

**“Engendering Budgets: Making Visible Women's
Contributions to National Development in Latin America”**

UNIFEM – UNV

Evaluation Report

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Lima, Peru
July 7th, 2008

Executive Summary

In December 2007, UNIFEM's Regional Gender Responsive Budget Program called for proposals to evaluate two of its projects, namely:

- “Engendering Budgets: Making visible women's voluntary contributions to national development in Latin America”. UNIFEM – UNV, 2005 – 2007. Project was carried out in the following settings: Argentina (Rosario), Brazil (Recife; Brasilia), Bolivia (Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz), Ecuador (Cuenca), and Peru (Villa El Salvador (VES) – Lima).
- “Strengthening local democratic governability: Latin American gender responsive budget initiatives”. UNIFEM – AECID, 2006 – 2008. Project was carried out in Argentina (Rosario), Brazil (Recife and Brasilia), Bolivia (Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz), Honduras (Santa Rosa de Copan), and Peru (Villa El Salvador – Lima).

UNIFEM sub-regional offices involved in implementation of these projects were the Mexican and Central American, Brazilian and Southern Cone, and the Andean Region.

Evaluation purpose was four fold:

- To analyze progress made in terms of expected outcomes for each project (UNIFEM – AECID and UNIFEM – UNV)
- To learn about the suitability of strategies being put into practice locally, nationally, and regionally as well as the relationship within these levels
- To identify elements that fuel improvements in program design with respect to their monitoring system and mechanisms for assessing its future impacts
- To understand the value of the UNIFEM – UNV – AECID partnership for attaining program results

After proposals had been evaluated, the team of Maruja Barrig and Virginia Vargas, lead evaluator and expert, respectively, was chosen to conduct the evaluation. We both visited the six countries, where projects are being executed, the Regional Coordinating Office in Quito, and the United Nations Volunteers Office in Bonn, interviewing a grand total of 137 people in a variety of methods: face to face, in groups, via email, or over the phone. We furthermore carried out field work during April 2008, which coincided with their submission to UNIFEM of an Evaluation Matrix and its corresponding data collection instruments. Once the field visits concluded, we turned in to UNIFEM a report writing plan and a PowerPoint

presentation, in English and Spanish that contained our preliminary findings.

UNIFEM decided that the analysis of both projects deserved an independent report, one to go to UNV and the other to AECID.

The following discussion sketches out some of the main conclusions we reached concerning the first project, “Engendering Budgets: Making visible women's voluntary contributions to national development in Latin America”. UNIFEM – UNV, 2005 – 2007.

- We find the proposal suitable for increasing inclusion mechanisms in the region, thereby making it easier for women to take part in decision making meetings. Since the project focuses on citizen participation in local government settings, it is onboard with UNIFEM’s institutional purpose for democratizing public spending through gender responsive budgets.
- We find that the UNV – UNIFEM project has fulfilled its objective of promoting women to take part in decision making spaces, an objective that benefitted from the existence of women’s organizations with previous advocacy experience – different networks, forums, and related assemblies hard at work in Villa El Salvador (VES) – Lima, Recife, and Cochabamba – or groups local government had purposely created for women’s involvement in participatory budgets (PB), like the Red de Mujeres (Women’s Network) in Rosario. Difficulties in fulfilling this objective are seen in places where the drive for mobilization was weak or non-existent, as found in some rural areas under the jurisdiction of Cuenca’s city hall.
- During project lifetime, 2005 – 2007, organizations did involve themselves in PB processes, where these existed. Yet, the project collaborated with them and other ongoing initiatives found in the settings with different results:
 - a. strengthening the institutional course of local government Departments of Gender Affairs (DGA), such as those within the cities of Recife and Rosario
 - b. facilitating Bolivian social groups agreement with directives from national social equity and gender plans
 - c. distributing analysis tools on issues surrounding gender in PB setting processes in the local governments of VES, Rosario, and Recife so as to equip and to enable women to submit better qualified proposals.

As well, we would like to point out that, in the spirit of the UNV, all of these are volunteer organizations.

- With the exception of the successful advocacy campaigns for getting the Bolivian Ministry of Finance to issue orders that local government set aside funds for gender equity and for having the Ministry of Development Planning include gender indicators for measuring local government performance, we were unable to isolate national policies in any of the other countries that the project was unable to generate on its own. Nonetheless, we did find that, on a local level, UNIFEM was able to get mechanisms installed for facilitating women's participation, such as what happened in VES with the establishment of PB registration gender parity rules and for prioritizing projects that contribute to improving gender conditions, both of which were issued in 2007.
- On the other hand, we find that the project sensitized, informed, and trained nearly 5,000 people, and while this fact deserves respect, it should be pointed out that most of the people trained were social leaders. Despite the project having the objective of improving local government policies and practices, it did not place the same amount of attention on government officials or political authorities that it did to local civil society organizations. Project design did not include objectives for local government capacity building, even though it did include indicators for measuring performance of its plans, programs, budgets, budget increases, and local government planning processes. We can therefore deduce that results would be realized through mobilizing civil society organizations and through political pressure on local government structures.
- As part of the project, designers included different types of instruments, from training manuals to appraisals, local government budget analysis forms, and others. Each tool was adapted to the specific intervention setting. Yet, we find no information on women's voluntary contribution, plans that consider it, or strategies for disseminating it. National UNV offices have no entry in their reports of progress on volunteerism indicators, and because monitoring tools are poorly designed, the project has been unable to correct this situation, which happened during each and every reporting period. As a result, we were not able to confirm that project achievements have contributed to greater recognition of V4D since the analysis which would underscore and assign a value to women's voluntary contribution, one of the UNV's concerns for this intervention, was discontinued.
- During project term, there has been greater engagement on the part of academia on issues of physical resources, poverty, and GRB. Existing agreements with FLACSO in Mexico and Ecuador and the initial ones with the University of Rosario have helped to increase understanding of these issues in national, project involved volunteers and its main stakeholders, such as local government political authorities and NGO members. This is a good practice for

strengthening the program's regional dimension, and it provides direction for its sustainability. By participating in seminars and other regional meetings, project beneficiaries have been able to share experiences and agreements on project focus, turning these into learning spaces.

- When we looked at project progress beyond the local level, we find that the Bolivian experience has been particularly enlightening through uniting what it does locally with the search for allies in the national government for influencing decision makers in several ministries and in congress. Proof that alliances bolstered the strategic setting and can be shown to be a good practice is seen in the above example, as in the creation of the Grupo Impulsor (Promoting Group) in Villa El Salvador, whose objective was to form a DGA (Department on Gender Affairs), and the activism of the Foro por la Reforma Urbana de Pernambuco (FERU – Forum for Pernambuco Urban Reform), whose objective is to influence national budget setting processes.
- We find that four cities (Rosario, Cuenca, Recife, and Cochabamba) have increased budgets for their Departments on Gender Affairs so these can respond to the women's demands, yet we could find no data to support project work bringing about the increases. Nevertheless, we do wish to point out that one of the unanticipated effects of the intervention is that, where there are DGA's, these have increased their visibility, partly due to support given them by a UNS member like UNIFEM, which has brought them to the forefront of and increased their stature in local government. There are specific women's programs in the VES local government management offices as well as in other areas and departments in project involved local governments, but neither have there been base line studies conducted in order to perform budgetary control, nor has there been systematic program monitoring throughout the years of their existence.
- We find that planning and monitoring tools are overall weakly constructed. Outcomes and indicators are written in such a manner as to hinder the monitoring process. What is more, there are neither regional nor national instruments for finding out whether users of advocacy booklets or methodological guides understand their contents and how to use them. Likewise, there is little value placed on conducting research or carrying out studies to influence PB processes or to increase the quality of "cascade" training replications. Moreover, no assessment was done on whether training has made stakeholders more resolute. This entire situation works against UNIFEM's expectation of knowing what changes were direct results of the project.
- In terms of internal factors contributing to results achievement, we find that coordinators' (national UNV's) commitment and creativity

were two of the most important assets for advancing the project in the intervention settings. Another important asset, depending on the location, was their ability to network. Project volunteers have likewise been an important piece when it comes to advisement, training, and mobilization of organizations and local governments' energies. These have fueled and broadened community member's voluntary participation and have even made it easier for them to attend decision making meetings. Through the project, UNV has wanted greater recognition given to this type of volunteerism, recognition far from what women usually receive.

- While we were charged only with evaluating the UNIFEM – UNV – AECID projects, we can certify, due to the operational dynamic of both projects, that the regional dynamic has empowered their partners through regional events and graduate course offerings, the former being spaces where highly respected experiences could share information and lessons.
- Unfortunately, we do not have the required data for giving an opinion on the regional GRB program, but it seems that it needs to take a qualitative leap; on one hand, an appraisal of the political context and of the potential and limitations of social mobilization should be carried out in each country where the program is set, as well as another on the call for democratic governability in the countries of the region. On the other, UNIFEM sub-regional offices need to build consensus among each other for bringing to bear their individual strengths to the issue and for identifying chosen partners' potentials. Structurally speaking, the first proposal would seem necessary.
- We find that sub-regional offices and regional coordination experienced some communications difficulties, and, in some cases, country and sub-national operations were detached from other settings. National coordinators have the ability to communicate directly with regional coordination, yet they lack sufficient lines of communications between each other
- In terms of the program's cost effectiveness, an issue brought up in the ToR, UNIFEM submitted a report in which it stated that \$138,000 was allocated as direct support to its nine direct partners during the period of 2005 – 2007. In the words of these organizations, it was an important "seed fund" that was used to prepare the fields for future actions and to stimulate synergies with other cooperation sources. What was accomplished far outweighed expectations placed upon those initial funds UNIFEM could muster. In almost every case, project partners have connected with other sources of cooperation, some more success than others, in order to broaden and/ or deepen their work around GRB.

In conclusion, we would like to propose succinctly the following main recommendations:

- ✓ Regional program dimension needs to take a qualitative leap. Two ways of accomplishing this would be to update the region's social and political situation analyses and to reach consensus on the emphases to which each UNIFEM sub-regional office would be able to provide feedback on the regional perspective. We furthermore suggest that the project be clear and reach consensus when choosing countries, partners, national strong points, but especially capacities of local partners, since the ideal situation is for the intervention to be transformed into practices that can be replicated anywhere in the world. What is more, regardless of local experience success, each one might seem bounded by its own territory and that sense of fragmentation might place regional unity in jeopardy.
- ✓ Operationally speaking, we see an urgent need for clear communication channels to be established between and among the sub-regional offices and regional coordination as well as between and among the latter and national project coordinators.
- ✓ Organization of regional events and graduate level course offerings are suitable strategies for interconnecting different project stakeholders. These experiences could be increased through offering government officers, authorities, and social leaders internships with other local government settings.
- ✓ Greater emphasis should be placed on local government capacity building, seeing that it is a major player in driving processes in which the civil society can exert influence. While local government is a central vehicle for generating some of the proposed GRB initiative results, it is necessary to formulate strategies for a more active intervention that seeks to change its institutional dynamics.
- ✓ We suggest UNIFEM make a significant change in its relationship with local government, which up till now has been characterized by specific and reactive support according to the need. Working from a base of an Operational Work Plan, UNIFEM may pledge its support to actions that develop more inclusive mechanisms for programs and for having more women involved in local decision making processes.
- ✓ UNIFEM must design a dissemination strategy for its outputs and have them permanently valued: beneficiaries and partners must be involved to a greater extent in updating the web page, circulating training materials, and being involved in national and regional studies it carries out.
- ✓ We recommend that UNIFEM perform a base line study and obtain more suitable tools for measuring progress and achievements over

time. At the same time, it is necessary for UNIFEM to set up an effective project monitoring system, which would require updating situation analyses of the settings in which it intends to implement the project. From our perspective, project managers need to unify budget analysis categories to identify which lines include expenditures for gender equity initiatives, independently of lines created explicitly for such a purpose, and include them into budget monitoring. Also important is the development of a method for assessing the use of training methodological materials and the capacity of studies done as part of project activities to be turned into advocacy instruments.

- ✓ In the future, the dimensions of local government transparency and accountability must be incorporated into intervention preparation as an expression of the program's policy direction towards greater democratization and governability and moreover as a right female citizens have and should exercise. This would involve generating local government budget documentation, analysis, and monitoring strategies plus transforming data into arguments for budget oversight.
- ✓ UNIFEM must actively install an element that values women's reproductive and voluntary work as an explicit program strategy for highlighting the contribution and support given by women. Implied in this would be preparing dissemination and advocacy tools that reinforce the central role women play in development.
- ✓ The project has proved to be a good experience of synergy between both agencies. The National Volunteers played a key part in the achievements of this project: they have driven the motivation and the organization of volunteers at a local level; supported the transfer of advocacy tools, and have offered technical assistance to their counterpart agencies. In addition, the National Volunteers were trained in the postgraduate courses supported by the project, contributing to form a valuable resource of specialists. The participation, as a way of volunteering, has opened the access for women and local organizations to deliberation over public spending in rural municipalities in Bolivia, rural Parishes of Cuenca, and other local spheres. Although existing norms created the framework for the participation of the population in these spheres – such as the laws of Participative Planning or Participative Budgets – due to the influence of the project, the presence of women appears to have increased.
- ✓ For these and other reasons, it seems to us that continuing the relation between UNV and UNIFEM would be extremely positive. UNV could continue deepening the concept of V4D with a closer approach to the interests of women. And, in the case of UNIFEM, it would continue enriching its reflection and intervention in women's Human Rights, with the concepts of participation and volunteering.

- ✓ If this relation between said agencies is to continue it seems important to us that UNV places a special emphasis in the recompilation of information about the contribution of women in development and about the analysis of their invisible contributions in nurturing actions of political incidence.

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Acronyms

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development
CFEMEA	Feminist Center for Studies and Advisory Services (Brazil)
CISCSA	Southern Cone Center for Exchange and Services (Argentina)
DESCO	Center for Study and Development Promotion (Peru)
FEPOMUVES	Villa El Salvador Women's Federation (Peru)
FERU	State Forum on Urban Reform (Brazil)
IFFI	Women's Comprehensive Training Institute (Bolivia)
FLACSO	Latin American School of Social Science
MNT-PSG	National Roundtable on Gender Responsive Budgets
OCT	Technical Cooperation Office
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
EOP	Equal Opportunity Plan
AOP	Annual Operating Plan
PB	Participatory Budget
GRB	Gender Responsive Budget
SLIM	Comprehensive Legal Local Services (Bolivia)
UNS	United Nations System
TOC	Table of Contents
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VES	Villa El Salvador (Lima, Peru)
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
V4D	Volunteerism for Development

Part I Background

Since the beginning of 2000, UNIFEM has been engaged in initiatives for the equitable distribution of public resources that take into account the needs and interests of women. Collaborating with Belgium Cooperation, the UNIFEM Andean Region (AR) office carried out in Latin America a gender responsive budget component within its program, DESafios. This became the foundation on which UNIFEM built an exclusive regional GRB program that incorporated among the many projects the following two:

- “Engendering Budgets: Making visible women's voluntary contributions to national development in Latin America”. UNIFEM – UNV, 2005 – 2007.
- “Strengthening local democratic governability: Latin American gender responsive budget initiatives”. UNIFEM – AECID, 2006 – 2008.

The first project was carried out in the following settings: Argentina (Rosario), Brazil (Recife; Brasilia), Bolivia (Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz), Ecuador (Cuenca), and Peru (Villa El Salvador – Lima), and therefore involved the UNIFEM sub-regional offices of Mexico and Central America, Brazil and the Southern Cone, and the Andean Region.

In 2007, the UNIFEM GRB program regional coordination, UNIFEM headquarters in New York City, AECID, and the UNV office agreed that an external evaluation of both projects needed to be performed. Since evaluation term was set from October 2005 to December 2007, it would become for the UNV an ex-post evaluation and a mid term one for the AECID.

