



**POST PROJECT EVALUATION
FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND**

EVALUATION REPORT

**UDF-16-738-PAR
“Improving Access to Public Information in Paraguay”**

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluation team. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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Project Area

This project covered seven Departments in Paraguay as detailed under section II of this report (see figure 1).



Figure 1 - Departments targeted by the project

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I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The overall assessment of the project “*Improving access to public information in Paraguay*” is very positive.

The initiative design was remarkably clear and consistent. This allowed for very clear and comprehensive progress reports. Another great strength of the design was the involvement of partners since the conceptualization of the initiative.

Although the project fully addressed the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries in nature, it was not adequate with respect to its scope. A thorough gender analysis would have benefited the impact of the project.

The project was perfectly aligned with the mandate of IDEA and its partners; as well as with the strategic lines of the UN in Paraguay and with the orientations issued publicly by the Government.

The level of completion of the planned activities was very high and the quality of the outputs was very high.

Under the two described outcomes, the project has managed to motivate and train key populations on the use of the Access to Information (ATI) law. Also, the project is likely to have a ripple effect that will be difficult to assess.

This project also has contributed to the use of the Law by committed journalists that have had enormous impact at the national level. Two paradigmatic examples of this are a) publications of sworn statements of the assets of public authorities ruled by the Supreme Court in June 2020, and b) the public scrutiny of the government’s management of the funds allocated to combat COVID-19.

The level of project efficiency can be considered very high. An important factor for this was the commitment and professional calibre of the project coordinators and other members of IDEA, and partners.

The 15% ceiling dedicated to staff placed by UNDEF could discourage the inclusion of certain highly effective approaches in the project logic, such as strategic litigation, that require full time highly specialized personnel.

IDEA and its partners continue to be very committed in promoting the right to public information in Paraguay. Therefore, the sustainability of the process is guaranteed.

However, the results that IDEA and its partners have achieved in terms of access to public information are all reversible. The progress that has been made is under constant threat and if civil society does not continue to exert pressure it could easily lead them to be in jeopardy.

Recommendations

For IDEA –

1. To complement the logical framework approach, it would be advisable for the organization to also work with the ToC.
2. Gender implications should be investigated from a more substantive point of view.
3. To design a communication strategy to manage the social capital engaged through the project.
4. The geographical selection criteria of future initiatives should be more related to the internal logic of the project.
5. To be more careful with the inclusion of the donor's logo in all materials relating to the project.

For UNDEF

6. Consider raising the 15% personnel ceiling to facilitate the inclusion of strategies that require highly qualified full-time personnel such as strategic litigation.

Main lessons

It is essential to have a monitoring system that unravels the intangibles and the sometimes-subtle connections that occur in complex realities. **Quantitative indicators are not enough** to understand how the project contributes to transformations.

It is essential that the organization implementing the project is responsible for **linking the intervention with the organization's** upstream and downstream work.

It is extremely important contextualizing all strategies.

Better practices

The flow of information and decision making between all the organizations involved in the project has been excellent. One of the main factors for this to happen was that they were **involved from the conceptualization** of the project.

The quality of the products provided by the project has been one of its main strengths. This was closely linked to the **professional calibre** of both the authors of the publications and the training facilitators.

Both FOPEP and the Paraguayan Judges Association are **professional associations** with great legitimacy in their respective fields. Involving them in the convening of the workshops and dialogues was a great asset.

The **focal point system** to organise events helped to contextualize each event and empowered local organizations. Having the women as focal points helped to promote the presence of other professional women in the workshops.

II. THE PROJECT AND THE EVALUATION

The object of this final evaluation is the UNDEF funded project “*Improving access to public information in Paraguay*”.

As explained in the project document, at the time of the formulation of the project, in 2017, Paraguay was in the process of consolidating and building up the rights of democratic institutions. Following a decade of activism by local NGOs, the right of access to public information recognized in Article 28 of the Constitution was finally regulated by law in 2014¹. However, due to a weakness in education and a relatively low awareness about citizens' rights, the project identified the need for journalists (as key users of this law) and judges (as guarantors of the right regulated by it) to have a deeper understanding of this legal framework; how to use it, and how to enforce it.

To meet these challenges the present project sought to strengthen the effectiveness of the implementation of the Access to Information (ATI) law by increasing the public awareness of the law across the country (and not only in the capital city Asunción), and very particularly among journalists and judges.

To achieve its objectives the project clearly conceptualized two outcomes:

Outcome 1 - Increased use of the ATI law by journalists based in Paraguay's interior cities and towns, in articles and investigations related to misuse of public funds.

Outcome 2 - Increased quantity of relevant judicial decisions from Courts not based in Asunción that reaffirm ATI law effectiveness.

The project was implemented by IDEA, an NGO founded in 1996 to study and promote environmental law that gradually complemented this initial focus with a strong defence of the rights of access to information and citizen participation. Three other organizations were also involved in the implementation of the initiative in partnership with IDEA: *Foro de Periodistas Paraguayos* (FOPEP), the main journalists' organization of the country; *Centro de Defensa del Interés Público* (CENDIP), which is a public interest defence organization; and *Asociación de Jueces del Paraguay*, the Judges Association of Paraguay.

The implementation of the project took place during the 2018 and 2019 in seven departments of the country: Alto Paraguay, Alto Paraná, Asunción Central, Caazapá, Caaguazú, Guairá, e Itapúa. The total budget of the project was US\$110,000.

Evaluation methodology

This evaluation involved the **collective examination** and assessment of the project by stakeholders and beneficiaries. The evaluation framework was **people-centred**, whereby stakeholders and beneficiaries were the key actors of the evaluation process and not the mere objects of the evaluation. In addition, the evaluation was gender responsive. This

¹Law 5282/14 regulates the way a person can file a request of access to information to any public entity (the three branches of government, but also the other independent constitutional bodies, and departmental and municipal governments) and the proactive disclosure obligations these entities have.

meant **mainstreaming gender** throughout the course of the evaluation in compliance with the UNEG norms and standards².

This assessment was carried out at the height of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, UNDEF deemed it prudent to carry out the entire evaluation process remotely. To address the constraints this could potentially pose, the evaluation team together with the project management team analysed three parameters at the offset of the process: a) the **scope** of the project (rural /urban, national/locally focused); b) the **availability** of relevant **information remotely** (including the connectivity of key stakeholders) and; c) the national/**institutional context** (including aspects such as mobility of staff, institutional use of new technology, internet speed, etc.).

Considering these three parameters, it was concluded that the project could be evaluated remotely without reducing the quality of the process and the deliverables.

The evaluation followed a **six-step process**: (1) engaging project management and conducting a preliminary desk review; (2) describing the project and evaluation framework; (3) refining the evaluation framework and designing remote data collection tools; (4) gathering credible evidence; (5) consolidating data and writing the report; (6) sharing the draft report with the main users for feedback then finalization.

In answering the evaluation questions the evaluation team drew from **the best available evidence across a range of sources** such as: interviews, focus group discussions, a survey (adapted for mobile devices) sent to most project beneficiaries and an ample body of documents.

During the evaluation **50 people**; 27 men and 23 women were consulted (see Annex 3). 51 documents were reviewed which include: activity reports, progress reports, project documents, administrative reviews, multi-stakeholder strategies and third-party documentation (see Annex 2). The team also conducted more than 130 Internet searches in news, social networks and pages of different organizations including the transparency portal of the Government of Paraguay. Some of these have been cited in this report (see Annex 2).

The information collected throughout the evaluation process was systematically **compiled and codified in tables of evidence and analysed using triangulation techniques** to validate the findings. The evaluation used Quality Data Analysis (QDA) software ([Dedoose](#)) to support this process. Furthermore, the evaluator analysed available information and insights during a formal preliminary finding's session held with the project team on the 8th of September 2020.

This final report presents the main findings and gives answers to those questions based on evidence.

²<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The Theory of Change

“The donor may expect us to go to the sea, but in Paraguay there is no sea. We know the way to the sea and we definitely have reached a river”

(Project partner)

To address aspects such as the relevance, impact, or sustainability of the project it was important to reconstruct the implicit Theory of Change (ToC) that underlies this initiative (see figure 2). To do this, the evaluation team developed a first draft of a ToC that was then validated with the project team during the preliminary finding’s session.

