

PROVISION FOR POST-PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
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EVALUATION REPORT



UDF- CHI-08- 273 Empowering Communities to Strengthen Citizen Participation in
Chile

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iii. Conclusions

f *Acción por la Tierra* ¶ Management of the project was excellent . Its high degree of professionalism and responsibility created a strong sense of project ownership in beneficiary communities.

f The commitment it elicited among women and young people , who, by organizing, came to understand the problems that afflict their communities, has enabled them to become more proactive citizens and move from social commitment to political participation that can lead to conflict resolution and problem solving.

f The aftereffects of dictatorship in the country are still visible in the priority accorded to economic development over a political and institutional approach aimed at strengthening democracy. Participation levels vary , with informational forums and/or citizen consultations prevailing over acti

f Promoting and reinforcing a culture of positive conflict management, stressing the sociopolitical perspective and improving stakeholders' ability to negotiate, listen, and dialogue to improve the quality of citizen participation. (See Conclusion viii).

f Supporting the promotion of relevant, consensus-based public policies, creating synergies that intensify efforts and actions to preserve the environment and improve the quality of life in communities. Increasing opportunities for joint environmental education activities with the Ministries of Education, Social Development, and the Environment. (See Conclusion iv).

f Offering legal counsel that fosters adoption of the rights approach, helping

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

i. The project and evaluation objectives

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the project Empowering Communities to Strengthen Citizen Participation in Chile (Acción por la Tierra/ Earth Action Santiago (EAN), from October 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011³. UNDEF provided a grant of US\$230,000, of which US\$23,000 was retained for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The purpose of the project was to strengthen democratic governance and political dialogue in Chile by supporting and promoting citizen participation in environmental issues.

The project strategy was based on four outcomes: i) The communication of specific knowledge to optimize citizen participation in the environmental impact assessment system (SEIA⁴) through information, education, and the training of local leaders; (ii) Support for creating and strengthening civil society synergies to develop a network that promotes citizen participation and environmental rights in the three intervention regions; (iii) A general public informed and aware of its right to participate in the SEIA process and conflict resolution, (iv) Greater community capacity to participate as a result of the methodologies and tools provided to navigate the SEIA process.

The project operated in vulnerable communities in three areas of the country (Monte Patria in the North Region, Pichidegua in the Central Region, and Chanco in the South Region), targeting leaders and multiplier agents, civil society stakeholders, and citizens in the communities. Particular attention was paid to youth and women in the beneficiary population.

The evaluation mission is part of the post-project evaluations funded by the United Nations

- Representatives of the partner organization, *Centro de Estudios Sociales y Promoción para el Desarrollo* (Sur Maule) ;
- Civil society stakeholders, environmental protection groups, and local authorities who had benefitted from the project activities;
- CSOs outside the project working in the same sector.

iii. Development context

Chile is a highly centralized

This is the context of the project evaluated. The Chilean affiliate of EarthAction: Defend the Earth provided substantive support for action by organized civil society to address serious environmental issues in Montepatria (Region IV), Pichidegua (Region VI), and Chanco (Region VII). In this latter commune, the mission was able to assess the impact of community organizing, which put a halt to the construction of a thermoelectric power plant that posed a threat to its living conditions.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

i. Project approach and strategy

The project *Empoderate!* was launched after 20 years of transition in the community. Its purpose was to respond to the need to empower citizens to organize and increase their access to information and their exercise of the right to participate.

Given the negligible community involvement in finding solutions to environmental problems, the project launched capacity-building initiatives. It lent support to citizen participation initiatives in vulnerable communities struggling with conflicts of interest and the need to defend their lands and natural resources like soil and water. Many of these communities knew little about their rights and ha

Systematization of the results of the investigational phase (timeline). Case study in the North Region.

The design of the second phase of the project was based on the information gathered during the investigational phase. The collected information was publicized and served as the foundation for training social leaders, women, and youth in the communities. A participatory methodology was used in developing the program contents, coordinating with other CSOs

We learned that voting is much more than casting a ballot.

Rodrigo O. Member of the Social Organizations Council, Constitución Commune.

ii. Logical framework

The table below illustrates the logic of the project interventions, based on four outcomes:

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

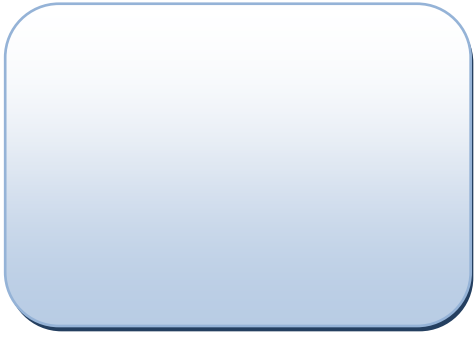
i. Relevance

The SUR Strategic Approach, centered on empowerment as fundamental to community development and change, is extremely relevant to the profile of the beneficiary groups. By and large, these are isolated, vulnerable farming and fishing communities, whose way of life and sustenance are highly dependent on the protection of natural resources and whose culture is deeply rooted in the land and the environment. Many of these communities are threatened by major energy and mining projects that heavily pollute and degrade their environment, severely impacting their quality of life. These populations do not know their rights, their voices are rarely heard, and they have little access to channels of political influence.

Politically empowering these communities helped transform governance, offering social groups greater

There is a growing need for this type of support in the municipalities to publicize the Environment Act. Civil society support is essential.

Valeria L. President of the Social Organizations Council in Constitución Commune.



- These geographical environmental networks have been successful in securing representation in local political and governmental forums. *Red Ambiental del Maule* participates in CONAF, serving as chair of the Advisory Board; the president of one of the NGO members of the network serves as its spokesperson in dealings with *APRO-MAULE* and coordinates with the Regional Office of the Ministry of the Environment (MMA), which gives it a voice in the territory and facilitates access to public information.
- Some local organizations are drafting a proposal for another project, 'Explore' submitted to the Municipal Board for Science and New Technologies.



Training workshop on the Transparency and Access to Public

- The training of leaders (many of them women and young people) committed to ensuring the continuity of the initiative in their respective groups is leading to the emergence of new opportunities for citizen participation.
 - Citizens have a better understanding of their situation and a greater ability to manage conflicts. The fact that the training courses dealt with both theory and practice, including field visits, gave citizens more accurate knowledge about problems and threats to their way of life. They also received training in the appropriate use of the media, using local radio programs, local newspapers, and social networks.
- Neighborhood agents, politicians, young people from the ecology brigades, local teachers, and professors and experts from regional universities were called on to participate and have been gaining autonomy, creating forums for sharing ideas and information.

They taught us that the initiatives must be self-sustainable over time. Many initiatives end with chapter I.

President of the Organizational Coordinating Office in Constitución Commune

Taking advantage of loosely structured emerging civic movements, the project managed to inform, motivate, and train citizens, improving local governance and generating activities aimed at defending and protecting rights.

v. Sustainability

Sustainability was a concern throughout project implementation. Aware that it could not ensure the continuity of the activities once UNDEF support came to an end, *Acción por la Tierra* focused on empowering stakeholders, emphasizing the local ownership process to the utmost. Having communities participate in the design of their own projects and strengthening leadership and coordination among local actors were the right options for promoting sustainability. The beneficiaries are aware that the local organizing fostered by the project is not a cycle that closes when it ends; instead, it is an ongoing process that will require sustainability. The beneficiaries and organizations interviewed are convinced that they must play a role in guaranteeing the durability of the commitment made. Thus, they meet as often as they can and, above all, stay in contact through social networks. At the same time, they are aware that they will need help, both strategic and financial, to finish their volunteer work and, especially, to produce relevant communications materials.

The partner organizations, which have also been empowered, are acknowledged points of reference committed to the communities.

Personally, I found it very useful. We learned to listen to young people and children. 1 R Z , working with the youth JURXS ³ & RQ RQ WKH L V V)

measures and alternatives in searching for financial resources that will contribute to their sustainability. (See Conclusion i).



Activities carried out by children who participated in community awareness events in the Central R egion .

VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

DAC criterion

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

- o *Project programming and management documents:*
 - Project Document;
 - Mid-term Report
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Annex 3 : Persons I nterviewed

Monday, July 30, 2012

Annex 4 : Acronyms

APRO-MAULE	Agrupación por la Protección de los Recursos Naturales del Maule Norte
CONAF	Corporación Nacional Forestal
CONAMA	Comisión Nacional del Medio Ambiente
COREMA	Comisión Regional del Medio Ambiente
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EAN	Acción por la Tierra/ Earth Action Santiago (EAN)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
SEIA	Environmental Impact Assessment System
EIS	Environmental Impact Statements
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FNDR	Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Regional
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
HDI	Human Development Index
MMA	Ministry of the Environment
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OCB	Grassroots Community Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLCA	Latin American Observatory of Environmental Conflicts
PD	Project Document
RAM	Red Medio Ambiental del Maule
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme