

EVALUATION REPORT

Chile - UDF-RLC-07-198-3835

The Gender Equality “Social Watch”: Following Bachelet’s Government

i. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

a. The project

The project entitled *The Gender Equality “Social Watch”: Following Bachelet’s Government* was implemented in Chile by the Center for Women’s Development Studies¹ (CEDEM) from October 2008 to January 2011 and included a 4-month no-cost extension. The project had a total budget of US\$ 250,000.

The project’s overarching goal was to foster women’s participation in public debates, aiming to influence gender-sensitive policy-making and promote gender-equality through advocacy and communication. The project builds on the unique opportunity created by the election of M. Bachelet as the first woman President of Chile to strengthen gender equality and monitor the implementation of the government’s commitments to the advancement of women’s rights.

The Gender Equality Social Watch was created in March 2007 and brings together gender experts, women’s NGOs, and civil society organizations (CSO’s). Its main objective is strengthening women’s participation and increasing their role with respect to monitoring and assessment of the government’s performance. It also enables Chilean women to influence gender-sensitive policy-making and raise awareness in public debates on gender equality through mass media, collective action and linking virtual networks in Chile and throughout Latin America.

b. Development context

Since its transition to democracy in 1990, Chilean governments have made progress in incorporating gender equality in the public agenda. Numerous indicators show improvement and in 2006, for the first time in the history of Chile and South America, a woman, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, was elected with broad popular endorsement as President of the Republic.

The government of President Michelle Bachelet, characterized by intense efforts to advance gender equality and social justice throughout the country, opened a new phase for gender equality. Her government’s agenda included policies emphasizing social protection and overcoming inequalities and gender discrimination. Nevertheless, these efforts to enhance women’s empowerment were confronted by strong political, ideological and religious resistance and denial by the authoritarian political culture, conservative press based on “patriarchal/ macho” attitudes to gender equality. It follows that low women’s political participation and culture of gender based discrimination persist in Chile, coupled with lack of social participation and general reluctance of the population to participate in local and national politics and electoral processes.

The project pursues the goal of empowering the Chilean women and advancing their rights by focusing on capacity building of women leaders in political and decision making positions, as well as members of associations and young women leaders. The project’s beneficiaries are women’s organization and associations from urban and rural areas, belonging to different social strata and ethnic groups. The project also has focuses on strengthening civil society’s capacity to participate in democratic processes, addressing the issues of gender equality and women’s participation,

¹ Centro de estudios para desarrollo de la mujer (CEDEM) - <http://www.cedem.cl/cedem.htm>

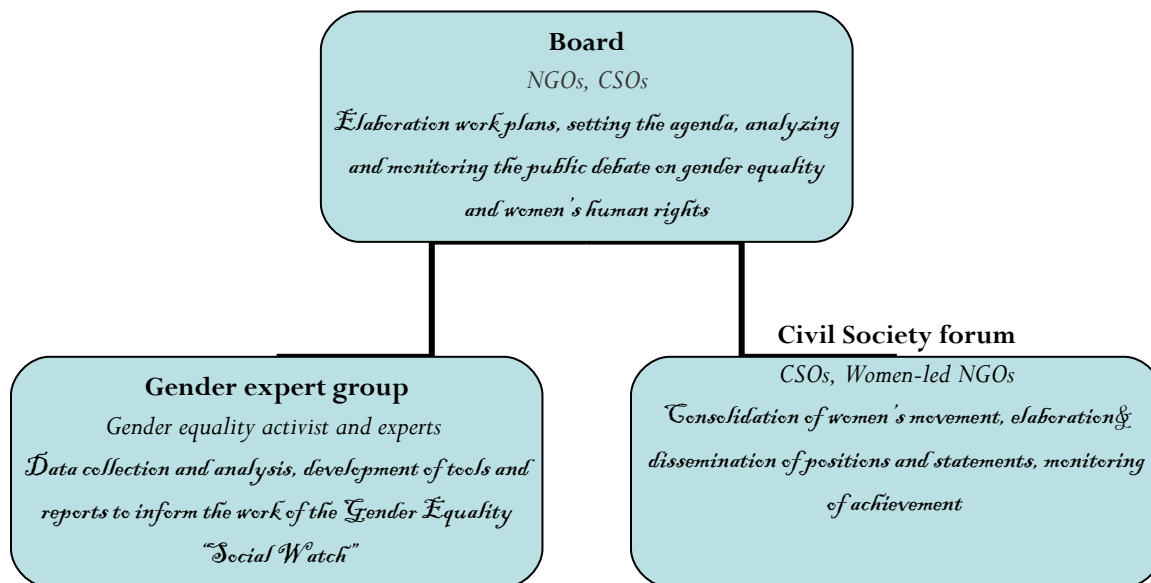
democratization, social cohesion and promotion of social and political participation of vulnerable groups. It emphasizes advocacy and empowerment of women’s organizations to impact policy-making and address the exclusion and gender discrimination that women have been enduring.

