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Youth Civic Engagement in Developing Countries: Lessons from Belize and Guatemala

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How can youth in developing countries enhance knowledge and capacity for civic engagement? What role can international development assistance play in youth civic learning and capacity development? This chapter weighs in on youth civic engagement from the angle of “social audit,” a participatory tool and approach. It does so by examining two specific initiatives designed and implemented by the author in Belize and Guatemala with support from international development organizations and local universities. In addition to describing the social audit approach, including the strategy and methodology, this chapter also provides initial evidence showing that introducing university students in developing countries to civic engagement, even with short and focused workshops that combine a mix of pedagogical approaches, has a potential to lay down a foundation to increase civic engagement and facilitates the development of basic knowledge and skills. Although international development assistance can play a crucial role in supporting youth civic engagement in developing countries, the effort will remain incomplete unless changes on youth attitude and behavior are systematically measured and effort is sustained through continuous civic engagement support by local stakeholders, including universities.

KEYWORDS: Social Audit; Youth Civic Engagement; Accountability; Integrity; Developing Countries.

Introduction

Over the past three decades, many developing countries¹ have transitioned from authoritarian to more democratic and decentralized forms of government. Multilateral and bilateral international development organizations, like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), seized the opportunity with this transition and provided support to developing countries. The premise was that such support would help developing countries establish and consolidate more inclusive and accountable democracies. While this support for democratic governance targeted a variety of stakeholders in developing countries, including the governments and civil society organizations, one group received special attention: youth.

Support for youth civic engagement by international development organizations has been a growing component of international cooperation in recent decades, with increasing attention to

election participation, political parties' membership and leadership, and skills development in areas such as public integrity and accountability. These efforts are well-guided in that building and strengthening a culture of democratic governance, and such key pillars as integrity and accountability, must start with young people. The theory of change framing this argument is that if young people acquire knowledge and capacity surrounding accountability and integrity, democratic governance would benefit as would civic engagement. Accountability in democratic governance simply means being responsible for decisions made and actions taken on the use of public resources to provide services that meet the needs of constituents.² Integrity in governance on the other hand, is associated with consistent and coherent behavior based on ethical principles and values.³ Both generate trust and strengthen democratic governance.

This chapter seeks to inform our understanding of youth civic engagement in developing countries by exploring two specific initiatives designed and implemented by the author in Belize and Guatemala with support from international development organizations and local universities, and determining how these efforts contributed to the youths' ability to embrace civic life. This chapter will approach civic engagement from the angle of social audit, asking whether youth in Belize and Guatemala enhanced their knowledge and capacity for civic engagement as a result of a social audit workshop, and drawing some initial lessons on the role of international development assistance in support of youth civic learning in emerging democracies.

In addition to describing the social audit approach, including the strategy and methodology, this chapter provides initial evidence showing that introducing university students in developing countries to civic engagement, even with short and focused workshops that combine a mix of pedagogical approaches, has the potential to lay down a foundation to increase civic engagement and facilitate the development of basic knowledge and skills. International development assistance can play a crucial role in supporting youth civic engagement in developing countries, but the effort will remain incomplete unless changes on youth attitude and behavior are systematically measured, and the effort is sustained through broad and continuous civic engagement support by local stakeholders, including universities.

Theoretical Framework for Promoting Youth Civic Engagement through Social Audit

Youth civic engagement is a pivotal issue within global academic and policy debates on democratic governance. As argued elsewhere, elections are an important component of democratic governance, but are not the only measure of it.⁴ The existence of effective and accountable public institutions to meet citizen needs and civic engagement are also important components of democratic governance. Longstanding evidence shows the benefits of citizen and youth participation in governance with regards to greater policy effectiveness, accountability, and political legitimacy.⁵ Civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future.⁶ As such, civic engagement involves being active and participating in public affairs and focusing on collective interests. Civic engagement is a process that in practice requires knowledge, skills, and motivation. Therefore, civic education and capacity building can be a means to develop knowledge about political processes, governmental institutions, and power relationships, as well as skills for civic engagement.⁷

Young people are an important stakeholder group in developing countries for achieving, strengthening, and sustaining civic engagement. Despite making up more than half of the population in many developing countries, young people (ages 18–30)⁸ often find themselves marginalized from mainstream politics and policy decision-making. They struggle to gain the respect of public officials combined with limited educational and economic opportunities. This can leave young people both idle and frustrated with the status quo. As a result, they may be drawn into conflict, crime, and violence, or simply opt to not vote or participate in elections and retreat from civic engagement. This retreat is often reinforced by the lack of civic education.

Multilateral and bilateral international organizations, like the UNDP and USAID, recognize in their respective international development strategies that young people are both individuals transitioning through life's developmental stages and potential actors in the development of their countries and communities.⁹ Youth engagement is considered both an end in itself for democratic governance, but also a means to achieve other cross-cutting objectives, like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰ While there is no blueprint or single approach to support youth civic engagement, multilateral and bilateral international development organizations focus on integrated approaches that encourage collaboration between government and citizens. General common features of youth civic engagement support and assistance include understanding citizen rights, finding collaborative solutions to problems, and knowing pertinent legislation related to public resources management, access to information and public procurement.

Social audit is one approach to help promote and support civic engagement. A social audit is an accountability mechanism that enables citizens to organize and mobilize to evaluate or audit their government's performance, policy decisions and integrity.¹¹ There are three main reasons why social audit has the potential to be an important means of civic engagement.¹² First, it can enhance accountability by highlighting integrity risks in democratic governance, including corrupt practices, abuse of power, and fraudulence.¹³ Second, social audit can help assess the quality and/or effectiveness of key essential public services, resources management, and the extent to which citizens' demands are being articulated in the public policy and budget cycle processes. Finally, social audit can increase civic participation and engagement by enhancing the ability of citizens to move beyond mere protest and/or apathy, toward an interactive process that helps to engage with bureaucrats and decision-makers in a more informed, organized, constructive, and systematic manner, thus increasing the chances of effective civic engagement.¹⁴

Social audit, however, is not a magic formula to promote and sustain civic engagement, as evidence shows that not all social audit efforts lead to successful and sustainable outcomes.¹⁵ Nonetheless, conducting a social audit exercise can unlock new opportunities for elected and public officials and their constituencies to have a conversation on public issues of common policy interests. The key element in social audits is the policy dialogue that is established between citizens and decision-makers either by monitoring budget expenses, organizing hearings for participatory policy design, evaluating a policy initiative, and overseeing public works. The ability to engage in a social audit process requires some key prerequisites, such as: knowledge, skills, and motivation to engage policymakers; knowing how to operate within existing normative and policy frameworks; and capacity to develop and implement actions and strategies.¹⁶

The literature relevant to developing countries suggests that the capacity to conduct effective social audits is affected by three main enabling conditions. First, the political will and responsiveness of public administrations to build an interaction with citizens. Second, having an appropriate normative framework that guarantees the right to public information, citizen participation and accountability. And third, citizens and constituencies who possess the knowledge, skills, and tools to engage with decision-makers.¹⁷

Young people in developing countries have not been necessarily exposed on a large scale to the potential of social audit to support civic engagement and participation in public policy processes. The social audit workshop described below offers an opportunity to examine how the social audit approach contributes to the promotion of civic engagement among youth university students. In this next section, the social audit approach is explained as well as the method for comparing the impact of their administration in two different settings.

