



Education for Citizens

5
great learnings
in 5 years



1. It is necessary to innovate the Citizen Oversight tools in order to improve the results.

Twenty years ago since we started the Citizen Oversight exercise with the *Cómo Vamos* programs, our main goal was based on following up and evaluating the quality of life in the cities. **We began looking for a chance to be held accountable by the local administrations and a control by the citizenship, which did not exist in those days.** The forementioned was based mainly on a quality of life report as accurate objectives of the city, and also a citizenship perception report with subjective indicators.

After two decades of work, we have witnessed together with the *Cómo Vamos* programs, the need to carry out innovations on the tools and approach of the citizenship oversight exercise that allows us to transcend this labor and fulfill in a better way our interest on guiding and improving the public administrations decision making, as well as the citizenship.

This is the reason why in the last few years we have been working on reports and tools with a more doable approach. Concerning this, we have developed reports based on tendencies and international policies for development for example the Social Progress Index and Sustainable Development Goals, which contribute to improve the process of decision making at both local and government level. They are aligned with the principal world tendencies facing the cities development.

Therefore, we have evidence of the necessity to work on specific agendas that are of the citizens' interest like the sustainable mobility, the use of the bicycle, and climate change among others. **This way, you have more access to those organized citizens who happen to be working on different subjects in their cities,** using relevant information which might be able to qualify their job.

On the other hand, we have begun the issuing of reports on Informe de Inequidades en la Primera Infancia. Besides, some of the cities are issuing living conditions reports within the present year. **Both strategies look forward to delivering doable tools focused on the public managements, and the citizenship so they themselves might be able to lead their actions and foster a public policy construction.**

2. Social leadership reinforcement should have a collective focus to achieve a major sustainability.

From the experience gained from Hacia Allá Vamos, Premio Civico, Todos por la Educación, and Teach for All. We have learned that **working on social leadership reinforcement allows us to get better results sustained in time, and also lets ability to take place in the territories,** and also in organizations which embody the cause.

Mainly after 3 years of working on the leadership reinforcement project in Buenaventura, (Hacia Allá Vamos), we evidenced that in cases in which organizations have been reinforced, there has been a higher installed capacity, which allows them to project a major effectiveness towards the

community unlike when the focus is performed on individual leadership.

From the experience of this initiative, we have been able to notice that when the task is done through individual leadership, despite the leader being in the reinforcement process and having the responsibility of conveying the trainings inside his organization, many times this was not reinforced at the expected development, therefore, we had the risk the leader might find another job opportunity and leave the organization, leaving us without bases to follow up the process.

This is why the focus of Hacia Allá Vamos will be to reinforce community organization based in order to guarantee a greater permanency in the community.

Moreover, the task we are performing using initiatives such as Todos por la Educación and Teach for Colombia, has allowed us to corroborate **that the collective leadership reinforcement mainly visualizes the cause beyond people, and reinforces the organizational skills,** which allow us to achieve a major sustainability and time continuance in the territories.

3. Identifying the civic ecosystem technologies in the country is key to pull together, struggle, and enhance good results.

In order to better the civic technology projects that we support in Corona Foundation, we met different strategic social partners from Latin America in the past, key social actors who lead these topics, having in mind to identify good methods that had been successfully implemented in other countries, and were able to be deployed in our case.

What we learned about the good regional practices highlights the fact that countries should count on a Civic ecosystem terminology, understood as a

group of independent social actors and organizations interrelated among themselves to fulfill a goal which allows to count on a systematic glance and define actions together with coordinated strategies to enhance initiatives and their results.

Although the different civic tech strategies already exist in Colombia, they are very young compared to countries like Brazil and Mexico. **An ecosystem will allow to bring together the actions of those ongoing initiatives that cannot**

embrace everything, join forces and expand the coverage to get better results.

This is the reason we are currently doing an ecosystem mapping which will be ready in May, the purpose of this is to identify knowledge acquisition and best practices for the development of strategies to strengthen the civic tech project results in Colombia.

4. The civic tech and the open data have Greater Impact if the country had an institutional legal framework which could validate, recognize, and enhance it.

To count on a institutional framework that validates and acknowledges the technical civic initiatives and the open data ones is fundamental, so they can meet their final requirements and achieve their goals such as citizen participation, transparency, and mobility, among others.

In the open data case, **one of the learning benefits we have experienced with Ciudatos, it is the importance and need for the country to move from a digital government web site model like the one we currently have, to an Open Government policy.**

This is fundamental because the digital government website only uses the technologies as a channel to offer different services and attention to then citizen, while in the Open Government approach the citizen participation is essential, as well as the civil society teamwork and transparent actions.

A normative framework of Open Government implies that the government besides disclosing the information to the public, acknowledges the civic initiatives and promotes the cooperation on the strategies development in a civil society, which materializes citizens actions as a result of concrete incidences. *As the CEPAL states in the Desde el gobierno abierto al Estado abierto en América Latina y el Caribe publishing: It is all about a new way to rule for, with, and through citizen participation.*

On the other hand, we have evidence that the actual problem that several civic technology projects face is the difficulty to interact with the decision makers, and therefore, they fail fulfilling their objectives of incidence, and also they weaken quickly. **That is why in order to achieve better results and a major time sustainability is important to count on a dialogue with the government,** so the information that comes up together with the citizen will be taken into account for the decision making by the public sector participants. Similarly, this must permit an effective feedback from the citizenship on how their participation had a concrete incidence on decision making, also, on how measurements are evidenced as well as changes from it.

5. It is essential to find incentives that encourage citizen engagement with the public sector through technology and open data.

Currently, the open data presents a paradox: the data was open to generate a greater transparency by the government, and a greater access to information, availability to be used by the citizenship to qualify their participation. **However, the traditional citizen participation barriers still exist in spite of the advancements that this technical innovation of the open data represents.**

This is mainly because of the fact, that the open data promote a great access to information, this remains at a technical level that makes it difficult to comprehend, and as a result, it will not allow to overcome the desinformation and lack of interest of the citizen concerning the public sector, adding to what is known as Civic and Digital Illiteracy. **Therefore, in spite of the open datas promise to democratize the information, this remains kept among a reduced number of people and privileged organizations which have the ability to understand the technical language.**

Thanks to our experience these years with Ciudadatos, we have proved that it is not enough to open information to the citizenship, **this should be reinforced with necessary incentives that**

allows to stimulate the citizen engagement towards the public sector through technology.

It is necessary to develop well thought strategies for and by the citizen in order to promote the usage, the appropriation of information, and finally their involvement. If we want to have more active citizens, willing to get involved in public policy process discussion, and also concerned about the accountability between the government and the citizenship, the citizens abilities should be enhanced in order to use the available Open Action oriented information.

In addition, when the time comes to think about civic platforms, this should be done from bottom to top, keeping in mind that besides making the in-

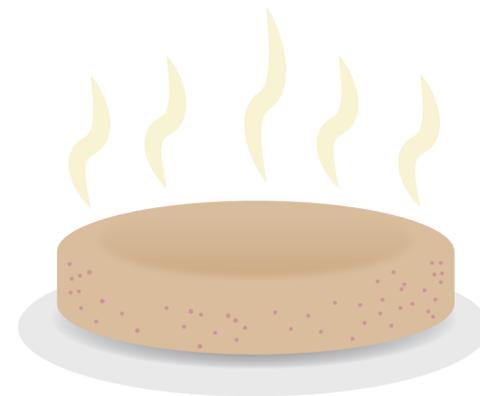
formation available by the institutions, it is key to think about the usability of these platforms by the citizenship, and also to consider the incentives to make this happen. In addition, we should keep in mind the necessary tools to allow information and report gathering to be generated by the organized citizens. **At last, there should be an answer from the government acknowledging the effectiveness of the platforms along with a feedback concerning the effects as the result of his interaction with them.**

Open data process for the citizen engagement



Data:

At this stage there is only a disorganized set of information.



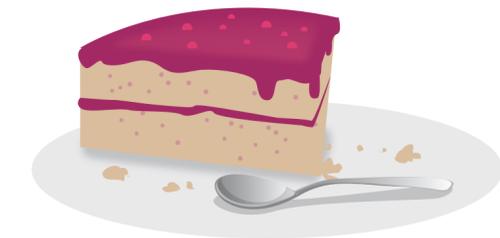
Information:

At this stage the data has been categorized, standardized, and refined.



Presentation:

At this stage the data has been presented in an appealing and clear way by visual graphics that allow its comprehension and interpretation, and also they come with communication and incentive strategies developed for the citizen.



Knowledge:

At this stage the citizen consumes the introduced information to qualify their actions, decision making, and the exercise of its citizenship.