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EVALUATION REPORT

TRANSTEC

UDF-ELS-11-475 – Strengthening Municipal Capacity for Access to Public Information in El Salvador

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I. Executive Summary

(i) Project Data

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled: Strengthening Municipal Capacity for Access to Public Information in El Salvador" *(Municipio Transparente. Apliquemos el derecho de acceso a la información pública)* which was implemented by 'Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo', from 01 January 2013 to 31 August 2014. The project was extended by four months with the new end date being 31 December 2014. The project benefited from a UNDEF grant of $US250.000 to reach the following objective: *"to strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders to promote, implement and enforce the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI)"*.

The project strategy focused on strengthening and promoting transparency as well as municipalities' technical capacities in order to implement and enforce the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI). In order to do this, work was undertaken to empower citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) so that they request the implementation of the law from their municipal governments and exercise their right to public information access. This was done by focusing on three specific outcomes: (i) Local volunteer educators improve the capacity to promote citizens' understanding and the implementation of the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI); (ii) Local civil society organizations improve their capacity for citizen oversight of the enforcement of the LAPI in the municipality; (iii) 10 municipal governments improve the capacity to enforce the LAPI.

In order to achieve these goals the project developed a training strategy for various social actors[1] on the Right to Public Information (RAPI) and LAPI, intervening in 11 urban municipalities of various sizes in the departments of La Libertad, San Salvador, Santa Ana and Ahuachapán.

In order to promote its training actions, FUNDAUNGO worked together with three institutions: the Secretariat for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Anti-corruption (SPCTA); the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAPI) and the Ministry for Education (MINED)[2]. On the Civil Society side, they worked with the Foundation for the Support of Municipalities in El Salvador (FUNDAMUNI), which has a strong geographical presence in the intervention departments.

(ii) Evaluation Findings

Due to the entry into force of the LAPI in 2011, the project displayed a high level of **relevance** with regards to the needs of both local governments (who had to make the public information available to citizens) and citizens and organizations themselves to exercise their right to public information. To this end the project developed aspects of technical assistance and capacity-building through courses, seminars, forums, and workshops as well as through a diploma for Information Officers, Municipal Secretaries, people in charge of the archives and other public officials.

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[1] Municipal promoters, members of youth organizations, women, educators, local communicators, municipal communication officers and journalists, local leaders and social promoters of civil society organizations, mayors, municipal syndics, members of municipal councils, municipal secretaries, executives and managers, information officers and those in charge of municipal archives.
[2] The last two entities participated as both partners and beneficiaries, since they participated in the training and coaching sessions.

The project contributed to strengthening institutions and improving the administrative capacities of the municipalities by offering tools and resources in a context where there were not sufficient capacities at local or national level to promote the enforcement of the LAPI. At the same time there was an increase in the knowledge of citizens about the importance of the right to public information and of citizen oversight. It is worth stressing the relevance and good design of the proposed methodology which was based on training multipliers and carrying out an in-depth analysis of the needs of the actors involved. The project included a gender perspective by encouraging equal participation and the presence of women in public office and in roles of responsibility. FUNDAUNGO decided not to work directly on the thematic of citizenship, though it could have been used as a entry point to many other fundamental rights

The project achieved the desired goals with an optimal level of **effectiveness**. Participatory studies[3] and research were carried out in order to design the capacity building content, the didactical resources and educational training sessions; and the tools that were necessary to address the needs identified with the target population. The project was able to train 125 volunteers and 27 local communicators as facilitators in order to promote the practice of the Right to Access Public Information (RAPI) and address specific methodologies on the disclosure of the LAPI. At the same time, 4361 people[4] received training through 150 educational training sessions. The capacities of grass roots organizations and civil society organizations to carry out oversight were strengthened, since there are nine groups which monitor the implementation of the LAPI in the various municipalities. A strong project axis was the training of members of the Municipal Councils and of the Heads of Administrative Units; where there was a high level of female participation. Through seminars and the diploma on "Transparency and Access to Information in the Municipalities", institutional capacities on transparency and access to information were strengthened in 32 municipalities, as well as on the process of elaborating municipal plans to enforce the LAPI. The project followed up on the activities which had been carried out and on the level of participant satisfaction. However, no follow-up was achieved on the effects that the integration of the lessons learnt may have had on the daily practices of the participants and institutions.

The project displays a high level of **efficiency** with an excellent cost-benefit ratio. Due to the flexibility of UNDEF, the link established with the EU-funded project[5] and the excellent technical, administrative and financial management, the outputs envisaged by the project were surpassed in terms of quantity. Specific tools were developed to manage and follow up on the activities, using the Project Operations Plan (POP), monthly coordination meetings and detailed reports on budget execution. The project extension was due to external factors, particularly due to the processes required by the governmental partners to render the collaboration agreements concrete. The four-month extension did not require any budgetary changes and yet it allowed for an increase in both the number of participants and in publications, additionally funding the release of several audiovisual outputs.

The project had a strong **impact** on improving the processes that the municipality has to carry out in order to implement the enforcement of the LAPI, particularly in light of the challenges it faces and the risks involved in not meeting the legal requirements. Due to the capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives, the issue of access to public information has been lifted to the next-highest level in the municipalities, leading to an increased

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[3] The baseline developed in the framework of the EU-funded project funded was used.

[4] It was noted that female participation surpassed male participation in the majority of the training sessions.

[5] Project: "Strengthening Municipal Capacity for Access to Public Information in El Salvador. Collaborative capacity-building among local players on access to public information in municipalities".

institutional desire to implement it[6]. The empowerment of the Information Officers and of archive-keepers has improved the quality of the public information offer. Furthermore there is a noticeable increase in demand, since local leaders and social promoters have taken on a stronger engagement in exercising transparency through public oversight. A further impact to be highlighted is the knowledge of RAPI in educational centers which, albeit informally, have integrated it into their curriculum activities. Finally, it is worth mentioning the empowerment of the inter-institutional relationships between the project partners as well as the strengthening of relationships between the IAPI, the governing body for public information, and the municipalities.

The strategy designed for the implementation of the project and the deliberate selection of the project partners aimed at ensuring the **sustainability** of the project, which was able to leave behind "installed capacities" of excellent quality. Although it is necessary to strengthen and fine-tune the initiated processes, sustainable empowerment has been achieved which will guarantee the continuation of the initiatives. Aspects of this empowerment worth highlighting are the inclusion of the RAPI as a basic condition for efficient and transparent municipal administration; the cascading training of multipliers who are able to replicate the initiatives in their own intervention areas; the deployment of materials and tools which had been developed, both in terms of outreach and capacity-building activities; as well as the adaptation of these materials in order for them to be used with other beneficiary groups.

The inter-institutional collaboration relationships which were established during the project implementation as well as the on-going technical advice offered by FUNDAUNGO provided a non-negligible support potential for the LAPI enforcement process which it would be appropriate to maintain. The implementation of future interventions that may consolidate and amplify the developed initiatives would primarily depend on the institutional will of the NGO, and they are not expected to encounter any difficulties in obtaining funding. FUNDAUNGO has stable relationships with several international cooperation agencies which has contributed to the consolidation of its financial stability.

In terms of UNDEF **added value**, it enabled the realization of the country's first Diploma on Transparency, providing opportunities to train civil servants and municipal employees in their knowledge on the LAPI. The fact that the project was financed by the United Nations helped generate interest in the program and convince public institutions (IAPI, SPCTA and MINED) and other relevant actors to take part.

(iii) Conclusions

▪ ***The project intervention was timely*** – just after the adoption of the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI), thereby contributing to the position of the IAPI as the governing body for access to public information and institutionally strengthening the municipalities in order to enforce the LAPI. Furthermore, it empowered social leaders and promoters in their knowledge of the benefits that the exercise of their right to access to public information would bring. FUNDAUNGO decided not to work directly on citizenship, but chose to work instead on RAPI as an umbrella right to cover a variety of other fundamental rights and impact more on local public policy.

▪ ***The project successfully achieved the desired results,*** even surpassing the targets which were identified in the initial document. Due to the good link established with the EU funding, it was able to maintain the quality and the targets of the technical proposal,

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[6] According to the data obtained, only 100 town halls had information officers in the beginning; the number has now reached 208.

despite the fact that the budget granted was less than what FUNDAUNGO had originally requested.

- ▪ **_The project developed materials and tools of excellent quality_** which contributed to the multiplication of knowledge amongst the different audiences and to the intervention's sustainability. The clarity and coherence of the contents, the didactical focus and the produced quality generated several requests for the project to be adapted and reproduced.

- ▪ **_The choice of project partners was very sound_** since it enabled the carving out of collaboration space between relevant public institutions on the subject of access to public information; without neglecting the presence of a geographical entity to optimize the most efficient use of resources. However, the project did not foresee to promote the establishment of networks among these institutions.