There were four purposes to the evaluation:

- To analyze progress made on expected outcomes for each project (UNIFEM – AECID and UNIFEM – UNV)
- To learn about the suitability of strategies being put into practice locally, nationally, and regionally as well as the relationships between and among these levels
- To identify elements that fuel improvements in program design with respect to the monitoring system and future impact evaluation mechanisms
- To understand the value of the UNIFEM – UNV – AECID partnership for attaining program results

The ToR for both projects were prepared with these objectives in mind, although it had been decided at first that each agency would carry out an independent evaluation. You will find the ToR in the Annexes section of

this preliminary report. Towards the end of 2007, UNIFEM publicly convened a request for proposals that included an evaluation methodology and work plan for both projects. After proposals had been evaluated, the Peruvian team of Maruja Barrig and Virginia Vargas, lead evaluator and expert, respectively, was chosen to conduct the evaluation. Term of their contract with UNIFEM was from March 7th, 2008 to July 7th, 2008.

The team focused on two aspects in their evaluation: one was women’s rights, from the perspective of constructing and broadening women’s citizenship, and the other was procedural since project achievement and constraint analysis had to be done from a mid and long term point of view.

For the evaluation, we chose the following two general frameworks of the UNIFEM – UNV – AECID initiative settings:

- Project-involved country institutional development and the relationship between GRB projects and government reform/ decentralization processes
- Nature and specific dynamics of incorporating women’s and other civil society organizations into the different stages of budget setting and monitoring/ oversight processes

Part of the evaluation methodology was field work (interviews), meaning we had to visit the six program involved countries as well as the UNIFEM – AR office in Quito, Ecuador, (headquarters of the regional GRB program) and the UNV offices in Bonn, Germany. We conducted interviews in the following localities:

Peru	Villa El Salvador, a large district of the city of Lima
Ecuador	Cuenca and two of its rural parishes
Bolivia	La Paz, Cochabamba, and Titora, a rural town
Honduras	Santa Rosa, in the western part of the country
Brazil	Recife
Argentina	Rosario

and employed a wide variety of interviewing techniques (face to face, group, email, or telephone). From the 137 interviewed people, there were 11 authorities and 17 officials from the local government, 22 NGO and network members, and 50 social organization leaders, urban and rural alike. Other aspects the team undertook during the evaluation process were the review of both projects’ internal evaluations and reports and the literature review of studies, publications, and the program’s web site.

The team coordinated its evaluation with the GRB program’s Regional Coordination, headquartered at the UNIFEM – AR office in Quito. We wish to extend our thanks to Raquel Coello, Regional Coordinator, for her support, openness, and preparations that helped us complete the work to the fullest extent. We also wish to recognize Aracelly de Leon, international volunteer, who coordinated the project in Brazil and the Southern Cone, as well as the following national coordinators: Karen

Suarez, Ximena Palacios, Carmen Zabalaga, Maria Soledad Perez, Maritza Perdomo, and the international officer in Recife, Saoia Polo. ¹ Our thanks also goes out to the dozens of representatives from different NGO's and networks, government authorities and officers, and community leaders, who shared their experiences with us.

As stipulated in the contract, the first evaluation output was a desk review based upon project documents and that analyzed its design and strategies. We submitted this document on April 5th, 2008. Yet before that, we created an Evaluation Matrix, structured around central themes that included specific indicators, which you can find in the annexes. We also created, submitted to UNIFEM, and validated in April before applying them in the field the data gathering tools and interview guides used with different stakeholders.

On May 15th, 2008, we submitted an English and Spanish version of a PowerPoint presentation, titled "Preliminary Findings" that summarized some of the ideas that came up as a result of our field work. As well, we presented a table of contents (TOC) for the preliminary report-writing plan that were sent to the AECID and UNV.

The report you are reading is the preliminary evaluation report.

As for limitations to the evaluation process itself, we wish to set the record straight, stating the following:

- Due to our knowledge of the regional GRB initiative related to these projects, we proposed an evaluation of both projects together and within the entire GRB program itself since both were part of it. Such a fact would have made it possible for us to identify influences from other program initiatives on these two as well as from the each other, without having to separate them artificially and instead having to find their complementarities. Yet, UNIFEM discarded this possibility, leaving it clear that this evaluation was not to encompass the GRB program, only two of its projects, and each one would require an independent report. ²
- UNIFEM requested that we identify what achievements can and cannot be attributed to the project in the report's description and evaluation. ³ We were unable to arrive at any concrete conclusions concerning that request in this evaluation, reason being that UNIFEM purposed through its projects to trigger social and cultural

¹ The professionals running the process are called National or International Volunteers, but more recently they are known as "consultants". For this report, we are grouping them under the heading of "coordinators"

² With respect to this, after reading the preliminary version of this report, UNIFEM sent us a written clarification: [...] we would like to make clear that the decision was "to have an evaluation report for each agency" given that formulated results (and their respective indicators) were different for each project and one of the evaluation purposes was to analyze progress on expected outcomes and because some of the intervention countries were not shared by both agencies and finally because one of the agencies (UNV) had specific information requirements. It seems to us important, then, to show the constraint but also to include the corresponding clarification of why UNIFEM made its decision. See III: Shared Comments to UNV and AECID Reports. Notice sent by Raquel Coello, UNIFEM GRB Program Regional Coordinator. Dated June 24th, 2008.

³ Notice dated May 16th, 2008, from Raquel Coello, UNIFEM GRB Program Regional Coordinator

processes in settings where, at different times, the intersection of stakeholders and circumstances could either coincide with, hinder, or favor them, which did not allow us, in every case, to isolate the projects' effects.

- The Evaluation Matrix we formulated on the basis of the literature review benefited from the field work. What usually happens during an evaluation is that reality refocuses, complicates, and enriches the work done in the office. That is the reason why we had to increase the issues originally listed in the Evaluation Matrix in our PowerPoint presentation and TOC submitted for UNIFEM's consideration. Meeting face-to-face with the main players and project beneficiaries provided us a clearer perspective on local government constraints and potential, women's expectations, and organizational complexities. However, UNIFEM neither accepted our TOC nor the issues we raised in the PowerPoint presentation and requested that we return to the original questions and central themes outlined in their April approved Evaluation Matrix, handing us a United Nations form to replace our proposed TOC.
- We deeply regret not being able to share with UNIFEM and their teams some of the concerns generated during our field visits. Fact of the matter is that projects are neither designed nor implemented in a vacuum, but occur in the midst of a full and changing Latin American reality. That is why we believe there are certain issues we should have been able to bring up in the debate surrounding the UNIFEM intervention in this area, namely a policy reflection regarding local government dynamics, tensions between focused and crosscutting budget spending on women, participatory budget restrictions, semantic travels in the region's concept of gender, and even a discussion on how national project coordinator profiles have influenced the projects' specific emphasis.
- Knowing and respecting our contractual and professional obligations, we are using the UNIFEM provided TOC for this report. In addition, we have limited our observations to what was laid out in the original Evaluation Matrix, as requested by UNIFEM, and, in the Conclusions section, we will follow the guidelines sent to us by UNIFEM in their ToR.

Part II. UNIFEM – UNV project: Context and intervention logic

According to the UNIFEM proposed TOC, this part is to be divided into two sections, the first being a summary of the national, local, and institutional context, and the second a description of the project intervention logic as stated in its objectives and results that were dealt with in the Desk Review.⁴

1. CONTEXTS

1.1 National Political Situation

For purposes of this report, readers must bear in mind that the 2005 - 2007 national political situation of the countries where project was being implemented was defined by general and local elections, processes that guaranteed continuation of democratic government in Peru, Argentina, and Brazil. Nevertheless, as we pointed out in the desk review, the political and social situations in two countries, Bolivia and Ecuador, were marked by instability; after four presidential changes in four years, Bolivians elected Evo Morales and his MAS (Movement Towards Socialism) political party into power, and his administration convened a Constituent Assembly, nationalized strategic enterprises, and generated antagonism between and among the different regions of the country, feelings that were stirred up by opposing political parties. One year into Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa's administration, 2007, he dissolved Congress and convened a Constituent Assembly. Amidst the consequences of these actions, there is a notable lack of legal and economic stability.

There is no doubt that the most critical aspect to political and legal instability, above all in the three Andean nations where project is present, is the permanence and application of the law. This sub-region is replete with laws, yet rife with non-enforcement of them. The ease in which lawmakers can sometimes pass legislation that favors women's interests is contrasted by the absolute zero official adoption of the means and resources for implementing them.⁵ This backdrop is vitally important for giving context to project intervention, such as the one evaluated; institutional weakness, volatility of laws and regulations, and constant policy changes are factors for consideration when preparing an intervention strategy, like the one we evaluated.

1.2 Decentralization and local government

⁴ Desk Review Abstract. Maruja Barrig and Virginia Vargas. Lima, April 5th, 2008.

⁵ The meager official budgets of the Ministries/ Councils of Women in the region graphically depict this statement as does the extremely limited allocation of resources for implementing domestic violence services, despite what the law stipulates.

In the DESafios program (2001 – 2004), UNIFEM not only wagered on gender equity advocacy to influence local budgets, but also national and /or sector budgets, just like the experiences in Mexico and Brazil. However, the UNIFEM – UNV project limited itself mostly to the local government level, with the only exception being the Brazilian NGO, CFEMEA, that monitors and analyzes the federal government's budget. In order for us to comprehend fully the weight of the achievements and risks in the design and execution of the UNIFEM – UNV project, there are certain factors related to the decentralization process and local government arena that must be brought into the discussion, these being:

- Decentralization cannot be disassociated from changes Latin American States experienced during the 1990's, such as the reduction of their powers, the privatization of public companies, and the slow abandonment of their role as social planner and provider. These transformations towards decentralization had a greater effect in the Andean nations when compared to Brazil and Argentina, two federal states with a consolidated decentralization.
- Local governments, on occasion facing serious budget planning and execution problems, are legally obligated – and socially required – to render social services, to design credit and employment plans, and to be participatory and democratic. Therefore, not only was a wide range of responsibilities transferred from the central to the local government, but the latter also became a storehouse of a set of political values, the likes of citizen participation, transparency, accountability, social inclusion, democracy of gender, etc., that the people do not normally demand with the same amount of vehemence from the Executive Branch.
- The last decade saw local government attempt to modernize itself in the face of the new tasks set before it, but enormous constraints in its available human, economic, and institutional capacities kept it from fulfilling them. Studies carried out on the decentralization process suggest that local government inertia in the sub-region has not been completely transformed; its officers, men and women alike, are part of an ingrained bureaucracy and, in some cases, lack a sufficient professional background for carrying out their duties plus are unmotivated due to the low pay and scant incentive to change.

However, in the countries where the project was active, there are laws that provide the grounds for advocacy in local government, even for including gender policies in it. For example, one article of the Bolivian Ministry of Finance's Specific Directives concerning local government preparation of annual operating plans (AOP) and budgets lays out that, starting in 2006, a portion of the budget needs to be allocated to gender equity programs and actions. There is also the Bolivian People's Participation Law that opens spaces for citizen oversight of local government as well as other

actions. In Peru, the state has, since 2003 and by law, obligated local government to apply participatory budgets. In Ecuador, the Decentralization and Participation Law of 1998 was one of the pillars for creation of the Parish Council Law of 2000. Rural Parishes are the priority settings for the project's actions in rural areas. In 2004, Brazil passed the National Women's Policy Plan, on which was based the "Commitment Agreement" of 2005 – 2006, entered into by the Secretary of Women's Policy and the federal and local governments. Even more concrete, in 2005, the mayor's office of the city of Recife passed Law # 17.108, establishing as part of the mayor's duties the formulation and execution of a crosscutting gender equality policy. This last one is a reference that provides some context for project actions within this locality.

1.3 Institutional spaces: NGO's and the women's movement

There are two institutionalized social spaces that act as main UNIFEM – UNV project stakeholders and participants: neighborhood grassroots organizations, especially women's organizations, and non governmental organizations. With these in mind, we assert the following aspects should be taken into account when framing project implementation evaluation:

- With respect to the social movement, several analysts of the South American reality agree in describing its present situation as one of reflux. Except for Bolivia and Brazil, whose strong tradition of mobilization is still active in spite of political circumstances, some lead organizations in social mobilization, like Peruvian and Argentinean unions as well as Ecuadorian indigenous groups, present weaknesses. The women's and feminist movements seem to be uncertain and limited by constant leadership changes. There are fewer neighborhood grassroots organizations now than there were in the 1990's since they attained their goal of having basic services installed in their settlements. Overall, the fragmented situation and weak organizational fabric gave way to a crisis in paradigms and strategies that were models used in constructing progressive proposals and even in development projects. It is becoming increasingly difficult to hold up the image of social mobilization leading change.
- When it is about NGO's, estimates for the number of these organizations throughout the entire region at the beginning of the 1990's placed the figure at roughly 10,000. Mexico and Brazil had the greatest concentration with 2000 and 1200 respectively; nevertheless, it was thought that some 600 were active in Peru and an almost equal number in Bolivia, which is a significant amount considering the size of these countries' total populations. If we limit the discussion to women, then Latin America NGO's during the 1980's and 1990's were the expression of feminist institutionality, or as they referred to it, the professionalism of the feminist cause. In contrast to the explosive growth of NGO's two decades ago, the reduction in resources by official and private cooperation has had

an impact, limiting their reach and cutting the number of potential participants the UNIFEM – UNV project had in some countries.

The unrest in some UNIFEM – UNV project involved countries has been such that it casts doubt upon their political and social futures. The influential voice of some social organizations has weakened and their interests, fragmented. Moreover, it is still too early for manifestations of the decentralization process, those associated with local government democratization and its openness to citizen participation, to break traditional political culture and cause a profound institutional transformation of local government.

2. PROJECT PHILOSOPHY, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES⁶

UNIFEM and UNV partnered together for this project in accordance with the following concepts and policies:

- A human rights framework, from which advocacy for changes can be performed
- A consensus to fight poverty, particularly the feminization of poverty
- The quest for strategies that will place women and their organizations into budget setting decision making spaces, and enable them to advocate an informed agenda before economic policy makers as well as to monitor commitment pledges
- A agreement on governability, based upon strengthening democratic mechanisms and institutions, in order to spur participation and respond to society's demands
- Concord with the commitment to gender equity and democratic institutionality strengthening

UNV has explained in several of its documents how specific networks and groups of organizations (residents, women, young people, etc.) are highly capable of mobilizing themselves to carry out important tasks: creating awareness of the rights of excluded groups, driving solutions based on the community and a unified front, and encouraging social relationships. It is a type of volunteerism that encompasses social transformation.⁷

In 1999, the UN convened the Expert Working Group on Volunteering, which defined participation as a form of volunteerism, by which individuals partake in the governance process. Furthermore, volunteerism is considered a tool for exercising the right to participate and an important means through which people can express their commitments as citizens.⁸ Volunteerism, in the form of participation, is the hub where UNV and

⁶ In this section, we summarized parts of the Desk Review submitted to UNIFEM on April 5th 2002 At at that institution's suggestion.

⁷ Volunteerism and Capacity Development. UN Volunteers 2002.

⁸ Report from the Expert Working Group on Volunteerism and Social Development. United Nations. New York, 1999.

UNIFEM's interest meet, in reference to encouraging and facilitating citizen participation, especially women, in government settings.

In addition to the value of participation, volunteerism is an effective way of contributing to capacity building and development. Since the 1980's in Latin America, volunteer groups of women fighting against subsistence and for services have been visible, and this contribution by women to development and its impact on increasing capacities is something society does not normally see to its fullest degree.

Recovery on these contributions by women and having them receive the recognition are two of the factors that harmonize UNIFEM's GRB program with the UNV philosophy. In the direction of the program, volunteerism positively influences governability by strengthening and making democracy more capable of responding the demands of the society.⁹

The project is clearly biased towards mobilization and participation as well as towards strengthening organizations. Its main objective is to make public and to recognize the voluntary participation of women in different regional processes in order to attain greater appreciation of the value of their voluntary contributions and to strengthen their influence on local decision making processes.¹⁰ Project intends to have the following institutionalized:

- a) Women's participation in political and economic decision making and accountability processes
- b) Tools and practices that reinforce budget management and control from a gender perspective, making known and placing greater value on the voluntary work of women.
- c) Stakeholder capacity for applying gender analysis when planning, monitoring, and evaluating the impact of national, sub-national, or local fund raising and budgetary allocations.
- d) Strategies for incorporating the gender perspective into planning and government budget setting processes.

The project tends to move beyond GSB's to aim towards women's participation in economic decisions and other, wider political ones (Objective a.). We can see this in the Outcomes Table (see annexes), specifically Outcome #3, where it alludes to "Improving practices and policies for promoting gender equality". Besides this, the project seems to have set its sights on budgets from three levels – national, sub-national, and local (Objective c.)

⁹ As was systematized in the 4th UNIFEM – UNV Regional GRB Program meeting (Quito, Oct. 2007), for the terms of this program, volunteers are defined as a person (leader, resident, and other stakeholder) who is part of a social organization that promotes participation and local development and is involved in PB meetings and councils and other discussion forums where civil society and local government meet.

¹⁰ See Gender Sensitive Budgets: Making visible the voluntary contribution of women to Latin American development. United Nations Volunteers (UNV) – United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), 2005 – 2007. Page 6

In a clear call to the spirit of volunteerism, the UNV project emphasizes the importance of “appreciating the voluntary contribution of women in budgets” (Objective b). In spite of this emphasis, as will be seen from this report, there are two indicators (1.3 and 3.1) that were left blank since no tool had been created for their evaluation (see Outcomes Table in the annex). A lack of agreement between the statements made in some outcomes and their respective indicators had consequences on the evaluation process, which we will discuss farther ahead.¹¹

In the project logframe is a list of identified risks, which are called “hypotheses”, and these have not assisted in the analysis. The following is what we came up with:¹²

- Unpaid work is not recognized as an economic contribution.
- Gender is not a priority for people leading the process.
- Unfavorable institutional changes for gender equity
- Traditional participation mechanisms do not recognize women’s organizations as valid participants.
- Available expert knowledge on GRB’s in the region.
- Participatory processes include civil society and volunteer groups in preparing plans and budgets.
- Strong political commitment
- Access to disaggregated data by gender

Lastly, we would like to put forth that, according to UNIFEM, the project has, from its initial preparation that centered on identifying volunteerism and women’s contributions to development through to its implementation, been adopting and prioritizing volunteerism’s participatory dimension.¹³

¹¹ For example, indicator 2.3, “Training people on budget analysis”, does not necessarily “point out” that there is a “greater capacity for carrying out and promoting gender analysis...” (Outcome 2)

¹² See Outcomes Chart of the project, Gender Sensitive Budgets: Making visible the voluntary contribution of women to Latin American development.

¹³ Interview with Raquel Coello, UNIFEM GRB Program Regional Coordinator. Dated July 1, 2008. Lima.

Part III. Project analysis: Themes and indicators

We will attempt, in the following pages, to respond to questions found in the UNIFEM ToR and to the Evaluation Matrix indicators by focusing on the major project themes of empowerment for advocacy, sustainability and institutionalization, relationships, methodological tools and other material production and dissemination, and management and volunteerism.

1. EMPOWERMENT FOR ADVOCACY

One clear emphasis of the project was to supply women's organization budget setting advocacy tools and, even if the organizations demonstrated differing degrees of cohesion and autonomy, they still constituted priority project beneficiaries.

We will devote this to summarizing project contributions with respect to increased women's participation in decision making meetings on matters of local government budget setting and results thereof as well as to the aspects of the relationship between different stakeholders in the GRB process and the extent they took ownership of the proposal. In order to provide a context for this purpose and the sections that follow, the next five paragraphs point out groups the project identified as its principal civil society participants.

In Argentina: Since 2004, four out of the six districts of the city of Rosario have had District Women's Networks, set up by the local government itself to promote women taking part in and submitting their PB proposals. What is more, the people of Rosario have democratically elected women to councilor positions on the Participatory Budget Councils, following the principles of male / female parity. There is, furthermore, the project's direct NGO partner, CICSA, whose headquarters are in Cordova.

In Bolivia: Two participants are found in Cochabamba: the Women's Platform, made up of grassroots and professional organizations, and Promoter Committee for the Demands of Women, created when GRB training for different departmental female leaders began. In other local settings, especially rural ones, branches of the Women Farmers Organization are in contact with the project. The project's NGO partner, IFFI, triggered the National Roundtable on Gender Responsive Budgets (MNT – GRB), comprised of networks, NGO's, and government entities, like the Ombudsman Office and the Vice Minister's Office on Gender Matters.

In Brazil: The Pernambuco Women's Forum works closely with UNIFEM's partner, SOS CORPO. This 10 year old forum gathers together nearly seventy groups, among them grassroots women's organizations, NGO's, academics, etc. According to project goals, it is a space for reflection and

dialogue with local government. A new partner within the project framework is the State Urban Reform Forum (FERU), with a membership of over 50 civil society organizations and NGO's and whose purpose is to advocate on items on the Pernambuco state budget.

In Ecuador: UNIFEM's priority participant in the city of Cuenca is the group, Council for Women. Their relationship was founded on the goal of creating a city Department of Gender Affairs (DGA), and afterwards, they took off in a new direction, backing the preparation of the 2001 – 2005 Equal Opportunity Plan. Council for Women is comprised of six organizations and grassroots leaders, and representatives sit on the Canton Planning Committee as well as on the Citizen Security Council, both groups counting on local government backing. The project has also worked with, to a lesser degree and only as reference groups, the Association of Parish Councils and the Domestic Violence Network.

In Peru: UNIFEM had already established a partnership with the local government from the Lima district of Villa El Salvador during the DESafios project, and there are different participating NGO's active in that district (Flora Tristan and DESCO) as well as indirect partners, like FEPOMUVES, which exerts influence over other grassroots organizations (health promoters, soup kitchens, Vaso de Leche committees, etc.). In terms of the latter, tensions between it and the mayor's office reached the breaking point when the mayor halted creation of the women's management division. In 2006, the VES Gender Equity Policy Promotion Group was formed, composed of grassroots organizations and NGO's from the area and purposed to monitor the local government's compliance with its commitments on matters of gender equity (women's management division and EOP's), yet, at the moment, its activism has taken a downturn.

1.1 Involvement of organizations in setting local government budget: some results

In this section, we will first cover the mechanisms provided to local government for opening the doors to citizen participation in local budget setting in order to understand to a greater extent how women take part in that and second, describe some of the results women's organizations have had during the life of the project. As we mentioned above, it is difficult to know which results came about exclusively and directly due to the project because the context in which it acts is influenced by a wide variety of other elements.

In Ecuador: City of Cuenca (Azua Province) The reality is that only 21 rural parish councils are applying the PB, and these are selected areas that have just recently begun democratic elections for their representatives. Most councils do not have the means to generate their own funds, receiving these from the sub-national (in Ecuador, cantons) and central government levels. Neighborhoods within the parish vote for their assembly representatives, who form the Parish Council and who

chose projects that will be funded. All projects have, as part of their implementation, community participation, whether in money and/ or voluntary work. The project encourages women's organizations to exert more influence so that the PB responds more to their interests. But, as far as we could tell this might take time to materialize given that women have little interest in organize themselves or fail to do so on a consistent basis.

In Peru: VES. Legally, local government is legally bound (Law #28056) to implement PB's, and 100% of the investment budget is to be decided in a participatory manner. Because VES is so large (380,000 inhabitants), it is divided into nine territories, each of which lead by a PB Territorial Management Committee. Committee representatives are voted in by the people. As a matter of fact, seven of the nine were presided over by men in 2005. Each territory elects its own "participating agents" who sit on the different Territorial Project Presentation and Selection Assemblies. The projects chosen during these meetings are then submitted to a general, district wide assembly. The VES local government has taken steps to move ahead with participation, such as issuing an internal rule for regulating parity of "participating agents" and promoting the organization of GRB workshops in the nine territories.¹⁴ As reported in a 2005 UNIFEM sponsored study, 94% of PB approved projects concerned themselves with infrastructure, and, what is more, we have no reports on projects proposed by women being approved in the PB Territorial Assemblies during the evaluation period.¹⁵

In Brazil: Recife. The PB process there generates different thematic and regional plenary meetings, the decisions of which are carried out with resources from different local government secretariats. Attendance is open to anyone who wishes to sit in on them, and participants choose their representatives in debates that define their priorities. There is a Thematic Plenary Meeting on Women in which women choose actions to be performed by the Coordinating Office on Women's Affairs, the local government's DGA. Not all participants sit in on the Thematic Plenary Meeting on Women; they are also present at other thematic meetings, an interesting strategy adopted by the UNIFEM partner in Recife, SOS CORPO, for positioning the gender perspective in other budget setting domains.

In Bolivia: No law obliges local government to consider PB in its budget setting processes, but there is a rule pertaining to local government participation planning through which grassroots territorial organizations may present their proposals, in accordance with the local government plan. Moreover, the 1994 People's Participation Law stipulated that Government Spending Vigilance Committees be created. What we observed in the evaluated communities was civil society organizations exhibiting a high degree of activism around local budget setting processes, and, in the case of women's organizations in the rural district, these would

¹⁴ See Box #1

¹⁵ Final report: Study on Gender Responsive Participatory Budget Process in Villa El Salvador. Bethsabé Andía. Lima, 2006. Ms.

submit their specific proposals, the majority having to do with productive or capacity building projects, before local government.

Box #1:

**Women's Participation. The Persistence of Discrimination
(in spite of local government intervention)**

In the Lima district of Villa El Salvador, it takes several months to pass through the stages of the PB process, from the election of "participating agents" to the Territorial Committees (there are nine of these that represent the nearly 400,000 district inhabitants) to their project deliberation, and then on to the choice of projects. The local government, a UNIFEM partner for more than five years, has attempted to drum up greater participation on the part of women in the process, insisting that there be parity in the election of the agents. For their part, women are trying to be present at the deliberations, but one of the constraints facing them is the time of the assembly, normally scheduled to start at 8:00 P.M. and lasting well past midnight, time normally devoted to domestic obligations yet also hours when it is not safe for people to be out since not all streets in Villa El Salvador are illuminated. Such a difficult schedule, furthermore, can bring with it all types of domestic disputes. But there is one circumstance that makes the PB process an even bigger thorn in the side of women and that is the general practice by people, who are clear on what they want and more resolute in getting it when it comes time to vote, waiting until the end to present their proposals for approval. Women normally leave early from the meetings and are therefore left with no option to push for their interests. Before the mounting number of complaints, the VES local government has set district wide assembly starting times at 6:00 P.M., but, in the case of the territorial assembly, whose board of directors is male dominated, the "democratic" vote maintained the traditional time of 8 o'clock. The solution offered by the male leaders was to have one of the male representatives escort the women to their homes once the meetings had ended. However, the cure was worse than the ailment, providing fuel for more jokes around the neighborhoods about the conduct of the women and feeding the jealousies of their husbands. What else could a woman be doing, late at night, on the street, and no less in the company of a man who is not her husband?

In Argentina: Rosario Based upon provisions in the Gender Parity Law, both councilmen and councilwomen must be elected to sit on PB Councils. In 2007, 4068 people voted and 62% of the candidates were women. Despite the growing interest, 50% of those elected to the PB Councils, men and women alike, failed to participate in the council meetings. The Department of Women, through its Active Women Citizens Program, has organized training workshops in different areas around the city to build women's capacity so they can offer higher quality proposals in participatory settings. This is greatly appreciated by the workshop participants. The PB Councils are split into two sections: one for social and the other for urban projects, and council members select the projects accordingly; at a later date, selected ones are presented at a "project fair", where participants then vote for the ones they want to comprise the PB.

As can be seen, women's organizations have been involved in PB processes long before UNIFEM implemented its project. Nevertheless, as

we will point out later in this report, the project contributed to increasing women's presence in the processes or to widening the coverage, as is the case in the rural settings of Bolivia and Ecuador.

The question posed on whether or not funds allocated for gender equity have increased, including greater attention placed on women's organization proposals, is very difficult to answer since there is a large diversity of budget assigning mechanisms, such as PB's (where they exist) or a DGA's specific budget. Looked at this way, we must add that the project has not grouped evaluation categories, making it possible to identify which entries might be directed towards attaining gender equity and thus having a budget monitoring tool. It would therefore seem that partners are free to set their own definitions. For example, using Ronda Sharp's classification model, IFFI in Bolivia proposed and disseminated four categories to be used in analyzing how responsive budgets are to gender; the four categories are:

- Investment focused on bridging the gender gap
- Investment in family care, including summer school for children and occupational therapy for the elderly
- Investment in sexual and reproductive health
- Investment in building a culture of equality, using programs that foster the equality of rights¹⁶

As we can see, limits to what can be qualified as "pro gender equity" budget allocation are rather wide.

In certain cases, like that of Cuenca, the department's budget lines respond to guidelines approved in the EOP. Its counterpart in the Cochabamba local government, the Directorate for Gender and Family Matters, is trying to follow what is laid out in the City Development Plan. On the other hand, DGA's in the cities of Rosario and Recife, the Coordinating Office on Women's Affairs and the Department of Women; respectively, mainly receive their budgets from women's proposals coming out of the PB process.

The reality in VES is different since there is no DGA, so we were unable to perform an effective evaluation of this aspect. Nevertheless, local government there and in other districts do indeed have budget lines established in various departments / divisions that offer services to women: microenterprise credit, maternal health care, violence against women prevention programs, and literacy training. We were unable to include these budget lines in the evaluation. Regrettably, we have no information from local governments with DGA's concerning the actual percentage increase in gender entities' budgets in relation to the overall budget. Neither do we possess the figures for "other" gender equity actions carried out by different government departments.

¹⁶ "Gender Equity Observatory". IFFI – Swedish Cooperative Center. Cochabamba, December 2007. Pg. 13.

In every project setting that has a DGA, the trend in local government budget allocation is to increase the resources given to it. The city of Rosario is a good example of this inclination, approving more women's proposed projects and quintupling the DGA budget in three years. Likewise, the Cuenca Planning and Management Department for Social Equity and Gender has diversified funding sources and augmented what it gets directly from the city budget with resources from international cooperation. The following chart lists the broad range of projects in Cuenca that are a response to the EOP now in force. Then there is the Cochabamba Directorate for Gender and Family Matters, which, as the name indicates, is the entity responsible for offering services not only to women, but also to other groups within the Bolivian population. Current fiscal policy in Bolivia is such that more money is being doled out to local government, and, as a result, a percentage of that increase is being poured into maternal health, nutrition, and education programs.

It is interesting to see that almost all DGA approved and supported proposals emphasize the issues surrounding gender and place renewed interest on topics concerning violence against women and sexual and reproductive rights.