The Method: The Social Audit Approach and Workshops¹⁸

The social audit "Workshop for Young Leaders" was designed in September 2011 in the context of the Transparency and Accountability in Local Governments (TRAALOG)¹⁹ regional initiative supported by the UNDP and other donors.²⁰ The TRAALOG was a regional technical assistance platform hosted at the UNDP Regional Service Center for Latin America and the Caribbean.²¹

The workshop was designed to engage youth and youth organizations in emerging democracies to enhance their management, leadership and practical skills for social audit in different areas, including civic education skill sets, and conceptual and technical skills for the design, implementation, communication, and evaluation of social audit processes. The next sections highlight the main goals, content, and components of the social audit workshop.

Goals of the Social Audit Workshop

The strategic goal of the social audit workshop was to influence youth towards civic engagement in their respective communities by exposing them to a method, new knowledge, and collaborative skills. The social audit workshop was conceived as an opportunity for participants to acquire new knowledge into their existing interests and frameworks of understanding.²² The premise was that as participants became more knowledgeable about social audit and civic issues, all other things being equal, they would more likely participate in civic engagement matters.²³

For most participants, the workshop would provide the first opportunity to be exposed to issues related to accountability, integrity, and civic engagement. As such, the workshop aimed at strengthening young participants with enhanced knowledge and capacities to understand the context and purpose of civic engagement. Specifically, the workshops were meant to:

- Promote deliberation, consensus building, and collective action;
- Encourage social audit action as a tool to empower youth, promote their participation in the policy-making process, and uphold public integrity; and
- Utilize as a reference and resource *A Practical Guide to Social Audit*.²⁴

Key Pedagogical Elements of the Workshop

To accomplish the goals, the social audit workshop:

- Blended theoretical and practical elements by employing an active participatory methodology involving traditional knowledge facilitation, exchange of concepts, tools, exercises, good practices, and experiences;
- Combined and articulated different pedagogical sources, including brief presentations, discussions and debates, the case-study method, group and ludic dynamics, survey analysis and deliberation; and
- Provided a practical opportunity for hands-on experience in identifying community issues that would merit a social audit after the workshop.

Workshop Strategy

The social audit workshop focused on youth not only because of their potential as sources of energy and innovation, but also to bring young people to realize how they could be part of a civic engagement effort and be changemakers. In addition, the workshop was grounded on the larger context of developing countries that were at a stage of consolidating their democratic governance amidst static or declining rates of civic participation among youth, the largest demographic cohort. Like in many other parts of the world, in Latin America and the Caribbean, young people are generally perceived as the source of many policy challenges, such as crime, violence, illegal drugs, high youth unemployment rates, immigration, and early pregnancy among girls. The workshop contextualized these challenges in each country and helped young participants identify how they could be productive, constructive, and contributing members of their communities and their emerging democracies.

Between 2011 and 2018, 17 workshops were conducted with over 350 participants from 20

countries; 15 were national-level workshops, and two were regional workshops.²⁵ Only three of the 15 national workshops involved local universities, and two are featured in this chapter. Workshop participants were youth between the ages of 18–30, who were selected to participate by the local partners working with UNDP and USAID in democratic governance initiatives. On average, workshops had 40 participants. In general, workshop participants were youth involved in some form of community voluntary activity, who belonged to a local civic organization and were part of advocacy groups or political party affiliates. To ensure the workshop had a diverse and representative group of participants, youth were selected from different communities and localities, racial backgrounds, genders, and academic sectors.

The workshops were designed to be implemented in two to four full days, and according to the length, the agenda could be adjusted accordingly. Typically, the workshops' learning format involved two experienced facilitators with political science background and experience in teaching and training. Facilitators deliver brief presentations to introduce the modules of the workshop, but most importantly, facilitators manage the discussions with and among participants, and promote constructive dialogue. Facilitators need to have the ability to foster workshop engagement, deal with complexity and complex issues, mediate and simplify discussions, and promote high-quality deliberation. The two facilitators are normally assisted by two local assistant facilitators, who help with the logistics and set-up of the various groups and ludic activities that occur throughout the workshop, as well as with providing input on the context where workshops were being held.²⁶

Workshop Structure

Although there were some adaptations, nearly every workshop consisted of the following modules.

Module 1

Participants are introduced to the principles of democratic governance which underpin social audit and civic engagement. The main questions addressed in Module 1 include: How is democratic governance defined in the context of your country? What are the main opportunities and challenges of democratic governance in your country? What is the role of government and citizens in your country? Through two exercises, one individual and one in pairs, participants are asked to reflect on “what is” and “what should be” democratic governance. Facilitators encourage and manage a plenary discussion with participants around these questions. By navigating the complexities and nuances of democratic governance systems, participants learn to recognize realities and opportunities in their country's political issues, policies, and systems.

Module 2

Participants learn about the social audit approach and how it can promote civic engagement. The focus is placed on competencies and performance, as well as the roles, rights and obligations of governments and civil society in order to fully promote civic engagement, public integrity and accountability. The main questions addressed in Module 2 include: What is accountability and integrity? What are the consequences of weak accountable governance? What normative frameworks that promote accountability and citizen participation are in place in your country? Participants discuss the role of social audit and civic engagement in promoting accountable governance, the rationale for its application and analyze the types of stakeholders which should be involved in social audit and the requisite skills required by social auditors. Through an exercise in groups of three, participants debate what behaviors of public officials in their country are red flags in terms of accountability, and what role might there be for citizen oversight.

Module 3

Participants are introduced to concepts related to transparent and accountable government management and what is required from both elected authorities and public servants in terms

of accountable behavior. It emphasizes public integrity concepts, and tools available to detect, prevent and sanction, acts, practices, and behaviors outside expected accountability and integrity frameworks (e.g., corrupt practices). Participants are divided in groups of seven, and through an outdoor and timed exercise, they are given a map to find eight “treasures,” collect them and organize them according to the instructions. The “treasures” are four corrupt practices sanctioned in their country and their respective definitions. Whichever group finds the treasures and matches the corrupt practice and definition first gets a symbolic prize. This occurs typically at the end of a full day and the exercise provides an opportunity to reflect on the competitive nature of the activity, the impact on collaboration and integrity, and lessons for civic engagement.