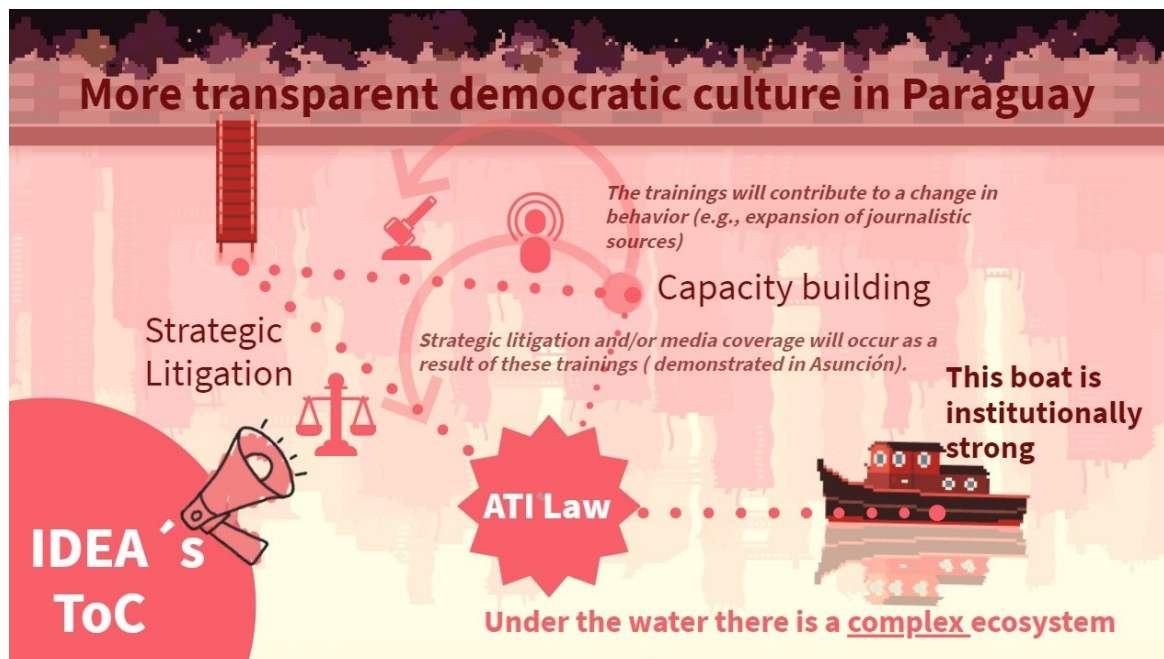


Figure 2 - The implicit ToC

Four important findings emerged from the reconstruction of this ToC:

The **first finding** of this analysis is that the project was clearly **embedded in a broader institutional ToC**.

In this institutional ToC, the motivational horizon was a **generational transformation "to make Paraguay's democratic culture more transparent"**. A generational change means that this type of objective will take decades of continuous effort to crystallize. All persons consulted during the evaluation agreed on this point.

IDEA aims to contribute to this generational change through two clear strategies: a) strategic litigations accompanied by media hype, which has demonstrated the potential to influence the country's public and political agenda; and b) capacitating key actors so that these litigations can take place (i.e., the judiciary and journalists - in a broad sense). It is in this last strategic line where this project was located.

It is important that the project was inserted into a broader institutional ToC because it enhanced its impact and it was key to the sustainability of the process, as explained in the corresponding chapters of this report.

The **second finding** concerned the assumptions of this ToC. Like all ToCs, there are several assumptions that underpin these strategies for change. Two of them were of particular relevance for understanding the dynamics of the project.

The first assumption is that strategic litigations with high media potential would emerge from the training offered through the project. It is important to note that this is an assumption that IDEA had already tested before. Indeed, there are litigations that are now producing a political earthquake in the country that emerged from IDEA's training on the ATI law in Asunción prior to this project (see the impact chapter).

The second important assumption was that this training (and subsequent follow-up) would suffice to elicit behavioural changes in participants. For example, after the training journalists would give up their professional inertia and would expand their sources of information by making use of the ATI law.

Both assumptions have proven to be true but only partially. This report unravels why this happened under the impact chapter.

The **third finding** was that there are **preconditions in this pathway to change** that are necessary and/or desirable for these strategies to be effective. The most important being the **institutional strengthening** of IDEA and partners. This is an essential prerequisite for them to undertake successful strategies to promote the ATI Law, including litigations, advocacy, media work or training.

During the evaluation it emerged clearly that IDEA and partners took this institutional strengthening into consideration in their work. However, this intermediate step was not reflected in the original design of the project. This report addresses this under the chapter on design and impact.

The **last finding** referred to the complex, and often uncondusive, context in which this ToC takes place. All sources consulted agreed that the objectives of this ToC often are in direct conflict with powerful political and economic interests, and with social and cultural values strongly rooted in Paraguayan society. This has produced a number of backlashes that affected the sustainability of the results.

Relevance – Why was this project needed?

The "Relevance" chapter analyses how appropriately the problems identified by the project and the activities that followed responded to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries and other key stakeholders; and how the project design met these needs.

The chapter is divided into three sections: **a) Design**, meaning how the planned activities and outputs adequately linked up and how/if they provided the best approach to achieve the project's outcomes; **b) Adequacy**, i.e. how the project addressed the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries. This is specifically the judiciary and the journalists in the targeted Departments; **c) Alignment**, this is how the project was clearly within the stakeholders' mandate, particularly IDEA (the implementing partner), and the partners, and other stakeholders like the UN.

Design

The analysis of project documents and monitoring reports indicated that the project design was **remarkably clear and consistent**. Notably, clear activities were formulated that allowed for monitoring what was being done, and impact indicators were formulated that allowed for the accountability for some of the project's achievements.

This permitted strong and comprehensive progress reports that were further enhanced by references to a variety of verification sources such as the press clippings, social networks citations, or court rulings.

Another great strength of the project design was the **involvement of FOPEP and CENDIP** since the conceptualization of the initiative. This early involvement helped the project to promote a sincere partnership between the different organizations and not a mere subcontracting of activities that could have led to working in silos in an uncoordinated manner.

Despite these strengths, the design suffered from some shortcomings that have affected some aspects of the project, most notably, the **capture and visibility of all its achievements**.

As already indicated in the description of the ToC, there were important prerequisites or **intermediate objectives that the project did not outline in its original design**, but in which very important achievements have been made. The most important of these intermediate objectives is the institutional strengthening of both IDEA and its three partners in this project: FOPEP, CENDIP, and the Association of Judges in Paraguay - see the impact chapter.

Although the original design formulated clear **impact indicators**, they were **not adequate** to understand if/how the project had contributed to the outcomes. For example, the impact indicator for outcome 1 was *"by the end of the project, at least 40% of the trained journalists from interior cities have published articles in the national and local media, using the ATI law"*. The project reported that by the end of the project the number of news items related to the ATI Law had increased. However, it is not clear if/how the training offered by the project had contributed to this increase.

Although there were no explicit indicators disaggregated by sex in the project design, the original project document contained a specific section called "gender strategy" that advocated for equal participation of women and men in project activities. Besides this

quantitative indicator on equal participation in the project activities, little was designed to ensure an adequate **gender mainstreaming**.

During the evaluation it became clear that the lack of inclusion of more substantive gender components in the project design was **not due to any ideological resistance by IDEA**. Rather, it had to do with a general view that corruption is a gender-neutral issue.

However, the documentary analysis conducted during the evaluation indicates that issues such as corruption do have multiple gender-related facets³. Rather than being gender-neutral, they are often gender-blind.

Adequacy

The project fully **addressed the needs and priorities** of targeted beneficiaries **in nature but not in scope**.

This means, first of all, that **the subject matter it addressed**, namely the promotion of the ATI law, was **entirely relevant** to contributing to a more transparent democratic culture in Paraguay. The evaluation also found that this line of action was not only adequate when the project was designed, but that it is still fully in force today (see the case of COVID-19 supplies under the impact chapter).

Being adequate in nature also means that **the population targeted by the project** (judges and journalists in the selected Departments) unanimously **recognized the need for training** on the ATI law, which was the main strategy envisaged in the project. Many argued that the reasons for this was that the Law was still relatively new and that very little training of this nature took place outside the capital; *"the first time that this type of workshop is coming here"* (project participant).

Although the project was totally adequate in nature it was not adequate with respect to its scope at three levels:

- **Customization** - Many have highlighted as a strength the way the training was adapted according to different audiences. For example, facilitators used different linguistic registers (more or less technical) for judges as opposed to local officials, and for traditional media correspondents as opposed to activist bloggers.

Although there were **adaptations in the methodology** of the training and how it was conducted, the **contents could have been more geared to the different profiles** that participated in the workshops to better ensure they could make use of the ATI law effectively. For example, the training participants who were consulted pointed out that how a Justice of the Peace may use the Law is not the same as how a Judge in the Supreme Court or a village lawyer might. This was also the case for how a correspondent from the daily media could use the Law, given the immediacy of the information s/he seeks from their sources as opposed to an investigative journalist.