- ▪ **_The project leaves behind a series of instruments_** that will allow to measure the progress of the enforcement of the LAPI at municipal level, thereby contributing to the systemization of applying lessons learnt. However, no follow-up mechanisms or tools were developed to monitor the effects on the professional practices of the multipliers who benefitted from the project.

- ▪ **_The project achieved the establishment of a collaborative relationship between FUNDAUNGO and the IAPI though impeded by the IAPI institutional fragility_**. Although the IAPI sees FUNDAUNGO as an important ally for the implementation of the LAPI, the relationship between these two institutions was not totally strengthened after the project and is still in need for consolidation. Besides, the IAPI has to address its institutional fragility in addressing the RAPI and in efficiently coordinating the actors that intervene at local level.

- ▪ **_The methodology which the project applied to the educational processes was highly relevant_** and contributed to strengthening the capacities of local and national multipliers and can both be replicated and have an impact.

(iv) Recommendations

For FUNDAUNGO:

    (i) Capitalize on the results of the strategic needs analysis that was carried out within the framework of the project and complete it with a map of vulnerable rights. The RAPI will contribute to an increased citizen participation in setting the local agendas and carrying out advocacy which then leads to concrete and relevant public policies.

    (ii) Support the consolidation of inter-institutional synergies which favor the mutual strengthening of the actors involved in promoting the RAPI, which is seen as an opportunity to strengthen and render more potent the capacities of citizens and civil society as a whole to be involved in politics.

    (iii) Include planned and sequential actions which promote spaces for participation and citizen organization at the grassroots level and on a geographical level, within the strategy for institutional strengthening, making sure that the benefits of access to public information reach even the most vulnerable population groups.

(iv) Increase the dissemination of materials between citizens; while diversifying their reproduction to reach specific beneficiary profiles (children, young adults, rural populations, people with disabilities, among others).

(v) Implement processes for strategic monitoring including the analysis and follow-up on effects obtained in the beneficiary groups with the aim of capitalizing on lessons learnt and the added value of the project.

For project partners

(vi) The IAPI and the MINED should use this opportunity to capitalize on the "quality" and the "potential" of the capacity-strengthening process that was started within the framework of the project. An agreement on technical cooperation could provide some continuity for the Agreement that was set up with FUNDAUNGO to ensure permanent advice, which would be open to other municipalities in an efficient and effective manner. The MINED could support the development of tools and dissemination of information about the RAPI, in accordance with article 46 of the LAPI.

(vii) Organize initiatives in order to capitalize on and to disseminate best practices, highlighting the beneficiary municipalities and creating spaces for exchange with other civil society organizations and/or UNDEF supported projects dedicated to capacity-building, rights-related topics and citizen participation.

I.   Introduction and development context

(i)   The project and evaluation objectives

The project: *"Municipal Capacity for Access to Public Information in El Salvador" (Municipio Transparente. Apliquemos el derecho de acceso a la información pública)* was implemented by the 'Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo' (FUNDAUNGO), from 01 January 2013 to 31 August 2014. The project was extended by four months with the new end date being 31 December 2014. UNDEF provided a grant of US$ 250,000, including US$ 25,000 which was retained for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The European Union provided a fund of € 295,000 (approximately US$ 363,600) to support activities in the same area. The project objective was to strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders to promote, implement and enforce the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI). The intended outcomes of the project were: (i) Local volunteer educators improve the capacity to promote citizens' understanding and the implementation of the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI); (ii) Local civil society organizations improve their capacity for citizen oversight of the enforcement of the LAPI in the municipality; (iii) 10 municipal governments improve the capacity to enforce the LAPI.

The project contributed to the construction of the fundamental conditions for democracy in El Salvador by improving the cultural and institutional conditions required for transparency and the participation of citizens in democratic institutions. The strategy focused on strengthening the capacities of public and private stakeholders to publicize, implement and enhance citizen oversight of the enforcement of the law. By these actions the project contributed to creating fundamental conditions for the enforcement of the LAPI, and to generating a more open and transparent environment at the local level.

In order to optimize the intervention impact, the project strategy focused on a 'sustainable change approach', in that the project did not act directly, but involved key stakeholders interested in democracy and human rights, and civil social organizations that need public information in order to strengthen their own capacities of promoting the awareness and use of the Right, and to monitor the compliance of municipalities with their duties.

The direct project beneficiaries were (i) local volunteer educators and local communicators, (ii) groups or coalitions of local members of civil society and (iii) municipal governments. The indirect beneficiaries were youth, women, and local leaders. The project covered 10 municipalities of various sizes in the departments of La Libertad, San Salvador, Santa Ana and Ahuachapán[7]. The chosen municipalities are predominantly urban, of varying sizes, and governed by different political parties.

The evaluation of this project is part of the larger evaluation of the Rounds 2 to 7 of UNDEF-funded projects. Its purpose is to "contribute towards a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project which will in turn help UNDEF to develop future project strategies. Evaluations are also to assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved"[8].

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[7] The expansion of geographical scope of the project (April 2014) allowed it to extend from 10 to 16 municipalities on which the actions were focused. Some services were also provided to a group of 9 municipalities; and individual services were given to participants from 10 additional municipalities in the mentioned departments.
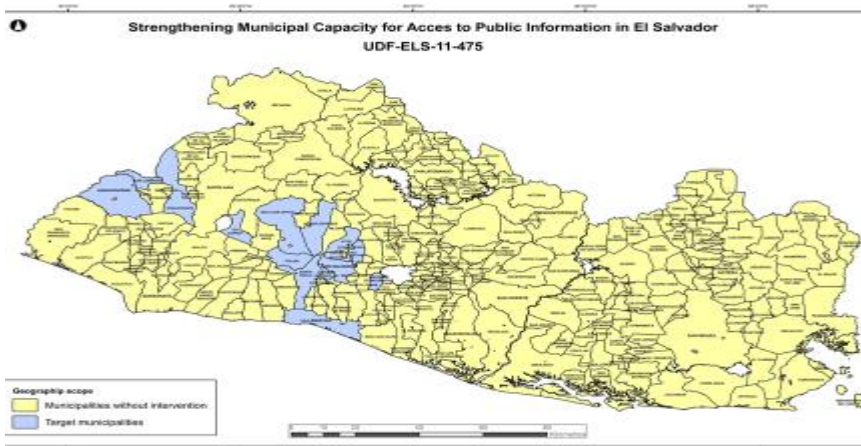[8] Operational manual for the UNDEF-funded project evaluations, page 6.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an international expert and a national 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 on 14 April 2015 (see Annex 2). After reading and analyzing them, they prepared the Launch Note (UDF-ELS-11-475), describing the analysis methodology and instruments used during the evaluation mission to El Salvador (Departments of San Salvador and La Libertad) from May 04 to 08, 2015. The evaluators interviewed project staff and members of the FUNDAUNGO coordinating team and stakeholder representatives. The team also travelled from San Salvador to the Municipalities of Santa Tecla, Colon and Ciudad Delgado to meet project beneficiaries and local Information Officers. Annex 3 contains the complete list of persons interviewed.

(iii) Development context

El Salvador is administratively and politically divided into 14 Departments and 262 Municipalities. In the Departments, the central government is represented by the Governors who are unelected officials. In the municipalities, Municipal Councils are elected and have been multipartite since 2015. At the municipal level, the financial, technical and administrative capacities are characterized by being very limited to meet the citizens' demands. Article 4 of the Municipal Code establishes a series of competencies which often surpass these capacities. In this sense, the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI) presents an additional challenge for local administrations. On the other hand, public administration, including at local level, has been marked by a culture of "secrecy" in which the authorities were not used to providing information and citizens were not used to requesting it.

Geographical scope of the project

The LAPI was adopted by a legislative decree in December 2010 and entered into force in May 2011. Its adoption was made possible by an initiative by the Sub-secretariat for Transparency and Anti-Corruption during the Funes administration (now called the Secretariat for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Anti-Corruption). The law granted a one-year period in order for the conditions within the institutions to be prepared for providing all individuals with public information.

The legal concept of the Right to Access Public Information (RAPI) adopted by El Salvador is outlined in article 2 of the LAPI: "Each person shall have the right to request and receive information which is generated, administered or is in the power of public institutions and other entities, which are obliged to grant the request in a timely fashion without withholding information for any reason or motivation". It is considered that the RAPI is one of the fundamental rights which asserts the autonomy of individuals by allowing them to acquire

knowledge, have an opinion and make decisions; and it in turn gives rise to the exercise of other rights, which is why it is known as a "key right". The RAPI is governed by the Municipal Code of the RAPI (FUNDAUNGO; 2014).

Although the implementation timeframe for the LAPI which is suggested in its Regulation determines the 30 December 2011 as the deadline for the establishment of the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAPI), it was not until the 23 February 2013 that the President of the Republic Mauricio Funes designated the five head and deputy commissioners who would thenceforth and for a period of six years be in charge of settling disputes on information on the State administration requested by citizens (ISD; 2013).

