



INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON RESOURCES, CITIZEN, ENGAGEMENTS AND DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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I. INTRODUCTION

FUNDAR, Centro de Análisis e Investigación is an interdisciplinary, plural and independent institution that seeks to place itself in the vortex of reflection, training, experimentation, circulation and actions regarding democracy in Mexico.

Since its creation, FUNDAR's activities have been grouped within a program called "Democracy's Theory and Practice", which is based on a comprehensive definition of human rights and on the explicit recognition of the need to incorporate and promote citizen participation, social justice, the protection of the environment and a gender-sensitive viewpoint. Along with these principles, FUNDAR's efforts are focused on finding creative solutions to the country's problems and formulating policy proposals that are characterized by strong research and an interdisciplinary nature.

FUNDAR'S institutional development has been structured within the program "Theory and Practice of Democracy" –the guiding line followed has been the analysis, monitoring and tracking of public budgets from a variety of perspectives. Starting in January 2003, a new area was added to the organization: Governance and Human Rights. In addition, during this same period, we underwent a strategic and institutional planning process in order to advance towards the consolidation of the organization.

In the following pages we offer a brief description both of the activities undertaken by our organization during 2003 and part of 2004 and of projects we have planned for the future. We also include a short explanation regarding FUNDAR's structure, its areas, projects and transversal activities.

II. FUNDAR'S SECOND PHASE

FUNDAR's scope of action and activities has taken an interesting turn during the past year. On the one hand, FUNDAR has consolidated itself as a leading authority in the analysis and tracking of public spending, respected by government institutions, academic institutions, the press and our civil society counterparts. On the other hand, the number of activities, which are interlaced to the human rights area, have increased dramatically, whether these are part of the projects that have a specific focus on the area or if they are part of budget projects.

In response to this new reality, we found it pertinent to expand and create a new area within the organization: Governance and Human Rights. This expansion forced us to undertake a reorganization of the institution, in order to ascribe the existing projects to each of the areas, and embark on new projects at the same time. Each area is headed by a coordinator, and is formed by several project managers, researchers and assistant researchers.

It is important to note that special emphasis has been placed on the interdisciplinary nature and collaboration between the areas so to guarantee effective feedback and mutual benefits between the two. We are also developing a work-agenda that can link both areas: all projects related to transparency and the activities of FUNDAR that relate to the legislative power. Both of these topics cut through the organization transversally, since they influence, and are of relevant interest, for the two areas.

1. MONITORING OF PUBLIC SPENDING

The year that followed the creation of FUNDAR, 1999, was devoted to identifying the pertinent niche from which the organization could contribute innovative instruments for strengthening citizen participation and democracy. Due to the importance that the analysis of public budgets has for a variety of topics, this line of inquiry became a guiding theme throughout FUNDAR.

The projects in which FUNDAR has been involved regarding public budgets have followed three strategic interests: transparency, gender and human rights. All of these projects mutually reinforce each other, taking advantage of the established lines of dialogue, the development of expertise, the spaces that have been opened to us and the knowledge we generate.

Transparency:

Latin American Index of Budget Transparency 2003 (financed by the Ford Foundation and the International Budget Project (Ford Foundation and International Budget Project))

The main objectives of this project were to carry out the second edition of the Latin American Index of Budget Transparency; to evaluate the advances that ten of the region's countries had made regarding budget transparency; and to issue policy-recommendation for the governments of these nations. The countries included in the index were: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.

The formal presentation of the index was done through a press conference held on November 12. With the index, a regional report was enclosed where there is a description of the methodology used for creating the index, its results, and a detailed analysis of the 14 variables that were evaluated in the study and general policy-recommendation for each of the ten countries included in the study. The regional report also included a cd-rom, which contains the legal and practical information for each country, the regional report and the individual country reports.

Access to public information and transparency as common activities in FUNDAR (Hewlett Foundation)

Recognizing that transparency and access to public information are central elements in the majority of FUNDAR's activities and projects, we are considering developing a series of activities that will strengthen our work as an institution and that of other organizations interested in these topics. With this in mind, we plan to establish a project that focuses on transparency and accountability and follows the following guidelines: collaborative work with other organizations, the development of a statewide index of transparency, identifying possible strategic allies in the states, and the development of a series of elements that will allow us to implement recommendations that are a part of the strategic and institutional planning process that we have undertaken over the past year.

One of the objectives of this project is to build a local transparency index in México. This index is supported by the work that Fundar has already achieved through the elaboration of the "Latin American Index of Budget Transparency". Civil society and the public in general are facing difficulties to access budget information all along the country. In order to solve this problem the Mexican Government has created a federal institute to access public information, yet the problem remains in the local level.

That's why Fundar planned to involve different non gubernamental organizations, which have local nets with other organizations all around the country. Fundar will be responsible to capacitate local organizations, particularly through budget analysis and information. The project is an ambitious one because it pretends to strengthen the ease of access to public information in the local level.

Civil society's Forum on Transparency and Access to Public Information

FUNDAR, together with a number of civil society organizations interested in monitoring the effects of the Federal Law for Transparency and Access to Public Government Information, called for a forum during the First National Week for Transparency, organized by the Federal Institute for Access to Public Information (IFAI). The event was the result of an eight-month-long work process with the other organizations involved in the forum. The main objective of the event was to establish common parameters and references in order to evaluate the current state of the access to public information in Mexico.

