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# FINAL REPORT

## CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY PROJECT

CONTRACT NO. AID-OAA-I-12-00012  
TASK ORDER NO. AID-524-TO-13-00001



Photo: ASODEL

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### **Submitted to:**

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Nicaragua

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### **DISCLAIMER:**

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Contents

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 4
- I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND..... 5
  - Objectives ..... 5
  - Technical approach ..... 5
- II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND CSO SELECTION PROCESS..... 7
  - HICD Framework and adapted Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) ..... 7
  - CSO Selection Process ..... 7
- III. MAIN PROGRAM RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS..... 8
  - Improve Human and Institutional Capacity of Selected CSOs ..... 8
  - Empower CSOs through grants to increase communications and advocacy ..... 18
  - Improve Coordination and Networking to Promote Awareness and Activism ..... 22
- IV. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING ..... 25
- V. MAIN CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED ..... 29
- VI. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK ..... 30
- VII. SNAPSHOTS (SUCCESS STORIES) ..... 32
- VIII. ANNEXES ..... 34
  - Annex I. Phase I Results Framework ..... 34
  - Annex II. Phase I Indicators Matrix ..... 35
  - Annex III. Success Stories ..... 38
  - Annex IV. CSOs’ OCAT Scores per Component ..... 45

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACD	Asociación Cívica por la Democracia
ADS	Automated Directive System
APS	Annual Program Statement
ASIS	Análisis y Sistemas, S.A.
ASODEL	Asociación para la Supervivencia y el Desarrollo Local
BOD	Board of Directors
CAFOD	The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CARITAS	Caritas de Nicaragua
CBCSA	Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy
CEGODEM	Centro de Estudios para la Gobernabilidad y la Democracia
CEPS	Centro de Estudios y Promoción Social
CINCO	Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
D&G	Democracy and Governance
EDUQUEMOS	Foro Educativo Nicaragüense
EyT	Ética y Transparencia
EOI	Expression of interest
FIDEG	Fundación Internacional para el Desafío Económico Global
FUNIDES	Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social
FVBCH	Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro
GUC	Grants under Contract
HADEMOS	Hagamos Democracia
HICD	Human Institutional Capacity Development
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IEEPP	Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas
INDE	Instituto Nicaragüense de Desarrollo
IPADE	Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Democracia
IR	Intermediate Result
IREX	International Research & Exchanges Board
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, and Intersex
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSP	Media Strengthening Program
MPN	Movimiento por Nicaragua
OCAT	Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
PMP	Program Monitoring Plan
RED LOCAL	Red Nicaragüense por la Democracia y el Desarrollo Local
REN	Red de Empresarias de Nicaragua
RFA	Request for Application
SOW	Scope of Work
TIP	Training Implementation Plan
UPOLI	Universidad Politécnica de Nicaragua
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From April 8, 2013 to February 28, 2018, the United States Agency for International Development's Nicaragua Mission (USAID/Nicaragua) supported 17 Nicaraguan civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their organizational capacity to better advocate for citizens' demands through the Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA). CBCSA was implemented by Dexis Consulting Group (Dexis) and its partner Chemonics International Incorporated (Chemonics). CBCSA worked with key Nicaraguan democracy and governance (D&G) organizations and economic think tanks through two distinct phases of the project. The first phase entailed issuing an open competition across Nicaragua for established CSOs to participate in the project using USAID's human and institutional capacity development (HICD) approach. This included conducting CSO self-assessments using a tailored Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) to identify their strengths and gaps in seven areas of organizational performance, including governance, management practices, human resources, financial resources, service delivery, external relations, and sustainability. The second phase built on the success of phase I, adding a Grants under Contract (GUC) fund for Nicaraguan organizations to implement institutional reforms, further strengthen their advocacy capacity, and promote public-private dialogue to broaden advocacy efforts.

Through this five-year project, CBCSA achieved its overall goals and objectives to improve CSOs' institutional capacity and advocacy. CSO organizational improvements and changes are demonstrated through an aggregate increase of 17.8% in the OCAT general score. In addition, CSOs improved their advocacy efforts, implementing 97 advocacy activities and campaigns on issues related to preventing sexual abuse and violence, promoting and defending the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) community, and raising awareness on the right to have a legal identity. They also conducted and presented studies on social, governance, and economic issues to influence public policy and provide an evidence base for advocacy for other CSOs, and established 126 alliances or partnerships for greater outreach and impact. These advocacy activities and campaigns directly reached over 3,599 Nicaraguans.

As a result of CBCSA's support through direct capacity-building interventions and/or grants, CSOs improved and strengthened their internal governance, developing effective strategic and operational plans, establishing policy manuals on human resources, administration, financial management, budgeting, gender equality, grants management, procurement, ethics, and sustainability, among others. The development of these policy manuals was followed by trainings, mentoring, and coaching, resulting in more accurate organizational planning and budgetary controls, sustainability strategies, and action plans as well as generating new sources of funding. CBCSA also helped build the capacity of CSOs to facilitate the annual organizational and performance self-assessment, using the adapted OCAT without CBCSA's support. CBCSA partners also carried out communication outreach campaigns to generate awareness and advocate for citizens' demands.

Moreover, CBCSA improved the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity of all 17 CSOs through the provision of a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system to track the project's and CSOs' activities as well as the impacts and expected results. The CSOs are now able to track, capture, and communicate their activities, deliverables, results, and impacts in an organized and user-friendly manner.

In the following sections, this report will provide detailed information on the project, its results, including individual CSO impacts, lessons learned, and recommendations for future programming.

## **I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND**

The goal of CBCSA is to provide capacity-building support to Nicaraguan CSOs and strengthen their ability to advocate for citizens' demands which contributed to achieving USAID/Nicaragua's Development Objective 1, "Citizen's Ability to Engage in Democratic Governance Increased." It also supported the USAID/Nicaragua's sub-results, particularly: "civil society capacity to advocate for transparency and accountability increased" (Sub IR.1.1.1) through new and existing channels; "civil society strengthened" (Sub IR 1.2.2) through program activities that support CSOs to raise, manage, and implement funding to achieve their mission objectives; and "research and economic policy analysis enhanced" (Sub IR. 1.3.2) through enabling Nicaragua's leading research institutes to provide objective, independent information to the public and policy makers.

### **OBJECTIVES**

In its initial phase, CBCSA's objectives were to: (1) provide capacity building services to USAID/Nicaragua so that key/targeted organizations, many of which receive support through other USAID-funded democracy and governance (D&G) activities, can better achieve mutually agreed program objectives; (2) improve the human resources and institutional capacity of CSOs so that they may more effectively represent, advocate for and mobilize constituencies, participate in public policy debates, and exercise oversight over public institutions; (3) improve the capacity of CSOs and individuals to increasingly coordinate and network with one another, the private sector, and media outlets to promote awareness, advocacy, and activism; and (4) improve internal governance of CSOs (through training, technical assistance, and institutional development support) to promote transparency and accountability towards their stakeholders to increase public understanding and support for their work.

After a scope of work (SOW) modification signed on April 22, 2016, which addressed recommendations of a mid-term assessment of the USAID/Nicaragua D&G portfolio, CBCSA's objectives were modified to the following: (1) improve the human and institutional capacity and sustainability of CSOs to achieve their programmatic objectives; (2) empower CSOs through grants to better represent, advocate for, and mobilize constituencies, and promote oversight over key actors to meet citizen demands; and (3) increase CSOs' coordination with one another to promote awareness, advocacy, and activism.

### **TECHNICAL APPROACH**

#### **PHASE I: CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT**

Prior to the SOW modification, CBCSA was expected to work with at least 10 CSOs on a yearly basis and with approximately 25 over the life of the project.

In the first phase, CBCSA assisted 10 CSOs to strengthen their goals and strategic objectives. CBCSA's adaptive and responsive approach helped to identify eligible CSOs, target capacity-building interventions for performance gaps, provide hands-on coaching and training, and facilitate linkages among all the stakeholders involved. CBCSA's comprehensive Capacity Building Plan ensured a consistent focus on achieving concrete and measurable results. For more information, see Section II Methodological Approach and CSO Selection.

#### **PHASE 2: GRANTS UNDER CONTRACT TO IMPROVE ADVOCACY, OUTREACH, AND NETWORKING CAPACITIES**

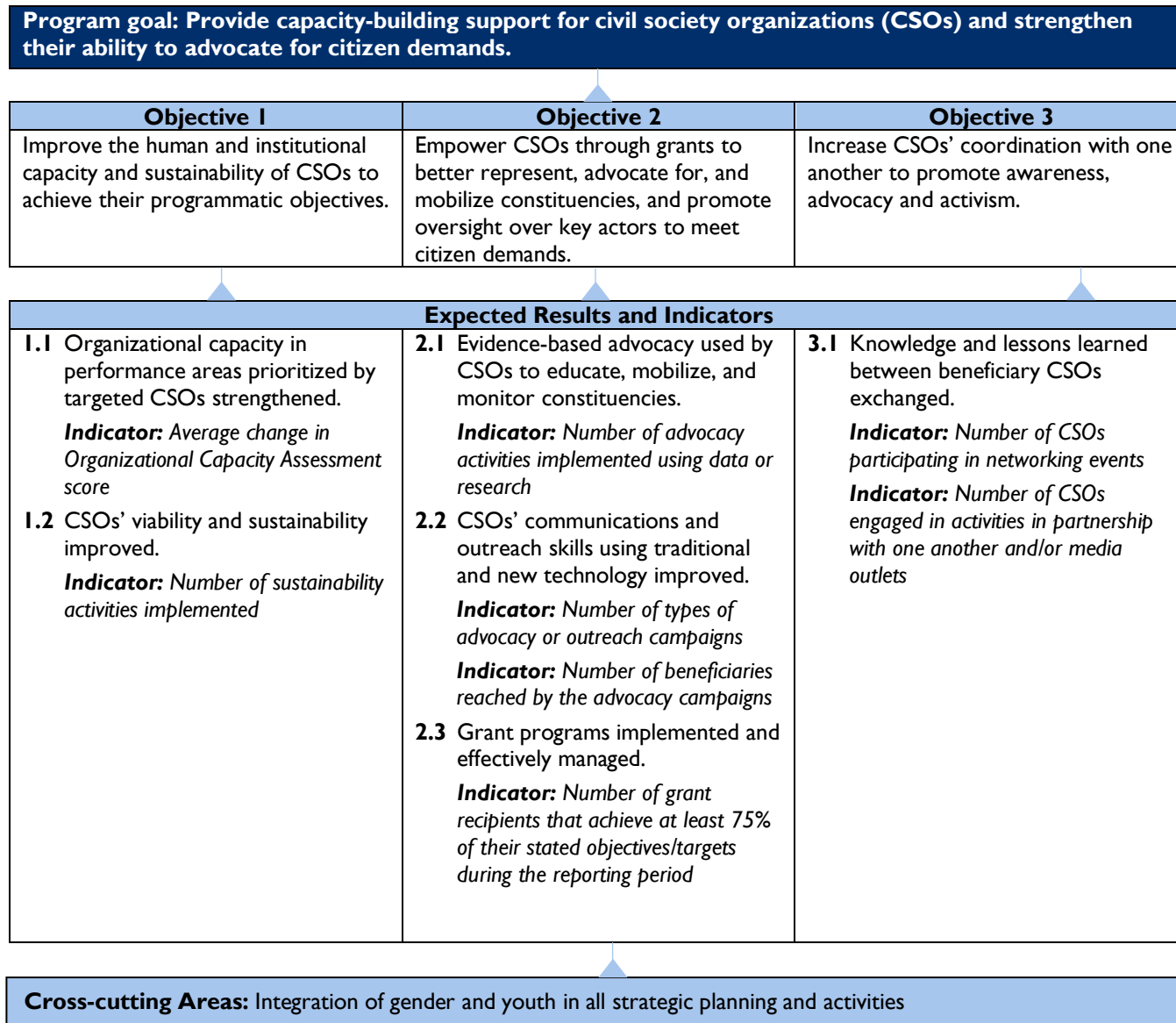
As referenced above, in 2015, USAID/Nicaragua's D&G office conducted an external mid-term performance evaluation to assess the efficacy of its civil society program portfolio, including CBCSA. The mid-term evaluation noted that while CBCSA had been successful in reaching or exceeding its performance targets, "less internal capacity building is needed especially among large and consolidated CSOs in Managua." The evaluators recommended more assistance for program implementation and to focus on new and more creative forms of capacity building. As a result of the evaluation recommendations, USAID/Nicaragua requested a modification to CBCSA's SOW to add a GUC component which was formally added on April 22, 2016.

To address funding constraints and ensure Nicaraguan CSOs continued to strengthen their organizational capacity and meet their goals, CBCSA supplemented direct capacity assistance through a GUC mechanism. Providing funds and customized assistance was central to CBCSA's approach. Assistance included hands-on training and mentoring

for grantees, which—together with the CSO-led performance assessments and CSO capacity improvement—fostered grantees' sustainability.

The results framework was also updated as demonstrated in Exhibit I below.

**Exhibit I. Phase 2 Results Framework**



Goal Level Indicators: Number of CSOs using USG assistance to improve their organizational capacity.  
Number of CSOs receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions.



## II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND CSO SELECTION PROCESS

### HICD FRAMEWORK AND ADAPTED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (OCAT)

During the first phase, CBCSA employed the HICD approach to strengthen CSOs and address performance gaps. The OCAT, adapted for the Nicaraguan context, was used to measure and assess CSOs' performance gaps. Each CSO's internal working group led the participatory self-assessment, which was required to receive support and to ensure institutional ownership of and commitment to the HICD process. CBCSA developed an annual Training Implementation Plan (TIP) for each CSO that outlined actions and steps needed to introduce performance solutions. The TIPs were analyzed and aggregated into a Capacity Building Plan that monitored how newly-learned skills were utilized to determine needs for follow-up assistance. The TIPs were highly effective as they helped address performance gaps through time-bound interventions that involved coaching, training, mentoring, peer learning, and short-term technical assistance. Each of these interventions reinforced one another, and as a result, CSOs significantly improved their institutional capacity. As an example of this, CBCSA increased the capacity of its partner Caritas de Nicaragua (CARITAS) to fundraise through interventions to strengthen its volunteer network, its ability to establish strategic alliances with media and the private sector, and its outreach capacity using new media. Each intervention reinforced one another and strengthened CARITAS's capacity to fundraise, resulting in a successful campaign raising \$150,000.

Under phase 2 of CBCSA, selected grantees that were beneficiaries of CBCSA assistance during phase I and had previously completed an OCAT self-assessment, worked with the CBCSA team to conduct a rapid appraisal of any financial or managerial issues and revised proposed grant activities as needed to address those issues. Selected grantees that did not work with CBCSA during phase I presented a grant application that addressed prioritized institutional gaps based on the OCAT components. CBCSA classified proposed activities by OCAT component, and then the CSO, with CBCSA support, conducted a self-assessment to establish a baseline for all OCAT components included in the grant proposal. At the end of each grant, CBCSA facilitated re-assessments to measure the performance improvements of each grantee, the results of which are reported on in Section III Main Program Results.

### CSO SELECTION PROCESS

On May 23, 2013, CBCSA began a full capacity building intervention with Nicaraguan CSO Ética y Transparencia (EyT) which had recently received a direct grant from USAID, as was envisioned in CBCSA's scope of work. CBCSA supported EyT to strengthen its institutional capacities in all seven OCAT components and to fulfill its special award conditions.

To select the other nine CSOs to receive CBCSA support in year I, the project analyzed local CSOs considering the following criteria: experience in advocacy; non-partisanship; link to USAID-funded institutional strengthening or other USAID programs; relationships to the D&G sector; work in cross-cutting areas of gender, youth, conflict management, and minorities; interest in being part of a HICD process; and potential impact of CBCSA support.

Based on the above criteria, CBCSA submitted to USAID on August 16, 2013, recommendations for CSOs to receive assistance. On September 24, 2013, to engage a broader range of CSOs, in coordination with USAID, CBCSA opened applications to any Nicaraguan CSO that met the eligibility criteria in Exhibit 2. CBCSA ensured a fair and transparent process, and 65 CSOs submitted expressions of interest (EOI). Based on evaluation criteria, 33 eligible CSOs were invited to participate in an informational conference. Of the 33 CSOs, 28 completed formal applications after the conference.

#### Exhibit 2. CSO Selection Eligibility Criteria

Work in the democracy and governance field, including the crosscutting areas of CBCSA (gender, youth, minorities, LGBTI, and conflict management)

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Non-partisan

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Nicaraguan and legally registered in Nicaragua

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Have a history of ample cooperation with other CSOs in resources mobilization, networks, alliances or coalitions. Preference will be given to organizations with previous or actual collaboration experience with USAID.

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Working closely with USAID, CBCSA created an internal selection committee to score the applicants according to a clear set of 10 selection criteria. The nine CSOs with the highest scores were selected as year 1 partners and were approved by USAID.

After one CSO, Comisión Permanente de Derechos Humanos (CPDH), rescinded its participation, the tenth CSO selected to receive assistance became Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (FVBCH), a direct USAID grantee. Like EyT, FVBCH also needed capacity building assistance to conform with USAID guidelines and reach its programmatic objectives to address citizen demands.

Phase 2, which began on April 22, 2016, involved a separate grants solicitation and selection process using the pool of selected CSOs from phase 1 and three additional targeted think tanks to be eligible to receive grant funding through two separate opportunities—the first for eligible CSOs to implement capacity building priorities to improve operational performance as well as implement advocacy initiatives; and the second for eligible think tanks to strengthen their ability to advocate for citizen demands while supporting enhanced research and economic policy analysis.

On June 23, 2016, CBCSA issued the Request for Applications (RFA) for the first pool, receiving 20 applications before the closing date. Based on the evaluation using eligibility and merit criteria, CBCSA selected the eight CSOs that obtained the highest final averaged score. All eight were subsequently approved by USAID. For a list of selected CSOs, see Exhibit 3 below.

On June 24, 2016, CBCSA issued the RFA for the think tank grant pool, targeting five pre-identified think tanks two of which were in the original pool of 28 pre-selected CSOs, including Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUNIDES), Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP), Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Democracia (IPADE), Fundación Internacional para el Desafío Económico Global (FIDEG), and Centro de Estudios y Promoción Social (CEPS). The think tank selection process involved two phases. First, the applicants submitted a concept paper. Of the five targeted think tanks, three submitted concept papers (FIDEG, IEEPP, and FUNIDES). Of those three, IEEPP and FUNIDES were selected to submit full proposals, and FUNIDES was ultimately selected and approved by USAID to receive grant funding.

To solicit additional grantee ideas, CBCSA issued an Annual Program Statement (APS) in December 2016 for eligible CSOs to implement capacity-building and advocacy activities. The APS was open for six months until June 23, 2017. During that period, CBCSA received 14 applications and selected 5 (Centro de Estudios para la Gobernabilidad y la Democracia (CEGODEM), Asociación para la Supervivencia y el Desarrollo Local (ASODEL), FUNIDES, ACD (Asociación Cívica por la Democracia), and IEEPP), based on the availability of funding and the eligibility and merit criteria.

### **III. MAIN PROGRAM RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

#### **IMPROVE HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF SELECTED CSOS**

##### **OCAT BASELINE AND FINAL SCORES**

Before providing capacity-building assistance, CBCSA established a baseline for each CSO's capacity using the adapted OCAT. The OCAT provided a snapshot of each CSO's current performance in seven areas:

- *Governance*: The provision of leadership and direction to an organization.
- *Management Practices*: The mechanisms intended to coordinate activities and facilitate processes within an organization.
- *Human Resources*: The management, staff members, volunteers, constituents, donors, and board members who have skills, motivation, and opportunity to contribute to an organization.
- *Financial Resources*: The resources required to purchase goods and services needed to conduct its affairs, record and account for financial transactions and monitor and report on its financial status. It involves adequate resources and necessary cash flow, a diverse resource base and long-term plans for meeting resource needs.

- *Service Delivery*: The programs and services carried out by CSOs that are appropriate, most-effective, and of high-quality.
- *External Relations*: The interaction between an organization and other development partners in the context in which it carries out its activities, which ensure that it is noting and responding appropriately to the social, political, ecological, economic, and other forces and events around it.
- *Sustainability*: The long-term continuation of an organization, program, or project. Identifies and measures the extent to which local partners of a CSO will continue to pursue and support the objectives after a project is over and involves the continuation of programs, institutions, and funding.

As previously noted, CBCSA supported the organizational development goals of 17 partner organizations through capacity-building activities and GUC. During its first phase, CBCSA provided capacity building to 10 CSOs, 5 of which continued to receive support during the second phase in addition to 7 new partners.

**Exhibit 3. CBCSA Partners by Phase**

Phase 1		Phase 2	
Partner Name	TIPs Developed	Partner Name	Grants Awarded
CINCO	2	CINCO	1
RED LOCAL	2	RED LOCAL	1
IEEPP	2	IEEPP	1
FVBCH	2	FVBCH	1
IPADE	2	IPADE	1
CARITAS	2	ACD	1
HADEMOS	2	INDE	1
MPN	2	CEGODEM	1
EDUQUEMOS	2	CEPS	1
EyT	3	REN	1
		ASODEL	2
		FUNIDES	2

### PHASE I CSO CAPACITY GROWTH IN MAIN OCAT COMPONENTS

At the end of the first phase, OCAT re-assessment scores showed substantial performance improvements from the pre-TIP OCAT baseline scores. Partner CSOs’ organizational capacity scores improved across all seven components of the OCAT and had an overall average score increase of 13.6% from baseline data. Component areas with the biggest aggregate improvements from the baseline were human resources (19.5%) and financial resources (17.6%). Moreover, individual CSOs demonstrated significant improvements in component areas such as:

- **Management Practices**: Eight CSOs improved their scores with FVBCH achieving the highest score increase of 73.55% from its baseline in 2014 to its reassessment in 2015.
- **Service Delivery**: Seven CSOs increased their scores, led again by FVBCH with a score increase of 63.48%.
- **Human Resources**: Eight improved their scores in this component with FVBCH improving its score by 60.95%.

To better illustrate quantitative improvements, CBCSA used the OCAT rating scale (0-6) to classify the organizational development stages of CSOs as follows:

- **Nascent**: The CSO is in the earliest stages of development. All the components measured by the OCAT are in rudimentary form or non-existent (Score of 0-1.4).
- **Emerging**: The CSO is developing some capacity. Structures for governance, management practices, human resources, financial resources, and service delivery are in place and functioning (Score of 1.5-2.9).

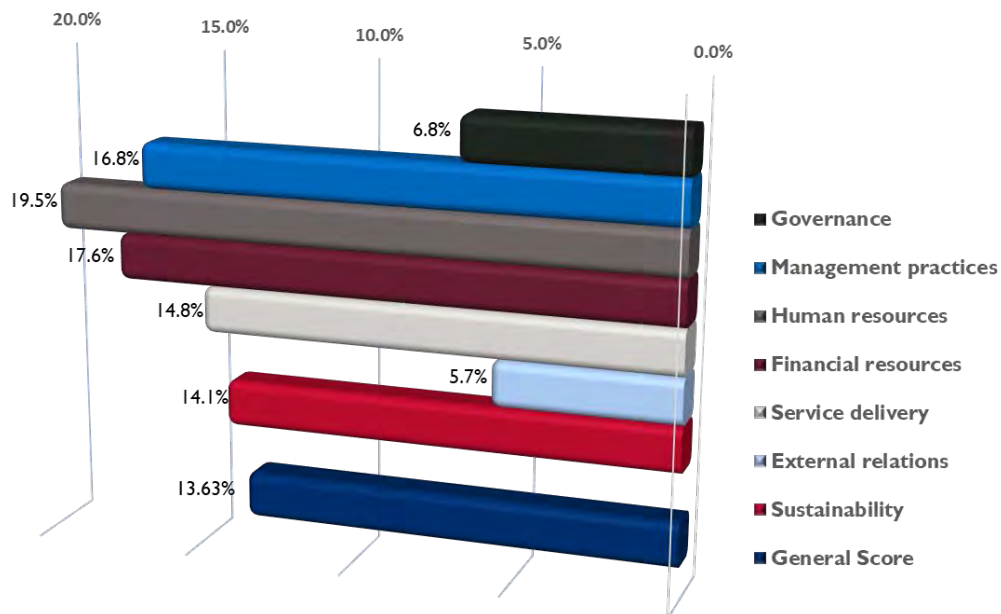
- Expanding: The CSO has a track record of achievement; its work is recognized by its constituency, the private business sector and other CSOs active in the same sector (Score of 3-4.4).
- Mature: The CSO is fully functioning and sustainable, with a diversified resource base and partnership relationships with national and international networks (Score of 4.5-6).

Due to CBCSA support in phase I, Foro Educativo Nicaragüense (EDUQUEMOS), EyT, IPADE, and Movimiento por Nicaragua (MpN) improved their organizational development stage from "expanding" to "mature," reaching general scores above 4.5 after the implementation of their tailored TIPs and associated interventions. EyT, EDUQUEMOS, and IPADE received capacity building support in five of the seven capacity areas addressed by the OCAT—governance, management practices, human resources, external relations, and sustainability. Their biggest areas of improvement were in sustainability with a 70.71% score increase for EyT, a 29.11% score increase for EDUQUEMOS, and a 43.94% score increase for IPADE. MpN’s greatest improvement was in financial resources with an increase in score of 57.23%.

Red Nicaragüense por la Democracia y el Desarrollo Local (RED LOCAL), IEEPP, FVBCH, and Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación (CINCO) maintained their organizational stage, although their OCAT general scores increased as they grew within the scale of the same stage. FVBCH strengthened its status as an "expanding" organization, raising its general baseline score from 3.40 in 2014 to 4.40 in 2015 while CINCO’s general score increased from 4.52 to 5.42, RED LOCAL’s increased from 4.15 to 4.26, and IEEPP’s increased from 3.59 to 3.81.

While CARITAS’s and Hagamos Democracia’s (HADEMOS) general scores declined, scores in prioritized components increased. The baseline general score of CARITAS went from 3.18 to 2.68, but the organization did show improvements in prioritized component areas including external relations which increased from a baseline of 3.52 to 3.70. The reason for the decline in the general score was due to a complete turnover of staff before the final self-assessment. This affected the staff knowledge of the organizational performance level. Likewise, HADEMOS’s general score declined from 4.5 to 4.38 while it improved in four OCAT components—management practices, human resources, service delivery, and financial resources. This last component had the highest improvement from a score of 4.17 to 4.54.

**Exhibit 4. Phase I Percent Improvement by OCAT Component (Baseline vs. 2015 Re-Assessment)**



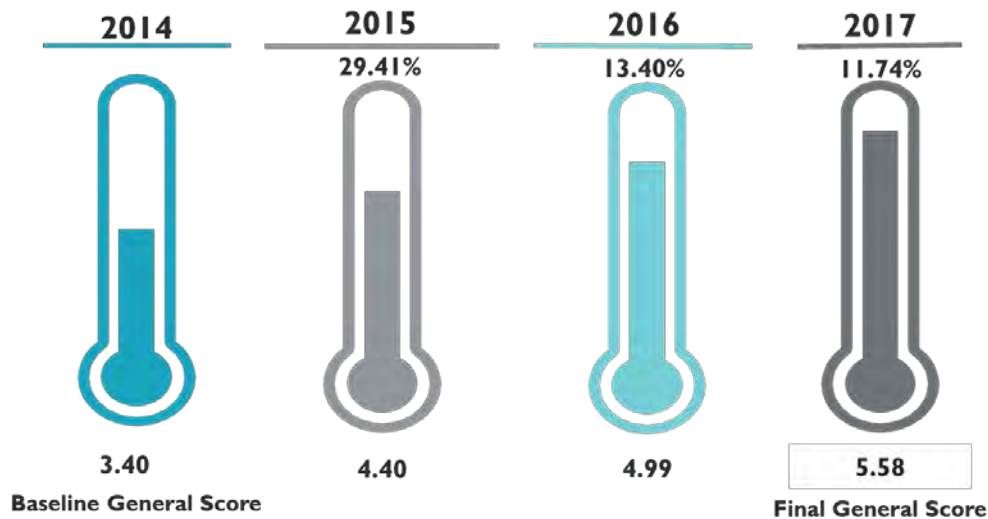
### Phase 2 CSO capacity growth in main components

In phase 2, CBCSA continued to support the organizational development goals of partner organizations through capacity-building activities and GUCs. The final OCAT self-assessment scores showed substantial performance improvements. Organizational capacity scores improved across all seven components of the OCAT and had an overall average score increase of 9.90% from baseline data collected at the beginning of grants implementation. The capacity areas with the biggest aggregate improvements from the baseline were human resources (16.15%), sustainability (12.97%), and service delivery (12.63%).

The five CSOs that were partners in phases 1 and 2 continued growing their organizational capacities during the GUC phase, showing significant improvements in all seven OCAT components. Four CSOs—IPADE, IEEPP, RED LOCAL, FVBCH—reached the highest stage of organizational development, becoming “mature” organizations.

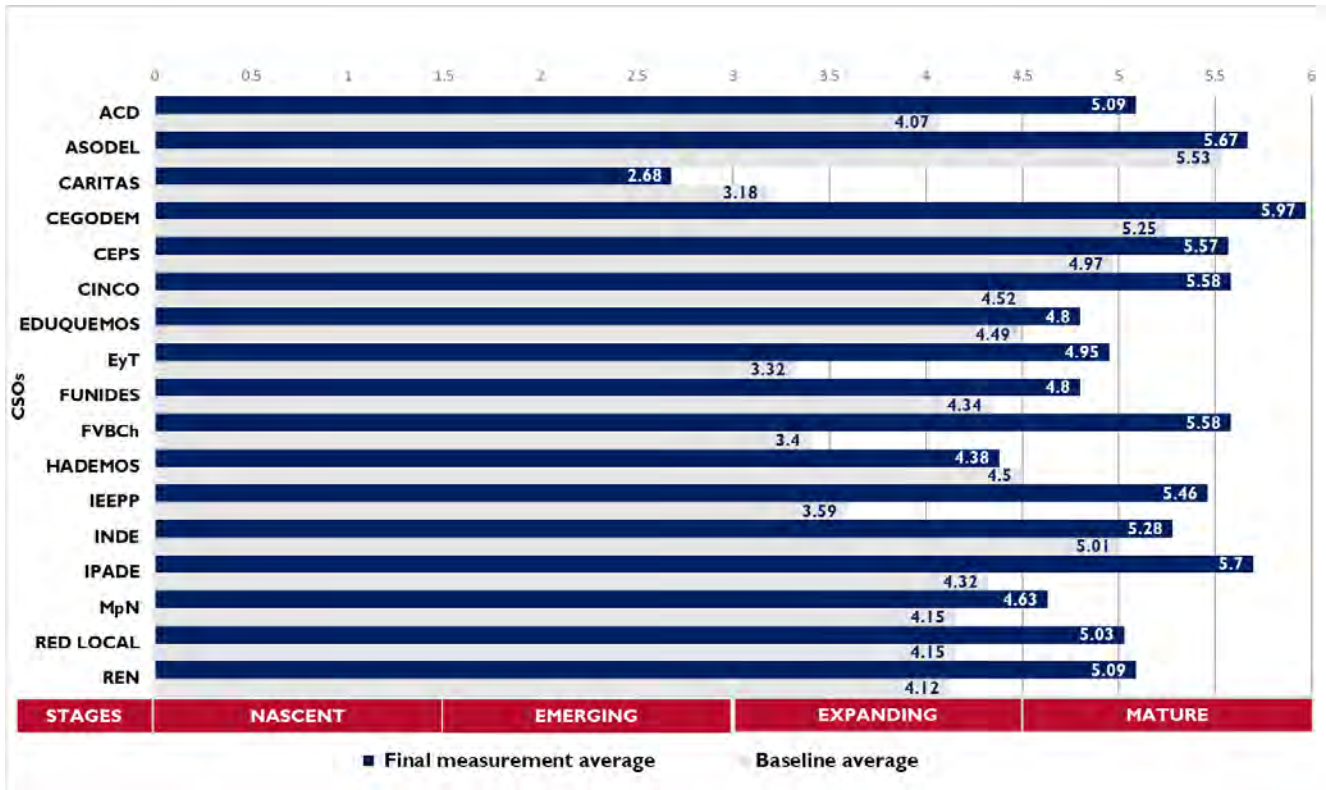
FVBCH was the CBCSA partner with the highest level of organizational strengthening, growing from its OCAT baseline score of 3.40 to 5.58. Its human resources score impressively improved 107.40% from its baseline as did service delivery with an increase of 102.38%, management practices with an increase of 102.27%, and financial resources with an increase of 98.85%.

**Exhibit 5. FVBCH’s Organizational Growth (2014-2017)**

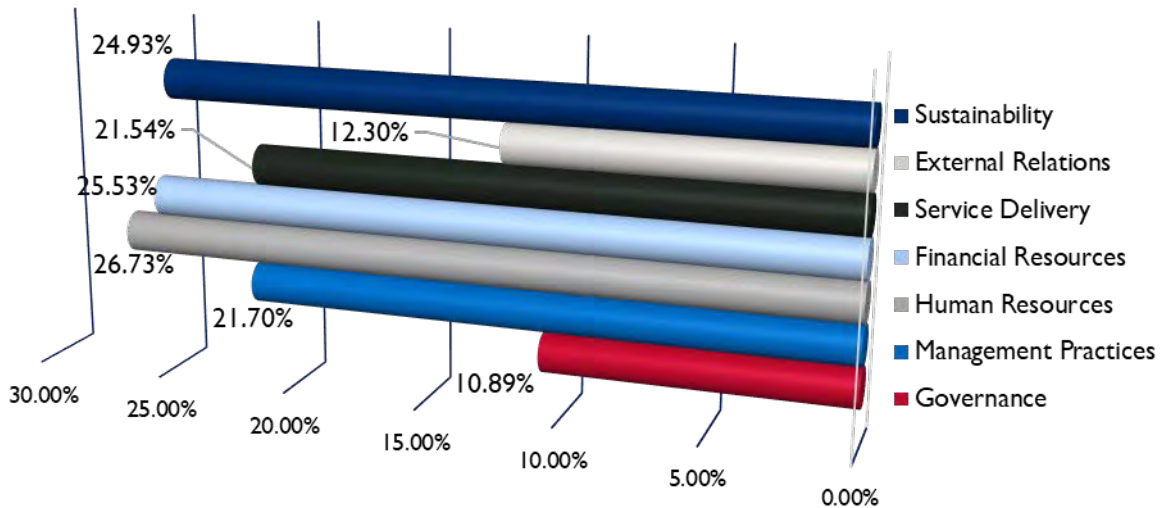


Overall, CSOs exhibited increased institutional capacity, enabling them to better advocate for citizen demands, raise awareness, and engage key stakeholders as well as increase their sustainability in a closing donor space. Exhibits 6 and 7 below present the overall increases in CSOs’ general scores and individual OCAT components. For more information on individual OCAT component scores for each CSO, see Annex IV.

**Exhibit 6. CSO OCAT Baseline vs Final Scores (Phases I and 2)**



**Exhibit 7. Overall Percent Improvement of Each OCAT Component (Phases I and 2)**



**KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED THROUGH TIPS AND GUC**

As a result of CBCSA’s support, CSOs have:

- *Clear mission statements and strategies*  
Thirteen CSOs refined their missions and visions based on the evolving operating environment and new needs. The revisions take into consideration how the CSOs aim to serve key stakeholders. The refined missions and visions will support the CSOs to better communicate their purpose and values.

- Effective strategic plans and program designs in place based on CSO missions*

CBCSA strengthened 13 CSOs' planning capacity with the development of 13 strategic and operational plans for ACD, CARITAS, CINCO, EDUQUEMOS, EyT, FVBCH, HADEMOS, IEEPP, IPADE, MpN, RED LOCAL, ASODEL, and REN. As a result, these CSOs improved their internal governance and management capacities, with a focus on sustainability and M&E. Each CSO reviewed and refined its mission, vision, and defined strategic guidelines and actions, outlining a road map of its goals over several years. Defining and documenting the strategic approach allowed the CSO, its donors, and key stakeholders to develop a better understanding of the organization's mission.
- Efficient management policies and structures in place consistent with strategic plans*

The organizational and performance self-assessments identified bottlenecks and weaknesses to address to improve CSO sustainability. CBCSA and 16 CSOs developed 88 policy manuals in total. With these policy manuals in place, CBCSA provided the CSOs with the capacity to meet internationally-accepted management standards. For example, EQUQUEMOS successfully developed internal administrative and financial manuals that improved its management capacity, gaining credibility among other donors and immediately increasing its funding in 2015 by receiving 13,000 Euros from Hivos of Netherlands to implement a new project. EDUQUEMOS would not have received the donation if it had not had the appropriate management policies to enable it to be more accountable towards its stakeholders.
- Strengthened financial management capacities*

CBCSA provided technical assistance and grant support to train 12 members of EyT's and IEEPP's technical and administrative team on the use of the accounting software system Análisis y Sistemas, S.A. (ASIS). The training provided the CSOs' staff with a more comprehensive understanding of how technology can improve and expedite financial operations. It also improved EyT's and IEEPP's internal management, and increased their transparency and accountability for stakeholders. In January 2016, CBCSA's Operations Manager and M&E Specialist visited IEEPP to measure the CSO's progress on using its Accounting System ASIS through a post-evaluation survey.

The survey showed that IEEPP achieved a time savings of 35% in its financial and accounting processes and EyT achieved a time savings of 40%, including improved classification of expenses, better budget monitoring, and improved internal financial audits.

During phase 2, CBCSA provided REN with a new administrative and accounting software to improve its internal management and increase transparency and accountability in financial reporting to multiple stakeholders. The new accounting software was integrated with REN's fundraising and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, reducing errors when entering information. It also enabled REN to produce financial reports, track and report on segregated accounts, ensure donor and grant regulations were met, produce accurate financial reporting, demonstrate accountability to stakeholders, and share grant information internally, so that staff members could access the necessary reports for decision-making.
- Improved sustainability through new donors, fee-for-services, and volunteerism*

During phase 1, CBCSA supported 10 CSOs to improve their financial sustainability through the development of strategies for effective fundraising, donor partnership, and the use of technology and volunteers to increase sustainability. The development of these strategies involved four cohort trainings on topics such as paradigms on fundraising for CSOs, management of volunteers, strategic alliances for CSOs, and a workshop on the legal framework for CSOs to provide services.



To support CARITAS’s sustainability, CBCSA worked closely with the CSO to develop a management plan for the implementation of its fundraising campaign “Provision of Integral Attention to Women.” The plan included a timeline, roles and responsibilities, and clear fundraising targets that were tied to a budget and goals. CARITAS presented the strategy and budget to a group of donors, resulting in a donation of approximately \$12,000 from various organizations including Catholic Relief Services, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and CARITAS SUIZA. It also received a \$75,000 donation from Kellogg’s-Central America.

**Exhibit 8. CARITAS Executive Director receiving a donation from Kellogg’s-Central America**



In addition, CBCSA designed digital and media campaign materials, including posters, Twitter messages, and Facebook pages for CARITAS. CBCSA supported CARITAS’s outreach and potential partnerships with traditional media that resulted in a variety of radio and TV spots that were advertised by 13 national media outlets for free, including Canal 2, Canal 10, Canal 12, Canal 14, Radio Corporación, Diario La Prensa, Canal 23, ACAN EFE, Radio Católica, Canal Católico, Radio Mundial, Radio Voz Católica, and Radio Sandino. As mentioned above in Section II, CARITAS raised \$150,000 during its fundraising campaign.

To support MpN’s financial sustainability, CBCSA assisted the CSO to create two digital fundraising campaigns with a more updated, renovated, and attractive digital image. One of the campaigns, “Boletín por Nicaragua” was sent to over 1,000 persons through Mailchimp. The other campaign, “Democracia hecha a Mano,” was launched on August 6, 2015 on Global Giving, the first and largest global crowdfunding online community that connects nonprofits, donors and companies. MpN’s global giving platform is active and has raised \$6,450 of its \$25,000 goal to date.

**“We thank the CBCSA Program for understanding that sustainability is a key subject for MpN; the support provided helped close an institutional human resource gap that enabled the organization to resume the implementation of its sustainability strategy.”**

-Violeta Granera, Executive Director, MPN

Additionally, CBCSA supported MpN to revise, expand, and organize its donor database using CRM, reaching 1,115 entries. This improved MpN’s capacity to track potential donors and to raise the public’s awareness of its activities.

In the face of ever-growing community needs and persistent economic strains on partners CSOs, volunteerism is very useful to meet critical needs and support continued sustainability. CBCSA carried out a training on volunteer management for six CSOs in response to the need for improving financial sustainability through a more effective use of volunteers, thus reducing the human resources burden on the organizations. The executive directors and key staff

members from CINCO, CARITAS, MPN, FVBCH, EyT, RED LOCAL, and EDUQUEMOS attended.

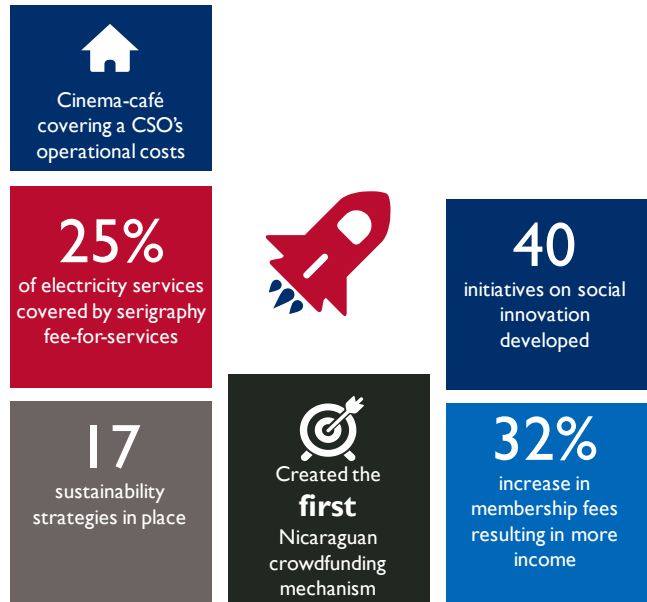
To build and/or strengthen CSOs’ volunteer networks, CBCSA also developed a volunteer management model. This model empowered MpN to optimize its volunteer management and provided a practical guide for those responsible for managing volunteers, providing MpN with a step-by-step guide to ease the process of creating and maintaining a viable volunteer program aligned with its strategic plan. MpN now has a useful institutional strengthening tool to motivate and manage its volunteers as well as allow it to advocate effectively and contribute to institutional strengthening and broaden fundraising options.

CBCSA also provided specific technical assistance to EDUQUEMOS to create its first network of more than 20 volunteers to contribute to its long-term sustainability. CBCSA mentored EDUQUEMOS to develop basic tools such as application forms, work plans, and training for its volunteer network. A post-training survey

indicated an increase in knowledge of how to better leverage volunteer networks to achieve organizational goals and sustainability.

Furthermore, during phase 2 of the project, CBCSA successfully supported ASODEL to implement two activities that are already generating savings and income, while improving the local community's wellbeing. After training 10 youth activists on serigraphy (silk screening) and how to use a screen printing machine purchased through a CBCSA grant, ASODEL created a fee-for-services unit, employing youth to offer screen printing services to other groups and businesses. ASODEL is generating income through tuition fees from its serigraphy courses, covering 25% of ASODEL's electricity bill and the serigraphy unit's costs in full. ASODEL also opened the cinema-café La Maga, a space for open dialogue, citizen participation, and critical thinking. ASODEL uses La Maga for its activities, including trainings, presentations, and meetings, saving ASODEL from paying rental fees for other venues and covering security guard costs. La Maga is already contributing to ASODEL's financial sustainability as other organizations, businesses, and individuals are renting it for meetings and events.

**Exhibit 9. Phase 2 Sustainability Efforts**



Furthermore, CBCSA supported IPADE to transform 20 years of experience in cacao production into four educational modules for agro-technicians. With CBCSA assistance, IPADE is ready to sell these modules for a fee, helping sustain its overall operations.

Finally, CBCSA supported CINCO to develop the first Nicaraguan crowdfunding mechanism that does not rely on international intermediaries. CINCO plans to offer fee-for-services to other CSOs and the media on how to develop crowdfunding platforms that reach new sponsors to overcome the closing political space and its impact on civil society's financial survival.

- *An understanding of the legal framework for CSOs and how to operate within it*

CBCSA developed a legal framework guide and training for phase I beneficiary CSOs to provide them with the knowledge to exercise their rights and to fulfill their legal obligations regarding taxation, labor, and social security. The training and guide also highlighted certain areas of the law with which CSOs should have more caution to avoid issues with authorities. For example, CSOs are often concerned with providing fee-for-services as they believe they may lose their tax-exempt status. The training provided information on the tax treatment of this activity and made clear that the legal order and case law enables CSOs to provide these services without paying taxes. A legal and administrative guide was given to the CSOs for further advice. Twenty-one individuals from eight CSOs (IEEPP, EyT, FVBCH, EDUQUEMOS, IPADE, Caritas de Nicaragua, HADEMOS, and MPN) participated in the training, which was recorded and shared on CBCSA's internal virtual platform *Voces por Nicaragua* so that other members of the beneficiary organizations and their chapters outside of Managua may benefit from this information.

When asked if the legal framework event was worthwhile, the participants said:

**"Yes, because it provided me the opportunity to learn in-depth about our obligations as NGOs and about the procedures to perform in difficult situations."**

-Johaira Rodríguez, Accounting Assistant, IEEPP

**"Yes, because it updates us on topics of great importance for NGOs."**

-Marcos Fletes, General Accountant, FVBCH

**"Of course, it was! Because the law is rather broad and it is constantly changing, so it is necessary to understand and to scale its impact on NGOs just to be prepared."**

-Martha Mondragón, Administrative Manager, IPADE

- *MEL tools and skills*

CBCSA provided continued support and training to 17 CSOs on M&E topics such as data collection and analyzing project results. CBCSA's technical assistance and support included the development of two M&E systems, and one-on-one trainings on how to use the systems (see Section IV M&E for more information).

- *Strengthened internal governance*

CBCSA worked on improving the internal governance of CSOs to promote transparency and accountability with their stakeholders to increase public understanding and support for their work. CBCSA developed four manuals and workshops related to best practices for decision-making for MpN, EDUQUEMOS, EyT and FVBCH to strengthen the transparency and accountability of their Boards of Directors (BOD). In addition to the manual, CBCSA provided technical assistance and training on transparency and accountability leadership to the BODs and key personnel of each CSO, resulting in:

- A succession plan for key positions of EyT, aimed at building new capacities, new initiatives, ideas, mechanisms of innovation, and improvement of internal processes. Young staff were trained on leadership, transparency, and accountability to increase their capacity and to provide the organization with a pool of sound candidates to fill key positions when required, thus supporting the long-term sustainability of EyT. With this plan in place, EyT is prepared to foresee any major staffing difficulties before they occur, to handle challenges, and to continue to achieve its mission.
- Strategies, procedures, and mechanisms for FVBCH to enable top management and leaders to have effective and efficient mechanisms to achieve more timely, accurate, and transparent accountability, which resulted in increased credibility among its stakeholder group including beneficiaries, donors, volunteers, partner organizations at the national and international level, and the BOD. Through this assistance, CBCSA strengthened FVBCH's transparency and accountability at the highest institutional level.

- *New technologies to better achieve their missions*

To extend learning beyond organizational boundaries and to maximize time and financial resources, CBCSA created cohorts of CSOs that face similar performance gaps, with particular focus on information, communications, and technology (ICT). In May 2015, with the support of a smart governance expert, CBCSA held a cohort training on using social media to increase public understanding and support of CSOs' work. After the training participants were more familiarized with new trends and social media tools and how they can be used to facilitate communication and streamline workflows. They also had better understanding on how these websites and applications enable CSOs to become more engaged with the community using new means for communication.

**“I have to mention that I’m old-fashioned and I resisted social media; but this presentation helped me a lot, since I learned enough to finally convince myself that this is the future.”**  
-Joaquín Tórrez, Communications Officer, FVBCH

In June 2015, CBCSA held a cohort webinar on community management through CBCSA's internal *Voces por Nicaragua* platform. During this cohort webinar, nine participants from eight CSOs received background on online community initiatives and learned how organizations are leveraging them today as well as how to develop and implement their own online communities.

**“One of the most useful things learned from the Venezuelan civil society experience during the recent parliamentary electoral process is the importance of defining the key aspects of an organizational alliance to manage the same campaign to pursue change for Nicaragua.”**  
-Violeta Granera, Executive Director, MpN

As a result of the trainings and technical assistance, IPADE, HADEMOS, IEEPP, and MpN implemented concrete plans and internal policies to better advocate through social networks.

Finally, in a very complex political environment, keeping sensitive information secure has become a challenge for CSOs in the D&G sector. CBCSA addressed EyT's ICT security gaps by developing an ICT Manual, which provided the CSO's staff and beneficiaries with standards and guidelines for operating in a safe digital environment, minimizing threats to information security, and protecting its users. This effort was complemented by training EyT's staff on the implementation of the manual, helping them understand the sensitivity of the institutional data they work with and their role in keeping it safe.

- *Communication and advocacy strategies for better advocacy*

During phase I of the project, CBCSA provided technical assistance and support to strengthen the communications and advocacy capacities of beneficiary CSOs.

CBCSA increased the communications capacities of four CSOs (EyT, EDUQUEMOS, FVBCH, and IPADE) by developing four strategic communications plans to help the organizations increase community-based support for their activities. The plans outlined institutional strategic objectives, goals, practices, and social media tools to enable each CSO to send consistent messages about its mission and accomplishments.

To increase CSOs' advocacy skills and actions, CBCSA carried out cohort webinars on public policy advocacy to learn from other the experiences of Latin American peer organizations on how to find niches or means to generate awareness in difficult political environments and provided case studies of successful advocacy in similar operating environments. CBCSA also trained all 10 CSO partners how to develop comprehensive models for advocacy, including planning and establishing mechanisms for institutional strengthening.

After these trainings, CBCSA appraised EDUQUEMOS's, EyT's, HADEMOS's, and MpN's institutional advocacy capacities in accordance with their TIPs to develop advocacy strategies and plans aligned with their respective missions and strategic plans. Based on the appraisals, CBCSA then provided technical assistance to each CSO to develop advocacy strategies and plans with associated budgets to achieve strategic goals and better advocate for citizen demands. Each CSO's strategy clearly reflected the policy change they wanted to achieve and provides them with a concrete road map to affect public policy.

- *New or improved gender practices*

During phase 1, CBCSA trained 10 individuals from 9 CSOs on gender inclusion and USAID’s policies on gender equality and female empowerment, including LGBTI, as well as other policies on inclusion in USAID programming. The workshop increased awareness among partners of the need for the CSOs to include gender concepts and recognize the importance of gender analysis and gender integration in their development programs.

As a result of the training, CARITAS developed a fundraising campaign called “Week of Charity” with the slogan “For an integral attention to women.” The \$150,000 funds raised served to provide health care to women at CARITAS’s local medical units and give assistance to women victims of human trafficking and violence.

With CBCSA support, EyT, ACD, CEPS, INDE, and FUNIDES developed their first institutional gender policies to close the gaps between men and women at all levels of the organizations and in Nicaraguan society. These gender policies are helping CSOs ensure they incorporate a gender approach in their programming.

**Exhibit 10. FUNIDES’s first study that includes a gender approach**



Various CSO partners established alliances to promote gender equality. In coordination with REN, FUNIDES published the study “*The obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs to access tax benefits.*” This study provided important inputs to decision makers and raised awareness among key stakeholders in the business community, government, and public to promote the access of women entrepreneurs to tax benefits. The study also provided information to women entrepreneurs on how to use the government’s online platform to obtain tax information.

REN will use the study to implement an advocacy campaign to promote the access of women entrepreneurs to tax benefits, train women entrepreneurs on how to use the government’s online platform to access these benefits, and advocate for the simplification of procedures for better access to these benefits.

- *New toolkits to guide CSOs to better achieve their mission*  
CBCSA developed 18 toolkits related to gender and social inclusion, sustainability, advocacy, and social media, among others. These resources are available on CBCSA’s web-based platform *Voces por Nicaragua* and were printed or share digitally with all 17 partners to ensure its access after the program is

closed. These tools served and will continue to serve as reference guides for CSOs in their everyday work.

**EMPOWER CSOS THROUGH GRANTS TO INCREASE COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY**

In phase 2 of CBCSA, GUCs helped put organizational development priorities from phase 1 into practice. They fostered further capacity building by enabling CSOs to manage grant funds, independently implement advocacy and networking activities, prioritize institutional capacity building through self-identifying needed short-term technical assistance, and identify other capacity building objectives in their grant applications. The GUCs also augmented technical assistance by providing the needed funds that helped CSOs take organizational improvements a step further—buying needed equipment and software, retaining staff, obtaining highly specialized technical assistance for specific CSO-driven actions, and conducting advocacy campaigns.

In phase 2, increasing and expanding advocacy remained a priority for CSOs and for CBCSA. Through grants and targeted in-house capacity-building assistance, CBCSA supported CSOs to increase awareness among the public on targeted issues and mobilize support from constituents, volunteers, other CSOs, and the media. The project encouraged CSOs to target issues where information was easily available and where constituents may be more readily engaged such as women’s rights and youth civic participation. In addition, CBCSA assisted CSOs that



prioritized research as part of their advocacy approach to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data to provide an evidence base for other CSOs.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH CAPACITIES IMPROVED

The project strengthened grantees' advocacy capacities through the revision and creation of communication tools, particularly digital media tools. Two partner CSOs (ACD and FUNIDES) developed communication strategies and all grantees created new communication content, and used new and traditional media that enabled them to successfully disseminate information about their institutional work and develop campaigns on specific topics. Advocacy campaign topics included preventing sexual abuse and/or violence against children, teenagers, and women; the right to have a legal identity and identification; and the human rights of vulnerable groups including children, youth, women, ethnic groups, and the LGBTI community. Grantees also effectively disseminated studies and research to generate debate and awareness among the population to influence public opinion and affect public policy.

Specifically, CBCSA supported FUNIDES to improve its communications abilities by developing a communications strategy, enabling the organization to manage and disseminate complete and comprehensive information on its work. This support helped FUNIDES generate fresh information through social media and traditional media outlets to generate public awareness of social and economic subjects such as access to education, risk management and climate change, economic development, and governance, among others. Consequently, FUNIDES increased its Facebook followers to 75,000; its YouTube followers to 160 with 1,500 video views; and created an Instagram profile reaching 223 new followers. FUNIDES's work appeared 300 times in traditional media due to its increased outreach efforts, including broadcasting the presentations of its studies on Facebook reaching 1,000 views. With CBCSA assistance, FUNIDES produced five videos about its work that were viewed 780 times on YouTube.

Finally, through a CBCSA grant, CINCO improved the IT security capacities of 150 individuals from D&G CSOs, journalists, and human rights groups through workshops on institutional and individual information security management, which is particularly important in challenging political contexts. The trainees learned how to encrypt information on their cell phones, computers, and other devices to prevent cyber attacks and manipulation of their communications pieces or websites with news about topics important to Nicaraguans.

### ADVOCACY SKILLS TRANSLATED INTO ACTION

Grants also provided CSOs the opportunity to put their increased advocacy skills into practice and develop specific advocacy actions. These actions included radio and television communications campaigns, digital media campaigns, sharing of experiences, work tours with the media, mobilizations, marches, crowdfunding and crowdsourcing campaigns, youth internships, collaborative alliances with media, and forums and trainings on advocacy, among others.

Through a CBCSA grant, CEGODEM strengthened the institutional and advocacy capacities of 18 organizations in the departments of Chinandega and León to advocate, defend, and promote the human rights of vulnerable

#### Exhibit 11. Main Advocacy Actions



Trained 840 youth and women on innovation, and new digital tools for advocacy and activism.



Trained 181 young activists and teachers on how to advocate against gender violence and sexual abuse of children.



Empowered and trained 15 women CSO leaders on how to defend themselves from virtual and physical sexual aggression.



172 people registered for the first time to exercise their civil and political rights.



25 leaders empowered through the first postgraduate course on human rights of vulnerable groups.



18 organizations prepared to advocate, defend and promote human rights.



**“This course provides the opportunity to find out much more about the rights of vulnerable groups and share experiences. There is a lot to share to get feedback that contributes to improving the work of each [organization] participating in the course.”**

-Norman Gutiérrez, Director, Centro para la Educación y Prevención del Sida

groups through 20 trainings on topics such as new masculinities, social auditing, ICTs, creative activism, and production of videos for social change. As a result of CEGODEM’s support, three LGBTI groups from Masaya advocated to declare the locality free from discrimination against the LGBTI population.

CEGODEM also developed and delivered a postgraduate course on democratic governance and human rights of vulnerable populations called “Democratic Governance and Human Rights.” The course was taken by 25 Nicaraguan human rights activists working on these issues and focused on the conditions of indigenous peoples, youth, women, and LGBTI individuals. As a result, these activists enhanced their skills to promote and defend human rights and democratic governance.

With its CBCSA grant, ASODEL executed the public awareness campaign “Lifting Voices against Sexual Abuse” that included trainings, public forums, and public demonstrations. Under this campaign, ASODEL raised and increased awareness on the need to have spaces for dialogue and information to prevent sexual abuse of children. ASODEL’s awareness and trainings targeted the entire population of Chinandega and included activities and actions in 10 schools, focusing on elementary and high school teachers, parents, children, adolescents, and youth. The campaign directly reached 1,132 individuals who participated in different activities under the campaign. Through social media, ASODEL’s campaign reached more than 5,000 Nicaraguans. As a result of this effort, three cases of alleged sexual abuse have been identified and are in the process being denounced.



**Exhibit 12. Public demonstration against sexual abuse of children in Chinandega**

**Exhibit 13. Leaflet for IPADE’s campaign**



Through a digital and radio campaign funded by a CBCSA grant, IPADE generated awareness and disseminated information on citizen identification rights. The campaign focused on the LGBTI community in Managua, Tipitapa, Masaya, and the Mulukukú region and was broadcast through five local radio stations and door-to-door visits. IPADE’s campaign included actions to promote, distribute, and disseminate information to identify cases of individuals lacking identity documents and provide legal input on how to access and obtain proper documentation. At the end of its grant implementation, IPADE succeeded in supporting 172 unregistered individuals to obtain legal identification. These individuals are now able to exercise their full rights as Nicaraguan citizens, including accessing formal education, voting in Nicaraguan elections, and opening bank accounts, among other tasks that require identification.

Through its CBCSA grant, FUNIDES developed and disseminated studies on economic and social issues, contributing to public-private dialogue around key public policies, and broader engagement with key decision makers—an indication of improved advocacy and networking capacity. FUNIDES’s studies included, but were not limited to:

- Three Nicaraguan Economic Situation Quarterly Reports that provided data on the national and international economic situation, growth projections, results of confidence surveys, and a proposal to bring about structural changes in productivity that can be used for decision-making and evidence-based advocacy. These were presented to businessmen, professors, students, public and private officials, donor

agencies, and media outlets, reaching more than 600 individuals who attended these events as well as the wider public reached through the media.

- The study “The factors that affect the quality of education in Nicaragua. Do children enjoy the same opportunities?” which examined the factors that influence the academic performance of students and provided data and recommendations on how the education system could improve the overall quality of education in Nicaragua. Public discourse about education has historically been minimal in Nicaragua, and through its advocacy campaign, FUNIDES generated public discussion about the issue, reaching 132 individuals who attended the study launch, more than 2,000 people through social media, and more than 10,000 through radio and television. In addition, FUNIDES’s study was mentioned 30 times in the media—more than any other study it has released, demonstrating the efficacy of FUNIDE’s outreach efforts. Through this expanded outreach, FUNIDES attracted greater public interest, and fostered wider dialogue around education in Nicaragua to lead to meaningful change in the sector.

As part of its CBCSA grant, INDE successfully trained 840 youth and women entrepreneurs in 7 localities of Nicaragua on topics including: how to advocate using new tools for digital activism, virtual platforms to improve business potential, and business skills to affect change within spheres of influence. After these trainings, INDE’s local chapters submitted five advocacy petitions to the municipality offices. One of them was developed with the owners of the hotels and businesses of Granada. The goal of the petition was to encourage local authorities to develop local regulations against sexual tourism. Unfortunately, due to municipal elections on November 5, 2017, the petition did not advance as of this reporting date as new local authorities were elected. INDE plans to follow-up on the petition with the new administration after CBCSA closes.

#### GRANTS IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

As part of ongoing capacity building to help CSOs advocate for citizen demands, CBCSA supported CSOs to effectively implement and manage their grants. As a first step in this process, CBCSA conducted a pre-award risk assessment for each grantee to determine if any special award conditions or modifications to the grant type or award were needed, and/or if a grantee should adopt and implement systems recommended by CBCSA. This was crucial in ensuring each grantee would be able to effectively implement and manage its CBCSA grant. Based on the pre-award risk assessment, CBCSA instituted special award conditions for seven grants primarily related to procurement, recruitment, SOW development, compliance with Fly America Act, and compliance with other U.S. government regulations in their grant agreements, better qualifying them for future funding.

Moreover, CBCSA provided one-on-one training at time of award to all grantees on award terms and conditions, relevant USAID and U.S. Government regulations, and CBCSA grant procedures as most grantees had minimal experience with USAID GUCs. Additional expectations and grant objectives were reviewed including details on financial payment processes. CBCSA and the grantee also discussed further training needs and capacity-building support based on the pre-award risk assessment process.

This initial support from CBCSA enabled the grantees to strengthen not only their general management and technical capacities but also helped them successfully manage their CBCSA grant and any future grant they may receive after CBCSA ends. Throughout the grant lifecycle, CBCSA also provided specialized technical assistance in areas such as procurement, recruitment, SOW development, accounting, finance, and information technology. Specifically, CBCSA provided the following support to help grantees effectively implement and manage their grants:

*Procurement support to grantees.* CBCSA staff provided support to ASODEL in the step-by-step procurement process for a screen-printing machine and items for the cine-café La Maga that contributed to ASODEL’s sustainability. The CBCSA Grants Accountant and Operations Manager provided one-on-one mentoring and guidance to ASODEL staff throughout all procurement processes to ensure compliance with USAID rules and regulations and grant requirements. ASODEL’s staff are now able to conduct compliant and transparent procurement process under future grants due to CBCSA’s support.

In addition, CBCSA provided guidance and support to REN’s staff to conduct a full and open competition process for a new accounting system. CBCSA conducted an accounting and administration assessment to determine the specific needs of the organization as well as an ICT assessment that provided the necessary technical background

for the Request for Quote. As a result of CBCSA's support, REN procured a best-value accounting system, tailored to its specific needs that will ensure clear and efficient accounting of the organization's funds. It will also support REN to better financially manage any future grants it receives.

CBCSA provide in-kind support to CEPS in the form of materials and services needed to improve the CSO's youth center space for meetings and gatherings. Due to this support, CEPS now has an updated meeting space, saving the organization money.

Finally, CBCSA provided guidance and training to RED LOCAL and FVBCH to purchase air tickets for consultants and staff to ensure compliance with the Fly America Act, including how to document an exemption for individual travel. RED LOCAL and FVBCH now have the knowledge to compliantly purchase U.S.-funded travel in the future.

*Pre-award risk assessments for institutional performance.* During the risk assessment process, CBCSA identified the need to improve and establish a more robust accounting unit for ACD. The project recommended that ACD acquire an independent software system to manage and control its financial accounts as well as hire an accountant to manage the system. The CBCSA Accountant and Operations Manager reviewed ACD's financial status and accounting books to clear and correct balances in ACD's new system. In addition to operations support, CBCSA's Capacity Building Specialist and M&E Manager provided technical support to develop SOWs for short-term technical experts who subsequently successfully designed and implemented a digital social communications campaign, developed an ICT and cyber-activism course, created a digital media plan for three CSOs, developed a gender policy, and designed a fundraising strategy.

Due to CBCSA's support, all 12 grantees have achieved 100% of their stated objectives targets.

## **IMPROVE COORDINATION AND NETWORKING TO PROMOTE AWARENESS AND ACTIVISM**

The project strove to improve coordination and networking among CSOs and with the private sector and the media to promote awareness and activism and foster sustainability. This was done in a variety of ways including establishing cohorts, making alliance-building a RFA objective, providing peer-to-peer capacity support, and holding quarterly coordination meetings with grantees and media outlets.

### **ALLIANCES**

For training purposes, CBCSA established cohorts, grouping CSOs of similar capacity and focus to improve coordination and sharing of best practices for advocacy. One of these cohort trainings was on strategic alliances led by an international expert who provided support to all 10 phase I CSOs to improve their capacity to coordinate and network with one another as well as with the local private sector. The international expert shared success stories of alliances in Latin America and made recommendations on how the 10 CSOs could build strategic alliances. After this training, CARITAS strengthened its network by training and mentoring seven of its local branches to successfully implement the joint fundraising campaign "Semana de la Caridad." Before CBCSA support, the campaign was implemented independently by each local branch, limiting its fundraising effort. With CBCSA support, the campaign was jointly coordinated and implemented with all CARITAS's branches for the first time in 2015, resulting in a total of \$150,000 funds raised.

Under its grant, FUNIDES strengthened its ability to build larger networks, reach new audiences, expand its advocacy efforts, and have greater impact by signing a partnership agreement with REN, which works with women owners of small and medium-sized businesses, to conduct studies on topics of interest to women business owners. As mentioned previously, this alliance resulted in a formal study about the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs to access tax benefits.

Other CBCSA partners established or strengthened working alliances with grassroots organizations. CEGODEM worked with 16 LGBTI groups, including Casa de Mariposas, Plataforma Juvenil, and Casa de Colores, in four municipalities, to empower them through trainings and mentoring on LGBTI rights, cyber-activism, social media content development, and social auditing, among others. Moreover, some alliances transcended the national level and widened the bonds of collaboration throughout Central America. With CBCSA support, CEGODEM led the creation of the first Central American Alliance of LGBTI Rights and Youth Organizations to promote and defend youth and LGBTI rights. The alliance will focus on raising awareness of human rights violations against youth and

LGBTI communities throughout the region. It will coordinate joint regional activities to promote and protect human rights of vulnerable groups. The first meeting included eight organizations from Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. As part of its sustainability efforts, CEGODEM will continue promoting and strengthening the alliance by attending a second meeting in Guatemala using its own resources.

Grantee ASODEL also strengthened its relationship with youth networks that lack a formal legal status, but nonetheless play an important role in raising awareness of sexual abuse and violence. ASODEL trained these networks, including Red Somos Nica, Haciendo el Cambio, and Promoviendo el Éxito, among others, on violence prevention methodologies and tools that these organizations can replicate within their networks. While training these networks, ASODEL engaged them in its main grant activities which enabled ASODEL to reach more schools, children, parents, and youth leaders in its efforts to change public opinion on the urgency of these topics and affect public policy.

Grantee CEPS strengthened its alliance with youth networks and other CSOs in Ciudad Sandino to jointly develop a local youth action and advocacy plan and created working groups to successfully implement the plan. The plan included activities such as a youth fair with cultural activities to raise awareness of and to prevent violence among at risk youth. The youth fair included the participation of 20 youth activists and was open to the public.

As a result of roundtables it held to develop the local youth action and advocacy plan, CEPS and its youth network allies jointly presented a petition at the February 19, 2017 town council meeting, voicing concerns about the community health issue of the burning of hospital waste which could affect the health of community members. Due to CEPS's and its allies' advocacy, the municipality and the Ministry of Health adopted some corrective measures to address the issue.

#### PEER-TO-PEER CAPACITY SUPPORT

The project also supported grantees to provide peer-to-peer capacity support to their networks and allied organizations for better advocacy and activism.

Grantee RED LOCAL strengthened its network through building the capacity of its 39 allied local organizations on social innovation. To do this, RED LOCAL developed and implemented a four-month virtual training course and held debate forums on the topic. Forty-three civil society leaders actively participated and subsequently developed 40 social innovation plans or initiatives to be presented to potential donors or to be implemented with their own resources.

Grantee IEEPP developed the digital platform and tool “Compartiendo Conocimientos con la Comunidad para Incidir en la Inclusión Social y el Desarrollo Local” or COINCIDE, for its network “Red de Aliados Locales” to help network members jointly address issues, share ideas, and collectively have a greater impact. By the end of IEEPP's grant, network members uploaded 14 initiatives on local issues such as rural education, prevention of trafficking in persons, and child protection, among others, to COINCIDE. These initiatives will be presented to local authorities as proposals to solve community issues. Due to its success, IEEPP will keep the web platform in place after the end of CBCSA.

Under its grant, CEGODEM strengthened capacities of LGBTI grassroots organizations such as Asociación Nicaraguense de Transgéneras and Organización de Personas Transgénero de Nicaragua which defend the rights of the LGBTI community in Nicaragua. CEGODEM empowered 16 additional LGBTI organizations in Masaya, Managua, León, and Chinandega to raise awareness of LGBTI rights through 20 training workshops on social auditing, activism, institutional strategic communication, audiovisual production, new masculinities, and gender.

Grantees ACD and INDE also strengthened the capacities of their associated advocacy partners or organizational affiliates in various areas. Under its grant, ACD trained five organizations on the use of ICTs and jointly designed digital campaigns with them to disseminate topics of interest to grassroots organizations and their target groups that will be implemented after the end of CBCSA support. Meanwhile, INDE worked with its seven departmental chapters to develop the capacity of 770 young entrepreneurs to better advocate and strength their skills for business success.



Finally, CINCO signed formal partnership with 11 CSOs to which CINCO provided IT security support and increased their capacities to protect themselves against potential risks. Of the CSOs that received support, three are CBCSA grantees (IPADE, ASODEL, and RED LOCAL) and one was a phase I partner (MpN). The other seven CSOs that received CINCO’s support were Movimiento de Mujeres de Chinandega; Centro Nicaragüense de los Derechos Humanos; Red Nacional de la Diversidad Sexual from Nueva Guinea; Consejo Nacional en Defensa de Nuestra Tierra, Lagos y Soberanía Nacional; Popol Nah; Iniciativa Nicaragüense de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres; and the media outlet Onda Local. As a result of the training, CSOs restructured their wiring and equipment configurations for better security and encrypted their information.

**PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR**

In phases 1 and 2, CBCSA worked with CSOs to establish partnerships with the private sector to support CSO advocacy and sustainability in a closing donor space.

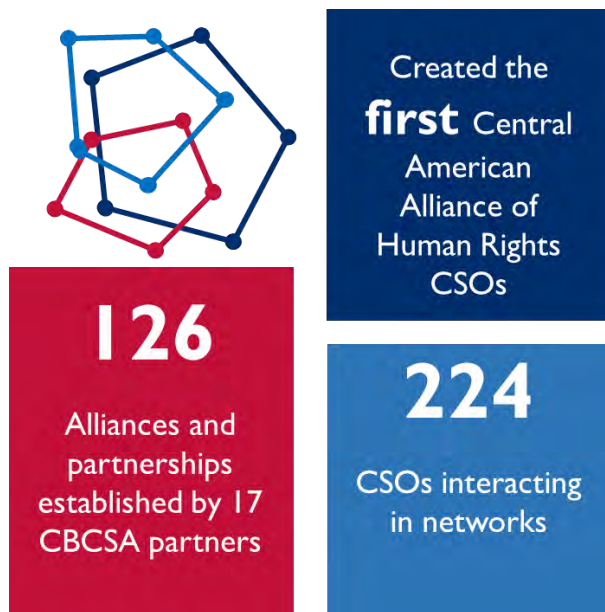
Under its grants, FUNIDES increased its network membership from the private sector by 15 new companies that will contribute to fund future studies through membership fees. Likewise, INDE’s media campaign to promote its work attracted new members from the business sector, increasing its membership by 35.49%, providing more income through membership fees and contributing to its sustainability.

Grantee ASODEL also obtained the support of private sector small businesses in Chinandega to carry out its campaign "Let's raise voices against child sexual abuse." These businesses supported ASODEL by donating goods for the awareness campaign’s contest prizes.

As mentioned previously, CARITAS successfully implemented a fundraising campaign for the “Semana de la Caridad” that strengthened its alliance with the private sector, including Walmart, and established a new alliance with Kellogg’s-Central America which donated \$75,000 to the campaign.

Finally, grantees established important partnerships and alliances with private universities. CEGODEM established a formal partnership with the Universidad Politécnica de Nicaragua (UPOLI) to carry deliver a four-month postgraduate course on human rights of vulnerable groups. Due to the success of this course, CEGODEM and UPOLI plan to continue offering this course with other funding sources.

**Exhibit 14. Alliances Created or Strengthened**



## IMPROVED COORDINATION EFFORTS BETWEEN CSOS AND WITH MEDIA OUTLETS INCREASE AWARENESS

*In-person networking and outreach.* To foster CSO networking and advocacy, CBCSA organized quarterly in-person meetings for CSO grantees and the independent media during phase 2. These meetings provided CSOs the opportunity to coordinate with one another and with media outlets to exchange ideas, share experiences, and discuss current issues related to both civil society and the media. CBCSA worked with FVBCH and International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), which are implementing two USAID-funded media programs, to ensure increased dissemination of the CSOs' activities through independent media outlets.

On February 10, 2017, CBCSA held the first meeting between CSOs and media outlets. Thirty-eight individuals from CBCSA grantees and independent media outlets that receive FVBCH or IREX support gathered to learn from each other and coordinate their work. During the event, CSOs presented their work to the media and shared publicity materials including brochures, studies, flyers, and CDs, among others, and identified possible topics of interest to the media. Participants rated the event as excellent, timely, and highly productive. Participants also mentioned that the event created a friendly space for CSOs to exchange information and make important contacts.

According to a survey applied by CBCSA in June 2017, 52% of participants surveyed said they had some type of coordination, including increased press coverage because of the meetings.

The quarterly meetings also served as opportunities to learn new skills and identify best practices to find new funding sources and web platforms to disseminate information. Both grantees and the independent media were trained on how to use those tools to strengthen linkages and explore possible scenarios for joint efforts towards crowdfunding opportunities.

The second coordination meeting between CSOs and media outlets, focused on using innovative media tools to disseminate information and increase sustainability. Latin American peer organizations from Colombia, Brazil, and Guatemala provided information on how they successfully implemented crowdfunding campaigns. Brazilian organization Intervezos shared information on how it succeeded in collecting money to produce a documentary film on the law of democratic media outlets in Brazil. Other organizations shared their successful cloud-based crowdfunding and crowdsourcing experiences, along with CBCSA grantee CINCO which had the opportunity to present its crowdfunding platform recently developed with CBCSA support. Participants were trained on how to develop a crowdfunding campaign, using the crowdfunding canvas model to put their knowledge into practice and develop their own crowdfunding campaign in accordance with their organizations' needs.

**Exhibit 15. First Quarterly Coordination Meeting**



## IV. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

### CBCSA INDICATORS

As mentioned above, CBCSA had two distinct phases. Both phases, with phase 2 building on the successes of phase 1, sought to increase the capacity of targeted Nicaraguan CSOs to advocate for citizens demands. Due to the transition from direct capacity building and technical assistance in phase 1 to capacity-building through GUCs in phase 2, CBCSA revised its results framework. The revised results framework and indicator targets were successfully met by CBCSA, and in some cases exceeded, as demonstrated in Exhibit 16 below. CBCSA's phase 1 results framework is in Annex I.



**Exhibit 16. CBCSA Program Indicators**

CBCSA PROGRAM INDICATORS									
Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Comments/Observations	
<b>#</b>	<b>Program Goal: Provide capacity building support for civil society organizations (CSOs) and strengthen their ability to advocate for citizen demands.</b>								
<b>1</b>	Custom: Number of CSOs using USG assistance to improve their organizational capacity (CDCS Sub I.2.2)	2016= 0	2017= 8	9	9	11	12	<b>12</b>	Output indicator
<b>2</b>	Standard (4.2-2): Number of CSOs receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions.	2016= 0	2017= 8	9	9	11	12	<b>12</b>	Output indicator Non-cumulative indicator
<b>3</b>	Custom: Number of gender and/or LGBTI integration initiatives and/or policies developed	2016= 0	2017= 3	5	4	3	4	<b>16</b>	Output indicator
<b>Objective 1: Improve the human and institutional capacity and sustainability of CSOs to achieve their programmatic objectives.</b>									
<b>Expected Result 1.1: Organizational capacity in performance areas prioritized by targeted CSOs strengthened.</b>									
<b>4</b>	Custom: Local Organizational Capacity Assessment Score, in performance areas prioritized by funded CSOs (CLBD-5)	2016= TBD	2017= 5.0	4.94	4.94	4.94	5.37	<b>5.37</b>	Outcome Indicator
<b>Expected Result 1.2: CSOs' viability and sustainability improved</b>									
<b>5</b>	Custom: Number of sustainability activities implemented	2016= 0	2017= 6	2	1	2	3	<b>8</b>	Output indicator
<b>Objective 2: Empower CSOs through grants to better represent, advocate for, and mobilize constituencies, and promote oversight over key actors to meet citizen demands.</b>									
<b>Expected Result 2.1: Evidence-based advocacy used by CSOs to educate, mobilize, and monitor constituencies.</b>									
<b>6</b>	Custom: Number of advocacy activities implemented	2016= 0	2017= 3	1	4	6	6	<b>17</b>	Output indicator
<b>Expected Result 2.2: CSOs' communications and outreach skills using traditional and new technology improved.</b>									
<b>7</b>	Custom: Number of advocacy and outreach initiatives implemented.	2016= 0	2017= 6	7	3	21	15	<b>46</b>	Output indicator
<b>8</b>	Custom: Number of beneficiaries reached by the advocacy campaigns.	2016= 0	2017= TBD (*)	844	626	980	972	<b>3,422</b>	Output indicator
<b>Expected Result 2.3: Grant programs implemented and effectively managed.</b>									
<b>9</b>	Custom: Number of grant recipients that achieve at least 75% of their stated objectives/ targets during the reporting period	2016= 0	2017= 6	8	6	8	11	<b>11</b>	Outcome Indicator
<b>Objective 3: Increase CSOs' coordination with one another to promote awareness, advocacy and activism.</b>									
<b>Expected Result 3.1: Knowledge and lessons learned between beneficiaries CSOs exchanged.</b>									
<b>10</b>	Custom: Number of CSOs participating in networking events.	2016= 0	2017= 4	0	5	9	8	<b>8</b>	Output indicator
<b>11</b>	Custom: Number of CSOs engaged in activities in partnership with one another and/or media outlets.	2016= 0	2017= 6	3	5	4	6	<b>6</b>	Output indicator

As shown in Exhibit 16, CBCSA exceeded some of the indicator targets, including the following prioritized indicators:

*Indicator number 1 (Custom): Number of CSOs using USG assistance to improve their organizational capacity.* Initially, to award \$1 million in grants, CBCSA planned to issue two RFAs (one for CSOs and another for think tanks). It was originally anticipated that grants would be awarded to two think tanks. However, only one think tank was awarded. For this reason, CBCSA released an APS that remained open for six months and, under which, five CSOs were awarded grants thereby increasing the number of CSOs from what was originally planned.

*Indicator number 2 (Standard): Number of CSOs receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions.* This indicator goal was surpassed due to the explanation provided for indicator number 1. One of the selection criteria to receive a grant was that all grant projects had to include an advocacy and awareness-raising component.

*Indicator number 3 (Custom): Number of gender and/or LGBTI integration initiatives and/or policies developed.* As a result, of the performance and organizational self-assessment using CBCSA's adapted OCAT, some additional gender initiatives emerged. For example, FUNIDES developed a gender policy after its self-assessment showed an organizational gap related to gender equality. When CBCSA issued the APS, one selected CSO was an LGBTI- and vulnerable groups-focused organization, resulting in an increase of the number of initiatives that, among others, included activities and campaigns towards promoting and defending human rights of these groups.

*Indicator number 5 (Custom): Number of sustainability activities implemented.* Some CSOs that were already grantees were awarded with a second grant under the APS. For example, ASODEL received a second grant under the APS, and as part of that grant, designed a sustainability plan and created a rental space which is now used to carry out its activities and generate income.

*Indicator number 9 (Custom): Number of grant recipients that achieved at least 75% of their stated objectives/targets during the reporting period.* The increased number of CSOs assisted by the program is the main reason for surpassing this established goal. This indicator is based on the current reporting period. In the last reporting period of Q4 FY2017, 12 out of 12 organizations achieved at least 75% or more of their goals, resulting in a level of compliance of 100%.

## **M&E SYSTEM**

To plan and manage the results of the program, CBCSA developed M&E Systems to monitor activities and measure progress and impact in phases 1 and 2. In the first phase, this system was based on the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and hosted on MS-ACCESS. The phase 1 M&E System was largely internal to the CBCSA technical team and allowed for the timely and consistent collection of data for informed decision making regarding the general management of the program and necessary adjustments in its implementation. Parallely, technical assistance was provided to the partner CSOs to develop and use their own customized M&E systems.

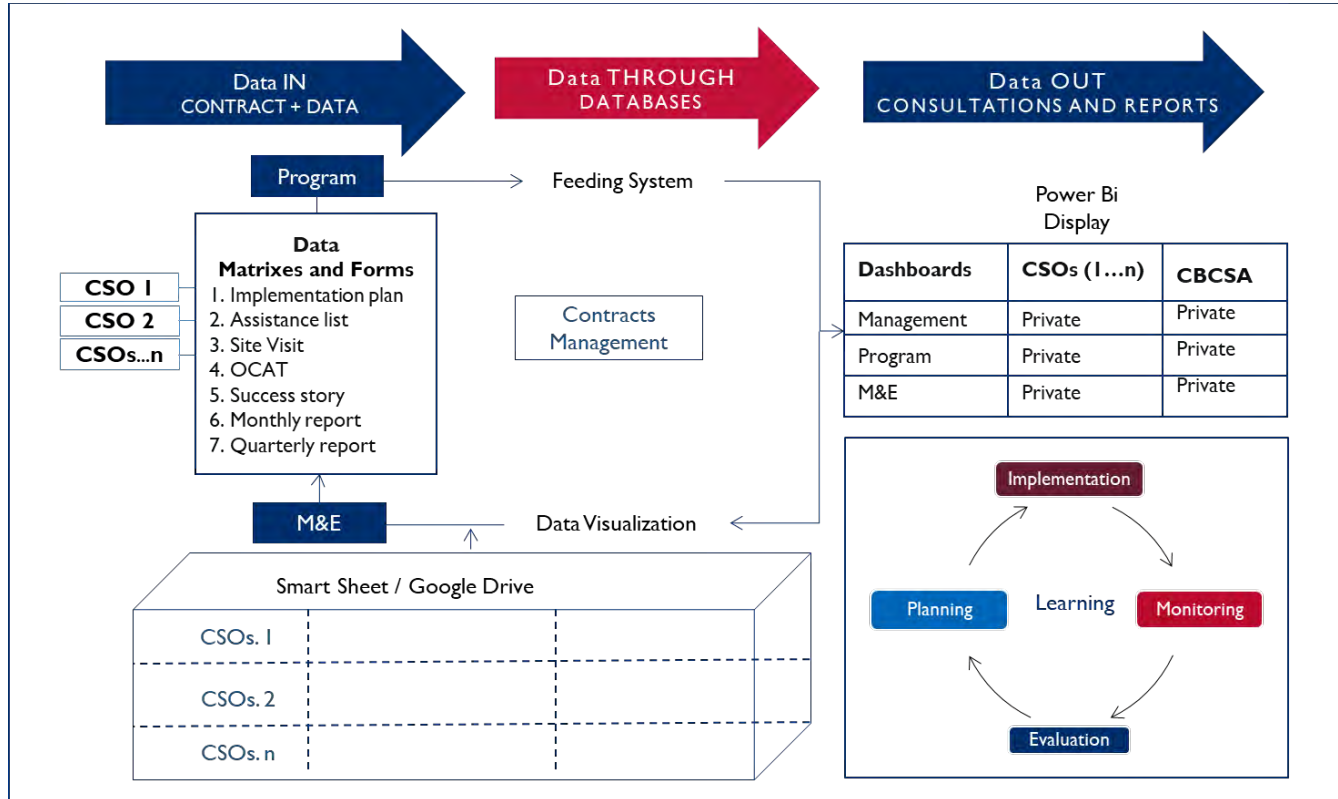
During the second phase, CBCSA refined and expanded the M&E System to monitor grant activities, milestones, and CSO impacts. The M&E System refinement included: adapting the M&E System according to the new CBCSA Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning plan (MEL Plan); scaling up the system to better capture, process, analyze, and visualize data for decision-making by the CSOs, CBCSA, and USAID; and adding customized web-based applications such as Smartsheet and Power Bi to track the implementation of each grant and CBCSA activities. Furthermore, CBCSA trained the grantees on how to use the system and empowered them with new technologies that made it easier to track and share their grant activities, deliverables, results, and impacts.

**“What will happen to the [MEL System] once the project is finished? It has been so useful that I would like ASODEL to adopt it as part of our monitoring system. In the short term, I want to use it to monitor all our current projects.”**  
-Maria Jose Diaz Reyes, Executive Director, ASODEL

CBCSA's theory of change was used as the structural pathway for expanding the system, using four simple, interconnected platforms (Smartsheet, Google Drive, Power Bi, and Voces por Nicaragua). As a result, CBCSA developed an information flow (Exhibit 17) and guidelines for CSOs, so they had clear procedures and tools at hand. CBCSA used this opportunity to continue transferring capacities in M&E to CSOs and therefore designed an interconnected information system and sharing rules defined in CSOs' own MEL Plans.

CBCSA's phase 2 MEL System was the only system of its kind developed by a USAID/Nicaragua-funded program and has built the capacities of partner CSOs to use technological tools for better programming. The customized designs in both the data capture formats locally and online, which later became panels or dashboards, facilitated decision making during the life cycle of the program.

**Exhibit 17. CBCSA M&E Information Flow**



With the implementation of the MEL System, CSOs managed to reduce costs associated with physical transportation of documents to the CBCSA office, printing, and back-up discs. Most importantly, it saved CSOs time, as the system was easy to use and accessible from any online device, allowing for the quick and secure upload of data. Likewise, CSOs could easily access and review all information, both quantitative and qualitative, associated with their projects at any time and from any location which helped inform decision making. Finally, all project data was secure through cloud-based back-up. Prior to CBCSA's MEL System, at least two organizations lost all or part of their information due to physical device damage and extraction. Because of CBCSA's support and the MEL System, all information related to their grant projects was recovered. By the end of CBCSA, all CSO project managers and technicians learned to use the system's technological tools, reducing the time dedicated to monitoring the execution of their projects. Some CSOs have shown interest in institutionalizing the system because of its user friendliness and efficiency. CBCSA's initial training provided to CSOs on using the system, training materials, and follow-up support will enable CSOs to develop similar systems after CBCSA ends.

## LEARNING

As established in the MEL Plan, CBCSA fostered learning across the project using key learning activities such as monthly and quarterly partner meetings, site visits, and regular progress reporting, among others. One of the biggest learning tools on the project was the phase 2 MEL System, which fostered CSO ownership of grant implementation and empowered CSOs to proactively find and propose solutions when challenges arose. At the monthly and quarterly meetings with CBCSA and grantees, reports and data visualization from the MEL System helped assess progress, challenges, and proposed solutions to achieve grant objectives and results.

In addition, CBCSA staff conducted 84 site visits to monitor CSO activities executed under grants, discuss challenges or concerns of the CSO, and find solutions to overcome obstacles. CBCSA verified activities and services were being implemented and gathered success stories and best practices to share with other CSOs and USAID. Due to the continuous communication and relationship between CBCSA staff and its partner CSOs, adjustments and modifications were made to overcome obstacles without altering the scope of work and quality of the interventions.

For example, CINCO took advantage of these opportunities to share with CBCSA the obstacles it was facing to establish the online payment mechanism for its crowdfunding platform, forcing CINCO to find international services that delayed the expected timeline to launch the platform. These discussions resulted in adjustments to CINCO's grant implementation timeline and additional adjustments to its work schedule to avoid any negative impact on other activities and deliverables. With additional support from CBCSA and open communication, CINCO succeeded in finding a solution and launching its crowdfunding platform.

## V. MAIN CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

The project faced different challenges throughout implementation primarily related to the operating and political context, CSO buy-in and coordination, the use of new technology, the SOW modification, and innovation.

*The political context.* The polarized and politicized environment in Nicaragua forced CSOs to keep a low profile to avoid government actions to counteract the promotion and defense of citizens' civil, political, and economic rights. These actions often include physical and cyber attacks on media outlets and CSO digital platforms, restricting the entrance of foreign activists/collaborators, and prohibiting access to public information. This same situation led CBCSA to seek a waiver for its Branding and Marking Plan. Keeping a low profile often restricted the types of advocacy actions that CSOs could undertake.

*CSO buy-in.* In the first phase of the project, it was difficult for CBCSA to get CSOs to commit the needed time and schedule for capacity building interventions as CSOs were dedicating a great deal of time and effort seeking new funding opportunities due to the closing donor space. Activities often had to be reprogrammed. The SOW modification to include GUCs resulted in more buy-in from local CSOs who had the opportunity to receive funds while improving their institutional capacities.

*Alliances and cooperation between CSOs.* Fostering alliances between CSOs was another great challenge for CBCSA due to a general lack of coordination between CSOs. This is because CSOs often see each other as competitors rather than partners or potential allies. The competition for scarce resources contributes to each organization acting in isolation to obtain donor support. To overcome this situation, CBCSA developed webinars, digital platforms, and coordination meetings with CSOs and with media that promoted and knowledge exchange.

*Use of digital tools.* Getting CSOs to use new digital technology and tools throughout the life of the project was another main operational challenge for CBCSA. Most CSOs lack the skills or have poor familiarity with using new technologies for their everyday work. The project worked to develop and support its partners to develop capacities on the use of digital tools such as webinars, new software, and systems to significantly improve information processing timelines, among other benefits.

*SOW modification and availability of funding.* The SOW modification to include GUCs occurred in year four of the project. While starting up the GUC component, CBCSA was still implementing TIPs to avoid gaps in assistance to CSOs. This required an increased level of effort of all CBCSA staff to finalize phase I while simultaneously pivoting project resources to GUCs. On September 19, 2017, CBCSA was informed that no additional funding would be obligated to the project. As a result, CBCSA modified some grant agreements, reducing funding to CSOs.

*Mental change for innovation.* Undertaking innovative changes within an organization like social entrepreneurship for financial sustainability requires a certain process and timeline for multiple interventions to achieve such change. At the start of the project, CBCSA assessed the willingness of CSOs' leadership to search for other sources of funding rather than relying on traditional donors. The assessment revealed a reticence from the majority of CSOs.

However, after CBCSA support, CSOs undertook innovative solutions like crowdsourcing and crowdfunding platforms to generate funding, breaking old paradigms.

## **VI. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK**

After five years of implementation, CBCSA has identified several key lessons learned and recommendations for future work as outlined below.

The HICD model and OCAT were useful and had good acceptance among the CSOs. However, after piloting both, the need to adapt those instruments to contextualize them to the environment emerged. CBCSA adapted the OCAT to include a gender perspective and less governmental issues to better fit the needs of local actors. RED LOCAL decided to further adapt the OCAT to apply the tool to its network of grassroots organizations. Future programming should ensure all tools and methodologies used are adapted to the local context for maximum impact.

Another important lesson learned is to include the entire stakeholder group and all levels of an organization in the performance self-assessment from the beginning. The OCAT is a valid and useful tool to measure and assess organizational performance capacities, but since it is a self-assessment, if members from different levels are not included at the onset, gaps in knowledge of the organization's work and activities will occur. This can skew scores, providing a different perception of the strengths or weakness within an organization. This problem was evidenced when one CBCSA partner had a high level of staff turnover that resulted in different perceptions or scoring at the second performance self-assessment. As such, CBCSA recommends that any future capacity-building program ensure members from different levels and functions of the organization participate at every juncture. This will also empower all members of the organization and engage them in a fruitful dialogue that will initiate their overall institutional strengthening.

The visibility and influence of a CSO or think tank can generate incorrect assumptions or perceptions about its capacity in certain areas. For example, CBCSA identified through a performance self-assessment that a well-respected organization did not have an institutionalized gender policy. CBCSA subsequently focused on closing that institutional gap with the development of a gender policy and staff training on gender inclusion. CBCSA recommends that organizational assessments be conducted on a regular basis as institutional strengthening is a continued and permanent need for Nicaraguan CSOs.

CBCSA recommends that future programs prioritize combining technical assistance with grants. As noted in the previous section, CBCSA struggled to secure CSO buy-in to direct capacity-building activities as CSOs needed core funding sources. The combination of both mechanisms resulted in more effective capacity building. Direct assistance strengthens, creates, and changes organizational and individual attitudes while grants serve as a complement to put improved institutional capacities into practice and improve service delivery and advocacy.

In addition, future programs should continue to include components aiming to strengthen CSOs' capacities and skills to diversify funding sources by identifying a CSO's expertise to provide fee-for-services or incorporate the use of volunteers. Future programming should also strengthen CSOs' abilities to develop and disseminate communications pieces to better attract donors and public-private partnerships.

Programs should continue to promote the use of new technologies for outreach and advocacy efforts. Digital tools and media allow CSOs to reach new audiences, primarily youth groups, and magnify the impact of communications campaigns to promote and defend citizen rights and generate awareness. This is particularly useful within the closed political context where digital spaces offer CSOs and independent media alternative means to communicate and inform the public effectively and freely.

In addition, CBCSA recommends that future work support initiatives that strengthen the level of coordination between CSOs and media outlets. CBCSA held workshops, coordination meetings, forums, site visits, and conferences that not only served to transfer knowledge but also to establish links between local and national CSOs and media outlets. This provided more visibility of CSOs' work through increased coverage in traditional

media and improved understanding of CSOs' work among the population. It also provided the independent media outlets with new content and opportunities for funding with CSOs through crowdsourcing and crowdfunding.

Finally, CBCSA recommends continuing to promote the creation of new regional and international alliances between CSOs to increase the impact of advocacy and awareness efforts and expand to access to funding available for regional or international efforts.



## VII. SNAPSHOTS (SUCCESS STORIES)



# SUCCESS STORY

## Higher Level of Standards

**Nicaraguan civil society organization improves internal systems to better advocate for citizen demands.**



PHOTO: CBCSA PROGRAM

EyT's team after assessing the first year of work with CBCSA

***“The Training Implementation Plan developed through assistance from the Nicaragua CBCSA program changed EyT into an organization that continuously grows and adapts; we are holding ourselves accountable to new higher levels of standards.”***

–Roberto Courtney, Executive Director

***“CBCSA provided the conditions that assure a better future for the organization”***

– Ana Davila, Finance and Administrative Manager

Nicaraguan civil society organization (CSO) *Ética y Transparencia* (EyT) has struggled over the past five years to define a clear strategic plan, and continue with its mission due to lack of funding and internal processes. EyT's mission is to contribute to the development of Nicaragua as a country committed to strong institutions and democratic principles such as sustainable human development, integrity, and transparency. EyT has been the principal driver of accountability of democratic processes in Nicaragua for almost 20 years.

Like many CSOs in Nicaragua, EyT lacked robust administrative manuals and an updated accounting system. The absence of these internal guidelines was a barrier to receiving international donor funding, which has high standards for financial controls and reporting. Furthermore, the personnel trained in the previous systems and policies had left the organization, creating a significant knowledge gap for the remaining staff members.

The USAID/Nicaragua Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA) assists organizations like EyT, which have strong potential to more effectively advocate for citizen demands in Nicaragua. CBCSA helped EyT establish an updated accounting system, designed new organizational manuals and guidelines, and trained the finance team. According to a survey applied to EyT's staff, the *Análisis y Sistemas, S.A* financial system resulted in a significant time savings of over 40% in processes related to accounting, payroll, and budget.

The institutional self-assessment process facilitated by CBCSA and subsequent Training Implementation Plan led to the involvement of staff at all levels of the organization, including the Board of Directors. Due to the support provided by CBCSA, procedures for adding new members to the board were developed and two new young members were chosen to join, renewing and strengthening it.

This new level of participation and empowerment has energized the organization to the point that it has proposed to position itself as a mentoring partner for other peer organizations as part of its next strategic plan, not only on grants and sub-grants management but as advisors and technical support providers of organizational strengthening processes in the context of strategic sustainability.

## SUCCESS STORY

### Nicaraguan CSOs Generate New Sources of Funding

**Closing political spaces and lack of funding opportunities spur innovative paths for civil society’s financial sustainability.**



Photo: CBCSA PROGRAM

Nicaraguan CSOs rent space, sell services, and source funds online for new revenue.

Over the past several years, Nicaraguan civil society organizations (CSOs) have faced challenges in sustaining their operations due to decreased donor resources, limited support for CSOs, and other constraints. Despite these factors, the following three Nicaraguan CSOs found a way to turn adversity into opportunity. With the support of USAID/Nicaragua’s Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA), these CSOs engaged their local communities and businesses and found new solutions for diversifying their income streams.

Asociación para la Sobreveiencia y el Desarrollo Local (ASODEL) implemented two activities that are already generating savings and income while contributing to their local community’s wellbeing. After training youth activists on serigraphy (silk screening) and how to use screen printing machines purchased through a CBCSA grant, ASODEL created a fee-for-services unit, employing youth to offer screen printing services to other groups and businesses. Now ASODEL is generating income through tuition fees from its serigraphy courses, which is covering 25% of ASODEL’s electricity bill and the serigraphy unit’s costs in full. ASODEL also opened a cinema-café La Maga – a space for open dialogue, citizen participation, and critical thinking. ASODEL uses La Maga for its activities, including trainings, presentations, and meetings, saving ASODEL from paying rental fees for other venues and covering security guard costs. La Maga is already contributing to ASODEL’s financial sustainability as other organizations, businesses, and individuals are renting it for meetings and events.

Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Democracia (IPADE) transformed 20 years of experience into four educational modules on sustainable cacao production for agro technicians. With CBCSA assistance, it is ready to sell these modules for a fee, helping sustain IPADE’s overall operations.

Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación (CINCO), has developed the first Nicaraguan crowdfunding mechanism that does not rely on international intermediaries. It plans to offer fee-for-services to other CSOs and media on how to develop crowdfunding platforms that reach new sponsors to overcome the closing political space and its impact on civil society’s financial survival.



## VIII. ANNEXES

### ANNEX I. PHASE I RESULTS FRAMEWORK

<b>Program goal:</b> Provide capacity-building support for civil society organizations (CSOs) and strengthen their ability to advocate for citizen demands.			
<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Objective 4</b>
Provide capacity building services to USAID/Nicaragua so that key organizations can better achieve mutually agreed program objectives.	Improve CSOs' resources and institutional capacity to more effectively represent advocate for, and mobilize constituencies, participate in public policy debate, and exercise oversight over public institutions.	Improve the capacity of CSOs and individuals to increasingly coordinate and network with one another, the private sector, and media outlets to promote awareness, advocacy, and activism.	Improve internal governance of CSOs to promote transparency and accountability toward their stakeholders to increase public understanding and support for their work.
<b>Expected Results</b>			
<p><b>1.1</b> CSOs selected.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Assessment tool developed and used to measure CSO performance.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Training implementation plan completed and CB plan refined.</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Effective and regular communication and coordination mechanisms in place with USAID and other AOI partners.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Effective strategic plans and resulting program designs based on CSO mission and strategy.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Management (financial and human resource) policies and structures in place based on CSO mission and strategy.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Improved financial sustainability through more effective fundraising, use of volunteers, use of new technologies, and other means.</p> <p><b>2.4</b> Evidence-based advocacy used by CSOs to educate, mobilize, and monitor constituents' interests.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Improved CSO relations and leveraging of funds with private sector and media.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Networks of grassroots CSOs created and linked to national CSOs.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Networks of volunteers created or strengthened and used for CSO program implementation and communication.</p> <p><b>3.4</b> CSO support platform created for neutral dialogue, debate, learning, and cooperation.</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Clear CSO mission statements and strategies defined.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Qualified, involved CSO boards and transparent decision-making in place.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Strong leadership skills developed.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> Improved communication and public outreach.</p>
<p><b>Cross-cutting Areas:</b> Integration of gender, youth, and conflict mitigation considerations in all strategic planning and activities.</p>			

## ANNEX II. PHASE I INDICATORS MATRIX

Indicators		Baseline	Targets	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Comments/Observations
<b>#</b>	<b>Program Purpose: Provide capacity building support for civil society organizations (CSOs) and strengthen their ability to advocate for citizen demands.</b>								
1	Number of interventions completed based on organizational performance self-assessments and/or specific needs of the beneficiaries	Zero (0)	2014=22	4	6	4	11	25	
			2015= 150	80	47	118	63	308	
			2016= 150	39	26	11	0	76	51% of annual goal reached due to SOW modification
2	Number of gender and/or LGBTI integration initiatives and/or policies developed	Zero (0)	2014= 0	1				1	EyT
			2015= 2				3	3	
			2016= 2	2	0	0		2	Annual goal reached
3	Local Organizational Capacity Assessment Score (CLBD-5)	2.48	2014= 3	2.48	3.18	4.26	3.54	3.25	EyT
			2015= 4.4	3.91			4.49	4.49	Q1 - EyT + FVBCh Score Average: 3.91 Q4 - 10 CSOs Score Average 4.49
			2016= 4.6						Annual measure
4	Number of CSOs using USG assistance to improve their organizational capacity (CDCS Sub 1.2.2)	Zero (0)	2014= 1	1	1	6	10	10	
			2015= 10	10	10	10	10	10	
			2016= 10	10	10	7		10	Annual goal reached
<b>Objective 1: Provide Capacity Building Services to USAID/Nicaragua so that key organizations can achieve program objectives.</b>									
<b>Expected Result 1.1: CSOs Selected</b>									
5	Number of CSOs selected following criteria and approved by USAID	Zero (0)	2014= 25	1	24			25	One selection process during the life of the program. 25 CSOs selected and approved by USAID in December 2013
			2015= N/A						
			2016= N/A						
<b>Expected Result 1.2: Assessment tool developed and used to measure CSO performance.</b>									
6	Number of persons trained on the self-applied organizational performance assessment tool.	Zero (0)	2014= 40	8	8	31	10	57	
			2015= 8	15	0	0	49	64	
			2016= 15	4				4	Annual measure
<b>Expected Result 1.3: Training implementation plans completed and Capacity Building plan refined</b>									
7	Number of target CSOs that have improved capacity in specific area(s) of intervention prioritized for program assistance	Zero (0)	2014= 1					1	EyT
			2015= 10				10	10	Updated data after self-assessments of 10 CSO partners.
			2016= 10						Annual measure
<b>Expected Result 1.4: Effective and regular communication and coordination mechanisms in place with USAID and other AOI partners</b>									
8	Number of meeting sessions with USAID and/or other DOI partners	24	2014= 24	8	10	9	7	34	
			2015= 24	8	9	11	10	38	
			2016= 24	7	12	7		26	
<b>Objective 2: Improve CSOs' human resources and institutional capacity to more effectively represent, advocate for, and mobilize constituencies, participate in public policy debate, and exercise oversight over public institutions.</b>									
<b>Expected Result 2.1: Effective strategic plans and resulting program designs based on CSO mission and strategy</b>									
9		Zero (0)	2014= N/A						

	Number of target CSOs assisted in the development of strategic plans consistent with their mission		2015= 10	5	4	2		10	
			2016= 3						Annual goal not reached due to the program's SOW modification
<b>Expected Result 2.2: Management (financial and human resource) policies and structures in place based on CSO mission and strategy</b>									
10	Number of target CSOs with management policy manuals in place	Zero (0)	2014= N/A	1			1	2	EyT and EDUQUEMOS
			2015= 10	7	2	4	3	10	
			2016= 3	1	2	1		4	
11	Number of targeted CSOs with institutional M&E systems developed	Zero (0)	2014= 1				1	1	
			2015= 10	9	9	7	4	10	
			2016= 3	7	5	2		10	
<b>Expected Result 2.3: Improved financial sustainability through more effective fundraising, use of volunteers, use of new technologies, and other means</b>									
12	Number of target CSOs with institutional sustainability plans, sustainability strategies and/or fundraising actions developed and/or improved	Zero (0)	2014= 0				1	1	EyT
			2015=10	0	1	8	4	13	
			2016= 3	6	1	0	0	7	
<b>Expected Result 2.4: Evidence-based advocacy used by the CSOs to educate, mobilize and monitor constituent interests</b>									
13	Number of target CSOs strengthened to promote policy dialogue, advocate for change and exercise oversight on public institutions.	Zero (0)	2014= 0					0	
			2015= 10			8	10	10	
			2016= 3	6	4	5		10	
<b>Objective 3: Improve the capacity of CSOs' and individual to increasingly coordinate and network with one another, the private sector, and media outlets to promote awareness, advocacy, and activism.</b>									
<b>Expected Result 3.1: Improved CSOs relations and leveraging of funds with private sector and media</b>									
14	Number of initiatives promoted to strengthen relations between partner CSOs and the private sector and/or the media	Zero (0)	2014= 0					0	
			2015= 3				3	3	
			2016= 2	2	1	2		3	
<b>Expected Result 3.2: Networks of CSOs grassroots created and linked to national CSOs</b>									
15	Number of CSOs networks created or strengthened	Zero (0)	2014= 1				1	1	RED LOCAL
			2015=3	0	2	1	0	3	Data as reported to USAID in Quarterly Report M&E section
			2016= 2	3	0	0		3	
<b>Expected Result 3.3: Networks of volunteers created or strengthened and used for CSO program implementation and communication</b>									
16	Number of target CSOs whose volunteer leaders were trained on how to actively participate in CSOs organized networks	Zero (0)	2014= 0					0	
			2015= 10				10	10	
			2016= 3	6	1			7	
<b>Expected Result 3.4: CSOs support platform created for neutral dialogue, debate, learning and cooperation</b>									
17	Number of CSOs utilizing program website platform	Zero (0)	2014= 0					0	
			2015= 10		10	10	11	11	10 FDI partners plus 1 non-partner CSO that used the FDI's website platform for training as invitee to a webinar on advocacy best practices
			2016= 10	14	7			21	Annual goal exceeded
<b>Objective 4: Improve internal governance of CSOs to promote transparency and accountability to increase public understanding and support for their work.</b>									

<b>Expected Result 4.1: Clear CSOs mission statements and strategies defined</b>									
<b>18</b>	Number of CSOs whose boards of directors provide approval on transparent decision-making procedures/tools	Zero (0)	2014= 0					0	
			2015= 10	0	4	0	4	8	
			2016= 3						Annual goal not reached due to the program's SOW modification
<b>Expected Result 4.2: Qualified, involved CSO boards and transparent decision-making in place</b>									
<b>19</b>	Number of CSOs whose boards of directors adopt accountability procedures/tools toward their stakeholders	Zero (0)	2014= 0					0	
			2015= 10	0	4	0	4	8	
			2016= 3						Annual goal not reached due to the program's SOW modification
<b>Expected Result 4.3: Strong leadership skills developed</b>									
<b>20</b>	Number of CSOs BOD and/or key personnel trained in transparency and accountability leadership	Zero (0)	2014= 0					0	
			2015= 10		4	3	10	10	
			2016= 3	1	0	0	0	1	Annual goal not reached due to the program's SOW modification
<b>Expected Result 4.4: Improved communication and public outreach</b>									
<b>21</b>	Number of CSOs that develop and/or strengthen communication/outreach strategic plans to promote accountability.	Zero (0)	2014= 0					0	
			2015= 10		3	3	10	10	
			2016= 3	7	3	2	0	10	Annual goal exceeded

## ANNEX III. SUCCESS STORIES



# SUCCESS STORY

## Sowing New Opportunities for Growth

**Nicaraguan CSO ASODEL implements innovative alternatives for organizational sustainability, generating employment opportunities for at-risk youth.**



Foto: CBCSA PROGRAM

Freddy Pérez, youth activist of the "Somos Nicas" (We are Nicaraguans) networks, shows one of his creations.

*"Now I have dreams to achieve [and] projects to undertake. ASODEL's serigraphy training workshop - supported by the [USAID-funded CBCSA program] provided me a world of opportunities. Who knows if someday one of you will wear a t-shirt designed by me."*

-Freddy Pérez

Freddy Pérez grew up in a marginalized neighborhood in the Nicaraguan town of Chinandega without opportunities for personal growth and development. Lacking opportunities and resources, many residents do not study or work but spend their time consuming alcohol and drugs on the sidewalk across the street from where Freddy lives. Freddy's future seemed set to see life pass by, sitting on the sidelines, with little possibility to change its course.

But, at the age of 14, Freddy joined a youth network called "Somos Nicas" (We are Nicaraguans) which has been supported by local civil society organization Asociación para la Sobrevivencia y el Desarrollo Local (ASODEL). Joining "Somos Nicas" set Freddy's life on a completely different path.

Little by little, Freddy participated in all the individual and collective activities and opportunities that ASODEL offered to youth groups in Chinandega to make a difference in their communities. Participating in these activities instilled a deep confidence in Freddy, and he now has a vision for himself to be a leader in the community and understands the importance of demanding transparency from the local government.

When ASODEL offered a serigraphy training, funded by USAID/Nicaragua through the Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA), for Chinandega youth networks, Freddy saw an opportunity to tap into his creativity to contribute to the development and wellbeing of his community and to his personal growth. Freddy and other youth activists were trained on screen printing machines purchased through a CBCSA grant and will be hired by ASODEL to design and develop promotional materials such as t-shirts and baseball hats. ASODEL will use these products for their awareness activities such as a recent campaign to prevent child sexual abuse and to provide fee-for-services services to other NGOs and small businesses, thus contributing financially to the organization's sustainability.

Freddy now has a dream to escape from becoming a statistic that has trapped many Nicaraguan youth in difficult environments, and, with the support of ASODEL, USAID/Nicaragua, and CBCSA, he is set to achieve it.





## SUCCESS STORY

### Improving Capacity to Fundraise for Sustainability

**Caritas de Nicaragua successfully implements a fundraising campaign, receiving \$150,000 in donations.**



Photo: CBCSA PROGRAM

CARITAS received an in-kind donation of \$75,000 from Kellogg's-Central America



Photo: CBCSA PROGRAM

CARITAS's volunteers participating in the nationwide "Week of Charity/Provision of Integral Attention to Women" fundraising campaign

Nicaraguan civil society organization (CSO) Caritas de Nicaragua (CARITAS) successfully implemented its "Week of Charity" fundraising campaign under the slogan "Provision of Integral Attention to Women," raising \$150,000 and exceeding the expected target of \$100,000.

The USAID/Nicaragua Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA) supported CARITAS to plan and execute the campaign by developing a sustainability strategy and plan based on long-term goals established in the CSO's strategic plan. The plan includes fundraising strategies, techniques, and steps to support CARITAS's ability to raise funds and strengthen donor diversification. Working closely with CBCSA, CARITAS developed a management plan for the fundraising campaign to ensure its successful execution.

This strategy bolstered CARITAS's human and institutional capacity by strengthening its volunteer network, its ability to establish strategic alliances with media and private sector, and its capacity for outreach using new media. The strategy included steps to actively engage and strengthen CARITAS's volunteer and diocesan network. CBCSA also supported CARITAS to expand its use of social media through a digital campaign, reaching 72,854 people on Facebook and 108,606 Twitter users. In support of this effort, CBCSA helped design digital and media campaign materials, including posters, Twitter messages, and Facebook posts, among others.

With the support of CBCSA, CARITAS presented the strategy and budget to a group of corporate and individual donors, resulting in a donation of \$12,000 from various faith-based groups to cover campaign costs; free advertisements with 13 national media outlets; an in-kind donation of \$75,000 from Kellogg's-Central America; and approximately \$65,000 from the national collection.

Due to CBCSA's support, CARITAS exceeded its fundraising goal and ensured CARITAS was able to provide assistance to women in need. With a sound fundraising strategy and tools in place, CARITAS will be able to continue implementing successful fundraising and awareness campaigns for many years to come.



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## SUCCESS STORY

### The Quality of Education in Nicaragua

**Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social raises awareness of the factors that affect the quality of education in Nicaragua.**



The cover of FUNIDE's study "The Quality of Education in Nicaragua: Do children enjoy the same opportunities?"

Through a grant from the USAID/Nicaragua Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA), Nicaraguan think tank Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUNIDES) is strengthening its research capacity, expanding its outreach, and achieving greater impact from its advocacy efforts.

On February 7, 2017, FUNIDES presented its study on the quality of education in Nicaragua titled, "Do children enjoy the same opportunities?" Developed with CBCSA grant funds, the report examines the factors that influence the academic performance of third and sixth grade students and provides data and recommendations on how the education system could improve the overall quality of education in Nicaragua.

FUNIDES gave the study to the Nicaragua Ministry of Education, providing the government with hard data and tools they can use to increase the quality of education at public and private institutions. In addition, FUNIDES held a formal presentation of the study, inviting education sector stakeholders, entrepreneurs, government officials, civil society groups, and the media, and transmitted it live on its YouTube channel. Since its release, FUNIDES's presentation has been viewed more than 500 times on YouTube and the study has been mentioned more than 120 times in traditional media and social networks. In March 2017, FUNIDES presented the study in different regions of the country at various universities and other public spaces to raise greater awareness among the general public about how to improve the quality of education in their communities.

Following the event, high governmental officials requested that FUNIDES present the results of the study in a private meeting to the government, which FUNIDES considers as a great advance in the promotion of public policies to relevant stakeholders.

With additional presentations and greater public interest, FUNIDES hopes to foster wider dialogue around education in Nicaragua and lead to meaningful change in the sector.





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## SUCCESS STORY

### Improving Sustainability in Closing Donor Spaces

**Movimiento por Nicaragua tells its story at an international level using international fundraising platforms and alliances.**



Foto: CBCSA PROGRAM

*"We thank CBCSA for understanding that sustainability is a key subject for MpN. The support provided helped close an institutional human resources gap that allowed the organization to resume the implementation of its sustainability strategy."*

-Violeta Granera, Executive Director

Nicaraguan civil society organizations (CSO) have faced financial challenges due to changes in the donor space. CSOs have struggled to remain sustainable as most have traditionally depended on international donors to sustain their operations. The substantial cutbacks in international support have caused organizations to develop and revise their fundraising actions to achieve financial sustainability.

To foster sustainability through new and creative fundraising, USAID/Nicaragua through the Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA), provided technical assistance and coaching to Nicaraguan CSO Movimiento por Nicaragua (MpN). Working closely with the CSO, CBCSA developed a tailored Training Implementation Plan (TIP) with targeted interventions to strengthen MpN's fundraising capacities. The TIP included concrete actions to immediately start raising funds and diversify the CSO's funding sources.

CBCSA provided technical assistance and coaching to MpN to create two digital fundraising campaigns with a more updated, renovated, and attractive digital image. The campaigns used various platforms such as Mailchimp, an online email marketing solution to manage contacts, send emails and track results; and Global Giving, the first and largest global crowdfunding online community that connects nonprofits, donors, and companies across the world.

Improved digital campaigns promoted more effective fundraising outreach and alliance opportunities. Google accepted MpN into its non-profit program which offers organizations free access to Google tools like Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Cloud, and Google Ad Grants. This strategic alliance will help MpN tell its story, attract new volunteers, and reach new donors domestically and internationally.

Due to its effective technical assistance and coaching, CBCSA received a formal acknowledgement from MpN for the support the project provided. Violeta Granera, MpN's Executive Director noted that "[t]he results of the technical assistance provided by CBCSA were outstanding and we feel very pleased with them. We are certain that restarting the fundraising will bring positive impacts for the organization and we hope that our alliance on this topic will continue in the near future."



# SUCCESS STORY

## Supporting Sustainability and Gender Inclusion

**The USAID-funded CBCSA project has helped increase the sustainability, advocacy, and gender awareness skills of Nicaraguan CSO RED LOCAL.**



Photo: CBCSA PROGRAM

RED LOCAL receives capacity building on advocacy leadership and volunteer management



Photo: CBCSA PROGRAM

Workshop on gender inclusion and USAID's policies on gender equality and female empowerment

Through the Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA), USAID/Nicaragua is working to improve the organizational capacity of Nicaraguan civil society organizations (CSO) through tailored technical assistance in areas including strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, communication and awareness-raising efforts, and social inclusion and gender equality.

The support CBCSA provided to Nicaraguan CSO Red Nicaragüense por la Democracia y el Desarrollo Local (RED LOCAL) has strengthened its human resources and institutional capacities. Through targeted technical assistance, CBCSA supported RED LOCAL to develop its institutional strategic plan to ensure the CSO can successfully respond to changes in the operating environment, thereby increasing its sustainability. Ludely Aburto, Executive Secretary of RED LOCAL, noted that “this was an interesting experience because it involved a hard and thorough work process with the Board of Directors, the assembly of members, and the technical team. It gave RED LOCAL the opportunity to evaluate and rethink key strategic indicators and extend the timeframe of its implementation.”

In addition to a strategic plan, CBCSA worked with RED LOCAL to develop a complementary sustainability plan to serve as a roadmap to promote and strengthen donor and funding diversification—one of the CSO's strategic indicators. The CSO now has clear guidelines that recognize the challenges the operating and social-political environment present to the sustainability efforts and daily work of its network and members.

To support USAID's commitment to inclusive programming, in 2015, CBCSA implemented activities to strengthen the knowledge of RED LOCAL members on gender equality and female empowerment. The activities included a workshop on gender inclusion and equality, and the revision of RED LOCAL's gender policy and strategy. Throughout 2015, CBCSA continued to work with RED LOCAL to implement the policy and strategy to better advocate and address the needs of women and other vulnerable populations, including LGBTI communities, in its work and to comply with USAID's policies on gender equality and female empowerment.



## SUCCESS STORY

### Human Rights Leaders Improve Their Advocacy Capacity

**Twenty-five Nicaraguan human rights activists in Nicaragua were empowered to promote and defend vulnerable groups.**



Photo: CBCSA PROGRAM



The first group of graduates of the postgraduate course "Democratic Governance and Human Rights of Vulnerable Groups."

With the support of the USAID/Nicaragua Capacity Building for Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA), the Centro de Estudios para la Gobernabilidad y Democracia (CEGODEM) delivered a four-month postgraduate course, never before taught in Nicaragua, on the human rights of vulnerable populations, including children, women, indigenous and afro-descendant peoples, and the LGBTI community.

To develop and deliver this postgraduate course titled "Democratic Governance and Human Rights of Vulnerable Groups," CEGODEM signed an alliance with the Polytechnic University of Nicaragua (UPOLI), which also enhanced CEGODEM's capacity to build and strengthen alliances to achieve its objectives and goals.

The postgraduate course strengthened the knowledge and capacities of 25 Nicaraguan civil society and sexual diversity movement leaders who work with LGBTI populations, youth, afro-descendant groups, women, and other vulnerable groups. These leaders now have knowledge about the legal and social framework of the rights of vulnerable groups and have an enriched understanding of the experiences of different groups that advocate for the rights of vulnerable populations. This knowledge and understanding will allow participants to be more effective in their advocacy.

CEGODEM's Director Fidel Moreira commented: "We developed the postgraduate course to improve the communication and messaging of all these groups that work with children, youth, and other vulnerable groups to put the struggle, defense, and recognition of human rights on the national agenda."

Angelica Toruño, Director of the Evangelical University of Nicaragua Law School and one of the 25 course participants said, "it is very important that the law school includes these topics and groups for reflection. The facilitators have brought the issue of human rights to the forefront, which although often considered or understood, we do not know how to recognize them and demand those rights."

As a result of this course, CEGODEM, with the support of CBCSA, managed to position itself as a reference organization and leader in the defense of the human rights of vulnerable groups. As a next step in solidifying its leadership, Fidel Moreira noted, "[w]e are contributing to the creation of a think tank in interdisciplinary processes to analyze the human rights of vulnerable groups."



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## SUCCESS STORY

### Nicaraguan Think Tank Uses Research to Promote Gender Equality

**FUNIDES implements a gender policy to support research and advocacy.**



The presentation of FUNIDES's study, developed in conjunction with REN.

Photo: CBCSA PROGRAM

As a think tank that conducts the most advocacy in Nicaragua, the Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUNIDES) collects and analyzes data on economic issues, both social and institutional, to develop reports and proposals aimed at decision makers to improve the wellbeing of Nicaraguans through sustainable development. Historically, FUNIDES's research has focused on quantitative models to highlight the differences between men and women.

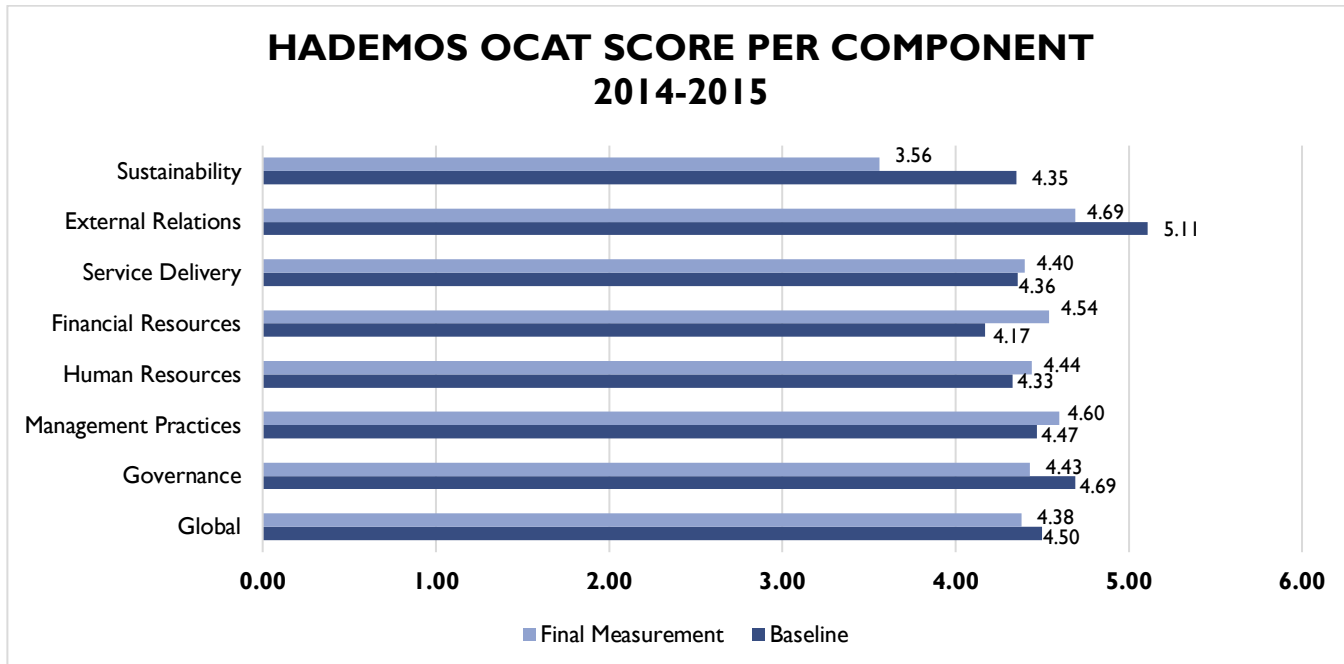
In September 2016, FUNIDES received a grant from the USAID/Nicaragua Capacity Building Civil Society Advocacy project (CBCSA) to improve its advocacy and develop studies to provide an evidence-base for Nicaraguan civil society organizations. As part of its grant, CBCSA facilitated an organizational capacity self-assessment for FUNIDES which detected the need for tools to institutionalize gender equality internally to better advocate for it externally.

With the support of CBCSA, FUNIDES implemented its first institutional gender policy, developed in a participatory manner with its staff. The gender policy included raising awareness among the staff and identifying areas and tools for FUNIDES's research and actions to include gender considerations to reduce existing gaps in gender equality.

The implementation of the gender policy constitutes a great advance for FUNIDES as it supports better advocacy of its research to make women's issues more visible and take specific actions to achieve greater gender equity in society.

With its new gender policy in place, FUNIDES, together with another CBCSA grantee, Red de Empresarias de Nicaragua (REN), conducted a study on the challenges that women entrepreneurs face to access tax incentives that could support the sustainability of their businesses. The study enriched debate and enabled FUNIDES to increase its advocacy of issues that contribute to the exercise of a more inclusive, democratic, and participatory society. The study also provided REN with an evidence base to advocate for issues important to its members and mission.

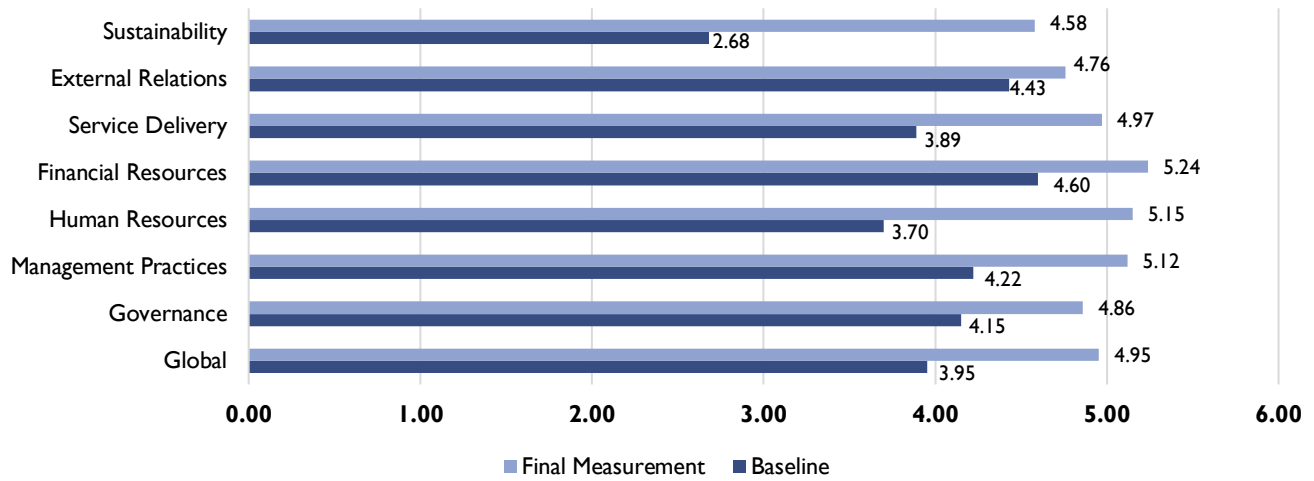
## ANNEX IV. CSOS' OCAT SCORES PER COMPONENT



HADEMOS		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>4.38</b>
Components	Governance	4.69	4.43
	Management Practices	4.47	4.60
	Human Resources	4.33	4.44
	Financial Resources	4.17	4.54
	Service Delivery	4.36	4.40
	External Relations	5.11	4.69
	Sustainability	4.35	3.56

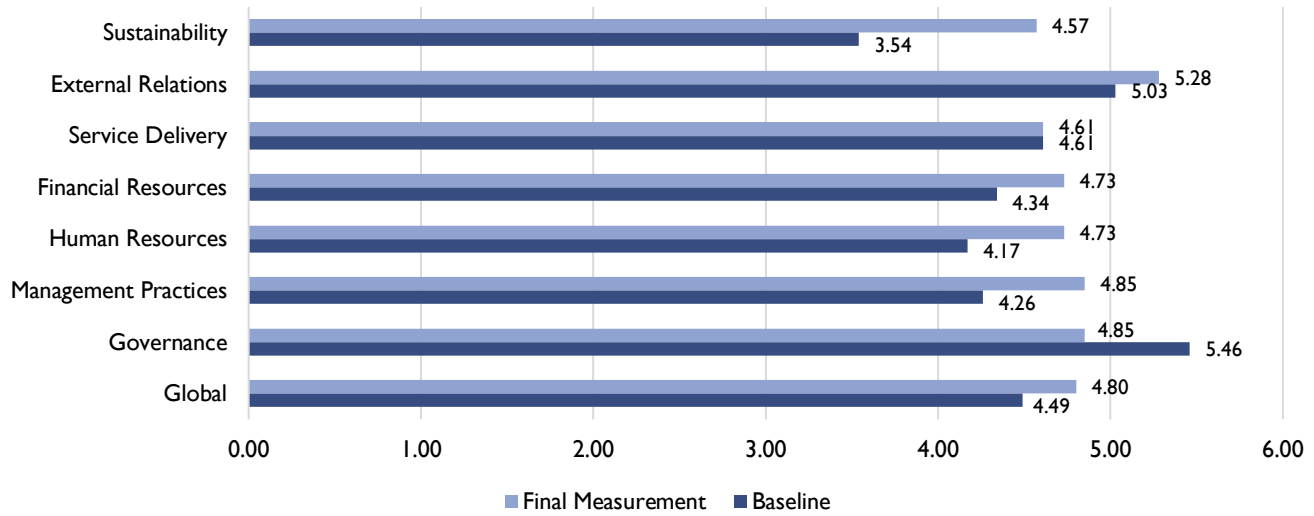


## EyT OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2015



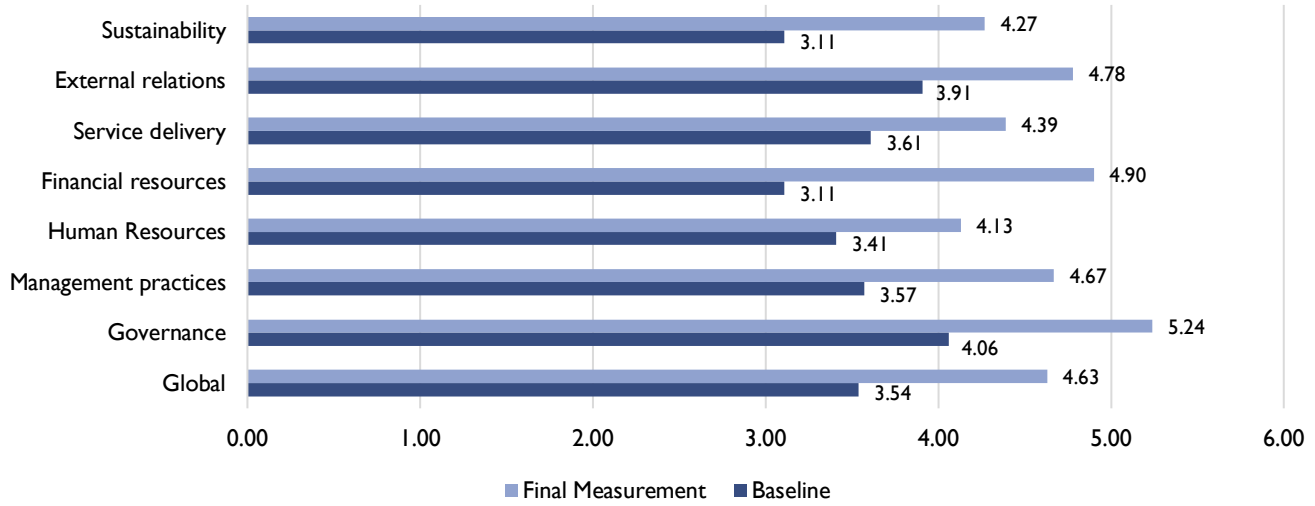
EyT		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>4.95</b>
Components	Governance	4.15	4.86
	Management Practices	4.22	5.12
	Human Resources	3.70	5.15
	Financial Resources	4.60	5.24
	Service Delivery	3.89	4.97
	External Relations	4.43	4.76
	Sustainability	2.68	4.58

## EDUQUEMOS OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2015



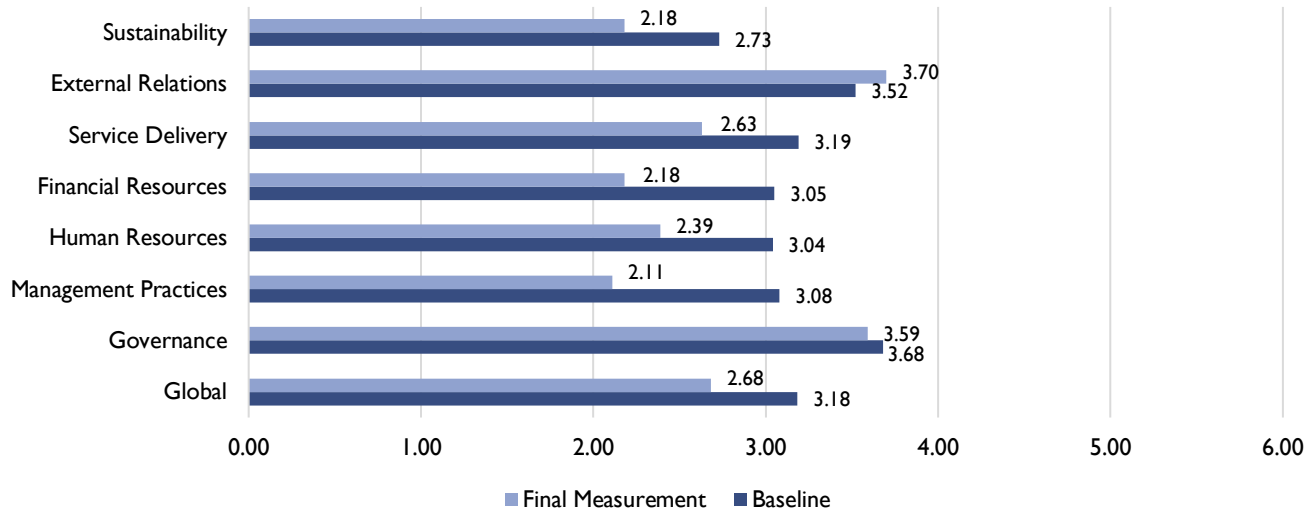
EDUQUEMOS		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>4.80</b>
Components	Governance	5.46	4.85
	Management Practices	4.26	4.85
	Human Resources	4.17	4.73
	Financial Resources	4.34	4.73
	Service Delivery	4.61	4.61
	External Relations	5.03	5.28
	Sustainability	3.54	4.57

## MpN OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2015



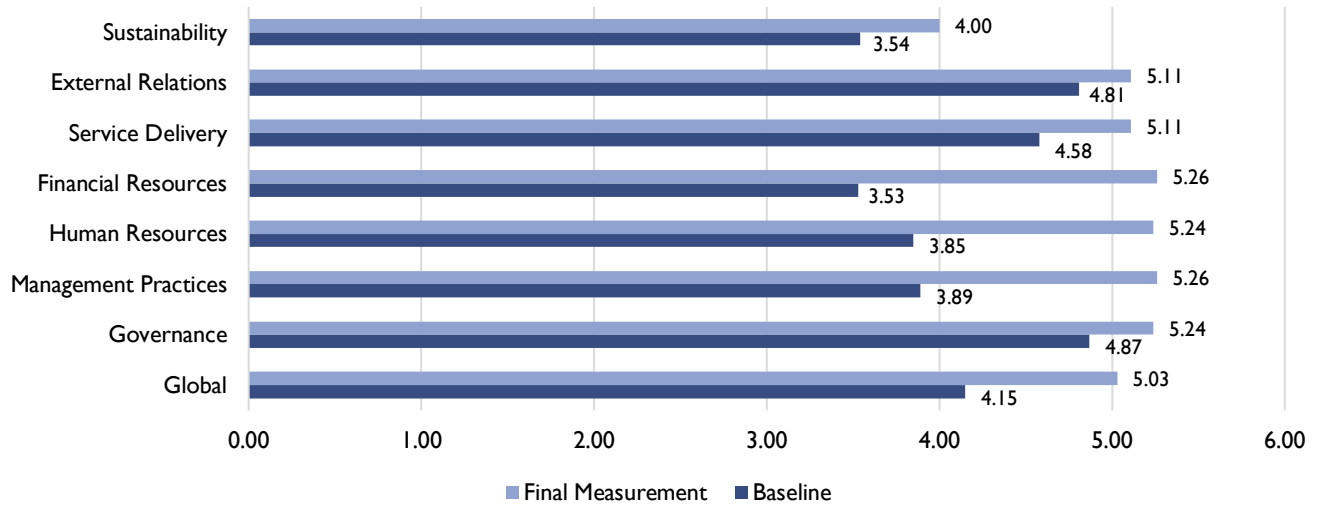
MpN		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>4.63</b>
Components	Governance	4.06	5.24
	Management Practices	3.57	4.67
	Human Resources	3.41	4.13
	Financial Resources	3.11	4.90
	Service Delivery	3.61	4.39
	External Relations	3.91	4.78
	Sustainability	3.11	4.27

## CARITAS OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2015



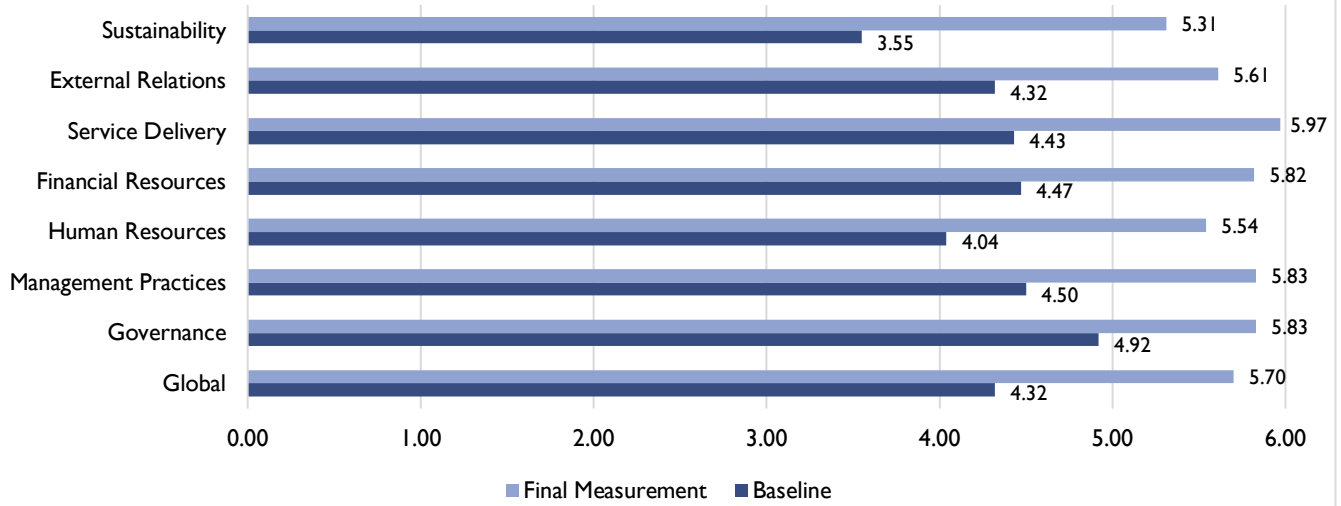
CARITAS		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>2.68</b>
Components	Governance	3.68	3.59
	Management Practices	3.08	2.11
	Human Resources	3.04	2.39
	Financial Resources	3.05	2.18
	Service Delivery	3.19	2.63
	External Relations	3.52	3.70
	Sustainability	2.73	2.18

## RED LOCAL OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2017



RED LOCAL		Baseline	Final Measurement
Components	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>5.03</b>
	Governance	4.87	5.24
	Management Practices	3.89	5.26
	Human Resources	3.85	5.24
	Financial Resources	3.53	5.26
	Service Delivery	4.58	5.11
	External Relations	4.81	5.11
	Sustainability	3.54	4.00

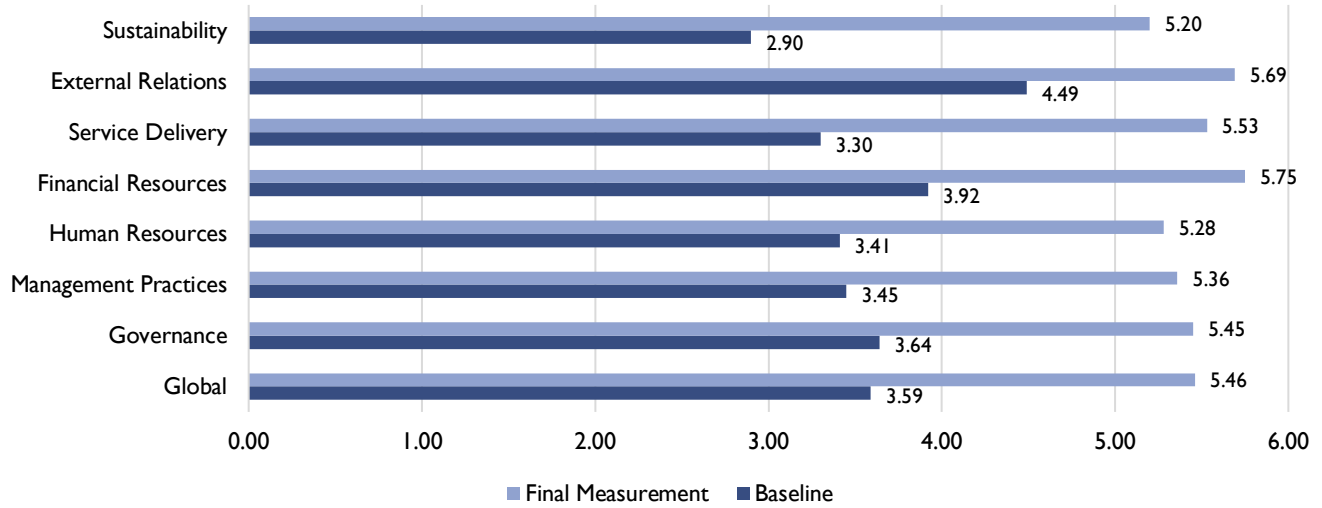
## IPADE OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2017



IPADE		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>5.70</b>
Components	Governance	4.92	5.83
	Management Practices	4.50	5.83
	Human Resources	4.04	5.54
	Financial Resources	4.47	5.82
	Service Delivery	4.43	5.97
	External Relations	4.32	5.61
	Sustainability	3.55	5.31

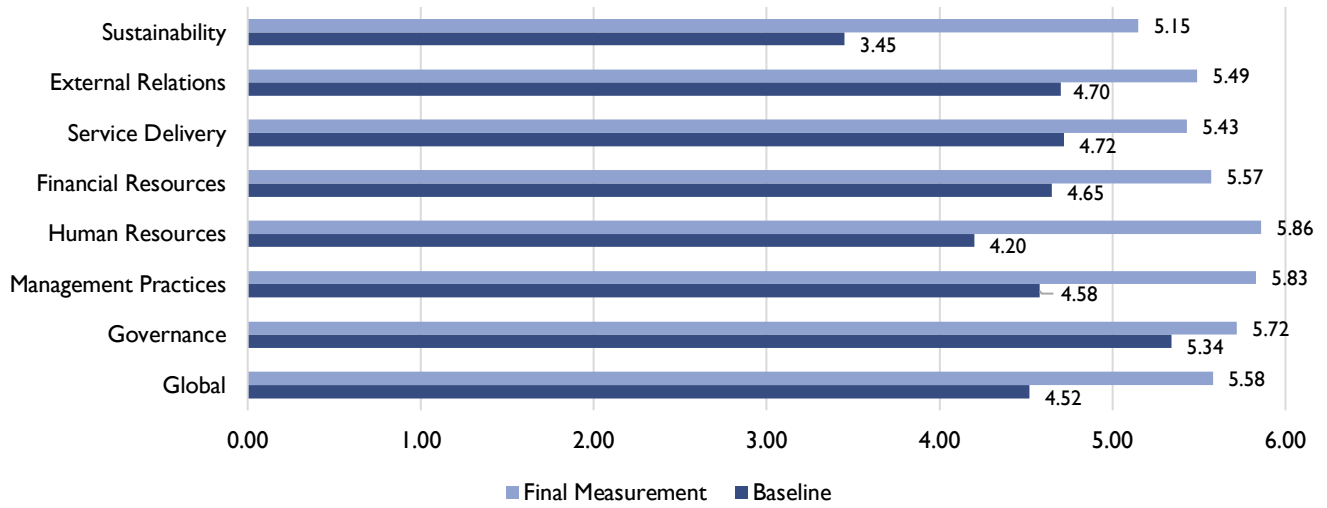


## IEPP OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2017



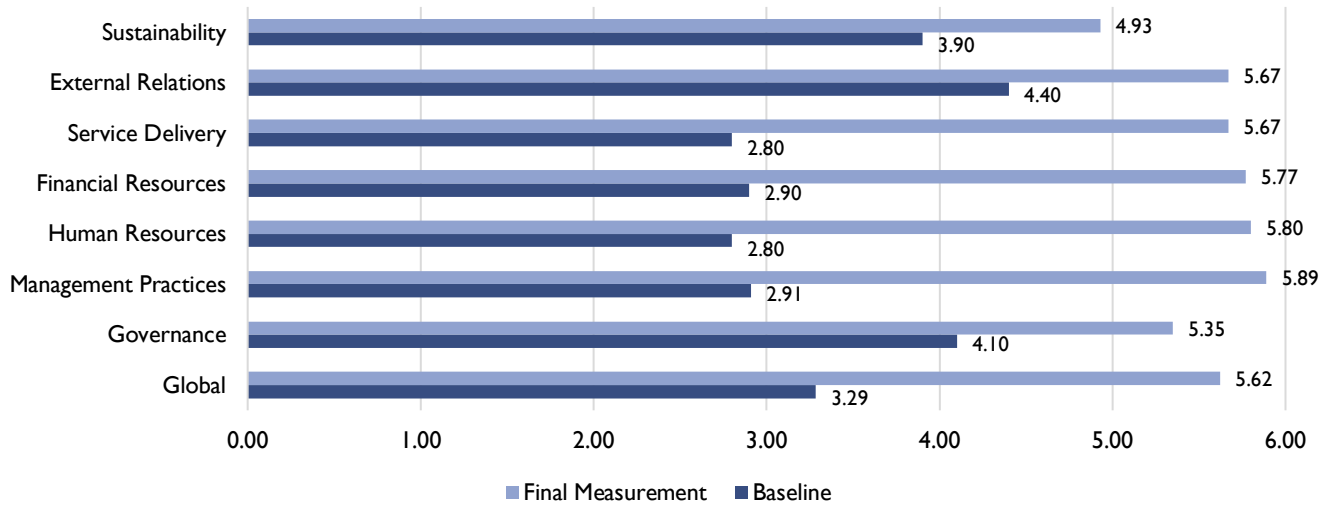
IEPP		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>5.46</b>
Components	Governance	3.64	5.45
	Management Practices	3.45	5.36
	Human Resources	3.41	5.28
	Financial Resources	3.92	5.75
	Service Delivery	3.30	5.53
	External Relations	4.49	5.69
	Sustainability	2.90	5.20

## CINCO OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2017



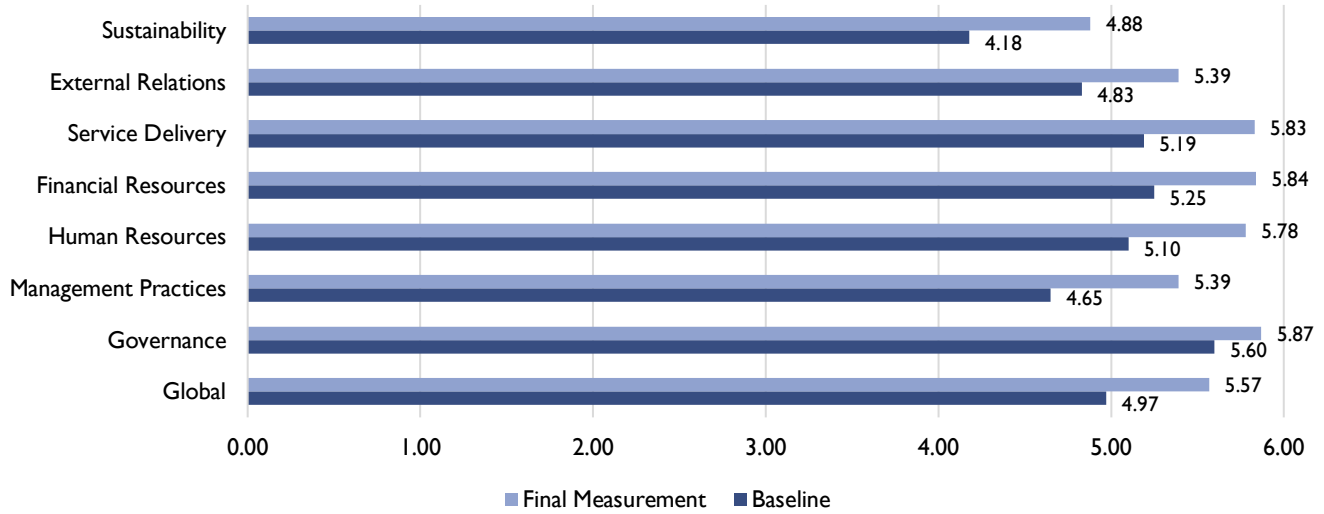
CINCO		Baseline	Final Measurement
Components	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>5.58</b>
	Governance	5.34	5.72
	Management Practices	4.58	5.83
	Human Resources	4.20	5.86
	Financial Resources	4.65	5.57
	Service Delivery	4.72	5.43
	External Relations	4.70	5.49
	Sustainability	3.45	5.15

## FVBCH OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2014-2017



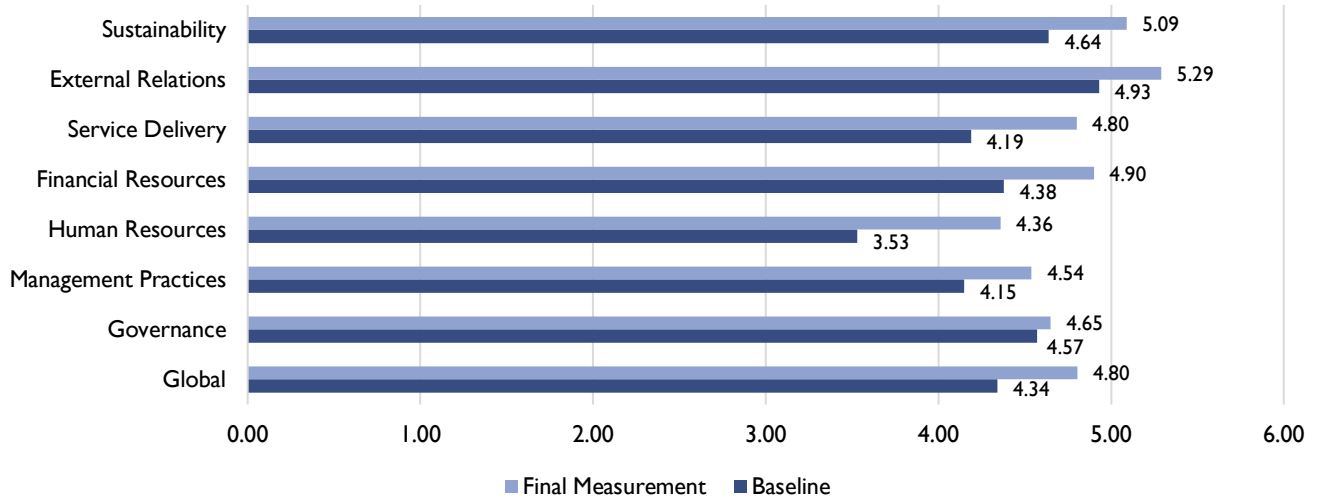
FVBCH		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>5.62</b>
Components	Governance	4.10	5.35
	Management Practices	2.91	5.89
	Human Resources	2.80	5.80
	Financial Resources	2.90	5.77
	Service Delivery	2.80	5.67
	External Relations	4.40	5.67
	Sustainability	3.90	4.93

## CEPS OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2016-2017



CEPS		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.97</b>	<b>5.57</b>
Components	Governance	5.60	5.87
	Management Practices	4.65	5.39
	Human Resources	5.10	5.78
	Financial Resources	5.25	5.84
	Service Delivery	5.19	5.83
	External Relations	4.83	5.39
	Sustainability	4.18	4.88

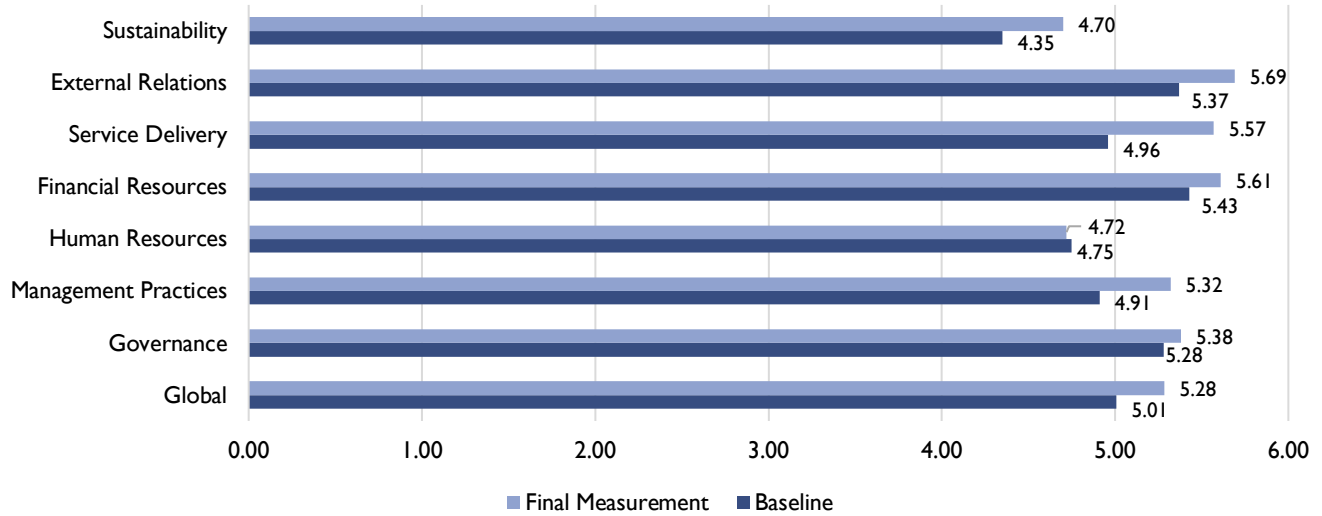
## FUNIDES OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2016-2017



FUNIDES		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>4.80</b>
Components	Governance	4.57	4.65
	Management Practices	4.15	4.54
	Human Resources	3.53	4.36
	Financial Resources	4.38	4.90
	Service Delivery	4.19	4.80
	External Relations	4.93	5.29
	Sustainability	4.64	5.09

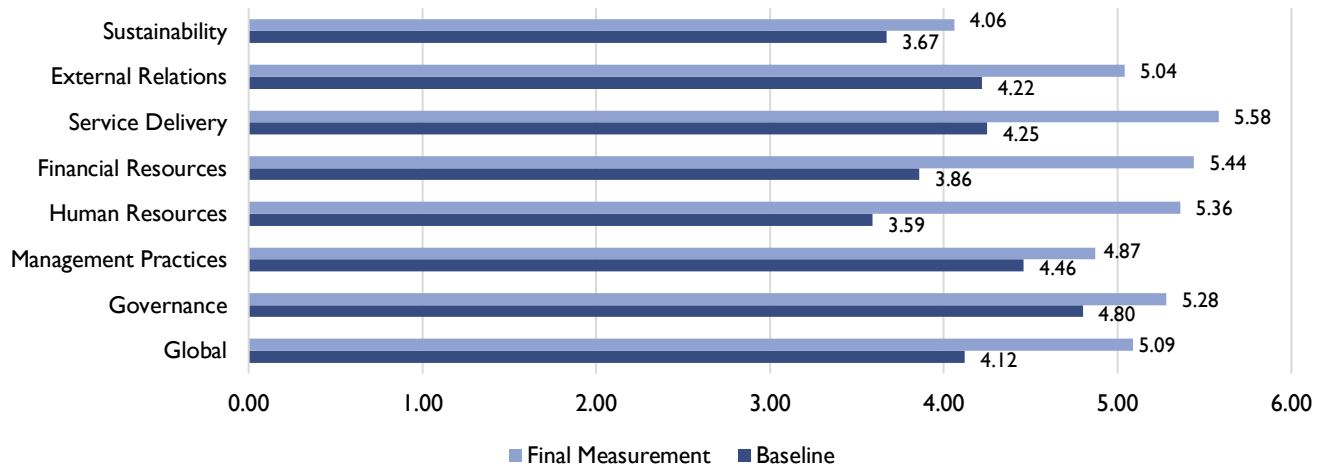


## INDE OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2016-2017



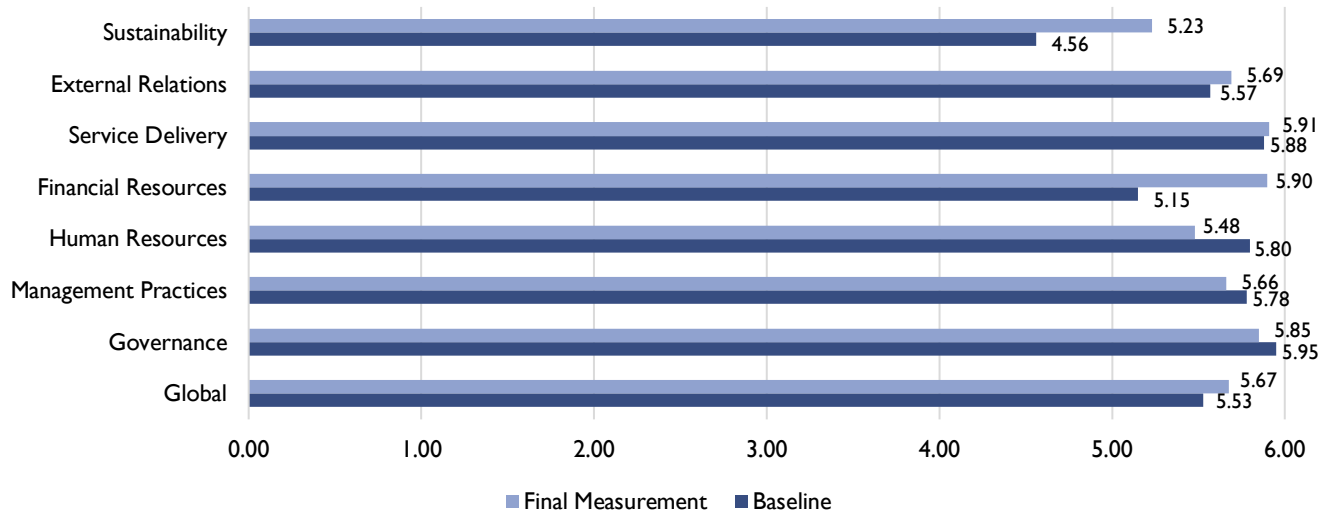
INDE		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>5.01</b>	<b>5.28</b>
Components	Governance	5.28	5.38
	Management Practices	4.91	5.32
	Human Resources	4.75	4.72
	Financial Resources	5.43	5.61
	Service Delivery	4.96	5.57
	External Relations	5.37	5.69
	Sustainability	4.35	4.70

## REN OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2016-2017



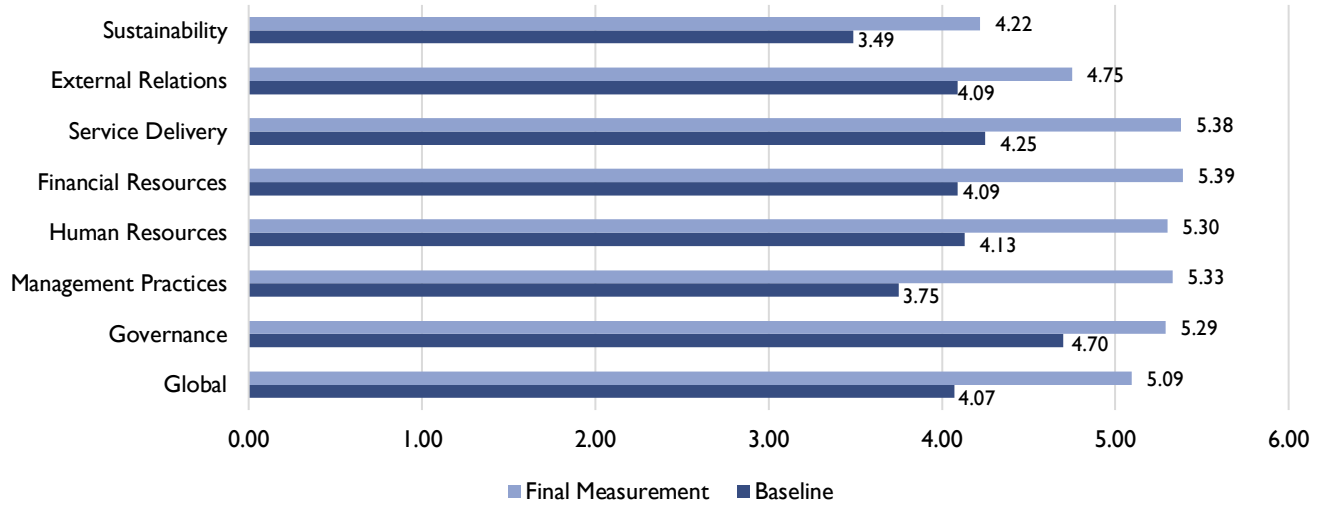
REN		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>5.09</b>
Components	Governance	4.80	5.28
	Management Practices	4.46	4.87
	Human Resources	3.59	5.36
	Financial Resources	3.86	5.44
	Service Delivery	4.25	5.58
	External Relations	4.22	5.04
	Sustainability	3.67	4.06

## ASODEL OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2016-2017



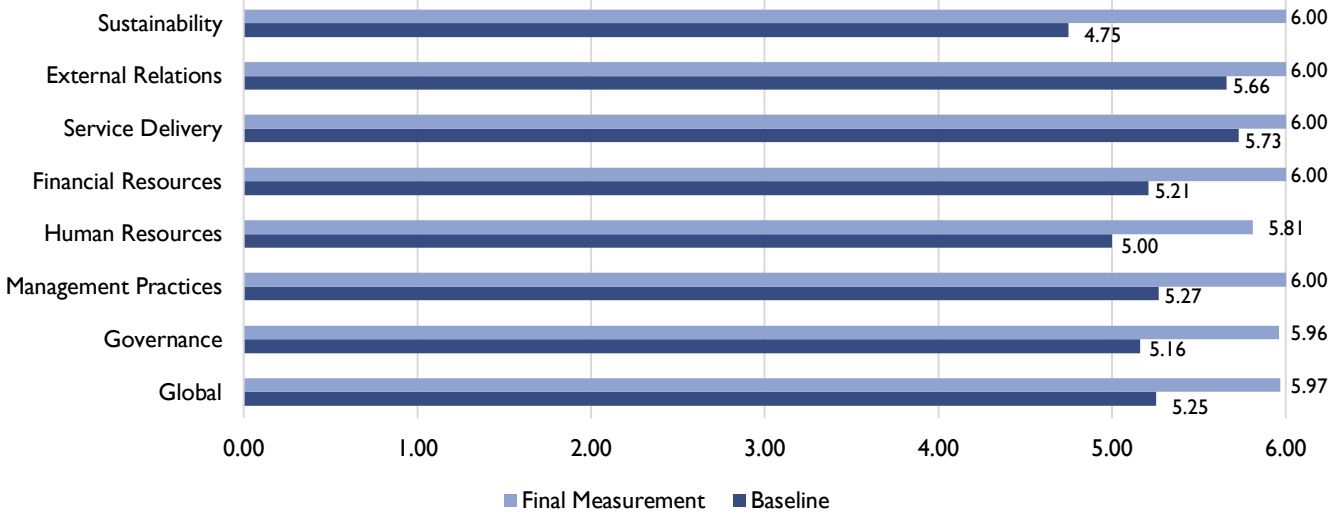
ASODEL		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>5.53</b>	<b>5.67</b>
Components	Governance	5.95	5.85
	Management Practices	5.78	5.66
	Human Resources	5.80	5.48
	Financial Resources	5.15	5.90
	Service Delivery	5.88	5.91
	External Relations	5.57	5.69
	Sustainability	4.56	5.23

## ACD OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT June-October 2017



ACD		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>5.09</b>
Components	Governance	4.70	5.29
	Management Practices	3.75	5.33
	Human Resources	4.13	5.30
	Financial Resources	4.09	5.39
	Service Delivery	4.25	5.38
	External Relations	4.09	4.75
	Sustainability	3.49	4.22

## CEGODEM OCAT SCORE PER COMPONENT 2016-2017



CEGODEM		Baseline	Final Measurement
	<b>Global</b>	<b>5.25</b>	<b>5.97</b>
Components	Governance	5.16	5.96
	Management Practices	5.27	6.00
	Human Resources	5.00	5.81
	Financial Resources	5.21	6.00
	Service Delivery	5.73	6.00
	External Relations	5.66	6.00
	Sustainability	4.75	6.00