The Gender Equality Social Watch consists of gender experts from a variety of socio-economic sectors and 20 women’s NGOs and civil society organizations. It seeks to strengthen civil society participation and support democracy through:

- Monitoring of Bachelet’s Government’s commitments to gender equality and women’s rights;
- Monitoring of public debates in mass media;
- Capacity-building of women activists and leaders to enable increased participation in political and public debates in order to influence policy making.
- Awareness raising and promotion of gender equality through advocacy;
- Influencing public opinion and disseminating information on gender equality through virtual tools and mass media to the general public, women’s organizations and leaders, government officials, political parties. and social actors at a national and regional level;
- Sharing lessons with women leaders across the country and in Latin America.

The Gender Equality Social Watch, also known as the Observatory for Gender Equality, is constituted by a Board, a Coordinator and an Executive Secretary. The Board integrates NGOs and CSOs and meets every two months. In addition there is a Gender Experts Group (GEG) which meets five times a year and a Civil Society Forum (CSF) which meets twice a year.

The GESW has the following structure:



ii. PROJECT STRATEGY

a. Project approach and strategy

The Implementing Agency

The Center for Women Development Studies (CEDEM) is a women-led NGO, established in 1980, with objectives focused on contributing to the strengthening of democracy, fighting social exclusion, transforming gender relations; generating knowledge, encouraging citizens' participation in the public debate and promoting active and critical citizens' positions. It was originally created as a development organization called Program for Studies and Capacity Building of Rural and Indigenous Women. In 1984 its staff, along with other female activists, established the Center for Women's Studies (CEM), which after 1990 became known as the Center for Women Development Studies. It includes an interdisciplinary team of experts and focuses on institutional strengthening by encouraging implementation of projects addressing a broad scope of topics such as democratization, rural studies, employment, private life, sexuality, etc. CEDEM's mission is to contribute to social and cultural changes and democratization through a rights-based approach, social justice and sustainable development. CEDEM encourages women's participation in the public debate in a meaningful and critical way, generating knowledge and political action for the purposes of strengthening democracy, social justice, gender equality and the promotion of human rights.

The strategies

The project implementation is based on a set of strategies which include awareness raising, advocacy, lobbying, networking and coalition building, improving the capacity of women's organizations and female leaders to impact policy making and monitor the government's accountability in implementing gender related policies. CEDEM has applied the following strategies to the project implementation:

- Articulation of political and social actions as main axes for institutional development through a rights-based approach which seeks to encourage the capacity building and civic control;
- Encouraging integration of young leaders and professionals and their development and capacity building;
- Maintaining work relationships with social organizations, networking, coalition-building at national, regional and international levels, focusing on establishing horizontal relations with particular onus on issues of identity, autonomy, and transparency;
- Promotion of cultural initiatives in the public space, as well as awareness raising on diversity and plurality;
- Engaging with government institutions in order to acquire knowledge, contribute and influence the development and implementation of public policies and the design of tools and indicators for public monitoring and assessment;
- Networking with independent academic centers and universities to achieve political impact, broaden knowledge and promote the research of social and humanitarian issues related to the professional capacity building;
- Dissemination of the results of activities through publications, electronic media, political communications, and participation in the workshops, congresses, etc.