The forum was held on June 15, 2004, and was called "The Right to Access to Public Information in Mexico: a diagnosis from society". FUNDAR was also involved in the design and presentation of the document "Transparency and Access to Public Information from a Civil Society Perspective", which is an evaluation on the different institutions that are bound by the access to information law.

Tracking of the diversion of thirty million pesos of funds from the Secretary of Health to Pro-Vida

As a result of the work that FUNDAR carries out yearly with the Commission for Gender and Equality of the Chamber of Deputies of the Mexican Legislature regarding the yearly

budget, in 2003 an irregular allotment of 30 million pesos to the Pro-Vida's "Women Help Centers" was detected. In order to clarify the incident, FUNDAR, along with five other organizations, held meetings with specialists on administrative law to determine if that allotment was legal; made formal government information petitions to document the assignment of the resources and their subsequent use; and on November 6, 2003 held a meeting and the Chamber of Deputies in order to denounce the incident.

During 2004, FUNDAR filed a formal petition with the IFAI requesting Pro-Vida's complete financial records in order to evaluate the spending of the government resources. Fundar, and the other five organizations, carried out a citizen audit of the funds, in order to verify the policy contradictions between the Secretary of health and the use that was given to these funds by Pro-Vida. The results of this investigation were presented at a news conference on July 16, 2004, and three days later were also presented to Congress.

Gender-sensitive Budgets

The health sector's budget and maternal mortality: monitoring the Arranque Parejo en la Vida project. (MacArthur Foundation)

The main goal of this program is to increase public spending and strengthen the activities of the programs that are focused to reduce the rate of maternal mortality. The project consists of research regarding federal activities, and the particular effects in three states—Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca—of spending on the Arranque Parejo en la Vida program, which is aimed at providing health care for poor women that are not covered by the state sponsored social security and live in municipalities with high rates of maternal mortality.

During 2003, the main research focused on linking the available human, material and financial resources on which the Arranque Parejo program depends on. The general conclusion was that the program does not effectively respond to the challenge maternal mortality presents; hence, it seems rather improbable that they can reduce it significantly. The main difficulty it has is the few resources assigned to the program, and the profound inequality among the different states, sanitary jurisdictions and municipalities.

The research activities are combined with a series of collaborative actions with other non-governmental organizations. We have also worked directly with the Secretary of Health, both at the federal and the state level, through the meetings of the National Directorate for Reproductive Health, and the local offices responsible for mother-child health. In 2004, the book "La mortalidad maternal en Mexico" was presented, which basically sums up the activities of the project during 2002.

Exploratory dialogue between experts on budget analysis and reproductive health, with special emphasis on maternal mortality, 2004 (International Budget Project)

This is an initiative that seeks to bring together a group of experts on maternal mortality and budget analysis in order to discuss the practical and theoretical approaches that can be built between the two areas and strengthen a common agenda. The model for this meeting is based on FUNDAR's previous experience in holding meetings between experts on social,

economic and cultural rights and budget expenditure experts. This meeting will be held in mid-October, in Mexico.

Budgets and Human Rights

Budgets with a social perspective (Ford Foundation)

The main objectives of this project have been to analyze, monitor and watch over public policies and budgetary allotments that focus on education, health and basic social infrastructure, in order to ensure that the social priorities, identified as such by the Mexican government, and the commitments it has made regarding the development of the most marginalized groups of society and the defense of human rights are indeed achieved. Some of the most noteworthy activities during 2003 were:

- The analysis of the Report of the Results of the Revision and Superior *Fiscalización* of the 2001 Public Account, published by the Superior Auditor of the Federation.
- The analysis of the account of the Federal Public Treasury, 2002.
- Informative sessions with the LIX Federal Legislature
- A press conference with members of the Commission on Gender and Equality on the Chamber of Deputies.
- Participated in the meetings with other social organizations in the on-going process for the elaboration of the Alternative Report on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Mexico.
- Participated in the National Treasury Convention and the Social Council of Taxpayers.

2. GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Citizen mechanisms for monitoring public security institutions (Open Society Institute)

The initial research project was regarding the state of public security in Mexico and the possible opportunities for citizen participation. As a result of this first stage, we developed a project that centers on accountability and public security institutions. Between 2004-2006, we will review the different accountability mechanisms that are in place in the case of the Mexico City Police Department (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública del Distrito Federal); we will analyze the statistics they publish, its budget, its internal control mechanisms, its efficiency indicators and the external control mechanisms that exist in the city. We plan to evaluate the availability of public information, transparency and the effectiveness of the control mechanisms.

Revenue Watch: Tracking of oil income (Open Society Institute)

Based on a previous effort undertaken by FUNDAR in 2003 regarding the effect of oil income in governmental spending, we observed the need to expand our expertise into the income part of the budget. With this project we hope to build a knowledge base relative to the analysis and monitoring of the income generated by the oil industry in Mexico. The

income side of the budget still has a long way to go with respect to transparency, and as with spending, citizens need to have the instruments to examine it.