

**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND**

Acknowledgments

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Disclaimer

The evaluators are solely responsible for the content of this publication, which in no case can be considered to reflect the views of UNDEF, Transtec, or any other institution and/or individual mentioned in the report.

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This report was written by Luisa María AGUILAR and Isaias BEZERRA de ARAUJO. Landis MacKELLAR, Evaluation Team Leader, provided methodological and editorial input. Aurélie FERREIRA is the Transtec Evaluation Manager and provided quality insurance.

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary

(i) **Project Data**

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled *Promoting Freedom of Information Activism at the Local Level in Brazil*, implemented by ARTICLE 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression, in collaboration with the *Amigos Associados de Ribeirão Bonito* (AMARRIBO) network, from March 1, 2011 to February 28, 2013. The project, which received a four-month extension with a new end date of June 30, 2013, benefited from a UNDEF grant of US\$250,000 to carry out the following activities and objectives.

The aim of the project was *to promote the development of a more inclusive and equitable society facilitated by a free flow of information to the general public to allow individuals, civil servants and civil society groups acting at the local level to hold their government to account, advocate for their rights and entitlements more effectively and influence policy-making processes*. The project was to meet these objectives by fostering local activism on freedom

running; the website to serve as a platform for exchange among the focal points was affected by the subcontract



II. Introduction and development context

(i) *The project and evaluation objectives*

The *Promoting Freedom of Information Activism at the Local Level in Brazil* project was implemented by ARTICLE 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression, in collaboration with the Amigos Associados de Ribeirão Bonito (AMARRIBO) network, from March 1, 2011 to June 30, 2013.¹ UNDEF provided a grant of US\$250,000, \$25,000

A history of Democracy and Repression

- Quilombos (sec. XVII and XVIII). Brazil came to have several hundred quilombo communities in Bahia, Pernambuco, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais, and Alagoas. The Palmares quilombo alone had more than 50,000 residents in 1670, all of whom were killed or captured by the army under the command of Domingos Jorge Velho.
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The persecution, torture, and murder of activists drove Brazilian social movements underground and led them to fight for the confidentiality of information and control of public installations to back their political demands. The fight for democracy thus gave rise to a further ambiguity. The practice of concealing information by privatizing public goods became a tool for both the social movements and the undemocratic oligarchical movements. This situation only began to change with the adoption of the new Constitution of 1988, which introduced two key provisions: the universal right to vote for Brazilians over the age of 16, which caused voter rolls in Brazil to soar from 6 million voters in 1960 to 100 million in 1989 and right



**ARTICLE 19 and AMARRIBO coordination meeting
in São Paulo**

litigation. AMARRIBO has a broad social base and extensive experience (since



IV. Evaluation findings

(i) Relevance

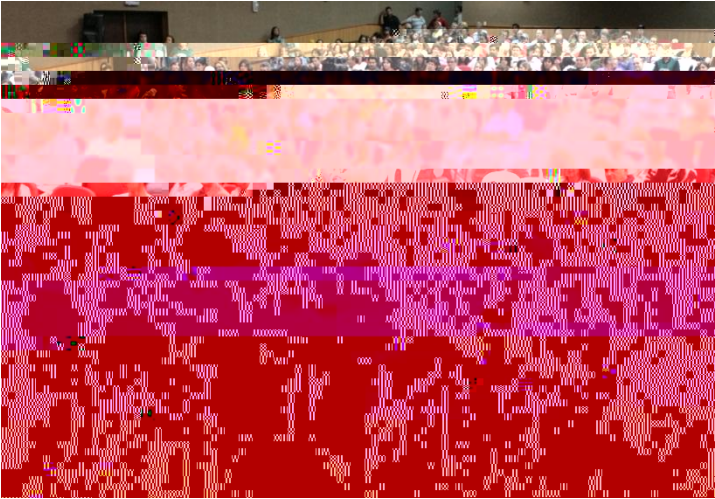
Several highly positive components of relevance were observed in the interviews conducted as part of the evaluation.

In November 2011, Brazil enacted Federal Law No. 12,527, the Access to Public Information Act, which guarantees access to any public document, not just budget documents. The new law complements and improves on Law No. 131 of 2009, the Transparency Act, which guaranteed access to information on budgetary and financial execution. Under Federal Law No.12,527, which took effect in 2012, the Federal District and municipalities must draft specific regulations on access to public information consistent with the general provisions of the law. Each municipal government must therefore establish regulations that guarantee the proper enforcement of the law. Citizen participation is essential to this process.

create local forums for dialogue with municipal authorities is therefore extremely relevant. The project objectives addressed a real need, expressed by the beneficiary groups and confirmed by recent surveys and studies, showing the relevance of the target population and geographic areas selected for project intervention. Data from the Prefecture of São Paulo show that more often than not, it is citizens with more training and skills who are familiar with and benefit from public policies. Roughly 70% of Brazilian citizens involved in requests for access to public information are people with a university education.

