

Institutional CV

At Alternativas y Capacidades, A.C. (civil association), our mission is to strengthen organized civil society's advocacy ability, promote strategic social investment and work for an environment conducive to citizen participation in the public sphere, with the aim to contribute to social development.

Professional, strategic social investment, with a vision for development

Alternativas y Capacidades promotes strategic social investment between donor institutions and partnering civil society organizations (CSOs). We work with foundations (independent, community, enterprises, familial, etc.), businesses and individual donors interested in creating institutions. We generate knowledge, build capacities and provide advice to receiving organizations to improve their professionalism and build social impact.

From 2013 to present, we have supported PepsiCo Mexico Foundation through monitoring and building institutional capacity for the CSOs that they sponsor through their *Call for Investment in Human Development and Sustainability Projects*, as well as carrying out the evaluation of the results of social investment.

Between 2015 and 2017, we created and gave five tailor-made training and monitoring projects as part of the Comprehensive Program of Capacity Building (PIF, in Spanish), for QUIERA, the Mexican Bank Association Foundation. During this process, internal capacities were built that allowed donor social interventions to be increased with the purpose of contributing to the professionalization, effectiveness and sustainability of the institutions supported by the foundation.

In 2013, we collaborated with CAMMINA, the Alliance for Migrations in Mexico and Central America in their process of internal capacity building. We were part of the creation of their Strategic Framework for Planning and Evaluation, which aimed to build strategies and mechanisms to facilitate and improve their operations, in addition to responding to the challenges of the regional migratory context.

In 2011 and 2012, we worked with Iniciativa Mexico, a televisual project backed by 69 media organizations, which aimed to finance citizen initiatives and give them visibility through advisory services, monitoring social investment and offering capacity building to the finalists' projects.

In 2009, we worked with the MetLife Foundation to complete an assessment of their processes and outcomes, as well as supporting them in improving the operational procedures of the foundation, giving them more professional and transparent processes for choosing the projects that they support.

From 2008, we have given the "Corporate Philanthropy and Social Investment Seminar" in conjunction with the Mexico Autonomous Technological Institute (ITAM), with the aim to provide information and practical tools to professionalize corporate social responsibility with a strategic vision for social change.

Additionally, we worked on the design and modification of the procedures, evaluation of results, institutional assessments and monitoring of donations for institutions and businesses such as Microsoft Mexico, Nacional Monte de Piedad, The Museum of Memory and Tolerance, Coztli Foundation and the U.S.-Mexico Foundation.

The social investment department has also carried out research on the following topics and published the following materials:

- 🍷 *11 Steps to Professionalize the Donor*: a manual on how to invest resources for greater social impact, a tool that shares knowledge and experience from the organization, presenting valuable information that can help those who are interested in making the donation process more professional and achieving a greater impact through their resources.

- ☞ *An assessment of corporate philanthropy in Mexico, 2008*: this document collects data from 90 businesses that donate in cash, kind and talent. It was published in collaboration with the ITAM and the Synergos Institute, with the financial support of the Kellogg Foundation and the Borquez Schwarzbeck Foundation.
- ☞ *Community Foundations in Mexico: a detailed panorama*: this is an in-depth study about the activities and organizational and financial characteristics of Mexican community foundations, commissioned by the Ford Foundation, the Charles S. Mott Foundation, the Inter-American Foundation and the Global Fund for Community Foundations.

CITIZEN ACADEMY FOR PUBLIC POLICY: Building capacity for public policy advocacy.

The Citizen Academy is a space for training, learning and analysis about Public Policy Advocacy (PPA). We aim to support citizens and civil society organizations in taking on the necessary vision and tools to conceive themselves as central actors in public policy processes, with the potential to influence solutions for social problems.

Our work is focussed on three different areas:

Training: we give workshops through a variety of methods that offer a strategic vision, knowledge and tools for advocacy in public policy. We offer face-to-face and online workshops personalized for:

- ☞ CSOs, citizens and networks who begin to discover advocacy as a path towards achieving their objectives.
- ☞ Civil society leaders that have now worked on public policy advocacy and are interested in acquiring more sophisticated tools to take their aims to the next level.

Our records show that we have trained more than 1,500 members of civil society. Some organizations that we have trained in public policy include: Oxfam UK, the Mexico City Council for Private Assistance, the Chihuahua Business Foundation, the UN Fund for Childhood, the Human Rights Commission of Mexico City, We Reforest Mexico, and FUNDAR, Center for Analysis and Research, among others.

Support: we offer specialized options to build capacities in organizations, collectives and organization networks in public policy advocacy to increase their ability to influence in the governmental sphere. We support:

- ☞ CSOs that want to advocate directly for public policies related to the specific areas they work in.
- ☞ Collectives, networks and coalitions that want to define their plan of action to influence in governmental spaces.

Research: We generate knowledge about the role and advocacy of civil society organizations in public policy through collaborative research with academia and other actors.

