



Sixth Report

Project “Fiscal Transparency in Nicaragua”



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Contract No. CHF-081-FT-01
July- September, 2014

This report corresponds to the activities completed by the Institute of Strategic Studies and Public Policies (IEEPP, Spanish acronym) under the framework of the project “Fiscal Transparency in Nicaragua” between July and September 2014. The project was implemented under sub Grant agreement No. CHF-081-FT-01 between Cooperative Housing Foundation –presently Global Communities- with cooperative agreement funds from the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

During this quarter, the principal highlighted achievements are the following:

1.1. Information on public procurement is up to date and available to citizens

During the month of July IEEPP worked to update 2014 information on public procurement on a national and municipal level. This update was necessary because most public institutions make modifications to their annual procurement programs - implying variations in the amounts estimated.

The updated information is available to download with Excel on the site www.nuestropresupuesto.org. Also available to download is an interactive map of Nicaragua to facilitate access.

Additionally, the virtual observatory received 484 visits from 331 users. The majority of these users were university students who consulted the observatory as a result of promotional visits by IEEPP to universities.

1.2. Population has access to information on the General Budget of the Republic in friendly and easy to understand language.

Two new products were designed with user friendly information on the Budget cycle (a poster with information and a budget calendar with key dates of budget preparation and approvals) which have been distributed to members of the CSOs working with IEEPP training processes and training and other relevant groups. These materials will also be distributed as part of the re-launch of the campaign, “The Budget is your Money, understanding it is your responsibility”.



These promotional materials allow Budget information to be brought to the public's attention.

1.3. CSO members, journalists, decision makers, and the general public have access to Budget analysis and public contract information.

Two investigations were developed and published. The first, "Fiscal Space and spending on poverty: A review from the budget performance reports," analyzes the evolution of poverty spending in the period 2005-2013. This work was done after a review of the budget settlement reports.

The second study, "Challenges and Opportunities of Social Accountability in Nicaraguan public procurement", addresses opportunities for exercise of social accountability in the Nicaraguan Public Procurement System (UCS, Spanish acronym) from the public information that is generated through electronic media such as institutional platforms and the electronic system that operates for this purpose. It also states who can potentially perform these exercises using the opportunities of access to information and the limitations they face in their exercise.

1.4. Technical assistance was provided to CSOs on budget analysis and social accountability.

During the month of July, the second technical assistance session was carried out with the selected CSOs: *Movimiento Puente, Ajoma, Aldema, Asotrasol* and the *ILLS*. This session included the topics of communications and advocacy as related to budget analysis. The fundamental objective was to give the CSOs tools to plan advocacy action using diverse media and social networks once the budget analysis was prepared.

The second session also involved an evaluation of the technical assistance. One aspect that stood out was the importance of CSOs sharing their experiences and lessons learned, as well as to explore potential partnerships. In turn, it permitted IEEPP to approach the CSOs that work in the regions and transfer tools that had previously only been used by the IEEPP team at a national level.

1.5 Shared experiences with fiscal transparency- particularly with the Budget.

On July 9 a conference was held to discuss "Initiatives which contribute to Budget transparency in Latin America". International speakers addressed the Latin American experience, particularly in the cases of Guatemala, México and Argentina, attended this event. The international partner organizations were: Fundar (Mexico), International



Budget Partnership (IBP), ICEFI (Guatemala) and ACIJ (Argentina). All speakers had extensive experience in analysis and advocacy on public budgets focused on social sectors. Punides, CODENI and IEEPP all participated in the presentation of national experiences. The conference also featured a presentation by Kenneth Coleman, a representative of the Latin American Public Opinion Project of Vanderbilt University. He discussed the results of the LAPOP survey on the everyday experience of Nicaraguan citizens with corruption and kickbacks in 2014.

The conference was attended by 70 people, including officials from the Central Bank of Nicaragua (BCN), the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MHCP), representatives from national CSOs (Funides, Codeni, Aldema, Asotrasol, Movimiento Puente, Inceju, etc); representatives from international organizations (Action Aid, Cosude, etc); and media (La Prensa, El Nuevo Diario, Confidencial, Metro, Radio Universidad, Radio Restauración, Channel 2 and Channel 12). Links to some of the media articles covering the event can be found at [La Prensa](#) and [El Nuevo Diario](#).

This event enabled experience sharing among peers and key stakeholders such as government officials, members of CSOs and journalists. Moreover, journalists' coverage put the issue of regional and national fiscal transparency on the media agenda.

2. Various activities

During the month of September, IEEPP planned activities in preparation for the continuation of the second phase of the Fiscal Transparency Project.

This included the launch of the previously successful campaign “The budget is your money, understanding it is your responsibility” with a greater emphasis on radio, social media and printed materials. The printed materials will be distributed during university visits in order to present the campaign and the virtual observatory: www.nuestropresupuesto.org

An October visit was coordinated for an IBP team to accompany the IEEPP team to meetings scheduled with key actors to provide feedback on advocacy work done by the IEEPP on issues of fiscal transparency.

3. Limitations and Lessons Learned

- Delays in the progress of investigations resulting from publication of government information and increase in investigators assigned work.



- Delays in the development of technical assistance sessions. This was due in part to the need to coordinate dates with CSO recipients to ensure that all involved parties could attend.
- Expectations were not met for the number of participants attending the closing conference for the first phase of the project
- Approval of the budget for the second phase of the project was a month later than initially planned

4. Main Activities for the Next Period

The following table shows the events planned under the project framework for the October-December 2014 quarter.

Activity Name	Activity Description	Location	Proposed Date	Participants
Meetings with key actors	Meet with key actors to cover the issues of fiscal transparency in Nicaragua.	Organization offices	October	IEEPP and IBP teams
Fiscal Transparency campaign	Launch of the campaign " <i>The budget is your money, understanding it is your responsibility</i> "	Radio and social networks	October-December	IEEPP team
Fiscal Transparency Virtual Observatory	Present updated information on the PGR and pre PAC 2015 Projects	Website/ Activities under DAL NIC 2014 framework	October-November	IEEPP team
PGR 2015 Project Descriptions	Present preliminary considerations on the RMP 2015 draft to key stakeholders, the media and students	IEEPP board room / hotel / universities	October-November	IEEPP team
"Citizens Budget" Document	Base document will be prepared for the subsequent development of the user-friendly version of 2015 PC	IEEPP offices	November-December	IEEPP team
Investigation of Budget Reform processes	Currently developing	IEEPP offices	October-December	IEEPP team
Investigation on Venezuelan Cooperation	Begin designing investigation	IEEPP offices	December	IEEPP team