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EVALUATION REPORT



**UDF- ARG-08- 271 Best Practices for Women´s Participation in Democracy at
Local Levels (Argentina)**

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Disclaimer

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

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) Project Data

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the project “Best Practices for Women’s Participation in Democracy at Local Levels (LIDERA)”¹, implemented by *Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género*² (ELA) from November 1, 2009 to April 30, 2012.³ UNDEF provided a grant of US\$325,000, of which \$25,000 was retained for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The project strategy focused on consolidating and advancing a new view and understanding of the essential role of women leaders in social and policy-making bodies. It pursued two main objectives: (a) to promote women’s leadership in civil society by identifying and sharing relevant experiences in leadership-building with this group at the local level; and (b) to provide tools for improving women leaders’ ability to promote the issues on their agenda through advocacy with national and local government agencies.

In order to meet these objectives, the project was structured around four strategic lines of action: (a) knowledge-building; (b) networking for collaboration and sharing between women leaders and CSOs; (c) leadership capacity-building and training in key issues of concern to women leaders; (d) awareness-raising about women’s role in different aspects of political, economic, social, and cultural life in Argentina.

LIDERA operated in Buenos Aires, Rosario, San Salvador de Jujuy, Mendoza, Neuquén, and Morón, working with a beneficiary population made up of women leaders from civil society and/or politics. The project was backed by partner organizations, which furnished support and organized activities in the intervention areas.

The evaluation mission is part of the post-project evaluations funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF). Its purpose is “to undertake an in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which in turn helps UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders in determining whether projects have been implemented according to the project document and whether the intended project outcomes have been achieved.”⁴

(ii) Evaluation Findings

The project tackled the issue of women’s political participation from a broader, more inclusive perspective, moving beyond the national level to analyze developments in the provinces and municipalities. This approach responded to the unmet needs and challenges of the Argentine context, and led to greater equality in real terms and improved women’s participation in society and politics at the local level. The project objectives were consistent with the institutional strategy prioritized by ELA. LIDERA combined the issue of gender equity with the strengthening of women’s participation in political life in the broadest sense – that is, their engagement in social, community, and economic life – promoting opportunities for sharing information and networking. Selection of the beneficiary population was based on ELA’s familiarity with the jurisdictions in question and its knowledge of the women leaders there. The project increased the **relevance** of civil society as an advocate for the promotion of

¹ In Argentina, the project is known as *LIDERA: participación en democracia*

² In English: Latin America Justice and Gender Team

³ According to the Project Document (contract signed on September 23, 2009), the initial project end-date was October 31, 2011; however, the project received two extensions, for a total of six months.

⁴ Operational Manual, page 6.

gender equity. However, encouraging male participation in the initiatives could have contributed to greater gender equity, making the project's approach even more relevant.

The project was very **effective**, achieving excellent tangible results. Its appropriate and relevant methodological design contributed to the implementation of its key components. The quantitative and qualitative studies yielded quality information, providing better knowledge about the political participation of women, by analyzing how women's leadership is born, consolidated, and has progressed, as well as how these women interact with the public authorities. The materials published gave women leaders and civil society organizations engaged in local and community advocacy efforts access to academic research findings. The study *Sex and Power. Who runs Argentina?* [*Sexo y Poder. ¿Quién manda en Argentina?*] led to the development of the Women's Participation Index (IPM), a methodological tool that will facilitate future studies on women's gains in policy-making. The issues discussed in the training workshops were a response to the needs identified in the studies; the workshops directly enhanced women's leadership and improved the ability of the beneficiary organizations and women leaders to tackle issues on the public agenda. The project materials are excellent in terms of both content and design. Widely distributed, they are well-known and used by stakeholders in various spheres of activity.

The project was **efficient**, as evidenced by a highly satisfactory cost-benefit ratio. ELA employed the necessary and appropriate technical and financial monitoring procedures to ensure efficient, transparent strategic management. Problems meeting deadlines caused some scheduling delays but did not compromise the strategy or project results. For management and monitoring, ELA and the partner organizations held coordination meetings and visited the jurisdictions in question for monitoring purposes. The reports provided detailed information for documenting progress. The evaluators wish to underscore the excellence of the published materials and extensive coverage achieved in their distribution. However, the monitoring modalities could have been supplemented with a more efficient strategic approach focused on analyzing the results, and the integration of lessons learned in beneficiary practices. Similarly, greater empowerment of the partner organizations would have contributed to more successful advocacy and greater sustainability at the local level.

The project had a significant **impact** on the stakeholders and beneficiaries that were directly mobilized during its implementation and, more broadly, on the media, the general public, and other stakeholders indirectly involved. The project empowered women leaders by bolstering their leadership skills, and the organizations and venues in which they worked. Prioritizing the local level as the intervention area helped put the issue on the provincial agenda. The project enabled the beneficiaries to learn about each other and forged ties among women leaders of social and community initiatives in different jurisdictions. The National Forum gave beneficiaries a much-appreciated opportunity to learn about and share information on advances in women's participation in civil society and political institutions.

The publications have had an extensive impact and are being used not only by the beneficiaries but by stakeholders outside the project (e.g., UNDP, FLACSO, British Embassy, CSOs). ELA's connections through its network of contacts in the region facilitated the dissemination of information on experiences in the region.

ELA's institutional track record and deep roots in society make it an intermediary and point of reference for other organizations working on the issues of gender equity and women's rights - an important component in terms of **sustainability**. Its diverse relations with international cooperation agencies have served to consolidate its financial sustainability. At the technical and institutional levels, the project yielded results that will support the continuity and replication of its initiatives. Important among these were: (i) the empowerment of women leaders by improving leadership, management, and communication skills and increasing their ability to influence policy in the jurisdictions targeted by the project; (ii) the valuable local

experiences in the promotion and defense of rights and in leadership building that were identified, systematized, and made accessible in a database of practices on the ELA website; (iii) the development of the Women's Participation Index (IPM) for Argentina, which will make it possible to measure progress in different areas of the nation's public life; (iv) the initiatives that are being organized to continue the processes that were initiated.

LIDERA mobilized a substantial number of stakeholders in six jurisdictions of the country. This represented significant **value added** and made it possible to reach out to the women leaders of important initiatives.

(iii) Conclusions

- The project's contribution to empowering women leaders and improving their participation in political, social, cultural, community, and economic life has lent visibility to the issue and fostered recognition and exercise of the right to equal participation by men and women, as an essential element in democratic processes.
- The track record and professionalism of *Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género* (ELA) and its steadfast promotion of women's rights, democracy, and justice have built bonds of trust and respect among the project beneficiaries, resulting in very high achievement of the expected results.
- The project's quality, consistency, and participatory approach have led beneficiaries to take ownership and get involved. The results of their participation and input in studies and knowledge-building were used to design empowerment workshops.
- The creation of the Women's Participation Index (IPM), a key methodological instrument, will make it possible to gather statistical information and measure gains in women's public presence in Argentina.
- Strengthening the institutional monitoring strategy can increase the systematization and use of results and lessons learned, thereby increasing impact and sustainability.
- The development of a diversified institutional communications strategy centered on advocacy activities targeting legislators and other government authorities appears necessary to make lobbying and advocacy more effective.

(iv) Recommendations

The evaluation mission proposes several guidance points that could maximize the impact of the results and capitalize on the lessons learned.

- Complement the analysis and monitoring of the impact and results of project activities through a more strategic follow-up, identifying qualitative achievements and assessing the extent to which project activities and processes sustainably translated into personal or institutional benefits.
- Optimize the procedures and tools for systematizing and utilizing the materials and information generated to increase their use in public awareness, advocacy, and lobbying activities, in view of developing diversified advocacy strategies tailored to the profile of each target group.
- Include a specific component in the institutional communications strategy for undertaking legislative political advocacy initiatives in which male and female legislators

explore together what their role could be and how conditions can be improved to encourage equal participation by women leaders at the national, provincial, and local levels.

- Expand the institutional vision of gender to include men's involvement and commitment to creating opportunities for equitable, egalitarian participation in different aspects of social, political, cultural, and economic life.

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

(i) The project and evaluation objectives

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the project “Best Practices for Women’s Participation in Democracy at Local Levels (LIDERA),”⁵ implemented by *Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género* (ELA) from November 1, 2009 to April 30, 2012.⁶ UNDEF provided a grant of US\$325,000, of which \$25,000 was retained for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The project pursued two main objectives: (a) to promote women leaders from civil society by identifying and sharing relevant experiences in local leadership-building; and (b) to provide tools for improving the ability of women leaders to promote the issues on their agenda by lobbying local and national government bodies.

The project strategy consisted of four components: (a) generating and disseminating knowledge through research, articles and other publications; (b) promoting networks for women leaders to collaborate and share information through the contacts made in training sessions and the Forum; (c) capacity-building and training in issues of key interest to women leaders; (d) raising awareness about women’s role in different aspects of Argentina’s political, economic, social, and cultural life through two studies conducted by the project. Through empowerment activities, the project sought to identify best practices in the experiences described by the women leaders, increasing their involvement in civil society and their ability to influence the policy agenda. It also provided tools to facilitate their participation in public discourse and greater engagement in civil society.

The project beneficiaries were essentially women leaders from civil society and the political world, although certain public awareness and training activities were open to a larger audience in local communities. The project was implemented in several cities in Argentina, notably Buenos Aires, Rosario, San Salvador de Jujuy, Mendoza, Neuquén, and Morón.

The evaluation mission is part of the post-project evaluations funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF). Its purpose is “to undertake an in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which in turn helps UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders in determining whether projects have been implemented according to the project document and whether the intended project outcomes have been achieved.”⁷

⁵ In Argentina, the project is known as *LIDERA: participación en democracia*

⁶ According to the Project Document (contract signed on September 23, 2009), the date initially programmed for the end of the project was October 31, 2011; however, the project received two extensions, totaling six months in all.

⁷ Operational Manual, page 6.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an international 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 in early July 2012 (see Annex 2). After reading and analyzing them, the evaluators prepared the Launch Note (UDF-ARG-08-271) describing the analytical methodology, techniques, and instruments used during the evaluation mission to Buenos Aires from August 6 to 10, 2012. The evaluators interviewed project staff and members of the ELA coordinating team. They also met with the beneficiary women and organizations and visited *Madre Tierra* [Mother Earth], a local civil society action group, in the town of Morón, some 50 km from Buenos Aires. The interviewees consisted of:

- The ELA team that coordinated LIDERA;
- The communications and press, research, and financial administration teams;
- Women leaders who had participated in the project activities⁸: in-depth interviews for the database of practices, training and educational events, participation in the project's closing Forum;
- Representatives of civil society organizations;
- Under Secretariat of Social Development of the City of Buenos Aires (CABA), until very recently, in charge of gender matters in the city government;
- Cooperation agencies working on gender issues (British Embassy in Argentina, UNDP).