³Género y Corrupción en América Latina ¿Hay alguna conexión?, Documento de Trabajo, Centro Regional para América Latina y el Caribe, Panamá, Dirección Regional para América Latina y el Caribe (DRALC), UNDP, Julio 2014

- **Geographical outreach** - it was not clear that the departments prioritized in the project were the most adequate, given the resources. Some of the people consulted suggested that the project could have used **criteria that were more in line with the internal logic of the intervention**. For example, the project could prioritize departments where IDEA already had a spearhead i.e., allies who were already familiar with the Law and its use, rather than Departments with a higher density of population.
- **Follow-up** - As indicated in the ToC chapter, the changes sought with this project are of a generational nature and clash with some social values rooted in Paraguayan idiosyncrasy. Therefore, a single training will not have the capacity to bring about change if it is not followed up with strong and sustained efforts. Although the project contemplated some **follow-up measures**, especially in the case of journalists, they were **not sufficient** to ensure a meaningful contribution to the objectives set.

Alignment

The evaluation found that the project was **perfectly aligned with the mandate of IDEA** and its partners. Its objectives were also **in line with** the strategic lines of the **UN** in Paraguay and with the Strategic orientations issued publicly by **the Government**.

IDEA has been involved in promoting ATI law for over a decade. Numerous testimonies and documents attest that they have indeed become a national reference in this field. Its strategies of capacitating key actors and sponsoring strategic litigations also precede this project, as can be seen, for example, through the analysis of court rulings prior to 2017⁴.

It has also been possible to confirm that both the objectives and the guidelines of the project were in line with the work of the partners. **FOPEP's** mandate is precisely the training of journalists, and this project allowed them (according to the testimony of its management) to expand the geographical coverage of this mandate, which was traditionally restricted to Asunción.

CENDIP has also been involved in similar issues to this project both before and after its implementation, as demonstrated by the many public campaigns the organization has led against political corruption in the country⁵.

Finally, the **Paraguayan Judges Association**, which came into the project at a later stage, also had its own strategic processes that were completely aligned with the internal logic of the project. For example, the organization was immersed at the time of the project in an important internal reflection about how the judiciary had to relate to civil society to make them more accountable, inclusive, and transparent. This process started with a historic convention of judges in October 2017⁶ where judges even reached out to sectors such as LGTBI which have traditionally been excluded in Paraguay.

⁴For example, in 2016, IDEA sponsored the appeal brought by Mrs. Mabel Rhenfelt against the command of the armed forces reference number 2016/715.

⁵For example, <https://www.abc.com.py/edicion-impresia/economia/instalacion-de-un-bar-en-la-estacion-central-fue-suspendida-por-la-seam-111769.html>

⁶<https://www.pj.gov.py/notas/14735-presentan-primera-convencion-nacional-de-jueces>), followed by the civil society dialogue in 2018/19 <http://www.ajp.org.py/archivo/Noticias%20562-conclusiones-extradadas-del-dilogo-por-la-justicia-entre-jueces-y-sociedad-civil.html>

The initiative was also perfectly in line with **UN strategies** in the country. In particular, it responded to the priorities detailed in point 1.2. of the UNDAF 2015-2019 "strengthening democracy and participation" under the first chapter dedicated to civil and political rights.

It is also important to note that although the central idea of the project (transparency) clashed with important political and economic interests, at least in theory, different governments in Paraguay have supported the promotion of the Law. It was under the mandate of Horacio Cartes (2013-2018) that the ATI law was approved and under the current government of Mario Abdo Benítez that steps have been taken to implement it, i.e., the transparency portal⁷.

⁷ https://informacionpublica.paraguay.gov.py/portal/#!/buscar_informacion#busqueda

Effectiveness –What was done?

The chapter on effectiveness analyses **what the project has done**; the extent to which it was able to carry out the activities that had been planned. It also unravels the **factors that hindered and facilitated** progress in the project's implementation.

Progress

In general, the level of completion of the planned activities was very high. Only result 2.3. was not carried out. However, to compensate, the amount of training for both judges and journalists exceeded those planned.

What follows is a summary of the activities carried out by the project under the different outputs, as well as the findings referred to the **quality** of each one of them.

These findings are the result of an exhaustive analysis of the project progress reports whose information has been triangulated with the documentation of the activities and the testimonies of the stakeholders.

Outcome 1: Increased use of the ATI law by journalists based in Paraguay's interior cities and towns, in articles and investigations related to misuse of public funds.

Production of 205 books to serve as training material for journalists

The **target was met** as set out in the project document. The manual has been widely praised by stakeholders who underlined its usefulness and the clarity of the book.

It has been also noted that these publications have been distributed to an expanded community of actors which not only includes journalists, but also amateur communicators and students of journalism.

10 training workshops for 200 journalists on the ATI right conducted.

The intended target was 10 training sessions for 200 journalists and the project **exceeded this target**. Training reached 250 journalists (40% women) in 14 training sessions.

The **convening process** would involve one person from FOPEP using her personal network to identify a focal point in each of the departments where training was organized. Then FOPEP and the focal point would have a discussion about who would be invited to the training session. The evaluation found that this process was very thorough; organizers sent invitations by email and then followed this up by calling people multiple times.

The project took effective but informal measures to **reach out to women**, for example the person from FOPEP tried to actively look for a woman as the focal point in each Department to help them organize the training. However, the **presence of women was irregular**. For example, there was one location (the

first training) where there were no women in the training session at all. This reflects the patriarchal reality of the media sector in Paraguay, yet the **project achieved a 40% participation of women**.

The training sessions managed to reach to **an eclectic audience** including national media correspondents, community radio personnel, amateur bloggers, and social activists. This was a good reflection of the reality of the media sector in the departments of Paraguay outside Asunción. One caveat here would be that around 40% of those surveyed said that **many people were left out of the training**. This suggests that the demand is still greater than what the project could offer (see chapter “adequacy”).

An aspect that participants were very pleased with was **the peer to peer approach** guaranteed by the involvement of FOPEP and CENDIP. Also, the hands-on methodology and the use of **highly contextualized dynamics** (terere⁸) that promoted an atmosphere of trust.

WhatsApp community created and individual follow up to provide assistance to journalists and to strengthen their training on the ATI law

It was confirmed that there were various WhatsApp groups formed with a total of 87 members. The WhatsApp groups **were active for a little while**, but they have subsequently waned.

There were two reasons identified as to why this WhatsApp group did not function as well as expected. Firstly, some participants perceived that contributing to a WhatsApp group was like speaking in public and they felt shy about it. Secondly, there was somewhat of a culture of distrust about sharing sensitive information in a public chat.

Outcome 2: Increased quantity of relevant judicial decisions from Courts not based in Asunción that reaffirm ATI law effectiveness

Production of 200 books to serve as reference material for judges.

It was confirmed that 200 manuals for judges were **printed and distributed** during the six dialogues with judges and judicial officers. Stakeholders viewed this publication as having a **very high quality** and credibility. There are two factors that contributed to this (even before opening the books): 1) the author of the publication was a renowned judge and journalist whose name carried a lot of weight; and 2) the publication was launched at the Supreme Court with the endorsement of the Minister of Justice himself.

As in the case of the handbooks for journalists, the evaluation found here too that the **demand for this publication exceeded the supply**. Several of the respondents expressed a desire to have more copies to distribute to their peers.

⁸Informal meeting organised around the "terere", the onomatopoeic voice that identifies a traditional type of cold *mate*.

Conduct 5 dialogues with 175 judges and judicial officers on the ATI right.

Six dialogues were organized reaching more than 300 people which **exceeded the planned target**. 90 of them were judges and 213 judicial officials and lawyers. Remarkably, more than **60% participants were women**. Although, the evaluation could not identify any specific strategy that caused this to happen (like positive discrimination). It was not therefore clear whether this occurred due to an intentional project strategy or not.

Judges and judicial personnel participated from all sectors, i.e. criminal judges, juvenile judges, and justices of the peace, among others. This ample outreach was warmly received as a positive feature. However, it also meant that the audience had **diverse interests and possibilities in applying the ATI law**, and some voices have indicated that perhaps the content of the sessions was not specific enough to their particular area of work (see “Adequacy”).

Of note here is the **involvement of the Association of Judges of Paraguay** which, according to all sources, was of great benefit to the development of the activities. Most notably, was their convening power among judges and for the legitimacy they brought to the project particularly before the judiciary, which is a demanding audience.

Another aspect highlighted by stakeholders was the **methodology** used by facilitators; combining theory and practice, and the professional calibre of the facilitators of the dialogues; including the IDEA team.

Community of knowledge created to share information and discuss regional and international judicial decisions and special reports.

People consulted during the evaluation thought this activity was highly relevant as there are Judges and judicial officers identified who were very committed to the cause of transparency, but they still lack the knowledge to take the ATI law forward. However, IDEA **did not manage to get the community of practice off the ground**.