**Chart #1
DGA Approved Projects and Programs for Women**

ARGENTINA Rosario	BRAZIL Recife	BOLIVIA Cochabamba Cercado	ECUADOR Cuenca
2005	2005	2005	2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non traditional job training • Community Health • Popular educators/ multipliers training, awareness raising, and strengthening • Domestic violence and sex education training sessions • Sexual and reproductive health workshops for young people and adolescents • Awareness raising campaigns on social problems and domestic violence (throughout all districts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program for a credit line specifically for women • Continuance of health care referral services for female victims of violence; conducting a selection process for professionals to run the service • Guarantee of compassionate attention in the event of unsafe abortion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights of children and elderly females; comprehensive legal services • Implementation of the Women's Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Women's Council • 2005 – 2010 EOP design • Government and management school; Citizen Media Observatory • Constructing health citizenship • Canton Plan for a Violence Free Life; Strengthening the Red VIF (domestic violence network) • Pilot community intervention model on domestic violence • Measures put in place with sex workers to guarantee their safety as citizens • Aid for women's microenterprises • Women, microenterprise, and rights: educating ourselves

			<p>for gender equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defending the rights of migrant workers and their families • Aid for the University of Cuenca Master's level program in Gender, Development, and Health and the Gender Studies program.
2006	2006	2006	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive adolescent health care • Training workshops on gender issues for pregnant women • Strengthening shelters for victims of domestic violence • Non traditional job training (central, northern, western, southeastern, and southern districts) • Procuring ultrasound equipment for health centers • Violence and preventing family conflicts • Gender training • Breast feeding and sexual and reproductive health training • Awareness raising campaign and training sessions on domestic violence • Preventing domestic violence; women's rights • Awareness raising campaigns on social problems and domestic violence (throughout all districts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating spaces for women to market their products • Productive project development training, guaranteeing autonomy and raising self-esteem • African aesthetic course I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and strengthening young people's organizations • Implementation of The Elderly Program • Rights of the child and young person training • Women's rights training • Rights of people with disabilities training • Rights of the child, women, and the elderly and SLIM (Comprehensive Legal Services provided by local government) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing health citizenship • Literacy and life long learning campaign • Implementing Canton Domestic Violence Plan strategies • A life free of violence and sexual abuse in rural parishes • Citizen Media Observatory • Strengthening Women's Council
2007	2007	2007	2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual and reproductive health workshops • Comprehensive teenage mothers' program • Job training for women • Traditional and Non traditional job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening legal services for female victims of violence • African aesthetic course II • Creating spaces for women to market their products • Productive project development training, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting gender equity and women's rights • Promoting the exercise and rights and entitlements in the elderly • Awareness raising and information program; gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforceability of the Free Maternity and Infant Health Care Law • Preventing domestic and gender violence • Launching a job listing service • International

<p>training (western and southern districts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop on preventing domestic violence (northern, northwestern, and southern districts) • Training women on issues surrounding gender • Recreational activities for the children of mothers assisting in the various district activities • Human rights, abuse of authority, violence, gender and legal affairs course • Workshop for 12 year olds on getting to know and caring for our bodies • Awareness raising campaign/ training sessions on domestic violence, sexuality, and preventing child abuse • Women in action: training for various jobs 	<p>guaranteeing autonomy and raising self-esteem</p>	<p>policies and programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights of the child, women, and the elderly and SLIM (Comprehensive Legal Services provided by local government) • Rights of the child and young person training through strengthening families • Support program for children of migrant workers abroad 	<p>women's meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender responsive budgets • Towards a Constituent Assembly from a gender equity perspective • Citizen Media Observatory
<p>2005 = ARS 125,000 2006 = ARS 545,610 2007 = ARS 742,448</p> <p>1 USD = 3.2 ARS (May 2008)</p>	<p>Overall total from 2001 to 2007 = BRL 295,639,316.36</p> <p>1 USD = 1.65 BRL (May 2008)</p>	<p>2005 = BOV 348,000 2006 = BOV 743,200 2007 = BOV 2,447,000</p> <p>1 USD = 7.48 BOV (May 2008)</p>	<p>Local government allocation: 2005 = USD 170,000 2006 = USD 185,000 2007 = USD 196,000</p> <p>Partnering organizations: (URBAL; PGU - ONU UNIFEM; UNV COMUNIDAD DE MADRID): 2005 = USD 173,000 2006 = USD 50,000 2007 = USD 120,000</p>

Source: Project coordinators from the 4 countries; May, 2008.

Concluding this section, we give the following comments:

- In spite of these encouraging outcomes, as were summarized in the chart above, and the efforts of the partner and/ or project coordinator, barriers to integrating budget proposals put forward by women's organizations still persist, a very obvious state of affairs in VES and in the two visited Cuenca rural parishes, as stated in the interviews. Local government investment into infrastructure, while important, still predominates when compared with such lines as

say, capacity building. Inhabitants and the government's own dynamic have not been able to act upon and assimilate in their commitments the principles of social development and gender equity. Moreover, the present central role of Bolivian social mobilization coincides with the particular politics of the times in that country and has made the results obtained by the project reachable. Activism of women's organization in processes occurring in Recife is a direct contrast to the limited level of autonomy experienced by counterpart groups in Rosario. The former is part of the northeastern Brazilian tradition of mobilization.

- It would seem that a combination of elevated dynamism and tradition steeped in mobilization may be needed to direct project objectives, which are empowered through dialogues with local government. But what may turn out to be difficult mountains to climb are municipal institutionalities lacking the ability to assimilate gender democracy and the inconsistent nature of women's organizations.
- When looking at what was actually accomplished, we may consider that PB processes have very different meanings for women and their empowerment, although outcomes may not always be tangible. Further, there are two cycles to PB's: a visible cycle, institutionalized and official, as well as an invisible cycle that sheds lights on community conflicts and competition for stronger participation in the PB cycle. We could say that women form part of the latter group.¹⁷
- In terms of the questions surrounding budgets, we cannot affirm conclusively that the project actually influenced their increase in favor of gender democracy. As we have attempted to point out, the project has been a catalyst, mobilizing wills, and is one of many factors that came together at the right time. Nevertheless, where we have the data to support them, overall results are encouraging.

1.2 Proposal ownership: stakeholders¹⁸

We must stress that this project has been an excellent offshoot of the DESafios initiative; the partners of that program are currently engaged in PB processes, even if their results are not very tangible, as is the case in VES. The strongest organizations (women's groups and mixed men and women groups in Bolivia, the Pernambuco Women's Forum in Brazil, and FEPOMUVES in Peru) seem to be more focused on including budget planning participation in their agendas, whereas they are less enthused about involving themselves in current local administration. District

¹⁷ Mulheres no Orçamento Participativo: Estudo da Experiência de Recife na Gestão 2001-2004. SOS CORPO, Recife. 2006.

¹⁸ As found in the Evaluation Matrix, which is one of the annexes, to us indicators of the initiative's "appropriation" are the integration of the GRB topic into social organization agendas, diversity of organizations involved in project activities, and level of receptiveness in local government to civil society proposals. The following lines must be read with this in mind.

women's networks in Rosario are, by definition, encouraged to get involved in PB's, and while they are participating, they have little clarity about their role as part of civil society. Their interaction is basically with the local government.

The "appropriation" processes are unbalanced. Women's groups value their organization's tradition, size, and consistency. NGO's, their greater or lesser proximity with women's organizations and/ or with local government departments. Local government, the extent of their institutionality, depth of decentralization process, and citizen participation. Nevertheless, training of and advocacy before delegates, councilors, and those involved in participatory processes is making it easier for women to appropriate the project.

The project has not proposed strategies for influencing local government and for strengthening and institutionalizing the gender perspective in them. We have sounded the alarm in regards to a situation in which "participation and decentralization" standards were theoretically complied with but their spirit was not; while some local governments make official declarations about including citizens in the course they are setting, the people do not have an overall vision of how to apply the budget or have clear in their minds the procedures for making agreements stick. What is more, there is a lack of institutionalized accountability mechanisms.

Let us illustrate our last statement with some examples. In 2006, the mayor of VES ordered the creation of a women's management division, yet he and the city councilors made a later political decision not to have it installed. Likewise, we have the situation in Cuenca of the data sheet to be used for gathering information on women's volunteer contributions in the *mingas* (community labor) of rural parishes. Although it had been created collaboratively between the project and the Rural Development Unit of the Cuenca Secretary General's Office of Planning and validated in 2005, we registered resistance, throughout our time in the field there, in its application by members of that very government department. At the time we carried out the evaluation, there were no records of it being used.¹⁹ There is also the case of the Rosario poverty index, a tool that would cross gender with poverty and social action and is to be used for equitably distributing among the districts the percent of local budget agreed upon through a participatory process. It was never used. In the framework of the project, demands for greater transparency and accountability for what local government actually does have been weak. If the area of citizenship and democratic governability had been strategic, women's organization political advocacy would have been greatly enhanced.

Box 2
Local Government: Transforming institutions from the inside

¹⁹ While conducting the interview, officers that did not agree to applying the data sheet argued that the emphasis in rural areas should have been on "social equality" and not "gender equity". Such a viewpoint would mean that, when gathering data on women's voluntary contribution, you should also take into consideration other variables: age (children and elderly people), social groups (less poor and more poor).

We have in our possession a preliminary evaluation sponsored by the Cochabamba Directorate for Gender and Family Matters, and its contents shed some light on aspects that are usually swept under the rug when it comes time to talk about the issue of local government capacity for applying a gender equity approach: the city hall from the inside.

According to preliminary findings, only 25% of local government staff is female. And from that figure, 66% is categorized as technical-administrative workers (office assistant or secretary), 9% as middle management, 3% as management, and just 0.5% as upper management and officers. Accordingly, women have little access to management positions, especially officers or board members.

Looking over salary figures disaggregated by gender, women in the same position as men earn less: female officers earn 10% less, female managers 4% less, female middle management 3% less, and technical-administrative 1% less. The only exception is female professionals who earn 5% more than their male counterparts. Another startling discovery was that 37% of female government workers stated having experienced on the job sexual harassment by a superior.

Source: "Institutional Appraisal Reflecting Gender Differences and a Crosscutting Gender Proposal for Local Management"
City of Cochabamba. Preliminary version. Ms. 2008

2. SUSTAINABILITY AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION

In this section, we set to complete three tasks: 1) summarize data on how the project relates to and complements local and national initiatives so that they benefit women's rights, 2) how it built capacity in its partners, and 3) how project-launched processes will reach self sustainability.

2.1 Project and institutional agendas: local government, NGO's, and women's organizations

As long as project plans and actions are oriented to involving partners and women's groups to a greater degree in decision making spaces through strengthening them, then it is responding to the political need for furthering principles and practices of democratization and advanced governability.

All project involved countries have made progress in decentralizing their duties and competencies with variations in process age, depth, and scope. As we have already demonstrated, constraints to this process can be summed up in the restricted transference of resources needed to fulfill new roles, weak institutional capacity, and in some locations, partial implementation of oversight mechanisms.²⁰

Citizen participation is part of local government agendas. Starting from this premise, the project has made great strides on including women

²⁰ See Section 2, Context

in budget setting meetings where openness is apparent. Another way of saying this is that an improved cohesion and engagement of overall citizen participation has a maximizing effect on inclusion, as is seen in Recife, Rosario, and several rural settings in Bolivia, whereas constraints between local authorities and civil society is seen in the vulnerable relationships between women and their organizations and the other project involved local governments. Another point to be brought up is that local government DGA's have acquired more legitimacy and, in some cases, have forged alliances with civil society stakeholders, thereby widening their role.

When we scrutinized the agendas of NGO's on the notion of participation, we discovered they also vary widely on the matter. Project partnering NGO's do possess experience dealing with local government and have a background of engaging the principle of gender equity. Moreover, one of the institutional action lines of the NGO's IFFI, SOS CORPO, DESCO, CICSA, and Flora Tristan is citizen inclusion, emphasizing women. Nevertheless, we found special circumstances in Rosario and Cuenca, where either there are a small number of NGO's at work in the setting or the ones there are not interesting in PB's, examples being INDESO (Institute for Management and Social Leadership for the Future) and INSGENAR (Gender, Rights, and Development Institute), two rather important NGO's in Rosario.

Lastly, the evaluation took into consideration agendas from women's organizations and the project itself. PB processes are not based on large social women's movements or on the poorest of women, a state of affairs documented by SOS CORPO in Recife.²¹ Likewise, women involved in setting PB's are not necessarily members of specific organizations; they are only inhabitants of the region covered by the PB. In some cases, local government created organizations specifically so that women could get involving in the debates surrounding PB and other matters, examples of such being the Rosario district women's networks and the Cuenca Women's Council that had been set up during the DESafios project (2001). For these two, public budget setting is one of their main action lines. For other organizations, like the Cochabamba Women's Platform, the Villa El Salvador Women's Federation, and the Pernambuco Women's Forum, etc., it has been incorporated in their movements' agendas as an additional issue.

2.2 Capacity building in partners and allies

The project emphasizes strongly capacity building in its objectives, with training and sensitizing a wide range of public actors (councilwomen, local government officials, NGO's, grassroots organizations, etc.) being priority strategies. It has also increased the means by which it complies with this

²¹ Mulheres no Orçamento Participativo: Estudo da Experiência de Recife na Gestão 2001-2004. SOS CORPO, Recife. 2006

objective, from GRB training workshops to seminars, conferences, and even “accountability” events held in Bolivia. With respect to this country, action is not limited to Cochabamba, one of the pilot departments where work began back in 2001 that included 12 other pilot settings – local governments from three additional departments, Oruro, Santa Cruz, and La Paz. The outreach in Bolivia can be seen in the number of training/awareness raising recipients: some 3,286 people (including local government officials) have attended these events during the period of 2005 – 2007, as documented in Chart #2. Unfortunately, the audience was mixed, males and females, and so there was no way to define who was who – urban or rural grassroots organization leaders, government workers, etc.

Quite the opposite is the example of Brazil, where efforts to train the people have been directed almost exclusively to grassroots organizations, whether women’s or mixed, and NGO staff members. In Recife, a documented 410 people attended training sessions, and these included some from the state government. Training focused on PB’s, gender perspective principles, and women’s participation. Unlike the project in Brazil, training topic in Rosario centered on issues surrounding gender; it has only been during the latest period that it began using a PB preparation training module.

Chart #2
Training and Awareness Raising Activities from the Evaluation
Period

Recipients	Argentina	Bolivia	Brazil	Ecuador	Peru	Total
# of government officials and councilwomen sensitized and trained on GRB	15	---	---	27	170	212
# of leaders sensitized and trained on GRB.	50	3,268	410	905	340	5436

Source: Project coordinators. May 2008. We did not include data from Honduras since it belongs to the AECID project.

A study of the chart reveals a rather large number of leaders trained in Cuenca, reason for this being the new project focus on working with the rural parishes and urban grassroots organizations. Nonetheless, despite the effort of organizing training workshops, maintaining consistent mobilization of women in parishes has been difficult due to the fact that there has been little tradition for that in the areas.

There were other options that several officials, men and women alike, took advantage of: virtual and on-site courses sponsored by the project and regional events, like the seminar with Mercociudades (network of Southern Common Market, Mercosur, cities).

One stakeholder we would like to specifically point out as being strengthened by the project is the DGA in project settings where they exist; this body in Cuenca, in particular, has benefited the most from the project. The city of Cuenca, just like VES, is a direct project partner. With

the transference of local government resources for meeting its obligations to the canton population, this department published in 2006 the 2nd Equal Opportunity Plan (EOP), a participatory endeavor that involved women from different social organizations in the meetings, which contributed to its legitimacy. In Bolivia, even though the Cochabamba Directorate for Gender and Family Matters was indirectly supported by UNIFEM, its capacity for increasing the budget during 2005 – 2007 was greater and so strived to add more staff members to SLIM, a government program mainly in charge of responding to cases of domestic violence. In Rosario, the Area for Women’s Affairs has stepped up its advocacy, influencing district women’s networks involved in PB’s and conducting studies the project supported through consultancies. Moreover, the project in Recife has reinforced, indirectly, the role of the city’s Coordinating Office for Women’s Affairs. Support from UNIFEM, as a member of the United Nations System, provides legitimacy for these different entities.