Annex 3 contains the complete list of persons interviewed.

(iii) Development context

The 1980s and initial years of the democratic restoration in Argentina, which began in 1983, were marked by major victories for democracy. Some of them, spurred by the international gains achieved by women's organizations in the areas of rights and public participation, involved efforts to eliminate discrimination against women.⁹ Ratification in 1985 of the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) obliged Argentina to harmonize its national legislation with the Convention to ensure its implementation and enforcement, and to create and/or modernize judicial and administrative bodies with the authority to handle specific complaints, an activity that is still ongoing.

Studies were conducted on the status of women during that period. Moreover, several economic, socio-educational, and cultural projects were launched to improve conditions for women, especially the poorest. A debate that continues today on the direction and goals of national and international women's rights and gender equity policy emerged during those years. The goals are linked with gender and development policy, and more recently, mainstreaming of the gender approach in development policies.

The positive developments continued into the early 1990s and were consolidated with major institutional achievements. Examples of these included the new National Constitution, the act establishing a quota for women in politics, the higher profile of the National Council on Women and its policies, the emergence and activism of numerous civil society organizations made up of and/or working on behalf of women, network-building, and the holding of

⁸ Since this was a project with federal coverage, several activities were carried out in the provinces of Rosario, San Salvador de Jujuy, Mendoza, Neuquén, and Morón. To access the stakeholders, the evaluators conducted scheduled telephone or Skype interviews using an open-ended questionnaire.

⁹ In particular, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

numerous public events – testimony to a genuine social movement built on the visibility that women’s issues were gaining internationally.

Argentina’s Constitution of 1994 recognizes the validity of all international human rights treaties signed by the country and calls for equal opportunity and equal treatment of men and women, opening a new path for the exercise of civil rights.

In 1991 Law 24,012, or the Quota Act, was passed. This requires that 30% of the candidates for elective office on the slates of political parties be women, in proportions that do not preclude the possibility of them being elected. Passage of this act had a positive impact and sparked an intense debate on social equality between the genders among a wide range of stakeholders. Passage of the act had an immediate multiplier effect: between 1992 and 1997, 20 provinces out of 24 jurisdictions passed legislation requiring the same percentage as the national act. The provinces of Córdoba, Santiago del Estero, Río Negro, and Misiones raised the percentage to parity, requiring 50%. In 2010 and 2011, respectively, Jujuy and Entre Ríos provinces passed the Quota Act requiring 30%. However, its political and institutional importance notwithstanding, compliance with the Quota Act is no guarantee of gender equity in public institutions.

In recent years, Argentina has also made progress in legal measures to eradicate violence against women, among them its ratification of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, also known as the Convention of Belem do Pará. In 1994, it passed National Law 24,417, on Protection against Domestic Violence; this piece of legislation, however, did not fully embrace the Convention of Belem do Pará and sparked controversy owing to the ambiguity of some of its articles. Law 24,632 ratifying the Inter-American Convention improves on that law by defining violence against women as gender violence. In the meantime, specialists in this field say that the legal system has not yet offered a comprehensive response to the problem, since: (a) the provinces are under no obligation to comply with this law (b) the provinces have passed their own legislation, resulting in the overlapping of resources and responsibilities at the different levels, (c) financial resources for training human resources and assisting abused women are scarce, (d) campaigns to raise public awareness and encourage citizens to take ownership of their rights are lacking.

This situation should lead to specific programs that yield reliable information and to full implementation of the National Plan of Action for Prevention, Assistance, and Eradication of Violence against Women.

In recent years, there have been equally important achievements in sexual and reproductive rights. In 2002, Argentina passed national legislation addressing this issue, although 15 jurisdictions had already passed their own sexual and reproductive health acts. Since 2002, Argentina has had a National Program on Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation (created by Law No. 26,673), whose implementation in the various jurisdictions varies. More active participation on the part of civil society and women’s organization could lead to effective implementation of the Program in each of the jurisdictions and monitoring of compliance with the law. Full implementation of the National Program on Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation and specific initiatives is necessary, as are programs to reduce the high maternal mortality rates from unsafe abortions. This means taking the necessary steps to guarantee that all legal abortions are performed in the public health system.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

(i) Project approach and strategy

The project strategy was centered on consolidating and advancing a new view and understanding of the essential role of women leaders in social- and policy-making bodies. To this end, it combined the issue of gender equity with the strengthening of women's participation in political life in the broadest sense, including women's involvement in social, community, and economic life. Recognition of the equal rights of men and women in democracy building guarantees the exercise of citizens' right to choose the best options and be elected to executive and legislative office.

In order to meet these objectives, the project was centered around four specific, complementary strategic lines of action: (i) knowledge-building; (ii) networking; (iii) capacity-building; and (iv) awareness-raising.

The first phase of the project involved promoting and developing knowledge about the way in which women's leadership is born, consolidated, and exercised, as well as how women leaders relate to public authorities. Aware of the relevance of gaining a better understanding of political and social participation, LIDERA conducted a series of studies and investigations, among them *Sex and Power. Who runs Argentina?* and *Beyond Numbers*, and developed a database of practices. The purpose of these studies was to examine women's presence in decision-making bodies and in different aspects of public life, to better understand their role in legislative bodies such as the National Congress and provincial legislatures. The database of practices shed light on women leaders' involvement in solving important problems in their spheres of action, and on their contribution to solving problems in their communities by lobbying their own legislatures. The research is grounded in a broad concept of democracy that emphasizes the importance of women's participation in civil society, where women play an active role in social and community affairs, forging alliances and coordinating resources to improve living conditions in their communities.

