

## “FULL CITIZENSHIP” IN MARACAIBO, VENEZUELA: A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

in Maracaibo, Venezuela (70% of poor urban areas) local partners, engaged with social transformation and framed by the concept of “participatory democracy”, have implemented the Program “Full Citizenship” (Alcaldía de Maracaibo (GO); Nuevo Amanecer-Cesap (NGO); Universidad del Zulia –LUZ- (academic); Hábitat-LUZ (NGO); international partner: the UMP-LAC/HABITAT; Banco Occidental de Descuento –BOD- (Private) and the local community neighborhood organizations).

The main purpose of “Full Citizenship” is to overcome poverty promoting local sustainable development in: environmental, social and economical level while establishing a model of democratic government for the urban management.

The Pilot project (1999-2000) implemented in a 4000 inhabitant poor community (“barrios”<sup>1</sup>), received the “Good Experience” by the Dubai 2000 Best Practice Awards. It supported 74% of homes headed by women with and investment of 100.000 US\$ and set the bases for the Micro-financing Service of Maracaibo (SAMI).

Last year, “Full Citizenship” has been active in 12 “barrios” of large population, has trained and granted loans to more than 500 families (mainly headed by women and 25% of indigenous) investing around 500.000 US\$. In 2005, the concept of the Program will be implemented supported by the NGO’s, LUZ, SAMI, as consultant and new local actors in the town of Barranquitas, Municipality of Rosario de Perijá (4000 inhabitant), which is a community seriously affected by Huntington disease and environmental problems.

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<sup>1</sup> Poor urban shantytown: barrios in Venezuela, favelas in Brazil, colonias in Mexico, villas miseria in Argentina, etc.

## **1. Development models in the contemporary Venezuelan history: How the social actors have been involved?**

The section of the paper attempts to describe the historical framework that has conditioned the rise and expression of the different sectors committed to the consortium-based model of development of the Program "Full Citizenship", and how their positions, regarding politics and social action, have evolved in relation to the local and national development. This is necessary to understand the operation of the consortium and how the relations, among the partners, emerge and consolidate.

### **1.1 The Welfare State: there is no space for others to assume social responsibilities (1900-1958)**

The international perception in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on a liberal thought, placed poverty as the result of the individual's own responsibility, absolutely private (Papadopoulos, 1994:53). In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the consolidation of Marxist principles in Europe, the interpretation and the new consciousness derived from the industrial processes and the rise of the new working classes, made the State assume that it was the only responsible for the social welfare. The scheme is reproduced in Latin America, while Venezuelan scene is ruled between military and local "caudillos" dictatorships –popular leaders promoters of tyrannical governments and self centered ideals- and the short periods of democracy, with workers-socialist characteristics.

The Venezuelan approach, nevertheless, is an answer to the pressure exercised by the political parties and social movements from the opposition, which are recognized "as main instrument of democracy and social achievement" (Fundación Escuela para la Gerencia Social/VENAMCHAM, 2000:13). The welfare model of the State is strengthened, based on the interpretation of democracy as a collective mechanism of social accomplishment (1947 and 1961 National Constitutions). This vision transcends toward the military government, established by "coup d'eta", between 1953 and 1958.

Large investments, in physical infrastructure (including popular housing), stimulate the rural-urban migration, which determines the disorderly and dysfunctional urban growth (more than 50% in the 1950s) and the emergence of peripheral "rings of misery", in the large Venezuelan cities.

### **1.2 Philanthropy, autonomy and social action (1960-1970)**

In Venezuela, with a new democracy in place, and threatened by the extremist and subversive armed movements (characteristic of Latin American in the early 1960s), the political parties and movements of socialist tendency are legalized and later they assume the control of the government and, with it, the consolidation of the policies of assistance and social protection of workers and employees.

The Law of Universities establishes the autonomy of universities and emphasizes on education as their primary function. The Universities touch the social problems when they affect their employees and students and establish protection programs, for student, and support those that are self-managed by their employees.