On 18 January 2006 a reform of the Municipal Code was adopted (Legislative Decree N° 929, dated 20 December 2005), which put in place mechanisms allowing for access to information on municipal administration. This reform introduced Chapter IX "On Citizen Participation and Transparency". This reform was very limited in terms of its power of enforcement and possibilities to request information since it was restricted to the municipality of residence of the person making the request. In this sense, the LAPI increased the scope of the right and the mechanisms for fulfilling it.

"Before receiving the training there was no previous disclosure on how to exercise the right to access to information nor on the advantages it entailed. We were afraid of the answer we might get from the State institution. Sometimes in the University we saw money being wasted. We realized the importance of knowing how the budget was being spent".
Gabriel Zura, Censura Cero, university leader, participant in the capacity-building course "The Municipality and the Right to Access Public Information"

The IAPI was therefore created in a context of many limitations in both human and financial resources and from the beginning its priority was to focus on the three State bodies at central level. Meanwhile, the 262 local administrations were relegated in terms of attention paid to them. They were and still are the focus of NGOs working on capacity-building through technical assistance, which is mostly financed through international cooperation. Among these NGOs is FUNDAUNGO, as well as the Social Initiative for Democracy ("Iniciativa Social para la Democracia" – ISD) and a Salvadoran foundation working on the enforcement of the law ("Fundación Salvadoreña para la Aplicación del Derecho" – FESPAD). The latter has carried out a parallel project to promote the RAPI in communities and was able to coordinate some actions with FUNDANGO.

A FUNDAUNGO study on the enforcement of the LAPI with a sample of 76 municipalities which was concluded in February 2014 shows among its main findings that most of the municipalities had nominated an Information Officer but that 75% of them had received no training on the LAPI. Furthermore, the study findings show that only 39.5% of the municipalities had created a Unit for Access to Public Information (UAPI), and that in 78% of these there was no clear procedure to classify information.

This is the context framing the project that was carried out by FUNDAUNGO with funding granted by UNDEF, which was based on a knowledge multiplication strategy through capacity-building both with the administrative bodies concerned, the municipalities, and with the citizens, who are the main subjects of the RAPI.

II.   Project strategy

(i) Project approach and strategy

The project strategy focused on institutionally strengthening the municipalities by increasing their transparency and technical and operative capacities to comply with the enforcement of the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI). At the same time, it was sought to empower citizens in acquiring knowledge, new abilities and tools to exercise their right to access public information through public oversight and to hold municipal administrations accountable.

The project's main strategic axis is part of the strategic options prioritized by FUNDAUNGO, particularly concentrating on urban issues and good governance. The issues of transparency and access to public information are part of the NGO's institutional agenda, which focuses on strategies for knowledge generation and capacity-building among social and political actors in the promotion of inclusive public policies favoring El Salvador's development and democratic governance. The project fits into one of the three institutional programs: *The Program on territorial administration and citizenship.* The specific aim of the Strengthening Municipal Capacity project was to strengthen the capacities of local actors to promote, exercise and enforce the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI).

"In the beginning, not many people requested information, since there was no culture of managing public information – not among the municipal staff nor among the citizens. The political process, with the election process, helped accelerate the increase in demand. On the other hand, especially in the head offices, the capacity-building helped raise awareness on the legal requirements and it became clear to people that they had to be complied with because otherwise there would be sanctions. This gave them more importance".
Edna   Álvarez,   Information   Official, Municipality of Santa Tecla

With the aim of achieving this objective, the project was constructed around three specific and complementary results: (R1) Local volunteer facilitators improve their capacities to promote the understanding and citizen exercise of the LAPI; (R2) Local Civil Society Organizations improve their capacities of citizen oversight on the enforcement of the LAPI; (R3) 10 municipal administrations improve their capacities to enforce the LAPI.

The project strategy was therefore focused on strengthening territorial administration, learning about how the municipal governments work and finding out what they needed in order to be strengthened, concentrating not only on the Administration (which is responsible for managing the public information offer), but also on citizens and on the strengthening of frameworks for the exercise of their rights and their civic participation (requesting public information is a competency all citizens have).

The intervention was geared towards promoting changes requiring long-term processes and for

Course I: The municipality and the right to access public information, aimed at

this the project defined precise targets that could be worked towards during the implementation period[9], while identifying fundamental components that would be addressed. The strategic priorities that were defined sought to contribute to solving the problem and initial cause of the project, namely the weaknesses in public information management and the lack of information about the LAPI in the municipalities; the scarcity of technical tools, like the index of undisclosed information; or official information that is not available. The project also sought to rectify the fact that municipalities were not proactive in bringing the LAPI closer to their citizens. For this, a diversified capacity-building strategy was implemented which was committed to promoting knowledge on the Right to Access Public Information (RAPI) and the LAPI in various scenarios. The goal was to strengthen capacities among various actors; it was not about FUNDAUNGO taking direct responsibility to intervene but rather about empowering municipalities and other social actors.

The profile of the project beneficiaries depended on each result: The R1 activities were fundamentally aimed at training multipliers and cascading facilitators; mostly municipal promoters, members of youth organizations, women, educators, local communicators, people responsible for municipal communication and journalists. Under the R2 target, the prioritized beneficiary groups were made up of local leaders and social promoters from Civil Society Organizations. R3 focused on strengthening capacities by working with information officers, archive-managers, mayors, municipal syndics, members of the municipal councils, municipal secretaries, executives and managers; information officers and archive-managers from the municipalities.

> "Many mayors were motivated to participate in the capacity-building workshops. Some said: "They've always thought of us as thieves…if we now give them information they might start trusting us and may even re-elect us".
> **Cesar González, Legal Unit IAPI**

Initially, the project planned to intervene in 10 urban municipalities of various sizes and governed by representatives of various political parties, located in the Departments of La Libertad, San Salvador, Santa Ana and Ahuachapán[10]. Thanks to the link established with the FUNDAUNGO project funded by the European Union: *"Strengthening Municipal Capacity for Access to Public Information in El Salvador. Collaborative capacity-building among local players on access to public information in municipalities",* interventions were achieved in 27 municipalities. UNDEF supported activities in 11 municipalities.

In order to implement the project strategy, FUNDAUNGO associated itself with three institutions of complementary capacities and competencies in an attempt to optimize the sectors of influence and the realization of the objectives. On the State side, the partners were: the Secretariat for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Anti-corruption (SPCTA), formally the Sub-secretariat for Transparency and Anti-Corruption; the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAPI), the governing body on Access to Public Information; and the Ministry for Education (MINED). In fact, the latter two entities were both partners and beneficiaries since members of staff also took part in the capacity building and coaching sessions. On the Civil Society side, the Foundation for the Support of Municipalities in El Salvador (FUNDAMUNI) has a strong geographical presence in the project intervention departments.

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[9] Initially planned for 20 months and then being granted a 4-month extension.
[10] The expansion of geographical scope of the project (April 2014) allowed it to extend from 10 to 16 municipalities on which the actions were focused. Some services were also provided to a group of 9 municipalities; and individual services were given to participants from 10 additional municipalities in the mentioned departments.

In conclusion it can be said that the strategy prioritized by the project was sound and efficient. However, the NGO did not work directly on the RAPI with citizens, which is an essential and decisive element to ensure that all citizens, especially those who are marginalized and/or live in vulnerable conditions, can exercise their political and socio-economic rights and can increase their capacity to be involved in the improvement of public services or local public policy. This component could be worked into future actions planned around this issue by FUNDAUNGO.

(ii) Logical framework

The following table presents the project's intervention logic: its activities, the desired and achieved results, the project objective and the development objective that was pursued:

Activities carried out	Desired results	Project objective	Development objective
• Identification of beneficiaries; • Focus Groups/needs investigation; • Preparing Training Plan; • Selecting facilitators; • Preparing materials; • Meetings with partners and establishing institutional relationships (IAPI, SPCTA, MINED); • Convocation of social organizations; • Carrying out five versions of the course "The Municipality and the Right of Access to Public Information" in municipalities in the Departments of Libertad, San Salvador, Ahuachapán and Santa Ana.	**1. Local volunteer facilitators improve their capacities to promote the understanding and civic exercise of the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI).** - *Young organizations, teachers, women, municipal promoters and local comunities are strengtheneed in: (a) their knowledge on municipalities and municipal governance; (b) RAPI practice; applying methodologies of disclosure.* - *4361 beneficiaries (2504 women and 1857 men).*		
• Identifying relevant experiences on the issue; • Designing the program with the collaboration of the SSTA and the Transparency Corporation for Colombia • Carrying out two seminars on: "Citizen oversight in the Enforcement of the LAPI in municipalities"; • Pilot practices on the exercise of citizen oversight; • Workshop: Lessons learnt and the enforcement and disclosure of the LAPI in mnicipalities; • Workshop "Experiences in citizen oversight and the enforcement of the LAPI in municipalities";	**2. Local civil society orgaizations improve their capacity for citizen oversight and the enforcement of the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI) in the municipalities.** - *Local leaders and social promoters from the municipalities have strengthened their capacities in the practice of citizen oversight in enforcing the LAPI, including: (a) preparing citizen oversight; (b)*	Strengthen the capacities of local actors to promote, exercise and enforce the Law on Access to Public Information.	Contribute to the improvement of cultural and institutional conditions which are neessary for transparancy and citizen participation in democratic institutions in El Salvador.