The results of these studies led to the identification and development of information and tools to increase women leaders' influence on the policy agenda, the focus of the second phase of the project. The strategy in this second phase was to design and hold training workshops in the target jurisdictions to improve women's ability to deal with issues on the public agenda (see information in point iii).

These activities were part of the project strategy to facilitate and create opportunities for interaction and joint learning, encouraging women leaders to collaborate and participate in the existing networks. This was the purpose of the project's closing event, the LIDERA National Forum, which brought women and CSOs from the beneficiary jurisdictions together to share ideas and information about their experiences with the project and discuss their common problems and challenges.

Another priority strategic component was awareness-raising and dissemination of the knowledge generated. In order to accomplish this, the project published the results of the studies conducted and developed tools (see Annex 2) to improve women leaders' ability to promote the issues on their agenda through advocacy. The published materials were widely circulated in the intervention areas, targeting primarily the media and the general public, as well as the stakeholders who participated in the project.

As mentioned above, LIDERA operated in several jurisdictions – Buenos Aires, Rosario, San Salvador de Jujuy, Mendoza, Neuquén, and Morón – targeting a beneficiary population

made up of women working in civil society and/or politics. In these jurisdictions, LIDERA received support from partner organizations, namely *Convocatoria Neuquina por la Justicia y la Libertad* [Neuquén Council for Justice and Freedom] (Neuquén); *Mujeres organizadas por el Cupo Femenino* [Women Organized for the Women’s Quota] and *Fundación Siglo XXI* [XXI Century Foundation] (Jujuy); *FAVIM Acción Ciudadana* [FAVIM Civic Action] (Mendoza) and *Las Juanas* [Juanas] (Rosario)¹⁰.



Workshop on "Communication in civil society initiatives: how to communicate for advocacy", University of San Andrés, Buenos Aires, July 2011

(ii) Logical framework

The table below summarizes the logic of the LIDERA intervention, which was organized around four results. It likewise illustrates the activities carried out and their contribution to the achievement of the expected results and objectives.

Activities and outputs	Intended outcomes	Medium-term impacts	Long-term development objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Methodological design and implementation of three research studies ▪ Publication and distribution of brochures “Sex & Power: Who Runs Argentina?” and “Beyond numbers...” ▪ Dissemination through alliances with government organizations and NGOs ▪ Creation and development of a project website ▪ Organization of a public campaign through the press and media 	<p>Greater awareness of the status of women in political, social and cultural institutions through research “Who runs Argentina?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a methodological instrument that permits replication of the survey on a regular basis (every five years); • Up-to-date, quality information on women leaders’ participation in decision-making venues in the social, political, economic, and cultural sphere • Awareness and media coverage (at least 49 publications, including 28 in the press, and coverage in radio and TV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge-building and dissemination, promoting visibility and understanding of women leaders’ activism in decision-making venues in political, social, economic, and cultural life • Women leaders from civil society and politics, trained and connected through a collaborative network, maximize their capacity for social and political leadership and influence • Beneficiary populations and women leaders empowered to recognize and exercise the right to equal participation by men and women as inherent to democracy-building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualitative research on women leaders and politically representative leaders to identify best practices enabling women’s leadership and women’s connections with 	<p>Women leaders in civil society more able to influence the public agenda</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women leaders empowered in terms of their leadership, management, and communication skills, and their political influence in the project intervention areas • Valuable experiences in 	

¹⁰ Initially, *TRAMAS – Derecho en movimiento* [TRAMAS- Rights in motion] (Santa Fe) had been selected as a partner organization. It was later replaced by *Las Juanas* (Rosario). For more information, see point IV. iii

<p>politically representative institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction of a database with best practices identified at local levels ▪ Publication and distribution of report and brochure on Best Practices (2000 copies) ▪ Training sessions tailored to the stated needs of the beneficiaries 		<p>the local promotion and defense of rights and leadership building identified, systematized, and accessible in the database of practices available on the ELA website</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of national and local results of the 2007 and 2009 elections. • Comparison of political career paths of men and women legislators in selected jurisdictions 	<p>Knowledge built on women's participation in national and local government as a result of the 2007 and 2009 elections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge built on women's participation in national and local government • Potential allies in local jurisdictions identified 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holding of the closing National Forum (April 2012), attended by 143 people representing 55 CSOs, 30 from political venues and 10 from international organizations • Publication of the results of the Forum and their dissemination through the ELA website and institutional channels 	<p>Sharing of experiences among Latin American countries with regard to women leaders in civil society and their capacity to influence the public agenda</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 143 women leaders from academia, civil society, and government and legislative bodies share information and learn about opportunities for collaboration by joining existing networks and groups • ELA's connections through its network of contacts in the region facilitate the dissemination of best practices. 	

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) **Relevance**

The interviews conducted during the evaluation revealed several positive aspects relating to relevance:

- The project objectives respond to unmet needs and challenges in the Argentine context, helping improve current equality conditions and the quality of women's social and political participation. Argentina was the first country in the world (1991) to enact a legal quota system to overcome the impediments to women's holding congressional office. Today, the country is one of 11 nations in the world that has more women than men in congress.¹¹ However, the statistics do not provide enough information on how much real influence congresswomen have in legislative affairs; they also shed no light on the impact of women's political participation on provincial and municipal institutions – a particularly relevant matter in a country with a federal system. The project tackled the issue of women's participation in Argentina from a broader, more inclusive perspective, extending beyond the national level to analyze local processes.