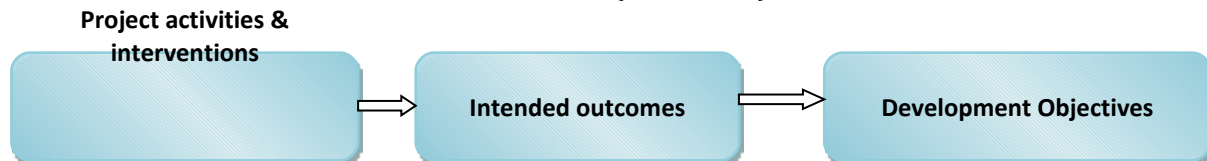
CEDEM was established in 1980 by an interdisciplinary team of experts; its main objective is strengthening of democracy, fighting social exclusion, transforming gender relations; generating knowledge, participation in public debate, and promotion of active and critical citizen's position.

CEDEM

CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS
PARA EL
DESARROLLO
DE LA
MUJER

b. Logical framework

The logical impact diagram that follows is based on the project logic as set out in the project document. The framework involves three distinct (immediate) outcomes.



1.1. The Council of the Observatory met 12 times, elaborated the annual working plan, organized discussions on the gender-related political agenda and all relevant issues, promoted new alliances and networks at the national and regional level

1.2. Increasing the number of women's organizations integrated in the "map of organizations" in the website and ensuring their participation in the debates

1.3. The Observatory follows and participates in public debates related to women's rights and gender equality.

1.4. The Observatory operates through the website www.observatorionegeneroyequidad.cl Twenty one virtual fora have been organized through the website between November 2008 and

Gender Equality Social Watch established to monitor and measure performance of key issues in gender and social equality agendas

Women leaders –rural, indigenous and urban - empowered and trained on the substantive debate and citizen control from a gender and social justice perspective.

Public debates on gender equality and gender-sensitive policymaking monitored

Website strengthened and used by national women's organizations, NGOs, women candidates/ legislators, policy makers and broader public as a tool for advocacy and public debate on gender issues as well as a platform

Strengthening women's participation through monitoring and assessing gender equality policy-making, as well as raising awareness, and encouraging the public debate in the mass media on all aspects of gender

January 2011

1.5. Developing new innovative virtual tools for dissemination of information – Internet, YouTube, Facebook, and Vimeo.

1.6. Communication strategy developed targeting the media - ensuring an opening for women's organizations to advocate for gender equality

1.7. Biannual Civil Society Forum (CSF) organized to articulate and consolidate gender equality messages

1.8. Identification of experts in different areas to constitute a Gender Experts Group.

1.9. Participation by the Observatory team in activities aimed to strengthen gender equality organized by women in the political parties and women's movement.

1.10. Organization of an Annual Public Evaluation Seminar on the advancements in the gender agenda.

2.1. Elaboration of a monthly Newsletter with articles and interviews to be distributed to the media, authorities, social and political leaders

3.1. Latin American women leaders use and evaluate positively the Observatory website.

3.2. The Observatory Newsletter circulates in several women's electronic networks: Articulación Feminista Marcosur, Mujeres en Igualdad, REPEM, and Feminists Studies.

3.3. Substantive participation of GESW in regional networks & initiatives strengthen gender equality in Latin American women's movement

for wider dissemination of **mainstreaming** information.

New and innovative virtual tools - using new media - developed to facilitate debate and discussion by and among organizations and to disseminate information.

Communications strategy designed and targeted at traditional media to advocate for gender equality and to influence public opinion.

Civil Society Fora organized to generate discussion among women & other social leaders and further articulate and consolidate women's messages.

Gender Experts evaluate gender public policies and the situation of women's rights.

Substantive Observatory team participation in local and national networks and initiatives strengthen gender equality in political parties and Chilean women's movement.

Annual Public Evaluation Seminars held and attended by diverse and key stakeholders to review progress & challenges in gender equality agenda.

Monthly newsletter developed and disseminated to wide range of stakeholders: media, government, and social and political leaders.

Latin American leaders informed of the Chilean experience, and learning lessons for actions in their countries

The Observatory articles and reports reproduced and disseminated in Latin American women's electronic networks.

The Observatory team participates in the Latin American women's movement.