• Lessons learnt study: "LAPI Enforcement in a Sample of Municipalities" (in progress); • Forum "Experience in promoting and enforcing the LAPI in municipalitites"; • Three seminars on "Challenges in LAPI Enforcement in the Municipalities of El Salvador".	*research and developing findings; presenting the findings.* - *15 organized coalitions with the capacity to carry out citizen oversight;* - *124 individuals from MINED, IAPI and municipalities have taken part in the LAPI promotion and enforcement experience.*	
• Identifying needs; • Preparing two seminars; • Three seminars: Challenges in LAPI Enforcement in the Municipalities; • Designing the training strategy of the Diploma; • Two versions of the diploma for information officers: "Transparency and access to information in municipalities"; • Elaborating 11 municipal plans for the enforcement of the LAPI; • Publication of two guides containing guidelines for the generation of information and making it available to the public;	**3. 10 municipal governments have improved their capacity to enforce the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI).** - *Awareness was raised among 53 members of Municipal Councils and 114 heads of administrative units and 51 informtion officers and archive-managers and they received training on the importance of the LAPI;* - *11 municipalities have the capacity to prepare their Municipal Plan for the enforcement of the LAPI; they offer relevant public information to citizens.*	

III.   Evaluation findings

(i)   Relevance

The project was relevant since it intervened at a very timely moment, shortly after the recent adoption of the Law on Access to Public Information (LAPI) in 2010 and its entry into force in 2011, which establishes obligations on the issue, both at central level and at municipal level.

The creation of the governing body, the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAPI) at national level was carried out without ensuring that sufficient capacities were in place to promote and support the enforcement of the LAPI and to respond to the needs of the municipalities.

This new political scenario created a series of concrete requirement both in terms of the institutional strengthening of local governments to produce and organize information and make it available to the public; and in terms of empowering citizens to exercise their right to access public information.

Consultation on training City needs and the barriers to enforcing the LAPI with officers from Halls from la Libertad and San Salvador, April 2013.

The municipalities, which are considered as spaces for citizen participation which are closest to the citizens, displayed great weaknesses at various levels. The technical support and capacity-building initiatives which the project developed (be it the seminars and workshops, the diploma or the forums) therefore responded to needs to strengthen the institution at various levels. On the one hand, the municipalities did not have enough information on the LAPI, they were not getting ready to enforce it and did not possess the adequate tools to do so. On the other hand, the resources and capacities to implement the LAPI were scarce in

> "At the start of the project, young people were very doubtful. Some of them said: why should I go and ask for information if I'm not going to get anywhere".
>
> *Carlos Rodríguez, Project Coordinator*

comparison to the resources available to the central government. It is worth mentioning that the 262 municipal governments only administer 8% of the national budget. In addition, the coaching sessions with the municipalities showed that their administrative capacity was also very limited, since 89% of them did not have a Governance Plan in place. On top of that there was an atmosphere of resistance within the municipalities to investing energy and resources into enforcing the LAPI.

In this context, it is worth highlighting that in El Salvador there was no previous experience of citizen oversight of the enforcement of the law at local level. Only very few initiatives had been developed, which had been disperse and insufficient. The citizens were not aware of their rights which meant that there was very little demand from citizens for public information.

In this Salvadorian socio-political context, marked by extended periods of conflict and violence and characterized by the State's limited ability to bring about effective public

policies, the project was responding to a genuine need and helped position the issue of access to public information at the local level. According to the opinion of the beneficiaries interviewed, the project responded to the need to learn more about rights, particularly about the right to access public information, and it furthermore provided relevant tools that contributed to the improved quality of both offer and demand.

The municipalities were selected on the basis of a call for expressions of interest, while care was taken to ensure that there was a diverse political representation as well as diversity in size and taking into account the municipalities' interest and commitment to participating in the project. The UNDEF project was carried out in more urban municipalities close to San Salvador, since this is the sphere of FUNDAUNGO's influence. The EU project moved out of San Salvador, since it was also associated with FUNDAMUNI, which has a greater geographical presence.

Course I: Municipalities and the Right to Access public information, Participatory exercise.

The choice of project partners was very appropriate, since the Secretariat for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Anti-corruption (SPCTA) (formally the Sub-secretariat for Transparency and Anti-corruption), was the body in the executive arm which promoted the Law. The Institute for Access to Public Information (IAPI) was invited as the governing body on access to public information; and the involvement of the Ministry for Education (MINED) allowed the issue to be raised in public educational centers, thereby significantly multiplying knowledge on the right. The Foundation for the Support of Municipalities in El Salvador (FUNDAMUNI) in turn provided experience and a geographical presence, which meant that the resources could be deployed more efficiently, since FUNDAUNGO relied on them to carry out activities in municipalities where they had already developed a working relationship with local governments and citizens.

Other relevant actors were also invited to participate at local level, such as the Corporation of Municipalities in the Republic of El Salvador (COMURES), the Salvadorian Institute for Municipal Development (ISDEM) and the José Matías Delgado University. However, these actors did not respond favorably to the call since they could not see what the benefits would be and due to a general lack of interest in enforcing the law. The project did not develop any mechanisms to promote a working network among these institutions.

Another component worth highlighting is the relevance of the suggested methodology, which was designed on the basis of a meticulous analysis of the needs and the data collected in the baseline[11]. The methodological focus was extremely coherent with the project objectives and was adapted to each of the three results, working with cases which were related to the daily practices of the participants, and using participative and easily comprehensible dynamics. The entry and exit evaluation were key elements for continuous improvement.

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[11] The baseline was not constructed within the UNDEF Project but instead within the EU Project – yet another strength that resulted from the link between the two projects.

The development of support tools and materials was based on the specific needs and experiences of the target audience – both of the multiplying agents and of the institutional beneficiaries – and they contained clear, didactic and high-quality content; which led to the need to design dissemination plans which would allow their contribution to be capitalized on.

The project strategy ensured internal coherence between the three results, by linking the activities on strengthening demand through institutional strengthening and the training of multiplying agents; while at the same time strengthening the demand for public information by teaching citizens about the uses and benefits of access to public information and exercising oversight to improve their quality of life.

The strategy selected by FUNDANGO did not, however, include direct work with citizens so that the RAPI may serve as a "key right" to unlock other fundamental rights or push for improvements in public services and local public policies.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the gender perspective was integrated in a relevant and transversal way. In most of the activities, the participation of women and men was equal in the various capacity-building initiatives and in many a female dominance was observed. The field visits revealed that women were present in public office, both as information officers and as archive-managers. In some municipalities, such as in Santa Tecla, work was being done specifically with women leaders to inform them about their right to access information. An improvement in more equal participation could be seen through the increase in the demand profile (164 men and 174 women in 2014).

(ii) Effectiveness

The project achieved concrete results of excellent quality, reaching the desired objectives while displaying a very high level of effectiveness. A key factor which contributed to the project's effectiveness was the appropriate and relevant design of the methodology applied during the project implementation. For each result the outputs that were to be achieved were precisely defined in advance, as well as the steps that would be followed in order to achieve them. The project team identified key questions that would orient the methodological design step by step. The first phase focused on getting closer to the target population in order to hear what they were interested in and to gather very concrete information which would serve as the basis for planning the content of the capacity-building courses and the training sessions and in designing the tools and support material. For instance, the team sought to understand what the beneficiaries already knew about the LAPI: what might people be interested in in terms of public information? What type of information did women or young people need and how would they use it? Focus groups and needs investigation sessions were organized in order to gather this information. When designing the capacity-building sessions, the "barriers" and "obstacles" which had been identified during the exploratory phase were sought to be transformed into information and content provided during the sessions, by explaining the right to public information to the beneficiaries. The project's advantage was that it was a "design-in-progress" depending on the specific needs of the beneficiaries, which meant that its effectiveness could be maximized.