- The project objectives fall within the strategic options prioritized by ELA. Their particular focus is encouraging women to exercise their rights and fostering gender equity through advocacy, networking, and capacity building among political and social stakeholders to improve the social, political, and economic situation of women.

- The criteria employed in selecting the beneficiary population were based on ELA's contacts and knowledge of the jurisdictions, and on the progress made in these locations by CSOs with expertise in gender equity. In this way, the project strengthened civil society, which is also a key stakeholder that engages in political advocacy, fostering synergies and collaborating with other actors working on similar initiatives.

- The project strategy preserves the internal coherence of the research and training components. The initiatives to empower women leaders in civil society and government were tailored to the specific needs identified by the studies in the jurisdictions where the project was in place. LIDERA helped upgrade the skills of women leaders, when weaknesses impeding their political participation were identified. The workshop content and training tools were built on the basis of data from the studies, and on the database of practices. The logistics of the Forum (selection of the conference room and hotel) were tailored to the profile of the beneficiaries and grassroots organizations, who considered that this had fostered a good work environment.



Public launch of project database, National Congress, City of Buenos Aires, March 2011

However, since creating gender equity was one of the basic components of the project, promoting male participation in the initiatives could have made its approach more relevant.

¹¹ *Guía práctica para la incorporación del enfoque de género en el trabajo legislativo*, UNDP Argentina, 2011.

(ii) Effectiveness

The project yielded excellent, tangible results, achieving the expected results and meeting the objectives. Thus, it was very effective.

The intervention strategy was built on the results of an earlier project financed by UNIFEM (2008-2009), in which successful women's leadership practices had been identified in a provincial area. This information was used to establish LIDERA's baseline for analyzing and increasing the opportunities for women leaders to participate and improve their practices, especially in social and political life. One key factor in the project's effectiveness was the appropriate, relevant design of the methodologies used in the two implementation phases.

Through quantitative and qualitative studies, the research phase produced knowledge and information and made the results of this academic work available to women leaders and CSOs engaged in community advocacy. The study "*Sex and Power: Who runs Argentina?*" explored women's presence in decision-making bodies in politics, economics, civil society, culture, and science. During that study, the IPM was created as a methodological tool for similar future research. This study shines a light on the participation of women in civil society, where they play an active role in social and community life, forging partnerships and coordinating resources to improve living conditions in their communities. The



Training session on political advocacy for CSOs, city of Neuquén, October 2011

women leaders interviewed during this study greatly appreciated the fact that an organization from the country's capital had given them an opportunity to participate so it could learn about their experiences. They also noted that they had been able to read and validate the text containing their input prior to its publication. A second study, "*Beyond numbers*", analyzed the legislative track record of women and men in the National Congress and some provincial bodies, leading to a better understanding of women's role in certain legislative environments. The project also developed a database of practices, compiling the experiences with participation of women leaders of social organizations through in-depth interviews.

The project helped us understand many things conceptually, motivating us to learn more about the concept of gender. We don't normally have a lot of time to theorize.

Gabriela S. Las Juanas
organization, Rosario Province

The three studies and investigations led to a better understanding of women's political participation by analyzing the forms it takes and how it develops and advances, as well as how these women relate to the public authorities. The studies' findings were published in user-friendly materials with excellent, easy-to-understand content. The interviews showed that the materials had been widely distributed and were being used not only by

the project's direct beneficiaries, but by stakeholders in academia and the international development cooperation community, many of whom work on gender equity issues.

The second phase of LIDERA contributed directly to the strengthening of women's leadership processes and to boosting the capacity of beneficiary organizations and women leaders to tackle the issues on the public agenda. Three training workshops were held on issues considered important by the women who were interviewed during the creation of the

database of practices: Project Management and Funding Sources, Communication in Social Projects, and Keys to Advocacy for Civil Society Organizations.

The training enabled the beneficiaries to integrate new types of analysis into their daily work and extend their political and institutional relationships, increasing joint activities with other organizations. It also enabled them to begin designing initiatives to be proposed to municipal legislative bodies.



Training event: "Communication in Social Projects: Communicating to Make a Difference", City of Mendoza, August 2011.

The LIDERA National Forum was held April 19-20 in Buenos Aires, and attended by more than 130 women from the targeted jurisdictions who are at the forefront of social and political life in their communities. This forum was an opportunity for joint exploration of common problems and challenges. Although the project did not foster the creation of new networks, it did provide new opportunities and channels for informal interaction among the stakeholders, who expressed an interest in continuing to share experiences.

An important aspect was the project's priority of raising awareness and disseminating the knowledge generated. The findings of all the studies were published in materials with excellent content and design. The materials were widely publicized in the media and had a real impact on public opinion and the different contexts and on the project's direct and indirect stakeholders. Disseminating and publicizing the information was part of a press strategy that targeted opinion-makers and indirectly influenced public opinion in general.

It was the first time anyone had ever come to ask us what we'd done.
Participant in the interviews for developing the database of practices.

(iii) Efficiency

The analysis of efficiency factors showed coherence between the budget requested in the Project Document and its execution, yielding a highly satisfactory cost-benefit ratio. ELA employed the necessary and appropriate technical and financial procedures to ensure transparent strategic management. As a relatively new (2003) and small (8 staff members) organization, it has a motivated and professional interdisciplinary team with specialized expertise in the institution's priority areas.