Factors hindering and facilitating the progress

As **Table 1 summarizes**, the main factors identified that facilitated and hindered the implementation of project activities. I

<i>Facilitating factors</i>	<i>Hindering factors</i>
<i>The professional calibre of the facilitators was very high.</i>	<i>The media sector is precarious with a lot of volunteerism. This meant that the availability of both participants and facilitators was limited and sometimes</i>

	<i>erratic</i>
<i>The methodology combining theory and practice was highly contextualized</i>	<i>Often difficult to meaningfully involve journalists who were heavily influenced by political interests</i>
<i>The involvement of professional associations (FOPEP and the Association of Judges) in convening participants</i>	<i>Paraguay's high level of centralization makes it difficult to work in a sustained manner with other parts of the country outside the capital.</i>
<i>The alliances with local focal points to reach out to a wide audience</i>	<i>The interference of different interests that sometimes endangers the jobs and even the lives of journalists makes it difficult to establish safe places where professionals can express themselves freely. This has affected participation in WhatsApp groups</i>
<i>The brand of IDEA as a national reference in regards to the ATI law</i>	<i>The patriarchal society that permeates different sectors in Paraguay makes it difficult to ensure the participation of women</i>
<i>The international backing of UN</i>	<i>The educational level of the judiciary meant that the project had to be doubly thorough in order to convey information convincingly to such a demanding audience</i>

Impact – So, what was achieved?

The effectiveness chapter of this report has analysed what was done. This impact chapter addresses **what was achieved**. In other words, it analyses how change happened as a result of (or as a contribution of) the project **under its two outcomes**.

As already indicated in the launch note of this evaluation (see Annex 1 – evaluation questions), the aim of this chapter was assessing the impact of the project against the original outcome targets. However, as stated in the design chapter, the project has contributed to outcome areas not stated in the original project document; most notably the institutional strengthening of IDEA and its partners. This report has also uncovered this outcome area.

As a general consideration it is important to emphasize that under the two outcomes, **the project has managed to motivate and train key populations** (judges, judiciary officials and communicators in the targeted departments) **on the use of the ATI law**. In fact, 85% of the survey respondents agreed or fully agreed that *“the workshop or dialogue contributed to the acquisition of technical skills related to the use of the Access to Information Law”*. This was also consistent with the feedback documented during the interviews.

This knowledge and skills **have already led to some fruitful results**. For example, 52% of the respondents declared that they have already *“been able to apply the teachings of the workshops/dialogues to use the ATI law”*. Also, during the interviews, specific examples were collected of how participants in the project training have made use of what they learned. This report unpacks some illustrative examples under each outcome.

It is also important to note that the project is likely to have **a ripple effect** that will be difficult to assess. For example, 76% of surveyed participants pointed out that *“What I learned in the workshop will be useful for future application”*. In fact, during the evaluation it was possible to document results that began to take shape in the ATI law training that IDEA developed in Asuncion under previous projects.

OUTCOME 1 – Increased use of the ATI law by journalists based in Paraguay’s interior cities and towns, in articles and investigations related to misuse of public funds.

Original target - By the end of the project, at least 40% of the trained journalists from interior cities have published articles in the national and local media, using the ATI law.

The final progress report of the project mentions a **significant increase in the number of media pieces in Paraguay** (in the traditional media and/or social networks) that either refer to the ATI law or that use the mechanisms offered by the Law (i.e. the transparency portal⁹) as a source to elaborate media pieces.

The evaluation has been able to certify this tendency. In fact, complementary analyses reveal that traffic peaks on Google Paraguay about the ATI law become more and more

⁹<https://informacionpublica.paraguay.gov.py/portal/>

frequent throughout the life of the project (see figure 3). This indicates an increase in interest on the part of the general population that can be attributed to a greater presence of the Law in the country's media.



Figure 3 - Google trends on ATI law in Paraguay

Another indicator of the increased use of the Law is the increase in the number of consultations received by the Official Transparency Portal¹⁰. An analysis of the portal's statistics indicates that the number of consultations rose by 67% from 2017 to 2019. Although there is no exact correlation between this data and the number of journalists who used the portal, it can be inferred that this increase is due in part to greater information available about the ATI law and how to use it.

A closer look at the statistics shows that in six of the project's seven targeted regions this growing trend was equal to or greater than the country average. In fact, in Departments such as Caguazú or Cazapaa, the increase in the number of consultations was more than 2.5 times greater than the country average. It is also interesting to note that it is the departments of the interior (and not the capital city of Asunción) where the increase is greater (see figure 4).

¹⁰ *ibid.*

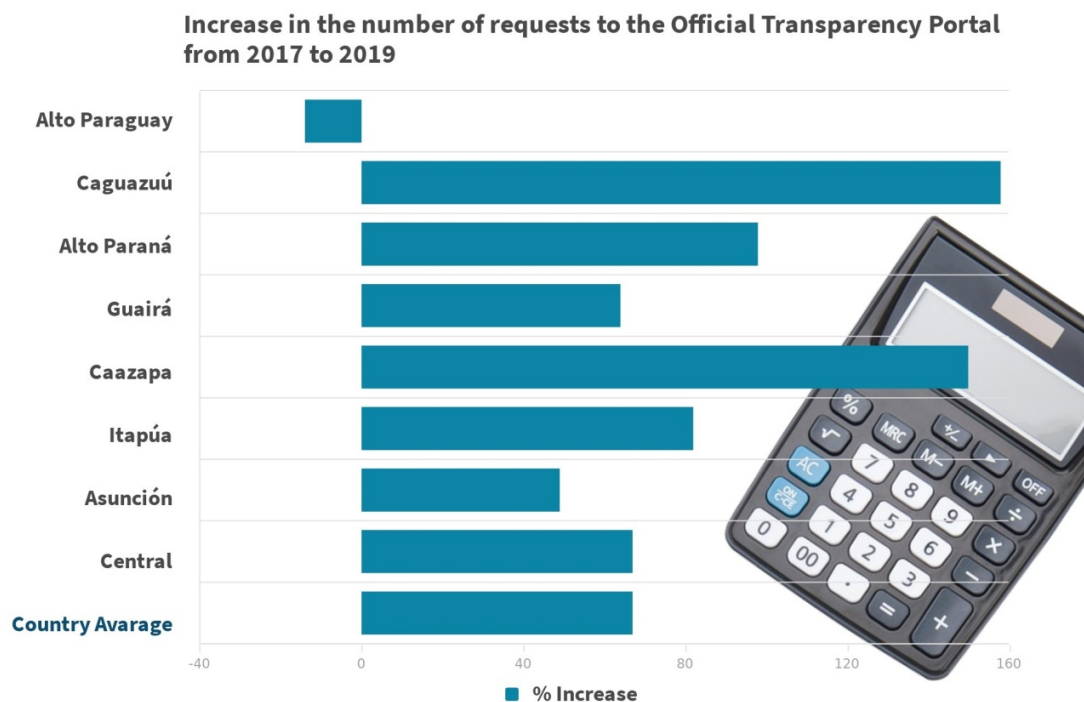


Figure 4 - Number of requests to the ATI Portal

However, this quantitative data alone, while promising, **does not shed a light on how IDEA in general and the project in particular have contributed to increased use of the Law**, and in turn how that increase has contributed to a more transparent democracy.

To try to **join these dots**, a **qualitative analysis** on specific cases/scenarios is needed that makes visible the intermediate steps on the road to change and how these steps are interrelated. The original project design and MEL tools, following a logical framework approach, as opposed to a ToC approach which does not facilitate this type of learning.

The case of Oviedopress.com in Caguazú is a good illustrative example on how to unravel the ways in which this project in particular and IDEA in general have contributed to the Paraguayan press's use of the ATI law.

□ Zooming in – Oviedopress.com

Oviedopress.com was founded in 2012 as a digital independent media with a regional scope (Caguazú) that has prioritized an **investigative journalism approach** since its inception.

In 2014, representatives of Oviedopress.com **attended the first training for journalists in Asunción on the recently approved ATI law**. They also participated very actively in the workshop held under this project in Coronel Oviedo on the 21st of November of 2018.

Since 2015 until the present, Oviedopress.com has **produced various news items** based on information gathered using the ATI law and as a result it has **contributed to greater democratic transparency**. The first time they used it was with a corruption case at the National University of Caguazú. As a result of this investigation, the person who was denounced by the Oviedopress had to resign¹¹. They have kept on using the law until now. For example, very recently, in May 2020, the municipality of Coronel Oviedo had to hand over statements of its bank accounts (at the request of Oviedopress.com), which showed irregularities linked to a credit for the construction of the market.¹²

Also in 2020, the case of Oviedopress.com against the Governor's Office of Caguazú, has led to a criminal lawsuit for contempt of court because the Governor's Office has not yet provided the requested information by the digital media, which included details of the contracts between the Governor's Office and contracted officials; including their payroll and their degree of kinship¹³. Members of the IDEA team represented Oviedopress.com in this case.

Where is the project in this story?

This example revealed that the training and other products developed under this project **have contributed to the use of the Law by committed journalists**. In fact, the founder of Oviedopress.com stated *"the manual is my bible. It is a legal and a practical tool that explains step by step and in a very clear way how to access what kind of information. We use it all the time"*.