> "The content of the Transparency Diploma was easy to grasp. There were various teachers from different professional backgrounds: lawyers, communicators, public relations experts… there was a good atmosphere and the tools that were presented were very useful".
>
> *Víctor Antonio Alvarado, Information Officer, Ayutuxtepeque*

Result R1 aimed at involving as many facilitators as possible in the promotion of the LAPI. Overall, 125 volunteers and 27 local communicators were empowered as facilitators by following the course "The Municipality and the Right to Access Public Information". A total of five editions of this course were carried out which were adapted to the target audience, and it took place in form of three complementary modules, which helped strengthen the participants' knowledge of municipalities and municipal governments; promoted the practice of the Right to Access Public Information (RAPI); and addressed specific methodologies on the disclosure of the LAPI. The following table shows the participants' profiles, the geographical scope and the gender representation:

Activity	Dates	Beneficiaries	Municipalities
Course I: The Municipality and the Right to Access Public Information	27 July - 21 September 2013	**35 Teachers** • 24 women • 11 men	San Salvador, Ciudad Delgado, Mejicanos, Quezaltepeque, Antiguo Cuscatlán, Colón, Apopa, San Juan Opico, Colón, Sacacoyo, Tepecoyo, Zaragoza
Course II: The Municipality and the Right to Access Public Information	04 September - 3 October 2013	**30 Municipal promoters and members of CSOs** • 19 women • 11 men	San Salvador, Mejicanos, Quezaltepeque, Antiguo Cuscatlán, Ilopango, Apopa, San Juan Opico, Quezaltepeque, Santa Tecla, Apopa, Soyapango.
Course III: The Municipality and the Right to Access Public Information	28 September - 9 November 2013	**28 Teachers and CSOs** • 16 women • 12 men	Santa Ana, Ahuachapán, Chalchuapa, San Lorenzo, San Francisco Menéndez, Tacuba, El Congo, Jujutla, San Sebastián Salitrillo.
Course IV: The Municipality and the Right to Access Public Information	17 July - 14 August 2014	**32 Municipal promoters and members of CSOs** • 21 women • 11 men	San Salvador, Ciudad Delgado, Mejicanos, Soyapango, La Libertad, Colón, Sacacoyo, Tepecoyo, Santa Ana, Ahuchapán, El Congo
Seminar for communicators **Social communication strategies to disseminate the LAPI in the municipality**	17 July - 14 August 2014	**27 Local communicators, municipal communication officers, journalists** • 13 women • 14 men	San Salvador, San Juan Opico, Zaragoza , Antiguo Cuscatlán, Ciudad Delgado.

In addition, 150 training sessions were carried out to empower 4361 participants, 2504 of which were women and 1857 of which were men.

The 'Citizen Education booklet: the Right to Access Public Information in the Municipality' was edited within the framework of the project and was an optimal support tool which complemented the capacity-building sessions. The conceptual and didactical quality as well as the presentation of the produced material were certainly key factors for the project's high level of effectiveness.

Result R2 sought to strengthen the capacities of grass-roots organizations and Civil Society Organizations to carry out oversight. In order to do this, two seminars were carried out on the topic of: "Citizen oversight of the enforcement of the LAPI in municipalities". These benefitted from support from SPCTA and the Transparency Corporation from Colombia.

Activity	Date	Beneficiaries	Municipalities
Seminar: Citizen oversight of the enforcement of the LAPI in municipalities	October November 2014	**106 Local leaders, social promoters** • 57 women • 49 men	San Juan Opico, Quezaltepeque, Colón, Zaragoza, Santa Tecla, La Libertad, Chalchuapa, San Lorenzo, Santa Ana, El Congo, Ahuachapán, Acajutla, San Salvador, Mejicanos, Ciudad Delgado

In addition, 15 pilot practice groups on the "Enforcement of the LAPI in municipalities" provided practical information on how to carry out the interview with the Information Officers, what sort of questions to ask, how to ask for information, how to draft the report, and how to present it to the body in charge. This exercise was rated highly by most of the beneficiaries, since they had no knowledge of their right to carry out citizen oversight, and in cases where they were aware of it, they were too afraid to carry it out and they simply did not know what procedures to follow. Nine groups completed their activities on exercising oversight of the enforcement of the LAPI in the municipalities. The project's contribution was also significant since this practice is still quite unusual in El Salvador, except for some projects that have observatories on specific issues. The project provided a space for empowerment at local level, which leaves the challenge of how to ensure its continuity. Contact has been made with the Sub-secretariat for Territorial Development which has pushed for the formulation of Strategic Participatory Plans and is interested in ensuring that there is an oversight in place for them.

Result R3 focused directly on the institutional strengthening of the municipalities, mainly through training members of the Municipal Councils and the Heads of Administrative Units. To this aim, three seminars were organized on the topic of: "Challenges in LAPI enforcement in the municipalities", as well as two Diploma sessions for Information Officers on the topic of: "Transparency and Access to Information in the municipalities".

Activity	Date	Beneficiaries	Municipalities
Three seminars: **Challenges in LAPI enforcement in the municipalities**	April, May and June 2013	**148 mayors, municipal syndics, members of municipal councils, municipal secretaries, executives and managers and information officers.** • 63 women • 85 men	17 Municipalities in San Salvador and La Libertad
Two Diploma sessions: **Transparency and Access to Public Information in the municipalities**	2013-2014	**82 information officers, municipal secretaries, archive-managers and other related holders of public office** • 48 women • 34 men	**Diploma I:** Municipalities of San Salvador, La Libertad, Santa Ana, Ahuachapán, Usulután and San Vicente. **Diploma II:** Municipalities of San Salvador, La Libertad, Santa Ana, Ahuachapán, Usulután and Sonsonate.

The design of the content of the capacity-building sessions was supported by a preliminary investigation to identify the needs for support and capacity-building that the municipalities had, by analyzing the understanding of the RAPI among municipal staff, looking at the major problems and limitations the municipalities face, what needs the municipalities had in order to enforce the LAPI and promote the RAPI and the types of difficulties municipal staff faced in providing information to young people, women and local leaders. The implementation of the Diploma was participated in by the Ministry of Education and two technical experts from Mexico, whose participation was supported by UNDEF. The Diploma made it possible to train 82 people in 32 municipalities over the course of eight days. The methodology was structured around in-person sessions once a week, research exercises and applied group workshops in the municipalities, individual reading tasks, field visits and follow-up sessions in the departments. The beneficiaries of the capacity-building sessions said that they were very satisfied, since the seminars enabled them to understand how the municipality works and what the necessary requirements are to manage and guarantee access to public information. The participants in the Diploma highlighted the quality of the content, the practical focus of the methodology which suited their needs and they especially appreciated the usefulness of learning about procedures to elaborate Municipal Plans for the enforcement of the LAPI.

As previously mentioned, the project amply fulfilled its objectives and results which had been initially identified. In addition, the matrix of indicators which was provided by FUNDAUNGO as well as the field visits led to the conclusion that most of the pursued outputs had in fact surpassed their aims in terms of quantity. This is due to the flawless management and execution of the project, but also due to the link that was established with the EU-funded project, which meant that a larger number of beneficiaries and municipalities could be reached.

Above all, the project put in place a monitoring process for the activities carried out and the level of satisfaction among the participants of the various activities. However, it was not able to implement processes to follow-up on the achieved effects, for instance by observing the level of regular application and appropriation integrated into the daily working practices both of the participants and of the institutions, which would have had an added value for the assessment of effectiveness.

Lectures given by Mr Ubaldo León and Ms Alma Tovar from the Federal Institute for Access to Information and Data Protection of Mexico

(iii) Efficiency

The project's efficiency was highly satisfactory. Due to the receptiveness and flexibility of UNDEF the project was able to positively link the execution of several of its activities with the project: *"Strengthening Municipal Capacity for Access to Public Information in El Salvador. Collaborative capacity-building among local players on access to public information in municipalities",* financed by the European Union (EU). This complementary situation made it possible to optimize the intervention's efficiency. The UNDEF project financed the interventions in the Departments of San Salvador and La Libertad; in Santa Ana and Ahuachapán UNDEF financed capacity-building spaces, thereby increasing the number of beneficiaries from what had initially been planned by the project (capacity-building was carried out with 4361 individuals, 2504 women and 1857 men although only 3000 had initially been planned).

The team that was responsible for coordinating the project was made up of a general coordinator, who was responsible for supervising the global progress of the project; and three coordinators who were each responsible for one of the three results. In addition the team was supported by one administrative assistant and one accountant.

Three complimentary tools were used to monitor the project: (a) the Project Operations Plan (POP); (b) monthly coordination meetings; (c) execution reports on the budget.
Each coordinator developed a project plan that corresponded to their respective results and products. In addition to identifying each milestone and its realization date, work plans were designed with a corresponding execution matrix. Each product was divided into tasks and each task was allocated a weight which totaled 100% all together.
In order to monitor the results, the matrix of indicators was used (annexed to the PD), which the team deemed to be a very useful instrument since the construction exercise meant that they had to think about and identify realistic indicators.

In the monthly coordination meetings the achieved progress was analyzed as well as problems and possible adjustments to be made. The meetings were an opportunity to coordinate and gain knowledge of the technical points of the partners, who had the opportunity to choose the sector which they wanted to collaborate on.