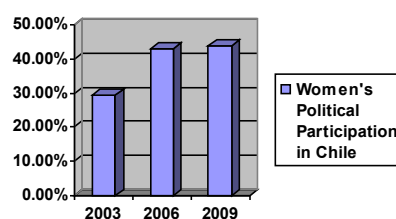
iii. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation is based on a set of evaluation questions designed in compliance with UNDEF evaluation guidelines and covering the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability as well as the issue of UNDEF and UN Women value added. The Evaluation Questions and related sub-questions are presented in Annex 1.

a. Relevance

The project focuses on issues which are central to the mandate of UNDEF and UN Women, such as civil society strengthening, encouraging citizens' participation in the political and public life, and women's empowerment. In view of this fact, most of the project activities focused on awareness raising, capacity building, advocacy and networking and were implemented as envisaged in the logical framework.

The project's goal to encourage women's leadership and strengthen women's organizations in order to participate in public debates and influence the political agenda through government accountability was implemented through the Observatory on Gender Equality². The Observatory has been active for over 4 years and has substantially contributed to giving visibility and voice to women leaders from different social strata in Chile, including indigenous and marginalized women. There was advancement in women's political participation and access to power, as expressed by the Index of Fulfilled Commitments (ICC³). The Index measures citizenship participation and access to power and shows an increase in women's political participation, which is a step towards achieving gender equity in the political and public realm. Thus, the ICC shows that women's participation in 2003 was 29.6%, in 2006 - 43.2%, and in 2009 - 44.2%. These figures reflect the impact of President Michelle Bachelet's policies with respect to gender equality.



The project implementation also contributed significantly to awareness raising on role of women as political and social leaders and decision-makers, and generally on the need to mainstream gender equality in public policies at national level. The project activities, related to lobbying and advocacy on women's political participation have had an impact on the election debates, and have resulted in inclusion of more women in the parties' lists.

² Observatorio Genero y Equidad en Chile - <http://www.observatoriongeneroyequidad.cl/>

³ ICC - índice de compromiso cumplido, Chile, 1995-2000. ICC is an accountability mechanism, developed by the Santiago-based *Grupo Iniciativa Mujeres* a group of 12 NGOs and research institutions. ICC is applied in Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay, and is supported by UNIFEM. ICC measures the progress and implementation of national laws and international conventions that guarantee greater equality to women, political participation, and leadership.

The government of Michelle Bachelet played a pivotal role as it was based on the principles of gender equality and zero tolerance to gender discrimination. During her term of office several laws aiming at the advancement of women were adopted. The Observatory on Gender Equality not only monitored the legislative process related to their adoption but also actively participated in the discussion of some of the drafts such as the law on Information, Counselling and medical benefits in fertility regulation⁴ adopted in 2009. In 2010 the Observatory also actively participated in the discussions of the draft law on “working from home and tele-employment⁵”, which affects women’s employment and in the debate on the extension of maternity leave.

b. Effectiveness

The overarching objective of the project was to enhance women’s participation and leadership by influencing government policies on gender equality and monitoring the implementation of government’s commitments to the advancement of women’s rights. To this end, all project’s interventions are implemented through launching and operating the Gender Equality Observatory. The Observatory has been functional for over 4 years and has received recognition among women’s organizations, CSOs, social and political leaders and government authorities. The Observatory’s website has multiple functions: to facilitate coordination of women’s organizations in Chile and Latin America; to announce activities held in Chile and the region; to provide resources for actions - documents, brochures, statistics, pertinent links; to foster debate on gender equality and non-discrimination; to disseminate other citizens’ actions such as campaigns, monitoring efforts; and to enhance the knowledge and women’s participation at the local and regional level.

By December 2009 the Observatory website had 600 visitors per day; between in January 2010 and January 2011 – the average number of visitors increased to 663 per day. The electronic newsletter, which is distributed directly via the Observatory website, was sent out to over 10,000 subscribers, mostly women. The Observatory is followed by 2,640 people in Twitter, including by women parliamentarians, and political leaders. In Facebook, the Observatory page has 636 friends and 970 people participate in the Observatory group. 68% of all visitors are domestic and 32% are from 57 countries; among them the website is most frequently visited from Mexico, Colombia, Spain and Ecuador.