However, it took at least two previous ingredients for this to happen:

1. The first conducive ingredient for journalists to use the ATI law is that they do **investigative journalism**. Several testimonies coincided that investigative journalism can benefit better from the mechanisms offered by the Law. This is because the investigative journalists have more time to research and write media pieces. While journalists who produce daily information cannot wait the 15 days that administrations take to respond to requests for information.
2. Secondly, it is important to note that **relationships with journalist champions are built over time** and that strategic litigation cases, as explained in the following outcome, require continued efforts over several years to yield significant results.

In fact, **training is essential** not only to promote the use of the ATI law among journalists but also equally importantly **to establish strategic relationships with committed journalists** who are willing to advocate for a more transparent democracy. In the words of the founder of Oviedopress.com *"If you dare to use it (the Law) they (IDEA) will stand by you"*.

The project has **contributed to strengthening existing partnership relations with litigating journalists** such as the director of Oviedopress.com. However, many agree that **a more intentional management of the social capital** generated by the project

¹¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ro51zgK2sj4>

¹²<https://oviedopress.com/dinero-que-era-para-el-mercado-sera-destinado-en-la-construccion-del-palacete/>

¹³<https://oviedopress.com/condenan-a-gobernacion-de-caaguazu-por-negar-informacion-publica/>

(i.e. a more intense follow-up) would help more champions to emerge.

OUTCOME 2 – Increased quantity of relevant judicial decisions from Courts not based in Asunción that reaffirm ATI law effectiveness.

Original target -By the end of the project, judges/court of appeals have issued decisions in favour of the ATI right at least once in each of the seven regions targeted by the project.

Stakeholders inside and outside IDEA agreed that both **the formulation of this outcome and its impact indicator skipped an important step in the ToC**. This is that in order to have an increase in positive resolutions reaffirming the effectiveness of the ATI law, there must be an increase in court cases.

According to the statistics of the Official Transparency Portal of the Government of Paraguay, from 2017 to 2019 there has been a **68% increase of judicialization** of cases related to the ATI law. Only five of them generated in departments outside of Asunción during 2018 and 2019¹⁴, one of them is the aforementioned case of Oviedopress.com versus the Governor of Caguazú where IDEA had a heavy involvement.

However, during the evaluation **several more important cases from 2019 and 2020 could be documented** that are not yet present in the official statistics and to which this project in particular and the work of IDEA in general have contributed.

Other uses of the Law have also been identified **not only by judges** but by lawyers. For example, the case of the lawyers from the Central Department who used the Law days after being present at the IDEA workshop to request the complete instructive compendium and the maps of the Public Ministry's districts. They shared the information they compiled making use of the ATI law on Facebook with a shower of compliments from colleagues¹⁵.

The project's **final report also gives details of several litigations of national outreach** related to ATI law in Paraguay that have benefited from the work of this project and whose accuracy has been verified by this evaluation. For example, the publication¹⁶ developed for the workshops with judges was cited in a sentence ruling in favour of the Cabotage Captains Association¹⁷.

Also, Judge Vivian López¹⁸ used the same publication in her sentences involving the Ministry of Education and Sciences (the second largest budget in Paraguay) in 2020, the Minister himself answered the tweet explaining the actions taken¹⁹.

¹⁴1) Movimiento político Cruzada Nacional C/ Tribunal Electoral Del Este S/ Amparo, Alto Paraná (2018); 2) Marcelo Silva Staple C/ Universidad Nacional De Asunción C/ Amparo, Central (2018); 3) Javier Lesme Noguera C/ Junta Municipal De Fernando De La Mora, Central (2018); 4) Hernan Antonio Giménez Ramírez C/ Municipalidad De Coronel Oviedo S/ Amparo, Caguazú (2019)5) Cristian Bianciotto C/ Gobernación Del 5° Departamento De Caaguazú S/Amparo, Caguazú, (2019)

¹⁵ https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2228626430493359&id=100000380703681

¹⁶ "La Justicia como Garante del Acceso a la Información Pública"

¹⁷ References to sources of verification can be found in the final report of the project

¹⁸ This judge coordinated the involvement of the Judges Association with the project

¹⁹ *ibid.* footnote 13

However, as in Outcome 1, it is key to make a qualitative rather than a quantitative analysis to **understand the extent to which the ATI law is effective** to achieve a more transparent democracy and to disentangle what role this project has played in it. The evaluation has identified **two paradigmatic cases**, because of their scope and relevance, which will help to understand how IDEA has leveraged their assets, including those emerging from this project, to contribute to an **outstanding impact**.

□ **Zooming in: Publication of sworn statements of assets of public authorities**

In June 2020, Paraguay's Supreme Court ruled in favour of **senior public officials making their incomes and assets public**. This was the first time that the country's highest court had ruled on an issue concerning the right of access to information²⁰.

In the words of a leading journalist, this case has led to a "political earthquake" in the country with several ramifications, one of which is precisely the case of the purchase of inputs to combat COVID-19 that is also analysed in this chapter.

The Supreme Court's ruling meant the happy ending to a history of litigation over several years led by the journalist Juan Carlos Lezcano whom IDEA represented in court.

The project and the case, a virtuous circle

This case achieved **enormous notoriety** in the country during the years of the project's implementation, becoming IDEA's flagship in terms of defending access to public information in Paraguay. The notoriety of the case contributed to placing **IDEA and its partners as indisputable references** in the country regarding the use of the ATI law.

This had a **positive effect on the activities of the project**, but also the **project activities supported IDEA's positioning**.

For example, the **training** for journalists and judges organized under this project were credited as important elements that have helped raise the profile of IDEA. Especially, as already noted in the chapter on effectiveness, for their technical quality and for the professional calibre of the facilitators.

This positioning has made the **journalists** (both at local and national level) frequently turn to IDEA to clarify technical aspects of the use of the Law and also **as credited experts in the pieces of information** that have been elaborated.

For example, the aforementioned Oviedopress.com declared that in the last few years they have had almost monthly interviews with representatives of FOPEP or IDEA to explain different aspects of the ATI law.

The continuous presence in the media also strengthened IDEA's position as an unequivocal reference point for the law.

The case was also important for the project as **it strengthened partnerships with FOPEP and CENDIP** both of which were also heavily involved in the dissemination of the case resolutions.

²⁰ <https://www.rdn.com.py/2020/06/11/las-declaraciones-juradas-son-publicas-confirma-la-corte/>

□ **Zooming in: Government management of funds allocated to combat COVID19**

Although at first the public was satisfied with the health measures taken by the government regarding COVID-19, not much time passed before complaints began to arise about overbilling, rigged tenders, and poor quality of the products purchased to fight the pandemic.

The Paraguayan Congress expeditiously passed the "National Emergency Law", Law 6524/20, which authorized the Government to contract loans of up to 1.6 billion dollars, of which approximately 500 million dollars would be committed to the consequences of COVID-19 in the country²¹.

As of August 14, 2020, with the curve of the pandemic rising in the country, only a minimal part of these resources had been executed²² largely due to the successive **irregularities detected** in the bidding processes and aired by the press²³.

Where is the project in this story?

The evidence that supported this information disseminated by the press **emerged from various sources of journalistic investigation**. Among them were the **results of one of the strategic litigations** that IDEA sponsored against the Comptroller's Office.

As a result of this litigation, in June 2020, the Justice Department ordered the Comptroller's Office to publish the updated data of the **sworn statements of the authorities, officials and suppliers of the State that had been directly or indirectly involved** with the emergency law by COVID-19.

With the resolution, **the sworn statements of assets and income of authorities and officials from various ministries were to be published**, including the Ministry of Health, the National Emergency Secretariat, and the Technical Secretariat for Economic and Social Development Planning. The court order also extended to the Military Health, the National Environmental Sanitation Service (Senasa), Petróleos Paraguayos (Petropar) and all State providers involved in purchases made as a result of the Pandemic Health Emergency Law 6524/20.

This **injunction was promoted** among others by David Riveros (Reacción Paraguay –and activist organisation from Alto Paraná). The **lawyer** of the case was Federico

²¹http://www.mic.gov.py/mic/w/mic/pdf/DECRETO%203506_2020%20Que%20reglamenta%20la%20Ley%206524_2020.pdf

²² 500 million dollars, which are translated into Guaraní at ₡ 1,545,866 Million, as of August 14, 2020, only ₡ 94,851 Million had been executed

²³ See <https://www.telam.com.ar/notas/202006/473184-paraguay-salud-corrupcion-sobrepuestos.html>
<https://www.efe.com/efe/america/sociedad/paraguay-una-elogiada-gestion-sanitaria-empanada-por-la-sombra-de-corrupcion/20000013-4254242>

<https://www.abc.com.py/nacionales/2020/04/30/tapabocas-de-dinac-imputan-a-edgar-melgarejo/>

<https://www.infobae.com/america/america-latina/2020/04/24/escandalo-en-paraguay-la-presidenta-de-la-petrolera-estatal-debio-renunciar-por-una-supuesta-sobrefacturacion-en-la-compra-de-agua-tonica-por-el-coronavirus/>

Legal, member of **IDEA** and one of the coordinators of this project²⁴.