On the other hand, the self-reflection of the business groups and the Catholic Church, in regard with the social responsibility, places them in a new position related to the social aid. In the meanwhile, business groups create philanthropic institutions, economically supported by the sector. Its position is similar to that of the Welfare State as it contributes, but does not directly participate, in the social processes (Fundación Escuela para la Gerencia Social/VENAMCHAM: 2000,16). The sustainability of these endeavors depends, exclusively, on the disposition of each businessman and his or her organization ("social investment").

The social work of the Catholic Church, restated by the Vatican's Council II (1963), promotes the appearance of international social organizations that also operate in Venezuela, based on principles of attention to the poor. Although service-oriented, the Jesuits sponsors the first cooperative of workers in the Peninsula of Paraguaná, oil-refining zone located in the west region of the country (this is still operational). This new emphasis, on social groups' self-responsibility as the promoter of their processes, represents an innovative advance in the context of community participation.

### **1.3 The community-based organizations and NGOs (1970-1990).**

Venezuela is an exceptional country, exhibiting one of the most stable democracies in the region, and the misuse of the revenues from oil exports, while, other Latin American countries face deep economic crisis (Argentina and Colombia) and violent changes of government (Chile and Brazil), or are pioneers implementing the State Reform policies of the International Monetary Fund (Bolivia, Chile, and Mexico).

In the 1980s, community-oriented organizations emerge, mainly directed to the poorest, and focused on the development and consolidation of groups from the base to lead their own transformation. Some of them have been promoted by the Catholic Church and a smaller group by professionals, who understand the need to overcome the increasing national poverty (i.e. the CESAP group).

The recognition of the organizations from the base, as representatives of community sectors, is legalized and become speakers of the "demands" to the government apparatus. But, the State focuses on lessening the situation with paternalistic programs and promotes political clientelism.

The perspective of the 90s is different. The country has initiated the decade with one of the most violent social crisis of its history, resulting from the process of economic “rationalization”. The social explosion is caused, mainly, because the poorest classes have been ignored, and excluded. This “rationalization” is part of the process of the State Reforms that, according to Edwards, has placed Venezuela among the late-reformist group of countries (Edwards: 1997, 17). The State Reforms failed because they did not achieve to promote a stable economic growth; to alleviate poverty and social exclusion; or to strengthen the democratic institutions and the popular legitimacy (Boron in Faerstein & Buthet: 2003, 52).

The State is still recognized as the only responsible for the social welfare, but, the investment that it does, at that moment, accounted for almost 50% from that of previous years (Oficina Central de Presupuesto, 2002).

The universities initiated extension functions policies, traditionally understood in the cultural and philanthropic context, but, yet, they do not understand themselves as key actors in the development process.

#### 1.4 Stakeholders’ Partnership: a proposal for local development. How it is assumed in Venezuela? (1990-1999).

Agenda 21 (1992) puts in the first place a global social agenda with the ideal to overcome poverty. Also, it mandates that all the sectors of the community are accountable for the development process.

Part of the Venezuelan, since the social riots of 1989, conclude in the consolidation of the non-governmental organizations, which now assume an important role in the national context, by their own initiative.

Poverty is perceived as a problem, but it is not recognize as a problem of the State. Assessments of the number of poor people and poor urban zones are done on a national scale, as the National Inventory of “barrios” in 1993, that was carried out, mainly, by NGOs (FUNDACOMUN-OCEI: 1993).

As a response to the local demands, the national university system, undertake processes of transformation (LUZ: 1998, 21), and university-based institutions emerged in the form of non-profit foundations or entrepreneurial businesses. The business sector, in turn, takes the road of what Roosen calls the “third dimension”; and the businessman “social responsibility” arises among the redefinition of the State and civil society relationship (Roosen: 2000).

Each social actor acts under its assumption and will, because the State does not provide clear nor articulated policies. The level of poverty begins to reach very high values, mainly in the urban areas. The city of Maracaibo shows the greatest proportion of urban area poor zones, among the cities of Venezuela (around a 60%) according to the National Inventory of “barrios” (FUNDACOMUN-OCEI: 1993).

Habitat II (1996) recognizes the role of the NGOs and the community-base organizations and the need to decentralize, by region, the Urban Management Program (UMP), first constituted in 1986 by the UNHABITAT, UNDP and donors like the World Bank.

Among the complex Venezuelan social-political context conditions, in 1998, different social actors, being reflexive on their participation and the ways to strengthen it, allows the UMP for Latin America and the Caribbean to propose various agreements to undertake local processes of development under the consortium type model. The first effort is carried out in Maracaibo (west region), with the “Program Promotion of Full Citizenship as a mechanism to overcome Poverty” (González de Kauffman 2003, 10); the second in Ciudad Guayana (south-east region). In both cases, the municipalities commit. The third experience, even though the agreement is signed with an NGO, never works because the municipality is not involved (Barquisimeto, west-central region). Of these three, “Full Citizenship” is the only one that remains operational.

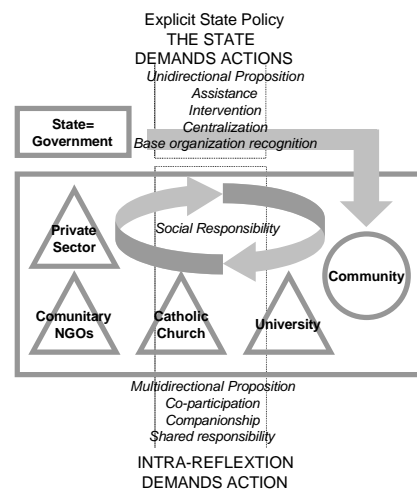


Figure 1 The Multi-actor cooperation scheme in Venezuelan vs. the State policy. Source: González de Kauffman 2005, 5

### 1.5 The Neo-Welfare State and the State Hypertrophy (1999-p to date).

With new government in 1999, Venezuela faces a restructure of its State institutions and a new Constitution is approved, at the end of that year, by means of popular consultation. This document affirms that the local level is the fundamental arm of the State and that the process of decentralization is necessary for the national development (Rep. Bolivariana de Venezuela: 2000).

It is important to mention that poverty has become a State problem, nevertheless, the government action shows, again, the lack of clear social policies while its actions and social investments have been centralized, in such a way, that they do not care for the institutional structure, but create other parallel structures (directly dependant to the President) based on spasmodically variable and concrete objectives, known as "missions". These, although have an apparent positive effect in poor areas (and they seem to be directed to reach the "millennium goals" (UN: 2000), have not been monitored, evaluated nor have been audited in the mechanisms of investment and execution. The military and Cuban groups have acquired an important figure in these experiences and have been assigned the implementation of the social work by the upper sector of the government. Also, the national oil industry (PDVSA) redirected its social investments, after the 2002 general strike, toward the "attention of the communities".

On the other hand, cooperative of production have been promoted at the national level and credit mechanisms have been constituted in parallel to the formal banking system. But, these mechanisms show high levels of insolvency, after a short period of time of implementation (Salmerón: 2005, 114).

The new social demands to businesses and organizations, placed by the State, have been accentuated. Among others, it has mandated the construction of 120 thousand low-income housing units by the year 2005, with the highest percentage of investment coming from the private sector (Armas: 2005, 115).

In regard with social issues, the central government is demanding the universities to reinforce the teaching and learning exercise and, in order to accomplish these goals, has created new government-dependent, and totally controlled, public Universities.

The State is returning to the old fashion plan -"the welfare State", perpetuating the clientelistic model (in many cases party-oriented). The State has reinstalled the people expectations to be "benefited" and the feeling that the "fault" of their situation of poverty is out of their control (external locus). But, the poverty is still present and increases every day...