Module 4

Participants address the issue of civic engagement tools to be applied through social audit. Participants are introduced to actual samples of social audit from their country and other countries across the world such as Kenya, India, and Vietnam, and obtain a better understanding that social audits can occur at any stage of the public policy cycle. The module also equips participants with practical tips about access, veracity, and analysis of public information. Participants are teamed up in groups of six and undertake two exercises; one that promotes discussion on the pros and cons of using social media in a social audit process and as a civic engagement tool; and a second one that exposes participants to the challenges they may face in obtaining access to public information.

Module 5

Participants engage in a discussion of how the results of a social audit can be used and communicated to other community stakeholders as a means of contributing to policy dialogue and change. The module also provides participants with a practical framework for planning a social audit and with an opportunity to prepare a draft action plan for a social audit to be conducted after the workshop.

Measuring the Effectiveness of the Workshop

The workshop is defined by its sequential structure as well as its focus on interactivity among participants and between participants and facilitators. Moreover, the workshop is pedagogically designed in a way that exercises start from individual analysis and gradually evolve into a collective work of two, three, four, and more than five participants, respectively. This helps participants experience the challenges of translating individual into collective work, as well as negotiating and finding consensus in the analysis and debates. The workshop agenda is intensive and designed to be lively and interactive to achieve a careful balance between meeting the learning objectives on the one hand, and engaging the participants to build leadership, management, and teamwork skills through practical exercises, on the other hand. The blended methodology and approach of the workshop involves engaging the participants with short and theory-based presentations to enhance knowledge of key concepts and promote critical thinking, as well as plenary and group discussions and debates (see [sample two-day workshop agenda](#)).

The overarching social audit workshop learning goal is for participants to be able to develop and strengthen their knowledge and skills to influence youth towards civic engagement in their respective communities by exposing them to a method (social audit), acquire new knowledge, and collaborative skills. In some cases, the workshop agenda can be tailored to specific requests by the funding international development organization or the partners, such as to include participants as co-facilitators of the workshops, or by administering an anonymous pre-workshop Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior (KAB) survey which requests participants' views on a variety of topics related to civic engagement and democratic governance (see [themes of KAB survey](#)).²⁷

To measure how well the workshops met their intended goals, we utilized an evaluation that is completed by participants at the end of the workshop. The evaluation is designed with seven structured questions, of which four are qualitative and open-ended in nature, and three require

a Likert-type scale response (see [sample evaluation](#)). The four qualitative open-ended questions ask participants to: (1) highlight which specific aspects of the workshop best contributed to their understanding of democratic governance, social auditing, and civic engagement; (2) list if they had learned something new or saw something from a new angle, as a result of the workshop; (3) specify what other themes or topics did they think should be incorporated in future workshops; and (4) provide additional specific observations or comments about their experience in the workshop. The three closed-ended questions use a 1-5 scale to rate three areas: (1) whether several aspects of the workshop, such as the objectives were met, the content and themes covered were relevant, the workshop methodology was appropriate, the facilitators' presentations were helpful, materials useful, and if the workshop met their overall expectations; (2) the outcomes, related to whether the workshop improved their knowledge of social audit and civic engagement, had motivated them to act as soon as possible, and had given them ideas of how to apply what they learned; and (3) the logistical aspects of the workshop in terms of the overall organization, facilitators, rooms, materials, and catering. Participants are given as much time as needed to complete the evaluations. All evaluations are anonymous and returned to facilitators through a random collection process managed by co-facilitators. Responses are recorded and coded in an excel datasheet.

In addition to completing the evaluation, participants are encouraged to share their learning expectations about the workshop in plenary at the beginning of the workshop and as part of the introductory portion of the workshop. Moreover, at the end of the workshop, participants are asked to share in plenary their learning takeaways as part of the concluding module at the end of the workshop. If and when the KAB survey is applied as part of the workshop, the data collected can serve as an additional tool to help establish a participant's baseline of knowledge and attitudes, and in the future monitor changes and further influence participants' attitudes towards civic engagement. For this chapter, we will use the qualitative and quantitative data from the evaluations as evidence to measure whether the learning objectives were met, as well as the comments from participants in the evaluations to show evidence of initial impact.

Analysis and Findings from the Belize and Guatemala Social Audit Workshops

To further weigh in on how the social audit approach contributed to the promotion of civic engagement for integrity and accountability, this section will showcase and compare two youth social audit workshop experiences implemented in Belize and Guatemala. We used the most-different method for case selection. Of the 15 national social audit workshops, these two cases were the most different in terms of independent variables, such as country history, context, culture, level of development, and governance systems. Also, the social audit experience in each country had different international development organizations as sponsors and responded to different overall strategies. However, the fidelity of the core social audit workshop methodology remained relatively standard in both cases. These two cases were selected to compare the social audit workshop experience, outcome, and results for participants.²⁸ For each case, we will offer a brief description of what took place in these workshops, report the evidence of initial impact, and analyze the key findings.

Social Audit Workshop for Young Belizean Leaders

Under the sponsorship of the TRAALOG regional initiative mentioned above, the UNDP Belize Country Office partnered with the University of Belize (UB),²⁹ a national and the largest higher education system in Belize, to offer a "Workshop on Social Audit for Young Belizean Leaders." The two-day training workshop was held October 25–26, 2013, at the Central Farm Campus of UB in the Cayo District of Belize. Through a memorandum of agreement between UNDP Belize and UB, 34 students from five of the six districts of Belize participated.³⁰ Participants of the workshops averaged 23.2 years of age, all were first-time university students, and the majority of participants

were women. They were selected by the UB under the following criteria: active student at UB; juniors and seniors in bachelors programs across disciplines (education and arts, management and social sciences, nursing and social work, science, environmental and technology); leadership roles in the university (student council) or in social organizations in their communities outside the university; and the same number of male and female participants to ensure parity. Outside their university life, most of the participants had an affiliation to civic and voluntary community organizations. The idea was to ensure participants were influential among their peers and thus had the potential to advance and promote civic engagement through social audit across the country.