Furthermore, the Observatory is perceived as an information source, a forum for discussions, and a place to meet and find the opinions of women leaders and political leaders on the whole spectrum of gender equality issues. The Observatory is recognized by the Ministry of Women, by parliamentarians and is often invited by the media to provide comments and share opinions on relevant issues of the women’s agenda. The Observatory has proved its role as an instrument for the mobilization women’s movements – e.g. by supporting the public reaction against Constitutional Court ban on the distribution of emergency contraception or in support of women’s organizations after the destructive earthquake that hit Chile on 27 February 2010.

⁴ <http://www.observatoriongeneroyequidad.cl/index.php/noticias-mainmenu-2/18-noticias/1743-sesie-la-comisie-salud-del-senado>

⁵ <http://www.observatoriongeneroyequidad.cl/index.php/noticias-mainmenu-2/18-noticias/3409-oge-en-discusi-el-proy-sobre-teletrabajo>



CEDEM - Capacity building workshop

The Observatory has also played an important role in networking and connecting women's organizations in Chile and Latin America. Its mailing list includes: 516 organizations, 375 women's organizations and NGOs, 90 other CSOs, 80 ethnic groups organizations, 170 labor unions, 15 university student federations and 264 political women leaders. These entities are registered in the "map of organizations" created by the project, which as of 2010 includes 201 Chilean organizations and 105 organizations from abroad, mostly from Latin America. The Observatory also organized various fora, including 21 virtual debates, for female leaders of social organizations throughout the country, including rural and indigenous groups, union leaders and youth organizations.

Along with other civil society organizations, the Observatory has actively lobbied legislators from the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate with regard to matters related to pension reform, sexual and reproductive rights, education and balanced political participation of women and men. During the Parliament review of the draft law on *Information, Counselling and Access to Contraception*, the Observatory broadcasted the proceedings via Twitter, lobbied legislators by sending in letters, and participated in the consultative commissions. It also lobbied the Chamber of Deputies Commission on Labour during the discussion of the bill on *Home working and Teleworking*. The Observatory played an important role in defending the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which according to the conservative government's proposal was supposed to be integrated in the Ministry of Social Development, thus reducing its powers and authority to define gender mainstreaming policies. The mobilization of the women's movement, along with political and parliamentary leaders, resulted in the government preserving the status and powers of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The Observatory perceives the Internet as well as virtual social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Vimeo as tools for political action and gender mainstreaming. Similarly, the Observatory used a specifically created blog, called *Women of Knowledge and Action*⁶, to broaden the democratic access to information and encourage in-depth discussion before the 2008 Municipal elections. The blog disseminated articles on gender and local governance, links to municipal

⁶ Mujeres de Saberes y Haceres), (<http://www.observatoriogeneroyliderazgo.cl/blog/?tag=municipales>

governments, useful tools and a manual on capacity building in politics. For the parliamentary and presidential election of 2009 the blog presented the four presidential candidates' program proposals for women and gender equality, along with articles on women's participation and democratization. In October 2009 the blog reflected the presidential candidates' discussion and signing of the *Presidential commitments to women*, which is the first event of this kind in Chile. After Bachelet's government the Observatory organized several campaigns to monitor and criticize decisions affecting women's rights through Twitter and Facebook.

The project's objective of advocating for gender equality encompassed communication strategies which targeted the media. The Observatory covered a wide-spectrum of women's rights issues and had 122 appearances in 64 media, where women's political participation in the municipal and parliamentary elections was the preferred topic. In this respect, the Observatory organized 2 public events which had good coverage: the seminar *Gender in Power? Michelle Bachelet's Chile* and the forum *Presidential Candidates and Their Commitments to Women*.

The Observatory organized several events with the participation of former President Michelle Bachelet. In June 2010, in collaboration with the NGO SUR, the seminar *Women and Earthquake: Building Citizenship* took place. In January 2011 a civil society forum was held, in the context of the seminar *Building Equality? 20 years of gender public policies*. In 7 September 2010 along with the Dialogue Foundation, presided by the former President Michelle Bachelet, the Observatory organized a debate, entitled *Women workers rights and the extension of the maternal post-natal leave* with labour union leaders to discuss the proposed extension of maternity leave that modified workers' rights.

