



**Annual Report
For the Governance and Transparency Fund
Reporting Period: 1st April, 2011 – 31st March, 2012**

**CN-164: Strengthening Institutions to Improve Public
Expenditure Accountability
By the Global Development Network**

30th June, 2012

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1. Programme Identification Details:

GTF Number	CN - 164
Short Title of Programme	Strengthening Institutions to Improve Public Expenditure Accountability
Name of Lead Institution	Global Development Network
Start Date	16 / 10 / 2008
End Date	15 / 10 / 2013
Brief Summary of Programme:	<p>The project aims to improve development outcomes by increasing the effectiveness with which governments allocate and use their resources. By strengthening the analytical underpinnings of policy debates around public expenditure priorities and their impact, it endeavours to improve the governance of public service delivery in the education, health and water sectors in 14¹ developing countries. Through this approach, the project intends to achieve, amongst others, the following key outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded institutional capacities for public expenditure monitoring and analysis, development of policy options and constructive engagement in a peer-learning environment; • Increased use of evidence-based policy alternatives in the social sectors; and • Development of internationally comparable information on public expenditures that will begin to build benchmarks for quality of public spending.
Countries where activities have / are taking place	Annex D1
Target groups and wider beneficiaries	<p>Immediate beneficiaries are the 14 selected research institutions whose analytical and communications capacities are being built and strengthened for constructively engaging with policymakers and providing rigorous evidence-based policy options for public expenditure management. Since its inception, more than 100 research team members have been trained through this project. Wider beneficiaries include government officials, civil society organisations, academic institutions and citizens of the 14 partner countries who would gain from information on public expenditures, research-based policy alternatives and, in-turn, better allocation of resources. For further details, please refer to Annex A2.</p>
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¹ In consultation with DFID and the GDN Board of Directors, the partner from Tanzania (ESRF) has been removed from the project due to non-performance.

2. List of Acronyms

AST	Advanced Social Technologies, Armenia
BIA	Benefit Incidence Analysis
CBPS	Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, India
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
CEA	Cost-Effectiveness Analysis
CEDS	Center for Economics and Development Studies, Indonesia
CIPPEC	Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth, Argentina
CIUP	Research Center of the University of the Pacific, Peru
CRC	Center for Research and Communication, Philippines
CSEA	Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa, Nigeria
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	(UK Government) Department for International Development
EGAP	Graduate School of Public Administration and Public Policy, Mexico
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Centre, Uganda
ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation, Tanzania
FUNDESA	Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala, Guatemala
GDN	Global Development Network
GTF	Governance and Transparency Fund
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre, Ghana
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NORC	National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago
PBA	Program Budgeting Analysis
PEA	Public Expenditure Analysis
PMT	Project Management Team
PRAD	Policy Research and Development, Nepal
PS	Policy Simulations
R4D	Results for Development Institute, USA
TA	Technical Advisor
US	Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh

3. Executive Summary

The five-year project *‘Strengthening Institutions to Improve Public Expenditure Accountability’* builds the capacities of 14 partners in 14 developing countries to monitor and analyse public expenditures, processes and impacts (in sectors of high significance to human development—education, health and water), to engage with policymakers by providing evidence of efficiency, equity and costs of spending for enhanced public service delivery. During the reporting period, various activities have been undertaken to strengthen the capacities of the partners and further increase the impact of the project.

Capacity Building:

The Project Management Team (PMT) is continuously working with partners to provide them with need-based individual technical assistance and is rigorously monitoring their progress. Global and regional workshops, individual and tailored mentoring by sector Technical Advisors (TA) have helped further build capacities and strengthen research. Through a regional workshop held in Kenya in July 2011, efforts have been made to support the partners from the Africa region (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda) on Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA). Research communications workshop

held in New Delhi in October 2011 has provided the six partners from Asia with the skill to effectively engage with key stakeholders. All 14 partners are receiving support in designing and implementing their own project communication strategies. The Global Development Network (GDN) has also provided platforms to partners to disseminate their results at various international forums. Short films are being produced to highlight the project's impact in each country. To further increase the capacities of the partners, additional grants have been given to ten on merit bases to strengthen their research and dissemination activities.