According to the Project Document,¹² activities were to begin on November 1, 2009 and end on October 30, 2011. Owing to a number of problems, the schedule had to be changed, leading to a six-month extension of the project (until April 30, 2012). One of the causes was that ELA had received the contract signed by UNDEF on November 25, just before the start of summer vacation in Argentina, which lasts from mid-December to early March. Although it began selecting personnel and drafting the activities' plan, this was not a good period to open contacts with the partner organizations, set up interviews, and organize preparatory activities at the local level. Furthermore, several members of the team had personal matters to deal with; as a result, the project did not actually get off the ground until March 2010. While these problems affected the original schedule, ELA took the necessary steps to prevent them from affecting the strategy adopted.

¹² Contract signed by UNDEF on September 23, 2009.



NGO exhibit, LIDERA National Forum 2012

With respect to management and monitoring, the coordinating team held periodic meetings to supervise and adapt the planning and implementation of the activities (studies and training) and to organize monitoring visits to the intervention areas. The partner organizations assisted with the local activities, especially the training workshops and closing Forum. These organizations were selected through field visits by

the coordinating team, which evaluated the quality and relevance of their institutional competencies and their commitment to the local intervention areas. The responsibilities and work in each jurisdiction were determined jointly with ELA.

The reports detail the execution of the activities and include specific annexes with specific complementary information. The financial report details budget execution by line item and year. Another important efficiency factor was the excellence of the materials published, because of the seriousness of their contents and their appropriate, user-friendly design.

These components confirm LIDERA's highly satisfactory efficiency levels. In conclusion, the evaluation team would like to point out two aspects that could have been improved to make the strategy more efficient: (i) ELA focused its monitoring on the execution of the activities, without considering their impact or the integration of lessons learned into the practices of the beneficiary population. Such an approach would have permitted better evaluation of the extent to which project activities translated into personal or institutional benefits; (ii) collaboration with the partner organizations could have been geared more to their empowerment. This would have helped to maximize the results and enable beneficiaries to have a greater impact. It would also have increased sustainability.

(iv) Impact

The evaluation mission observed very substantial benefits for the stakeholders and beneficiaries involved in the implementation of the project and, on a wider scale, on the media, the general public, and other indirect actors. These benefits include:

- Capacity building among women leaders and the organizations in which they work, an aspect greatly appreciated by the beneficiaries. The opinions collected through the field interviews stress the project's efforts to lend greater visibility to women's presence and role in leadership venues. This has significantly raised the project profile in CSOs and legislatures. The beneficiaries interviewed indicated that they had had an opportunity to obtain first-rate academic information tailored to their needs and professional practices. They also said that they had gained a better understanding of their rights and gender approaches and were more receptive to them, commenting that the project had given them concrete tools to learn about advocacy methods and improve their institutional work.

- Selection of the local level as the priority intervention area. This put the issue on the provincial agenda. LIDERA strengthened and professionalized existing operations and processes in the jurisdictions covered by the project, creating opportunities for information dissemination and group learning – and not only in the sphere of political advocacy. It also showed women's leadership in highly diverse environments. Many women's organizations – some devoted specifically to gender issues and others working on different community concerns – were mobilized, fostering the participation of grassroots leaders and organizations through a widespread call to action.

- Building bridges and promoting solidarity among women leaders of social initiatives and communities in different parts of the country, fostering mutual understanding and the sharing of experiences. Several of the leaders and CSOs interviewed considered the opportunity to get to know one another and learn who was doing what to have been a very positive experience. They commented that the National Forum had given them an opportunity to learn about developments and activities to promote women's leadership in civil society and political institutions in the participating jurisdictions.

Participation in the workshops was very important for us and the organizations that attended. As a result of this experience, we have integrated the issues discussed and the tools received into the analysis and design of our daily work. The project improved our ability to forge political and institutional ties, to increase joint activities with other organizations, and to begin designing joint proposals for submission to municipal legislative bodies.

**Gabriela S. Las Juanas organization,
Rosario Province**

- The materials and tools that were published. These products had a real impact on the internal dynamic promoted by LIDERA and on other actors outside the project, especially the media and the general public. This was the first time that a published study was so relevant, with detailed statistics on women's presence in decision-making bodies. *Sex and Power: Who Runs Argentina?* unexpectedly caught the interest of the media, especially the national and local press. Furthermore, the quality of the materials contributed to improvements in the institutional press strategy, and hence, better relations between ELA and the media. The publications had a widespread impact and were used by a number of stakeholders outside the project. For example, UNDP decided to use the materials as a reference for gender issues in legislative work; the director of the FLACSO gender program requested authorization to list the publications in the reading list for the course; the cooperation project officer at the British Embassy commented that the materials had improved the Embassy's knowledge about what was happening in the country, and that the tools presented at the National Forum had given them ideas for improving communications about this issue.

- ELA noted that internally, the project had enabled it to view its institutional operations from a broader perspective, causing it to change the way it addressed the issue, and making it part of a longer-term strategy. The project also showed how to take advantage of the information produced. Moreover, the knowledge generated

was shared and publicized through *Articulación Regional Feminista por los Derechos Humanos y la Justicia de Género*,¹³ an organization in which ELA has been an active member since 2003.



Instructional materials used in the communication training

The evaluators generally observed that, for a two-year project, this one had a remarkable impact.

