

**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10**



90-UDF- MEX-09- 343 Constructing Citizenship in San Luis Potosí (Mexico)

Date: 31 October 2013

Acknowledgments

The evaluation team would like to thank Alma Irene NAVA and Fabiola Delfín MARTÍNEZ, as well as all members of the team from Educación y Ciudadanía A.C. who devoted their time and energy to organizing this mission. Their goo

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) **Project Data**

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the Constructing Citizenship in San Luis de Potosí Project (*Construyendo Ciudadanía en San Luis de Potosí*), implemented by Educación y Ciudadanía A.C.¹ (Education and Citizenship) in collaboration with three partner organizations: the Congressional Committee on Human Rights and Gender Equity of the State of San Luis Potosí (*Comisión de Derechos Humanos y Equidad de Género del Congreso del Estado de San Luis Potosí*), the Potosí Youth Institute (*Instituto Potosino de la Juventud*), and Propuesta Cívica A.C (Civic Purpose), from November 1, 2010 to April 30, 2013 with a 6-month no cost extension.² UNDEF provided a grant of US\$325,000, \$25,000 of which was retained for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The aim of the Project was to empower civil society organizations (CSOs) to promote democracy in Mexico through real and effective civic engagement, the exercise of human rights, and support for political dialogue. The Project also sought to encourage the active participation of youth and women in local democracy- and citizenship-building activities to improve their ability to influence policy and impact local governance. The Project operated in the state of San Luis Potosí, and its target population was a group of CSOs, youth and women's organizations, journalists, universities, members of political parties, and representatives of San Luis Potosí state and local authorities.

in devising, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating public policies. The training and citizen networking initiatives to increase their participation and influence in the public square, the preparation of thematic agendas, and the drafting of legislative proposals were important models for democratic practices in a society characterized by marked civic passivity in the last 10 years. The project beneficiaries as a group are willing to get more directly involved in public affairs and have the tools and publications they need to do so. However, key components of the process need to be strengthened, especially to support the linkage and organizing of CSOs to improve their ability to act in the social and political sphere.

EDUCIAC has contacts and agreements with a variety of funding sources (public and private, domestic and international), making it financially sound enough to continue supporting implementation of the processes launched. Furthermore, the Project has enhanced the institutional **sustainability** of this NGO, which has made strengthening civil society to influence public policy-making a strategic priority. The definitive inclusion of the *Cero Trata* (Zero Trafficking) and *Ojo Ambulante* (Roving Surveillance) watchdog groups will lend continuity to the civic oversight exercise begun within the framework of the Project. The CSO network that was created is a strategic forum for strengthening members, both individually and collectively, and protecting and lending visibility to the human rights of citizens from heretofore vulnerable sectors of the population.

The Project's **efficiency** level is highly satisfactory. The cost-benefit ratio of the activities and results is very good, as the Project has managed to train and mobilize a substantial and representative number of stakeholders in an array of civil society sectors. Collaboration among the four partner organizations and the efforts of the coordinating and monitoring teams made for effective management, providing the feedback needed to adjust planning to the demand and response capacity of the beneficiary groups. Hiring subject specialists in the fields of law, advocacy, social communication, and transparency yielded quality results. Processes and content have been systematized, and the Project's publications and practical tools are regularly used by CSOs.

The **impact** analysis reveals major achievements in the short and long term. While the degree of impact depends largely on the type and profile of the stakeholders, all of them acknowledge the Project's contribution to creating social capital with the ability to put forward ideas and network and the desire to make a difference and b(t)-11(y)16()-11(t)-11(o)40()-11(p 0 1 402.3

The Project **(iii) Conclusions**

Programming stable mechanisms and channels for negotiation and dialogue with government authorities, identifying the key strategic allies among state officials and government agencies and planning mechanisms for continuous networking that offer opportunities to influence policy. (See Conclusion vi).

Improving the representativeness of women's groups and organizations,
conducting

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

(i) *The project and evaluation objectives*

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Constructing Citizenship in San Luis de Potosi Project (*Construyendo Ciudadanía en San Luis Potosi*), implemented by Educación y Ciudadanía A.C. (Education and Citizenship) in collaboration with three partner organizations: the Congressional Committee on Human Rights and Gender Equity of the State of San Luis Potosí, the

UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders in determining whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an international expert and a local expert hired under the Transtec contract with UNDEF. The evaluation methodology is spelled out in the contract's Operational Manual and is further detailed in the Launch Note. Pursuant to the terms of the contract, the project documents were sent to the evaluators in March 2013 (see Annex 2). After reading and analyzing them, the evaluation team prepared the Launch Note (UDF-MEX-09-343), describing the analysis methodology and instruments used during the evaluation mission.

The mission was carried out in the city of San Luis Potosí from April 8 to 12, 2013. The evaluators interviewed project staff and members of the EDUCIAC team responsible for coordinating the Project. They also met with youth groups, beneficiary organizations, and other stakeholders directly and indirectly involved in the execution of the Project. In locations that could not be visited owing to security concerns, beneficiary organizations were interviewed via Skype. The parties interviewed were:

- Project staff (coordinator, assistant, manager; and lobbying, research, and legal advisers); Officials from the Ojo Ambulante (Roving Surveillance) and the Cero Trata (Zero Trafficking) watchdog groups;
- Partner organizations (except the Potosí Youth Institute, which was unable to be present for the interview);
- A representative number of youth organizations and CSOs working on human rights, women's issues

Concerning the exercise of human rights, Executive Secretary Emilio Álvarez Icaza of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the regional body for the protection and defense of human rights, has stated that Mexico was the country with the most complaints lodged against it in 2012 (1,800); and, in addition, that five times since 2009, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has sanctioned the Mexican State for violations of rights protected under the American Convention on Human Rights.⁵

In this context, the local scenarios in which people go about their daily life are complex. This is true of San Luis Potosí, which is located in a region known for its extreme conservatism and whose population is little inclined to social mobilization and political organizing. Added to this is the precarious social, economic, and security situation that largely keep the population, especially vulnerable social groups, from the free, deliberate, and informed exercise of their right to make decisions, participate, demand accountability, and obtain justice.⁶

Moreover, San Luis Potosí is still has a long way to go in terms of its democratic life, which is marked by: a) an institutional dynamic co-opted by the agendas and interests of a few economically powerful people; b) lack of credibility, waste, lies, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness; c) a gulf between government and the population and its needs; d) lack of transparency due to the co-opting of judicial and legislative authority by the executive branch; e) inability to manage the conflicts, demands, and needs of the population; f) government action only during the election season to capture citizens' votes in the least democratic, legitimate, and legal means possible.

In this context, women and youth are among of the most affected populations. In addition to the poverty and the social and economic vulnerability experienced by women as a result of their gender, Mexican women are repeated targets of many forms of violence, both public and domestic. One of these is sex trafficking. According to some of the civil society organizations interviewed, this problem is denied or minimized in San Luis Potosí because of the conservatism of the population. Institutionally, while San Luis Potosí has a law against human trafficking, it has no regulations to make it operative.⁷ Furthermore, in the experience of some of the so

officials.	of women.	Visibility of youth, women, and civil society issues on the public agenda
Training and creation of advocacy mechanisms: CSOs and legislators for drafting and passage of the Youth Act.	Drafting and passage of a Youth Act. Drafting (not been passed) and lobbying for a law to promote CSO activities in San Luis Potosí through consultative processes. Boosting of stakeholder capacity to lobby and participate in the drafting of proposed legislation.	
- Forums and roundtables to analyze direct democracy mechanisms.	Draft amendment on reforms and additions to the Plebiscite and Referendum Act for the state of San Luis Potosí to include recall mechanisms (this bill has not been passed yet). Analysis of the Plebiscite and Referendum Act.	Stakeholders trained in the use of mechanisms of direct democracy, plebiscite, referendums, and recall of public officials.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

i. Relevance

The impressions and testimonies gathered during the mission confirmed the relevance of the intervention, given the limitations of the country’s political situation and democracy (specifically, in the state of San Luis Potosí) and the needs and problems of the Project’s three beneficiary groups: youth, women, and CSOs. In a context marked by thoroughly debilitated democratic governance, youth and women are vulnerable groups whose rights are very much in jeopardy. Therefore, the beneficiaries, men and women alike, had a very positive opinion of the training opportunities provided by the Project and the civic practices it enabled them to develop. With the passage of the Youth Act on 6 September 2013, young people feel that they have been recognized as having rights, substantially altering their status as citizens. At the same time, CSOs say that their individual and collective skills for integrating the rights approach and civic engagement initiatives into their institutional strategies have improved. Stakeholder capacity-building is an approach consistent with EDUCIAC’s strategic options—one that has been used from the outset to promote democratic processes rooted in three basic elements: (a) promoting a non welfare-oriented approach; (b) fostering horizontal relations between adults and young people, moving beyond the adult-centered approach; and (c) improving citizens’ ability to influence policy.



Invitation to the roll-out of the Youth Act

This priority methodological approach centered on capacity-building as essential to promoting different forms of civic engagement is clearly relevant to the profile of the beneficiary groups. The Project’s activities have brought together and mobilized CSOs, women, youth organizations, academics, community groups, organizations that aid children and women that are victims of violence, and advocacy groups working to guarantee the right to food, information and transparency, environmental protection, gender equality, and the treatment of hearing impairment in the intervention areas and cities. These initiatives have encouraged the adoption of the rights approach, providing citizens with opportunities to increase their democratic participation and informing them of their right to participate in forums where they can make a difference and influence decision-making.

In addition, the gender approach has been relevantly integrated, promoting the equitable participation of men and women, adults and young people. The Project’s roster of participants shows a total of 1,095 beneficiaries, 625 women and 471 men. However, participants repeatedly mentioned the problems that still arise when attempting to establish equitable, nondiscriminatory gender relations in different sectors of society.

“Being young and venturing into the adult world is complicated, because sometimes they undermine your confidence that you can do things right, especially if you’re a girl.”
Olga P. former youth deputy who participated in the congressional drafting of the Youth Act

“Six years ago when first got involved, I tried to see how youth groups could make themselves more visible. Now there's a mechanism that has resources and goals and attracts people. To a certain extent, the Youth Act was a pretext to make the voices of young people heard.”

Mariana, member of a youth organization.

v. Sustainability

EDUCIAC's recognition, legitimacy, and credibility in the universe of civil society organizations in San Luis Potosí are its calling card and greatest social capital. That profile is also one of the most important sustainability factors for building and strengthening civil society's capacity to influence public policy—above all, since the initiatives undertaken have given many stakeholders the confidence to develop and implement initiatives for networking and social and political participation. Added to this is the fact that EDUCIAC has a sound institutional structure and a committed team with the requisite expertise. One of the unexpected results of the Project cited by EDUCIAC is that it caused the organization to shift its institutional priorities, making civil society strengthening to influence public policy-making a strategic priority. This issue is now part of EDUCIAC's agenda, making this NGO far more sustainable, since it no longer depends solely on having a project under way. In terms of institutional sustainability, equally important is the fact that EDUCIAC is a member of the CSO network and is actively advocating for the network to put passage of the law to promote civil society activities on its agenda. Likewise, definitive integration of the Cero Trata and Ojo Ambulante citizen watchdog groups in its work and agenda will lend continuity to the exercise of citizen oversight that began with the Project.

As a new organization, we had to learn the ropes. We had a lot of enthusiasm but were asking ourselves, what now? How do we get things done?

Jesús O., Director of a member foundation of the CSO network.

Another important sustainability factor in the process is the CSO network created in the context of the Project. Members recognize the network as a necessary strategic mechanism for: promoting solidarity and strengthening them both individually and collectively; encouraging the sharing of services and transfer of knowledge and skills; making heretofore unrecognized issues and population sectors visible; and above all, strategically connecting them and promoting agendas of mutual interest.

Furthermore, EDUCIAC has contacts and agreements with a number of funding sources (public and private, domestic and international), making it financially sound and able to continue supporting the processes begun.

vi. Value added

This is the first time that EDUCIAC has received financial support enabling it to implement a two-year project. Having the backing of a United Nations program has enhanced its credibility and enabled it to begin making major changes and encouraging key civil society stakeholders to embrace democratic practices.

put EDUCIAC in a better position, making it an important resource for promoting the changes generated in civil society. All this confirms the value added that UNDEF has contributed to the implementation of democratic civic engagement processes that will gradually improve the living conditions of social stakeholders.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Bearing in mind the context of the Project, characterized by apparent social and political stagnation in recent years, the evaluators consider its impact to be highly satisfactory. While consolidating and capitalizing on the process begun is a pending challenge, a solid foundation has been laid for continuing the dynamic generated and capitalizing on the lessons learned. The Project's strong points have been:

i. Fostering understanding and acceptance of civil society's role in strengthening democracy and environments that promote the exercise of civil rights. All actors involved have had an opportunity to learn about their rights and recognize opportunities, forums, and tools for exercising citizen oversight more effectively and less onerously than before. Raising awareness among groups and organizations and mobilizing them to action has heightened their motivation and increased their ability to influence public affairs.

ii. Lending visibility to issues and vulnerable sectors of the population that up to now have been ignored, especially from the standpoint of their rights.

iii. Strengthening and advancing the professionalization of CSOs as legitimate social and political stakeholders with their own identity, capabilities, and proposals

The Project was **very ambitious**. Dealing as it did with the promotion of highly qualitative processes of change, some of its components had real potential for impact that has yet to be consolidated. Specifically, certain sectors in need of particular assistance were identified:

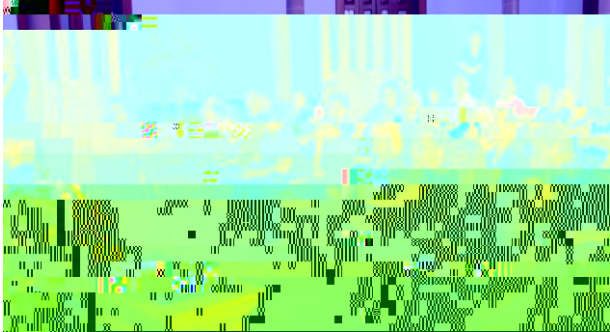
v.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to sustainably bolster the impact of the Project, the mission recommends the following:

i. Strengthen mechanisms for connecting groups as participants in policy dialogue. Contribute to the creation of a collective identity with a specific agenda and social and political engagement profile in the recently created mechanisms: the CSO network, youth organizations that lobbied for passage of the Youth Act, and organizations that focus on some aspect of women’s rights. Reorient the strategy to ensure that the activities are not all mass activities; instead, include initiatives that encourage critical thinking and a strategic approach, integrating the use of a plan of action, roadmap, and intervention protocols that stress the operational level. (See Conclusions iii and v)

ii. Design a diversified training strategy. The future plan for building CSO capacity should be based on the results of the mapping done over the course of the Project to ensure that it addresses the specific needs of each beneficiary group. It should also guarantee the development and transfer of knowledge, skills, and social and political resources for civic engagement, decision-making, and political organizing and negotiation and improve mechanisms and methodologies for developing the capacities required to achieve this.



Consultative forum on the Youth Act

iii. Program stable mechanisms and channels for negotiation and dialogue with government stakeholders. Identify strategic partners among government stakeholders and entities that are open to collaborating with civil society and planning and can support ongoing relationships that foster specific policy advocacy initiatives. (See Conclusion vi).

iv. Improve the representation of women’s groups and organizations. Conduct diagnostic reviews of the dynamic of women’s organizations in San Luisa Potosí and based on that, develop a relevant, balanced strategy and plan. (See Conclusion vii).

v. Develop a specific mechanism for publicizing the Youth Act. Disseminating information about the Act, publicizing it, and training not only those responsible for its enforcement but populations and youth organizations as well are essential. Otherwise, there is a risk of having a relevant, up-to-date but inoperative legal framework. EDUCIAC and the CSOs should jointly study initiatives that they can work on to contribute to the enforcement of this legislation at the state and local level (See Conclusion iv).

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question
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Annex 2: Documents reviewed

Project document:

- Project Document UDF-MEX-09-343
- Mid-term Narrative Report
- Final Narrative Report
- Final Financial Report
- Extension status report
- Website: <http://www.educiac.org.mx>

Materials published within the framework of the Project:

- Youth Agenda
- Record of negotiation meetings
- Manual on Citizenship-building
- Diagnostic review of youth for the state of San Luis Potosí
- Social Dialogue among Youth
- Youth Act in the State Congress
- CSO civic agenda
- Civic agenda on women for the state of San Luis Potosí
- Law to promote CSO activities in San Luis Potosí
- Informational material on direct mechanisms of democracy, plebiscite, referendums, and recall of public officials
- Bill on amendments to the Plebiscite and Referendum Act
- Website of the Ojo Ambulante youth watchdog group (www.ojoambulante.org.mx)
- Website of the Cero Trata watchdog group on the sex trafficking of women (www.cerotrata.org.mx)

Other documents reviewed:

- Informe de pobreza y evaluación en el estado de San Luis Potosí 2012, Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL)
- Informe sobre la Situación de Derechos Humanos en México, Red de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos "Todos los derechos para todos y todas," presented at the 147th Regular Period of Sessions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in March 2013
- El Universal, national daily newspaper

Annex 3: Persons interviewed

Monday, April 8, 2013	
<i>Meeting with the EDUCIAC team</i>	
Alma Irene Nava Bello	General Manager of EDUCIAC and project coordinator
Fabiola Delfín Martínez	Project assistant
Sofía Córdova Nydia Morales César Reyna Rubén Puertos	Team for the creation, management, and operation of the Ojo Ambulante and Cero Trata watchdog groups
Marcela Godínez	Member of the Project Follow-up and Systematization Committee
Tuesday, April 9, 2013	
Martín Faz,	External consultant hired to lobby for passage of the bills
Guillermo Luévano	Adviser to the former deputy involved
Diva (vía Skype)	Head of the organization Albergues para Mujeres Víctimas de Violencia. Formación y Protección de la Mujer y el Menor A.C, in Ciudad Valles
Laura (vía Skype)	Comunidades campesinas y urbanas solidarias con alternativas (COMCAUSA), a civil society organization working in the municipality of Tancanhuitz
Helga (vía Skype)	Asociación Huasteca en ayuda a los animales (ASHUDA), a civil society organization working in the Huasteca region
Wednesday, April 10, 2013	
Jesús Olvera	Fundación Itskoatl
Martín Faz Ramón Ortíz	External consultant hired to lobby for legislation

Annex 4: Acronyms

CDHDF	Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal
CONEVAL	Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EDUCIAC	Educación y Ciudadanía A.C.
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
INEGI	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PD	Project Document