For the follow-up and the execution of the budget, the NGO has specific procedures for managing their accounting and account management system. The accounting system is organized by funds and each project has a completely separate bookkeeping. This system works with

Participantes del Seminario: Desafíos para la aplicación de la LAIP en el municipio, provenientes de departamentos de San Salvador y La Libertad.

chapters which are defined in the approved budget according to the Convention established with each project. Furthermore, the accounting system is registered in accordance with the legal standards established by the Ministry of Governance. In accordance with these requirements, two audits were carried out which reviewed the entire bookkeeping and operation of the NGO. The audit is carried out by an external auditor and is linked to fiscal management. In addition, a project-specific audit was carried out.

In order to facilitate the internal supervision, the NGO adapts the budget of each project to a format which enables it to carry out a monthly follow-up on the financial evaluation of the project. In order to do this, expenditures are entered into the monitoring spreadsheet and the NGO's monitoring table is linked to the UNDEF format. The accounting for UNDEF was organized by product, whereas the accounting for the EU project were structured according to type of expenditure.

No problems were noted in the execution of the budget, the execution of the time frame or the disbursement plan. The expenditure monitoring tools which were used by the NGO made it easy to establish financial reports since all the information was already registered. In addition, UNDEF's quick approval of the reports and disbursement of each contribution favored the smooth running of the activities.

> "We wanted the following question to be eliminated from the vocabulary of municipal staff: what do you want it for? This would mean that they had understood that all citizens have the right to public information".
> *Bernardo Posada, FUNDAMUNI representative*

In terms of budget analysis, the technical posts which were the major part of the project were entirely covered by UNDEF, which is to be viewed positively. However, the staff and institutional support posts were, according to FUNDAUNGO, very restrictive and limiting, which could have affected the quality of the results at some point. The budget which was initially requested from UNDEF was $US 299,000, of which only $US 225,000 were granted (for staff costs $US 90,000 were requested and $US 51,000 were granted; for contractual services $US 45,000 were budgeted and $US 11,000 were approved). It was in FUNDAUNGO's view that the budget fell short in the areas of logistical support and finance and administration.

The presence of the EU funding meant that these difficulties could be compensated for. An additional factor that contributed to balancing the books was the contribution made by two local partners, namely the mayors' offices and the MINED who provided resources in kind (refreshments, volunteers, local instructors…). These savings were not quantified since they were provided locally.

The need to extend the project by four months can be explained by various reasons. On the one hand, the delay in the establishment of the IAPI postponed the agreement with the municipalities. On the other hand, establishing the collaboration relationship between the MINED and the IAPI took a long time, since the Institute was just setting up and the MINED's response was slow. However, it was very important to achieve this agreement with the Ministry, since it is in charge of education and the education centers. In addition there was the political factor, specifically the on-going election process. The project extension did not require any changes to the budget line, but it did allow to increase the number of participants, increase the number of publications and fund the production of various videos.

(iv) Impact

In spite of the fact that it is difficult to evaluate the impact achieved by the project in the short term, the field visits which were carried out during the mission made it possible to appreciate significant effects and an impact on the direct beneficiaries and project-external actors.

One of the major impacts was raising the issue of access to public information up to the next level in the municipalities and them becoming aware of the challenges they face and the risks involved in not meeting the legal requirements. Through the capacity-building and awareness-raising activities the project had a strong impact on the process that the municipalities have to carry out in order to implement the enforcement of the LAPI. The interviews and focus groups made it possible to appreciate the highly positive rating of the project's contribution, particularly at the local level. The information officers and archive-managers of the municipalities explained how little they knew about the legal text and the requirement to enforce the LAPI and how their participation in the Diploma course had allowed them to gain a completely different view on their role within the municipality.

Lectures and exercises during the in-person session, Diploma course, Antiguo Cuscatlán.

The fact that a detailed analysis of the initial situation of each municipality was carried out and installed capacities which were essential to guarantee the enforcement of the LAPI were reflected on, allowed them to gain theoretical and operational knowledge in order to improve the management process of public information and the efficient dissemination of official information by the municipality. The fact that mayors and medium-level officials (municipal syndics, member of Municipal Councils, municipal secretaries, executives and managers, information officers…) participated in the workshops shows the institutional will to enforce the LAPI.

According to information that was gathered during interviews with the IAPI, the mayors who had participated in the project were more aware of the issue of public information and frequently consulted the IAPI. The municipalities are undertaking a series of adjustments, reviewing whether or not they have information officers, whether they will change them and whether the information is classified. The data gathered shows that in the beginning only 100 mayors' offices had information officers and now over 208 have already appointed information officers. Another area in which progress was made was the inclusion of the concept of transparency. Although the project was of too short a duration to bring about cultural paradigm shifts in the institutions or in the participatory culture of citizens who demand their rights but have difficulties in becoming involved, the project nevertheless laid the groundwork and provided tools to exercise active transparency and strengthen social citizen oversight. At the same time it helped identify the necessary cultural and institutional factors to enforce the LAPI in the municipalities.

> "Staff and employees of the municipality have been empowered in terms of Access to Public Information. Once the project is over there will be adequately trained staff to assist the population (information officer, technical officers and assistants); and there will also be official information available in the Transparency Portal".
> *Karla María Escobar, former Information Officer, Mayors' Office of Soyapango, participant in the Diploma course on Transparency*

The project was positively rated by local leaders and social promoters who participated in the seminars and coaching sessions to establish practices of oversight and who said that they would not forget how to conduct oversight and how to reach the municipality to request information. In Santa Tecla for instance, it was said that in the beginning not many people requested information but that the figures showed a positive trend in the new paradigm that was being applied both by the municipal staff and by the citizens.

Oversight groups during the training session, seminar: Citizen oversight of the application of the LAPI.

Another considerable level of impact that should be mentioned relates to the project partners themselves. Particularly for the IAPI, the governing body for public information, the project tuned out to be a strategic ally. The capacities of the Institute to accompany the State entities were increased and it was strengthened and "mobilized" by the project, which meant it could interlink with municipalities. It would be a shame if this institutional strengthening could not be capitalized on in the future, especially if for economic reasons the IAPI does away with the technical services offered by FUNDAUNGO.

The collaborative relationship that the project established with the Ministry for Education should also be noted, since this had a strong multiplier effect as many directors and teachers in educational centers learnt about the RAPI and are incorporating it, albeit informally, into their curriculum activities.

(iv) Sustainability

The project was able to strengthen important sustainability factors at various levels, due to the strategy that was designed to carry out the intervention and the sound choice of its partners, which allowed to leave behind "installed capacities" of excellent quality in the beneficiary entities.

From an institutional and technical perspective, the decision to carry out institutional strengthening through cascading capacity-building among multiplying agents was an important aspect of sustainability since most of the beneficiaries hold leadership roles in their own organizations, educational centers and/or municipalities and are already replicating the lessons they learnt there.

The focus groups with information officers and the interviews held with archive-managers in municipalities led to the conclusion that they greatly valued the knowledge they had acquired. They have internalized the RAPI as a fundamental condition for efficient and transparent municipal management and at the same time they possess knowledge and relevant tools to improve the management of public information and to respond to and adequately manage requests for information from citizens. In several municipalities the archives have been re-organized, making official information available and orderly.

Along the same lines, beneficiaries of the coaching sessions and practical sessions on citizen oversight who were able to present their oversight report to the Department for Transparency of the Secretariat for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Anti-corruption – for instance in Ciudad Delgado – shared what this experience had meant for them. They highlighted that the capacity-building seminar enabled them to become aware of the fact that they did not know how to request information and that sometimes they were afraid to request it for fear of possible reprisals by a State entity; they simply did not know that it was one of their rights.

Even though the level of understanding and use is different from one municipality to the next, the observations that were made during the evaluation process make it possible to anticipate that the project has achieved sustainable empowerment which may guarantee the continuation of the initiatives. Although it is still necessary to fine-tune the processes which have been launched, the project was able to lay the necessary groundwork for the creation of a favorable environment for the exercise of the Right to Access Public Information.

> "Before the capacity-building sessions there was no knowledge at all about the Law on Access to Information or on the process that was necessary to request information from a municipality. Now, a larger number of information requests has been encouraged".
> **Marcela Jiménez, seconded staff from UAPI to the mayor's office in Antigua Cuscatlán, participant in the Diploma course on Transparency**

Equally, the materials and tools which were produced within the project are being used by the beneficiaries, both in knowledge dissemination activities and to support the organization of new capacity-building initiatives. They constitute a key sustainability component since they could continue to be applied in future initiatives. Quite a few of the persons interviewed suggested that it would be useful to adapt the materials to target groups with other profiles, such as children, young people, elderly people, people with special needs, among others, in order to increase their coverage and usefulness. Some of the teachers and directors of educational centers stated an interest in adapting the materials to their students, stressing

that they would however require technical assistance and a small amount of resources to support this initiative.