Sustaining Outputs and Outcomes:

The approach in building research capacities of the partners, interwoven with facilitation for appropriate communication and dissemination has allowed them to assimilate issues and challenges in Public Expenditure Analysis (PEA) within their institutional capacity and approach different stakeholders in their countries. In order to sustain the outcomes of the project, partners are developing training modules and guides on 'unpacking the budget' to support knowledge sharing with institutions, citizens and the media.

Networking and Collaboration towards Influencing Policy:

Partners are actively embarking upon collaborative efforts to influence policy or push reforms in their country. In doing so, the partners have engaged with politicians and policymakers, used traditional and new social media, disseminated in academic forums and formed collaborations with other civil society organisations and networks.

Emerging Impact on Governance and Transparency:

Partners have created inroads into the policy-making circles with their inputs for reforms or new programmes to enhance service delivery in the project sectors, particularly for the poor or marginalised groups. Some have made considerable strides in their outreach efforts and in many ways have provided inputs to policymakers or government bodies on required policy reforms.

Innovation and Learning from GTF:

The in-built flexibility within the concrete conceptual framework has allowed partners the space to engage with research problems of their choice, and also with peer-groups and stakeholders within their countries. With supplementary grants, partners have produced publicly available databases for researchers working on similar issues, produced TV talk shows on national budget, initiated contests on budget analysis, produced training modules and other innovative activities. Few concrete lessons have emerged which are likely to be useful for policy relevant research and outreach on critical areas such as service delivery and public expenditure monitoring. These include the nature and usefulness of timely policy-driven research, building of strategic alliances, timely and contextual dissemination, and networking and cross-fertilization.

Risks:

Risks faced by partners have remained relatively similar. Some partners have continued to face external political challenges ranging from political instability, frequent turnover in public office, to lack of political commitment. Challenges in accessing quality data, especially on usage and beneficiaries of various public services, has been a fairly common problem faced by many partners. Staff turnover continues to be a risk faced by most. GDN has provided critical support in mitigating risks by providing technical and financial support to conduct additional primary surveys, manage communication initiatives and ensure continuity in capabilities of partners.

4. Programme Management

The project continues to be implemented in technical partnership with Results for Development Institute (R4D), USA. There has been a relatively minor change in the PMT at GDN since last year. Ms. Savi Mull has assumed the role of Coordinator, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) at GDN, and is now the liaison with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) for the M&E of the project. Ms. Mull has been succeeded by Mr. Kaushik Ganguly, as Program Officer at GDN. Mr. Ganguly holds an MPhil in Economics from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, India and has over five years of experience in budgets and public expenditure related issues.

GDN has a new President, Mr. Pierre Jacquet, commencing office on 16th July, 2012. Chief Economist of the French Development Agency since 2002, Mr. Jacquet is also the Chairman of the Department of Economics and Finance, and Professor of Economics at the Ecole des Ponts – ParisTech. Mr. Jacquet belongs to the Cercle de Economistes, a group of 30 French Economists that have taken an active role in the public policy debate. He is a former member of the Prime Minister's Council of Economic Analysis and former Deputy Director of the French Institute of International Relations.

On the Steering Committee, Dr. André Portela Souza from Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Brazil has accepted to share the slot with Dr. Eliana Cardoso. In his role, Dr. Souza provides strategic guidance to the project. Mr. Ray Struyk has retired from his services at NORC. In his place Mr. Clifford Zinnes, Senior Fellow at NORC, will be supporting the M&E activities of the project.

Remaining personnel and management practices are the same as indicated in the previous Annual Report of June 2011. Regular communications with the partners enable the PMT to stay up-to-date with their progress and discuss relevant technical and management related matters. Sector TAs work closely with the teams to help strengthen analysis. Customised research communications strategy is being implemented in partnership with CommsConsult Ltd, Mendizabal Ltd and GDN. GDN is also in the process of conducting financial and management reviews of the partners, with two done so far.