Reacción Paraguay **coordinated the realization of the workshop** on the "*Effective Use of the Law of Access to Public Information in the Practice of Journalism*" together with IDEA within the framework of this project in 2018²⁵. This **was the beginning of a strategic relationship with IDEA** that contributed to the exposure of cases of corruption in Alto Paraná²⁶ and in the whole of Paraguay, like this one referring to the mismanagement of the funds allocated to fight the pandemic.

Hidden results - institutional strengthening

As mentioned in the ToC and design chapters of this report, the project has contributed to changes that were not envisaged in the original framework. The most relevant of these is the **strengthening of IDEA and its partners**.

In addition to contributing to IDEA's positioning, the project also **strengthened the organization's administrative scaffolding**, put audits and management systems in order, and helped IDEA to mobilize resources to give it programmatic continuity²⁷.

The **Association of Judges in Paraguay** also credits the project as an important element that had supported them to **embrace a culture of transparency and judicial independence**. For example, they published in their web page the affidavit of assets of judges to set an example²⁸.

FOPEP also reported important institutional developments because of the project. Its **membership became more inclusive**, including now not only journalists of the traditional media but also media producers and digital communicators. Thanks to the social capital mobilized through the training they considerably **increased their membership**. Prior to this project, there were 132 journalist affiliates, mostly in the capital and in the Central Department. After this project, they doubled the number of members.

"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts." William Bruce Cameron,

But perhaps the most important transformation reported by FOPEP is the most **intangible** one. Several sources stated that the project was able to reach fellow journalists who were very exposed to political interests to the point that it could be dangerous for them. A **latent network of dissidents** was thus formed through the WhatsApp groups "*even if we don't use it, we know we are not alone*" (workshop participant).

"It is important to have a sense of proximity and know that there is a network that cares about your fate" Leading journalist.

²⁴ <https://www.ultimahora.com/otro-fallo-ordena-publicar-ddjj-compras-covid-n2892249.html>

²⁵ see timeline 2018 in <https://www.reaccion.org.py/linea-de-tiempo/>

²⁶ <https://www.ultimahora.com/activista-sostiene-que-el-este-no-se-libero-aun-la-corrupcion-n2800574.html>

²⁷ For example, the USAID funded project: INCREASING CIVIL SOCIETY OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION AND IMPUNITY

²⁸ <http://www.ajp.org.py/declaraciones.html>

Efficiency – The use of human and financial resources

In this chapter the evaluation assesses the extent to which the project made good **use of its human and financial resources**. This includes a) how the **management and coordination arrangements** ensure a cost-efficient and accountable implementation of the project; and b) how the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended or unintended results (**value for money**).

Management and Coordination: Human resources

During the design and implementation of the initiative the project had **three coordinators** in charge. This high turnover **did not have a negative impact** on the pace of implementation or on the quality of the products. The reason why the transitions remained smooth was because the Director of IDEA became directly involved with the project by ensuring that the initiative remained true to its design at all times and in a timely manner.

Project coordinators oversaw the daily running of the project supported by the M&E officer and the administration of IDEA. However, it is necessary to add that the **coordinators were not only project managers**, they also had a **very high technical profile**. This means that they brought to the project their professional credibility, a very good command of the ATI law and their own personal networks.

The **information and decision-making** process in the project was carried out **very smoothly**, both inside IDEA and in their relationship with the partners. This is with the three external organizations that were also involved in the management of some of the activities: CENDIP, FOPEP and the Association of Judges in Paraguay.

Both CENDIP and FOPEP were involved in the initiative from the beginning (see design). They had budgets assigned to contribute to the implementation of several of the activities, but also, they contributed to some of the core costs of the organizations. This resulted in important contributions to their institutional strengthening, as noted in the impact chapter.

Clear agreements were signed with all three organizations, reflecting their role and involvement.

The Paraguayan Judges Association became involved later, in 2018, and although it played a key role in Outcome 2 (see impact) it had no financial counterpart. This is a very well-established association which brings together more than 900 judges from all over the country. The Association of Judges in Paraguay were responsible for the convening of judges to the workshops, which gave these talks a high degree of legitimacy.

The project also **collaborated with more local organizations** such as OviedoPress.com in Coronel Oviedo that helped with the organization of the event.

Value for money

The level of project **efficiency can be considered very high** considering a) the relatively low investment (110,000 US\$); b) the execution of most of the activities and strategies that were planned which on occasion exceeded expectations at no extra cost; c) the remarkable quality of the outputs, and; d) the contributions to very significant changes at the national level under the two outcomes.

The **budget allocation for the different items was balanced** and in line with the objectives of the project with only one exception, the **allocation for the human resources was insufficient**.

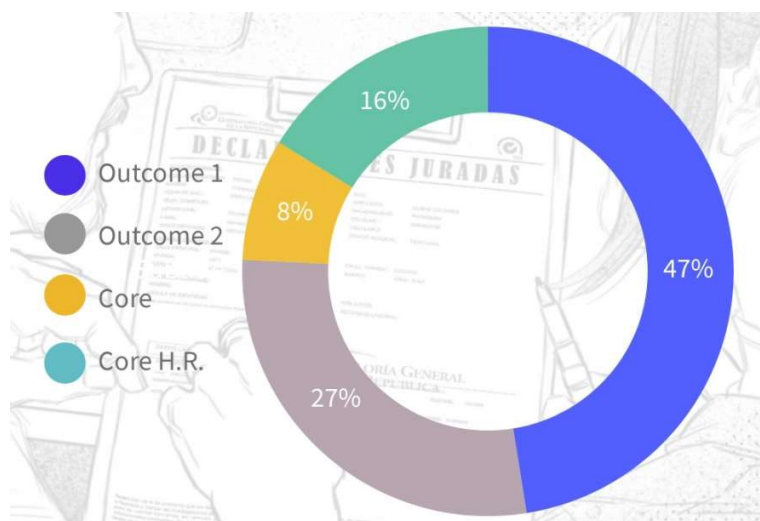


Figure 5 - The budget allocation

The Project provided for a full-time coordination position and 50% for a M&E Officer, 30% for a Project Assistant and 30% for an Administrative Assistant. All these positions amounted to 16 % of the budget which is slightly over the 15% limit that UNDEF had for personnel in projects (see figure 5).

The project did not foresee any budget line for the Director of IDEA, whose work and reputation, as evidenced in several

sections of the impact chapter, has been extremely important in the success of the initiative.

It is important to note that the project would not have gone so far without the **commitment and professional calibre** of the project coordinators and other members of IDEA, especially its Director and the specialists contracted under the different activities. The same can be said of the persons who were involved from the partner organizations (Association of Judges, CENDIP and FOPEP); who **contributed not only with their effort, but also with their credibility as professionals and with their networks**.

In a related point, the evaluation found that **the 15% ceiling** dedicated to staff placed by UNDEF could have **discouraged** the inclusion of certain approaches in the project logic, such as strategic litigation, that require **full time and highly specialized** (and therefore more expensive) staff.

Sustainability – Is there life beyond the project?

The sustainability chapter identifies those aspects of the project that are likely to be sustained after its completion. These aspects can be approached from two points of view. The extent to which the **process** is sustainable, i.e. the extent to which key stakeholders will remain committed to the project's objectives; the extent to which the **results** of the project (for example, the manuals developed for judges and journalists) are being used and sustained after the funding stopped.

The process

As already indicated in the chapter describing the ToC, the motivational objectives of this project are of a generational nature. Both the more **general objective** of contributing to a more transparent democracy and the more **intermediate objective** of promoting the use of ATI law **require continuous efforts from various actors over years** and possibly decades. This obviously goes beyond the scope of this particular intervention. It is therefore **essential that IDEA and its partners remain committed** to this cause so that the project's efforts do not fall on deaf ears.

The evaluation has confirmed that **IDEA and its partners continue to be very committed** in promoting the right to public information in Paraguay. Two main factors encourage the organization to continue working on this issue. Firstly, as mentioned in the section on impact, the effectiveness of ATI law is still highly relevant and remains in the **spotlight** in emblematic cases such as the purchase of supplies against COVID-19. Secondly, IDEA's prominence as a **national reference** in this area encourages the organization to remain involved.

Therefore, **the sustainability of the process is guaranteed** if IDEA and partners can obtain funding to continue their work.

The results

The **results** that IDEA and its partners have achieved in terms of access to public information, however, **are all reversible**. It has emerged clearly during the evaluation that the **progress that has been made is under a constant threat** and that if civil society does not continue to exert pressure it would be easy for them to be in jeopardy.

For example, the same week that the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the publication of affidavits of property and assets, in Parliament, a group of MPs presented a legislative initiative to decriminalize the falsification of data in such affidavits²⁹.

The same journalist, Juan Carlos Lezcano, who led the case for the publication of the sworn statements of assets and patrimony, faces up to two years in prison for reporting irregularities in public management³⁰.

