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MEXICO ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Over the course of the past two years, we developed two projects with two very different end goals.

On the one hand we are in the process of building a community based approach to develop governance tools in the general population in a marginalized community with a long history of civic participation in the borough of Iztapalapa in Mexico City, called Yuguelito. In this community we are continuing to build and strengthen the bonds with community leaders, with the aim of deploying a Civic Action Teams exercise.

On the other hand our Voice 2 Rep work lead us to deepen our understanding of the need for supporting gender procurement of justice with a gender lens, by bringing us closer to the prosecutors that impacted positively in the case of Dolores de León, helping bring about her freedom in early 2023 and supporting her into overcoming a significant challenge to her freedom through a discriminatory attack from an unfriendly prosecutor.



Through the work of HackCorruption in Latin America, we have also managed to work locally with two CSOs, bridging the work into more concrete options for anti corruption efforts in the region, one in sustainable development by tracking and monitoring the misappropriation of publicly owned land. The second is by tackling a transnational approach to monitoring corruption in public procurement by generating a transparency layer, bridging the sanctions lists produced by Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. government and the Mexican Fiscal Control entity.

What did we learn that has set us up for sustainable work and success in 2024?

The Latin American CSOs scenario is rapidly changing since 2022. During this cycle it has been established, particularly in Mexico and northern Central America, that while technical CSOs produced valuable work into modernizing accountability mechanisms and institutional capacity in the region, that alone is not enough.

The effort is not sustainable if extreme poverty can be used as a political tool to undermine transparency efforts, as well as facing the challenges that unchecked migration to the northern border between Mexico and the U.S. creates. Organized crime and drug trafficking also add a radical component to the already critical situation.

There is a need to strengthen capacities of affected communities on several fronts by supporting civic agents of change within those communities. To this end we are working to build governance tools for the general population in a marginalized community with a long history of civic action. Using a community-based approach in Yuguelito in Iztapalapa borough, Mexico City, we are working to strengthen the bonds with community leaders, to eventually launch a Civic Action Teams program.





We also learned that supporting institutional development for improvement of human rights and accountability of the institutions in the procurement of justice, is a necessary component of the expansion of the work that has been done out of the Voice2Rep campaign. Through this initial work we want to build and expand Voice2Rep by organizing workshops in the community as well as piloting a second stage of the program in Southern Mexico.



We are also doing a participatory project with other CSOs to reposition ourselves in a more sustainable way in the ecosystem. Through this exercise we have been able to build a more concise vision of the needs, trends, and areas of opportunity in the region. One of the learnings from this exercise has been the critical importance of returning the work of civic society to the ground level for a more direct interface with the general population.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

The open data agenda in Mexico went backwards during this six-year term; there was an abandonment of the open data portal, for instance. Civil society organizations and government agencies do publish data, but no longer do it on that portal, and it has to do with the fact that the digital strategy has been defunded, and rather, funds are now being concentrated on topics such as e-governance. This is symptomatic of the panorama in the country: back in the day, the open data agenda was pushed and promoted as something new and completely innovative, but in self-criticism, it was very technical as it was only about publishing data but not in a strategic way. Thus, we have to think about data governance, and not just publishing data. This requires a reconstruction of the political agenda of the civic technology and open government ecosystem in Mexico.

Ali González
Director of Strategy at Codeando México

It's important to understand open data as a tool that enables citizen participation mechanisms. We have to shift away from the discourse about the importance of transparency for transparency's sake. Government assets, such as public information, must spark innovation in order to generate impact. We have focused on developing assets aimed at the middle class, which has education, training, access to a computer and the Internet, and so on. We have to create strategies that consider those who are being left out. We have to focus on the quality of the assets and their potential outputs and not, for instance, on the number of visits to the open data portal. We have to aim to enable civic participation focused on processes and their outputs, which necessitates finding out what the needs are, including possibilities that had not been taken into account, such as improving services, creating new products, sparking public debates and influencing public policies.