Nevertheless, the project down-scaled or altered some of the originally envisaged objectives. The objective to strengthen Latin American women's networks has not been implemented as originally designed due to the fact that the project focused mostly on the target population in Chile and had to mitigate challenges within the country. It should be noted that the Observatory website emphasizes topics pertinent to the domestic women's agenda and pays less attention to the women's movements and events taking place in other Latin American countries, despite the fact that the project was designed as a "Regional" rather than "Country" type of project. Nevertheless the Observatory website is visited on a daily basis from women from all Latin American countries; the most frequent visits are from Mexico, Colombia and Equator and the feedback is predominantly positive and encouraging.



One of the unexpected results of the project implementation was the interest of former President Michelle Bachelet to participate in the Observatory after completing her presidential term. The collaboration and partnership with the Dialogue Foundation, created by her, is a recognition of the contribution made by the Observatory and its role in mobilizing the civil society in Chile.

In 2011, similarly to other countries in the world, the civil society in Chile "woke up". There was an "explosion" of social movements, the citizens demanded constitutional changes, a more representative parliament, and a government able to listen to the needs of the citizens.

Silvia Lilian Ferro, Argentina:

"I work as an advisor to the Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Santa Fe where we are launching gender equality institutions... I'm really interested in learning more about the Observatory, and as a historian I am curious about the interesting electoral process you are living. Many greetings."

Trinidad TERRAZAS, Mexico:

"Hello! Fortunately we women became aware of the importance we have in the world's order and we are putting hands on it. The world needs the balance of both genders to keep turning to justice, peace and equality. In Mexico, we walk upright and with dignity, repudiating the toxic machismo that has done much damage to both sexes. The machismo erodes the most intimate fibers of the entire society and prevents women's advancement. We are going through all that, and it is such as painful work. A warm hug to all women in the world!"

Patricia Young, Argentina:

"Greetings from the city of Hurlingham, Rep. Argentina to our dear struggle partners, we want to keep in touch with you to exchange ideas and share experiences of our daily heroic battles, trying to eradicate, obsolete mandates, inheritance not desired of a macho mankind. Go ahead, you can."

Challenges

The project implementation encountered a series of difficulties, which prompted a delay in some of the activities in 2010 and resulted in a 4-month no-cost extension. The implementing agency, CEDEM, outlines the following challenges:

- The 2010 Earthquake - on 27 February 2010 a powerful 8.8-magnituded earthquake hit central Chile, affecting 6 of 15 regions. The destructive earthquake slowed down some of the project activities or shifted the focus to the role of women in natural disasters and humanitarian crisis.
- Elections and shift of the political perspectives – the 2008 local elections and especially the 2009 Congress and Presidential elections affected negatively the project activities since they brought into power a right-wing government following 20 years of progressive governments, which had proved beneficial for the CSOs and particularly for the women's movement.
- The delay in the second instalment of the project funding, accompanied by deterioration of the US dollar exchange rate also impacted the project implementation by delaying some project activities.
- Lack of coordination of the Chilean women's movement, weakness and invisibility of women's organizations, and the absence of independent women's voices in the public debate also represented challenges for the project implementation.

Good practices

In its 4 years of existence the Observatory has become be an effective tool for advocating for women's rights, influencing gender-related policies, and empowering women's leaders and women's organizations. As a result of the project's contribution to Chilean women's advancement, including the Observatory's work on the website and newsletter, Radio Tierra⁷ invited the Observatory to develop a weekly radio program, which was called *Zoom Lens*. The radio programme, which started in June 2010, has become a forum for discussion, monitoring and evaluation for CSOs on the whole spectrum of gender equality topics. The radio programme is broadcasted every Friday and through its online signal can be downloaded as a podcast on the Observatory's website.

The project achievements were highly praised by the women's NGOs and Chilean civil society. In this respect, the Observatory was recognized by the former President Michelle Bachelet, who after the end of her presidential term often participated in the Observatory's activities. In addition, the Observatory successfully collaborated with the Dialogue Foundation who acknowledged the project's contribution and its impact on the civil society.