Amongst other publications, our body of work includes:

- ☞ *Between activism and intervention: the work of civil society organizations and their advocacy for the health of indigenous women in Mexico*, research that highlights five case studies of civil society organizations and their influence on health public policy for indigenous women.
- ☞ *Manual for Advocacy in Public Policy*: written for civil society organizations and organized citizen groups. The aim of the text is to offer tools that give the reader an integral vision of public policy in the Mexican context in order to advocate more effectively.
- ☞ *Constructing citizenship from digital activism*: a publication written for CSOs that want to widen their knowledge of effective use of technological tools to carry out their work.

- 👉 *Quick guide to identify allies and make coalitions to advocate for public policy*: this guide focusses on making forms of collaborative work visible, as well as giving examples of keys to success and types of existing coalitions.
- 👉 *Quick guide to research and analysis for public policy advocacy*: this text offers a methodology to plan and execute research or a political analysis to advocate in the public sphere.
- 👉 *Civil society and the struggle to reduce maternal mortality*: an article published for a volume edited by John Gaventa of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, that analyses seven case studies of advocacy for national policy.
- 👉 *Civil society organizations and public policy*: an article published for the book “Public Policy”, coordinated by José Luis Méndez, which is part of the series “Mexico’s Greatest Problems” (“Los Grandes Problemas de México” in Spanish), published by the College of Mexico.

DEVELOPMENT POLICY: a conducive atmosphere for CSOs.

Alternativas y Capacidades works to promote policies, laws and a regulatory environment that recognizes and favours the work of organized civil society in Mexico. To this end, the development policy department works to push for procedures that advocate for public policies that regulate the work of CSOs, carries out research and proposes improvements that benefit the development and sustainability of organizations in Mexico.

We have generated knowledge to strengthen CSOs regarding the legal and fiscal framework in which they operate, with publications such as:

- 👉 *Federal Government Financing for civil society organizations: how is economic support assigned?*: the study identifies mechanisms through which the federal government awards economic support to CSOs, and analyses the institutionalism and transparency of the programs and governmental actions destined to foster the work of CSOs.
- 👉 *Organized citizenship capacity building: an assessment and reforms for a favourable climate in Mexico*: a study that gathers key findings about the regulatory framework and development policy of organized civil society. Additionally, it offers timely recommendations about changes to develop a conducive atmosphere for organizations.
- 👉 *Civil Society Organizations: present in schools, absent in educational policy*, a research project carried out with the purpose of identifying the principal problems around the lack of institutional mechanisms so that the Department of Public Education recognises and collaborates with CSOs on educational policy, and assigns them, impartially and transparently, public resources to strengthen innovative educational projects.
- 👉 *Public funds for Civil Society Organizations: an analysis of the Social Joint Ventures Program*, a text which analyses the Federal Public Administration’s policy framework regarding the reliance on developed programs and discussing the limitations in the context in which they are redesigned, implemented and evaluated.
- 👉 *Building your organization in 16 steps: manual for the legal constitution of civil associations*: a manual that guides the reader through the process for constituting a civil association and the decisions that need to be taken along the way, from choosing a name to the necessary clauses in their articles of association to obtain their RFC (Federal Register of Contributors, a unique tax number), CLUNI (Unique Inscription Key, a registration number which allows Mexican CSOs to work on public policy and receive government funding) and become an authorized donor.

- ☺ *Institutional challenges from the legal framework and financing of civil society organizations*: this text recounts the history of the origins of the Federal Law for Development and analyses the challenges of coordination amongst departments and levels of government that regulate and influence the financing of CSOs.
- ☺ *Institutional Capacity Building for CSOs in Mexico: debates, offer and demand*: this text is a basic guide to institutional capacity building, how you achieve it and who does it in Mexico.
- ☺ *Strengthening organized citizenship: assessment and reform for a conducive atmosphere in Mexico*: a study that reassesses the proceedings carried out to create a development policy for CSOs in recent years, specifically in the nine years since the passing of the Federal Law for Fostering Activities Realized by Civil Society Organizations.

FUNDS IN PLAIN SIGHT

Funds in Plain Sight is a joint initiative between **Alternativas y Capacidades A.C.** and the **Philanthropy and Civil Society Project** at the **ITAM** that offers easy access in a transparent manner to institutional and financial information about donors and donees in civil society organizations in Mexico.

In the context of low confidence in donations for institutions and where the information about donor entities and civil society organizations in Mexico is scattered and disorganized, Funds in Plain Sight came about to address the need for confidence in the sector, fostering transparency and accountability.

Funds in Plain Sight has institutional, financial and donation information about more than 35,000 Mexican civil society organizations and private donors. This information is available in www.fondosalavista.mx using a free search engine that offers searches based on a diverse variety of criteria such as geographical location, legal status, themes and populations served, amongst others.

As well as the search engine, Funds in Plain Sight develops services including information about the social sector in accordance with specific needs, it provides information about professionalization services for civil organizations through a directory of capacity building organizations, and it offers articles and news about Mexican and international philanthropy, transparency, accountability, legal and financial frameworks, amongst other relevant subjects for CSOs.