## 2. Brief description of Maracaibo, Venezuela: Location of Partnership model of "Full Citizenship"

Maracaibo, as other Latin American cities, suffered a strong migratory process, in the last fifty years, stimulated by the oil production in the nearby region. The process has derived in the formation of sub-urbanized zones disarticulated from the physics and social-urban reality of the original intermediate city. This has conferred the city character of intermediate-metropolis placing its influence beyond the western shore of Lake Maracaibo -natural barrier-, where it is located.

Second city of Venezuela, Caribbean country at the northern edge of South America, has a privileged location that has allowed a close historic relationship with Colombia (by land) and the Caribbean (via sea) and a substantial differentiation, even cultural, with the rest of Venezuela.

The city conforms a symbiotic space that combines the "formal and regular" with the "informal" in which the poverty (as an expression that transcends the material good) is predominant characteristic in the "barrios", which account for the 70% of the city in 2000 (Alcaldia de Maracaibo: 2000). It is divided into two municipalities: Maracaibo, to the north -1.447.257 inhab.- and San Francisco to the south -271.555 inhab.-, and has a multicultural population (indigenous, Creole, Colombian) that with their own dynamics, reproduces a fragmented, individualistic society with limited capacity to participation (González de Kauffman: 2003, 4).

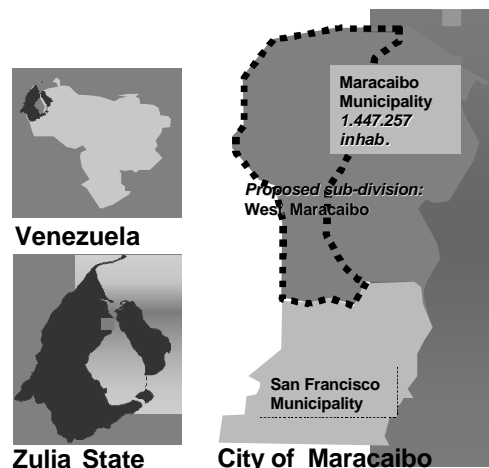


Figure 2 Geographical location and municipalities of the City of Maracaibo.

The political, social, and economic condition of Venezuela has increased poverty in the last five years (57.6% in 1998 to 67% in 2002), mainly in the poorest group (28.8% in 1998 to 36% in 2002), in regard to the last reports of the National Institute of Statistics –INE- (2004). This situation is greater in Maracaibo, with higher indexes of poverty, an expensive cost of living, and a significant quantitative and physical housing deficit. However, the infrastructure services reach the 80% of the urban population, better than the national average.

### 3. Alignment of interests: paradigms and purposes of “Full Citizenship”.

The program “Full Citizenship” was created with the “recognition of local actors that the poverty was not static but a multifunctional problem, resulting from diverse processes and the social vulnerability caused by the economic and political instability of the country” (González of Kauffman, 2003).

Stakeholders follow a series of paradigms that define their exercise:

*Democratic governance*: based on the local autonomy, the participation and coordination of all actors of the local society and *Effective participation* of all the local actors in a just and fair environment.

Planning and implementation of projects and actions under the concept of economic, social and environmental *sustainability*.

*Urban-Environmental consciousness*: the proposed and developed physical interventions are generated under the concept of adaptation and protection of the urban and natural environment and in agreement with the local urban plans.

*A new vision of the public management and the concept of the public good*: not only intends the transformation of the community but also the municipal government, with the understanding that that public management is professional, unbiased, non-political or individual.

The partners of “Full Citizenship” coincide in its comprehension as a *process*, with continuous *research-action* activities, that attend the internalization of *attitudinal changes* and *values*.

### 4. Management Model of the Partnership.

To operate the process, the partners of the consortium are responsible for a dimension of the Program (it does not mean that they will implement it). The University of Zulia- LUZ (academic), through the Instituto de Investigaciones de Arquitectura –IFA-, coordinates the monitoring and systematizes the experience. Nuevo Amanecer-CESAP (NGO) takes care of the administration and training process in micro-enterprise. The University-based Foundation Habitat-Luz (NGO) has carried out the coordination of the housing improvement component and environmental sensibilization and its corresponding training program, while encouraging community members to participate. The municipality, Alcaldía de Maracaibo (GO), has acted as general coordinator, carried out most of the fieldwork and is the main investor as it administers all the financing. The UMP-LAC/HABITAT<sup>2</sup> has been an external advisor and sponsor. At last, the organized communities have been the most important actors and have worked to promote and implement the Program in their area.

The consortium has defined, to operate the Program, three decision-making instances of management in which all the actors are represented and active: the administrative council, which determines the policies, and rules the main profile of the Program’s activities and the financial decisions; the management committee, which plans and implements the activities and tasks of the group; and, the community assembly, which is the main instance that decides the purpose of the Program in each community.

To the end of 2001, the Autonomous Micro-financing Service of Maracaibo -SAMI was constituted by a Mayor’s decree, instituting the purposes and the solidarity loans mechanism implemented by “Full Citizenship”, as a public policy. But, it is in 2003 that it becomes operational, when the main funds are obtained (around US\$ 600.000) from the Investment Fund for Decentralization –FIDES. The delay is caused by the fact that FIDES has never financed proposals other than for infrastructure projects. Before the grant was finally transferred in 2003, preliminary activities of SAMI were carried out using resources from the municipality and the NGOs.

SAMI’s is the operative branch of “Full Citizenship” and it is structured like other municipal Autonomous Services of the municipality: it has a President, directly nominated by the Mayor and a Board of Directors in which all the partners are represented. The Board is now assuming the responsibilities of the Administration Council of the Program.

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<sup>2</sup> The UMP was a transitory Program and in March 2005 the Regional Office for LAC ended up its operations. But, the interest of local governments, social groups and movements, universities, NGOs and professional groups, from different countries of LAC, promoted the formation of the International Center for Urban Management, coordinated by most of the professionals that worked for UMP-LAC.

## **5. “Full Citizenship”: action and results.**

Comparing to “interventionist” models, “Full Citizenship” promotes the strengthening of civic right and duties, through a plan of “companionship” and multi-actor cooperation, that, as consortium, has established specific responsibilities in the action, with the subsequent purpose of building, legitimizing and institutionalizing a new form of exercise of municipal government based on participatory democracy.

In 1999-2000, the Program carried out a pilot experience whose main achievement was the articulation based on the confidence of the actors; and, the international recognition as “Good Experience” in the UNCHS -BEST PRACTICE DUBAI AWARDS- (UN-HABITAT: 2000). Initially, the Program was a micro-credit lending project accompanied by the necessary processes of participatory assessment and community training. The results of the first year, with an investment of 100.000 US\$ (32.5%-Alcaldía; 21.5%-UMP; 36.5%-NA-CESAP, 3%-HL; 6.5%-LUZ) were, essentially, of socio-political type (the re-organization of the neighbors association of “barrio” Ma. Angelica de Lusinchi (4000 inhabitants), the democratization of the source of water, a community census, and the recognition of the municipality of the action of urban actors in spaces of government. The financial results of the pilot experience showed a recovery of the 90% of the 49 credits, a self-sufficiency of the 92%; and, the benefit in 74% with women as heads of households. With this success, the partner institutions channeled the creation of the SAMI, as part of the municipality.

In 2003 the program finally receives the 600.000 US\$ to create the first fund (with the contribution of a local bank), which is administered by SAMI. The NGOs have contributed an additional 6%, which accounts for their expertise, experience and personnel. The funding has allowed the allocation of 500 credits for housing improvements and micro-businesses and the benefit of 12 communities (27.000 inhabitants) in 4 different parishes of the municipality of Maracaibo. In the 2005 phase of expansion, the Program expects to reach all 18 parishes of the Municipality of Maracaibo.