Visit to the General Archive of the Nation and the Ministry of the Economy.

The inter-institutional relationships that were established during the execution of the project constitute another component to potentially foster sustainability. The interviews revealed that many of the project beneficiary organizations and actors still maintain contact with FUNDAUNGO and are organizing initiatives to lend continuity to the processes which were launched. This is the case for MINED which, even though it was not able to institutionalize the integration of the RAPI into its official curriculum, does indeed have many teachers and directors of educational centers in the formal education sector who are implementing educational activities with students. The collaborative framework which was created by the project should be capitalized on, as should the motivation and skill of the trained teaching staff, in order to promote the sustainable implementation of article 46 of the LAPI which states that official educational plans and programs should include content related to the importance of transparency, the RAPI and citizen participation in public administration.

At the same time, the Convention that was established within the project between the IAPI, in its capacity as governing body for access to public information, and FUNDAUNGO should continue to be implemented in order to encourage future programs and initiatives on capacity-building which would be open to other actors from the public sector and/or civil society. In terms of sustainability, it would be important for the process of technical assistance offered to the IAPI by FUNDAUNGO to be established on a permanent basis which would allow the consolidation of the institutional strengthening of the IAPI, thereby increasing its capacity to support other municipalities in an efficient and effective way. It should be noted that the State institutions that are involved in the enforcement of the LAPI depend on these types of projects, which could lead to future problems in terms of sustainability. With this in mind, it would be important for projects of this kind to revise the commitments that State institutions could take on during and after the project.

The NGO has been intervening for more than twenty years, attempting to contribute to the democratic development in El Salvador, which means that it has established collaborative relationships with State entities, both at central level and at department and local level. Due to the reliability and quality of its research and its sound institutional track record, FUNDAUNGO is a well-respected organization and is known as an important interlocutor and a reference for other civil society organizations intervening in similar sectors. Furthermore, it has the support of international cooperation agencies, which has contributed to the consolidation of its financial sustainability. The implementation of future interventions which may consolidate and amplify the developed initiatives will depend above all on the institutional will of the NGO and they are not expected to encounter any difficulties in obtaining funding.

(v) UNDEF added value

Without UNDEF's support, it would not have been possible to carry out the first Diploma on Transparency in the country. Even today there does not exist any other similar capacity-building program on this issue. It is important to bear in mind that, in the Salvadorian context, there are some democracy-related topics with very few donors support. The added value that UNDEF brought to the project made it possible to carry out capacity-building among municipal staff and employees in a prolonged and systematic way and increase their knowledge on the Law on Access to Information. At the same time it contributed to the empowerment of citizens by providing them with knowledge on their rights and possibilities for citizen participation, leading to the realization among the population that in their daily lives there are series of rights that the local governments are obligated to render effective. Finally it is worth noting that the weight provided by a project funded by the United Nations helped generate respect and bring on board relevant actors, especially the public institutions (IAPI, SPCTA and MINED).

IV. Conclusions

       (i) ***The project intervention was timely*** – just after the adoption of the Law on the Access to Public Information (LAPI). Its quick entry into force required capacities which local governments, citizens and the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAPI) did not have. In this context, the project allowed for various educational actions as well as technical assistance to institutionally strengthen the municipalities so that they may comply with the enforcement of the LAPI; to help social actors learn about and exercise their right to access public information; and to position the IAPI as the governing body that is responsible for access to public information. However, the executing body decided not to carry out direct work with the citizens, thereby making use of the RAPI as a "key right" aiming to unlock other fundamental rights or leading to improved public services or local public policy.
This conclusion follows from findings on relevance and effectiveness.

       (ii) ***The project developed materials and tools of excellent quality*** in terms of content, didactical focus and quality of production. These contributed to the multiplication of knowledge among the various audiences, and became key components for sustainability to support future activities. Some of the participants asked for the materials to be adapted to other types of audiences in order to achieve a greater coverage and so that the right becomes part of the civic culture among children, young people, elderly people, people with special needs, among others. In some cases, multipliers such as teachers in educational centers offered to adapt the materials to suit their audiences. In these cases, all that was needed was technical assistance and a small amount of resources to support these actions.
This conclusion follows from findings on relevance and effectiveness.

       (iii) ***The choice of project partners was very sound*** since the IAPI is the governing body in charge of access to public information; the Secretariat for Citizen Participation Transparency and Anti-corruption (formerly the Sub-secretariat for Transparency and Anti-corruption) was the body in the executive arm that promoted the law; the Ministry of Education (MINED) allowed for the topic to be introduced in public educational centers, thereby greatly multiplying knowledge about the right; and the Foundation for Municipal Support in El Salvador (FUNDAMUNI) has a geographical presence that allowed the resources to be deployed more efficiently. Other relevant institutions were invited to participate but they did not respond favorably. Regrettably, the project did not foresee any mechanisms to promote a working network among these institutions.
This conclusion follows from findings on relevance and effectiveness.

       (iv) ***The project leaves behind a series of instruments*** which in the medium term will allow the country to make progress in the enforcement of the LAPI at municipal level. The project has placed a great emphasis on the systemization and the reproduction of lessons learnt. *However,* ***FUNDAUNGO did not plan for a mechanism to follow up on the effects*** of the project on the professional practices of the beneficiaries (multipliers); meaning how it could be seen whether the multipliers were

continuing actions that had been carried out with the project. This could present a risk, since many of the multiplier actions may not be institutionalized.
This conclusion follows from findings on effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

       (v)   The project achieved the establishment of a collaborative relationship between FUNDAUNGO and the IAPI in order to strengthen the latter. However, it can be seen that there remains the institutional weakness of the IAPI in addressing the Right to Information at the local level and in coordinating the actors that are supporting the enforcement of the LAPI at that level. In this sense, the IAPI was not able to capitalize on the institutional strengthening or on the use of the tools to promote the right to access public information at the local level, which FUNDAUNGO provided through the project. This could have been a key element to ensure a relevant and high-quality education process in other municipalities. The IAPI sees FUNDAUNGO as an important ally for the implementation of the LAPI at the local level. However, the relationship between these two institutions was not consolidated at the project end which suggested the risk that it progressively faded away.
This conclusion follows from findings on effectiveness and sustainability.

       (vi)   The methodology which the project applied to the educational processes was highly relevant and contributed to strengthening the capacities of local and national actors, as well as knowledge multiplication, thereby adapting successfully to the different audiences and providing practical elements for the execution of the right to access public information. The methodology and the production of materials were based on the needs analysis and specific participant experiences as well as on continuous improvement. The entry and exit evaluation as well as the perceptiveness of the methodology and materials were a key element for continuous improvement. In addition, FUNDAUNGO demonstrated that they were very coherent with the institutional objectives in selecting the project approach strategy, meaning that they opted for developing knowledge management actions with the multipliers, at the expense of direct actions with citizens on the execution of their rights through access to information as a "key right".
This conclusion follows from findings on effectiveness and sustainability.

V. Recommendations

These recommendations are geared towards enabling a favorable environment for the access to and exercise of rights; supporting participatory processes for the promotion of coherent public policies. In order to do this, it is recommended that:

FUNDAUNGO:

> *(i) Capitalize on the results of the strategic needs analyses* (identification of the baseline[12], participatory diagnoses) that were carried out within the framework of the project and complete them with the identification/mapping of vulnerable rights, which would help increase the impact of the project actions. The aim of access to public information is to contribute to an increased citizen participation in setting the local agendas and in carrying out advocacy which results in the implementation of relevant public policies. In this sense, even though the project did not seek to do so during this particular intervention, it is important to ensure a cross-over between this right and public policies in order to give access to public information meaning and a more concrete application for the citizens in general (see conclusion i).

> *(ii) Support the consolidation of inter-institutional synergies* which favor opportunities for mutual strengthening of the actors involved in similar issues and struggles would be, from all points of view, a great contribution by FUNDAUNGO to stimulate and promote a working network between actors involved in the RAPI. In other words, it is about promoting organized spaces for collaboration to address the right to access public information, as an opportunity to give more potential and strength to the capacities of political intervention among citizens and civil society as a whole. In this context, FUNDAUNGO could contribute by passing on planning and actor-coordination methodologies to the governing bodies (see conclusion iv).

> *(iii) Include planned and sequential actions which promote spaces for participation and citizen organization at the grassroots level* (or on a geographical level) within the strategy for institutional strengthening, focused on empowering multiplying actors. Otherwise there exists the risk that if the multiplication practices are not institutionalized, the benefits of access to public information will not trickle down to the most vulnerable population groups, who are among the beneficiaries targeted in priority in interventions funded by UNDEF. (see conclusion i).

> *(iv) Increase the dissemination of materials between citizens*; while diversifying their reproduction to reach specific beneficiary profiles (children, young adults, rural populations, people with disabilities, among others). In order to do this, FUNDAUNGO could work together with other actors who have more experience in working with these population groups (see conclusion iii).

> *(v) Implement processes for strategic monitoring* including the analysis and follow-up on effects obtained among citizens with the aim of capitalizing on lessons learnt

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[12] Constructed in the framework of the EU-funded project.

and the added value generated by the project. This focus should allow to assess the qualitative achievements and evaluate to what extent the launched actions and processes reached the institutional level in a sustainable way (see conclusion v).

Project partners:

(vi) The IAPI and the MINED should use this opportunity to capitalize on the "quality" and the "potential" of the capacity-strengthening process that was started within the framework of the project. In order to do this, the Convention set up with FUNDAUNGO should continue to be implemented so that it favors the coherence and continuation of future programs/initiatives on capacity-building. In addition, the IAPI could ask FUNDAUNGO to provide permanent assistance through an agreement on technical cooperation, in order to increase the coverage of municipalities in an efficient and effective manner, through adequate planning and coordinating efforts of other public and non-governmental actors. The MINED should make use of the energy and creativity that the project generated among directors and teachers to reproduce the RAPI knowledge for teachers and students by using language, materials and

Submission of the report on oversight in Ciudad Delgado to the Director for Transparency of the Secretariat for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Anti-Corruption.

methodologies that are adapted to specific ages, thereby complying with article 46 of the LAPI which states that study plans and programs in formal education should include at all levels of education (except higher education) content that displays the importance of transparency, the RAPI and citizen participation in public administration (see conclusions iii and vi).

(vii) Organize initiatives in order to capitalize on and to disseminate best practices, (a) increasing the coverage at the municipal level; (b) through exchanges with other civil society organizations and/or UNDEF supported projects which are elaborating programs on capacity-building, rights-related topics and citizen participation (see conclusion v and vii).

VI. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	• Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? • Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? • Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve its objectives and goals?	• To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? • To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged in the project document? If not, why not? • Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? • What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	• Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? • Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? • Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to the direct promotion of democracy?	• To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? • Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? • To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? • Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	• To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support a continued impact? • Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF added value	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	• What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project that could not have been achieved as well by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). • Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

Project documents:
- (i) PO Note - UNDEF;
- (ii) Initial project document;
- (iii) Mid-term and Final narrative reports submitted by Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo;
- (iv) MVR2;
- (v) MVR3;
- (vi) Final FUR;
- (vii) Final budget;
- (viii) Web site: www.fundaungo.org.sv and link of the Project under http://www.fundaungo.org.sv/ptm/en/

Materials edited during the project execution:
- LAPI, Enforcement in Municipalities in El Salvador (2013).
- The Municipality and the Right of Access to Public Information, Training program;
- Challenges in LAPI Enforcement in the Municipalities of El Salvador, Seminar;
- Transparency and Access to Information, Diploma Program;
- Citizen Oversight in the Enforcement of the LAPI, Seminar;
- Strategies for social communication regarding the right of access to public information (RAPI), Seminar for local communicators;
- Guide for the classification of information and preparation of public information by own initiative;
- Guide to communication LAPI;
- Guide: Installation of basic conditions for the enforcement of the LAPI;
- Report on Citizen Oversight. Availability of official information in the Municipality of Ciudad Delgado;
- Report on Citizen Oversight. Functioning of the UAIP and dissemination of the RAPI in the Municipality of Chalchuapa;
- Report on Citizen Oversight. Functioning of the UAIP and dissemination of the RAPI in the Municipality of Colon, La Libertad;
- Report on Citizen Oversight. Functioning of the UAIP and dissemination of the RAPI in the Municipality of San Lorenzo, Ahuachapán;
- Citizen Education booklet "The Right of Access to Public Information in the Municipality";
- Awareness-raising videos, testimonials;

Other documents:
- Law on Access to Public Information;
- Temas de Actualidad, N°10, Los Derechos Humanos en El Salvador: Una lectura desde las encuestas de opinión; Ricardo Córdova Macías y Nayelly Loya Marín, FUNDAUNGO, 2011;
- Temas de Actualidad, N° 15, Aplicación de la Ley de Acceso a la Información Publica en las municipalidades de El Salvador, Alicia Elena Miranda Duke; Proyecto Municipio Transparente, Apliquemos el derecho de acceso a la Información publica. Construcción colaborativa de las capacidades en los actores locales para el acceso a la información publica en el municipio, Proyecto Unión Europea, FUNDAUNGO.

Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

May 4 2015	
Carlos Rodríguez	Project coordinator
Carlos Rivas	In charge of strengthening municipal capacities
Irma Huezo	In charge of education and citizen oversight
Kimberling Hernández	Director for Transparency - SPCTA
Miriam Chávez	Expert on Participation - SPCTA
Dr. Ricardo Córdova	Executive Director of FUNDAUNGO.
Santos Hernández	Administrator of FUNDAUNGO
Luisa Maria Aguilar	International Consultant
Roberto Rivera	National Consultant
May 5 2015	
Herminia Funes	Commissioner of the IAPI
César González	Legal Unit of the IAPI
Edna Álvarez	Information Officer, Municipality of Santa Tecla
Juan Bosco	Archive-manager, Municipality of Santa Tecla
José Rubén Guerra	Information Officer, Municipality of Colón
Dalila Velasquez	Archive-manager, Municipality of Colón
Rosario Díaz	Accountant, Municipality of Colón
Alexis Henriquez	Technical expert from FUNDAUNGO
Patricia Rodríguez	Technical expert from FUNDAUNGO
Carlos Rodriguez	Project coordinator
Irma Huezo	In charge of education and citizen oversight
Metzi Rosales	Communication Officer from FUNDAUNGO
Luisa Maria Aguilar	International Consultant
Roberto Rivera	National Consultant
May 6 2015	
Focus group with Information Officers	Municipalities of Ayutuxtepeque, Antiguo Cuscatlán and Soyapango
Alejandrina Bonilla	Project Manager for the Delegation of the European Union to El Salvador
Carlos Rodriguez	Project coordinator
Irma Huezo	In charge of education and citizen oversight
Metzi Rosales	Communication Officer from FUNDAUNGO
Luisa Maria Aguilar	International Consultant
Roberto Rivera	National Consultant
May 7 2015	
Focus group with multipliers	Representatives of educational centers, Civil Society Organizations, Community organizations
Salvador Méndez Leal	Training advisor
Salvador Cerna	ADESCO leader and Oversight committee, Ciudad Delgado
Sandra Abarca	ADESCO leader and Oversight committee, Ciudad Delgado
Delmy Vasquez	Operational Director, Ciudad Delgado
Sofía Monroy	Information Officer, Ciudad Delgado
Cecia Serrano	Information Officer, Municipality of Apopa
Carlos Rodriguez	Project coordinator
Carlos Rivas	In charge of strengthening municipal capacities
Irma Huezo	In charge of education and citizen oversight
Michelle Peña	FUNDAUNGO instructor
Bernardo Posada	FUNDAMUNI representative

Luisa Maria Aguilar	International Consultant
Roberto Rivera	National Consultant
May 8 2015	
Meeting at the close of the evaluation	
Carlos Rodriguez	Project coordinator
Carlos Rivas	In charge of strengthening municipal capacities
Irma Huezo	In charge of education and citizen oversight
Luisa Maria Aguilar	International Consultant
Roberto Rivera	National Consultant

Annex 4: Acronyms

ADESCO	Association for Community Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
COMURES	Corporation of Municipalities in the Republic of El Salvador
EU	European Union
FESPAD	Salvadoran Foundation for the enforcement of the law
FUNDAUNGO	Foundation Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo
FUNDAMUNI	Foundation for the Support of Municipalities in El Salvador
IAPI	Institute for Access to Public Information
ISD	Social Initiative for Democracy
ISDEM	Salvadorian Institute for Municipal Development
LAPI	Law on Access to Public Information
MINED	Ministry for Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PD	Project Document
POP	Project Operations Plan
RAPI	Right to Access Public Information
SSTA	Sub-secretariat for Transparency and Anti-corruption
SPCTA	Secretariat for Citizen Participation, Transparency and Anti-corruption
UAIP	Unit for Access to Public Information
UNDEF	The United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Annex 5 : Guide for the Focus Group

Focus Group with Information Officers

Date: _____

Name: _____

Municipality: _____

Question 1

Briefly present your office

Date on which the office was created: _____

Starting date of the information office: _____

Hierarchical dependency: _____

Number of people working in the office: _____

Do you exclusively work for the information office?   Yes   No

If the answer is NO, what other tasks do you perform? _____

Name at least three courses you attended:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Question 2

Briefly explain the situation in your municipality in terms of access to information before and after the project.

Before the project	After the project

Question 3

Briefly describe the positive and negative aspects of the methodology used.

Positive aspects	Negative aspects

How was the methodology used to contribute to the multiplication towards citizens?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____