Viridiana Hernández, independent expert in open data, open government and political innovation

VOICE 2 REP

Objectives and activities

- Build a positive narrative about marginalized women in prison
- Generate traction around the conversation of building up gender-based justice procurement in Mexico
- Build a network of allies in government institutions and local CSOs to leverage capacity-building programs
- Build advocacy campaigns around the relevant topics

How did we make an impact and what did we learn?

The workshop gathered 300 people from 3 different penitentiary centers. Out of these participants, 20 were selected to write songs and workshop the lyrics and composition in order to record the album.

Out of the participants we had 3 people who became actively involved in their own cases, with one becoming a key advocate for gender justice based accountability. Dolores de León's activism in her own case helped us create a concrete institutional network in Nuevo León, building our Integrity Icon campaign with the public defender Susana Montañes as a focal point of the role of the capacity public servants have in their own advocacy capacities.

While we have a clear understanding on how narrative for change is a viable tool for building and raising external awareness, we now have evidence of its capacity to influence institutional change. It can also generate traction in addressing key issues in the area of interest.

We want to solidify this into a workshop for piloting and advancing programs with public justice officials who work in gender issues.

Funding in the region is moving towards organizations that can do bridge work, as well as prove institutional advocacy around key issues in Mexico. Two of those issues are; human rights and gender development, and focus on the population of marginalized communities.

IMPACT BY NUMBERS

8

public servants
interviewed

300

women in prison
reached



CIVIC ACTION TEAMS

Overview of main objectives and activities.

- Build trust within a community that has a 40-year history of activism in development.
- Integrate our programmatic work into their prospective development
- Do ground work and assess the needs of the community for rebuilding their internal structure and improving the organizational structure and communication channels
- Build sustainable network opportunities for the community with other organizations that might generate impact in topics such as gender equality, infrastructure development, and green accountability

How did we make an impact and what did we learn?

We are still making an impact giving them the possibility to rethink and restructure their internal work to be more efficient in their delivery. This opportunity also helps us identify how to broaden our initial efforts into more generalized impact initiatives that can translate to rural contexts as well.

What makes the work sustainable?

For us it means rooting ourselves in a respectful way in a community where we can prove that our work has direct measurable and visible impact in several of the fields the Lab is an expert at.

In terms of outcomes, what are we most proud of?

We built the exercise with full support from the community ensuring that they can share our vision for critical internal accountability in a way that supports advocacy and development work for everyone involved.

IMPACT BY NUMBERS

8

community leaders
participated in workshops

15

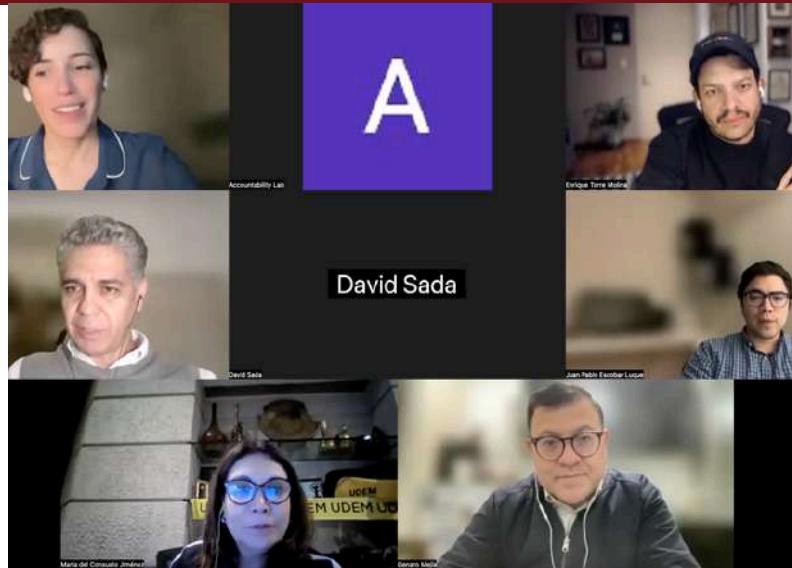
volunteers so far

150

community leaders
attended town hall meeting

CUARTA EDICIÓN

INTEGRITY ICON MÉXICO

INTEGRITY ICON

After observing the positive effects we achieved by narrowing the themes of our Integrity Icon campaigns in Mexico, we thought it extremely important to keep choosing poignant themes highlighted by our community. In 2023, these themes were Youth and Sustainability.

Integrity Icon Sustainability 2024

Sustainable development involves how we should live today if we want a better future, addressing present needs without compromising opportunities for future generations. The UN indicates that with sustainable development, everyone can access decent work, healthcare, and quality education. Utilization of natural resources avoids pollution and permanent losses to the environment. Public policy decisions ensure that no one is left behind due to situations of marginalization or discrimination. We aim to depoliticize transparency, integrity, and public service, choosing to follow the path of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as the 2030 Agenda already embodies a collaborative, cross-cutting, and shared agenda that is evident to all. To promote and combine efforts in such a critical moment for the world, the idea of creating an edition of Integrity Icon focused on Sustainability was born in Mexico, and this is our third campaign dedicated to Sustainability.

Integrity Icon Youth 2024

We want to recognize the crucial role that young people play in today's society and their ability to influence social change. Young people represent the future and have a fresh and innovative perspective that can revitalize efforts to promote integrity and transparency.

Additionally, by highlighting positive role models among young people, a culture of integrity is fostered from an early age, laying the groundwork for a more integrated society in the future.

IMPACT BY NUMBERS

60+

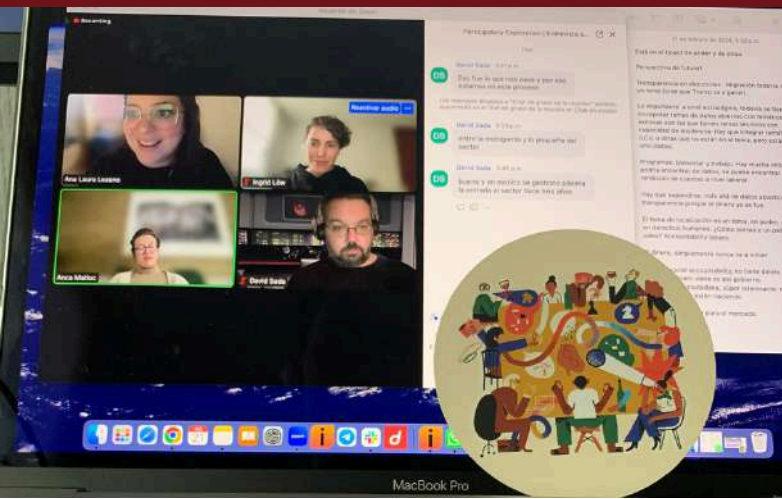
nominations

10

finalists
(both categories)

2

deliberation meetings
with judges



PARTICIPATORY EXPLORATION

Overview of main objectives and activities.

Via personalized interviews we are:

- Generating awareness of the composite meaning of the term Accountability in Spanish, which doesn't offer a direct translation.
- Raise awareness of the scenario and challenges presented to us as collaborative members of the civic space in Mexico.
- Build our network for better impact.
- Help build our narrative and understand mutual challenges for sustainability in the region.

How did we make an impact and what did we learn?

We are positioning the Lab in the transparency and accountability not for profit ecosystem in a way that wasn't done before.

While our main work here is to inform ourselves on the perspectives of different key long standing actors, our secondary intention is to inform them of our work, show respect, and willingness to listen and collaborate with different partners that have proven their work to be sustainable in the region.

It was a common perception of the interviewees that the scope and reach of the Lab's work is not always entirely clear, so we are supplementing the narrative around the work that the Lab does globally and regionally to clarify its aims.

By generating these dialogues we have built a mutual learning experience that aims to create a consistent reflection experience, as well as strengthening the Accountability Lab network in the region.

What makes the work sustainable?

Sustainability in civic space in Latin America, specifically in Mexico can only happen if we are straight forward with the collective challenges and trends we face. We are all trying to influence transparency and accountability in different ways, and we need to leverage our capacity for collective action and generate solid networks and bridges with other organizations that have a wide trajectory in the Mexican context.

In terms of outcomes, what are we most proud of?

The positive perspective of the exercise amongst the different participants, and the space for reflection that it gave them, which in their own words has become so rare with the encroachment of the civic space in Latin America.

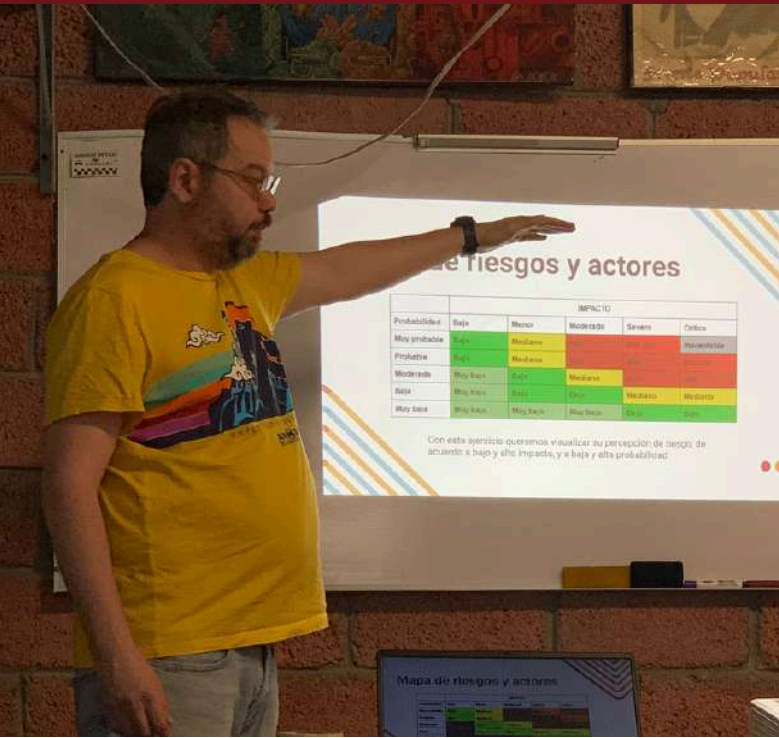
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Through last year's Voice2Rep pilot project, we met Dolores, a woman who was unjustly deprived of her freedom. Thanks to her fight and a correct defense with a gender perspective, she became the first case of freedom thanks to this defense in Nuevo León, Mexico, thus giving hope to many women who are going through a similar situation.

During her fight for freedom, Dolores participated in song creation workshops, where she discovered herself as a great composer. Her lyrics were captured in the album "Volver al Corazón", which has given voice to many women deprived of their liberty and the abandonment they suffer from the justice system and their families.

After this pilot, at Accountability Lab México we reinforced the idea that creative and artistic work has a healing and hopeful potential for the creative person, and at the same time, the result of this work can be a powerful tool for dissemination and awareness of a latent problem in our society that must be addressed imperatively.

When we opened the call for Integrity Icon 2024 in Mexico, Dolores did not hesitate to nominate Susana, the public defender who handled her case, who is among the finalists of this campaign, since after achieving Dolores' release, the defense where she works decided to open an area specialized in defense with a gender perspective, based on the protocol for judging with a gender perspective, published by the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation in 2013. Like the rest of the public defenders, Susana She receives hundreds of cases a week, however she has decided to make a difference and has committed herself to cases of injustice that offers these women an opportunity.



STAFF CORNER

We are a solid three people team that brought on Ana Laura Lozano, an expert with over 10 years of experience of work in the ecosystem, to solidify our networking and advocacy capacity in the region.

We are looking forward to Viridiana Ramírez as our communications officer.

STAFF & BUDGET

1

grant & 1 sub-granting

\$150k

budget for 2023

4

staff