In sixteen months, the results show a number of 769 families that received micro-credit (61% women, 20% foreigners, 25% indigenous) with a total recovery rate of 92 %. The profit generated during the first time of the phase of expansion, with the recovery of the initial credits, has permitted the reinvestment of the capital in 300 new credits, which accounts for the 64% of the total of the 469 granted in 2004..

Even though credits are important as mean to promote the financing program, the primary goal is to embark the individuals in a process of transformation through a psychosocial and technical training. In this sense, the participation of committed experts, with innovative techniques, is also relevant. For 2004, from 1412 applicants 811 have accomplished different levels of the training program (543-psico-social, 109-housing and environmental, 159-micro-enterprise) and have become potential promoters of the program in their communities.

The Program contemplates four projects: individual, family, and civic education; strengthening of the local economy (micro-businesses and preparation of youths for the work); housing improvement and the habitat; the local centers of communication (decentralization of municipal functions and space for participation). The main challenge, however, transcends the material since it seeks cultural transformation of what motivates and promotes the poverty. Perhaps, the most important impact is not measurable in the short or medium run, but the testimonies of the participants let us conclude that there has been an important impact that will be valuable with new training directed to the reconstruction of citizenship values.

The consortium is now active on the identification of new partners and different sources for financing the rotational fund of loans of the Program, others than the governmental funds (Fundación Banco Occidental de Descuento, PDVSA, and international donors).

## **6. Inter-municipal phase of “Full Citizenship”: advances of the process in Barranquitas, Municipality of Rosario de Perijá.**

Motivated by the experience in the Municipality of Maracaibo, Shell Venezuela has proposed the Consortium a new alliance to transfer the principles of the “Full Citizenship” to the town of Barranquitas, located in the area where it operates. Different to Maracaibo’s urban context and dimensions, Barranquitas is a small rural town that lives from fishing, with a population of 4000 inhabitants.

At this time the NGOs have developed management strategies to determine the commitments of the municipal government of Rosario de Perijá, to set the understanding of co-responsibility in the exercise of government. Also, they have recognized the need to sponsor processes of modernization and training of the personnel of the local government. In the mean time, it has been necessary to work with Shell Venezuela to make it comprehend its involvement as partner (not sponsor or contractor), and that development processes have natural stages to transcend before their installation and operation.

About the 30% of Barranquitas inhabitants are poor; nevertheless, the community is complex, because it presents problems of political affiliations division, but also religious division (Christian Evangelical and Catholic) a very new situation for the consortium to deal with. Additionally, the community presents higher indexes of Huntington disease, which affects the population almost in endemic terms (most of the inhabitants of Barranquitas are consanguine related); and different environmental problems.

The impossibility of SAMI to act outside the municipality obliged it to intervene as external advisor in Barranquitas; therefore the NGOs associated to “Full Citizenship” will directly administer and coordinate the activities.

The multi-actor agreement will include various groups of the private sector, besides Shell Venezuela: the BOD (local bank); ENELVEN (electric service provider); PDVSA (National Oil Industry), the NGOs Nuevo Amanecer-CESAP, Habitat-Luz and the University of Zulia. CIGU will be being included as an international partner and advisor.

## 6. Weaknesses and strengths of partners and of the consortium “Full Citizenship”.

The partner institutions have recognized their organizations weaknesses and strengths, but also those that belong to the sector they represent. On the other hand, since the Consortium responds to the sum of interests, it has allowed the actors to complement each other's work, diminishing the weaknesses and promoting strengths of individuals. Nevertheless, the trend toward the joint work of all sectors (academic, government, civil society and business) is mediated by how their internal mechanisms operate for articulated processes.

*SAMI.* The municipal agency has replicated a series of mechanisms and practices of the municipality of Maracaibo. The strengths relate to issues and conducts seen in the program's team members, in their high levels of commitment to the Consortium and SAMI, their teamwork commitment, their compromise with their functions; the use of processes of evaluation and monitoring; the recognition of the participation of other actors and their representatives. Most of the staff members are highly qualified professionals with experience in community work. Highlighted weaknesses comprise the low remuneration of the hired personnel; the administrative processes of the public sector, which do not require processes of external control; the late availability of operational resources; the internal demand (recommendations, sponsorships, among others).

*Habitat-Luz Foundation.* The University-based NGO has the advantage of having highly qualified technical capacity; and the promptness to respond to demands, compared to the university itself. The research experience, the educational practice, the planning and management skills, and the technical knowledge in (urban, housing, environment) are valuable contributions of the faculty appointed to the “Full Citizenship”. Moreover, the *University of Zulia* also counts on a high-quality technological platform and field data, which is available for program research purposes. Nevertheless, weaknesses seen in the Foundation include the personnel's time constraints to fully commit and the working calendar with two one-month periods of complete inactivity per year.

*Nuevo Amanecer-CESAP.* The NGO's most significant strength is its natural dedication to the community and collective spheres. Its 20-year experience as part of a group of organizations (the CESAP group) with locations nationwide represents a solid asset. The NGO has been facilitator, stakeholder and implementing actor of rural and urban development processes. It supports successful micro-financing programs, and, thus, has transferred the technological micro-credit support system to “Full Citizenship”. The NGO's identified weakness is, basically, the fact that the number of its commitments is greater than the capacity of their personnel.

*The local Bank: BOD* offers unlimited management of the program's clients and the credit system itself. But, its weakness is the lack of experience in dealing people that are not familiar with banking argot and operations.

*CIGU.* The UMP-LAC, had as strength its relation to UN, which the current international partner does not have, even though it has all the experience of the UMP-LAC.

The main strength of the consortium is that it has achieved a great level of articulation, even though the partners have different character, missions and timing. In the other hand, the main weakness is the difficulty for the community to recognize the active participation of all partners, which is very complex when they relate to the consortium in a municipality environment. Also, the political commitments, of some sectors of the municipality, tend to complicate the management process of the Program.

## 6. Lessons learned.

To implement development projects, with similar paradigms, in a different reality, it is important to identify which are the lessons learned. Some of the “Full Citizenship” lessons learned are, among others (González de Kauffman 2004, 10):

### 6.1 Governance and Social Dimensions.

- It is important to invest efforts in generating confidence among actors.
- The importance of the mediation of NGOs and University between government and community provides credibility to the management
- The participation of the UMP-LAC promoted confidence in the Municipality and in other actors and validated the acceptance of the Consortium-base model
- Keep transparency in the roles and responsibilities planning, registry, evaluation, systematization.
- The need to minimize the dependency on public resources
- Set mechanisms to legitimize the actions of the different actors
- The synergic efforts, with the communities, to identify their problems

### 6.2 Financial Dimension.

- Reduction of public sector funding and the search of external not-governmental funds

- The synergic efforts with the communities to negotiate their own resources

## 7. Conclusions

There is an unprecedented diversity of experiences, all over the world, that follow a cooperation approach to development. However, even though they have similar principles, the variation between the processes recorded in contexts with different social-political and economical frameworks, suggest individual characteristics in each case. The recognition of this nature is what guarantees success and accountability, because the strategies have to be built by the same process and, by all those groups involved.

The permanent monitoring and evaluation made by the actors, themselves, and the community, are necessary exercises to guarantee and visualize the impacts achieved by development projects, because these initiatives, such as "Full Citizenship", can impact as they turn into public policies. This requires the perseverance of the non-governmental sectors and also the maturity and political will of the municipality to understand that the exercise of community participation has to transcend the simple opinion to become the way to do government.

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