished through collective efforts.

Other examples worth noting come from the youth groups in Colombia that worked directly with a presidential initiative, Colombia Joven, and with CSOs

to address the problem of inadequate coverage of the public health subsidy program. The youth not only saw themselves as beneficial to the public, but became seen by the community and public officials as a positive force in helping government as well. The vigilance committees in Peru that formed to monitor local budgets worked with the *rondas campesinas* and gave civic groups there a new, more cooperative role in municipal governance. Another example is the COMUDE in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala that organized, lobbied the government, and was encouraged by the mayor's pledge to spend 40 percent of its development budget on projects identified by the COMUDE. These examples show how new, more positive attitudes about democracy were not just taught through educational programs, but were also instilled through activities that altered patterns of participation and behavior.

Because these projects are very recent, it is not possible to see all the behavioral changes that will take place as a result of the work done by the lead organizations and their partners. The examples

above, however, show that the projects created the potential for sustainable changes. Though the question was never directly put to project participants, some of them in Nicaragua, Peru, and the Dominican Republic expressed that they had been inspired to run for public office as a result of the project. Again, it is not clear if these potential new leaders would have emerged without the project, but it does indicate the depth of the change in public attitudes regarding government and participation.

COLLABORATION

Another key element to improving democracy, sustaining those gains, and integrating them into the local political culture is the formation of collaborative relationships between civil society and government, and among CSOs. When civil society and governmental institutions adopt collaborative approaches and practices, cooperation becomes more durable. The projects made clear that political will is essential to putting and keeping PTB mechanisms in place, but it is never a guarantee. And while CSOs demonstrated some ability to

create political will, a more important and lasting contribution of the Transparency Program's projects might be the working relationships that they established with municipal and regional governments. Collaborative efforts between CSOs and government often result in increased mutual trust. Citizens also come to expect that government will treat civil society as a partner. These expectations and relationships may help to expand and sustain PTB in periods and places where political will is weak.

While it seems intuitive that CSOs working in similar areas would collaborate on community development and democratization efforts, this is not always the case. CSOs often perceive themselves more as competitors for funding and donor attention than as partners. The Transparency Program presented here, however, built collaborative relationships among local CSOs, which enabled the organizations to achieve their projects' objectives, as well as to strengthen their individual capacities through the mutual exchange of tools, lessons learned, and technical skills. In overall

“This brings up the importance of Platonic and Aristotelian ideals, which express that the most important fact for democracies—the most important fact for the survival of communities—is the education of their citizens. It is through this continual public culture that we can create true processes of social change.”

—JORGE EDUARDO LONDOÑO,
GOVERNOR OF BOYACÁ, COLOMBIA

program terms, more than 340 CSOs joined the projects with 65 action plans or agreements signed, not including the collaborating partners who joined at the outset of each project. Also, 168 government institutions agreed to participate in the project in some way, as demonstrated with 111 signed agreements. Finally, 108 new civic groups, such as neighborhood commissions, oversight committees, or working groups for certain policies, were formed.



IN SEPTEMBER 2005, REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH OF THE TEN PROJECTS AND FIVE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECTS CONVENED IN WASHINGTON, DC TO PARTICIPATE IN A WELL-ATTENDED PUBLIC EVENT HELD AT THE WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS.

“Participatory mechanisms play a fundamental role ... that has to do with complaining, presenting, and channeling demands to the different government levels—local, regional, and national.”

—NICOLÁS LYNCH, PUBLIC POLICY SCHOLAR, WOODROW WILSON CENTER AND PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF SAN MARCOS

MECHANISMS

There is also a technical dimension of PTB that must be conceptualized and implemented with expertise, or else none of the potential benefits of PTB will be realized. The mechanisms that bring PTB into fruition include basic processes such as how to channel participation and hold votes in local meetings, to more specialized steps such as mapping communities and defining the regional bodies that will send delegates to participatory budgeting committees. There are often additional needs such as passing municipal ordinances to facilitate PTB, laws that require public transparency, and/or providing trainings that give public officials and bureaucrats practical skills.

In terms of the mechanisms that advance and institutionalize PTB, the overall program had results that indicate significant impacts. The projects successfully influenced the creation or modification of 23 laws and ordinances at the local, regional, and national levels. These laws created spaces for PTB processes to function, such as guaranteeing more

and better access to public information, recognizing citizen committees, and establishing guidelines for greater citizen participation.

Some of these new mechanisms were not institutionalized formally, but rather were put into the hands of citizens to sustain. With the help of the lead and collaborating organizations, 108 new civic groups were created to perform functions such as monitoring, lobbying, and project development. Project participants implemented PTB activities using mechanisms they had learned in their trainings. For example, more than 13,500 citizens participated in activities that included voting on prioritized projects, presenting budget information to the public, and holding direct consultation with public officials.

Despite the necessity of informal networks of support, institutionalized mechanisms and accepted practices hold PTB in place with more consistency than political will or public support alone, since the latter factors can wax and wane. Therefore, a focus on PTB

“Municipalities and departments, at least in the case of Colombia, are aware that we must soon transcend the decentralization stage and go forward to a stage that moves us to implicit autonomy as territorial entities.”

—JORGE EDUARDO LONDOÑO, GOVERNOR OF BOYACÁ, COLOMBIA

mechanisms is also a way to address the concern for sustainability of the projects. In order to create long-term results, projects need several years to establish contacts, trust, and familiarity with technical aspects. Since the Transparency Program supplied support only for one year, most of the project participants felt that they could have accomplished more with additional time. Nonetheless, in addition to teaching and institutionalizing many of the PTB mechanisms, a number of the organizations were able to build on their projects' results to leverage additional funding from other sources in order to continue their work.

Though PTB has been linked to many aspirations, this report's introduction cited three main goals of PTB: administrative reform and government efficiency, social justice and fairer allocation of resources, and more active and democratic citizenship. The Transparency Program's projects demonstrated the capacity of PTB to make progress toward all of these ends. PTB is also defined in the introduction as a set of practices that is broader than PB and that includes

efforts to enhance monitoring, transparency, and participation in all stages of public budgeting. Based on that definition, three general types of approaches were identified: those focused primarily on implementing strictly PB practices (*participatory budgeting*), those that improved access to information and that supported monitoring of public budgeting (*transparency and monitoring*), and those that strengthened participation among socially excluded groups (*participation and capacity-building*).

Results varied according to each approach to PTB. This suggests that each approach has its place, depending on the context where it is implemented and the goals of the project. For example, the participatory budgeting projects often revolutionized local government by giving elected officials a way to engage citizens, demonstrate commitment, and win over potential voters. Meanwhile, more citizens came to better understand local budgets, demanded more information—which resulted in greater transparency—and became leaders in their communities. In the *transpar-*

ency and monitoring projects, citizens seemed to become more actively engaged on their own and, through civil society, led government to become more accountable, transparent, and often collaborative. In that sense, the projects took important steps not only towards establishing PTB but also towards making PB feasible. The *participation and capacity-building* projects demonstrated that CSOs can reach out to excluded groups to train and encourage them to become more active players in government, beginning with public budgets.

Irrespective of approach, the PTB projects have generated awareness of and participation in local budgeting processes. Those achievements have improved democratic governance by strengthening the role of citizens and civil society in local government, and by improving the transparency and equity of public budgets.