2.3 Project progress sustainability

Within the ToR are questions into what measures have been taken and institutionalized for sustaining women’s participation in budget setting and execution. In response to those, we will highlight what was discovered from 2005 to 2007.

In Peru: The VES city government established an internal regulation to keep parity between male and female “participating agents” in the territorial and district wide assemblies called for selecting and prioritizing PB projects. It was also agreed that 30% of the people who sit on the Territorial Management Committees – representative for each one of the nine territories during the PB assemblies – must be women. Although it had been agreed to add more points during the evaluation stage to projects that improved gender conditions, this has not yet been applied since no one has established indicators for such a purpose.

In Bolivia: The government ratified Ministry of Finance Article 21, now with a new designation – Article 22, which stipulates that all local governments must allocate a certain percentage of resources to meeting requirements for gender equity in their annual plans and budgets. In another move to keep momentum, the National Public Policy Observatory, a division of the Office of the Vice Minister for Decentralization and Local Government Policy, incorporated 10 gender indicators for assessing how far the 327 local government settings have advanced on the matter. These indicators were built by the MNT – GRB.

In Ecuador: The Cuenca city government adopted its 2nd Equal Opportunity Plan, encompassing the period from 2006 to 2020; it received support from women’s organizations that took part in its drafting and is also a reference point for project execution.

In Argentina and Brazil: In the two settings evaluated, local government has created recreational areas for the children of women who are involved

in PB debates. Besides that, the city of Recife created a PB Women's Plenary Meeting. As well, the Rosario Area for Women's Affairs launched the program, "Participatory Budgets and Active Citizenship" with the intention to complement and strengthen women's participation in PB's and to publicize their presence. The city has also made progress in formulating and adopting its 2nd Equal Opportunity Plan, valid for the period of 2005 – 2009.

Another means for sustaining project initiatives is the capacity of women's organizations involved in them to take ownership of them, to varying degrees, depending on the setting and organizations' current experiences. Take, for instance, Rosario and its district women's networks, birthed out of the PB processes and that possess the ability to advocate for certain aspects of the PB. Then, we have in Bolivia clear encouragement for popular participation from the current administration and MAS political party which tends to promote that social organizations take possession of setting the budget. Lastly, in Recife, women's organizations value PB processes and appreciate the support given from the City Coordinating Office for Women's Affairs, but they have also become critical of PB scope and citizen's rights.

A rather complex task is deciding if local government is using a gender equity analysis in preparing its budgets, as is suggested by one of the Evaluation Matrix indicators (see annexes). Table #1 shows the increase in resources allocated to DGA's, but it is possible that we do not have all local government budget information for women's programs and hence cannot verify what proportion is going towards achieving gender equity. There are other difficulties in giving a more precise answer to this question; in some rural Bolivian settings, local government could not always apply what had been budgeted to them, including monies assigned to gender equity actions, a situation caused by a lack of ability on the part of the officials. Then, in Recife, women's PB proposals are hammered out through discussions in the Women's Plenary Meetings, yet what we are missing in this evaluation is the number of approved proposals that contribute to gender equity coming from other thematic plenary meetings, the likes of education, health, social security, economic development, urban and environment, culture, youth, African-Brazilians.

With respect to advocacy papers, which will be discussed later in this report, and analyses of budgets and general funds allocated to gender equity, impact did not reach the expected level in Cuenca's officials. Moreover, studies on the potent yet invisible voluntary contributions of women in VES were not used as tools for advocacy and changes.

3. LINKAGES

In this section, we will, first, comment on project stakeholder participation levels, second, on their relationships with the cooperating agency and United Nations mandates, and lastly, on some guidelines for mutual learning.

3.1 Stakeholder participation in project actions

In the previous sections, we attempted to document the range of organizations that act inside the project's intervention settings. There are all types of networks and collaborations connected to UNIFEM's GRB initiative: just for women, a mix of men and women, purely social, and with local and national government divisions. Another difference is the intensity and continuity of this relationship.

What results is the difficulty in nailing down the number of networks and organizations related to the project, one of the Evaluation Matrix proposed indicators (see annexes). It is simply immeasurable. In Bolivia alone, there are more than 100 rural and urban organizations from the twelve settings receiving consultancy or training from the project. The situation is similar in Recife, we might say, because the two forums operating there gather into their ranks various networks that, consequently, represent multiple organizations. While the project places great importance on the civil society organizations and their strengthening, what it lacks is the same enthusiasm for local or central government institutions, a situation evidenced by the figures listed in Table 2.

An additional ToR question asked if project beneficiaries do indeed participate in project management and activities. We are unable to answer that unequivocally, as well. There is greater engagement in project management, follow up and attendance to scheduled events when the institution in question is a direct partner – defined by having an agreement and a transference of resources, which implies its accountability for them – rather than it being just a beneficiary. What is more, a strict beneficiary institution may also present differences from others of its category if it is a network executing some of the project activities, like the Bolivian MNT – PSG. Or, look at the example of the Pernambuco Women's Forum, which has received training and other assistance from UNIFEM's partner in Brazil but has also included GRB's within its current work plans.

Through the application of two strategies, the project has indirectly been able to strengthen women's participation while encouraging greater engagement to the UNIFEM proposal and providing steps towards its sustainability. First, it has been able to bring together major players from national and local experiences (local government officials, councilwomen, leaders in society) at different dialoguing spaces, like regional seminars. This has had the effect of broadening the initiative's impact, a fact we discovered through the interviews, since almost every person present at these meetings reported learning something new as they listened to the presentations, appropriating original ideas, and even feeling part of a larger group involving local government and gender equity in the region, thus transcending just their locality. Along the same lines, although with a lesser impact, the project set up exchange visits for project coordinators (from Rosario to VES, from Cochabamba to Cuenca, from Cuenca to VES, etc.) or sent them to conferences, both of which were highly appreciated.

Second, the project offered scholarships for academic programs it sponsored to the volunteer coordinators and members of some networks at work in the UNIFEM project's sphere of influence. These included one VES councilwoman, University of Rosario professors, and even members of the Pernambuco FERU. In this way, the project did fulfill its objective of promoting and founding gender justice as proposed by GRB's, positioning the issue in an academic environment, and indirectly originating new adherents to the cause.

3.2 Institutional frameworks in which the project is positioned

In the Desk Review (April 2008), we pointed out some aspects on the project's relationship with the UNIFEM institutional framework on the matters of women's rights, governability, and strategic focuses.

All settings rely on the UNDAF for sketching out the general scheme into which the project will insert itself, except for Argentina that does not have the document. In the case of Brazil, UNIFEM uses several UNDAF priorities as the frame of reference for its project interventions, namely gender and racial inequalities and transparency and public management participation policies, etc. It is interesting to note that this project does not clearly continue with the racial dimension since it is such an important political guideline in the country and was a focus of the DESafios program sponsored by UNIFEM and Belgium cooperation.

In the Andean Region, the project positions itself within each country's respective UNDAF on matters of democratic governability, whereas GRB's are only mentioned explicitly in the Peru document as part of its guideline of "building local government capacity" (2006 – 2010 Peru UNDAF, 2007 – 2012 Bolivia UNDAF, 2004 – 2008 Ecuador UNDAF).

On a different point, both UNIFEM and its partnering cooperation agencies clearly embrace the MDG's and the Beijing Platform for Action in their mandates, yet it was only in Rosario that the city budget was evaluated through the lens of the MDG's, an action supported by UNIFEM and sponsored by the city itself.

In terms of United Nations Volunteers, the UNIFEM Regional Coordination and the UNV Central Office collaborated on the basis of a shared concept of volunteerism, citizen participation, and the recognition of women's voluntary contribution to development into one initiative. Interviewees from both institutions are in agreement that the project has generated unconstrained association and influenced its vision: project volunteers (coordinators) have mustered collaborative actions and generated synergies among volunteers and local participants in local decision making, thereby building capacities. UNIFEM has also contributed to spreading the idea of Volunteerism for Development (V4D) in the project

intervention settings, and consequently, the volunteers have helped to publicize women's rights.

We have also discovered cross over with other proposals promoted by stakeholder agencies. For example, one could say that GRB project's influence on the UNIFEM and AECID backed program, Safe Cities, that is being carried in several locations, two such being Rosario and Recife, is a model to encourage action. We see a similar model in UNIFEM's determination to keep the Mercociudades project up and running.

3.3 Lessons learned from the experience

Many practices from this project can be used to fortify others. One of the most appropriate from those publicized is the capacity in Bolivia for connecting what was going on in the local setting to advocating for national laws to be passed. It was that capacity that moved the Ministries of Finance and of Planning to send officials to technical round tables where they passed regulations for distributing local government funds and furthermore to have project personnel advocate before congress for the ratification of a law to solidify those regulations. It is possible that project leaders in other countries do not know enough about this experience, but we must always keep in mind the political reality Bolivia is going through at the moment.

In Recife, that more alliances are being made with mixed gender organizations, advocacy is being focused at the national level, and the political perspective has been developed around PB's are, undoubtedly, contributions to the program as a whole. Still others deserving more publicity and an increased debate among the people directly involved in the project include what is happening in Cuenca, specifically that the DGA broadened and diversified its cooperation sources without implying the city abandon its duty of assigning and increasing this entity's operating budget. Rosario also boasts the developed yet unapplied local and territorial poverty index tool, which seeks to improve the budget redistribution in that setting and definitely includes a component for women.

The different avenues used by the project for experience dissemination – seminars, workshops for planning, etc. – do account for a certain level of informing, although this does not necessarily translate into fluid coordination. It also does not appear to have developed an internal procedure for identifying best practice and generating mutual learning between project coordinators and direct partners.²²

As for the project and the UNIFEM GRB program interacting at a global level, some information was exchanged as were materials and GRB experts. In Latin America, the process is positively regarded since it is connected to women's priorities, has a wide and diverse range of partners, and has been able to build up a stable of experts. Nevertheless, we

²² When the evaluation team was in the field, the project was in the process of systematizing the concept of volunteerism with the GRB process, a task given to the Bolivia National Coordinator.

uncovered a lack of documentation and communication on methods which would have improved information exchange and the shaping of monitoring tools, resulting in a better knowledge of the changes. These would have constituted certain elements that would have made learning more fluid. Along those same lines, one person we interviewed said that for the region, the GRB program is more engrained in an advocacy culture rather than a results oriented culture.

4. PRACTICAL TOOLS AND OTHER MATERIAL PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION/ LINKAGE WITH ACADEMIA

We will devote this section to discussing three key areas: 1) materials produced and circulated as part of the program, training method handbooks, systematization of the experience, and ownership of these by the recipients, 2) certain tools the use of which has been a response to the challenges of measuring women's voluntary contribution (Cuenca, rural areas), of having a direct influence on public budget monitoring (Bolivia), and of connecting poverty to gender in the local government setting (Rosario's poverty index), and 3) GRB program experiences with academia.

4.1 Methodological handbook and information booklet production

The main materials produced in the Andean Region were booklets, bills, pamphlets, handbooks, etc., which seem to be directed at training community and/ or women's organizations.

In Peru, for instance, the handbook, "A Practical Guide to Incorporating the Gender Focus in Participatory Planning", was published in 2006 as a set of evaluation and indicator guidelines for making gender a crosscutting theme in local management.²³ It also offered examples on how to submit proposals, ordinances, etc. DESCO and the VES city government likewise published and circulated different materials: the former, agendas prepared by women's organizations from four southern Lima districts, and the latter second, the proposal for installing a women's management division. National project coordination performed an appraisal on the community of VES and worked up a training module yet both were unpublished. The project also sponsored a consultancy on how the VES city government's participatory budget from 2003 to 2005 contributed to gender equity, and this could have an impact on advocacy for increasing the budget for women's issues.²⁴

Another document that could be considered for advocacy purposes is "Analysis of Local Government Investment Expense", written by the

²³ The document was sponsored by UNIFEM AR with imprints from the Roundtable in the Fight Against Poverty and the city of Villa El Salvador.

²⁴ Bethsabé Andía, Ob. Cit.

Cuenca Department of Social and Gender Equity. This government department has also designed women's situation analyses for rural parishes and, during the evaluation period, led the meetings, along with the Women's Council, for preparing the city's 2nd EOP, which was later published.

The project published a training guide in Cochabamba: "Citizen Participation in Budget Planning and Civil Oversight for City Development with Social and Gender Equity", that bore the logos of UNIFEM and IFFI,. While it came out in January 2008, it had been validated years earlier. An example of the synergies project partners are developing is that this handbook was supported by the group, USWA Steelworkers Canada. We also have the example of the support given from the Swedish Cooperative Center, IFFI, and UNIFEM to a training booklet on rights and development, "Local Government Development with Equity: in order to Live Well", which was published in Spanish and Quechua.

Box #3

Knowledge Production: Towards Qualified Political Practice

In 2005, SOS CORPO, the GRB project partner in Recife, published its report "Women in PB: A Study of the Recife Experience during the 2001 – 2004 Administration". Later on, it included the participatory process from 2005 and 2006. The study was an analysis of the government institutions involved in and processes of the participatory budget, profiles of the women who participated, how they participated, and their opinions on the aspects PB's and local government have not resolved. The report highlighted two ideas that were the focus of the research: the importance of appropriating PB processes bearing in mind women's interests, while looking into the local government's set of public policies, and the confirmation that society forging gender inequalities create different conditions for participating in the PB's and therefore a change in public policy towards equality is required. These two aspects have not become part of the PB's, a reason why the local government's Coordinating Office on Women's Affairs is so important as a guarantee for this perspective and for the existence of autonomous women's organizations.

The study turned into a main reference point for the GRB project in Recife as well as a practical tool that has been used to produce a group of sub-products and materials, like pamphlets, booklets, handbooks, and strategic proposals written in everyday language, that have become very valuable tools for training women and, as a consequence, better enabling them to take part in the PB Thematic Plenary Meetings.

In Brazil, SOS CORPO conducted the study, "Mulheres no Orçamento Participativo: Estudo da Experiência de Recife na Gestão 2001-2004", which describes the complex dimensions involved in the PB process as a democratizing agent for public management and speaks of the importance of an inherently political, qualified, and autonomous women's intervention.

²⁵ Popular editions of this study and other booklets have also been disseminated by this NGO (see box), which happens to be the largest producer of analyses, methodologies, and PB proposals out of all project partners. SOS CORPO likewise published a work on “Mulheres e Orçamento Participativo. Fortalecendo a Participação” under the auspice of the Special Secretariat on Women’s Policy with support from UNIFEM, UNV, the Global Fund, OXFAM-Novib, and AECID.

In Argentina, we must point out two publications and one study. “Program: Participatory Budgets and Women’s Active Citizenship” and “Participatory Budgets from a Gender Perspective” were written by the Area on Women’s Affairs, supported by UNIFEM, UNV, AECID, and the city government, and have also been used during training sessions. The study, “Gender, Development, and Participatory Budgets: An Analysis of Local Government Budget Allocated to the Equal Opportunity Program in the City of Rosario”, has not yet been published, but it analyzes PB’s through the lens of the MDG’s and presents data on the increased participation of women and on district outlay as it relates to women’s proposals incorporated into the PB’s in accordance with the framework of the 2nd EOP’s guidelines.

4.2 Other project tools

Other specific tools, created and validated as part of the project, deserve special mention. First on the list is the Bolivian initiative of the 10 indicators for measuring local government performance on the question of gender, which were incorporated into the National Public Policy Observatory, a division of the Office of the Vice Minister for Decentralization and Local Government Policy. It took the MNT – PSG more than six months of dialoguing to reach an agreement on the criteria to be used for measuring gender equity in the 327 Bolivian local government settings, yet the effort was well worth it since it got government approval for them and the promise of their application in 2008 after meeting several times with sector officials.²⁶

Second on the list is the abovementioned Cuenca data sheet, designed as part of the project, titled “Registry for Qualifying Community-based Contributions in the Execution of PB Works”, and applied in the following simple manner: you record the specific *minga* (community work), what the men and women did during its execution, and their total time and wages, but you also include other work that is usually ignored, such as food preparation and child care, etc. In collaboration with the Cuenca Rural Development Unit, the project validated the data sheet, and Parish Councils have accepted it. At the time of our evaluation, there was no concrete data produced through its application.

