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DECENTRALIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (DDLGP)

FINAL REPORT - VOLUME I

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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SEPTEMBER 2006

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AECI	Spanish International Cooperative Agency
AME	Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities
APM	Advanced Participation Methods
ARD-3D	Democracy, Decentralization, Development
BEDE	State Bank
CAF	Andean Finance Corporation
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc.
CDC	Cantonal Development Committee
CGM	Consortium of Galapagos Municipalities
CONAM	National State Modernization Commission
CONCOPE	Ecuadorian Consortium of Province Councils
CONESUP	Ecuador's Consortium of Public Universities
CONAJUPARE	National Consortium of Juntas Parroquiales (local rural councils)
CORPO-Ambato	Ambato's Development Agency
DDLGP	Decentralization and Democratic Local Governance Program
FLACSO	Latin American Faculty of Social Science
FMM	Financial Management Model
GOBEL	Electronic Government
GoE	Government of Ecuador
GTZ	German Technical Assistance Agency
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
INECI	National Institute for International Cooperation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IR	Intermediate Result

LAN	Local Area Network
LDMM	Local Decentralized Management Models
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDP	Municipal Development Plan
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MERA	Monitoring, Evaluation, Report, and Analysis
MIDUVI	Ministry of Housing
MIS	Management Information System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PAL	Program Audit Letter
SIF	Social Investment Fund
SO	Strategic Objective
Sub-IR	Sub-Intermediate Result
STA/M	Senior Technical Advisor/Manager
TO	Task Order
UDENOR	National Government-sponsored Public Infrastructure NGO to support the northern border communities
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTE	Equinoctial Technological University
WAN	Wide Area Network
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROGRAM CONTEXT, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIC APPROACH

The USAID/Ecuador Decentralization and Democratic Local Governance Program (DDLGP) was designed to contribute to the broader USAID policy goals of strengthening the Ecuadorian democratic system through support for effective decentralization and the strengthening of democratic local governance (i.e., increasing citizen participation in and oversight of local decision making, and simultaneously enhancing the capacity of local governments to respond to citizen needs in an accountable and transparent manner). Between October 2001 and September 2006, ARD, Inc. implemented DDLGP, or ARD-3D (Democracy, Decentralization, Development), as it later became known in Ecuador.

To achieve the overall objective of DDLGP, the program has three specific components: local government strengthening, citizen participation, and effective decentralization. The strategies and activities have been three-pronged: (1) strengthening local governments in policy formulation, organization and management, service delivery and transparency processes; (2) institutionalizing community participation in decision making, local strategic development planning, and provision of local government services; and (3) supporting reforms and more effective implementation of decentralization policies in collaboration with key institutions such as the Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities (AME), Congressional leaders, and the Executive arm's National Modernization Commission (CONAM), among others. The fundamental development hypothesis of the ARD-3D project was that positive results in these three interrelated components would enhance the legitimacy of local government in Ecuador and enhance participatory democratic processes, which in turn would increase citizen support for democracy.

In the initial phase of the project (October 2001–September 2003), ARD-3D concentrated its efforts to improve service delivery as a key area to better quality of life in local communities and to enhance citizen involvement in local government decision making. The Social Investment Fund (SIF)—although placed within the institutional strengthening component—was essentially crosscutting, serving to provide municipalities with an opportunity to apply basic planning, budgeting, management and implementation skills in a transparent manner, and citizens with opportunities to participate in planning, decision making, and oversight. During the initial 30 months of project implementation, SIF was the entry point and the identification and implementation of SIF projects were the main focus. A total of 15 municipalities located on the coast, highlands, and Amazonia received assistance under the program. In decentralization, efforts were geared toward the creation and operation of an advisory committee to provide guidance to ARD on key policy bottlenecks regarding decentralization, the successful organization of a presidential forum at which candidates for the Presidency responded to questions on decentralization policy, and the development and approval of the Municipal Law (*Ley de Regimen Municipal*).

During the second period or last half of the project, the project was reoriented at the request of USAID. Geographically, 3D was asked to expand the project to 25 local governments and to include the Galapagos. 3D was also requested to focus its actions at all three subgovernmental levels: provincial, municipal, and parochial (parishes), and by extension to *mancomunidades*. Although ARD-3D continued with many of the approaches proven successful in the initial 30 months, more emphasis was given to "soft" activities (technical assistance and training) to complement the infrastructure and public service outputs of the first phase of DDLGP. As a result, SIF was often used to leverage funds and optimize the local governance strengthening and decentralization indicators, but was by no means the program's only point of entry. In the area of decen-

tralization, the project's initial activities were complemented with strengthening local government capacities to manage sectors that had already been decentralized *de jura* or *de facto* by central administrations in the areas of health, agriculture, tourism, and education.

ARD developed an innovative strategic approach and a variety of methodologies and interventions to strengthen local governance through technical and financial assistance in target municipalities, provinces, parishes and *mancomunidades*, and support the implementation of effective decentralization. In accordance with USAID/Ecuador's strategic results framework, assistance was designed to improve USAID-assisted local governments' ability to respond more effectively to community needs, increase oversight capacity of the civil society, promote broad-based participation in decision making of targeted local governments, and advance decentralization for strengthened subnational governments.[1]ARD was responsive to USAID in terms of employing the key elements of its strategic approach: namely, using local government selection criteria that yield a balanced choice of demonstration sites, managing DDLGP resources for local-level results within an ambiguous policy environment, pursuing demand-driven implementation with a results-driven approach, applying the SIF creatively at entry points that support DDLGP objectives in response to citizen demand, and integrating high-performing citizen participation and facilitation methods throughout the project.

The centerpiece of the approach was a demand-driven approach, as seen through the eyes of the local civil society and government. ARD-3D's technical assistance was linked to local priorities. This paved the way for technical assistance and training interventions to meet the more challenging governance objectives of DDLGP. The SIF was a powerful tool to accomplish a results-driven approach and to promote broad-based participation in decision making. It served both as a consensus-building activity and it showed concrete, rapid, and visible results that built confidence and credibility in the program. Last, given considerable confusion, ambiguity, and lack of consensus and role definition at the national level regarding the form and content of decentralized governance, it was important to develop a strategy that used a bottom-up approach from the local to the national level.

The approach emphasized demonstrating the concrete development benefits of democratic local governance by engaging a wide range of local actors in program interventions while simultaneously building their capacity and strengthening the relationships between the Ecuadorian state and its citizens at the local level. Within this framework, the program provided numerous opportunities for citizens to voice their opinions and express their preferences. The program helped establish institutional mechanisms to promote transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs. Among the broad range of local actors, special attention was given to ensuring the participation of vulnerable groups—particularly, indigenous populations, Afro-Ecuadorians and women—to expand the benefits of improved local governance to these marginalized populations.

Over the life of the project, ARD-3D also promoted equity reflected by gender and racial diversity in the project office. Out of 23 employees, 16 were female, or the equivalent of 70% of the workforce; 54% were in supervisory, technical, or managerial positions. In addition, mestizos, indigenous, and whites were represented on the project staff. This sent a message to USAID and the beneficiaries that ARD was committed to promoting equity, both racially and related to gender.

ARD-3D went beyond its contractual duties in scale and responsibilities by extending the project beyond the contracted level of effort (which required 25 local governments [geographically, ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse] at the provincial, municipal, and parish levels), where it was able to strengthen strategic planning, organization and management, service delivery, and transparency processes of parish subnational governments, including two provincial councils, 30 municipalities, 18 parishes, and three *mancomunidades*.[2] See geographical coverage in Annex A.

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[1]   These four objectives correspond to USAID's sub-Intermediate Results under IR 3: Strengthened Local Governance.

[2]   Consortiums of local governments created with a specific purpose.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS AND PRINCIPAL RESULTS

The specific DDLGP objectives reflected in the Intermediate Results (IR): (1) targeted local governments respond more effectively to community needs; (2) oversight capacity of civil society increased; (3) broad-based participation in decision making of targeted local governments increased; and (4) decentralization for strengthened subnational government advanced, were addressed through an integrated package of work-shops, exchanges of experience, study tours, SIF planning and implementation, and technical assistance.

Between October 2001 and 2006, ARD-3D benefited a large number of Ecuadorians[3] and its intervention resulted in the following principal results:

- *Development of strategic municipal and parish development plans:* First, plans were either developed or validated. This means that ARD did not duplicate any existing efforts. If the municipalities or parishes had already worked on a plan prior to ARD-3D's entry, that process was respected and leveraged and the project focused on a validation of the existing document. If such a process was not in place, then project technical assistance was targeted at the development of a new plan. Also, all planning exercises were done in a partici-patory manner, considering all possible representative actors and their diverse points of view. Moreover, the planning exercises were used to articulate disperse efforts. The latter was particularly powerful in the tourist plan developed for the *Mancomunidad de Santa Elena.* Finally, ARD's planning exercises were different than those sponsored by other cooperating agencies, in that plans were not only developed as documents, but in all cases plans were implemented either with ARD's SIF or through alliances built with other cooperation agencies (i.e., it was outcome oriented). For instance, potable water in Tulquisán, within Juan Montalvo Par-ish, and the new organizational structure for the Municipality of Mira were implemented with the Govern-ment of Ecuador's (GoE's) Prolocal.[4]

- *Increased accountability and transparency:* This result was attained through a variety of mechanisms. To begin with, ARD's intervention in each locality was defined through a highly participatory process. Manage-ment systems for service provision were selected among a variety of options by the local key actors. SIF pro-jects also provided the opportunity for both local government officials and community members to partici-pate in transparent selection and procurement processes, and monitor the advancement of the project. The Citizen Oversight Committee of Esmeraldas was so empowered in monitoring the process, that a delayed process and indecisive political will on behalf of the authorities was modified and the new slaughterhouse is presently in place and operating. Civic forums also represent very successful processes related to transpar-ency. These entities were created around the last local authorities' electoral process. Efforts were targeted at four pilot municipalities: Mira and San Lorenzo (Northern Border), Ambato (Highlands) and Tena (Amazo-nia). In all four municipalities, the citizens worked on the development of a "citizen agenda" that responded to citizens' needs. Candidates presented their work plans and had to respond to citizens' questions and con-cerns. Then, a basic governance agenda was negotiated, agreed, and signed by the candidates. Once elected, a diverse group of citizens organized around a civic forum, have been monitoring elected officials actions against the negotiated basic governance agenda. In particular, Ambato's civic forum was and continues to be very aggressive, and this group of citizens continues to work independently of ARD-3D support.

- *Graduate Certificate in Local Public Management:* This was one of ARD-3D's most successful and rep-licable programs developed to strengthen local governments. This initiative also decentralized unitary and central planning away from Quito to other crucial and critical geographical nodes. A national consortium of four universities (Guayaquil's Catholic and Casa Grande Universities, Cuenca's Azuay University, Quito's Equinoctial Technological University [UTE]) was formed to implement a Graduate Certificate in Local Pub-

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[3] The ARD-3D project benefited 2,216,024 Ecuadorians, out of which 51% of the beneficiaries were men and 49% were women, and 77% were mestizos (mixed race), 9% were indigenous, 8% white, and 6% Afro-Ecuadorians.

[4] An executive unit of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

lic Management. A total of 176 professional Ecuadorians (mayors, prefects, municipal and provincial council members, local public officials) throughout the country have participated in this program. Twenty-seven students from the central and northern part of the Sierra, Esmeraldas province, and the Amazon region enrolled in UTE (Quito); 69 students from the coastal region (with the exception of Esmeraldas) enrolled in Casa Grande and Catholic Universities (Guayaquil); and 80 students from the southern part of the Sierra, enrolled in Azuay University. This program attempts to professionalize public service at the local level, by providing actual and potential local public servants with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to rationally contribute to the development of their jurisdictions.

- *Financial strengthening:* This result was accomplished by different means. First, during Phase I, financial strengthening was targeted through the creation and strengthening of cadastre (Pedro Moncayo and Ambato) and financial systems (Ambato) in order to increase the generation of own-source revenue. Also, in Phase II, ARD-3D successfully leveraged resources from different national public and international donor organizations in order to develop the cadastre for one of the most vulnerable municipalities ARD-3D worked with San Lorenzo. ARD-3D also assisted local governments and communities to develop and even implement tariff schemes to collect public services fees. Finally, ARD's *Financial Management Model* (FMM)[5] was presented in a workshop to officials and authorities of 17 local governments, and attendants were trained on the application of this tool. In addition, the FMM was successfully tested in two local municipalities.

- *Management systems for public service delivery:* Over the first 30 months of operations of DDLGP, 15 municipalities (Ambato, Azogues, Babahoyo, Cayambe, Cotacachi, Esmeraldas, Espejo, Manta, Mira, Otavalo, Pedro Moncayo, San Lorenzo, Saraguro, Sucre, Tena) were assisted by ARD-3D to agree upon the selection of a public service that the local authorities, officials, and community considered a priority to work at and improve. Technical assistance was provided to select the most suitable management system for each specific case. During the second half of the project, service delivery was successfully targeted as an extension and replication from the first targeted local governments. For instance, Olmedo, Ascázubi, Ayora, and Juan Montalvo parishes benefited from the project's intervention in Cayambe, where a management system was developed for solid waste management. Presently, all the aforementioned parishes have developed management systems in order to operate their own solid waste management through delegation from the municipality. Similar results were obtained in Tena, where the solid waste management system was replicated in the Ahuano parish. Tálag parish, on the other hand, benefited from the extension and replication of a potable water system from the Provincial Government of Napo. In Chaco, three management systems for the provision of potable water were implemented in the parishes of Sardinas, Linares, and Santa Rosa. Also, eight decentralization management systems were developed in the following municipalities: for decentralization in health, in Cotacachi, Chordeleg, Cuenca, Bucay, and Santa Cruz; for tourism, in Portoviejo, Manta and Isabela; and for agriculture, in Cayambe. Education management systems were also developed for the Provincial Government of Los Ríos, and the municipalities of Samborondón and Salitre. Finally, the *mancomunidad de Santa Elena* was assisted to develop its tourism management system.

- **Support for the development and strengthening of citizen participation models (i.e., municipal and parish assemblies, veedurias [or technical oversight committees], and civic forums):** Advanced Participation Methods (APM) was ARD-3D's most versatile instrument to foster citizen participation. Initially, APM was used in the identification and prioritization of SIF. APM was also used for strategic and action planning workshops for citizen oversight committees, building consensus between citizens and between communities and local government officials. Trainees received insight on how to develop different participatory models like local assemblies and *veedurias*. ARD-3D also took advantage of the 2004 municipal elections by conducting effective "civic forums." ARD-3D promoted the civic forum events through TV, radio, and the distribution of 5,000 brochures. Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) replicated civic forums in Pedro Moncayo and Otavalo. The goal of each forum was to build the capacity of the citizens to develop

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[5] Financial management tool developed in Romania by ARD Inc. experts and adapted to meet Ecuadorian needs.

"citizen agendas" and attend forums to share the agenda with the candidates running for mayor. The candidates then signed commitment letters of what they agreed to do when elected. Civic forums have been sponsored by various donors over the years; however, ARD-3D developed an innovative final phase. Once the mayor was elected, a citizen oversight committee met with the newly elected mayor to discuss the agenda, negotiate next steps, and obtain his/her commitment once in office. Although this was a difficult phase for both the mayor and the citizens, it produced a more accountable governance process. ARD-3D trained local government officials and citizen groups in 10 municipalities, two parishes, and one provincial council on the necessary tools and the appropriate mechanisms to carry out oversight (*veedurias*) for local government activities either in specific areas or services, or in the general operations of the municipality, such as Pelileo's Cantonal Development Committee (CDC).

- *Lobbying and approval of the Municipal Law (Ley de Regimen Municipal):* The actions and advocacy of the 3D's Advisory Committee in coordination with AME, the Permanent Commission for Decentralization and Deconcentration of the National Congress, and other international donors resulted in the approval of all articles (66) of the 2004 Organic Municipal Reform Law. The law provides more significant fiscal and administrative autonomy for municipalities.

- *Strengthened capacity of eight municipalities to prepare systems, both fiscal and administrative, for future decentralized resources and creation and strengthening of eight cantonal councils by area of intervention:* In order to propel decentralization processes in eight municipalities in the areas of agriculture (Cayambe), health (Bucay, Cotacachi, Cuenca, Chordeleg and Santa Cruz), and tourism (Manta, Portoviejo), both technical assistance and SIF was invested in the administrative and fiscal strengthening of these eight municipalities. As a result, local governance will be strengthened through the efficient provision of decentralized local services taking into account local needs. In all eight municipalities, fiscal management models were developed to simulate the alternatives that these local governments have in order to deliver a sustainable decentralized service. The fiscal management models have been completed and validated by local government authorities and technicians. The models showed that under an ideal transfer of responsibilities and resources from the central government, municipalities would have enough resources to provide decentralized local services.

- *SIF projects:* SIF projects were a critical element of program integration, addressing both the demand and supply side of democratic local governance by providing incentives and hands-on experience in development planning, project design, community participation and oversight, and transparent public management, while also improving local government infrastructure. Therefore, the impact of SIF transcended its *hard* side (pure infrastructure) and transformed into several *soft* elements of local governance. The SIF process provided invaluable training to citizens, offering them the opportunity to gain firsthand experience in the development, implementation, and oversight of publicly funded projects. The benefits of this process were manifest in terms of meeting the infrastructure needs of the participating communities while encouraging and rewarding civic involvement and building confidence and productive relations between communities and their local governments. SIF projects were used as a platform to foster institutionalized citizen participation in public affairs. The SIF platform was also used to involve vulnerable marginalized communities, including indigenous groups, Afro-Ecuadorians, displaced persons, and women, and encourage their participation in municipal governance. To illustrate the latter, the Oversight Committee to the Modernization of the Municipality of Ambato promoted the active participation and involvement of handicapped, women, and indigenous citizens. Clear requirements and rules on financial management and program implementation facilitated the completion of these projects and the mobilization of over US $4 million in local counterpart contributions.

- *Galapagos Islands governance:* During Phase II, ARD-3D initiated a process of support to democratic governance in the three municipalities of the Galapagos: Isabela, Santa Cruz, and San Cristóbal. ARD's major achievement in this short period of intervention was to mobilize different foreign assistance organizations

that have been working in the Galapagos for several years now[6] and align them toward the need to invest in human development and governance in the Galapagos Islands cf. to flora and fauna.

- **_Systematization of the DDLGP experience:_** ARD-3D allocated resources to create medium- and long-term impact beyond the outreach of the project itself. In order to do so, the project systematized its own experience. Different aspects of the project's intervention were assessed and documented, both as lessons learned and best practices, in order to publish and disseminate them. This way, elected officials and local government officials, community members, and other cooperation agencies have been stimulated to replicate best practices[7] and benefit from project lessons learned.

- **_Workshops:_** During the program execution, ARD-3D developed some important workshops in different locations detailed as follows:

  Sustainable Local Development Workshop in Sucre (AME): On March 2, 2006, in Bahia de Caraquez – Sucre, a workshop sponsored by AME's Manabi region and ARD-3D was held. Representatives from Andean Finance Corporation (CAF), Ambato's Development Agency (CORPO-AMBATO), and ARD-3D presented best practices and discussed development alternatives with municipal officials from Manabi's province. These officials were exposed to issues like decentralization in agriculture, design of management systems, civil society organization models, and initiatives for sustainable local economic growth.

  AME-Guayas Workshop: A workshop sponsored by AME-Guayas to exchange experiences and best practices from the Management Models of Phase I was held in Guayaquil, on November 10, 2004. ARD-3D experiences from Solid Waste and Slaughterhouse Management Models were documented and presented by ARD and municipal technicians to a group of 80 people from the Guayas province. Incumbent and newly elected mayors from the different cantones of the Guayas Province; officials from AME-Guayas and the Ministry of Housing (MIDUVI); and representatives from USAID, Pact, and the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) were present at the workshop. A presentation of ARD-3D's vision of the decentralization process and its legal framework was also part of the agenda. For elected mayors, the exposure to innovative management models, subnational government officials, and donors' technicians, and the possibility to replicate existing municipal best practices were the important results of this activity. ARD-3D also offered its support to serve as a link between donors' resources and the needs of the Guayas municipalities. Furthermore, mayors showed particular interest in decentralization processes and the activities ARD-3D executes. Guayas province has not experienced international donor interventions before and yet has the greatest concentration of population and the largest city (Guayaquil) in Ecuador.

  Best Practices Workshop – Cuenca: On September 14 and 15, 2006, a workshop sponsored by ARD-3D was held in Cuenca. The objective of this workshop was to share the best national practices of different USAID governance and democracy contractors (CARE, Fundación Esquel, International Organization for Migration [IOM], ARD-3D) in the areas of local government strengthening, citizen participation, effective decentralization, and local economic development and thereby provide models for future replication and recommendations for future decentralization and local governance projects in the region.

- **_Innovation:_** During its execution, ARD-3D assisted local governments and communities to develop and implement innovative management systems. For instance, public-private partnerships were selected in Cotacachi and Manta from a varied array of management models to run the municipal market and the slaughterhouse, respectively. Also, in Phase II, the project supported several parishes to assume the provision of po-

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[6]   These organizations include the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI), Araucaria, Fundación Charles Darwin, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), United Nations (UN), and Cuerpo de Paz.

[7]   Replication does not mean _copy-paste_ recipes.

table water (Chaco) and solid waste collection and final disposal (Cayambe and Tena), as a result of transfer of responsibilities from the municipal to the parish level .

- *Matching contributions from the beneficiaries:* ARD-3D has been highly successful at leveraging funds from the local government and communities. From the initial stages of the ARD-3D project, local governments were encouraged to contribute up to 50% of the resources required for financing infrastructure projects. As per last calculation in September 2006, ARD-3D has invested $5,280,988.17, while local governments and community counterparts have invested $5,519,497. This represents a 0.96:1 ratio in investment. Leveraging funds ensures that local governments promotes ownership of local development projects and increases the capacity of local governments to raise funds for local development projects, which in turn, promotes sustainability. The USAID Assistant Mission Director, Ray Waldron, has stated: "It's very unusual for USAID contractors to accomplish this high ratio."

Over the life of the program, many success stories were generated through DDLGP. The quote shown to the right is from the mayor of Santa Elena. It is a testimony to the success of DDLGP in strengthening local governments.

> " When we started to work with ARD-3D we had no idea of the tourism potential of the region, if all the mayors worked together. Now, all mayors of the *mancomunidad* are working together, no matter what our political affiliations may be, with the sole purpose of mobilizing the local tourism sector in order to enhance the economic development of the region."
>
> **Lcdo. Dionisio Gonzabay**
> **Mayor of Cantón Santa Elena**

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Decentralization and Democratic Local Governance Program (DDLGP) has been a key component of USAID/Ecuador's development assistance program since its inception in October 2001. A second, 30-month phase of the program was agreed in September 30, 2003, under contract number OUT-AEP-I-807-00-00016-00 TO 807 with ARD, Inc.

This document is the final technical report for DDLGP. Following the introduction, which describes the context of local governance in Ecuador, the report is organized into three main sections:

- Section 2.0 describes the expected results that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) assigned to this program and the approaches and methodologies that ARD used to achieve those results.

- Section 3.0 describes program implementation and the results achieved in relation to established indicators.

- Section 4.0 presents the principal recommendations that emerged from the experience of DDLGP for future democratic local governance programming.

The Financial Report and Annex A (geographic coverage) of the ARD-3D project are published separately as Volume II.

1.1 LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN ECUADOR

Ecuador has been a presidential democracy since 1979, when it joined what political scientists called the "third wave" of democratization in Latin America.[8] Countries defined as third-wave countries were considered to be "returning" to some form of civilian electoral democracy. Since 1979, Ecuador has, however, experienced significant political instability, as evidenced by the fact that it has had six presidents in the last eight years. An acute institutional crisis, a discredited political elite and party system, regional friction between Quito and Guayaquil, and the indigenous movement have buttressed the role of the Ecuadorian military as arbiters of national politics.[9] In 2000, a group of officers led by Colonel Lucio Gutierrez allied with the indigenous movement and briefly formed a government. Ecuador's sixth president since 1996, Lucio Gutierrez, was elected in a runoff vote in 2002. He disappointed his allies by trying to introduce structural reforms, was involved in several instances of corruption and nepotism, and pursued a less than transparent foreign policy. He was toppled, as a result of street protests and politically unsound decisions, in April 2005, and was replaced by his Vice President, Alfredo Palacio. Mr. Palacio has struggled to contend with rising social unrest and to secure party support for his policy proposals.

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[8]   Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

[9]   Iglesias, Carlos. *The Military and Politics of the Andean Region*. Andean Working Paper. Inter-American Dialogue, April 2006.

Region-wide opinion polls show that, although Latin Americans continue to broadly support democracy as compared with military rule, Ecuadorians are increasingly dissatisfied with the performance of democratic governments and are becoming impatient with those governments' ability to effectively address their most pressing concerns.[10] Ecuador registered the second greatest decrease (behind Peru) in its citizens' level of satisfaction in government institutions—from 34% in 1996 to 14% in 2004.[11] Ecuadorians' frustration with their politicians stem from the leaders' failure to satisfy citizens' most basic needs, such as providing sanitary waste facilities, potable water, and decent schools. As a result, Ecuador's political leadership, at both the national and local levels, is blamed for the shortcomings of democracy. The country's politicians are accused of corruption, and of lacking the long-term vision and skills needed to lead governments and deliver basic public services. These high levels of dissatisfaction with the government and its institutions could have negative consequences for democratic consolidation.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Ecuador's decentralization reforms yielded a framework for decentralization in Ecuador. These reforms, however, have not necessarily led to a wide-scale existence of local democratic governance. A clear political path to the implementation of existing decentralization laws has yet to be apparent in Ecuador. Since 2001, several laws and policies have been developed; however, the GoE has yet to implement these laws uniformly.

In response to the political context, USAID developed a democracy strategy that focuses on strengthening the transparency and accountability of democratic institutions, fostering greater inclusiveness of historically disadvantaged groups in key democratic processes, and increasing consensus on policies that are critical to democratic consolidation.

The 3D project aimed to strengthen democratic local governance through the promotion of effective decentralization, strengthening citizen participation in and oversight of local decision making, and simultaneously enhancing the capacity of local governments to respond to citizens needs in an accountable and transparent manner. The project focused technical assistance on the following subgovernmental levels: provinces, municipalities (*cantones*), parishes *(juntas parroquiales)*, and municipal associations *(mancomunidades)*. The 3D project strengthened the capacity of and worked in collaboration with mayors, council members, and staff at the municipal level, governors at the provincial level, and presidents at the parish level.

ARD-3D also worked with citizen oversight committees, whose objectives are to (1) involve citizens in the decision-making process; (2) support citizen oversight initiatives; and (3) strengthen local organizations in public outreach, strategic planning, and service provision. At the highest level, municipal assemblies (*asembleas cantonal*) represent the citizens of the community. They are autonomous organizations, elected by the citizens, and serve as the representative to the council and mayor. Municipal assemblies work more at the political level of the process; whereas parish assemblies work at the most local level, generally in rural areas, and represent the citizens of several neighborhoods. *Veedurias* provide oversight and technical assistance to projects.

The rationale behind DDLGP was that by strengthening local and other subnational governments to ensure delivery of services, local governments would serve as a conduit to attract greater public participation and increase citizen participation in the identification and prioritization of public works. The improved service delivery and increased citizen participation would lead to an increase in Ecuadorian's confidence in their government's institutions.

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[10]   Mijeski, Kenneth. *Citizen Support for Democracy in Ecuador: Has the Third Wave Crested?* Paper prepared for presentation to the 52nd Annual Meeting of South Easter Council on Latin American Studies, April 7-9, 2005. Nashville, Tennessee.

[11]   See www.latinobarometro.org/ for more information about the Latinbarometro survey's origins and activities. The countries surveyed are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

1.2   PROGRAM FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

DDLGP was designed to support the US government/USAID objective of helping Ecuadorians strengthen their democracy. At the core of Ecuador's complex array of economic, political, and social problems is a fundamental need to extend the role, presence, and responsibility of the Ecuadorian state to all parts of the country to improve the quality of life of Ecuadorians, especially the most vulnerable and traditionally marginalized. This is why DDLGP promoted effective decentralization, increased citizen participation and oversight of local decision making, and simultaneously enhanced the capacity of local governments to respond to citizen needs in an accountable and transparent manner.

DDLGP was designed to contribute to USAID's Strategic Objective No. 12: "Increased support for the Democratic System." As part of this global objective, the program focuses on the underlying Intermediate Results (IRs), all of which guided key elements of the ARD-3D project:

IR 1: Improved Transparency and Accountability of Key Democratic Institutions,

IR 2: Greater Inclusiveness of Democratic Processes, and

IR 3: Increased Policy Consensus in Key Democratic Areas.

The Mission's results framework for DDLGP is completed by the following four specific objectives, or Sub-Intermediate Results (sub-IRs), that constitute the foundation for the orientation and design of program interventions and performance measurement:

- IR 1.2: Targeted local governments respond more effectively to community needs,

- IR 1.3: Oversight capacity of civil society increased,

- IR 2.2: Broad-based participation in decision making of targeted local governments increased, and

- IR 3.2: Decentralization for strengthened subnational government advanced.

1.3   PROGRAM APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

1.3.1   Principal Strategic Approaches

ARD's overall approach to DDLGP was based on a flexible strategy designed to foster a high degree of ownership and engagement among all stakeholders and partners. The approach aimed to demonstrate the concrete development benefits of democratic local governance by engaging a wide range of local actors in program interventions while simultaneously building their capacity and strengthening the relationships between the Ecuadorian state and its citizens at the local level. Key elements of this framework included providing numerous opportunities for citizens to (1) voice their opinions and express their preferences, and (2) establish institutional mechanisms to hold their public officials accountable. Among the broad range of local actors, special attention was focused on ensuring the participation of vulnerable groups to expand the benefits of improved local governance for indigenous populations, Afro-Ecuadorians, and women. The program also emphasized sustainability through the mobilization and institutional strengthening of intermediary organizations, such as the AME and the Ecuadorian Consortium of Province Councils (CONCOPE), allowing them to continue the important work initiated under the program.

The following section succinctly describes the salient features of DDLGP strategic approach used to achieve program goals and objectives.

- **A demand-driven approach:** ARD-3D respected the local processes and adapted the project's intervention to the local reality. This strategy took advantage of existing processes without duplicating efforts and promoted the sustainability of the program.

- **Flexibility and support for other USAID strategic programs (i.e., the Northern Border Program):** ARD-3D was sensitive to USAID's overall policy and was always open to leverage efforts with other programs and organizations under the Mission's umbrella.

- **Synergies with other organizations:** ARD-3D was able to develop strategic alliances with several institutions, such as multilateral organizations, NGOs, and other US and Ecuadorian agencies in order to enhance the impact of the USAID-funded intervention. The project not only recognized areas of specialty and strengths in others, but was able to turn that perception into real proactive cooperation, and by so doing undermining a narrow and pervasive tradition of single protagonists, instead of focusing on the main actor of this effort, the people of Ecuador. ARD-3D built a relationship and/or MOUs[12]/agreements to reflect this coordination with the following institutions: AME, CONCOPE, the National State Modernization Commission (CONAM), the Ministry of Housing (MIDUVI), UDENOR (a government-sponsored public infrastructure NGO), the State Bank (BEDE), Ecuador's Consortium of Public Universities (CONESUP), *Fundación Equel*, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), CARE, German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), UN Habitat, UN Development Program (UNDP), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Participación Ciudandana, Fundación Ecuador, Universidad Casa Grande, Universidad Católica Santiago de Guayaquil, Universidad Tecnologica Equinoccial, Universidad del Azuay, *Proyecto de Reducción de la Pobreza y Desarrollo Rural Local* (PROLOCAL), and the Peace Corps.

- **Social Investment Fund as a governance catalyst:** Throughout DDLGP's implementation, SIF was a useful tool to attain visible and tangible results that in turn created the commitment and enthusiasm of ARD-3D's counterparts. SIF was employed on a demand-driven basis, to strengthen local government/community partnerships in addressing local priorities. In Phase I, it was strategically utilized as the entry point for program interventions. The program promoted good governance practices through the practical application of participation, accountability, and oversight in the context of developing and implementing SIF projects, starting with the identification and selection of infrastructure projects in the field. A *quick-start* approach was used in which program presence in target municipalities focused immediately on funding priority infrastructure projects to resolve long-standing communal needs. These quick-start projects constituted a platform to establish program credibility and trust and laid the foundations for addressing more difficult governance challenges. In Phase II, SIF was used to leverage funds and provide an incentive to enhance the participatory democratic process of local governments and stimulate citizen participation. As a result, ARD-3D concentrated more on improving the process and basic internal functions and skills needed to improve service delivery and allocate public resources in a more efficient, transparent, and accountable manner.

- **Capacity strengthening at the local level to prepare local governments for future decentralized resources:** Given a very ambiguous standing at the national level to effectively implement decentralization, ARD-3D supported decentralization initiatives at the local level. With little political will to systematize and implement decentralization laws at the national level, DDLGP focused on strengthening capacity at the local level to prepare local governments and citizens for future decentralized resources. Once the local decentralized models were developed and approved by the corresponding local government and line ministry, the models to decentralization "champions" were presented at the national level.

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[12] Memoranda of Understanding.

- **Scaling up and replication:** Over the course of the project, USAID extended ARD-3D in both geographic scale[13] and duration. The 3D project was also modified, expanding responsibilities to provinces and parishes and increasing the total of local governments to 25. This expansion in scale was advantageous in that ARD-3D successfully created economies of scale, replicating previously successful municipal strengthening and citizen participation activities in the first 15 targeted municipalities at the provincial and parish levels. For example, in the Municipality of Cayambe, ARD-3D replicated successful solid waste management activities at the parish level.

- **Development of long-term capacities:** ARD-3D developed certain activities and mechanisms that were geared at developing the long-term capacities of beneficiaries beyond the project's life. For example, several trainees at the APM workshops are now capable APM facilitators themselves. Also, the Graduate Certificate in Local Public Management is a means to develop a new generation of Ecuadorian professionals that have the skills and competencies to manage local governments efficiently.

- **Citizens' empowerment:** Citizen participation is a key to success and sustainability. Over the course of project execution, ARD-3D's technical team had to struggle with cases of ambiguity and lack of political will on behalf of the elected authorities. Sometimes, very successful projects were put at high risk because of the aforementioned scenario. It was realized, however, that empowering citizens to participate in the development process is a powerful tool to counteract these vicious circumstances. When citizens get involved, most obstacles can be overcome. This was the case with Phase I projects in Manta, Esmeraldas, and San Lorenzo.

1.3.2 Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Analysis

At the beginning of Phase II, as the ARD-3D project expanded its responsibilities to more local governments (including provinces and parishes) and increased its pool of assistance packages. A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System was put in place in order to guarantee compliance with USAID/Ecuador performance indicators and expected results.

It was a challenge to combine the two phases of the project into one fluid and flexible system able to collect inputs of different natures and obtain standardized outcomes and effects. Phase I had an important SIF component. The construction of infrastructure combined with the provision of local services drove the ARD-3D intervention. Phase II— with a significant reduction of SIF funds—concentrated on providing technical assistance not only to local governments but also to citizen organizations.

The scaling up and complexity of activities demanded more flexibility in the design of monitoring tools (templates, assessment scales, reports) and periodic meetings with technical and field staff. This was extremely useful for tracking inputs and monitoring activities.

Program Audit Letters (PALs) were developed in order to bring grantees into compliance. PALs were sent along with Evaluation Reports—after an intervention was completed by ARD-3D—to mayors or the correspondent local authority. The PAL stated that the local government had succeeded or failed to comply with the terms of the agreement and requested rapid corrective actions in order to be considered for future assistance. PALs have been highly effective; authorities have quickly responded and agreement terms have been honored.

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[13] Scaling up is defined as efficiently increasing the socioeconomic impact from a small to a large scale of coverage. In the case of 3D, the project scaled up in expansion of experience (i.e., scaling up impact within an area or country on the basis of one or more existing useful, preferably successful initiatives).

2.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This section describes the principal DDLGP II technical assistance and training interventions and activities. It provides a general overview of the program's portfolio of services that was offered to participating municipalities and other partner organizations and institutions. The specific outputs, results, and impacts of program interventions are presented in Section 3.0, organized according to each of the program's four sub-IRs.

2.1 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

The design and implementation of DDLGP interventions were organized under three major programmatic components:

1. **Local Government Strengthening** to improve local governments' general capacities at provincial, municipal and parish levels in the areas of financial and administrative management, citizen outreach, transparency, and participation;

2. **Citizen Participation** to strengthen local communities overall capacities at the provincial, municipal, and parish levels, to learn about, understand, participate in, and oversee decisions and management by local government authorities; and

3. **Effective Decentralization** to promote improvements in the legislative, institutional, and financial enabling environment, especially by strengthening the institutions dedicated to these tasks such as the National State Modernization Commission (CONAM), Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities (AME), Ecuadorian Consortium of Provincial Councils (CONCOPE), and National Consortium of Ecuadorian Parishes (CONAJUPARE). ARD-3D also enhanced local communities' specific capacities to assume new responsibilities in health, agriculture, tourism, and other areas as transferred from the central government ministries.

Following a brief overview of the program's geographic coverage, the sections below describe the principal DDLGP training and technical assistance interventions under each program component.

2.1.1 Geographic Focus

DDLGP has been a national outreach program. ARD-3D worked in four regions of Ecuador: the coast, the highlands, Amazonia, and the Galapagos Islands.

In Phase I, ARD-3D focused its intervention in three out of the four regions of the country (coast, highlands, Amazonia) and its actions were targeted at municipal governments. Most interventions took place in the Highlands. In Phase II, USAID extended ARD-3D in geographic scale by including the Galapagos Islands, and expanded responsibilities to provinces and parishes. The Galapagos was an important place to implement the project, not only to complement other USAID investments in this location but also because its weak social tissue, which could jeopardize the internationally recognized environmental asset it represents.

ARD-3D continued expansion in scale, at the request of local governments and with the approval of USAID, by extending the project beyond the contracted level of effort (25) to parish local governments.

Geographic specifics have also been respected. In a country as diverse as Ecuador, ARD-3D was sensitive to use the appropriate means and tools to reach out to civil society and to elected officials and local governments' staff. Geographic, cultural, and ethnic specifics were taken into account by the technical and managerial staff as crucial inputs in order to create long-term processes that can have an outreach beyond ARD-3D's life.

Over the life of the program, DDLGP operated in and benefited a total of 56 parish subnational governments, including 2 provincial councils, 30 municipalities, 21 parishes, and 3 *mancomunidades*.

ARD-3D's target local governments are shown in the map in Annex A.

2.1.2 Local Government Strengthening

As previously mentioned, this component's primary objective was to strengthen the management and administrative capacities of local governments, in order to provide responsible, transparent, and effective leadership that can respond to citizen priorities and thus target better governance and decentralization. By enhancing and reinforcing key technical skills related to a customer-oriented focus, local governments are now able to provide better services and achieve higher levels of governance. In addition, this component supported all actions entailing citizen participation strengthening; particularly those that enable institutionalization of citizen participation within local governments.

To help targeted local governments increase their management and administrative capacities to foster better governance, DDLGP designed and implemented different programs and instruments that are described below:

- *Developing public service provision management systems:* The development of management systems for public service provision was one of the key elements of this component. During Phase I, this was DDLGP's most relevant area of intervention. Both technical assistance and SIF were used to assist targeted local governments and communities select which public service to enhance and the best alternative to manage and operate the targeted service. During Phase II, service delivery was successfully targeted at different local governments. First, as part of the scaling up process, some service delivery management systems developed for local governments of the first generation were replicated to nearby parishes. Also, specific management systems were developed for local governments where efforts were geared at the strengthening of decentralized competences in the areas of health, agriculture, tourism, and education. Today, these local governments have a comprehensive and viable model to provide targeted service that includes the administrative, financial (cost analysis and tariff schemes), legal, and operational components of a management system.

- *Modernizing and automating key areas: finance and cadastre:* By strengthening the managerial capacity that the local government utilizes to respond to citizens demands in the financial and cadastre systems and implementing the automation of the aforementioned areas, the Municipality of Ambato was able to improve the operational efficiency in the departments of finance and cadastre and its own-source revenue; increase citizen satisfaction (fast, efficient and red tape-free service) and internal customer satisfaction (municipal employees); and enhance the transparency of the municipality with the citizenry. In Pedro Moncayo, a new urban-rural cadastre system including improved interdepartmental connectivity, was the top priority for the local government and community. With ARD's support, this project helped promote the institutionalization of transparency in local governance and enhance accurate information dissemination to the public about property taxes. In Phase II, and as the result of an interinstitutional agreement, ARD-3D assisted the Municipality of San Lorenzo to develop its cadastre. Presently, San Lorenzo has updated its urban (100%) and rural (40%) cadastre. This activity was very successful because of its potential impact to significantly increase own-source revenue for this poor territory and also because of the means by which it was accomplished. DDLGP was able to leverage resources beyond a $108,000 SIF contribution from the following organizations: IOM, UDENOR, MIDUVI, and the Municipality of San Lorenzo.

- ***Sponsoring development of a Graduate Certificate in Local Public Management:*** ARD-3D sponsored an academic program developed to create or enhance local competencies in the art of public management, a major breakthrough in decentralizing capacity building. Four prestigious universities (Guayaquil's Catholic and Casa Grande Universities, Cuenca's Azuay University, and Quito's Equinoctial Technological University [UTE]), formed a consortium at ARD's request, and have implemented the first generation of a Graduate Certificate in Local Public Management (*Diplomado*). In an initiative without precedent, these four universities were able to launch the program in record time. It took the consortium less than a year to discuss and define the purpose of the program, the curriculum, and administrative and financial issues. Classes began in January 2006 with 176 enrolled students, out of which 18 participants of the different local governments received scholarships from USAID through the DDLGP project. The first class from UTE is expected to graduate by the end of this month (September 2006).

- ***Building capacity of public management leadership:*** During June 2006, two workshops in public management leadership were carried out to train parish representatives from the different ARD-3D regions. The first workshop was held in *"El Oasis",* a location in Imbabura Province, attended by 14 *Juntas Parroquiales'* presidents and community leaders. The second workshop was held in Ambato, Tungurahua Province, attended by 15 *Juntas Parroquiales'* presidents and community leaders. This activity enhanced managerial capacity and negotiation skills.

- ***Assisting development and institutional planning:*** Through this activity, the project was able to strengthen 16 local governments. ARD-3D assisted in the development of these plans and they have begun to be executed with the support of ARD-3D. Each plan includes a diagnosis, a set of strategies, objectives, prioritized projects, and an immediate and viable annual work plan.

  Most local governments in Ecuador have designed some sort of development plan. However, many of them have not translated the territorial priorities into an institutional plan that responds to the community needs. This is why ARD-3D supported six local governments in their effort. Today, targeted local governments have institutional plans aligned with their development plans, and they are more capable of satisfying the needs of their communities in an organized fashion.

- ***Strengthening transparency and accountability:*** ARD-3D carried out many activities to strengthen transparency and accountability in targeted local governments. All of these actions were complemented with matching efforts and activities in the citizen participation component. SIF enhanced municipalities' and communities' capacity to carry out a participatory and transparent procurement process that could be emulated in the future with public funds. A specific ordinance was developed by AME to provide official recognition to citizen oversight committees within the municipal organizations. This was successfully delivered to 27 ARD-3D targeted local governments. These local governments adapted the ordinance text to its local specifics and passed it as an official by-law. Other activities to enhance local transparency and accountability included a Citizen Information System that was developed in Ambato to provide real-time and accurate information to citizens regarding municipal services. Moreover, due to ARD-3D's intervention, all council meetings held in Manta are televised and can be watched live by any citizen.

- ***Assisting organizational development:*** This activity was implemented as a complement to institutional planning. The Municipality of Mira was assisted in designing a new organizational structure and introducing a process-based administration. An alliance with PROLOCAL enabled the municipality to begin redesigning the financial area. In Babahoyo, governing processes defined in the planning exercise were introduced in the organization. In Simón Bolívar, a slot was created in the organizational structure for a city manager position in order to become more efficient and responsive to citizens needs. A new organizational structure and a process-based administration based on citizens' satisfaction and local economic development was developed in the Galapagos Islands for the Santa Cruz and San Cristóbal municipalities.

- ***Developing a fiscal management tool to strengthen municipal finances (Financial Management Model):*** The purpose of this model was to provide municipalities with an analytical tool that would provide Ecuadorian municipalities with the capacity to:

  1. Collect financial information to self-evaluate their financial balances, and therefore their financial capacity to borrow;
  2. Forecast revenue and expenditures more accurately;
  3. Monitor and report the accumulation and payment of accounts payable (or short-term debt);
  4. Quantify the impact of unfunded mandates and transfers of responsibilities without adequate financial resources;
  5. Monitor and report accounts receivable and payments of enterprises under the subordination or jurisdiction of municipal governments; and
  6. Simulate two loan scenarios with the capacity to modify loan terms and conditions as well as currency type.

  The Financial Management Model was successfully tested in the Municipalities of Otavalo and Sucre. In both cases, a financial report was submitted to the local authorities to demonstrate the utility of the tool and to provide a diagnosis of the municipalities' fiscal situation. This effort was complemented with a Financial Management Workshop held in Quito, on May 18, 2006. In the event, financial directors, financial officers and five mayors represented a total of 17 local governments. José Larios, ARD-3D's Senior Technical Advisor/Manager (STA/M), explained the utility of the tool and compared the fiscal situation of Ecuadorian local governments with countries like Romania and El Salvador. Assistants received the Model (software) and a manual and were trained on how to use this tool.

2.1.3. Citizen Participation

The citizen participation component was focused on the promotion and strengthening of mechanisms that properly influence decision-making processes. These should link various citizen groups in problem solving and consensus building. Citizen participation processes included leadership skills development of the local civil society representatives. In addition, it involved shared responsibility in decision making for the collective welfare, as well as civic oversight and accountability. Therefore, it encouraged transparency and trust-building processes as well as the development of governance. To help accomplish these objectives, DDLGP designed and implemented different programs and instruments that are described below:

- ***Providing decision-making training and assistance for civil society representatives:*** ARD-3D supported and developed models of citizen participation, including municipal assemblies, parish assemblies, and *veedurias* (technical oversight committees). The objectives of these models were to (1) involve citizens in the decision-making process; (2) support citizen oversight initiatives; and (3) strengthen local organizations in public outreach, strategic planning, and service provision. At the highest level, municipal assemblies (*asambleas cantonales*) represent the citizens of the community. They are autonomous organizations, elected by the citizens and serve as the representative to the council and mayor. Municipal assemblies work more at the political level of the process. ARD-3D strengthened the organizational development, helped develop proposals for official legal approval of the organizations, and provided technical assistance to the municipal assemblies of Cotacachi, Babahoyo, Simon Bolivar, Pelileo, Ambato, Urcuqui, and Mira. In Otavalo, the mayor developed four parish assemblies, instead of a municipal assembly, to reach citizens at the local level in each parish. Municipal and parish assemblies organized events to identify and prioritize needs, developed and reviewed municipal and parish strategic plans, and provided oversight of strategic plans and the implementation of the projects.

  Advanced Participation Methods (APM) were successfully used to increase citizen participation in the identification and prioritization of SIF projects in Phase I. These workshops involved between 30 and 90 citizens and local government officials in each municipality. Citizen oversight committees were elected at this phase of

the project. Citizens who benefited from APM to identify and prioritize the SIF project often formed citizen oversight committees. In addition, APM was used for better involvement of citizens into government activities, strategic and action planning workshops for citizen oversight committees, and building consensus between citizens and between communities and local government officials. ARD specialists taught the three foundational methods of advanced participation: how to lead a consensus-based workshop; how to facilitate a focused dialogue with an interested and engaged group; and how to lead an action planning activity to create a short-term, realistically implementable plan. During the workshops, participants were exposed to several models of participatory events and instruments that could be applied in their communities. ARD-3D conducted a training of trainers in APM for 275 citizens and local government officials. Of those 275, 120 citizens and local government officials became expert APM facilitators who conducted strategic and action planning workshops, quality service improvement programs, public review of local government commitments, and progress and best practices workshops.

Civic forums also provided citizens from four different municipalities (Ambato, Mira, San Lorenzo, Tena) with the opportunity to participate in the development of a local agenda, be informed concerning the candidates'[14] proposals, negotiate the terms of a basic work plan related to the agenda with elected officials, and to monitor the fulfillment of the work plans. All these activities geared toward the improvement of governance in local jurisdictions.

Finally, strategic planning was another means to enhance citizen participation and local governments' responsiveness to citizens needs. Local governments learned how to link strategic planning with service delivery directly in response to citizens needs. In Babahoyo, for example, strategic planning activities were conducted in collaboration with 700 citizens, through open participation and dialogue that in turn increased transparency, citizen trust, and the sense of ownership of the 2005–2008 municipal strategy.

- *Strengthening citizen oversight:* ARD-3D successfully strengthened local communities' overall capacities at the provincial, municipal, and parish levels to learn about, understand, participate in, and oversee decisions and management by local authorities (i.e., developing skills in the oversight of transparent procurement processes). During Phase I, APM Working Groups were created in targeted municipalities to select an area of intervention, define a management system for the delivery of a service, and monitor the implementation of SIF projects. APM Working Groups members also had the chance to learn and practice transparent procurement procedures. In Phase II, when most Phase I projects were coming to an end, APM Working Groups in various municipalities began the process of converting citizen participation responsibilities into legally constituted municipal oversight or "formal *veeduria*" bodies. Regarding the advances of the *veeduria* bodies, technical assistance was provided to update a local actor's map, inform citizens on their rights and responsibilities, develop an action plan for next year, and gain legal recognition from the local governments. Training was also provided to 22 participants during the Citizen Oversight Strengthening and Advanced Participatory Methods Workshop held in Cotacachi during the third week of May in 2006.

- *Providing transparent leadership training for civil society representatives:* Citizens out of 10 targeted municipalities attended a four-day workshop, where participants learned how to improve their skills as leaders and group facilitators. They were exposed to different mechanisms to develop several models of participatory events that could be applied in their communities. The different models developed were local assemblies, citizen oversight, accountability processes, strategic plans, and development plans. ARD-3D also assisted the Municipality of Cotacachi to strengthen their own initiative to create a Leadership School. A core curriculum was developed and a National Congress of Leadership Schools was held with ARD-3D's support.

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[14]   Candidates for mayor.

- ***Involving citizen groups in the decentralization processes:*** In regard to civil society representatives involvement in key decision making, ARD-3D provided support to eight municipalities to increase citizen participation in decision making related to the decentralization process. Different actions were carried out, responding to the specific needs of each locality. ARD-3D helped organize and strengthened citizen oversight committees, called the Municipal Committees of Decentralization, [15] comprised of citizens and local government officials, in the areas of agriculture, health, and tourism. The committees participated in municipal strategic planning, organizational development, budgetary oversight, and awareness-raising campaigns. Workshops were held to reach consensus between key actors including municipal committee members, municipal officials, municipal councils' representatives, and civil society representatives on substantial issues around decentralized service provision. Citizens' involvement in the design of public policies related to the decentralization process was encouraged, and municipal ordinances that regulate the committees' functioning were updated.

- ***Preventing human trafficking:*** In response to USAID's request, ARD-3D promoted policymaking and development of appropriate mechanisms to reduce vulnerability around trafficking in persons. A standard ordinance was developed by Children's Defense Fund to formalize local governments' involvement in the prevention of trafficking in persons; and was applied to all ARD-3D targeted local governments. Also, three municipalities were targeted to receive specific technical assistance. Strengthening activities include educational and informational events, and small SIF investments. In Simón Bolívar, the Municipality assumed responsibility of managing the issue of human trafficking with the *Patronato,* and the Childhood and Youth Cantonal Council's capacity was strengthened. In Otavalo and Santa Cruz, ARD-3D strengthened the capacity of the Community Development Unit and the Childhood and Youth Council for the same purpose. A workshop, in partnership with the American Bar Association, was organized to promote awareness and prevention. Overall, ARD's interventions have contributed to create awareness and promote local government's responsibility in supporting vulnerable groups at risk of involvement in human trafficking activities.

2.1.4. Effective Decentralization

Ecuador's decentralization reforms, starting in the late 1990s, yielded several policies for decentralization in Ecuador. These reforms, however, have not necessarily led to a wide-scale existence of local democratic governance. Although there is a comprehensive legal framework for decentralization, there is not a favorable regulatory environment or political will to implement decentralization laws. A clear political path to the implementation of existing decentralization laws has yet to be apparent in Ecuador. Since 2001, several laws and policies have been developed; however, the GoE has yet to implement these laws in a uniform manner.[16]

ARD-3D employed a two-prong approach by working from the central to the local level, and vice versa. The following activities reflect efforts made by ARD-3D to enhance effective decentralization implementation:

- ***Developing an Advisory Committee:*** ARD-3D developed and institutionalized a formal *Advisory Committee* to help develop and guide implementation of the decentralization component. The Advisory Committee worked to convince the GoE to implement decentralization laws, regulations, norms, and practices. This group was also charged with lobbying and interagency coordination (AME, CONCOPE,

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[15] These committees are the official entities in charge of policymaking around the specific decentralized area.

[16] In 1997, two major laws were promulgated with the intent to foster decentralization of the Ecuadorian state:
1. Law on Decentralization of the State and Public Participation and its Regulation; and
2. Law on Distribution of 15 percent of the Central Government budget to Sectional (Local) Governments and its Regulation.

In addition, Article 225 of the most recent Constitution states: "the state will promote coordinated development of the country, strengthen public and local government participation, and the transfer of public resources and wealth through decentralization and deconcentration."

CONAJUPARE, CONAM, *Mesa de Gobernabilidad*, etc.) to improve Ecuador's enabling environment in the area of decentralization. The Advisory Committee's participation was especially beneficial as it provided important input and guidance into ARD-3D's annual work plans that improved project implementation in the decentralization component. The *Advisory Committee* was composed of former and present political leaders, renowned professionals in the realm of development; indigenous movement's leaders; and press editorialists.

- *Coordinating with the central government:* The decentralization component supported more effective coordination between the cooperation agencies and the central government in efforts to implement policies and programs in this area. In this context, ARD-3D supported CONAM with decentralization studies and the strengthening of its administrative capacities to lobby for decentralization reforms and implementation of laws. Moreover, ARD-3D continuously lobbied with different ministries to formalize the transfer of responsibilities in a given area and make effective the transfer of resources to operate the new decentralized areas.

- *Strengthening the capacity of and coordination between donors and national organizations promoting decentralization and local governance strengthening:* To maintain momentum at the national level when there is little political will to implement decentralization, it is important to strengthen the capacity of, and coordination between, donors and national organizations involved in the decentralization debate. ARD-3D participated in the International Donors Group (*Mesa de Gobernabilidad*), whose goal was to facilitate development of a common donor vision and ensured that donors were aware of each organization's strategies and objectives. It was important to present plans to avoid replication and sequence activities with other donors. Table 2.1 lists the 3D donors and collaborative initiatives. ARD's participation in the International Donor Group resulted in collaboration with GTZ in the "Best Practices Competition" and with CARE in the initial phases of the 3D activity in the Galapagos.

ARD-3D also supported national organizations involved in decentralization reforms and implementation, such as AME, CONAM, and CONCOPE.

TABLE 2.1. ARD-3D DONORS AND COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

Donor	Type of Intervention
CARE	*Gobierno Electrónico* (**GOBEL**)
	Provided staff for Galapagos and shared institutional knowledge
GTZ	Best Practices Competition
	Lobby for approval of Municipal Law Reform
AME	GOBEL
	Lobby for approval of Municipal Law Reform
CONCOPE	GOBEL
	Lobby for approval for Provincial Law Reform
CONAM	Strengthen administrative capacities to lobby for decentralization reforms and implementation of laws
	Decentralization studies
Fundación Ecuador	Develop primary education models and plans that can be replicated in other local governments
Peace Corps	Helped place volunteers and collaborated with them in the Galapagos
IOM, UDENOR, MIDUVI, AME	Modernization and automation of urban and rural cadastre in San Lorenzo
IADB	Modernization and automation of key areas of finance and cadastre in Ambato

- *Lobbying to promote legal reforms:* ARD-3D supported several initiatives to push for the reform of decentralization laws and policies. Working with AME and all Congressional parties (blocs) in individual sessions, ARD provided technical assistance to delineate the impact of proposed reforms on the munici-

pal modernization and financial process. Moreover, ARD-3D lobbied legislators in the Ecuadorian Congress to support the law through events and meetings, and conducted workshops with all political parties to reach a consensus on the law. The law explains the roles and responsibilities of the national and municipal levels of government related to the decentralization context. The main impact of these reforms was an increase in local property tax revenue due to market-based cadastre property valuations.

ARD-3D has also supported initiatives for several laws and ordinances that are still being discussed, including:

– Technical assistance to develop the national law related to the roles and responsibilities of the provincial levels (*Ley Orgánica de Regimen Provincial*), lobbying, and consensus building with 22 prefectures.

– Technical assistance to develop and build consensus around six municipal ordinances to create the Municipal Councils for Health.

It was challenging to achieve results of legal reform in the Ecuadorian political context, where there is a lack of political will to effectively implement decentralization.

- ***Strengthening capacity at the local level to prepare local governments for future decentralized resources:*** With little political will to systematize and implement decentralization laws at the national level, in Phase II ARD-3D focused on strengthening capacity at the local level to prepare local governments and citizens for future decentralized resources. To propel decentralization processes in eight municipalities in the areas of agriculture, health, and tourism, ARD-3D strengthened local governance through the development of administrative management systems to provide decentralized local services that take into account local needs and citizen involvement in the process. *Local decentralized management models* (LDMMs) were developed and approved by local government authorities to present clear and accurate information concerning fiscal transfers. The LDMMs present different options to deliver sustainable decentralized services. ARD-3D analyzed the capability of the eight municipalities to provide decentralized local services through data gathering and simulation models. The LDMMs demonstrate that under an ideal transfer of responsibilities and resources, municipalities will have the resources required to provide decentralized local services. ARD-3D developed workable decentralized models in Chordeleg, Bucay, Cuenca, Cotacachi, Santa Cruz, Cayambe, Manta, and Portoviejo.

  As an example, in Manta and Portoviejo, ARD-3D collaborated with the municipalities to develop administrative and financial management tourism models. The models demonstrated what municipalities can do with the effective transfer of administrative and financial resources from the national level and what must be improved, both administratively and fiscally, at the local level to ensure effective decentralization in the tourism sector. The local governments have already made the initial recommended administrative changes (e.g., decrease the number of government employees or charge fees to more users).

  Once the local decentralized models were developed and approved by the corresponding local government and line ministry, it was critical to present the models to decentralization "champions" at the national level. For example, ARD-3D organized a presentation of the Manta and Portoviejo decentralized models with the participation of USAID, the mayors, the Ministry of Tourism (an advocate for decentralization), and the Vice President of Ecuador. It was important to help local governments market their newly acquired skills and management models to the national level in order to promote better communication and encourage the implementation of existing decentralization laws. At the presentation, it was recommended that ARD-3D (or another neutral observer) follow this process in the near future to monitor progress and cull lessons learned for municipalities that will replicate the process at the national level.

  Furthermore, ARD-3D in collaboration with *Fundación Ecuador*, developed primary education models in three local governments. These models can be replicated in other local governments.

- ***Building GOBEL (Electronic Government):*** Through a coordinated interinstitutional agreement between AME, CARE, and ARD, ARD-3D provided and installed computer software and training to AME to electronically connect their seven regional offices. As a result, an integrated local area/wide area network management information system (LAN/WAN MIS) created virtual information for the seven regional offices and transparent administration between AME and member municipalities was supported.

- ***Developing a communication campaign to promote decentralization among citizens:*** ARD-3D, in collaboration with CONAM, developed effective TV and radio commercials. These TV and radio commercials were broadcast on national and local TV and radio stations over a two-year time period. The objective of the commercials was to convince citizens (including local government elected officials and staff) of the need to decentralize to effectively solve problems at the local level. The result was that citizens were informed on the benefits and importance of decentralization.

3.0 PROGRAM OUTPUTS AND RESULTS

This section provides data on program outputs and results under each of the program's sub-IRs. Note that the outputs and results of several interventions impact on more than one sub-IR. For example, the creation and strengthening of citizen oversight committees (*veedurías*) on implementation of SIF projects have contributed to achieving both the citizen participation and the transparency sub-IRs. In the same manner, ARD's approach to development planning strengthened both municipal management and improved citizen participation.

3.1 SUB-IR 1.2: TARGETED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RESPOND MORE EFFECTIVELY TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

As described in the program activities above, local government strengthening was an integral part of DDLGP implementation. To some degree, most of the DDLGP intervention contributed to strengthening the capacity of participating municipal governments to manage administrative processes, provide services, and thereby better respond to the needs to their constituents. Some of the more noteworthy institutional mechanisms and processes created and promoted by DDLGP that substantially contributed to the objective of responding more effectively to community needs (which can be found in Section 2) included:

- *Public service provision and management systems;*

- *Municipalities' modernization and automation of key areas: finance and cadastre;*

- *Graduate Certificate in Local Public Management;*

- *Public management leadership;*

- *Development and institutional planning;*

- *Organizational development;*

- *Development of fiscal management tool to strengthen municipal finances (Financial Management Model);*

- *Strengthening of capacity at the local level to prepare local governments for future decentralized resources; and*

- *Human trafficking prevention.*

ARD-3D reached, and in most cases, exceeded targets. By means of all the aforementioned mechanisms, the following measures (indicators) reflect the program impact on sub-IR 1.2:

- Forty-one local governments have improved capacity to carry out basic general functions in general, with significant gains achieved in the delivery of one or more services targeted for improvement by means of participatory processes. The target for this indicator was 25.

- Thirty-nine SIF projects were disbursed and completed with maintenance provisions per local government. The target was 25.

- Forty-three targeted local governments applied new mechanisms for citizen participation and public information dissemination. The target was 25.

- Twenty-five local governments have increased their capacity to collect local taxes and fees.

- Forty-six targeted local governments held public meetings to create and/or review local government plans and budgets. The target was 25.

- Thirty-six local governments have increased citizen oversight, transparency, and accountability practices in key local government activities. The target was 25.

- One hundred seventy-six Ecuadorian professionals have gained the skills and competences to manage local governments efficiently.

- Twenty-nine parishes were trained in public management leadership.

- Twenty-four local governments have increased their capacity to meet conditions for accepting and utilizing transfers.

- Eight municipalities have issued ordinances that support the strengthening of management systems around transferred responsibilities, to increase own-source revenues.

3.2 SUB- IR 1.3: OVERSIGHT CAPACITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY INCREASED.

As discussed in Section 2, most program interventions were designed with multiple purposes and impacted on local-level transparency and accountability, and consequently contributed to increasing the oversight capacity of civil society:

- *Public service provision and management systems*;

- *Municipalities' modernization and automation of key areas: finance and cadastre;*

- *Public management leadership;*

- *Development and institutional planning;*

- *Strengthening of capacity at the local level to prepare local governments for future decentralized resources;*

- *Human trafficking prevention;*

- *Transparent leadership training for civil society representatives;*

- *Citizen groups involvement in decentralization processes; and*

- *Decision-making training and assistance for civil society representatives.*

Moreover, there were two specific interventions that directly fostered the enhancement of oversight capacity of civil society at the local level:

- *Transparency and accountability, and*

- *Citizen oversight.*

As a result:

- Forty-one local governments have improved capacity to carry out basic general functions, with significant gains achieved in the delivery of one or more services targeted for improvement by means of participatory processes. The target for this indicator was 25.

- Forty-three targeted local governments applied new mechanisms for citizen participation and public information dissemination. The target was 25.

- Thirty-six local governments have increased citizen oversight, transparency, and accountability practices in key local government activities. The target was 25.

- Forty-six targeted local governments held public meetings to create and/or review local government plans and budgets. The target was 25.

- Forty-five targeted local government increased frequency and depth of participatory and consultative activities, involving local government officials and civic society.

3.3 IR 2.2: BROAD-BASED PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING OF TARGETED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS INCREASED.

The most important groups of activities addressing this sub-IR involved:

- *Public service provision and management systems;*

- *Development and institutional planning;*

- *Transparent leadership training for civil society representatives; and*

- *Citizen groups' involvement in decentralization processes.*

Altogether, these interventions created a significant impact on this sub-IR that can be illustrated with the following indicators:

- Forty-five targeted local government increased frequency and depth of participatory and consultative activities, involving local government officials and civic society.

- Forty-six targeted local governments held public meetings to create and/or review local government plans and budgets. The target was 25.

- Forty-three targeted local governments applied new mechanisms for citizen participation and public information dissemination. The target was 25.

3.4 IR 3.2: DECENTRALIZATION FOR STRENGTHENED SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENT ADVANCED

Despite a lack of political will on behalf of the central government to make decentralization in Ecuador effective, several of ARD-3D's specific outputs and strategies created a positive impact in the decentralization environment. These were:

- *Public service provision and management systems;*

- *Development of a fiscal management tool to strengthen municipal finances (Financial Management Model);*

- *Citizen groups' involvement in decentralization processes;*

- *Advisory Committee;*

- *Coordination with the central government;*

- *Strengthening of capacity and coordination between donors and national organizations promoting decentralization and local governance strengthening;*

- *Lobbying to promote legal reforms;*

- *Strengthening of capacity at the local level to prepare local governments for future decentralized resources;*

- *GOBEL; and*

- *Communications campaign to promote decentralization among citizens.*

The following indicators reveal the impact accomplished in regard to this sub-IR:

- Twenty-five selected local governments have increased their capacity to collect local taxes and fees.

- Twenty-four selected local governments have increased their capacity to meet conditions to accept and utilize transfers.

- ARD-3D has participated in 12 joint activities that helped improve the environment for and progress of effective decentralization.

- Thirty-six local governments have increased citizen oversight, transparency, and accountability practices in key local government activities. The target was 25.

- Four activities were carried out that assisted strengthening USAID/Ecuador's role in donor coordination on decentralization.

- Three activities were carried out that coordinated participation of Ecuadorian subnational (municipal and provincial) associations and civil society groups in advocating for the decentralization agenda.

- Two pieces of decentralization legislation and/or implementing regulations were promoted.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE LESSONS LEARNED REVIEW FROM THE DDLGP EXPERIENCE

The following recommendations for future decentralization and democratic local governance programs in Ecuador are based on the findings of the lessons learned review. These recommendations can also be applied to other Latin American countries that implement decentralization and democratic local governance programs.

- **Recommendation 1: When scaling up, simplify and replicate successful processes, refine processes to contextual factors, maintain focus in scope, and build on previous successful projects.** The process of scaling up should, at least internally, be driven by a process of simplifying rules, methodologies, and procedures for use by many people on a larger scale. In the case of the 3D project, APM was simplified and replicated to ensure that marginalized and hard-to-reach groups in the municipalities and parishes were included in the participatory process. In addition, manuals, procedures, and processes to transfer lessons learned and best practices were developed and replicated at the provincial, municipal, and parish levels. It is also important to consider institutional context and political, social, and cultural issues when scaling up. ARD-3D recruited and fielded staff in the regional hubs that focused on refining the process in the local context. It was important to limit resources to five essential services to maintain focus on the citizens, systematize project implementation and procurement procedures, and create a uniform program in which best practices and lessons learned were shared. In addition, successful processes and activities that were transferred from the municipal to the parish level, or between municipalities, resulted in highly successful interventions. Institutionalization of on-the-ground lessons, through reports, workshops, and events (i.e., *best practices awards*) is critical to the successful scaling up of an activity.

- **Recommendation 2: Consider the advantages and disadvantages of scaling up versus deepening impact in existing programs.** Donors and development agencies should keep in mind that by scaling up an activity, over a limited time period there are both losses and gains to the project. By geographically scaling up, a project will reach more local government units, citizen groups, and people; have the opportunity and more flexibility to replicate successful activities; apply the recommendations of lessons learned and best practices; and reach higher numbers of beneficiaries to report to their national government (i.e., Congress in the case of USAID). On the other hand, an expansion in geographic scale may result in missed opportunities to deepen impact; less focus on promoting the sustainability of existing programs; and, if staff is not increased at a proportionate level, a decrease in the quality of management of the program. Given this caution relative to scaling up, ARD-3D illustrates how scaling up can be appropriate under the right circumstances, i.e., motivation, commitment, and self-confidence within a high productive team.

- **Recommendation 3: Develop comprehensive financial management improvement technical assistance packages and require that local governments participate in financial improvement activities in**

order to receive funds. Local governments need a thorough understanding of their financial situation, financial management, fiscal decentralizations systems, and revenue generation to effectively and efficiently provide basic services to the community in a transparent manner. Donors and development agencies should develop a more extensive financial management technical assistance package to accompany institutional strengthening programs. Some local governments may be hesitant to open up their books to individuals outside of the government; however, donors and development agencies should require that a local government's finances are in order before implementing activities to ensure proper accounting of funds. Once local government units can effectively analyze and manage their finances, it is important to strengthen the skills of both local government and civil society in participatory budgeting and oversight.

- **Recommendation 4: Use SIF as an incentive to strengthen the participatory democratic process of local governments and stimulate participation of citizens.** If the objectives of a program are to strengthen local governments and institutionalize community participation in local development issues, it is important that SIFs are used as an incentive, as a means to an end, and not as an end in itself. In Phase I, ARD-3D focused more on multidimensional, large-scale infrastructure projects. The implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects tends to take time, attention, and resources away from strengthening the democratic/participatory process side. In Phase II, ARD-3D focused more on strengthening the participatory democratic process by offering smaller SIF incentives. As a result, local governments leveraged funds and delivered visible results more rapidly. It is important to start with small SIFs and scale up to larger ones in a selective manner, depending on the response of the counterparts. ARD-3D was able to focus more on improving the process and basic internal functions and skills needed to improve service delivery and allocate public resources in a more efficient, transparent, and accountable manner.

- **Recommendation 5: Develop strategies to overcome low political will at the initial stages of the project.** Assume political will of local governments will change over time, for better or worse. During the implementation of the 3D project, six of the original 15 mayors were not reelected. The six new mayors changed technicians and systems, or were unwilling to collaborate and/or maintain infrastructure projects. In addition, citizen participation in the SIF projects decreased, as many were loyal to the former local government administration. Donors and development agencies should assume that political will of local governments and citizens will vary over time, and develop strategies to overcome low political will.

- **Recommendation 6: Support, develop, and institutionalize models of citizen participation and oversight (i.e., municipal and parish assemblies and *veedurias*).** Citizen participation and oversight committees, which are responsible for involving citizens in local decision-making processes and overseeing projects and progress of local government strategic plans, should be developed and supported. It is critical to ensure that these organizations are institutionalized by helping them attain the relevant legal approval by local and national authorities. It is essential that citizen oversight committees are autonomous from the local government to create an authentic system of checks and balances.

- **Recommendation 7: Focus on strengthening capacity at the local level, at the beginning of the decentralization process, to prepare local governments for future decentralized resources.** Donors and development agencies should focus on strengthening capacity of local governments to understand what kind of services can be delivered with funds transferred from the central level, and what kind of administrative improvements need to be made to deliver decentralized services. At the initial stages of decentralization, local governments require clear and accurate information concerning fiscal transfers. Local governments need to understand what they can do with the effective transfer of administrative and financial resources. Local governments also need to understand what improvement should be made, both administratively and fiscally, to ensure effective decentralization. It is also important to provide opportunities for local governments to "market" their newly acquired skills and management models to the national level. This may increase trust between the central and local governments.

- **Recommendation 8: A decentralized operational structure is essential to allow a project to cover numerous activities in a large geographic area.** Recruiting and devolving power to highly competent and

reputable local staff gives a project immediate legitimacy in the community and allows access to marginalized groups. It is also critical to ensure that program implementation and M&E requirements match human resource capacity.

- **Recommendation 9: Transfer lessons learned and best practices to other municipalities, between provincial, municipal, and parish associations, as well as to other donors and national government entities.** Midway through a project, it is beneficial to begin to review lessons learned and best practices through workshops, interviews, a report, and presentations. It is especially interesting to begin the process at this point so that recommendations can be implemented and improvements to the project can be made. It is useful to share lessons learned and best practices (1) between municipalities, (2) between the different levels of local government (provincial, municipal, and parish levels), (3) with the national government, and (4) with other donors working on similar themes. For future interventions, local governments should be required to take the responsibility for transferring lessons learned to local governments outside the reach of the project. This would expand the impact of the project and provide sustainability to the processes.