5. Working with Implementing partners

In the past year, PMT and the TAs adopted several measures to improve the quality of research undertaken by the partner from Tanzania (Economic and Social Research Foundation-ESRF). Despite rigorous tailored training, technical workshops, individual mentoring, written and verbal feedback, progress made by ESRF was below par and continuously deteriorating. As approved by the GDN Board of Directors, and as communicated to DFID, the team's inability to improve quality of their analysis and meet timely deadlines has resulted in the termination of their grant in February 2012. PMT has decided not to bring any replacement institutions for the remainder of the project.

As the main objective in the reporting year was the strengthening of research, many partners (from Argentina, Bangladesh, Ghana, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru and Uganda) expanded their teams to include sector-specific researchers. Few partners (from Indonesia, Guatemala, Mexico and Philippines) also engaged additional staff on communications to support their efforts in effectively disseminating their research results to policymakers and stakeholders.

The partner from Peru witnessed change at the project team leader level while the partner from India underwent considerable changes in their research team with a number of members leaving to pursue higher studies abroad. These changes have not affected the quality of outputs produced by these partners or their ability to meet deadlines as the teams have engaged personnel with strong research backgrounds. Moreover, the PMT is working closely with all 14 partners to provide them with need-based individual technical assistance and is rigorously monitoring their progress. Through a regional workshop held in Kenya in July 2011, efforts have been made to further build the capacities of the partners from the Africa region on CEA, where the need for additional tailored, individual training was apparent. A workshop on research communications has been held in New Delhi in October 2011 for the six partners from Asia. All 14 partners are receiving support in designing and implementing their own project communication strategies. They are learning skills on using mediums such as policy briefs, working papers, articles for newspapers and journals, press releases, social media, budget guides, specialised debates to impact public opinion and engage with policymakers, key stakeholders and the media. GDN has also provided platforms to partners to disseminate their results at various international forums. Short films are being produced to highlight the project's impact in each country. So far, two films have been completed in collaboration with the partners from India (on education) and Indonesia (on health), and are available on GDN's new website (www.gdn.int).

Owing to last year's success, and in order to support the efforts of the partners and further strengthen their capacities, this year also competitive and merit based supplementary grants have been given to ten partners (from Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Guatemala, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Peru and Uganda) to undertake innovative dissemination activities and relevant extensions to their analysis. These include Town Hall Meetings in Armenia, 'Knowledge Bits' on social media in Guatemala, second round of the 'Eye on the Budget' competition in Peru and budget guides in Bangladesh, Nigeria and Uganda.

6. Risk Assessment

The typology of risks faced by partners over the years has remained relatively similar, with different magnitudes in terms of impact and probability of occurrence. Some partners have continued to face external political challenges ranging from political instability, frequent turnover in public office, to lack of political commitment. While partners have attempted to diversify their engagement strategy to overcome these challenges, GDN has provided crucial support in the form of trainings on research communications and stakeholder mapping. Experts have been brought in to support the partners in developing their tailored communication plans taking into account the evolving realities on the ground. Many policymakers from Asia have been directly approached through a Policy Dialogue held in New Delhi in October 2011, and thus have turned into 'local champions' of the research and work undertaken in the respective countries. Challenges in accessing quality data, especially on usage and beneficiaries of various public services, has been a fairly common problem faced by many partners. This has been mitigated through the use of primary surveys. The PMT and TAs are also working closely with the partners to find feasible alternatives to data lags. Finally, due to the length of the project, staff turnover continues to be a risk faced by many. This is being addressed by partners through the strengthening of their own institutional capabilities, while the PMT is striving to maintain continuity through capacity building of different partner team members. Rigorous monitoring of challenges and

progress made by the partners is enabling the PMT to support and implement timely mitigation measures. The updated Risk Assessment Table is attached as Annex E1.