²⁵ Ob. Cit.

²⁶ The following list contains some of the 10 criteria: 1) reducing maternal mortality, 2) improving basic, technical, higher, and adult education, 3) reducing domestic violence and increasing citizen security, 4) making more efficient use of time, 5) improving conditions for exercising economic rights, etc.

The last tool on the list is the Rosario poverty index, a response to a 2005 city ordinance stipulating the need to allocate differentiated funds to each district on the basis of their needs and poverty level. Created along side the index were indicators for assessing social needs in different urban areas and districts throughout Rosario so as to have a distribution of the annual PB designated funds proportional to the real poverty levels. UNIFEM provided money for indicator creation, which includes some on gender. Despite having the ordinance support the index, it has not yet been applied.

4.3 Web page and best practices systematization

In 2005, UNIFEM collaborated with the GTZ and UNFPA in the launching of a specialized gender and budget Spanish language website. In 2007, the regional coordination made the decision to update and streamline the site and brought on board more collaborators, in UNV and AECID, with very good results. From mid July 2007 to December 2007, close to 500,000 people visited the website, which features a significant amount of institutional materials (handbooks, systematizations of experiences, studies), staff information (consultant list), and institutional data. Also during the same 6 month period, the project circulated a monthly newsletter to the 1135 people listed on its directory. Both partners and project coordinators are encouraged to send information to update the newsletter.

The web site was designed for budget designers in the different government institutions and men and women dedicated to citizen oversight, but visitors hail from a variety of other locations: local government officials, staff from ministries of economy, project partners, UNS workers, students of economics and gender, and many of these ask for more information, which the webmaster provides in the way of other specialists or bibliographic materials that can be consulted.

Likewise, during the evaluation period, the project edited seven initiatives that systematize the Andean Region best practice on this matter and also publicized workbooks belonging to the series "Everyone Counts in the Economy". You can find all this information on the web site. One surprising element we uncovered from our interviews of partners and training and mobilization recipients was that few people knew the web site even existed, despite its user friendly design and variety of posted information, a clear indication that it had not been well publicized. Overall, partners and recipients very rarely consulted the documents and studies.

4.4 Linkage with academia

The UNV project posed objectives on producing and disseminating budget analysis methodologies and follow up procedures. What resulted was significant progress in those two areas with FLACSO Ecuador and Mexico, and the University of Rosario. Unfortunately, no significant progress was

made in Bolivia in spite of initial agreements entered into with the University of San Andres Department of Development Sciences (CIDES) School of Graduate Studies in La Paz and with the University of San Simon Higher Education Center in Cochabamba.

In terms of progress in FLASCO Ecuador, this institution organized an international seminar on gender and poverty in 2004 and, on the basis of that, developed a classroom course on gender and the economy as a response to the UNIFEM project and as an elective for FLACSO student in the Gender Studies Master's program as well as other masters programs. Nineteen people attended, three being men. A second important advance was the virtual – classroom course with one of the topics being GRB's. Thirty-two people registered, many of them partnering organization officials, men and women alike, and UNIFEM GRB project coordinators. UNIFEM offered scholarships to registered students. Then, in 2007, FLACSO offered the gender and the economy course again; all in all, getting men to register to take these courses is still something very difficult.

On the side of FLACSO Mexico, it launched in 2005 the course, Public Budgets for Gender Equity and against Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean (DIPPEGEP), with support from UNIFEM. At the moment, the course has been offered four times. Its impact on the GRB program is seen in partner training and new alliances being made with academic institutions. Officials from FLACSO Mexico deem that the demand for capacity building and gender perspective strategy incorporation outweighs the supply of academic human capital. There are still few opportunities for doing research into and producing specific knowledge on the topic. This particular course depends on UNIFEM support for its publicity (50% of registered students come from UNIFEM spheres of influence) and for scholarships.

When it is about the National University of Rosario, the School of Economic Sciences and Statistics has made great strides through engaging university officials and professor on the issue. The first GRB working meeting opened up possibilities for school authorities to become actively involved. During the initial stage, the project offered scholarships to professors (one being the dean) for graduate studies. A second stage is being planned and once it is completed, the school will prepare a budget analysis module to be used at the graduate level in Public Administration, which will impact not only those students, but it will also resonate in the Schools of Statistics and Economics, not to mention in the Women's Professional Council.

In general terms, materials (booklets, pamphlets, handbooks, etc.) have only been distributed in project settings. No one has, yet, validated the amount of data processed and its usefulness for the recipients. Neither has there been an inquiry into, for example, how many organizations or people used the analysis "models" and advocacy stages. What is more, we lack a

monitoring scheme for the methodological handbooks, training booklets, and even the sponsored research projects.

There might be a deficiency in following up on the way in which knowledge is produced in reference to research and studies advocacy. We need to point out that partners have had the ability to cooperate with different institutions for sponsorship and publication of those studies and that this cooperation with academia and UNIFEM has also borne much fruit. In particular, the relationship with both FLACSO organizations has built capacity in some project partners and volunteers (coordinators).

5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT ²⁷

In this section, we will briefly touch upon some aspects concerning local partners, resource distribution from UNIFEM, UNV, and AECID (since these three agencies have collaborated on the GRB initiative analysis in the six countries, management structure), and lastly relationship among national experiences.

5.1 Partners and resources

Looking over the UNV project, it is possible to suggest that there are more “partners” than what are actually defined given that it includes recipients from official partners’ actions, for example, the IFFI with the city of Cochabamba and Flora Tristan with FEPOMUVES. ²⁸ Nevertheless, it is important to establish the difference between both types of participants, namely that partnering organizations are responsible for concretely executing activities and managing UNIFEM resources through a project.

Just bearing in mind entities receiving donations, there were nine such organizations we counted during the evaluation period, seven being NGO’s and two being city governments; the NGO’s are CICSA in Cordoba, IFFI in Cochabamba, DESCO and Flora Tristan in Lima, FASE and SOS CORPO in Recife, and CFEMEA in Brasilia, whereas the governments are the city of Cuenca, Ecuador, and the district of Villa El Salvador in Lima, Peru.

Certain NGO’s on the list are characterized by specializing in local spaces and/ or women’s rights (CICSA and IFFI) or by being feminists (Flora Tristan, CFEMEA, and SOS CORPO). The other two are mixed gendered organizations; the DESCO Urban Program was responsible for project implementation in southern Lima districts, and the Pernambuco office of FASE received funds since it was the FERU coordinator.

In terms of the city governments, UNIFEM directly influenced the creation of the Cuenca Planning and Management Department for Social Equity and Gender in 2004. For the reality in VES, city hall officials and political

²⁷ We do discuss AECID and UNV together in this section.

²⁸ IFFI and the city of Cochabamba had a valid contract only in 2003.

authorities there have sponsored GRB workshops in preparation for selecting PB projects intended to raise awareness in participating organizations. It would seem that GRB engaged workers in both city governments arrived at the same conclusion, albeit by different avenues, by the end of the evaluation period, that conclusion being the urgency to inform, train, and exert influence in a more persistent manner on local government officials.

Half of the above partners were important ones for UNIFEM's DESafios program (governments of VES and Cuenca, DESCO in Peru, CFEMEA in Brazil, and IFFI in Bolivia), and the sustained relationship tended to strengthen an institutional intervention line as was demonstrated by CFEMEA in its concrete monitoring of Brazil's national budget.

IFFI also increased its number of participants during the period, entering institutionally in rural areas as it works with local government. In this way, they were able to increase presence of the rural population, particularly women, in budget setting processes in twelve local government settings in three of the country's departments. It also had much to do with increasing the budget of the Cochabamba Directorate for Gender and Family Matters, and with disseminating, among local organizations, participatory budget planning mechanisms for the local government setting. UNIFEM's renewal of support with these partners has brought about their stronger institutional capacity on the issue.²⁹

Although indirectly, two new recipients of the project were the cities of Rosario and Santa Rosa, the latter being included in the AECID's OCT institutional work in Honduras. These local governments receive very specific types of collaboration – payment of consults' fees or event sponsorship – and technical assistance that is channeled through UNIFEM offices.

The following chart shows the funds the project donated to the partners, all differing amounts.

Table#3
Amount of donations to partners in the different countries

October 2005 – December 2007

²⁹ A ToR question concerning sustainability.

Country	Amount
ARGENTINA • CICSA	\$10,000
BOLIVIA • IFFI	\$45,000
BRAZIL	\$40,913
• FASE	\$3,507
• SOS CORPO	\$16,207
• CFEMEA	\$21,199
ECUADOR • City of Cuenca	\$12,000
PERU	\$31,000
• Flora Tristan	\$8,000
• DESCO	\$8,000
• District government of VES	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$138,913

Source: UNIFEM GRB Program Regional Coordination

Lastly, the evaluation looked into the possibility of initiative sustainability without reliance on UNIFEM funds, and one thing is clear: partners did not receive significant amounts during the evaluation period.³⁰ One interviewee said that the UNIFEM donation was important “seed fund” to get the project underway. Some partnering NGO’s applied UNIFEM funds to proposals that were already in process or to laying the foundation, only to receive support from other cooperation agencies later on down the road.

As long as the Cuenca Department of Social and Gender Equity allocates a budget for EOP implementation and its main activities appear sustainable, it would be a guarantee for continuance of that action line. This is not necessarily the case of VES or Santa Rosa, whose budgets for internal strengthening of the gender focus are less clear.

As shown above, the UNV approved amount for the UNIFEM GRB project was \$313,000 (Oct. 2005 – Dec. 2007), and the support provided by AECID for the four year term of Oct. 2006 to Sept. 2009 is 1,050,000.00 Euros or just about \$1,400,000.00.³¹

UNIFEM and UNV entered into a contract that stipulated the former was to contribute from its own monies the amount of \$365,500.00 – a figure that could include support from outside sources. During the evaluation term, we discovered the declared amount from UNV to be less than what was

³⁰ A ToR question concerning existence of project exit strategy.

³¹ See project document “Engendering Budgets: Making visible women’s voluntary contributions to national development in Latin America”. UNV - UNIFEM

committed (\$261,433.44). If we take into account AECID amounts (\$281,388.95) and those UNIFEM declared as its “own resources” (\$43,400), then the latter comes within reach of contributing what it had contracted with UNV to provide.³²

The total budget of both projects during the evaluation term was \$586,222.39. As we can see from the following chart, 45% of the total was allocated to paying staff salaries (national volunteers – coordinators, the regional coordinator and program assistant, and the international volunteer and assistant stationed in the UNIFEM office in Brasilia). More than one-third of that percentage went to paying salaries for the regional coordination. What is more, Table 3 lays out that during the same period, partners directly received \$138,913 or just under 24% of the total budget.

Funds destined to the regional coordination activity budget enabled it to forge alliances with academia, promote experience systematization, arrange seminars and exchange trips, and revamp the website; and, if the entire budget for the evaluation period is added up, then regional coordination received just over 35%. Brazil occupies second place for funds received, and, just like regional coordination, large percentages of these went to salaries and to activities, like the organization of the Mercociudades Regional Seminar. In Argentina, the city of Rosario used the activities budget to pay for consultancies on specific studies. In Santa Rosa, Honduras, budgeted activities were training workshops for strengthening Copaneca women’s mobilization.

³² UNIFEM stated that term of the UNV project had been extended to July 2008, so not all agency pledged funds had been used.

Table #4
Distribution of UNV – AECID – UNIFEM Resources
Oct. 2005 – Dec. 2007
In USD

Categories	Regional Coordination	Argentina	Brazil	Bolivia	Ecuador	Honduras ³³	Peru	Total	%
Salaries	97,404.44 ³⁴	15,496	81,916	15,296	24,396	11,700	20,144	266,352.44	45.4
Support to partners	----	10,000	40,913	45,000	12,000	----	31,000	138,913.00	23.6
Activities (workshops, publications, etc.)	85,901	5,673	26,697	----	----	7,784.25	----	126,055.25	21.5
Administrative costs (office supplies, petty cash, etc.)	21,263	1,000	10,968	238	547	2,103.92	881	37,000.92	6.3
Others (monitoring and follow up trips)	3,341	5,769	5,165	----		3,625.78		17,900.78	3.0
TOTAL	207,909.44	36,938	162,655	60,296	36,396	25,213.95	51,744	586,222.39	
Percentage	35.4%	6.3%	27.7%	10.2%	6.2%	4.3%	8.8%	98.9%	99.8%

Source: Prepared by the UNIFEM GRB Program Regional Coordination. April 2008.

³³ Consider Honduras starting in July 2007, month project began in Santa Rosa (its contract is valid until Dec. 31, 2008)

³⁴ Regional Coordinator salary paid starting in Oct. 2005.

We could not fail to observe that even though the countries received a lesser portion of the overall budget, they carried out a wide range of activities and attained a considerable number of goals within the period, proving that, nationally, funds were managed quite efficiently.³⁵

5.2 Management structure: Program coordinators

The UNV project incorporated two UNIFEM sub-regional offices: the Andean Region office (Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru) and the Brazil and Southern Cone office (Recife and Brasilia, Brazil, and Rosario, Argentina). With support from AECID, the project remains active in just two of the Andean Region settings (Peru and Bolivia) and in two Brazil and Southern Cone settings (Recife and Rosario), and it brought on board the Honduras setting (city of Santa Rosa), therefore involving the UNIFEM office for Mexico and Central America. Nonetheless, a situation that appears odd to us was the fact that Mexico was not included as a recipient of the new project in spite of the success of the DESafios program in that country.³⁶

Headquartered in the UNIFEM AR office in Quito, Ecuador, regional coordination, with its one administrative assistant, is directly connected to project coordinators. The volunteers/ coordinators are the channels through which communication flows to and from partners, beneficiaries, and UNIFEM. They also are responsible for the critical task of energizing local and national spaces within their settings.

In each country, with the exception of Honduras, the professionals in these posts do not work under contract but receive a work assignment with UNV and UNIFEM. Requirements, expected profile (as described in the UNV and UNIFEM ToR), and the scope of responsibilities coordinators must handle are great indeed when compared with the amounts of this “assignment”.³⁷ Figures listed in Table 4 must be divided into the months of this evaluation period, except for Honduras since the project coordinator started her work in July 2007.

The coordinators are different professionals who hail from a wide range of backgrounds, which may have made it easier for them to connect with certain participants. For example, if a coordinator has more professional experience, then a more demanding participant, such as a local or central governmental authority, may perceive that person, or even the position itself, as being more legitimate, a circumstance that may not happen with a different partner.

³⁵ We wish to stress this aspect since the ToR for this external evaluation requests that evaluators perform a cost-effectiveness analysis for invested funds versus outcomes. As is seen in the chart, “investments” have produced results well beyond what could be expected.

³⁶ “Strengthening Economic Governability” program evaluation report (Phase I of the Belgium program).

³⁷ Assignments cover “costs of living” costs and are based upon each country’s price levels. United Nations Volunteers do have international medical insurance, vacation time in line with UN guidelines on the matter, and 16 weeks of paid maternity leave if necessary.

Notwithstanding these considerations, we divined from our interviewees, some with more enthusiasm in their responses than others, that coordinators had good relationships with both partners and beneficiaries.