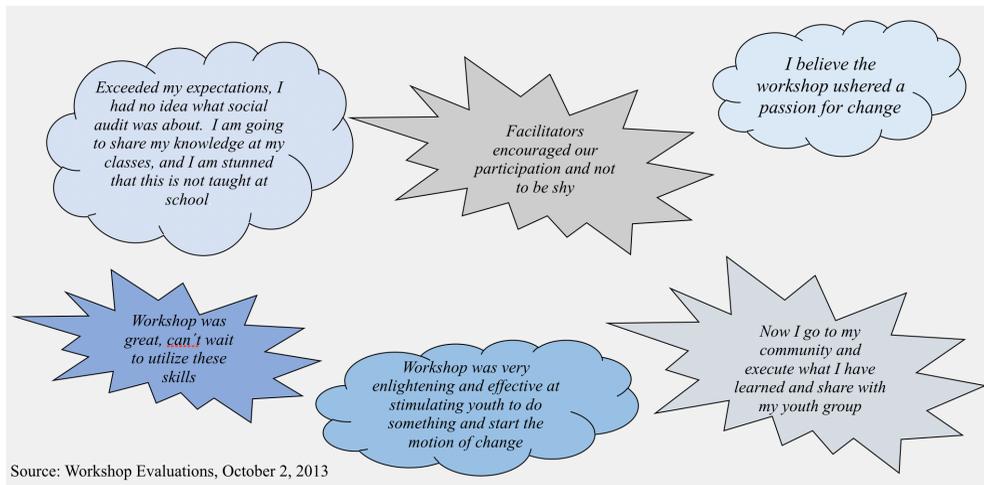
Against the background, the workshop sought to: (1) introduce young leaders to the social audit approach as a tool to promote civic engagement; and (2) strengthen knowledge to design and implement a social audit process. At the request of the UB, the KAB survey was not applied to participants in this workshop. One unique feature of the workshop in Belize was the selection, at the request of UB, for nine students to play dual roles as participants and co-facilitators. Their main role was to assist the lead facilitators with the management of group discussions and exercises.

Through participants' interventions during the workshop and evaluations at the end of the workshop, it became clear that they had not been exposed on a large scale and in a systematic way to civic engagement approaches prior to these workshops. The workshop exposed young leaders for the first time to several features of social audit, which could help boost their civic engagement skills. For example: understanding concepts such as governance, public integrity, accountability, and corruption; and collecting and accessing public policy evidence, and the use of technology as a tool to access information.

Although students did not complete the KAB, they did conduct an evaluation at the conclusion. Based on the evaluations, the workshop appears to have acted as a potential catalyst for planning youth civic actions on important policy issues in Belize. The evidence from the evaluation shows that 100% of participants either "strongly agreed" (83%) or "agreed" (17%) that the workshop contributed to improving their knowledge and interest in civic engagement. Moreover, 93% of participants "strongly agreed" (70%) and "agreed" (23%) that the workshop motivated them to act as soon as possible, while 96% of participants felt the workshops gave them new ideas.

Qualitative feedback from the participants in their evaluations indicates that the co-facilitation was valuable to the participants as it afforded the opportunity to strengthen communication and leadership skills, as well as it encouraged a more open, relaxed, and culturally relevant dialogue with the youth participants who responded well to the prompts from their peers. As figure 1 below demonstrates, by the end of the workshop, the participants felt sufficiently empowered to

Figure 1. Selected Comments Made By Participants in the Evaluation



Source: Workshop Evaluations, October 2, 2013

begin taking the first collective steps towards operationalizing youth social audit in Belize. This included the formation of the Belize Youth Social Audit Network (BYSAN) and the establishment of a sub-committee to draft Rules of Engagement for BYSAN; the establishment of a social media (Facebook) presence and a group email list to facilitate communication across the network and to engage other young people across the country. Initial proposals for some potential social audit initiatives included, social audit of university issues (budget), and a social audit of expenditures of community service clubs.³¹

Moreover, prior to the start of the workshop, participants were asked to discuss in plenary their expectations for the workshop. As one participant observed, “the workshop will be a space for skill-building and leadership for civic engagement.” Another participant remarked that she was expecting the workshop to “empower her to train others in social auditing.” After the workshop, the evaluations highlighted that the workshop was an enabler for future action. One participant noted in the evaluation, “I have increased my knowledge on issues like integrity, accountability, transparency, civic engagement, and social audit planning.” Another participant added, the workshop was successful at “giving me a sense of empowerment to bring about change.”

Guatemala: University Youth Leadership Workshops for Social Audit

The international development community identified increased citizen participation as a critical element in improving democratic governance and human development in Guatemala.³² Under the sponsorship of the USAID funded Urban Municipal Governance (UMG) project, five social audit workshops were conducted in 2018, targeting university students. The UMG Project (2017–2022) is managed by the USAID Guatemala Democracy and Governance Office. The project provides municipal governments with technical assistance to achieve transparent and participatory planning, improve financial management, and effective service delivery implementation.

The UMG project also provides technical assistance and capacity building to local civil society groups (youth clubs, citizen’s associations, community organizations, and university student organizations) to monitor public policies, service, and expenditure.³³ In that context, five social audit workshops of two days each were conducted targeting students from San Carlos³⁴ (public) and Rafael Landívar³⁵ (private) universities. In addition to promoting the development of technical and practical skills for social audit processes, the workshops aimed at encouraging the design of civic engagement strategies through social auditing. Altogether one hundred and ninety-nine (199) mostly undergraduate students from social science careers (social workers, law, public administration, sociology, political science) participated in the workshops, with an average of forty (40) participants per workshop (table 1 shows a summary of the dates and locations of the workshops). The participants were carefully selected by the respective universities and based on guidance and advice from the UMG project’s technical personnel. Some workshop participants had previous academic and practical experience on social audit, but the majority were new to the topic of social audit and were selected by the university programs based on their potential to advance a social auditing process in Guatemala, their own individual interest in the subject, and their interest in being part of a civic movement in favor of more youth participation in local and national policy affairs. As can be seen in table 1, participants of the workshops averaged 24.3 years of age. Most of all workshop participants were women.