It is important to note that this **backlash should not be taken as an indicator of defeat** but rather the opposite. The fact that there are signs of resistance is a clear indicator that **IDEA and its allies are threatening the status quo** and that their actions are having a

²⁹<https://www.rdn.com.py/2020/06/11/las-declaraciones-juradas-son-publicas-confirma-la-corte/>

³⁰<https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20200825/483053753013/sip-repudia-que-se-busquen-penas-de-carcel-contra-dos-periodistas-en-paraguay.html>

clear transformative power. However, the fact that their work attacks powerful and long-established interests makes the results more vulnerable from the perspective of sustainability.

The sustainability of the **results obtained through the training cannot be guaranteed if the social capital** that managed to bring these activities together **is not properly followed-up**.

The content that the participants learned has **clear transformative potential**. In fact, 76% of those who responded to the survey stated that "what I learned in the workshop will help me to apply it in the future". However, there is also a consensus that the **follow-up after the workshop has not been adequate**. For example, the WhatsApp groups that were created after the workshops had not been active for several months and only 23% of respondents thought that "there was an appropriate follow-up". This does not encourage the participants reached by the project to make a sustained use of what they have learned.

The evaluation confirmed that the **manuals** for both journalists and judges **are still in force and in use**. Although, it is difficult to determine the extent of this use.

UNDEF Value Added and visibility



Figure 6 - Project leaflet in San Lorenzo

The evaluation found that IDEA and its partners **generally complied with UNDEF's visibility requirements** as specified in page 5 of the UNDEF Project Monitoring, Reporting, Revision and Extension Guidelines³¹. UNDEF was featured in the main outreach such as the two main publications associated with the project. This is the manual developed for the journalists and the book for the judges.

The presence of UNDEF's **logo was not, however, present in all the outreach material** designed under the project (see figure 6). This is an aspect that could be improved in future initiatives. The presence of the UNDEF partnership on IDEA's website is also unclear.

Although the UNDEF logo was not used to its full extent, **the partnership with the United Nations was very beneficial** according to those consulted. Beyond the financial contribution, several stakeholders pointed out that the UN seal gave the project **international legitimacy**.

³¹ https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/r12_undef_me_extrev_guide_en.pdf

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The ToC

The project was clearly embedded in a broader institutional ToC whose motivational horizon was a generational transformation "*to make Paraguay's democratic culture more transparent*". In order to get there, IDEA has two clear strategies: a) strategic litigations accompanied by media hype, which has demonstrated the potential to influence the country's public and political agenda; and b) capacitating key actors so that these litigations can take place i.e., the judiciary and journalists - in a broad sense. It is in this last strategic line where this project was located.

This ToC had some hidden assumptions. The two most relevant for this project were a) that strategic litigations with high media potential would emerge from the training, and b) that training would suffice to elicit behavioural changes in participants. Both assumptions have proven to be true, although with some caveats.

There are preconditions in this pathway to change that are necessary and/or desirable for these strategies to be effective. The most important being the institutional strengthening of IDEA and partners. However, these preconditions were not unpacked in the original project design.

Relevance

The project design was remarkably clear and consistent. This allowed for very clear and comprehensive progress reports. Another great strength of the design was the involvement of partners since the conceptualization of the initiative.

Besides a quantitative indicator on equal participation between women and men in the project activities, little was designed to ensure an adequate gender mainstreaming. This was not due to an ideological resistance by the implementing partner, but rather a general view that corruption is a gender-neutral issue.

The project fully addressed the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries in nature. However, it was not adequate with respect to its scope at three levels: a) Customization of the contents of the projects' product could have been more geared to the different profiles of beneficiaries; b) Geographical outreach - it was not clear that the departments prioritized in the project were the most adequate; c) follow-up - the project contemplated some follow-up measures, especially in the case of journalists, they were not at all sufficient to ensure the objectives set.

The project was perfectly aligned with the mandate of IDEA and its partners. Its objectives were also perfectly in line with the strategic lines of the UN in Paraguay and with the Strategic orientations issued publicly by the Government.

Effectiveness

The level of completion of the planned activities was very high. Only result 2.3. was not carried out. However, to compensate, the amount of training for both judges and journalists exceeded those planned. The quality of the outputs was very high.

Impact

Under the two outcomes, the project has managed to motivate and train key populations (judges, judiciary officials and communicators in the targeted departments) on the use of the ATI law. Also, the project is likely to have a ripple effect that will be difficult to assess.

This project has contributed to the use of the Law by committed journalists. There are two important factors that have affected the quality of this contribution: a) investigative journalists can better benefit from the ATI law than those working on daily news b) relationships with journalist champions are built over periods of time which are longer than the duration of this initiative. Therefore, the fruits of journalistic research and subsequent litigation cannot be seen in the time perspective of this project.

The evaluation has identified two paradigmatic cases, illustrating how IDEA has contributed to an outstanding impact at the national level. They are a) Publication of sworn statements of assets of public authorities ruled by Supreme Court in June 2020, and b) Government management of funds allocated to combat COVID-19.

The prestige of IDEA as the undisputed national reference in terms of access to information has been fundamental in these cases. The project has contributed significantly to this positioning. In addition to contributing to IDEA's positioning, the project also strengthened the organization's administrative scaffolding, and helped IDEA to mobilize resources to give it programmatic continuity.

It has also contributed to the strengthening of the partners in important and often subtle ways. Most relevantly, it contributed to creating a latent network of dissidents among committed journalists inside and outside the capital.

Efficiency

The high turnover of coordinators had no negative impact on the pace of implementation or on the quality of the products. These coordinators did not only manage the project, they also brought their professional credibility, a very good command of the ATI law and their own personal networks. In fact, the project would not have gone so far without the commitment and professional calibre of the project coordinators and other members of IDEA, and partners.

The level of project efficiency can be considered very high considering: a) the relatively low investment (110,000 US\$); b) the execution of most of the activities and strategies that were planned which on occasion exceeded expectations at no extra cost; c) the remarkable quality of the outputs, and; d) the contributions to very significant changes at the national level under the two outcomes.

The 15% ceiling dedicated to staff placed by UNDEF could discourage the inclusion of certain highly effective approaches in the project logic, such as strategic litigation, that require full time highly specialized personnel.

Sustainability

IDEA and its partners continue to be very committed in promoting the right to public information in Paraguay. Therefore, the sustainability of the process is guaranteed.

However, the results that IDEA and its partners have achieved in terms of access to public information are all reversible. The progress that has been made is under constant threat and if civil society does not continue to exert pressure it could easily lead them to be in jeopardy.

Recommendations

For IDEA

To complement the logical framework approach, it would be advisable for the organization to also work with the ToC. This would allow intermediate objectives to be made visible and assumptions to be challenged and/or validated.

For IDEA

It would be advisable that in future projects the gender implications should be investigated from a more substantive point of view. To this end, partnerships could be established with the Paraguayan women's movement.

For IDEA

The project has managed to bring together a significant amount of social capital through training. It would be advisable to design a communication strategy to manage this capital. For example, the fact that a large number of journalists have been involved in the project makes them an immense resource for amplifying the messages of future advocacy campaigns.

For IDEA: It would be advisable for the geographical selection criteria to be more related to the internal logic of the project like “existence of strong professional networks or activists”, or “already established alliances with IDEA”. Purely demographic criteria (more/less population) should be avoided.

FOR IDEA

It would be advisable to be more careful with the inclusion of the donor's logo in all materials relating to the project. In this case it would also have been beneficial from a substantive point of view as the partners and the target audience value the partnership with the UN positively. It would therefore be advisable to include this point in all agreements signed with other partners under UNDEF projects.

For UNDEF

Consider raising the 15% personnel ceiling to facilitate the inclusion of strategies that require highly qualified full-time personnel such as strategic litigation.

V LESSONS LEARNT AND BEST PRACTICES

Main lessons

Qualitative indicators

If the devil is in the details, God is in the subtleties. It is essential to have a monitoring system that unravels the intangibles and the sometimes-subtle connections that occur in complex realities. Quantitative indicators are not enough to understand how the project contributes to transformations.

The project inserted in a wider strategic framework

It is essential to pay close attention to how the project fits into the partners' strategies. This project is a good example of how UNDEF can finance only one link in a chain of factors that require sustainable transformation. It is therefore essential that the organization implementing the project is responsible for linking the intervention with the organization's upstream and downstream work.

Context

An important learning of this initiative is the importance of contextualizing all strategies. The project did this excellently in methodological approaches such as the use of "terere" in workshops with journalists. However, it did not anticipate that, given the project's resources and cultural peculiarities, follow-up mechanisms such as WhatsApp groups might not work.

Better practices

Involvement of partners at the beginning

The flow of information and decision making between all the organizations involved in the project has been excellent. The evaluation has identified that one of the main factors for this to happen, especially in the case of CENDIP and FOPEP, is that they were involved from the conceptualization of the project. This helped to ensure that roles and expectations were clear from the outset.