5.3 Regional coordination

In 2005, UNIFEM and UNV entered into an agreement that officially launched the regional GRB program, handing over responsibility for it to an economist who had been the “focal point” of UNIFEM – AR’s budget issue. Using construction and implementation of a regional agenda as a goal and a challenge, regional coordination proposed different types of strategies for moving beyond national experiences settings: exchanging and systematizing experiences, disseminating lessons learned, using online media, and organizing regional seminars.

Once the AECID project had been approved, Spanish cooperation placed special emphasis on granting scholarships to FLACSO Mexico graduate students in the areas of economy, public budgets, and gender equity, maintained its relationship with FLACSO Ecuador for graduate studies in budgets, and opened up the possibility of assisting the University of Rosario School of Economics on a more permanent basis.

When examining actions that regional coordination was the prime mover of, it is evident that two main thrusts were exchange visits and enrollment in concrete events for national coordinators: a total of seven events for different recipients (program teams, public officials, women’s organizations), which might demonstrate a good project appropriation strategy. Exchanges, on the other hand, were more fluid between Andean countries than between those of Brazil – Southern Cone.

While regional coordination focused on exchanges and events, it also maintained its relationship with the Mercociudades Network and the Red URB – AL12³⁸. It furthermore relaunched the specialized website www.presupuestoygenero.net in Spanish. And lastly, it was responsible for systematizing best practice arising from GRB program assisted experiences in the Andean Region.

Together with resource management and relating to cooperation agencies supporting the GRB program, it also fell to the regional coordination to monitor implementation. As we pointed out in the earlier report, project, output, and indicator generation was a weak point.³⁹ Due to the existence of unnecessary duplication and confusion as to the outputs/ outcomes and objectives/ strategies, etc., regional coordination found it difficult to monitor partial achievements and was also hindered in its ability to detect constraints in time to solve them. In real

³⁸ The Mercociudades Network was created in 1995, originally included cities just from the MERCOSUR region, but now has branched out to encompass cities from non-MERCOSUR countries. There are presently 181 cities within the network. www.mercociudades.org. One of the main goals of the Red URB – LA12 is to promote women’s participation in local decision making settings. <http://urbal.diba.cat/mujeresyciudad>

³⁹ See UNIFEM – Latin American Regional Gender Sensitive Budget Program Desk Review Abstract. April 5th, 2008.

terms, there was no actual project monitoring system. While conducting the interview with national coordinators, they unanimously agreed with the notion of an urgent revision of the planning instruments and of the production of more appropriate, 6 month progress and monitoring report formats.⁴⁰

Regional coordination is the head of the organization, binding together national coordinators' initiatives. Besides the aforementioned administrative assistant, other members of the UNIFEM team, especially from the poverty area, have been involved in some implementation stages of the projects.⁴¹

5.4 Relationship and dialogue between the experiences⁴²

As we emphasized in the first section, UNIFEM charged us with the evaluation of the two GRB projects that are part of the regional program and not the program as a whole. Therefore, we do not have the information or the judgment criteria for answering every single question laid out in the ToR. However, from what we observed in the field, we can comment upon the relationships and dialogue between and among the different national experiences as well as the sub-regional offices.

UNIFEM was able to build upon the Belgium cooperation-supported DESafios program of 2001 when it constructed this regional GRB program. More than half of the project's partners we evaluated are still linked to DESafios and have gained expertise on GRB's and strengthened the interior of their organizations' agendas and work plans concerning that issue. In light of the real outputs, the UNIFEM – UNV – AECID projects empowered partners and recipients to act, a noteworthy achievement among the projects' many. Even more so, there is recent, evident growth in the ability to host regional events and connect stakeholders from the different countries involved through virtual and part time classroom courses. As we pointed out earlier, seminars and conferences had the indirect effect of making recipients feel they were part of something much larger.

Based solely on the two evaluated projects, it would seem that the time is ripe for GRB presence in the region to take a qualitative leap in two different directions. First, based upon what was observed, UNIFEM needs to evaluate local government dynamics, the role of civil society, the role of women's movements, and governability within Latin America, which would identify, starting from the region's heterogeneity, national central themes and strong points and consequently encourage other countries and other locations to replicate the experiences.⁴³ Regional expansion proposed by the project should begin with achievements it has made, but this could have the opposite effect and actually

⁴⁰ Response to the ToR question concerning indicator and monitoring system usefulness.

⁴¹ This situation perhaps explains why several interviewed partners stated they were confused since they had to deal with different UNIFEM staff members for matters concerning the project and did not know for certain the person's duties or who was responsible for answering what.

⁴² Response to the ToR question concerning the adequacy of regional management structure.

⁴³ We understand this framework is about further developed and more specific plans than what are laid out in the UNIFEM – LAC SBP.

increase the risk of fragmentation if planners do not produce clearly defined guidelines.

In the second and more operational direction, each sub-regional office involved in the project should come up with improved selection criteria for new partners (or just keep the ones it traditionally has been working with). New participant selection, what each one contributes to a national/ regional dynamic, what their capacity is for influencing other experiences, and how they enrich the dimension for transcending local experience are just some of the questions that need to be answered before positioning the regional relationship model as “best practice” and injecting them into UNIFEM internal procedures.

On another note, we observed, within the program itself, disharmony in the operational dynamic expressed between regional coordination and the Brazilian and Argentinean initiatives and a similar situation taking place between Santa Rosa and its main coordinator, the Mexico and Central American office. Moreover, when it comes to describing the relationship between and among national experiences, through our interviews we were able to divine that it took the shape of a “triangle with no base”, i.e. coordinators, occupying the base vertices, would talk directly with the regional coordination, the vertex at the top, yet national coordinators lacked horizontal connection with each other. Communication was informal and unplanned. It would seem the project needs to set up clearer lines and mechanisms of communication so the different national experiences can share information and learn from each other, thereby increasing the impact of the projects.

6. VOLUNTEERISM AS A CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT

This is a concern for and part of the UNIFEM – UNV project’s objectives and expected outcomes: that this intervention has strengthened women’s voluntary contribution in local government participatory processes and increased the recognition of those contributions for the community.

UNV and UNIFEM’s partnership for this project was initially centered on the objective of contributing to increasing recognition of volunteerism for development (V4D)⁴⁴, an issue that, through incorporating dimensions of participation and advocacy, has become more complete.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ See ToR questions concerning the matter.

⁴⁵ “Volunteerism and Development”. Essentials. United Nations Development Program. October 2003. See also: “On Volunteering & Social Development”, Expert Group Working Meeting. New York. November 1999, and “Volunteerism and Capacity Development” UN Volunteers, 2002.

The topic of several meetings during project execution centered on profiling the relationship between volunteerism and women involved in making decisions.⁴⁶ UNIFEM – UNV project teams defined a volunteer as a woman, member of a rural or urban community, who is promoting local development and “participatory space” as assemblies, town councils, and other meetings where planning and citizen oversight took place. They installed two development pillars within this context: to improve governability and to promote gender equity. In addition, they described women’s volunteerism in the project in three ways: 1) as empowering since it would provide them access to participatory decision making meetings, 2) as mobilizing since would produce a multiplying effect in the communities for increased participation, and 3) as transforming since it would change the government – civil society relationship, conceiving a new development model based upon full citizenship.⁴⁷

As we have pointed out above, the project has met some of the UNV expected outcomes:

- National volunteers – the coordinators – were a fundamental aspect for project success. They mobilized women’s organizations, supported the distribution of tools to these so they could prepare PB proposals, and accompanied the people in charge of selecting and approving the proposals, providing them technical assistance.⁴⁸
- The project, along with other initiatives, encouraged women to take part in local government planning and budget decision making meetings. Factors that have encouraged their participation are in fact some of the project’s successful strategies: forging alliances with different stakeholders for project formulation and advocacy, training, organizing debate and sharing events (from internships to seminars).
- Voluntary participation, as we have extensively pointed out in previous pages, has opened up access to public budget setting forums for women in local government settings in rural Bolivia, rural Ecuador, and other project settings. And while women had already been taking part in these processes before project had intervened in each country, it seems that it has caused an increase in their participation, such as Rosario: the percentage of women in 2005 was 57% and by 2007, 62%.
- In Rosario, the project worked actively with the UNV focal point in Buenos Aires to encourage that a Rosario Office of Volunteers be installed in local government, yet the initiative was discontinued. Despite that set back, the city has incorporated “volunteerism” in its institutional speech and has qualified women as “volunteers” in its publications.
- In Bolivia, due to IFFI’s fluid relationship with the UNV focal point in La Paz, both institutions symbolically certified 150 female workshop

⁴⁶ Among these, there was the 1st International Forum on Volunteerism and Policy in Buenos Aires 2006, the Seminar in Brazil, and the 2007 Regional Meeting in Quito.

⁴⁷ UNV – UNIFEM AR systematization: “Women’s voluntary work experiences for fueling local development with equity”. Consultant: Carmen Zabalaga. S/f.

⁴⁸ Answer to the question on whether or not project volunteers have stimulated the people’s voluntary participation.

facilitators as “Volunteers Trainers of Volunteers”, handing out to them a certificate printed with the UNV logo. Out of that number, forty-four were project trainers from five Cochabamba districts.

In contrast to these results, it is our opinion that project failed to continue producing studies that would make visible women’s contributions that are usually overlooked or combined with contributions from “other groups”, like children and the elderly. In that way, the project did not promote more studies and analyses of women’s contributions that might have produced more data to be used in advocacy, in publicity campaigns designed to grant them that recognition, and as a tool that might even have elevated their self-esteem.⁴⁹ It is this less significant view of women’s community contributions that cheapens it as a social category.

Another concern for the UNV that might have deserved further development in the project was the notion of voluntary participation as an inseparable dimension of democracy – the same as with V4D – but pushing for a framework of rights. In settings where PB processes exist, it came up in group interviews that women had appropriated the right to being present in budget setting meetings but with varying degrees of intensity.

Concisely put, we could say that in terms of objective fulfillment, the project did make more methods and tools available for advocacy as well as build capacity in people to influence local government budget setting processes, yet there were gaps in data gathering on women’s voluntary contributions and in promoting recognition of voluntary work.

⁴⁹ An example of this is from the Andia and Beltan study “Gender Focused Public Budget Analysis: The Case of Villa El Salvador” in *Towards Transparency and Governability with Equity: Gender Responsive Budgets in the Andean Region*. UNIFEM, Quito 2004.

Part IV. Conclusions

In this chapter, we will try to answer the questions laid out in the UNIFEM evaluation ToR, following key criteria content and order as identified by UNIFEM at the time.⁵⁰

1. Relevancy and Coherence⁵¹

Project Design:

Strengthening the democratization of local government decisions through integrating gender justice is a response to women's interests in the region and should be an essential element in participatory policies it must advance. As such, the UNIFEM proposal is relevant as is the initiative content since it aims to enrich the sense of local democracy. Therefore, the project is also theoretically coherent with stakeholders' agendas.

As to the question on whether or not objectives and expected outcomes are "realistic, concrete", and consistent with strategies and activities, this all depends upon the intervention setting. Fulfilling the objective of "promoting women's participation in political and economic decision making forums" was made easier by prior experience women's organizations had advocating before policy makers, regardless of their current cohesion and activeness (Recife, Cochabamba, VES) or that they had been created by local government prior to UNIFEM's project (Rosario Women's Network). In settings where mobilization was weak or non-existent, such as the rural areas under the jurisdiction of the Cuenca city hall, fulfilling the objective in two years, as was proposed, is both optimistic and irrelevant.

Although the following were designed as project objectives, they are in fact strategies: 1) progress was made in *stakeholder capacity building* through training and 2) *methodological tools* were developed for writing proposals for local government, albeit limited by the intervention setting. However, neither was analysis performed nor visibility given to women's voluntary contribution in different participatory processes, which, in this particular case, was not the problem of the objective "being realistic", rather one of failing to have a strategy for accomplishing it.

Even if the prioritized strategy of civil society stakeholder training was appropriate, it was overemphasized in comparison to attention local government institutions deserved. Not a single objective or outcome was developed for local

⁵⁰ See ToR Section IV in the report's annexes.

⁵¹ As found in the ToR, this is a reference to project and strategy adaptation to local context, to planning quality, and to the monitoring and evaluation system.

government capacity building, yet project planners did nail down indicators for measuring plans, programs, budgets, planning processes and budget increases. Judging by the project document, we can deduce that outcomes would be met by mobilizing civil society organizations and through applying political pressure on a neutral party (local government). Nowhere is the central role of local government as the privileged participant for achieving some of the proposed results, like best practice and policies for promoting gender equity, clearly mentioned.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

After the field work, we corroborated what had been affirmed in the Desk Review of April 5th. Planning instruments – by and large the indicators – do not seem to be the most suitable for measuring project progress towards its goals. The sheer number of indicators did in fact complicate, unnecessarily, monitoring, as evidenced in national coordinator reports, where they “repeat” in several of the outcomes the same indicators. Outcomes being weakly prepared and lacking correspondence to the indicators do not guarantee suitable monitoring. The so-called projects’ “monitoring matrices” do not help with the visualization of accumulated progress toward outcome achievement. Likewise, semi-annual planning forms and activities reports do not allow for explanations of why some activities were not completed (and seem to hang on from one six month term to another).

Furthermore, what the project calls a “baseline” does not seem directed toward monitoring. For example, starting point data – how many organizations of women were already active in the participatory budget process at project launch – is not collected. This works against one of UNIFEM’s expectations for this evaluation: determining direct project generated changes. During the interviews, coordinators (UNV) unanimously agreed on the need to have clearer monitoring instruments than what now is part of the so-called “monitoring system”.

Lessons and best practice in terms of the strategies followed:

During this period, the Bolivian experience has been particularly educational when it comes to constructing its practices locally while seeking for national allies in order to influence policy makers in several ministries and the congress. Examples such as this one, the VES Promoter Group pushing for the creation of a women’s management division, and the dynamism of FERU to exert influence on the Pernambuco state budget demonstrate how alliances bolstered strategic arenas and can be featured as a best practice. And, the example of these practices, which impacted different levels, could have a multiplying effect in other project intervention settings.

Another good regional practice has been establishing links with academia through which the project can offer stakeholders study scholarships in order to strengthen them; considerations have been given for continuing it as a means of updating GRB knowledge. Both projects opened fluid lines of communication with different academic institutions and could be examples for potential replication in

other parts of the world. Different project stakeholders participating in seminars and other regional meetings allowed them, as a group, to reach greater understanding and agreement on project focus. These were important spaces for group and individual learning, affecting the day to day activities of those involved. Such a practice could be replicated in worldwide initiatives

With regards to the notion of placing a value on women's voluntary contributions, the project discontinued referring to the Andia and Beltran study which assigned a value to that type of contribution for survival; continuance may have strengthened UNV's action line on the matter.⁵²

To the question on how the intervention complemented other programs promoting gender equity in the same settings, we must reiterate that it did operate at the same time and in the same places as other ongoing proposals or initiatives and that UNIFEM joined or collaborated with them with varying degrees of success. In two instances, the Recife and Rosario DGA's, collaboration managed to strengthen their institutional course, even though local government there were not direct partners. In Bolivia, crossover actions facilitated civil society organization agreement with the directives found in national social and gender equity plans. Lastly, joint work assisted in transmitting gender situation analysis tools for PB processes in VES, Rosario, Recife, and other local governments.

2. Efficacy⁵³

General Outcomes:

A primary concern to underscore in this section, which we touched upon in the above section on monitoring and evaluation, is that planning instruments are weak. Since there is no real connection between results and indicators, we are unable to respond completely to how and to what extent were proposed results reached. During the evaluation period, the project in each country has produced materials (mainly evaluations and training manuals) to be used as advocacy references or training tools, yet only the Cuenca Planning and Management Department for Social and Gender Equity consistently followed up on budget analysis using a gender focus. (Outcome 1)

In terms of the number of trained / sensitized people, the figure surpasses 5,000 if we include civil society stakeholders and local government staff. Consequently, we might be able to infer that the project has met with the planned outcome of *greater capacity for promoting gender analysis* as laid out in Outcome 2, yet its indicators do not correspond to what is expressed and the measurement variables for this "greater capacity" were not created.⁵⁴

⁵² Ob. Cit.