¹³ Feminist Regional Network for Human Rights and Gender Justice, in Latin America.

(v) Sustainability

The seriousness of its work and solid institutional track record have made ELA a well-known and respected organization that has steadily gained standing in society, taking its place as an intermediary and reference for other organizations working on similar issues at the national and regional level.

ELA's different types of relations with international cooperation agencies have contributed to its growing financial sustainability. Thus, by the end of the project, the NGO had the financing it needed to continue implementing its institutional strategy. This funding included support from Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), which promotes political participation and analysis of the subjective barriers to women's participation, and a European Union (EU) contract for a project on support for working women. Negotiations are also under way with the World Bank for the implementation of initiatives on violence against women.

One reason for the impact of the publication *Sex and Power: Who Runs Argentina?* was the fact that it contained statistics, which is very important in these matters. Also, the fact that there is very little information and few initiatives of this type in the Provinces.

Alejandra W. In charge of communication activities for the LIDERA project

In institutional and technical terms, strengthening women's leadership capacity in the conceptual and practical sphere and giving them tools to use in their professional work are important components of sustainability. This is because the vast majority of the beneficiaries hold leadership positions in their communities, municipalities, and/or provinces, where they can continue to utilize the tools and replicate the lessons learned.



Workshop: "Communication in Civil Society Initiatives: How to Communicate for Advocacy, San Salvador de Jujuy, June 2011"

The interviews revealed that many of the organizations that benefited from the project maintain contacts with ELA and are developing initiatives to ensure the continuity of the work begun. Examples of these are the new initiative by *Red por los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad* [Network for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities] (REDI); the joint gender project of the Special Prosecutor for Violent Crimes against Women (FAVIM) and the Supreme Court in Mendoza Province; and the virtual forum created for maintaining contacts and sharing information.

Finally, an important development was the creation of the Women's Participation Index (IPM) for Argentina. This instrument facilitated the design of a methodology for conducting periodic surveys to obtain statistical information for objectively measuring progress toward gender equality in the different spheres of national public life.

(vi) UNDEF value added

Without UNDEF support it would have been impossible to mobilize so many stakeholders in six jurisdictions of the country, or to conduct the research that generated knowledge in little-studied areas. UNDEF provided value added beyond the project's important efforts to strengthen women's leadership at the local level, promote networks for collaboration, training, and raising awareness about women's role in different aspects of Argentina's

political, social, economic, and cultural life. The beneficiaries greatly appreciated its outreach to women leaders. Important initiatives were committed to transforming life in their communities, by influencing public agendas and effectively participating in public policy design and implementation.

This is a real contribution consistent with UNDEF's objective of achieving tangible improvements in questions related to democracy and human rights, and in interpreting the very concept of democracy; which is understood as finding practical solutions to enable people to make their voices heard and actively participate in the improvement of their living conditions.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions of the evaluation team and lessons learned can be summarized as follows:

i. Raising the profile of women leaders and understanding their role. The evaluators took note of the beneficiaries' very high opinion of the project's contribution to empowering women leaders and improving the quality of women's participation in political, social, cultural, community, and economic life. Great strides were made in the recognition and exercise of the right to equal participation by men and women as a basic component of democratic processes. This conclusion emerges from the findings related to relevance and impact.

ii. Social solidarity and commitment. The social solidarity and commitment displayed by *Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género* (ELA) in promoting women's rights, democracy, and justice contributed to the success of the project. The professionalism of its administrators, technical staff, and outside experts, as well as the quality of its strategic approach, helped build trust and respect among project beneficiaries, resulting in an excellent level of achievement of the results. This conclusion is based on findings related to relevance and efficiency.

iii. Participatory approach and coherence of the strategy. The beneficiaries' direct involvement in developing the conceptual, methodological, and operational framework fostered a sense of ownership and the achievement of the expected results. The project produced knowledge that met rigorous academic standards and served as the foundation for empowering the beneficiary population. This conclusion merges from findings related to relevance, effectiveness and impact.

iv. Ability to observe progress in gender equality. Based on the findings related to sustainability, the creation of the Women's Participation Index (IPM), a key methodological instrument, will permit periodic updating, using the same database, of objective statistical information on the consolidation of women's leadership in the different aspects of public life in Argentina.

v. Need for an improved strategy for monitoring and capitalizing on lessons learned. As evidenced by findings on efficiency and impact, ELA acknowledges the need for an institutional strategy to monitor its initiatives and projects and thus improve its ability to systematize and capitalize on the lessons learned and value added generated by its interventions.

vi. Need for an improved communication strategy. The project's impact on the press and other media led to a positive change in the way news about gender-related issues and events is handled. Similar efforts with a more technical approach could have been launched to work with the groups most directly involved in promoting equal participation of men and women. ELA is considering the expansion of this strategic option to further develop this area of advocacy targeting legislators and other government authorities to make lobbying more effective. This conclusion is based on findings related to impact and sustainability.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The degree to which the initial objectives were met was highly satisfactory. The evaluation team will therefore confine its proposals to a few guidelines that could serve to maximize the impact of the results and capitalize on the lessons learned during the implementation of the intervention.

i. Adopt a monitoring strategy that includes analysis and monitoring of the impact and results and not just the implementation of activities. Such an approach could help consolidate achievements, making it possible to determine how well project activities and processes translated into sustainable benefits at the personal or institutional level (see Conclusions iv and v).

ii. Plan the systematization and use of the information and materials produced, optimizing their use in public awareness and lobbying activities through advocacy strategies tailored to specific target groups – strategies that will foster a new vision of the role of women's leadership and participation in society (see Conclusion vi).

iii. Give priority to developing a communication strategy that takes better advantage of advocacy opportunities in the legislative sphere. To this end, it would be useful to create an entity for publicizing research and analyzing its results with legislators, jointly considering what initiatives could foster equal participation of women at the national, provincial and local levels (see Conclusions iv and vi).

iv. Strengthen the institutional strategic approach with a broader gender vision, enlisting male involvement and commitment as well. The approach should foster opportunities for participation and equitable, egalitarian gender relations among legislators and leaders in the different spheres of social, political, cultural, and economic life (see Conclusions i, iii, and vii).



LIDERA National Forum, April 2012

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Evaluation Questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related subquestions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project that could not as well have been achieved 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 document:*
 - Project Document UDF-ARG-08-27
 - Mid-term Report
 - Final Report
 - Final Financial Report
 - LIDERA website: www.ela.org.ar

- *Publications produced within the framework of the project :*
 - Mujeres participando en ámbitos locales – Banco de experiencias;
 - Detrás del número: Un estudio sobre las trayectorias políticas de mujeres y varones en las legislaturas argentinas;
 - Sexo y Poder ¿Quién manda en la Argentina?
 - Liderando los procesos de cambio: claves para la incidencia política de organizaciones de la sociedad civil;
 - Las deudas del bicentenario: Una agenda de trabajo por los derechos de las mujeres en la Argentina;
 - LIDERA: Participación en democracia. Experiencias de mujeres en el ámbito social y político en la Argentina;
 - Violencia en las relaciones intrafamiliares: qué hacer y dónde ir. Claves para salir del laberinto;
 - La comunicación en los proyectos sociales: ¿Cómo comunicar para incidir. Cuadernillo de fortalecimiento en comunicación para organizaciones de la sociedad civil.
 - Informe Regional 2011 de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres y Justicia de Género;
 - Feminist Regional Network on Human Rights and Gender Justice;
 - Best Practices for Women’s Participation in Democracy at Local Levels. Report on Best Practices. Activity 2.4;
 - Digital materials on LIDERA website: www.ela.org.ar

- *Other documents consulted:*
 - Guía práctica para la incorporación del enfoque de género en el trabajo legislativo. PNUD- Consejo Nacional de Mujeres-AECID-ONU Mujeres;
 - Masculinidades Plurales. PNUD-Campaña del Lazo Blanco.

ANNEX 3: Persons interviewed

Saturday, August 4, 2012	
Arrival of international expert	
Monday, August 6, 2012	
Working meeting of evaluation team	Luisa María Aguilar, International Expert; Juan C. Buchet, National Expert.
<i>Meeting with team of ELA Justicia y Género</i>	
Natalia Gherardi	Executive Director Project Coordinator
Mariana Morelli Tucumán	Communications Director
Lucía Martelotte	Web LIDERA / Forum
Tuesday, August 7, 2012	
<i>Working meeting with LIDERA project research team</i>	
Sofía Olaviaga	Investigator in charge of the study: “Detrás del número”, CABA
Paula Magariños	Investigator in charge of the study: “Sexo y Poder” and dataset of practices, CABA.
María Inés Zigarán	Colectivo de Mujeres por el Cupo (Jujuy Province) Skype interview.
Alejandra Waigandt	Journalist, in charge of LIDERA communication activities, Asociación Civil Comunicación por la Igualdad, CABA.
Wednesday, August 8, 2012	
Carolina Buceta	In charge of the REDI network. CABA.
<i>Trip to Morón - Working meeting with the team of the NGO Madre Tierra (Focus Group)</i>	
Virginia Parodi	Head of administration and accounting
Marisa Salvarezza	Coordinator
Sandra Ferreyra	Head of social assistance activities
<i>Return to CABA</i>	
Thursday, August 9, 2012	
Maria Rosa Goldar	Fundación Ecuménica de Cuyo (Mendoza Province). Skype interview.
Marcia Baranovsky	Fundación Siglo XXI (Jujuy Province). Skype interview.
Elsa Colqui	Casa de la Mujer María Conti. (Jujuy Province). Telephone interview.
Eliana Luna	Head of FAVIM (Mendoza Province).
Constanza Galli	Project, Policy, and Public Affairs Officer, British Embassy
Marisa Miodosky	Cooperation project manager, British Embassy, CABA
Guadalupe Tagliaferri	Under Secretariat for Social Development, City Government, CABA
Mabel Bianco	Fundación Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM). CABA
Friday, August 10, 2012	
Diego Ocampo	Interdisciplinary contribution for the region - AIRE (La Rioja Province). Skype interview.
Matías Ascueta	Interdisciplinary contribution for the region - AIRE (La Rioja Province). Skype interview.
Natalia Gherardi	Executive Director, ELA Project Coordinator, CABA.
Mariana Morelli	Communications Director, ELA CABA.
	Finance Director, ELA , CABA.
Andrea Balzano	Head of Gender Division, UNDP CABA.
Gabriela Sosa	NGO Las Juanas, Rosario, Telephone interview.
Mabel Bianco	Fundación Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM)

ANNEX 4: Acronyms

ACIJ	Asociación por la Igualdad y la Justicia
CABA	Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ELA	Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género
EU	European Union
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Argentina Office
IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
IPM	Women's Participation Index
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
REDI	Network for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (REDI)
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women