Use top level facilitators and writers

The quality of the products provided by the project has been one of its main strengths. This quality is closely linked to the professional calibre of both the authors of the publications and the training facilitators. The project has spared no effort in involving leading figures who have given the process the credibility it needed to influence the target audience. Implicit in this good practice is also a reflection for UNDEF. This type of professional calibre is more expensive, in terms of investment in human resources, than more junior profiles that would not have been appropriate to contribute to major policy changes.

The use of professional associations to convene colleagues

Both FOPEP and the Paraguayan Judges Association are professional associations with great legitimacy in their respective fields. Involving them in the convening of the workshops and dialogues was a great asset. During the evaluation, two important aspects in this respect were highlighted through stakeholder testimonies. Firstly, the use of professional

associations facilitated the confidence of those convened that the event would be reliable and worthy of being held. Second, the project was able to make use of the knowledge of "who's who" that these organizations already had. This ensured that relevant people attended the training.

The use of focal points to organize the workshops

FOPEP first allied itself with focal points (whether individuals or organizations) in the various departments and from there decided with them all the practical issues (where the workshop would be held, who to invite, etc.). The focal point system had not been planned in a formal way but was a more organic and intuitive way of working and worked very well because it helped to contextualize each event and empowered local organizations.

In relation to this, it was also a good practice to have women focal points so as to promote the presence of other professional women in the workshops, the premise being that those women would have more women among their network.

VII. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

KEY Questions to be Addressed by the Evaluation	
1. Relevance: Understanding how appropriately the identified problems and the interventions that followed responded to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries and other key stakeholders; and how the project design met these needs.	
Adequacy: Did the project address the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (journalist and judges) both women and men?	
Alignment: Was the project clearly within the stakeholders' mandate and congruent with their strategic framework?	
Design: Were the project activities/outputs adequately linked up and did they provide the best approach to achieve the project's outcomes? Were risks and mitigation strategies appropriately identified?	
2. Efficiency: Assessing the extent to which the project made good use of its financial and human resources	
Value for money: How well have the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quantity, quality, and timeliness? (in comparison to what was planned)	
Governance and management (internal coordination): To what extent did the management and administrative arrangements sufficiently ensure a cost-efficient and accountable implementation of the project?	
Partnership and alliances (external coordination):	
3. Effectiveness: Assessing the extent to which the project produced its expected activities and outputs (what was done?)	

<p>Progress: What was done? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?</p>
<p>Monitoring, evaluating, learning and accountability (MEAL): How appropriately was progress towards results measured and monitored? Was monitoring information sex disaggregated? How did this information feed into the project to promote learning?</p>
<p>4. Impact: Building a mature understanding of how change happened as a result of (as a contribution of) the project under its three outcomes (see also impact and complexity).</p>
<p>(Outcome 1) Use of ATI law by journalist: Extent towards the use of the ATI law has increased by journalists based in Paraguay's interior cities and towns. (especially in articles and investigations related to misuse of public funds)</p>
<p>(Outcome 2) Use of ATI law by judges: Extent towards relevant judicial decisions have been taken based on the ATI law (especially in chosen departments)</p>
<p>5. Sustainability: Identifying aspects of the project that are likely to be sustained after its completion, including an analysis of the factors for sustainability.</p>
<p>Process: To what extent did key stakeholders remain involved in promoting and utilizing the ATI law once the project finished?</p>
<p>Results: To what extent the products of the project (for example, the publications) are likely to be used after the funding stopped?</p>
<p>6. UNDEF added value and visibility</p>
<p>Added value What was the value of UNDEF specific support to the project? Visibility: Is there evidence showing that UNDEF support to IDEA project appears in all printed materials distributed during the project? UNDEF visibility appears in all events/products done by IDEA and partners under this project?</p>

ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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- Annex 3: Agreement with the Judges Association of Paraguay. (not dated)
- Annex 4: Statistics on requests for ATI and publications in the press. (not dated)
- Annex 5. Training methodology for journalists. (not dated)
- Annex 6. Standard academic program for the development of the workshop for journalists. (not dated)
- Annex 7: Training methodology for judges. (not dated)
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- Annex 9: Standard academic program for judges. (not dated)
- Annex 10: Pictures and presentations. (not dated)
- Annex 11: Gender breakdown of participants. (not dated)
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- Milestone Verification Report, Improving Access to Public Information in Paraguay, July 2018
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- Original Concept Note, Improving Access to Public Information in Paraguay UDF-16-738-PAR, R11-2016
- Plan de Igualdad de Paraguay, Presidencia de la República del Paraguay, Ministerio de la Mujer Decreto número 936, diciembre 2018
- Proyecto NED 2017-18 III, Asistencia Jurídica para Litigar Negativas al Acceso a la Información en el Paraguay
- Proyecto NED 2019-2020 REV, Prosecución de Litigios en Materia de Acceso a la información en el Paraguay
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- Project Document, Improving Access to Public Information in Paraguay UDF-16-738-PAR, Instituto de Derecho y Economía Ambiental-IDEA. (not dated)
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- Alcides Manena, The Daily Last-Minute newspaper Paraguay, Alto Paraguay
- Alejo Marvin Barras Ozuna, The Ministry of Education and Science, Alto Paraguay
- Andres Colman Gutierrez, Journalist, Asuncion
- Ariel Alberto Jara Acosta, Channel 19 TV Aire Coronel Oviedo, Caaguazú
- Benigno Gimenez Balbuena, The Ministry of Education and Science, Alto Paraguay
- Camilo Javier Cantero Cabrera, Childhood and Adolescence Judge, Asunción
- Carlos Ovelar, Vox Populi Paraguay, Caaguazú
- Cheng Kuo, Private Law Firm, Asunción Central
- Ciro Acuña, The Source newspaper Paraguay, Caazapá
- Claudia Riquelme, The Supreme Court of Justice, Asunción Central
- Colman Capatai Gamarra, Alto Paraguay
- Cristian Bianciotto, Oviedo Press Multimedios, Caaguazú
- Desireé Ezquivel, FOPEP, Asuncion
- Edgar Ramón Medina Encina, The Daily Last-Minute newspaper Paraguay, Alto Paraná
- Elida Acosta Dávalos, IDEA, Asuncion
- Ezequiel Francisco Santagada, Executive Director, IDEA, Asunción
- Federico Legal, Project Officer, Asuncion
- Hugo Ojeda Bardella, Alto Paraná
- Irene Esquivel Hermosilla, reAcción Paraguay, Alto Paraná
- Jadichi Adriana Aquino Lezcano, Elementary School nro 117 Mayor Ramón Bejarano, Alto Paraguay
- José María Costa, The Supreme Court of Justice - Asunción National University, Asunción Central
- Jose Morinigo, The Supreme Court of Justice, Central
- Juana Avalos, Judicial Branch, Alto Paraná
- Judith Gauto, JUEZ 1° INST. C Y C. 4°T, Asunción
- Leticia Benitez, Radio, Guaira
- Lourdes Jacquet, The Supreme Court of Justice, Asunción Central
- Lourdes Yumi Piñeiro, The Judges Association Paraguay, Asuncion
- Luis Giménez Sandoval, The Supreme Court of Justice, Asunción Central
- Marcelo David Duarte Villalba, ESBA UNE A2 Studio, Alto Paraná
- María Del Carmen Molas Fleitas, Caaguazú
- María Luz Martínez Vázquez, Judicial Branch, Asunción Central
- Marília Moreira, Judicial Branch, Alto Paraná
- Marta Ecurra, Journalist, Asunción
- Marta Marchan, M&E Officer, Asunción
- Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, Caaguazú

- Mirta Giménez, La Paz University, Alto Paraná
- Monica Barreiro, Communications Officer IDEA, Asuncion
- Natalia Gagliardone, CENDIP, Asuncion
- Nelida Rosa Alvarenga, The Supreme Court of Justice, Alto Paraná
- Nino Silguero Rodas, Radio Panambi Vera y Unicanal, Guaira
- Noelia Galeano, Judicial Branch, Alto Paraná
- Oscar Aguilera Jara, The Municipality of Fernando de la Mora, Asunción Central
- Oscar Cáceres, Itapua
- Oscar Galeano, Radio Studio 92.1 Faculty of Humanities UNI., Itapua
- Pablo Argaña, Zone 1, Alto Paraguay
- Rocío Martínez Godoy, Judicial Branch, Alto Paraná
- Rossana Barría, UPAP, Central
- Victoria Salinas, Private Law Firm, Asunción Central

ANNEX 5: ACRONYMS

ATI	Access to Information Law
CENDIP	Centro de Defensa de Interés Público
DRALC	Dirección Regional para América Latina y el Caribe
FOPEP	Foro de Periodistas Paraguayos
LGTBI	Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, Intersex
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
QDA	Quality Data Analysis
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund