



SPOTLIGHT ON KEY ORGANISATIONS: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LATIN AMERICA



Boosted in part by the region's democratic transitions, citizen participation initiatives in Latin America have become increasingly common throughout the region. Promoted both by governments and civil society, these initiatives have sought to strengthen governance, enhance accountability and oversight, and improve social justice, ensuring that government spending and policies address relevant social issues and benefit socially excluded groups. This Spotlight highlights some of the key regional networks and national organisations working on and supporting citizen participation initiatives in Latin America.

► **Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analyses (*Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas – Ibase*)**

Link: <http://www.ibase.br/en/>

Areas of Expertise: Participatory democracy, active citizenship, institutions, citizen empowerment, CSO collaboration and networking, social mobilisation, cities and territories, state and economic democratisation, democratic alternatives to globalisation

Key Activities: Creating and supporting networks, research, organisation of seminars and workshops

Ibase is a well-regarded CSO working on participatory mechanisms and democracy in Brazil. For the last three decades, Ibase has promoted the creation of participatory public policies and a participatory culture among Brazilian citizens. Ibase is a member of many international, regional, and local networks supporting citizen participation and is the founder of the [World Social Forum](#), an annual event that gathers CSOs from the world to discuss alternative solutions to capitalism. Its website offers access to a list of partners and other relevant organisations working on citizen participation, as well as news in English.

► **Centre for Social Control and Studies of Democracy Building (*Centro de Contraloría Social y Estudios de la Construcción Democrática – CCS CIESAS*)**

Link: <http://ccs-ciesas.org/>

Areas of Expertise: Social control, citizen oversight, citizen participation, accountability

Key Activities: Documentation, training and capacity building, research and analysis, support for social oversight initiatives

The CCS CIESAS is a centre for conducting research on citizen participation, social control and accountability initiatives in Mexico and Latin America. It also provides capacity building, training and support to social control initiatives undertaken



by citizens and CSOs. Its website offers access to publications, tools and organisations working on social control and citizen participation in Mexico and globally. Readers will also find it useful to consult and learn about the various social control initiatives that the CCC CIESAS supports.

► Citizen Freedom Corporation (*Corporación Libertades Ciudadanas*)

Link: <http://www.libertadesciudadanas.cl/CLC/index.php>

Areas of Expertise: Citizen participation, strengthening of participatory mechanisms and democratic institutions, participatory public management, citizen education, CSOs' empowerment and advocacy, CSOs' collaborative work, interculturality, globalisation, citizenship, and cultural patrimony

Key Activities: Capacity building, drafting public policies, plans and programmes, workshops, publications, creation and support of networks

Formed in 1997, Citizen Freedom Corporation is a Chilean CSO that supports the development of an active citizenship capable of demanding and enforcing its rights. It does so by working with public institutions and other CSOs, to create central-level, regional and local public policies that inform citizens, and incorporate them into processes of decision making and evaluation. Citizen Freedom Corporation provides capacity building and training to other CSOs, empowering them to demand their rights and conduct advocacy, and brings CSOs together in regional and social networks. Its website provides information on its projects and access to news, publications and multimedia materials on citizen participation and participatory mechanisms.

► Citizen Participation Corporation (*Corporación Participación Ciudadana*)

Link: <http://www.participacionciudadana.org/pc10/>

Areas of Expertise: Social control, citizen participation and action, citizen information and education, governance and democratic institutionalisation

Key Activities: Electoral monitoring, civic campaigns, citizen oversight committees (*veedurías ciudadanas*), organisation of citizen events and meetings, virtual education, capacity building, electronic newspaper, Media Monitoring Centre

Corporación Participación Ciudadana is an Ecuadorian collective formed by citizens in 2002 to strengthen Ecuador's democracy and to promote greater participation and transparency in public life. It implements activities related to social control and citizen monitoring to enhance the transparency of public agencies. It also promotes participation and seeks to strengthen civil society by implementing citizen events, educational and capacity building activities and encouraging dialogue between political and social actors.

► Citizen Power (*Poder Ciudadano*)

Link: <http://poderciudadano.org/>

Areas of Expertise: Transparency, social control, access to public information, governance, anticorruption, citizen education and participation, access to justice

Key Activities: Citizen networks, capacity building, political institutions and public administration monitoring, budget and public procurement monitoring, Anticorruption and Legal Aid Centre, strategic litigation through its Lawyer Network

Poder Ciudadano is a CSO that is recognised as a reference in Argentina for the participation spaces it offers. Its main objective is to consolidate democratic institutions by promoting and strengthening citizen participation, transparency



and access to information. It implements activities that seek to raise citizens' awareness of issues of public interest, to monitor political and democratic institutions, such as political parties and electoral campaigns, as well as oversee public administration through budget and public procurement monitoring. *Poder Ciudadano* is the Argentinean chapter of [Transparency International](#).

► **Civil Association for Equality and Justice (*Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia - ACIJ*)**

Link: <http://acij.org.ar/acij/2012/en/>

Areas of Expertise: Participatory and deliberative democratic mechanisms, equality in education, corruption, legal community actions, community rights, strengthening democratic institutions

Key Activities: Strategic litigation, workshops, monitoring and advocacy of public policies and democratic institutions, drafting of policy reforms, workshops, publications

Formed in 2002, ACIJ works to defend the rights of the most vulnerable groups in Argentina and to strengthen the country's democratic system. ACIJ has five programmes: legal communitarian action; citizen action and the fight against corruption; rights and communitarian construction in villages; strengthening of democratic institutions; and equality in education. Through all its projects and research, ACIJ aims to advance the understanding of democratic participatory and deliberative practices. The organisation also seeks to raise awareness among citizens of their basic rights and strategies to protect and enforce them. The ACIJ website provides access to publications, media and press releases, its staff directory, and information on its projects.

► ***Ciudadanos al Día***

Link: <http://www.ciudadanosaldia.org/sobre-cad/mision-y-vision.html>

Areas of Expertise: Citizen participation, capacity building, transparency and access to public information, social control, citizenship, role of the media, public management

Key Activities: Award for best practices in public administration, analysis of public service quality, research and publications, capacity building for journalists and public servants, organisation of workshops and of discussion spaces, advocacy campaigns

Ciudadanos al Día is a Peruvian non-profit organisation that produces relevant information on the quality of public services and policies, as part of its overall mission to strengthen the relationship between citizens and the state. It seeks to improve the quality of public administration by promoting efficient and reliable public servants, and to strengthen citizen engagement by ensuring access to public information and participation opportunities for all sectors of society. It has developed methodologies, research and reports that have become a benchmark for social auditing in Peru and in the Latin American region.

► **Latin American Centre for Social Accountability Strategies (*Centro de Estrategias de Accountability Social en América Latina*), Torcuato Di Tella University**

Link: http://www.utdt.edu/ver_contenido.php?id_contenido=870&id_item_menu=1922

Areas of Expertise: Social accountability, citizen participation, social control, accountability mechanisms

Key Activities: Research and analysis of social accountability cases, workshops, panels and seminars, publications

This research centre, which is part of the University of Torcuato di Tella's Political Science and International Relations Department, conducts research and analysis on the new mechanisms and forms through which citizens in Argentina,



Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru exact accountability from governments. The Centre's two leading researchers - Enrique Peruzzotti and Catalina Smulovitz - are well-regarded Latin American scholars on issues of social accountability. The Centre's website offers access to news, Argentinean researchers working on social accountability, information on workshops, seminars and panels, and publications.

► Transparency, Citizen Participation and Accountability Initiative (*Iniciativa Transparencia Participación Ciudadana y Accountability – Iniciativa TPA*)

Link: <http://iniciativatpa.wordpress.com/iniciativa/>

Areas of Expertise: Transparency, citizen participation, accountability, social control mechanisms, Supreme Audit Institutions

Key Activities: Research, promotion of transparency, citizen participation and accountability (TPA) activities, definition of TPA common indicators and standards, analysis and systematisation of TPA good practices, networking

Iniciativa TPA is a regional network that brings together civil society organisations (CSOs) and scholars from all over Latin America in order to share experiences in transparency, citizen participation and accountability. It focuses especially on strengthening control mechanisms in Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), by exchanging, analysing and systematising [good practices](#). By networking, the [members](#) of the *Iniciativa TPA* seek to generate knowledge and define common indicators and standards to promote good transparency, accountability and participation practices in SAIs.

► Transparency for Colombia (*Transparencia por Colombia*)

Link: <http://www.transparenciacolombia.org.co/>

Areas of Expertise: Transparency, access to information, corruption, citizen participation

Key Activities: Public and corporate transparency index, Social Control Fund, Municipal Councils Observatories Network

Transparencia por Colombia is the Colombian chapter of [Transparency International](#), whose main goal is to lead civil society's fight in support of transparency and against corruption, and to promote an active citizenry, strengthen institutions and consolidate democracy. Its activities focus mainly on three sets of actors and therefore on three goals. First, it seeks to strengthen public institutions, analysing transparency and advocating for better anticorruption measures. Second, focusing on the private sector, it aims to increase corporate transparency, implementing spaces and tools to encourage the private sector to engage in the fight against corruption. Finally, *Transparencia por Colombia* supports citizen-led initiatives that contribute to social control and oversight.

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To learn more about Latin America's experiences in promoting citizen participation, read the [ELLA Guide](#), which has a full list of the knowledge materials on this theme. To learn more about other development issues, browse other [ELLA Themes](#).