The workshop had four immediate goals for participants: (1) gain new knowledge, and (2) new skills, (3) develop a draft social audit strategy, and (4) respond anonymously to the KAB survey. According to the pre-workshop KAB survey results and the workshop evaluations at the conclusion, for most of the participants, “social audit” was a new concept and tool. Nonetheless, even for those participants who had previous training and practical experience on social audit, the workshop provided new and expanded knowledge. One key result from the KAB survey revealed that the participants of all five workshops were active in distinct types of community activities, including religious, sports, and university. For example, 25% of respondents indicated that they participated in university activities, another 24% that they were involved in religious activities, and nearly 16%

Table 1. Profile of Social Audit Workshops Participants (by Gender and Average Age)

Location-University-Date & Participants Home City	Men Numbers & (%)	Women Numbers & (%)	Total (numbers)	Average Age (years)
1. Antigua – Rafael Landivar University (August 24–26, 2018) Participants came from Antigua, Escuintla and Chimaltenango.	9 (19%)	39 (81%)	48	26.6
2. Chiquimula – CUNORI/San Carlos University (August 27–28, 2018) Participants came from Chiquimula, Esquipulas, and Jocotán.	19 (54%)	16 (46%)	35	23.7
3. Zacapa – Rafael Landivar University (August 31–September 1, 2018) Participants came from Colomba, Coatepeque, and Malacatán.	4 (8%)	45 (92%)	49	25.2
4. Quetzaltenango I – CUSAM/San Carlos University (September 4–5, 2018)	21 (54%)	18 (46%)	39	20.8
5. Quetzaltenango II – Rafael Landivar University (September 7–8, 2018) Participants came from Colomba and Coatepeque	2 (7%)	26 (93%)	28	25.2
Grand Total	55 (28%)	144 (72%)	199	24.3

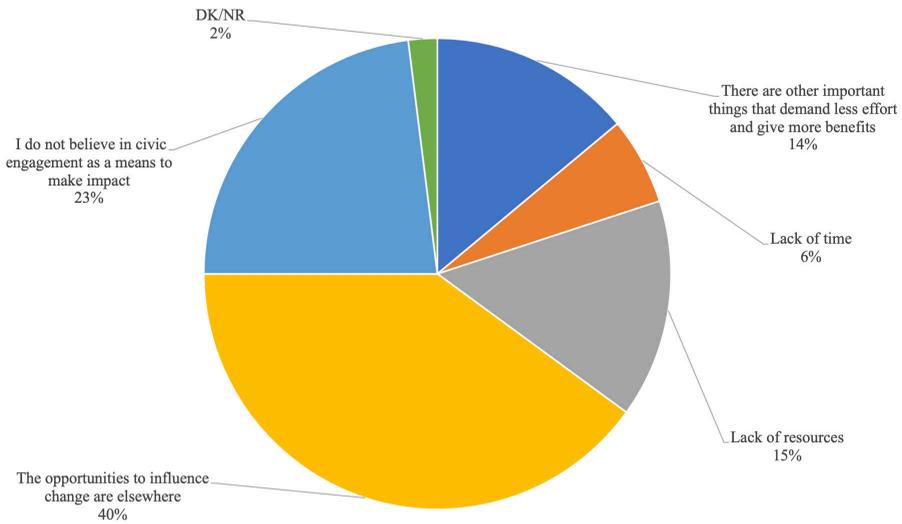
Source: Participants' KAB Survey Results

volunteered and/or participated in community organizations. An average of 47% of all workshop participants recognized more individualistic motives (e.g., career advancement, professional networking) for getting involved in community activity, while on average, 19% hoped to become activists in order to generate collective benefits for their communities.

The analysis of the KAB survey results detected two dimensions of civic engagement among workshop participants: one linked specifically to the political and policy aspects of participation (political parties and demands for accountability and transparency) and the other linked to a broader platform of community and social activities. The overwhelming majority (82%) of all the workshop participants said they were involved or had been involved in helping their communities and universities collecting money for social causes, and advocating for environmental issues. Only 13% of all workshop participants indicated they participated or had participated in political parties and were or had been involved in advocating for accountability and transparency in public policy processes.

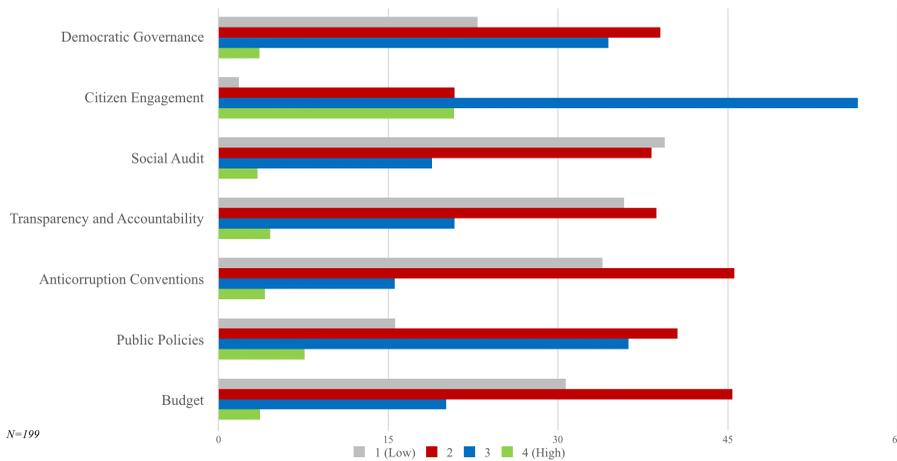
As it was important to identify the motives for civic engagement, it was also of great importance to probe the reasons for which workshop participants did not engage more actively in their respective communities. As shown in figure 2, the majority (40%) of the surveyed participants believed that “there were more opportunities elsewhere to influence change,” and 23% reinforced this perception in terms of not believing in civic engagement to attain genuine impact. In part, that response reflected the relatively low level of knowledge on critical issues related to social audit and civic engagement. As shown in figure 3, before the workshop participants were asked to assess themselves on a scale of 1-4 (low to high) with respect to their own level of knowledge in different topics related to civic engagement. The results of the KAB survey point to an overall relatively low (52%) and medium (40%) knowledge ratings. Only 8% of all workshop participants self-evaluated their knowledge as relatively high in all areas. The highest overall areas of knowledge according to the results of the self-evaluation were citizen engagement, public policies and democratic gover-

Figure 2. Why Do You Think That Young People of Your Age Don't Participate in Civic Activities?



N=199

Figure 3. In a Scale from 1–4, Where 1 is Low and 4 High, How Would You Grade Your Level of Knowledge with Regard to the Following Topics? (In %)



N=199

nance. Workshop participants self-evaluated their level of knowledge in social audit, accountability, anti corruption conventions and budget as relatively low.

The evidence from all the evaluations at the end of the workshops shows that the workshop appears to have had a positive impact on knowledge and motivation for civic engagement. The aggregated evaluation evidence from the five workshops in Guatemala shows that nearly 100% of participants either “strongly agreed” (88%) or “agreed” (11%) that the workshop contributed to improve their knowledge and interest in civic engagement. Moreover, 97% of participants “strongly agreed” (67%) and “agreed” (30%) that the workshop motivated them to act as soon as possible, while 98% of participants felt the workshops gave them new ideas for civic engagement. In that regard, the workshops contributed to the acquisition of new knowledge, it strengthened and expanded existing knowledge, and sought to make connections to broader concepts of democratic governance, public integrity, accountability, and participation.