These figures confirm the importance of empowering low-income populations that have fewer opportunities to access information and education. To this end, Brazil has created the Participation Program, launched in a

It is very important to monitor
There is great
resistance on the part of the public
up strategic information or lose
their bargaining power.
**Mauricio B, Rede NOSSA São
Paulo, Cidades Sustentáveis
(Sustainable Cities) program.**



Event: Citizens in Development Group, August 2012

25,065 requests for information, 89.97% of which were honored. Municipal governments, in contrast, generally displayed an utter lack of concern about monitoring transparency, and more specifically, about the stipulations of the act in this regard. This was confirmed by another survey, conducted by the Brazilian Association for Investigative Reporting (ABRAJI), which shows that in 133 cities with populations of more than 200,000, only 16 municipal governments responded to a simple request for information.

All this confirms the basic need for processes that promote transparency in public affairs. Access to information is a prerequisite for development programs in all sectors and at all levels. This ambiguity and contradiction in Brazilian democracy provided the framework for the project, demonstrating its relevance in each of the locations where the five focal points were positioned. The stakeholders

The ARTICLE 19 project supported by UNDEF lent credibility to the monitoring conducted by Transparência Cachoeirense. We overcame our fear of reporting misconduct and holding demonstrations.

Statement by the Sélvio Moreira Focal Point.

One of the strong points of the project was its training and information strategy on the importance of transparency for strengthening democracy, social mobilization, and citizen involvement in public affairs. While each focal point tackled the challenges identified in his or her particular context, it was interesting to observe the diverse participatory processes employed by the beneficiary organizations.

The focal points developed contacts and worked with municipal governments, public , tax courts, educational centers, and civil society groups, giving birth to a

widespread movement to fight corruption and the adoption of a wide range of citizen oversight activities. The most impressive experiences were observed in Mandaguari-PR, (ADAMA) and Fortaleza-CE (ACECCI). In Mandaguari-PR, the focal point working out of ADAMA helped create a standing civil society committee to monitor public procurement. It also made possible the election of a competent mayor capable of guaranteeing access to information and citizen oversight of local government activities. ADAMA also



Signature gathering to promote investigations by the

took charge of monitoring the expenditures of the prefecture in Mandaguari, where this citizen oversight led to cost-cutting equivalent to 19% of the 2012 budget (or nearly R\$220,000). This monitoring process demonstrated that municipal cost-cutting is directly related to a higher number of participants in public tendersety)3(Ma)3(nd)-004(en)3 444.41 Tmβ1 1 303

The city of Mandaguari is proud to have ADAMA
Statement by Mandaguari Mayor Romualdo Batista.

Transparência Cachoeirense is now recognized as a citizen oversight entity that files formal requests for public information and serves as a conduit for reports of corruption and misappropriation of public funds.

The project produced many publications and tools to support all these initiatives (see Annex 2). The quality of the materials published, in terms of graphics and the language employed, was excellent – very attractive, with clear and didactic content.

While the project produced some very positive outcomes, the evaluators observed a number of factors that undermined the effectiveness of the intervention. Aware of their limitations, the beneficiary organizations have therefore asked that the strengthening process initiated not to be weakened or interrupted. The focal points have developed contacts with public authorities, above all to ensure that municipal regulations for the Access to Information Act are drafted. The strength of the ties forged varies from state to state and they generally need to be reinforced to increase the capacity for dialogue and advocacy, as well as legal counseling (especially in cases where information requests are not expeditiously honored). Both the AMARRIBO network and the grassroots organizations that comprise the focal points consist largely of volunteers, who need training to handle new situations. In cases of threats and risks, it was found that, in many cases due to a lack of resources, they have often heightened the risks instead of contributing to solutions.

People understood that civil servants in the prefectures do not have it easy. When civil servants are threatened or afraid, they weigh the risks before acting. Sometimes they prefer to protect themselves.

Arthur S., Project Coordinator

Finally, it should be noted that the project experienced major problems getting the informational website and the website of the focal points up and running. These platforms, which were to serve as a catalyst for interaction among focal points and the sharing of information and experiences, suffered serious delays owing to the subcontractor failure to complete the work. The service is now operational, but how it will be kept up to date and who will ensure the preservation of its interactive operating modality are still unclear.

(iii) Efficiency

The social mobilization capacity in the cities where the focal points were positioned and the relevance of the proposed transparency and citizen oversight to strengthening democracy in Brazil are evidence of an efficient ratio between the funds invested and the impacts observed. The project was led by a qualified team known for its expertise and legitimacy in this field. ARTICLE 19 is an international NGO with an office in Brazil and ample international experience in the defense of freedom of expression and access to information, the drafting of sophisticated regulations governing these matters, and the implementation of national legal systems.



Meeting with Prefect Romualdo B., Mandaguari

While ARTICLE 19 acknowledged that it would have been administratively simpler for the office in Brazil, rather than headquarters in the United Kingdom, to have coordinated the project directly, it explained that when the project proposal was submitted to UNDEF, the office had not legally been in existence long enough to participate in the tender. Today,



We encountered real problems with local accounting procedures, the submission of receipts, etc. so much so that that we once contacted a local organization to request receipts to verify

do you want me to do? Fabricate a receipt?" We realized that even if some people

At ARTICLE 19 SP central coordinating office, these local problems impeded project implementation. This was one of the reasons for requesting the four-month extension to give local processes time to get under way. Another factor affecting achievement of the milestones was the construction of the project and C websites. The company that was initially hired claimed to have a problem with a virus that could not be fixed. In light of this situation and to prevent further delays, ARTICLE 19 was forced to hire another company, which generated additional costs that UNDEF agreed to cover, approving a budget amendment. This problem, however, primarily affected project implementation, especially information exchange and the strengthening of communication skills within the network. Although the Service Center was eventually set up, the beneficiaries did not have time to integrate its use into their organizational practices. In order to ensure greater efficiency in this regard, the beneficiaries will need to take advantage of the documentation and tools provided and forge relationships with other public and civil society entities.

While many of the problems observed are inherent to the context, they call into question the relevance of the risk and corrective measures analysis conducted in the project design phase. Compounding the problems already mentioned is the need to meet the demands of the beneficiary organizations, provide protection for activists, lems N3D3S5AVEcA\$15rleFwJAS3X

from the UNDEF project. However, we are faced with the challenge of responding to

need for access to information, especially at the local level. We lack boots on the ground to

rights, know the benefits they provide, and want the process to continue and keep going strong. At the same time, they are aware that they still lack the resources and skills to implement the mechanisms and procedures for properly exercising their right to public information. Regulations for the Access to Information Act have not been drafted, making enforcement problematic. Moreover, public awareness

V. Conclusions

The main conclusions and lessons learned observed by the evaluation team can be summarized in the following points:

(i) The project made a significant contribution to local implementation of the transparency policy.

an empowerment phase to enable stakeholders to exercise their right of access to information appears to be essential. The beneficiaries have exhibited high demand for more training in the areas of project design and management, securing funding, and institutional strengthening. This conclusion follows from findings on relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

(vi) Focal points need to identify and tap alternative sources of funding. At present, there are no funds to support a basic continuity plan, posing a risk to sustainability. The situation is complex, since on the one hand, Brazil is not a priority country for international cooperation, and on the other, access by the associations to national funds, especially at the local level, is still poor. Solutions must be found. This conclusion follows from findings on impact, efficiency, and sustainability.

VI. Recommendations

Based on its conclusions, the evaluation team has a number of recommendations aimed at contributing to and consolidating the organizational process and maximizing social stakeholders to engage in advocacy and dialogue with public authorities.

(i) Design an assistance phase that will lend continuity to the empowerment processes launched. The focal points managed to motivate and mobilize social movements and civil society organizations, raising expectations of citizen participation in the implementation of public transparency policies. There is a clear need to capitalize on these achievements, improving the ability of these stakeholders to participate and dialogue with municipal authorities. (

has the necessary capacity and resources to serve as a catalyst at the local level. (See Conclusions ii and v).

(v) ***Explicitly integrate the gender approach.*** Gender equity should be a cross-cutting component of institutional strengthening/operating plans and citizen

VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
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Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

Project documents:

- (i) PO Note - UNDEF;
- (ii) Initial project document,
- (iii) Mid-term and Final narrative reports submitted by ARTICLE 19;
- (iv) Final FUR;
- (v) Project Extension Request Form;
- (vi) New budget;
- (vii) Baseline reports and plans of action produced by focal points.
- (viii) Web site: <http://www.artigo19.org>; <http://ferramentas.artigo19.org>;
<http://www.amarribo.org.br>

Materials published during project execution:

- ARTICLE 19, *Liberdade de Informação: Participação e Controle Social da Administração Pública*, São Paulo, Brasil.
- ARTICLE 19, *Acesso à informação para garantia de direitos humanos*, São Paulo, Brasil.
- ARTICLE 19, *Lei de Acesso à informação pública, Um guia pratico para políticos, autoridades e funcionarios da Administração Pública*, São Paulo, Brasil.
- ARTICLE 19, *Lei geral de Acesso à Informação*, São Paulo, Brasil.
- ARTICLE 19, *Princípios para uma legislação sobre acesso à informação, Campanha global pela liberdade de expressão*, São Paulo, Brasil.
- ARTICLE 19, *Brasil: Campanha global pela liberdade de expressão*, São Paulo, Brasil.
- ARTICLE 19, *Guia de acesso à informação pública*, São Paulo, Brasil.
- Press releases.

Other documents:

- AMARRIBO, 2003, *O Combate à corrupção nas prefeituras do Brasil*, 4ª. Edição, São Paulo, Brasil.
- Lei de Transparência N°131, 2009;
- Lei Federal N° 12.527, de Acesso à Informação Pública
- Ação Educativa, Rede Nossa São Paulo, C&A, 2013, *em Questão 8, Educação e desigualdades na cidade de São Paulo*, São Paulo, Brasil.
- Ação Educativa, Pastoral Carceraria, Grupo Educação nas Prisões, 2013, *em Qu0.791 13mJEBT 0 0 3mp)8E)3*