After the 2010 Earthquake, when the debate on the role of women in disaster relief intensified, the Observatory was invited to present a proposal to work with women from the five regions most affected by the earthquake and strengthen their capacity to influence public responses in the reconstruction.

⁷ www.radiotierra.cl

The project's most significant contribution is related to enhancing the visibility of women leaders and women's organizations, strengthening their voices in. The Observatory website has become a forum for discussion of women's issues, a social watch for monitoring the advancement of gender equality at national and regional level, as evidenced by the number of visits. In addition, the Observatory's communication and partnership with traditional and alternative media has resulted in publications of various articles and dissemination of information on women's rights. The Observatory's successful application of information and communication technology for the benefit of gender equality and society's democratization has been acknowledged by the government, the parliament, the media and women's organizations.

c. Efficiency

Work relationships

The Observatory collaborated with many NGOs and other government and CSO organizations in order to enhance the coordination between different institutions for the benefit of gender equality and empowerment. In order to expand the impact and access to women's organizations and government institutions and to reduce expenses, the project adopted a strategy of establishing alliances with institutions that contributed with different types of resources. They partnered with the following organizations: the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung office in Chile, the Salvador Allende Foundation, the University Academy for Christian Humanism, the Dialogue Foundation and the NGO SUR. In addition, collaboration with the women's NGO La Morada, which operates Radio Tierra, has resulted in a weekly radio program, called *Zoom Lens*, which starting in June 2010.



CEDEM Capacity Building Workshop

Delays and changes

The initial project design envisaged a group of gender experts, along with the Council, which was supposed to advise Observatory on gender-related interventions and provide a follow-up evaluation on gender equality and social justice policies. Nevertheless, the challenges encountered during the project implementation and the situation analysis shifted the emphasis from expert analysis of policies and plans to media-oriented actions. Initially, the project design acknowledged

the role of the media, but it focused on expert analyses and recommendations. Yet the monitoring and analysis of the gender policies revealed that the largest deficit was in the area of women's leadership and role in public life. Thus project activities were shifted towards awareness raising and increasing women's visibility through traditional and electronic media; a change that justifies the alteration in the project design. The change also required prioritizing the Observatory web site, the media plan and the Newsletter publication.

This change reflects the implementing agency's flexibility and capacity to respond to the civil society's needs in a specific political and cultural environment, yielding positive results. The change allowed the Observatory to become a forum for debate and analysis, where women discuss joint actions, express opinions, share experiences, and mobilize efforts for the benefit of common interests. In this sense, the Observatory is playing an important role in Chilean society, although not necessarily the one envisaged in the initial project design.

The implementing agency, CEDEM, also shifted the emphasis of the project implementation from regional to domestically oriented activities. One of the project's objectives envisaged strengthening regional networks and initiatives related to gender equality in Latin America; however the project focused mostly on fostering the domestic women's movement. Most of the project's activities and resources were directed at interventions in Chile. Networking and communications with women's organizations were mostly online and the emphasis was on information exchange and sharing experiences. In this respect, the project was down-scaled from regional to national dimension. Yet, it has to be specified that the Observatory website and the Newsletter included updates on events, organized by women's organizations in Latin American, and gender experts from the region participated as panellists in the project's seminars.

Some of the project activities experienced delays due to various challenges including the 2010 Earthquake, the election of a right-wing government and subsequent change of political perspective, as well as the delay in the second instalment of the project funding, and the fluctuation of the US dollar exchange rate. As a result of the delay in the project activities, the implementing agency requested a 4-month no-cost extension, which was approved by UNDEF in 2010.

d. Impact

The project beneficiaries are women in decision making positions, women's organizations, including rural, ethnic groups, union leaders, vulnerable urban populations and youth organizations. The project also envisaged strengthening women's organizations in Latin America, yet its interventions on regional level were limited to its online resources – exchange of information and sharing good practices related to gender equality and advancing women's rights. In addition, the project outreach has surpassed the original expectations in quantitative and qualitative terms. The Observatory website was visited by more than 600 people per day, and the Newsletter reached over 10,000 subscribers. Furthermore, the project activities encompassed lobbying parliamentarians for the adoption of gender-sensitive legislation, advocacy campaigns for the protection of women's rights and preservation of gender equality machineries, such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs, reaffirming the role of women in the disaster relief after the destructive 2010 Earthquake in Chile, encouraging women's political participation, and fostering civil society in pursuit of democratic values in Chile.