A recurring theme in the evaluations was that the workshop enabled participants to better understand civic engagement and that they felt empowered to promote change (table 2). The knowledge and skills with which participants were equipped as a result of the workshops enabled them to prepare draft social audit strategies, which were considered initial ideas that needed to be refined before implementation with potential support of the UMG project and/or other similar projects in Guatemala. Altogether 20 draft social audit strategies were produced (4 per workshop). As was the case of Belize, the Guatemala experience also suggests that, exposing youth to approaches, like social audit, and key concepts like accountability and integrity, can enhance knowledge and capacity for civic engagement and youth could be in a better position to positively affect future accountability and integrity efforts.

Table 2. Feedback Provided by Workshop Participants in Their Evaluations

<p>“This workshop has been of utmost importance for my development and to acquire new knowledge, which I was honestly completely unaware.” – Antigua Workshop Participant</p> <p>“I now know what is, how it can be applied and what is the purpose of social audit.” – Chiquimula Workshop Participant</p> <p>“Now I understand better what social audit is, to better manage tools, to work in teams, and to be always observant.” – Zacapa Workshop Participant</p> <p>“I understand the importance of legal frameworks, which complemented my current knowledge, but most importantly I now know how to influence actions for change.” – Quetzaltenango Workshop Participant</p>
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Post Workshop Analysis and Lessons

A key drawback for both cases was not following up with complementary activities, such as a post-workshop survey in the case of Guatemala to better understand and measure the impact the workshop had in increasing participants’ knowledge and changed attitudes towards civic participation. Although international development organizations have promoted broad and targeted efforts in support of youth civic engagement in developing countries, comparative evidence of impact on behavior and civic engagement remains limited and mixed. Without data on behavior and attitude change, there is no strong evidence supporting a causal relationship between the workshops and civic engagement.

As the Belize and Guatemala cases highlighted in this chapter suggest though, exposing youth to approaches, like social audit, can enhance knowledge and capacity for civic engagement and youth could be in a better position to positively affect much needed change efforts in emerging democracies. However, translating the knowledge and skills acquired in the workshops into sustainable assets for civic engagement requires additional elements, such as complementary training, mentorship and measuring behavioral change.

Based on the result of the evaluations, the workshops in Belize and Guatemala had a relatively positive effect on young participants with regards to improving knowledge, motivation to act, and ideas for future civic engagement action. However, the efforts were incomplete. Ideally, it would have helped to have additional funding, resources and partnerships from the international development organizations and other local stakeholders, including universities, for a pre- and post KAB survey taken the first and last days of the workshop and to follow up with periodic annual surveys to be able to observe and analyze participants’ change in behaviors and attitudes about civic engagement. Similarly, the funding and strategies from international development organizations for the workshops did not consider the need for universities to institutionalize similar workshops as cross-cutting and interdisciplinary initiatives, or the design of a mid to long-term strategy with local stakeholders, such as universities, government and the private sector. Despite the acknowledged limitations, the two selected cases analyzed in this chapter provide initial evidence on the

potential impact of social audit workshops on youth civic engagement in developing countries.

The social audit workshop experience in Belize and Guatemala have provided a basis for drawing some initial conclusions and key lessons that speak to the larger discussion about the role of international development organizations and universities in promoting youth civic engagement in developing countries, particularly those that are emerging democracies. A few practical lessons from both experiences are worth careful consideration:

The Role of International Development Organizations in Promoting Civic Engagement

Donor-supported civic engagement initiatives in developing countries, like most other initiatives supported by donors, by their nature are “short-term enterprises” with limited resources and timelines (averaging 3-5year projects). Thus, there is a need to connect with larger and more localized initiatives, including supporting universities and engaging the private sector and the government to obtain commitment for scaling-up efforts and multiply the effects beyond a two-day training workshop for youth on civic engagement. Unintended consequences of donor-supported activities like lack of follow-up strategies to monitor youth behavior change, lack of further accompaniment and monitoring, and not measuring civic attitudes before and after the workshop, can be major drawbacks for engaged and enthusiastic youth looking for an outlet or next step in which to apply their newly acquired civic engagement knowledge and skills.

Partnerships

Short-term interventions (projects) can make important and positive differences, especially in reaching and engaging youth, but only if used strategically. Government, the private sector, foundations, and universities are also key stakeholders to promote youth civic engagement. While young people need to play a central role in addressing policy issues that affect them, they cannot tackle the multitude of challenges alone. Youth in developing countries face daunting challenges in an increasingly complex and ever-changing democratic context. Demographic data for young people in developing countries like Belize and Guatemala, indicate a high probability for unemployment, low self-esteem, and risky social behavior, particularly among marginalized groups. Acquiring civic competencies and skills, while critical, is not sufficient to better their lives and build their communities. They also need to be provided with the opportunities to do so. Active partnerships are critical.

Multiplying Effect

Learning civic engagement should have both a theoretical and practical basis. As an initial step, the social audit workshops focused on soft skills. It should be followed-up with complementary efforts to develop additional knowledge about emerging democratic systems. Moreover, universities can systematically incorporate social audit and other civic engagement tools into core academic program components. Expanding the circle of learning by targeting university faculty and staff, can strengthen the enabling environment and reinforce multi-stakeholder initiatives as essential for scaling up and sustaining efforts.

Measuring Change and Impact

Most impact evaluations of efforts to engage and support youth under democratic governance programs funded by international development organizations show mixed results. The focus is on the project or intervention (workshops), not so much on measuring the change of behavior and attitudes among the youth because of interventions. While the evaluations by participants amount to initial evidence that the workshop had an effect on knowledge, motivation and ideas, how youth changed their behavior on civic engagement as a result of the workshop remained unmeasured. A deeper cross-systemic research could provide more evidence of causality. This would be a component that international development organizations and universities should seriously consider in future efforts.

Conclusion

The Belize and Guatemala experiences offer a certain level of optimism about youth civic engagement in emerging democracies. It is vital to acknowledge, however, that every developing country and context is unique and ever-changing. These experiences are not a blue-print or a recipe, but rather a reference to contribute to the ongoing understanding of the complex dynamics of youth civic engagement. Opportunities like the social audit workshops or other approaches that support and promote youth civic engagement cannot take place in a vacuum. Youth issues are cross-cutting and the most successful are often those that work across sectors and interact and are integrated with broader development policies.