7. M & E Arrangements

M&E activities for this project have been and will be independently undertaken by NORC. GDN has also established an internal M&E unit which works in close coordination with the team at NORC.

The programme Logframe has been revised in September 2011. Revisions include changes in a few indicators to better reflect the outcomes of the project. Three indicators have been dropped as they did not show direct attributional causality to the project's outcomes. In order to measure the progress against indicators, baseline, mid-term and endline values for each indicator have been added to report change in the outputs and outcomes over-time. Where the project is tracking monitoring data on an annual basis, the baseline values as well as annual milestone values have been included. The M&E schedule in accordance with the end date of the project is attached as Annex F1. The Monitoring Report, covering the period April to November 2011, focusing on changes in research capacity and communications within the 14 partners since 2009, is also attached as Annex F2.

8. Logframe Changes

The programme Logframe has been revised and resubmitted for approval in September 2011. The Logframe has been revised to include:

- A clearer purpose statement that provides one overall statement on what the project aims to achieve. This combines the purpose statements from the previous Logframe;
- A slight renumbering has been done of the first and second output;
- All indicators have been made SMART; and;
- In order to demonstrate what the project aims to achieve against the baseline value by the end of the project period, target values have been included for each indicator. Annual milestone values have also been mentioned.

As reported earlier, the decision to remove ESRF was taken in February 2012. Target values for the indicators have been adjusted to reflect this change. However, this has had no effect on the indicators or the overall Logframe itself. The most up-to-date Programme Logframe is attached as Annex A2 to this report.

9. Emerging Impact on Governance and Transparency

As the project enters its penultimate year of implementation, some partners have created inroads into the policy-making circles with their inputs for reforms or new programmes to enhance service delivery in the project sectors, particularly for the poor or marginalised groups. In some cases, there has also been positive impact on the public expenditure accountability discourse in the partner countries. Most partners have finalised research reports on CEA and many are at an advanced stage of the Policy Simulation (PS) exercise. Partners are engaging in concerted outreach efforts to share their research findings with policymakers and relevant stakeholders. For instance, Advanced Social Technologies (AST), Armenia has been successful in reaching out to the Ministry of Education and Science with their Benefit Incidence Analysis (BIA) results highlighting disparate benefits going to students from wealthier families compared to poor students from the State funding for higher education. The Government has in turn incorporated AST's findings into a new strategy for more equitable higher education spending.

Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala (FUNDESA), Guatemala has also set up a Monitoring Office on the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme. The Office is in charge of reproducing the budget analytical strategy developed for the project, including a more frequent and updated analysis. The team has actively participated in the Dialogue Table for Transparency on Social Expenditure. The work of the Table has consisted of facilitating a discourse on how to increase social expenditure under the principles of efficiency and transparency. The result has been the constitution of a national agenda that promotes modifications to existing laws and regulations.

Organisations such as Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS), India are reaching out to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) actively involved in advocacy in the project sectors. The organisation has almost become a resource centre on intellectual inputs for stakeholders in Karnataka. Regular interaction with policymakers in the Congress has helped Center for Research and Communication (CRC), Philippines become an independent partner in advocacy for some associate legislators. As a result of its outreach activities, CRC has also been invited to be part of a technical working group that will study the creation of a water regulatory commission in Philippines. In Nigeria, Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa's (CSEA) engagement with CSOs has led them to hold the Government accountable by demanding more transparency in revenue allocation. According to CSEA, there seems to be an incipient positive change, as government functionaries now make additional information on budgets available. Work done by the Graduate School of Public Administration and Public Policy (EGAP), Mexico has helped them estimate the cost and benefit of the recently legislated mandatory secondary education for students. Many policymakers have found their results to be extremely useful in decision-making. Guatemala's Parliamentary Committee for Transparency receives regular updates from FUNDESA, and the Chair of the Appropriations Committee in the Philippines Congress is routinely briefed by the CRC team. Annex A9 further highlights the emerging impact in Indonesia and Peru.

10. Cross-Cutting Issues

The research undertaken as part of this project in the 14 implementing countries, particularly the current PS, is helping partners provide concrete suggestions to governments on policies required to improve service delivery and distribution of resources in the education, health and water sectors. Much of the research undertaken by the partners is focusing on the poor and marginalised sections of the society, and looks at addressing structural issues in implementation that impede effective service delivery. Some examples follow below:

- In India, CBPS is focusing on a public health insurance scheme (Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna) for Below Poverty Line families, the implementation of Right to Education for mandatory schooling of children within the age group of 6-14 years, and improvements in the quality and quantity of water supply for women belonging to low income groups in urban pockets in Karnataka;
- In the education sector, CSEA is targeting out-of-school children in Nigeria. Their research in the health sector is focusing on people with high malaria incidence and is encouraging better distribution of Long-lasting Insecticidal Nets. In the water sector, the team is focusing on people with limited access to portable water, and, feasible options for the provision of additional boreholes and piped water supply;
- In Nepal, Policy Research and Development (PRAD) is focussing on gender issues (primarily maternal health care and safe deliveries), social inclusion, unfunded/underfunded programmes and unmanageable budgetary release process;

- FUNDESA has worked on understanding the allocation and distribution of benefits under the CCT programme in Guatemala, which benefits the poorest families with children to attain better health and educational outcomes; and;
- AST in Armenia and Center for Economics and Development Studies (CEDS) in Indonesia are examining options to get more poor students into tertiary education.

11. Progress Towards Sustainability

The project has reached a phase of maturity where partners are increasingly disseminating their findings amongst peer-groups, policymakers, NGOs and the media to obtain maximum leverage towards a positive policy change. The length of the project has also supported the development of strategic relationships with the governments.

Capacity Building and Sustaining Outcomes:

The PMT has adopted an incremental approach in building the research capacities of the partners through a structured method with four different research modules (Program Budgeting Analysis-PBA, BIA, CEA and PS) interwoven with facilitation for appropriate communication and dissemination. This has not only allowed partners to assimilate the fundamental and methodological issues and challenges in PEA within their institutional capacity, but also allowed them to approach different stakeholders in their countries. This has added to the sustainability of the project beyond the life of the GTF funding as some partners have already institutionalised PEA and many more have forayed into additional social sectors using the same set of tools. At the beginning, it was envisioned that this project would build the capacities of the partners to become 'go-to' organisations in their countries and regions for rigorous PEA. To realise this objective, partners are developing training modules and guides on 'unpacking the budget' to support knowledge sharing with institutions, citizens and the media. The project's research communications plan has been developed keeping in mind the multiple organisational strategies and is therefore flexible to support the needs and capabilities of the partners.

- In Indonesia, skills acquired by CEDS through this project has led to a larger interest amongst the research community at the Center on poverty, inequality and social services, where historically the focus was largely on macro-economic aspects of development. The Center is close to securing additional funding to set up a web-based dashboard to monitor and publicly disseminate various alternative pro-poor development indicators in the education and health sectors (among others). With this activity, CEDS' will further strengthen its capacity, especially in getting a more comprehensive micro-dataset to calculate relevant and important indicators to assess development outcomes and inform public policy;
- The Research Center of the University of the Pacific (CIUP), Peru has institutionalised the knowledge base and methodological capacity generated from the project into its Master of Public Administration programme, within which tools of CEA and budget analysis (amongst others) are being used to deal with evaluation of public programmes. CIUP has also successfully launched the first round of its national contest 'Eye on the Budget' employing the techniques learned through this project. The first round of the contest was held in July 2011 and the second round will be launched this year (2012). With adequate funding, CIUP is keen on making this contest a permanent feature as this activity may build the capacity of potential analysts and public employees to do budget analysis in a more efficient way;.
- CSEA, by its own admission, has developed a better understanding of issues around public expenditure in the three sectors since the inception of the project. The team has also leveraged the opportunity created by the project to expand its skills into

other critical sectors and build sustainable partnerships with non-state institutions working on public expenditure issues. It is working with the Nigerian Economic Summit Group with the aim of entrenching public expenditure accountability at both the Legislative and Executive levels of the Government. CSEA is also planning to produce a guide to enhance understanding of public expenditures amongst government functionaries, CSOs and the general population.

Networking and Collaboration towards Influencing Policy:

According to the recent Monitoring Report (Annex F2), work-mix of all the partner are above 60 percent in research and less than 40 percent in advocacy, with more than 50 percent of partners having work-mix of 75 percent in research and 25 percent in advocacy. However, almost 50 percent of the partners work regularly with NGOs or have created new networks, and an additional 14 percent have engaged with NGOs on a needs basis. Apart from these, the preferred mode of communication seems to be focused policy round-tables with policymakers and stakeholders. A significantly large number of partners regularly engage with media and policymakers through different means. A recent example of this association is the Minister of National Development Planning/Head of Bappenas', invitation to host the next project Global workshop in Indonesia. GDN is also providing opportunities to partners to present their research findings at international forums. The project webspace, and various global and regional workshops, are supporting peer-learning.

- Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), Ghana has engaged with the media on its yearly budget analysis and has developed tools for them to track budget implementation. This has led to the formation of a Budget Media Monitoring Network, which is tracking the implementation of pro-poor activities in the budget;
- Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) has increased its level of engagement with parliamentarians. In addition, the team has strengthened its ties with key institutions dealing with child rights which are heavily influenced by the education and health sectors. The team is partnering with the United Nations Children's Fund, Uganda and the Federation of Uganda Female Lawyers to lobby for increased funding to key child interventions;
- CBPS has been invited to contribute to events such as the Bangalore World Water Summit and to train representatives of other organisations such as Child Rights and You. As a result of their work in the education sector, CBPS has also been invited to evaluate projects/programmes in other states such as Bihar and Odisha. Government departments in Gujarat have requested for CBPS' reports to help them in better decision-making and governance;
- AST, CBPS, CRC and FUNDESA are conducting multiple workshops to communicate their research results. The audience at these workshops has varied from Members of Parliament to local authority leaders and social workers;
- Traditional and New Social Media has been used extensively by most partners (AST, CBPS, CEDS, CSEA, CRC, EPRC and FUNDESA). In Argentina, for example, Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC), has developed a blog to disseminate policy relevant documents;
- Most partners have published their research findings in journals, books and working papers. In Nepal, PRAD has published a booklet on the budgetary process which was circulated amongst parliamentarians and political representatives.

Capacity of national institutions and the political space to engage in a constructive dialogue in each country varies, presenting a different set of challenges and opportunities. While most partners have found interested policymakers and

stakeholders, some have encountered challenges due to prevailing political scenarios in their countries. For more information, refer to Risk Assessment (Section 6 & Annex E1).

12. Innovation

The project combines a concrete conceptual framework on PEA with significant hand-holding for outreach efforts. In doing so, the PMT has borne in mind the diversity in country context on development issues and the variegated nature of political space available in each country to meaningfully engage in policy outreach. Accordingly, it has supported the research and communication initiatives by the partners on a country-to-country basis. In addition to technical support, GDN has provided partners with additional funding to enrich their research and exploring innovative avenues for communication and policy outreach. The in-built flexibility within the framework has allowed partners the space to engage with research problems of their choice and peer-groups and stakeholders within their countries.

In 2011, GDN provided merit based additional grants to eight partners. AST, CBPS and EGAP utilised this grant to undertake additional surveys which complemented their existing research. CRC, FUNDESA, CIUP and Unnayan Shamannay (US), Bangladesh, focused on innovative policy outreach and dissemination activities such as use of social media, national contest on public expenditure essays by students, and pre and post budget TV talk shows. The training module developed by CBPS is being translated in the local dialect and will be used for training of personnel in local bodies. The two databases on CCT and social sector expenditures prepared by FUNDESA have been well received by academics, researchers and think-tanks that have cited it in their reports and acknowledged its usefulness. Driven by the outcomes of the activities, GDN is providing additional funds for innovative activities to ten partners for the year 2012. For more information on innovative use of additional grants in 2011, refer to Annex E2.

13. Learning from GTF

With over a year remaining, learning from the GTF funded project has gained momentum, and GDN is working towards entrenching them deeper into the institutional processes of the partner organisations apart from its own management and communication practices. For the past 3 years, partners have engaged in rigorous analysis, disseminated their findings amongst stakeholders, reached out to audiences using media and innovative means of communication, and assisted policymakers with critical inputs. In this process, some clear lessons have emerged which are likely to be useful for policy relevant research and outreach in critical areas such as service delivery and public expenditure monitoring. These include the nature and usefulness of timely policy-driven research, building of strategic alliances, timely and contextual dissemination, and networking and cross-fertilization. The diversity of partners has created variance in their capabilities and outlook to internalise the learning, and GDN is actively encouraging engagement through workshops and an online webspace.

Policy-Driven Research on Public Service Delivery with Options for Policymakers:

The value of policy-driven research is now increasingly apparent given that many partners have found willing interlocutors and collaborators within their governments, political actors, civil society, media and other stakeholders. Partners have over the years developed a better understanding of public policies, their impact and effectiveness at the micro-level on various groups, particularly the poor. The current round of PS focuses on the most critical policy priority in the respective country in each of the three sectors. Some partners are looking at reducing maternal mortality by

improving access to professional staff and facilities in the rural areas, expanding access to potable water, improving teachers' incentives, and access for the poor students to higher education. The crucial element is developing a set of feasible scenarios for attaining a certain policy goal and providing all elements of the puzzle to the decision-makers – the costs, the equity implications and any redistributions involved, the effectiveness of various options considered and expected duration for implementation.

Involvement in the project has also led to an appreciation amongst partners on the ability of policy-driven research to bring about positive change. Partners based in universities (CEDS, CRC, CIUP and EGAP), who have thus far engaged in research on social issues and policy analysis, have reinvented their approach to align their research to influence policy through more evidences on costs and impact of public programmes.

Strategic Alliances

Apart from concrete evidence, key to influencing policies and sustained change is to build strategic alliances with stakeholders. Most partners have realised this early and are actively pursuing outreach activities. CRC's increased engagement with Congress representatives and government officials has resulted in their involvement in the Technical Working Group to study the creation of a water regulatory commission. The team has access to the Congress Library for data and information, and has also been invited to attend committee hearings related to the education, health and water sectors. CIUP has obtained technical support from the General Controllorship of the Republic and the Ministry of Social Inclusion to host the second round of the national contest.

Timely and Contextual Dissemination

Synchronising research outputs and their dissemination with ongoing policy debates is important in garnering support from relevant stakeholders, and in pushing strategic policy reforms. Particularly, in case of PEA, it is crucial to understand and follow budget formulation cycles of governments, political cycles and other major economic or political events. After the recent election in Argentina, CIPPEC published a 'Memo for the next President and its Ministers,' containing a series of research-based policy proposals. Among them, 'Defining a National Double Compensation Scheme: Compensatory Policies for the most Vulnerable Students and Unified Wage Fund for the Provinces with less Fiscal Resources' contains results from their PS exercise. CIPPEC has also met the Minister of Education and other functionaries to share their key recommendations.

Network Building and Cross-fertilization

For a global project spanning 14 countries, opportunities for peer-learning and cross-fertilization holds tremendous potential. The project presents an opportunity to build a loose network of like-minded researchers across the world working on social issues using the same or related tools of analysis. GDN is actively playing the role of a facilitator in this process through its online webspace, and bringing researchers together at global and regional workshops. An important learning here is that such loose networks of like-minded researchers and development practitioners can also be created to foster better research and public opinion on social issues at the local level.