⁵³ As found in the ToR, this measures the degree to which progress has been made on objectives and expected outcomes.

⁵⁴ See ToR outcomes and indicators in the annexes.

For the outcome of *improved practices and policies in public institutions* (Outcome 3), it was difficult for us to identify which ones improved as direct results of the project. Except for the successful advocacy campaigns to obtain Bolivian Ministry of Finance directions for local government to allocate funds for gender equity and to get the Ministry of Planning to include gender based indicators for measuring local government performance, we could not isolate any other policies from the other countries that arose exclusively from project action.

Budgets did increase so the DGA's in four cities (Rosario, Cuenca, Recife, and Cochabamba) – one more than indicators expected – could meet the demands of women, yet there is no information that supports the increase was due to direct project action. Specific women-directed projects do exist in VES governmental management departments as well as in other areas and divisions of project involved, local government settings. The problems are they lack baselines for overseeing budget management and no one has systematically followed up on budget performance throughout the years of their application.

In the life of the project, women have participated in PB processes where these exist, even when this takes the form of participatory planning (in Bolivia). Nevertheless, before the project entered the intervention areas, women had already been taking part in these processes, yet, because of the project, we can say that the installed mechanisms made it easier for women to get involved, examples of such being the 2007 establishment of PB registration parity regulations in VES. In the twelve local government settings of Bolivia, as in the cities of Rosario and Recife, the project directly fed existing conditions, through its training programs, so that women could submit superior quality budget proposals. Moreover, in response to the spirit of the UNV, we would like to point out that all these organizations are voluntary in nature.

We were unable to find information on women's voluntary contributions or plans that include and disseminate it. Project coordinators do not record data on volunteerism indicators in their progress reports. Because monitoring tools are weak in this area, they did not correct this information gap, which happened during each six month reporting period. Hence, at the end of the project, we are not able to state definitively that project achievements contributed to increased V4D recognition.

We discovered that the overall monitoring situation was weak. Neither at a regional nor national level do tools exist for divining whether recipients understood the contents of advocacy methodological booklets or manuals. Likewise, the value of research and studies or the quality of cascade training replications was not taken into consideration. In addition, no one was capable of assessing training effects on creating a more purposeful attitude and on increasing abilities in stakeholders.

With regards to internal factors contributing to outcomes achievement, we believe the commitment and creativity of the coordinators (national UNV) was one of the most important assets for the progress made by the project in the intervention settings. In some locations more than in others, it was their ability to network. As we mentioned earlier, alliance forming has been a driving factor for many of the projects anticipated actions. Externally, we cannot deny the significance of political contexts on this matter, where in Bolivia, activism was promoted, in Peru, driving forces hampered, and in Ecuador, advances disordered.

When examining unanticipated intervention effects, one of the most important was the prominence gained by local DGA's, where these exist. They are examples of how support from an agency like UNIFEM, as part of the UNS, bestows on them a more central role and increased standing in the eyes of local government. Besides the city of Cuenca's gender affairs department, having a prior relationship with the project that was renewed through this initiative, the three others (in Cochabamba, Recife, and Rosario) were strengthened indirectly by the project through support that came in the form of studies, conferences and seminars, participation in regional events, and study scholarships.

As pointed out in previous sections, Bolivia is the only setting that recorded the capacity to take its local advocacy agenda and connect it to the national level, yet we should point out that contributing to this has been the peculiar political context in that country, with President Evo Morales and his MAS party in power, and the openness of its members to topics like participation and social and gender equity.

Specific outcomes:

To varying degrees depending on the country, the project has united with other forces and other stakeholders to get local government to issue pro-gender equity regulations and to increase the range of submitted and approved projects (through participatory budget setting processes) that meet requirements in such areas as violence prevention, health, sexual and reproductive rights, job training, and others. Local government has indeed allocated more resources to their DGA's, although there is no available information on the number, type, and budgets of "other" women-related projects coming from different governmental areas / divisions. As women gained greater capacity, they were better qualified to enter debates on local budgets, an outcome linked to local government encouragement and depending in large part on political will.

3. Efficiency⁵⁵

Management:

As highlighted in section 5.4, we were charged with examining only the UNIFEM – UNV – AECID projects and not the entire GRB program. On account of both initiatives' operational dynamic, we have been able to certify that the regional

⁵⁵ As found in the ToR, adaptation of institutional structure and program management for achieving project outcomes.

dynamic has strengthened partners through regional events and graduate level course offerings, the former being settings where sharing and learning took place among highly valued experiences.

Due to GRB action expansion, it would seem necessary to take a qualitative leap regionally, which implies carrying out an analysis of the national political context where project is being implemented, social movement potentials and constraints, and call for democratic governability in the region's countries. The latter would entail consensus among the UNIFEM sub-regional offices for bringing to bear their individual strengths to the issue and for identifying chosen partners' potentials. Structurally speaking, the first proposal would seem necessary.

We also uncovered certain communication weaknesses between sub-regional offices and the regional coordination. In some cases, we found that country and sub-national operations were detached from other settings; in Peru, for example, no coordination or information transmission mechanisms were set up between and among the three partners at the time of the evaluation. Moreover, national coordinators communicate directly with regional coordination, yet they had established very few lines of communication with each other; normally, this took place during seminars and planning meetings in which they provided feedback and shared lessons as they passed information back and forth.

To the ToR question concerning cost effectiveness, UNIFEM submitted data, indicating that it had, from 2005 to 2007, allocated \$138,000 as direct support to its nine partners. The latter saw this money as an important "seed fund" that helped lay the foundation for future actions and that encouraged relationships with other sources of cooperation. What was accomplished far outweighed expectations placed upon those initial funds UNIFEM could generate.

4. Sustainability⁵⁶

The project strengthened initiatives focused on decentralized budgets, contributing to them its specialty and principles of gender equity. Its achievements varied to the extent that country contexts, where it is implemented, vary. While not necessarily GRB's, the Rosario and Cuenca EOP's are models for implementing women's proposals. Likewise, DGA's, limited yet also demonstrating commendable individual efforts, that have dialogued with the project have increased their resources and projects. Local government has also maintained in force pre-existing regulations, while those issued during the evaluation period were not as numerous or generated by direct project action.

One of the most important project strategies for sustainability is providing civil society groups' advocacy tools to influence local government budgets and building their capacity to use them. However, this strategy might be limited if the

⁵⁶ Understood in the ToR as the possibility to continue positive project processes and effects

project fails to view local government as a recipient and, therefore, a stakeholder in the changes it wishes to affect.

In other matters dealing with sustainability, almost every project partner has been able to establish relations with other sources of cooperation, some to a greater extent than others, and to use the resources to broaden and/ or deepen their GRB directed actions. As a prime example of this, we wish to make note of the Cuenca DGA's diversity of funding sources, which can be seen in Table #1.

5. Partnership and Coordination⁵⁷

The project is a model of how the relationship – the joining of principles – of two, relatively small UNS agencies is mutually beneficial. Both comply with the UN mandate for joint work and line up with the guidelines laid out in the MDG's, respective UNDAF's, and other similar documents. The UNV sees the project reinforcing the image of volunteers as development agents – mainly, but not exclusively, national volunteers (project coordinators) – and contributing to building capacity in members of organizations for participating in making decisions – volunteer women who are working for their communities.

Project volunteers were key components in consultancy, training, and mobilizing organization and local government energies. They were the driving force behind and helped widen community members' voluntary participation. Plus they opened up members' access to decision making meetings. Through the project, UNV purposed to give greater recognition to this volunteerism, usually very elusive for women. This emphasis on spotlighting women's voluntary contributions is the added value to the UNIFEM initiative.

What is more, UNIFEM has experience working with UNV in the region and sees volunteers as a strategic resource. It adopted the definition of volunteerism into its citizen participation component and views project's achievements as the means that increased women's participation in PB process and made it easier for them to attend (child care, transportation, PB gender representation parity, etc.). Both agencies drove a systematization process for the experience in 2008 from the concept of volunteerism in the project as empowering, mobilizing, and transforming. Added value from the UNV is participation in arenas of local power.

6. Appropriation⁵⁸

For the 2005 to 2007 project, UNIFEM kept more than half of its direct partners (not only those with agreements but also those with a financed project) from the previous project, which was the correct decision for strengthening GRB know how in them. The issue was incorporated into their work plans or is on the organizations' agendas.

⁵⁷ As found in the ToR, it is the value of developed institutional relationships for achieving project outcomes.

⁵⁸ Defined in the ToR as "local partner leadership".

For example, the city of Rosario (a new project partner), along with the participants, received specific yet sustained technical support by way of the national volunteer / coordinator and benefited from the internal relations since it is also a recipient of the UNIFEM Safe Cities program. Project ownership by local partners has been good: interviewed government officials, both male and female, from the cities of Cochabamba, Recife, and VES, not to mention Rosario, have heard of the initiative and took part in several activities. On the other hand, partners have the power to present their proposals as part of the GRB.

As previously pointed out, just as coordinators played the part in the local setting as the liaison for different stakeholders' initiatives, the inclusion of government officials and partnering NGO's from each project implemented country in seminars, conferences, exchanges, and similar regional experiences was a successful strategy for delivering information.

Part V. Main Recommendations

1. For the regional dimension:

Evaluated projects are part of the GRB regional program, which itself is part of UNIFEM's global GRB program, one of this agency's most visible and recognized contributions to the international move promoting women's rights.

In spite of the fact that we were only charged with evaluating these two projects and not the entirety of the regional program, we put out the recommendation that the project take a qualitative leap regionally. One possible way of beginning this would be, once the social and political analyses of the region have been updated, coming to agreement on the emphases of the regional perspective on which each UNIFEM sub-regional office would be able to exert influence.

We furthermore suggest that the project be clear and reach consensus when choosing countries, partners, national strong points, but especially capacities of local partners since the ideal situation is for the intervention to be transformed into practices that can be replicated anywhere in the world. What is more, regardless of local experience success, each one might seem bounded by its own territory and that sense of fragmentation might place regional unity in jeopardy.

Regional events and specialized, graduate level course offerings are good strategies for interconnecting the different project stakeholders. It might be possible to broaden their impact through offering government officers, authorities, and social leaders internships with other local government settings.

Operationally speaking, we believe it is urgent that the project establish clear lines of communications for all levels: to and from the three sub-regional offices and regional coordination, to and from regional coordination and country project coordinators, and to and from the coordinators themselves.

2. For the beneficiaries:

We have seen a lopsided relationship in the amount of emphasis placed on women's organization capacity building versus that of the local government. It should be noted that the latter is a central actor in moving forward process civil society wishes to influence. This would, therefore, require a better defined strategy for initiating advocacy on its institutional culture.

We suggest that the project place greater attention on local government; given that it is a main player and a partner in an outstanding position for achieving

some of the GRB program's proposed outcomes. It is necessary to build strategies that lead to a more active intervention to see changes happen in local government institutional dynamics. One step in the right direction was the project strengthening local Departments of Gender Affairs, albeit an unanticipated one.

Being familiar with bureaucratic obstacles to implement projects through agreements with local governments, we suggest a change be made in what has been seen up till now as specific and reactive support to their requirements: based upon an operational work plan, UNIFEM may pledge its support to actions that develop more inclusive mechanisms for programs and for having more women involved in local decision making processes.

Another action line for local government is the fostering of healthy competition, whether within, between, or among them, through different strategies to having them create best practice on gender equity. In addition to more determined actions towards the local government as the institution – where the Cochabamba internal evaluation on gender is a relevant initiative – and towards its officials, project could encourage a commitment on the part of councilwomen from its settings, as well as others, to reinforce the regional dimension of GRB initiatives.

One last recommendation for beneficiaries is strengthening them. What is more troublesome than not having close follow up and an outcome objective for training and mobilizing different stakeholders is spreading out the project too thinly in the attempt to bring on board an ever increasing number of beneficiaries.

3. For communication:

UNIFEM must design a strategy for disseminating its outputs and for the ongoing valuating of them; beneficiaries and partners must become more and better involved in updating the webpage, in distributing training materials, and in sharing in sub-national and national studies being carried out.

Internally, it seems an urgent need is to lay foundations for creating a procedure for mutual learning between project coordinators and main partners.

4. For project monitoring:

We have encountered serious problems in terms of project design. We have reiterated time and again there is confusion in what objectives, strategies, outcomes, and indicators are, a situation that has hindered the evaluation. We recommend that UNIFEM perform a base line study and provide more suitable tools for measuring progress and achievements over time. Likewise, projects need a real monitoring system.

Monitoring may require updating situation analyses of prospective project settings, covering such components as social organization dynamism and local

government openness to its new duties, both of which could form part of the baseline study. Nevertheless, perhaps of equal benefit would be project directors unifying budget analysis categories to identify which lines include expenditures for gender equity initiatives, independently of lines created explicitly for such a purpose, and include them into budget monitoring.

Along those same lines, developing a means for valuing the impact of training materials on the methodology and the capacity of studies performed within project framework for being turned into advocacy tools is also important.

5. Gaps that should be actively incorporated:

Future interventions should:

- Incorporate an aspect on local government transparency and accountability as an expression of the direction program policy is taking towards increased democratization and governability and as a citizen's right that women should exercise.
- Design more explicit strategies for documenting, analyzing, and monitoring local government budgets and turn that data into arguments for oversight as part of women's organizations' agendas.
- Install purposefully a component for valuing women's reproductive and voluntary work as an express strategy for underscoring women's contributions. Associated with this, the project should invent disseminating and advocacy tools that reinforce women's essential role in development.

6 Dissemination of best practice:

The project should:

- at this point in time, document the Bolivian experience of constructing a local advocacy agenda that is linked to national actions and alliances, expressed through advocacy before different national ministries and the congress.
- Intensify and publicize impacts and achievements generated through alliances for attaining specific results and with a wide variety of organizations.
- Step up dissemination of the importance of building relationships with academia and of strengthening project stakeholders and beneficiaries, laying the foundation for an informed and analytical population on GRB.

- Step up dissemination of settings that enable women to participate with ease in local budget setting debates, such as the cities of Recife and Rosario.
- Use research, the likes of what was conducted in Recife on PB and gender, for similar research projects and for generating other outputs for other ends: training, advocacy, etc.

7 Specific Recommendations for the relation between UNV and UNIFEM

- The project has proved to be a good experience of synergy between both agencies. The National Volunteers played a key part in the achievements of this project: they have driven the motivation and the organization of volunteers at a local level; supported the transfer of advocacy tools, and have offered technical assistance to their counterpart agencies. In addition, the National Volunteers were trained in the postgraduate courses supported by the project, contributing to form a valuable resource of specialists. The participation, as a way of volunteering, has opened the access for women and local organizations to deliberation over public spending in rural municipalities in Bolivia, rural Parishes of Cuenca, and other local spheres. Although existing norms created the framework for the participation of the population in these spheres – such as the laws of Participative Planning or Participative Budgets – due to the influence of the project, the presence of women appears to have increased.
- For these and other reasons, it seems to us that continuing the relation between UNV and UNIFEM would be extremely positive. UNV could continue deepening the concept of V4D with a closer approach to the interests of women. And, in the case of UNIFEM, it would continue enriching its reflection and intervention in women's Human Rights, with the concepts of participation and volunteering.
- If this relation between said agencies is to continue it seems important to us that UNV places a special emphasis in the recompilation of information about the contribution of women in development and about the analysis of their invisible contributions in nurturing actions of political incidence.