The project has achieved most of its objectives and has influenced gender equality policy making through mobilizing the resources of women's networks. The Observatory, its website, Newsletter, and radio program have become valuable assets to the women's movement in Chile, as well as a powerful tool for political action and public outreach at national level. On the other hand, the

project down-scaling from regional to national level is related to relative curbing of the project impact in Latin America for the benefit of prioritized Chilean women's agenda.

The project's achievements are significant – from influencing authorities, to expanding the capacity of the Observatory to convene gender-related public activities for a huge number of people, and to strengthening the coordination and partnership among the women organizations. Nevertheless, the Observatory's work is part of a broader women's movement and its contribution cannot be viewed as isolated or unrelated to the contributions of the CSOs. In this respect, the project's contribution is directly related and has to be viewed in the context of gender-related achievements during President Bachelet's term in office. To enhance the project's impact the implementing agency has to be advised to disseminate the lessons learned from the project throughout women's groups in the region in order to impact women's NGOs throughout Latin America.

e. Sustainability

The project continuity will be ensured by the Observatory website and the newsletter, as well as the *Zoom Lens* radio programme, which promote women's rights and women's participation. The Observatory, which was created four years ago with the support of UNIFEM and Oxfam, is recognized by the women's organizations, the civil society, and the government bodies in Chile as a platform for discussions and citizen's interventions for the advancement of women. Yet, it should be noted that beyond project's lifetime and without UNDEF's funding, CEDEM might find it challenging to maintain and constantly update the website and the Newsletter. Fortunately, the implementing agency, CEDEM, has a track record of gender equality achievements and remains very active and committed to women's empowerment. It is to be expected that CEDEM will continue mobilizing resources and fund-raising to ensure the Observatory's sustainability.

Furthermore, the Observatory has remained functional beyond President Bachelet's term in office, March 2010, and even beyond project's lifetime – January 2011. Thus, the Observatory continues to provide women's organizations and women community leaders with a strong tool for monitoring of crucial gender equality and social issues. The long-term impact of the project include empowerment of women leaders and women's NGOs, fostering of democratic processes, strengthening of women's organizations networks and coordination for common actions, increasing the visibility of different social actors and women leaders' voices, and dissemination of women's rights information. Currently, the website is functional and is run by CEDEM as part of its institutional activities.

f. UNDEF and UN Women value-added

The project clearly fits into UNDEF's and UN Women's mandates through its focus on building the capacity of CSOs and women's organizations to monitor government's commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment, and pursuing the democratic processes. The Observatory on Gender Equality represents a significant contribution to the promotion of women's rights, citizens' participation, and democratic values in Chile. The project activities encompass elements of good governance and gender equality, which were incorporated in the projects' activities. The project's interventions address topics such as gender inequalities, government's accountability, gender-related public policies, women's political participation, and women's rights. The good practices and lessons learned from this project will be informative and applicable to future programs dealing with cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and democratization. The great interest of the Observatory website visitors, as well as the acknowledgement of the project's contribution by the government institutions and the civil society is indicative of the need to expand this work in Chile and across the region.

iv. CONCLUSIONS

The project *The Gender Equality "Social Watch": Following Bachelet's Government* implemented in Chile has substantially contributed to strengthening women's visibility and leadership through awareness raising, capacity building, and mobilizing women's organizations and CSOs for the advancement of women's rights and democratic values. The implemented activities have had a significant impact on the project beneficiaries as the good practices and skills acquired during the project lifetime will be translated into further citizen's commitment and demand for good governance practices, and further women's organizations impact on gender policy making and women's participation. Furthermore, the project outreach has surpassed the number of beneficiaries envisaged initially by the implementing agency. The project clearly demonstrates the need for future interventions seeking to advance women's role on tracking government's accountability to women's rights and democratic values in Chile.