While the social audit workshops were an extracurricular initiative for university students, the two cases in this chapter demonstrated their potential effect on youth civic engagement. Young university students in emerging democracies need more spaces where their voice matters, where they have opportunities to have their consciousness raised, and where they can participate in collective learning, engagement, and exchange of information and knowledge. Institutionalizing civic learning and literacy in universities could be a cornerstone for emerging democracies to increase civic, democratic, and political knowledge and engagement among youth. In times of democratic governance backsliding around the world, it is vital for universities in developing countries to strengthen commitment to teaching civics and assume a more proactive, prominent and systematic role in supporting youth civic engagement efforts.

Endnotes

1. The concept of developing country is being used for analytical purposes and using as reference the World Economic Situation and Prospects classification of all countries of the world into three broad categories: developed, in transition, and developing, each one reflecting basic economic country conditions. See, United Nations, *World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2019* (New York: NY, United Nations, 2019).
2. For more analysis and information on accountability for democratic governance see, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Accountability and Democratic Governance: Orientations and Principles for Development* (Paris: OECD, 2014).
3. For more analysis and information on integrity for democratic governance see, L. W. J. C. Huberts, "Integrity: What it is and Why it is Important," *Public Integrity* 20 (2018): S18–S32.
4. Gerardo Berthin, "Democratic Governance and Corruption in Latin America," in *Latin American Democracy: Emerging Reality or Endangered Species?*, eds. Richard L. Millet, Jennifer S. Holmes, and Orlando J. Perez (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).
5. See, for example, William Robert Avid, *Increasing Youth Participation in Accountability Mechanisms* (Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2015); Duncan Green, *Promoting Active Citizenship: What have we learned from 10 Case Studies of Oxfam's Work?* (Oxfam International, 2014); Pedro Dal Bó, Andrew Foster, and Louis Putterman, "Institutions and Behavior: Experimental Evidence on the Effects of Democracy," *American Economic Review* 100, no. 5 (2010): 2205–2229; Herwing Cleuren and Patrício Silva, *Widening Democracy: Citizens and Participatory Schemes in Brazil and Chile* (Netherlands: Koninklijke, 2009); Peter Dahlgren, *Young Citizens and New Media: Learning for Democratic Participation* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Yves Zamboni, "Participatory Budgeting and Local Governance: An evidence-based evaluation of participatory budgeting experiences in Brazil," Working Paper, Bristol University, 2007; Brian Wampler, "Expanding Accountability through Participatory Institutions: Mayors, Citizens, and Budgeting in Three Brazilian Municipalities," *Latin American Politics and Society* 46, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 73–99; and Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1993).
6. Richard P. Adler and Judy Goggin, "What Do We Mean By 'Civic Engagement'?" *Journal of Transformative Education* 3, no. 3 (2005): 236–253.
7. Elizabeth C. Matto, Alison Rios Millett McCartney, Elizabeth A. Bennion, and Dick Simpson, eds., *Teaching Civic Engagement Across the Disciplines* (Washington DC: American Political Science Association, 2017).
8. Definitions of youth and young people vary widely across the world. Internationally accepted definitions include those categorizing people between 0–18 years old as children; those between 14–19 years old as adolescents; those between 15 and 24 years old as youth; and those up to 29 years old as young people. Other regional political and cultural definitions of youth may acknowledge those up to 35 years old as young people.

9. See, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, DC: USAID, October 2012); and United Nations, *Youth Civic Engagement: World Youth Report* (New York: NY, United Nations/UNDESA, 2016).
10. United Nations, *Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: World Youth Report* (New York: NY, United Nations/UNDESA, 2018).
11. For the purpose of this chapter, we are using the definition of public integrity sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Public integrity refers to the consistent alignment of, and adherence to, shared ethical values, principles and norms for upholding and prioritizing the public interest over private interests in the public sector. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/recommendation-public-integrity/>
12. Gerardo Berthin and Terri-Ann Gilbert-Roberts, "Explaining Youth Policy Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean Through Social Auditing Processes," *Revista Olhares Amazonicos, Boa Vista* 6, no. 2 (2018): 1186–1221; and Gerardo Berthin, *A Practical Guide to Social Audit as a Participatory Tool to Strengthen Democratic Governance, Transparency, and Accountability* (Panama: UNDP Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2011).
13. For a definition of horizontal and vertical accountability see, Derick W. Brinkerhoff and Anna Wetterberg, "Gauging the Effects of Social Accountability on Services, Governance, and Citizen Empowerment," *Public Administration Review* 76, no. 2 (2015): 274–286.
14. For specific cases and examples see, Berthin (2011); Anna Wetterberg, Derick W. Brinkerhoff, and Jana C. Hertz, eds. *Governance and Service Delivery Practical Applications of Social Accountability Across Sectors* (Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International, 2016); Claudia Baez-Camargo, *Harnessing the Power of Communities against Corruption: A Framework for Contextualizing Social Accountability*, U4 Brief (Bergen, Norway: Michelsen Institute, 2018); and Rachel Nadelman, Ha Le, and Anjali Sah, "How Does the World Bank Build Citizen Engagement Commitments into Project Design? Results from Pilot Assessments in Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Pakistan," IDS Working Paper 2019, no. 525 (April 2019).
15. See for example, Berthin (2011); UNICEF, *Making Social Audit work for Viet Nam: Key Findings and Lessons Learned from a Pilot of Four Social Audit Tools* (London: England, ODI, 2011); Kenyatta Mwashe, "Youth as Drivers of Accountability: Conducting a Youth Social Audit," in *Young Citizens: Youth and Participatory Governance in Africa* (London: International Institute for Environment and Development, 2011); UNDP, "Local Governance and Accountability and Transparency: Exploring Opportunities for a Post 2015 Agenda" in *Report on the Fourth Meeting of the Anti-Corruption Community of Practice in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Panama: UNDP Regional Center, 2014); Jonathan Fox and Brendan Halloran, eds., *Connecting the Dots for Accountability: Civil Society Policy Monitoring and Advocacy Strategies*, report from international workshop, June 18–20, 2015 in Washington, DC (London: Transparency and Accountability Initiative, School of International Service-American University, International Budget Partnership, Government Watch, SIM Lab, 2016); and Jonathan Fox and Joy Acheron, *Doing Accountability Differently: A Proposal for the Vertical Integration of Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy* (Bergen, Norway: U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre/Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2016).
16. Berthin (2011).
17. Berthin & Gilbert-Roberts (2018); Fox & Halloran (2016); and Berthin (2011).
18. The author acquired approval from the participating schools and the UNICEF Representative for this project.
19. The TRAALOG was a regional technical assistance platform hosted at the UNDP Regional Service Center for Latin America and the Caribbean. The regional center served as a hub for over 26 UNDP country offices in the region and was a source of knowledge, technical expertise, and resources provided by a group of international development experts and professionals. The Regional Center was organized around international development practice areas, such as democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery and environmental and sustainable development, gender and capacity development. As such, the TRAALOG was a mechanism of the Democratic Governance practice area designed to engage and interact with several UNDP Country Offices and their governmental and non-governmental counterparts in the region and identify and support integrity and accountability entry points and programming opportunities.
20. Both the TRAALOG Project and the Social Audit Workshops, were designed by Gerardo Berthin. The workshops were adapted to each country and/or regional contexts with the assistance of local UNDP program officers. The Caribbean workshops, including for Belize, were adapted and nourished with the assistance of Terri-Ann Gilbert-Roberts.
21. The UNDP Regional Center for Latin America and the Caribbean was located in the City of Knowledge-Panama, a place which once hosted a US Military base. Through Decree Law N° 6 of 1998, the Government of Panama arranged the transfer of 120 hectares of the former US military base, Fort Clayton, to the City of Knowledge Foundation, the entity that manages the compound. The formal transfer of the base to Panama took place on 30 November 1999. The compound was handed over to the government of Panama and on the same day of the handover ceremony the government passed on to the Foundation the land and facilities that now make up City of Knowledge. In addition to the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Center in Panama, UNDP had similar regional hubs in Bangkok for the Asia and the Pacific region; in Bratislava for Eastern Europe; in Cairo for the Arab States region; in Dakar for West and Central Africa; and Johannesburg for East and Southern Africa.

22. Eric Gorham, "Service Learning and Political Knowledge," *Journal of Political Science Education* 1, no. 3 (2005):345–365; and William A. Galston, "Political Knowledge, Political Engagement and Civic Education," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (2001): 217–34.
23. Galston (2001); and Kerry Ann Rockquemore and Regan Harwell Schaffer, "Toward a Theory of Engagement: A Cognitive Mapping of Service-Learning Experiences," *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 7, no. 1 (2000): 14–25.
24. Gerardo Berthin, *A Practical Guide to Social Audit as a Participatory Tool to Strengthen Democratic Governance, Transparency, and Accountability* (Panama: UNDP Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2011).
25. Fifteen National workshops (made up of young leaders of the same nationality) were held in Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala (5), Jamaica (2), Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru. The Caribbean regional workshop was held in Jamaica with participants from the following Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The Latin American regional workshop was held in Costa Rica for participants from the following countries: Costa Rica, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Peru.
26. On average the total cost of a workshop, including logistics, travel, materials and facilitation oscillated between US \$25,000–\$30,000, and on average each workshop hosted 40 participants. On that basis, the cost per participant averaged was \$750.
27. At the end of the workshop, each participant who completed the full days of learning, is awarded a Certificate of Achievement, and is provided with a Resource Library (on a USB flash drive) with additional materials (including articles, case studies, pertinent legislation and international reports) which will help them to further advance their knowledge and skills.
28. The initial assumption is that the approach and method of the workshop apparently did have a similar initial impact. In an initial observation, the different independent variables did not affect the overall outcome. This might be a correlative evidence that the workshop approach as an independent variable might have some correlation with the dependent variable of contributing to the increase of knowledge to promote civic engagement among youth. We are not implying that this apparent correlation is causality, simply that we might have identified an independent variable as a likely cause of similar initial outcomes. Measuring attitude and behavior change, and deeper cross-systemic research could provide in both cases more causality evidence. For additional information on the theoretical selection approach used, see Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1970).
29. On August 1, 2000, the University of Belize (UB) was created from a merger of five institutions: the University College of Belize, the Belize Technical College, the Belize Teachers' Training College, the Belize School of Nursing, and the Belize College of Agriculture. In 2004, the main campus was officially moved to Belmopan City. UB has a student population of over 4,800 and it offers 50 plus degree program offerings, ranging from the associate to master's level.
30. Belize is divided into 6 districts (a territorial division equivalent to a state). For the workshop, representatives from Belize, Cayo, Corozal, Stann Creek, and Toledo districts participated. Representatives from the Orange Walk district were unable to participate.
31. Also, six months after the workshop event, during the first quarter of 2014, the UNDP and UNICEF Belize country offices planned to conduct an assessment to measure the institutional capacity of local government in Belize. An Institutional Capacity Assessment is a tool employed by the United Nations and other international development organizations, to measure the existing ability of institutions to perform key functions and deliver expected results. The results of the assessment serve as inputs to craft an integrated support to strengthen and expand local governments' roles and functions in public policy and development. In the field of international development, the concept of capacity development emerged in the 1980s and became the central purpose of technical assistance to developing countries. For more information, see <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/capacity-development-a-undp-primer.html>. The assessment generated an opening to involve the BYSAN in the process and put some of the knowledge from the workshop into practice. The assessment team took the decision to involve six BYSAN members in one of the most important steps in conducting institutional capacity assessment – the data collection process. The assessment consisted of various phases and was achieved jointly with senior technical personnel from UNDP, UNICEF and the Belize Ministry of Labor, Local Governance, and Rural Development. The final report was well-received, and it served as a baseline and tool to promote dialogue with the government and to help identify priority capacities to be strengthened. See final report: Belize, Ministry of Labor, Local Government and Rural Development, *Rapid Assessment of Belize Local Governments' Capacities* (Belize: UNDP and UNICEF, 2014). In retrospect, the involvement of the BYSAN in the institutional capacity assessment process was a win-win for all involved. Inputs from a post-assessment evaluation with BYSAN participants suggested the assessment served to put into practice what they learned in the workshop, further build their confidence, skills and experience, and gave them an opportunity to engage with their local governments.
32. See, UNDP, *Guatemala Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE)* (New York, NY: UNDP/IEO, 2019); USAID, *Guatemala: Country Development Cooperation Strategy (2012–2016)* (2012); and PNUD, *Guatemala: ¿Un país de oportunidades para la juventud? Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2011/2012* (Guatemala City, Guatemala: 2012).

33. For more information about USAID Guatemala Citizen Security strategy see, <https://www.usaid.gov/guatemala/democracy-and-governance>
34. The San Carlos University (USAC) is the largest and oldest university in Guatemala. It was founded in 1676 by Royal Decree of the King of Spain Carlos II. USAC is a public university with eight schools, 18 campuses, three institutes, a postgraduate system and over 200,000 students.
35. Rafael Landívar University (URL) is a private, Jesuit university in Guatemala, founded in 1962. The main campus is in Guatemala City. There are satellite campuses in Quetzaltenango, Huehuetenango, Cobán, Zacapa, and other parts of the country. The URL offers undergraduate and graduate degrees and has over 30,000 students