ParlAmericas

PNUD
Al servicio
de las personas
y las naciones

GOOD PRACTICES ON TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE LEGISLATURES OF THE AMERICAS

INTRODUCTION

Parliaments are crucial institutions of democracy. Regardless of their formation, rules of operation or roles in the national political system, they constitute the expression of national sovereignty through representation. Parliaments articulate citizens' interests and the existence of such a forum is a prerequisite for the legitimacy of the State and for democracy (Global Parliamentary Report, 2012).

The main functions of the legislature are representation, legislation and oversight. In practice, this means that parliamentarians are representatives of citizens' interests, who deliberate and approve relevant legislation to promote their country's development and democratic governance, oversee the actions and governance of the executive power, as well as the national budget and its execution.

Consequently, given their fundamental role in the functioning of a democracy, all members of a parliament must act transparently, ethically, honorably and with accountability. This means that as part of their duties, parliamentarians must inform the public of their actions and justify them, ensure citizen participation in the process and that, in the event of non-compliance, sanctions are applied. A parliament that ensures these principles will be more effective in responding to citizens' expectations and promoting a strong democracy, which will legitimize its role and provide an opportunity to ensure public trust.

In the past four years[1], legislatures have approved laws and designed practical tools allowing progress to improve transparency, ethics, probity, accountability and citizen participation. However, these initiatives have not been sufficient, and citizens have echoed the importance of improving legal standards and tools so that they fully meet the objectives for which they were created. Today, for example, it is not enough for information to be published on web pages, it must also be of good quality, clear, downloadable in different formats, easily accessible and up-to-date. Likewise, having a virtual tool for citizens to send their comments on a bill is not enough; they should also receive feedback on their suggestions from their representatives, whether these are taken into account or not.

In this context, and based on the conversations in several meetings on open parliament organized by the Legislative Openness Working Group of the Open Government Partnership, ParlAmericas, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Chile and the Bicameral Group on Transparency of the National Congress of Chile agreed to share *good practices on transparency and citizen participation* adopted by the legislatures of the Americas. This sharing of experiences aims to disseminate information and facilitate cooperation between these parliaments, so that they can implement these practices, adapt them or collaborate to improve them, to achieve greater and better openness in accordance with the standards demanded by citizens of the Americas.

---

1 One of precedents of open parliament initiatives was the "Declaration of Santiago on Transparency and Probity in the National Congress and Party System" signed in Chile in 2012 by Latin American Members of Congress (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Uruguay). The Declaration is available at the following link: http://www.parlamericas.org/uploads/documents/Declaracion%20de%20Santiago.pdf

METHODOLOGY

Good practices on transparency and citizen participation must be on-going, proven to be efficient and effective, and to have achieved positive results according to assessments or diagnoses carried out by the parliaments themselves.

In order to collect the good practices presented in this document, a form was sent directly to the legislatures of the Americas in January 2016. This form was also posted on-line in the form of a survey in Spanish and English for direct submission. In the cases where more information was needed, parliaments were contacted and requested to provide the missing information.

A total of 29 good practices were received from 12 countries between January and October 2016. These were reviewed and classified in two categories: citizen participation and transparency[2]. Among the submissions received, 20 were selected for this publication: 11 corresponding to issues of citizen participation and 9 to transparency issues[3].

The completed forms were received electronically by ParlAmericas and submitted to UNDP for their systematization.

---

2 Originally, the questionnaire included five classification categories: citizen participation, transparency, integrity, accountability and oversight. However, few experiences were received for the last three categories so they were classified within the first two alternatives.

3 The reason why nine sheets were not included is that they were either related to the implementation of current legislation which is a mandate of parliaments and not a practice, and/or they did not correspond to any of the above categories.

CLASSIFICATION OF GOOD PRACTICES AND INCLUSION CRITERIA

TRANSPARENCY	
INCLUDES TOOLS THAT:	» Systematize regulations and facilitate access, updates, history of laws and searches
	» Facilitate the TV transmission or streaming of sessions and committees so citizens can directly observe the debate
	» Promote entities/units responsible for promoting transparency in the legislature

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	
INCLUDES TOOLS THAT:	» Facilitate citizens' participation in the legislative process and provide spaces for participation
	» Inform the public about the work of the legislature and the process to adopt laws
	» Allow citizens to participate in the appointment of autonomous authorities in cases where the legislature plays a role

The following is the list of good practices received per country, including the institution and the name of the tool, according to their classification:

TRANSPARENCY

	COUNTRY	INSTITUTION	NAME OF THE TOOL
1	ARGENTINA	Congress of the Nation	Argentinian Legal Digest (InfoLEG)
2	BRAZIL	Chamber of Deputies	Hacker Laboratory
3	CANADA	Parliamentary Budget Office	Ready Reckoner
4	CHILE	National Congress	Bicameral Group on Transparency
5	CHILE	National Congress	Legislative Information System (SIL)
6	CHILE	Library of the National Congress	History of the Law
7	MEXICO	Senate	Committee on the Guarantee of Access and Transparency of Information
8	PARAGUAY	National Congress	SIL-Legislative Information System
9	PERU	Congress of the Republic	Citizens Requests System

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

	COUNTRY	INSTITUTION	NAME OF THE TOOL
1	BRAZIL	Chamber of Deputies	e-Democracia (e-Democracy)
2	CHILE	Senate	Virtual Senator
3	COLOMBIA	Senate	Mobile application "Mi Senado" (My Senate)
4	COSTA RICA	Legislative Assembly	Citizen Participation Department
5	COSTA RICA	Legislative Assembly	Young Parliament and Interuniversity Parliament
6	ECUADOR	National Assembly	Houses of the National Assembly
7	MEXICO	Senate	Appointment of Transparency Commissioners
8	PERU	Congress of the Republic	Virtual Legislative Forums
9	PERU	Congress of the Republic	Participatory Workshops
10	PERU	Congress of the Republic	Youth Parliament and School Parliament
11	PERU	Congress of the Republic	Virtual Courses on Citizenship and Politics

GOOD PRACTICES ON TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION*

Good practices are presented in the form of a table. Each one explains its purpose, how it works, implementation timeframe, lessons learned, results and links for additional information.

I.

GOOD
TRANSPARENCY
PRACTICES

ARGENTINA
Argentinian Legal Digest

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	In response to the growing proliferation of regulatory provisions, that were confronting each other, and the fact that those losing force were not eliminated, the Argentine Legal Digest (DJA) aims to simplify and purify the regulatory universe to benefit citizens, to facilitate the application of adopted laws.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	To develop a collection of applicable national laws and regulations, systematized and arranged according to consolidation and updating methodologies in order to: » Give greater certainty to the Argentinian Legal System » Put an end to the indeterminacy of the applicable law » Give legal certainty with regard to the regulatory universe » Facilitate citizens' knowledge of their rights
HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	In order to develop the DJA, the following actions were carried out: » Preliminary studies and drafting of the proposal of the DJA by the Executive Power » Presentation of the bill to the Congress of the Nation » Study, correction and revision of the content of the DJA by the technical agency designated by law » Approval of the DJA by law 26,939, establishing a period of observations on the content by public, private organizations and citizens » Reception and resolution of the submitted comments » Drafting of the final version of the DJA, which was approved by the Congress of the Nation » Updating and consolidation of the DJA on a regular basis

WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** Due to the time needed for the creation and implementation, as well as to the diversity of actors involved, some processes had to be adjusted at different stages of the project, on the one hand enriching the process, but on the other making the task and the consolidation of results more complex. Specifically, the problems encountered arose from the modification of methodologies and technological support during the development and implementation process of the DJA, as well as from changes in jurisdiction, perspectives, scope and management of the project in the course of its development and implementation.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	33,000 laws and regulations have been analyzed, of which approximately half were excluded for being private. An analysis of validity and consolidation was carried out for the remaining 16,000. The DJA includes 2,235 general regulations in force and 2,277 international treaties to which Argentina is a State Party.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	Because of its duration, as well as the intervention of different departments of different branches of the State, it is impossible to determine the cost of the process. However, the Congress of the Nation has established by law that the implementation must be managed by its own officials applying international standards and open data policies.
CONTACT	María Isabel Giménez Díaz, Director of Parliamentary Information (mgimenezd@diputados.gob.ar) Daniel G. Ayoroa, deputy director of Legal Digest (dayoroa.dip@diputados.gob.ar / infoleg@jus.gob.ar)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.infoleg.gob.ar/?page_id=1176

BRAZIL
Hacker Laboratory of the Chamber of Deputies

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	After the first hackathon was held in the Chamber of Deputies, which had a fruitful participation, participants requested that the President of the Chamber establish a space for hackers and developers to collaborate in a permanent way.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	The Hacker laboratory is intended to be a connecting link between the parliamentary/administrative structure and civil society to generate technologies (applications and web pages) and knowledge, allowing more transparency and citizen participation in the legislative process.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The Hacker Laboratory preparations began in January 2014, after the hackathon in 2013, and it took a year to implement.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By the Parliament and the Administration:** As in any innovation, there is cultural resistance, so feedback and constant dialogue must be strengthened. There is a predisposition to understand the definition of hacker as if it were only related to virtual crimes and not as a person seeking to program technology in order to improve existing practices.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	Projects are kept open for collaboration with hackers and developers outside the Chamber of Deputies. While at different stages of progress, but not yet available for testing, the following applications stand out:

» *"Retórica Parlamentar"* (Parliamentary Rhetoric), allows an easy and intuitive display of information on the volume, type and frequency of the interventions of legislators in their parliamentary speeches

» *"Olho nas Emendas"* (Eye on the Parliamentary Amendments), gives the geo-referenced location of the parliamentary amendments of the Annual Budget Law, allowing citizens and parliamentarians the ability to oversee public spending, given that budget implementation is the responsibility of the executive branch at the federal, state and local levels.

» *"Cámara para mí"* (Chamber for me), customizes access to the legislative content of the Chamber portal site and the e-Democracy page with suggestions and recommendations for each user, according to their preferences.

» *"Mapa Participativo"* (Participatory Map), organizes and situates the opinions of Internet users in discussion forums, allowing them to vote on priority proposals for submission to the Parliament

In addition, the Hacker Laboratory establishes dialogue with academic institutions of excellence, formalizing agreements for technical cooperation, such as the Center for Advanced Studies of Digital Democracy (Federal University of Bahia), the Faculty of Communication and Information of the Federal University of Goiás and the Laboratory for the Study of Image and Cyber culture (Federal University of Espírito Santo). These partnerships allow, among other possibilities, to have knowledge, statistics and tools for visualization and mapping of the debates in social networks and e-Democracy.

WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The implementation cost was around US$ 45,000, including:

	» Salary payments of the team (monthly and permanent cost): US$ 30,000, for a team made up of 1 director, 4 project coordinators, 4 general consultants, 4 ICT specialists and 1 intern » Purchase of work materials, such as computers, television sets, tablets, tables, chairs and other materials (single expenditure): US$ 15,000
CONTACT	Cristiano Ferri Faria, Director of the Hacker Laboratory (labhacker@camara.leg)
MORE INFORMATION	https://www.facebook.com/LabHackerCD https://www.youtube.com/user/LabHackerCD https://www.flickr.com/photos/118815643@N04

CANADA
Ready Reckoner (Budget Simulator)

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	In general, budgetary and fiscal policies are not very attractive to the majority of the population. However, they have a huge impact on our daily lives. Whenever the budget period comes near, the government presents the decisions and agreements that have to be taken to develop the budget, but what happens if a citizen doesn't agree with certain measure? What happens they think a different decision should have been taken? How can they review the facts presented by the government? The average citizen is not an economist – they don't have the time nor the capacity to spend hours upon hours gathering data from various sources. Furthermore, their level of data

literacy might not be sufficient enough to actually use this data and transform it into information for their very own simulation. With its straightforward and user-friendly interface, it simplifies the federal tax system so that anyone can use it. It also allows citizens to fact-check the government anytime, including between elections and during policy debates.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE? HOW DOES IT WORK?

The objective of the budget simulator is to offer the public an online, interactive and ready to use tool, that simplifies data on the Canadian federal tax system.

The tax tool estimates the personal income tax (PIT) changes accounting for both primary and secondary effects on tax revenue. Primary effects include the increase or decrease in PIT revenue associated with personal income or its thresholds, while secondary effects account for after-tax revenues generated or lost. The users can modify the platform to simulate different tax structures and the application displays the changes on the federal budget according to these structures. In addition, PDF documents can be created with the simulation results.

Leveraging its expertise in budget simulators, Open North, a civil society organization in Canada, created a custom version of its popular civic tech tool Citizen Budget for the Parliamentary Budget Officer of Canada. A second version of the tool is currently being developed with the inclusion of two new modules: a fiscal policy tool and a sensitivity analysis tool. The first will allow users to build their own fiscal policy package by adjusting revenues (modifying specific expenses or taxes), the effects of which will be shown in indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) growth or full-time employment. The second will allow handling different assumptions (inflation, growth and interest rates) to simulate the impacts on federal revenues, expenses and programs.

HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The tool was created in April 2014 and was implemented in November of the same year. The work was carried out in half-days during a period of 6 months, which included 300 hours of technical work by economists and computer coding by Open North.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** The main difficulties arose from the technical challenge of designing complex financial models in an accessible format for the users. This required building additional microeconomic models to restructure what had historically been an "artisanal" process with multiple stages in the Parliamentary Budget Office. Another challenge stemmed from the enhanced transparency of the PBO's modelling work. Historically the numbers and available information were presented to an audience of experts (scholars, technicians). To widen the approach and the scope of the Parliamentary Budget Office's analysis to other audiences, it was necessary to incorporate the perspectives of other actors. For example, instead of using technical disclaimers that mention limitations of financial figures, the Ready Reckoner incorporated assumptions that reflect "standard" economic behavior.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	The tangible results of the application have been immediate among legislators, civil society and the media. On a monthly basis, the application is cited during parliamentary debates and press articles. During the last federal elections (in 2015), the application was used by all political parties to determine their platforms' costing. Informally, several political parties noted that any cost estimates they prepared needed to be perceived as credible compared to the Parliamentary Budget Office's figures. Overall, this resulted in higher quality and more public financial information, which supports better public discourse.

	Initially, the tool was intended for members of parliament and civil servants, but the goal is now to broaden it to a wider audience, allowing citizens to both educate themselves and participate more actively in political debates. In addition, it allows the government to increase their transparency standards in a cost-effective way, empowering citizens and public education organizations.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The total cost of implementation was approximately US$ 25,000, including the work done by the Parliamentary Budget Office staff and time used in communication activities with parliamentarians, the media and the public. Maintenance costs have been limited to updates and website hosting.
CONTACT	Jason Jacques, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director of the Costing and Budgetary Analysis team, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer of Canada (jason.jacques@parl.gc.ca / pbo-dpb@parl.gc.ca)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.readyreckoner.ca/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxBm1nW1USQ http://pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/files/files/Ready_Reckoner_Guide_EN.pdf

CHILE
Bicameral Group on Transparency

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	In 2012, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies created their respective Committees on Ethics and Transparency to treat infringements in these matters, but the need was felt to establish inter-institutional cooperation that would bring together criteria and joint actions aimed at promoting a broader range of areas covered in the "Declaration of Santiago on Transparency and Integrity in Parliaments and Political Parties", signed January 13th, that same year.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE? HOW DOES IT WORK?	Promoting public policies, legal and administrative initiatives, that develop and deepen the principles of transparency, probity, integrity, and citizen participation in the National Congress. Among other actions, through their members, the group presents bills or indications aimed at improving these principles in their respective chambers and makes regulation proposals to the Committees on Ethics and Transparency. Internationally, the group promotes the principles of open parliament through the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network and the Legislative Openness Working Group of the Open Government Partnership (OGP)[4]. The chairman of the Bicameral Group also chairs and coordinates these entities. The Bicameral Group is currently made up of five senators and five deputies; it is supported by the authorities of both chambers, the Library of the National Congress and a consultant. The Group meets generally once a month and liaises with public bodies, international organizations and civil society, on behalf of the National Congress.

4 The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative with the purpose to ensure concrete commitments from governments for the promotion of transparency, empowerment of citizens, fighting corruption and the use of the technologies to strengthen governance. For more information, please see the following link: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-ogp

HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	Approximately five months. The Senate proposed the creation of the Group to the Chamber of Deputies on June 5, 2012, which was accepted on October 16. Based on that agreement, the Group was established on November 7, 2012.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	The Bicameral Group on Transparency meets on a regular basis, thanks to the will of its members to participate and promote the proposed initiatives. However, it is considered advisable to strengthen its work, which is why a bill was drafted to reform the Constitutional Organic Law (LOC) of the National Congress, which, among other amendments, would institutionalize the Bicameral Group on Transparency as a permanent Bicameral Committee on Transparency, beyond the current agreement between both Chambers.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	In terms of transparency, probity, ethics and citizen participation both Chambers must be aligned to make progress in a similar way, that's why this body has been crucial to make the joint work possible. Part of the achievements have been: » Strengthening of the transparency, access to public information, probity and ethics agenda, which was included in the bill for reforming the Constitutional Organic Law (LOC) of the Congress » Regulation of the Law on Lobby and Management of Interests, which, with slight changes, was approved by both chambers » Constitutional amendment that obliges the Congress to report back annually » Approval of administrative standards regarding the statements of assets and interests laid down in the Law on Probity, in the same terms in both Chambers

	» Several workshops in cooperation with the World Bank, ParlAmericas, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), inter alia to promote the culture of open parliament, especially in the Americas. Three or four activities have been carried out annually with the participation of 20 to 100 people per activity » Presentation of the OGP Open Parliament Policy during the Annual Summit of the OGP in December 2016 together with the participation of other international organizations » Signing of an agreement with the World Bank to strengthen the parliaments of the region on open parliament issues » Signing of an agreement with the UNDP to strengthen the institutions of the Committees on Ethics and Transparency and the Bicameral Group, as well as to support the regulation that will require the approval of the amendment of the Constitutional Organic Law of the Congress » First country that presented an Open Parliament Plan and shows a progress of 65% of commitments made
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	Its regular operation is supported by Congress officials and the specialized consultancy is supported jointly by both chambers and charged to their regular budgets. International activities are also financed jointly and with the support of international organizations with which cooperation agreements on this matter have been signed.
CONTACT	José Luis Alliende, Secretary of the Bicameral Group on Transparency (alliende@senado.cl)
MORE INFORMATION	Not applicable

CHILE
Legislative Information System - SIL

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	To concentrate all information related to the processing of bills in a single database, regardless of the Chamber in which they are drafted.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE? HOW DOES IT WORK?	Allowing both internal users as well as all citizens to track the process of bills in the National Congress on-line, enabling the chronological display of each stage. Likewise, it also aims at giving the public access to all information and documentation that is generated during the processing of a bill (initiatives, committee reports, debates, votes, official writings etc.), as well as allowing cross-sector searches of bills processed by the National Congress, limited to a period of time, to a specific subject, by authors, by status of processing, etc.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The first versions of the Legislative Information System (SIL) were developed in different stages between 1994 and 2000. In 2004, a detailed review of the contents of the system was carried out, leading to the addition of missing material and a constant update of the generated information regarding a bill.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** At first, regarding the incorporation of the database, it was not easy for both chambers to assume the bicameral nature of law processing, especially regarding the prioritization of the SIL when entering information. **By citizens:** Ignorance of the existence and operation of the data cross-search option.

WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	Having an online tool, with free and easy access for citizens, which concentrates the information on a specific bill or legislative issue, allowing to construct the history of law quickly and efficiently. There are a total of 10,464 bills entered in the SIL, with all their history. Between August 20th and October 20th, 2017, the SIL was consulted 213,349 times.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	There is a new proposal for the implementation of the SIL at a cost of US$ 68,700, with an estimated implementation time of 8 months.
CONTACT	Patricio Alvarez, Head of IT (palvarez@senado.cl)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.senado.cl/appsenado/templates/tramitacion/index.php

CHILE

Website "Historia de la Ley" (History of the law) of the Library of the National Congress

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	To allow anyone electronic access to reliable information on the process of laws.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE? HOW DOES IT WORK?	Reducing the gap of information between the Congress and citizens, promoting transparency and access to legislative information and the work of the National Congress, by providing this information online, in open and interoperable platforms, allowing users to reuse the information to generate other products.

	Likewise, the website also allows each user to generate their own "history of a law" according to the specific requirements they may have, for example, based on a certain process, by participation of parliamentarians or by subject, among other elements. It also facilitates interoperability with databases of other legislatures and other branches of the State.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The preparation of the tool began in 2010, and it was launched in August, 2015.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By citizens:** Being a new platform with large scale use, a difficulty was produced in the management of the platform tools. **By the administration:** There are IT issues that require a permanent process of continuous improvement of the platform.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	The following are available in an interoperable format: » History of 250 laws concerning laws published between 1965-1973 » History of 479 laws corresponding to all the laws published between 2009-2014 » History of decrees approving international treaties from 2013-2014 » History of all laws published since January 1st, 2015 » In PDF format, the history of all laws published between 2007-2008 » History of laws by article of the Constitution » History of laws by articles of other laws or regulations The content population is currently in its second phase, where the history of laws for the period of 2001-2008 are being entered. Populating the history of laws for the period of 1990-2000 remains pending in 2017.

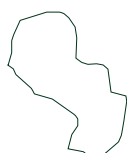|	
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	US$ 583,000 provided by the Directorate of Budgets for the population of content from 1990 to 2014, to be carried out in three years.
CONTACT	Karem Orrego, Head of the Section on the History of Law - Parliamentary Labor Department of Legislative and Document Services, and Responsible for Transparency of the Library of the National Congress (korrego@bcn.cl)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.bcn.cl/historiadelaley

MEXICO
Committee on the Guarantee of Access and Transparency of Information (COGATI)

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	By virtue of the constitutional reforms on transparency, the legislature must have an internal body guarantying the right to access information in possession of the Chamber and the protection of personal data that might be involved in such information. Thus, in 2003, the Committee on the Guarantee of Access and Transparency of Information (COGATI) was established, composed of senators who are representatives of the parliamentary groups of the Senate of the Republic.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	The Committee on the Guarantee of Access and Transparency of Information of the Senate is the specialized and impartial guarantor, with operational and management autonomy, responsible for coordinating and supervising proper

	compliance with the law by the administrative bodies and units of the Senate. It also has to perform the functions which the law and the regulations assign to it, including the function to determine classified or confidential information.
HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	First, the law that provided for the existence of the collegiate body and its powers was amended. A work plan was deployed and established, and meetings and agreements for the implementation of best practices were held and made. Finally, national and international projects for the promotion of the principles of open parliament were sought.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	Its creation came out of the constitutional reform of 2002, it was established by an agreement approved through a Plenary Session of the Senate on April 30, 2003. It should be noted that for about 10 years, its activity was limited to resolving non-conformities regarding information requests. As of November 29, 2012, the COGATI was established with new membership and re-activated its work on exploring new functions and implementing internal practices of proactive transparency and open parliament.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** There is internal resistance and lack of staff training to carry out the proposed projects. There are gaps in the internal regulations to clearly point out the functions and authority of each area involved in the process for access to information.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	The reports of the COGATI can be found at the following link: http://www.senado.gob.mx/comisiones/cogati/informe.php

WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The creation of the COGATI did not generate a specific budget allocation since the Committee is composed of Senators of the Republic.
CONTACT	Tanya Marlenne Magallanes López, Technical Secretary of the Committee on the Guarantee of Access and Transparency of Information (cogati@senado.gob.mx)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.senado.gob.mx/comisiones/cogati/index.php

PARAGUAY
Legislative Information System
(Version 1 - SIL and Version 2 - SILpy)

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	Because of the importance and significance of having a reliable complete and timely information management system for parliamentary activity, that is also easily accessible for citizens.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	The system allows for the electronic registration and monitoring of the process to draft and approve laws. Regarding the mechanism of citizen participation, afterwards, the application called Poder Legislativo Abierto (Open Legislature) was created by officials of the Paraguayan Congress. It allows any citizen to be informed, vote or contribute their opinion, in a non-binding manner and at any stage of the legislative process, on the laws under consideration that have been prepared and published for this purpose. In the new version (version 2), the citizen participation mechanism was integrated into SILpy and enables the entry of data concerning parliamentarians' legislative activities. Its implementation began on July 1, 2013. This is the current version in force.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	First, an Agreement of Institutional Cooperation was signed between the Senate of the Republic of Chile and the National Congress of Paraguay. The officials were trained, software was transferred and adapted for this purpose, which was then applied and adapted to the constitutional and legal system of Paraguay. In version 2, SILpy was developed by officials of the National Congress, allowing the incorporation of modules in accordance with institutional needs and policies. This version allows the inclusion of documents in different formats, such as: Word to facilitate compatibility with word processors and give the possibility to reuse the content of the document, Excel worksheets, Adobe PDF, images, etc.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	It was implemented in December 2007 and remained operational until June 2013. Many years earlier, the need had been identified, and an information system was started in the Chambers of the Congress for internal use. On the other hand, version 2 was implemented in July 2013 replacing version 1 (SIL). The re-engineering of the new SILpy consists of the general redesign of legislative processes. The development of the system took one year and the data migration took approximately three months.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** The adaptation of the Chilean software to the law-making process and to the legislative terminology of Paraguay was a challenge. With regard to version 2, the differences in the Internal Rules and Regulations between the Chamber of Senators and Chamber of Deputies made the implementation complex. For example, the legislative period of the Board of Directors in the Senate is one year, while in the Chamber of Deputies it is two years and six months.

WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	The system provides information that makes legislative work easier for both officials and parliamentarians, as well as allowing citizen participation.

Version 2 allowed multiple access to this platform from a computer or any mobile device like a smartphone, tablet, iPad, etc. Other results involve citizen participation in all bills under consideration, through public hearings or bills integrated in the SILpy. In addition, on the basis of the open data provided by this platform, the mobile application "Legislativopy" has been developed. |
| **WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?** | For version 1, the Cooperation Agreement between the Senate of the Republic of Chile and the Honorable Congress of the Nation of the Republic of Paraguay points out in its fourth clause that the costs of airfares, accommodation, food and internal transfers will be borne by the Congress of the Nation of the Republic of Paraguay, within the framework of the Project "Modernización del Congreso Paraguayo" (Modernization of the Paraguayan Congress), financed with funds from the World Bank.

For version 2, the cost consists of the hours of work of the designated officers of the Paraguayan National Congress, without additional expenses apart from the corresponding salary. |
| **CONTACT** | **Chamber of Senators:**
Ana N. Silva, General Director of Legislative Digitization
(asilva@senado.gov.py / informacionpublica@diputados.gov.py)

Chamber of Deputies:
Dalci Romero, Director of Legislative Information and Management
(silpy@diputados.gov.py / informaciones@senado.gov.py) |

MORE INFORMATION	Version 1 (currently out of service): http://sil.senado.gov.py/ Version 2 (operational since July 2013): http://sil2py.senado.gov.py/

PERU
Citizens Requests System

| WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	Before the widespread growth of the Internet, citizens presented their writings (requests, applications or complaints, among others) to the Congress of the Republic, through the Reception Desk of the Parliament, which implied traveling to the facilities of the Congress or sending it by mail, if they lived outside the capital. Days later, citizens would go again to the Congress to get responses to the documents they submitted. With the implementation of the Citizen Requests System, the public can now present their opinions, queries, proposals, complaints or suggestions to the Congress through two channels: the e-mail address of the Citizen Requests System (pedidos@congreso.gob.pe) or the citizens request form (on the Portal of the Congress).
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	Establishing a permanent link between the Congress of the Republic, citizens and social organizations, as well as channeling citizens' requests to the Congress and providing a permanent space of dialogue between citizens and the Congress.

With the widespread growth of the Internet, the Congress of the Republic, determined in 2001, through the Agreement of the General Committee N° 033-2001-2002/MESA-CR, that the "Oficina de Iniciativas Ciudadanas e Institucionales" [Office of Citizen and Institutional Initiatives] (today called "Oficina de Participación, Proyección y Enlace con el Ciudadano" [Office for Participation, Outreach and Liaison with the Citizen]) would be in charge of the service and monitoring of the different demands of the population.

Likewise, the Round Table Agreement stipulated that the Information System Management of the Parliament should implement a software for the registration and tracking of citizen requests to the Congress and its members.

Once the requests are received, they are registered, classified, numbered and subsequently referred to the relevant bodies of the Congress of the Republic:

» Citizen Participation, Service and Education Area: the Citizen Requests System is in charge of serving them entirely via e-mail, in the least time possible, and register them on the citizen requests website. Most of the requests handled by the Citizen Requests System are concerning the activities of the Congress (agendas), its procedures, documentation (texts of opinions, motions or bills, among others), information concerning its organization and functions or information about offices and contact information of members of Congress, among others.

» Standing Committees: requests referred to the standing committees are directed to the web pages of each committee, created at the beginning of each legislature for such purpose. Once the requests are listed on the respective web page, the Citizen Requests System sends an email to the citizens who presented a request, telling them to which committees their requirements have been referred, the name of the members of Congress chairing them, as well as the telephone number of their offices, so that they can follow up on their requests.
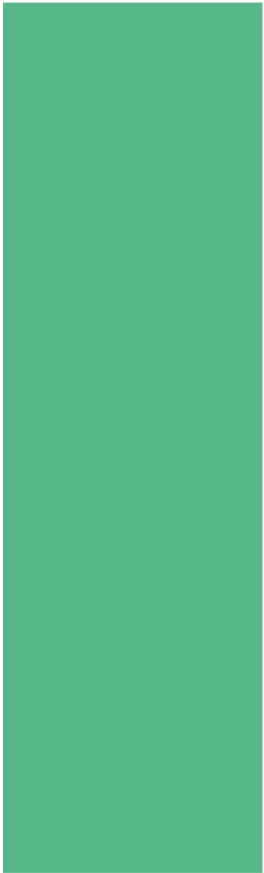
The Citizen Requests System sends the corresponding alerts to the standing committees every fortnight, for them to take notice of the requests referred to them. It should be noted that when a request referred to one of the committees involves any action or initiative, the prerogative to proceed lies with the members of Congress, both with their office and with the working committees, and is subject to the priority they determine whether by programmatic and ideological importance criteria, or even their position regarding majorities or minorities in Congress. Therefore, parliamentarians in general are not subject to any binding mandate, in accordance with article 93 of the Political Constitution. Accordingly, the parliamentary service does not have any interference in this respect.

» Members of Congress of the Republic: when a citizen's request is intended for a member of Congress, the Citizen Requests System refers it by e-mail. For this purpose, the Citizen Requests System contacts the respective office by telephone, to verify the parliamentarian's email address and, at the same time, request an additional email address (from the office staff), in order to refer the submitted request by e-mail.

HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The development of the platform and the corresponding administrative technical process lasted approximately three months.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** In July of each year a new period of sessions is initiated in the Congress of the Republic, which means in the vast majority of cases that the staff of the standing committees of the Parliament are changes. In these cases, it takes time for the new staff to adapt to the Citizen Requests System.

It has also been noted that some standing committees did not give any priority to responding to requests referred to them by the Citizen Requests System. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Citizen Requests System platform must be improved for better interaction with citizens.

By citizens: At the beginning, the Internet did not inspire confidence for a large part of citizens, so the Citizen Requests System did not have much credibility.
Due to the widespread growth of the Internet, citizens contact Congress members and standing committees directly, so the number of requests submitted through the Peruvian Virtual Parliament has been decreasing.

WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?

Much of the information requested through the Citizen Requests System is available on the Portal of the Congress, which has contributed to the decline in requests. As a result of the implementation of the system, citizens no longer have to travel to the Congress facilities to submit a request, nor to return, days later, for the answer. Now, from a computer with Internet access, they can submit their requests to the different bodies of the Parliament and obtain a response quickly through the same means.
Through the Citizen Requests System, citizens and institutions inside or outside the country can make requests to the Congress directly over the Internet, either personally or on behalf of an organization. In many cases, standing committees establish direct communication with citizens, to respond to requests through the Citizen Requests System.

Citizen requests submitted by citizens to the Congress:
In 2015: 998
In 2014: 1,418
In 2013: 1,292
In 2012: 925
In 2011: 1,531

WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The development of the virtual platform and its update as well as the methodology and administrative technical procedure has not been quantified since it was developed with the human and technical resources of the Congress.
CONTACT	Leny Palma Encalada, Head of the Office for Participation, Outreach and Liaison with the Citizen (participa@congreso.gob.pe)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www4.congreso.gob.pe/pvp/pedidos/presentacion.asp

II.

GOOD CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PRACTICES

BRAZIL
e-Democracia (e-Democracy)

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	It was created with the purpose of adding quality to the legislative process through the concept of crowdsourcing, i.e. taking on ideas of citizens collectively.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE? HOW DOES IT WORK?	E-democracy is a website that seeks to promote people's participation in the legislative process through three mechanisms: » Virtual chats: enabling citizens to participate in a live discussion and submit comments during the public hearings, since interaction in person is limited to invited speakers and parliamentarians » Discussion forums: where ideas can be proposed and discussions can be developed on a permanent basis on current projects from anywhere in the country » Tool *"Wikilegis"*: through which citizens can comment each article of a bill separately, or suggest an alternative wording. This helps to structure the citizens' contributions and to organize them in accordance with the structure of legislative debates facilitate analysis by the rapporteur for the bill.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The preparation of e-Democracy began in 2008 and was launched in June 2011.
WHAT PROBLEMS WERE EXPERIENCED?	**By citizens:** it is not easy to use, the format is not as attractive as in other forums. **By the administration:** there are difficulties in the implementation process, many steps are required to perform simple operations such as changing and feeding the site with

	news and videos. In addition, it is difficult to determine which comments are actual arguments and which are spam without reading all of them one by one. **By the Parliament:** many parliamentarians are not consistent users of the tool, which reduces civil society's interest in participating.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	» More than 3,400 discussion and forum topics have been created. » More than 340 public hearings with virtual chats have been carried out. » The contribution of ideas from thousands of Internet users to bills, such as the Code of Civil Procedure, the Civil Rights Framework for the Internet and the Youth Statute was made possible through *Wikilegis*. In the latter case, about 30% of the final text was established with contributions from citizens through the e-Democracy portal.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	Approximately US$ 50,000 including development and communication costs.
CONTACT	edemocracia@camara.leg.br
MORE INFORMATION	http://edemocracia.camara.gov.br/

CHILE
Virtual Senator

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	To bring citizens closer to the legislative process and increase their understanding of the law making process.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE? HOW DOES IT WORK?	It allows citizens to participate in the law making process as if they were senators, by voting on certain questions relating to a bill being processed in the Senate. The platform not only allows them to pronounce themselves in favor, against or to abstain, but also to substantiate their positions. This participation has no binding character. After these input, a report tracking public opinion on the issues discussed is given to senators and respective committees.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	Two years, after a pilot project in 2001 called e-legislación (e-legislation). However, it is a dynamic tool that has been developing, expanding and improving. Virtual Senator was formally launched in July 2003.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By citizens:** Some users did not understand that their vote is non-binding, but that their opinions are transmitted to senators.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	It has changed from being a civic education exercise to an important and massive means of expression of positions regarding relevant bills for citizens It has served to measure the degree of interest that a certain bill gives rise to, as participation significantly increases with respect to certain bills. There are currently 129,442 registered users.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	There is no specific cost dimension since the system was designed and developed by Senate staff. It was therefore part of the regular annual budget and there was no additional extraordinary investment. It requires human and technological resources supported by the parliament's regular budget

	since the initiative requires technology (website and computer applications) and relevant staff that are normally already working for Congresses.
CONTACT	María Eliana Peña, Acting Head of the IT Office (mpena@senado.cl)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.senadorvirtual.cl/

COLOMBIA
Mobile application Mi Senado (My Senate)

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	Attendance at plenary sessions and votes on proposed bills are issues of great public interest. Experiences from other countries were analyzed to identify what would be the best way to connect the Senate of the Republic with citizens to provide information in a timely manner. In this research, the goal was to design a flexible and simple tool, allowing citizens to know what was happening in real time in the plenary sessions, as well as to submit their views on bills being discussed inside the Senate. In this way, My Senate was designed to be a tool for transparency and openness of information, as well as an instrument of legislative education and citizen participation.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE? HOW DOES IT WORK?	The objectives of the mobile app My Senate include the following: » To open the Senate of the Republic for citizens to know what the Senate does and who represents them

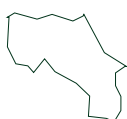|	
	» To provide strategic information from the Senate in real time » To generate channels for citizen participation » To use new information and communication technologies to bring the Senate closer to citizens » To help citizens become familiar with the senators who represent their interests
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The application was presented to citizens in February 2017. This was one of the commitments of the First Action Plan for an Open and Transparent Congress. The Presidency of the Senate of the Republic oversaw its design, together with the Planning and Systems Division and the press and communications team. The work was started in September 2016. Initially, similar initiatives in Latin America were reviewed, like Pleno Ciudadano (Full Citizen) in Mexico, Senador Virtual (Virtual Senator) in Chile and Cámara para Todos (Chamber for Everyone) in Colombia. They were analyzed, and strengths and weaknesses were identified. From there, a first version was designed and presented to civil society organizations, public and expert entities, and experts on legislative issues to receive their feedback. Subsequently, multiple tests were made that allowed to launch the application as complete as possible.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** The greatest difficulty with the mobile app has been uploading information from plenary sessions. Currently it is a mechanical process done by someone who remains in the plenary sessions. The system that registers senators and their votes is closed and it has not been possible to design a compatible mechanism that would allow rerouting information from the system to the application.

WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	So far, the application has been downloaded by 55,000 people and it has allowed us to generate the first bases for citizens to use essential information from the Senate. Given the relevance of the information supplied by the mobile application, the first open innovation exercise called Visualizatón Legistiva was developed. It aims to create tools to visualize the information generated by the mobile application, while involving young developers in legislative matters and informing the public about matters of interest of the Senate.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The development of the mobile application was US$16,000
CONTACT	Pamela Lozano, Private Secretary of the Presidency and Delegate for Transparency Affairs (pamela.lozano@senado.gov.co)
MORE INFORMATION	Website Link: http://www.senado.gov.co/ Link to mobile app: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.senado.app&hl=es

COSTA RICA
Citizen Participation Department

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	The Citizen Participation Department was preceded by the Popular Initiative Office, created in 1999, which expanded its functions with the Law on Popular Initiatives. Its main objective was to *"offer opportunities for active social participation in the Legislative Assembly, seeking thereby to contribute to*

to bringing the inhabitants closer to the First Power of the Republic". However, this was not achieved, therefore, the choice was made to strengthen the citizen participation process by identifying three processes: a process of managing citizen initiatives or proposals, another of civic-legislative education and a third of political communication, where the first two are substantial and the third supportive, not only to the other processes but also to other units of the Institution.

Due to the low levels of legitimacy of parliamentary work, it has been necessary to reverse this trend from a relationship that, instead of being politically aligned with a party, is institutional and links the deputies with different communities and social organizations.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	» To promote spaces of active social participation in the Legislative Assembly to facilitate the communication between the population and their representatives as well as their interaction in the legislative process » To create institutionalized channels to provide information about the daily activity of Parliament, as a medium for political communication with citizens » To promote educational activities in communities as well as public and private education centers about the work and the functioning of the Legislative Assembly and the legislation it promotes » To provide technical advice required by citizens for the submission of popular initiative drafts or citizen proposals
HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	Actions to come closer to communities and public and private organizations have been implemented, in which the educational work has been a fundamental element to effectively generate greater participation. Activities carried out with the participation of the deputies are planned in working sessions with different communities and organizations, for citizens to be the ones who raise their

concerns directly and identify the required dialogue mechanisms.

Main activities:
» To receive citizens and on a monthly basis, refer the initiatives submitted to the Citizen Participation Department to the deputies through the various existing means
» To keep track of the initiatives withdrawn by deputies as well as the initiatives turned into bills
» To provide advice and support for the submission of popular initiative drafts or citizen proposals
» To refer users looking for information to the relevant institutions and offices according to their requests
» To carry out Digital Forums through the legislative portal, TV and digital channels of the Legislative Assembly and when questions arise in real time through the Legislative Assembly's Twitter and Facebook accounts to promote a greater interaction between deputies and citizens. There is coordination with specific sectors, depending on the issue, so they are connected online and they can directly ask deputies who respond instantly
» To organize and participate in fairs of public institutions and social organizations that seek to inform and educate citizens in different regions of the country
» To sign agreements with social organizations and public institutions to achieve greater interaction with citizens and to democratize, territorially, the access to services provided by the Citizen Participation Department (currently working with the Medical College, the Ministry of Public Education and the Directorate of Community Development)

» To celebrate social participation through:
  » Civics competitions (with students of public elementary schools)
  » Student dialogues with caucus leaders (with students from several public and private secondary schools)
  » Citizen participation forums (with civil society organizations)
  » Training at educational centers and social organizations on the functioning of the Legislative Assembly and its mechanisms for citizen participation and influence
» To organize and to participate in citizen participation fairs, such as:
  » Student dialogues, in which fourth year student leaders from different public schools in the area assist the Ministry of Public Education to bolster and strengthen civic education at secondary school level, as well as to promote democratic values
  » Working groups, with the participation of representatives of different social, business and institutional sectors, to promote dialogue between representatives of civil society and regional institutions with the deputies, as well as submitting proposals, initiatives or requests from these sectors to their representatives
» To organize workshops on democratic leadership, aimed at young people in secondary school so that they interview deputies and are trained in mechanisms for assertive leadership, responsible social participation and the parliamentary system

	» To organize training workshops on the oversight of municipal resources and fiscal responsibility for Boards of Directors of Development Associations » To carry out University talks, based on a direct dialogue with groups of no more than 30 people from public and private universities on issues raised by the universities themselves to the deputies
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	This practice has been carried out effectively and in a process of continuous improvement since October, 2014.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** As a result of budgetary austerity and the fiscal situation of the country, resources are extremely restricted. However, social organizations, communities and institutions have collaborated to organize and contribute resources to the activities that have been carried out. More human resources are needed in the different areas, and it is necessary to strengthen this aspect with internal exchanges and cooperation agreements with other institutions. **By the Parliament:** There is a need to continue working with political parties to promote greater citizen participation and to create awareness of its benefits.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	During the last year, the Citizen Participation Department has received 193 initiatives for bills from citizens. The deputies have taken 107 of these initiatives to be studied. Legitimacy and credibility of the spaces for citizen participation and opening of the Legislative Assembly towards different social organizations and communities have been strengthened.

	Aspects of cooperation and openness have been achieved with cooperative, solidarity and union sectors or business chambers, among others. At training level, activities have been carried out promoting a greater understanding among the younger segments of the population on the functioning of Parliament and promoting democratic values. Finally, the celebration of the day of Social Participation was established, as determined by the Board of the Congress, to promote and encourage a culture of citizen participation, with three activities throughout the day.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The creation of the Department cost US$ 2,787.70. Since its inception, the budget increase has been approximately US$ 100.
CONTACT	Juan Carlos Chavarría Herrera, Director of the Citizen Participation Department (jchavarria@asamblea.go.cr)
MORE INFORMATION	https://www.facebook.com/participacioncr/?fref=ts

COSTA RICA
Young Parliament and Interuniversity Parliament

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	The Citizen Participation Department was preceded by the Popular Initiative Office, created in 1999, which expanded its functions with the enactment of the law on Popular Initiative. In particular, the Young Parliament was welcomed by the Citizen Participation Department and the Student Life Department in 2015. The proposal for the Interuniversity Parliament was presented by the Student Federation of the Technological Institute of Costa Rica (FEITEC)

	and was accepted immediately by the Citizen Participation Department of the Legislative Assembly.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	» To create a space within the Parliament so that young people of the country can exercise democracy » To allow the integration of youth in the decision-making process in a transparent manner and for their own benefit » To promote the parliamentary exercise among youth over the age of 15, regular students at public institutions for secondary education » To strengthen the involvement and participation of university students and propose initiatives to the deputies of the Legislative Assembly
HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	The Young Parliament consists of 57 young[5] parliamentarians, elected by secondary school students themselves. The selection is made by using the procedure that the administrative staff of the educational institution has determined, in coordination with the Citizen Participation Department. By 2015, some democratic leadership workshops were carried out, aimed at young people who had participated in activities carried out by the Department in secondary schools, to coordinate meetings that would enable them to interview deputies, as well as to get training in mechanisms of assertive leadership, responsible social participation and the parliamentary system. The Interuniversity Parliament simulates a model of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, with 57 members of the 5 State universities (UCR, UNA, UNED, UTN and TEC).

---

5 The Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica is composed of 57 deputies, so in this practice the same number of parliamentarians is being considered.

HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The agreement of the Board of the Congress for the institutionalization of the Young Parliament was made in January 2016 and of the Interuniversity Parliament in February 2016.

The democratic leadership workshops were initiated in 2015, first with the Democratic Civic Workshop in the Province of Limon with 17 schools (May 2015), in the Province of Puntarenas with 21 schools (July 2015) and, recently, in the Province of Guanacaste with 16 schools (August 2016). Two workshops per year were planned in areas far from the capital. In addition, in November 2015, workshops and student dialogues with caucus leaders were held in the facilities of the Legislative Assembly.

The Interuniversity Parliament was carried out over four months (March-July 2016), resulting in six proposals for bills approved by this parliament and made available to deputies.

Most new practices in the field of citizen participation were initiated from 2016 onwards, when the Citizen Participation Department became operational. |
| **WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?** | **By the administration:** budget restriction, resistance to change at administrative level regarding the creation of the Department, as well as a lack of human resources.

By citizens: the low legitimacy of the parliament in some social sectors has required the use of campaigns for awareness and persuasion. |
| **WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?** | On a training level, important activities have been carried out to promote a greater understanding of the functioning of Parliament by the younger segments of the population and to promote democratic values. It should be noted that 40 student leaders participated in the Congress of Student Leadership, organized together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. |

WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The Citizen Participation Department has an annual budget of US$ 5,000. Activities are carried out with logistical and financial support from social organizations, public institutions and municipalities.
CONTACT	Juan Carlos Chavarría Herrera, Director of the Citizen Participation Department (jchavarria@asamblea.go.cr)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.asamblea.go.cr/ Facebook: Participación Ciudadana - Asamblea Legislativa Costa Rica (Citizen Participation - Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica) Methodological guide of Young Parliament - available at http://www.silviasanchezcr.com/assets/guiametodologicaparl.pdf

ECUADOR
Houses of the National Assembly (CAN)

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	The purpose of these CAN is to have a space in which citizens can have direct contact with their representatives, learn about the laws being processed or that have been approved and that they can address problems in their own environment. They can also participate in debates via videoconferencing and appear in front of certain specialized committees when addressing topics of interest for citizen groups.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	To open the doors of Parliament to citizens and build a legal structure that leads to a society based on good living. Currently, these efforts are known as "Open Doors Assembly".

HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	Houses of the National Assembly (CAN) are located in each capital of the 21 provinces, in government buildings or facilities with which operating agreements have been made, located in the commercial city center so that citizens can visit the facilities without much difficulty. The following steps were necessary for the creation of the 21 CAN in the national territory and of the four abroad: » Approaching the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to determine space and faculties of offices abroad (it was agreed to implement a CAN according to the number of migrants in countries with Ecuadorian embassies) » Legalization through a transversal note between the National Assembly and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the functioning of the CAN abroad » Determination of locations » Transfer of technical and administrative staff, currently there are about 50 legislative officers for the 25 CAN
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	From 2010, it was decided to implement a territoriality policy in the Assembly. This idea was fully consolidated in 2012.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By citizens:** One of the major problems found in most CAN is the lack of knowledge of the work of this legislative space, since citizens make requests that are not up to the Assembly to decide on. This delays the benefits that this space provides for the creation of laws for citizens.

WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	» Bringing citizens closer to legislative work » Promotion of adequate information about making laws » Participation of citizens and social organizations in drafting laws » Socialization of laws adopted by the National Assembly It should be noted that the promotion of the CAN is a new component both in the country and in the rest of the region, implemented to strengthen the liaison between elected authorities and citizens. During 2015, 113,918 people visited the CAN of the national territory and abroad, attending for different purposes (for example: socializations of laws, training or accountability). Moreover, citizens have become closer to their representatives and have provided important comments on bills.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The initial cost for the operation of the CAN was US$ 20,000. Currently the annual funding to maintain the 25 locations nationwide and abroad is US$ 100,000.
CONTACT	Irina Quirola Boada, Officer of the General Citizen Participation Coordination Team of the National Assembly (irina.quirola@asambleanacional.gob.ec)
MORE INFORMATION	www.asambleanacional.gob.ec

MEXICO
Appointment of Transparency Commissioners

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	Because of the need for autonomy of the commissioners of the organization that guarantees transparency in Mexico, the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data (INAI).
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	To have commissioners of the organization for transparency who are independent in their resolutions through a process that is accompanied by a team of experts and organized civil society.
HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	» Making a public call for civil society organizations and academics, with expertise in these matters » Formation of a committee of experts to assess the applicants » Issuance of the committee regulations » Compilation of documentation and public evaluation sessions by the experts and senators. Both the documents and the sessions were public » Presentation of the evaluation results by the experts » Appointment by the senators. Six of the seven commissioners who were elected had the profiles with the highest scores according to the committee
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The process was carried out between March and April 2014.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By the Parliament:** The margin of discretion for decisions of parliamentary groups was reduced, as they had to choose professionally qualified applicants without partisan tendencies. However, it is necessary to continue ensuring that the election of commissioners complies with the technical criteria.

WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	We have well qualified and competent commissioners. The process was transparent, as the list of proposed candidates was published, and all the hearings were public and transmitted by the Congress Channel and online. Citizens and social organizations had the opportunity to participate by submitting their questions to the candidates. A committee of experts drew up a list with 25 candidates who, according to their criteria, met the right profile. Later, the Senate elected the seven members. There were 147 hearings.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	Information not available.
CONTACT	José Marco Romero Silva, Technical Secretary of the Committee on Anti-corruption and Citizen Participation (anticorrupcion@senado.gob.mx)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.senado.gob.mx/comisiones/anticorrupcion/ifai_com.php; Designation report: http://www.senado.gob.mx/comisiones/anticorrupcion/docs/ifai/Informe_designacion.pdf Hearings of the Candidate Commissioners: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLuH8BWke2UzB-GIXD-k-slb7lpl8Qzsxyl

PERU
Virtual Legislative Forums

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	Citizens interested in the topics that are discussed in the committees had difficulty to submit their views on bills, given that only the opinions of government sectors and social organizations was usually requested. Moreover, the consultation meetings always have limitations of time, space (because of the number of attendees), coverage (because of geographical distances) and costs.

However, article 70 of the Regulations of the Congress indicates that the reports: "*... must include a summary of the opinions on the bill that the civic organizations may have submitted...*".

It should be noted that article 107 of the Political Constitution of Peru establishes that the legislative rights are held by the President of the Republic and the members of Congress. In their own way, the other branches of the State, the autonomous public institutions, regional and local governments, professional associations and citizens also have this right. |
| **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?** | To foster the participation of civil society and citizens in the analysis of and debate on bills that the standing committees submit to consultation.

At a more specific level:
» To foster the participation of citizens in the legislative process, by making bills available to the public so they can give their opinion and discuss them
» To promote the systematic and orderly discussion and collection of citizen contributions and suggestions to bills, to incorporate them into the working material of the standing committees for use in the issuance of the relevant reports |

	» To collect the opinion of specialists on each of the topics of discussion proposed by the standing committees regarding the bill being analyzed
HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	Its implementation was carried out in 7 steps: » Problem identification » Elaboration of the procedure (management document) » Coordination with the internal people involved » Development of the computer system » Carrying out the practice » Annual evaluation of the practice » Adjustments to the methodology
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The Legislative Forums were launched in 2003. Initially, it was designed as a space in which the standing committees could request the opinion of groups and citizens concerned, but the model was not operational. In 2012, through an agreement of the Board of the Congress orders were given that all bills be published on the Portal of the Congress in Virtual Legislative Forums.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By the Parliament:** The systematized contributions referred to the committees were not considered when drafting the reports. Advocacy was incorporated to include the opinions received in the reports. Representatives need to be sensitized to institutionalize the practice as citizens and organizations have increased their contributions.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	In 2011, with support of the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development, the first satisfaction survey was carried out. The main conclusion of the study was that

"Forums manage to impact on users who are satisfied with them, improving their attitudes towards democracy and towards the Congress. There was a perception that they generate citizen inclusion and contribute knowledge on topics that traditionally are not easily accessible".

» 1,233 virtual consultations have been conducted and 7,201 citizen opinions have been received
» 94% of the respondents subscribed to Legislative Forums maintain that it contributes to citizen participation
» 97% of the respondents subscribed to Legislative Forums consider that it is a function of the Congress
» 44% of citizens who have used Legislative Forums indicate that it serves to give opinions on legislative proposals
» 84% of respondents subscribed to Legislative Forums believe that it has brought them knowledge for the exercise of their citizenship
» The users who are most satisfied with the received service appear to have a high level of satisfaction with democracy
» A very high impact of the service is observed with respect to the evaluation of the Congress as an institution

WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The development of the virtual platform and its update, as well as the methodology and administrative technical procedure, has not been quantified since they were developed with the human and technical resources of the Congress.
CONTACT	Carlos Fernando Castañeda Castro, Officer in Charge of the Virtual Legislative Forums (ccastaneda@congreso.gob.pe / participa@congreso.gob.pe)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www4.congreso.gob.pe/pvp/forosl/

PERU
Participatory Workshops

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	Given that the Congress is centralized in the capital, the Participatory Workshops Program was created to bring citizens closer to the members of congress, authorities and public and private institutions, as well as civil society, to provide them, in person, training and information on parliamentary work that takes place in Lima and in the provinces.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	To contribute to the civic education of all Peruvians and to promote the full exercise of their political rights and duties in a decentralized way. To present aspects related to the structure, organization and functions of Congress, promoting citizen participation and contributing to its representation function.
HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	First, the topics to be taught were developed. Then audiovisual material was prepared. Subsequently, the exhibitors were trained. In another stage a mapping of the process was conducted and the technical administrative procedure was drafted, in order to finally proceed to developing the management software.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The implementation took three months, both for the development of the platform, as well as the methodology and the initial contents of the workshops.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** one of the problems is staff turnover which occurs every year and generates a stage of uncertainty that remains until the second vice-presidency monitors the policies and sets the objectives and goals for the legislative year.

WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	The Participatory Workshops, through the annual training program, have been reaching goals set for the training of the public. These are included in a database and the respective records of the training are also received by its participants. Statistics can be found at http://www4.congreso.gob.pe/participa/talleres/estadisticas.asp.
WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The development of the virtual platform and its update, as well as the methodology and administrative technical procedure, has not been quantified since they were developed with the human and technical resources of the Congress.
CONTACT	Miracles Leveratto Rosas, Officer of the Office for Participation, Outreach and Liaison with the Citizen (mleveratto@congreso.gob.pe / participa@congreso.gob.pe)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www.congreso.gob.pe/participa/talleres/

PERU
Youth Parliament and School Parliament

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	The Youth Parliament was implemented facing the declining interest of Peruvian youth to participate in the political life of the country, as well as the lack of knowledge that existed of the functions and tasks that are carried out in the Congress of the Republic.

The School Parliament was initiated by the need to encourage the participation of youth in the politics of the country, so that they may learn in a practical way the importance |

	of the legislative work, the decision-making process and parliamentary procedures that are followed to approve a law.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	To create a space for participation for Peruvian youth in all departments, strengthening their political leadership capacities on parliamentary issues and contributing to the strengthening of representative democracy and the image of the Congress. To create in students the idea of citizenship with both rights and duties, strengthening their knowledge about democracy, the State and its institutions, and creating and developing spaces for participation and common policies that allow holding a debate on topics of their interest.

HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	The Young Parliament Program consists of five stages:
	» Call for candidacies: is made nationwide through the spread of ads on the radio, in newspapers and in social networks. To extend its scope, partnerships are signed with organizations representing each department of the country
	» Registration of participants: is done virtually in electronic format together with the call for candidacies
	» Training: is developed virtually through the Moodle Platform of the Virtual Courses Program "Citizens and Politics" of the Congress of the Republic. It is held simultaneously at the national level. This comprises three modules, each of one month and composed of two courses:
	  » First module: (i) Democracy and Congress and (ii) Organization and Functions
	  » Second Module: (iii) Political Participation and Citizenship and (iv) Leadership and Democracy
	  » Third Module: Parliamentary Procedures (v) and (vi) Parliamentary Ethics

In the beginning, the training and evaluation stages of the Youth Parliament program were held in person. To do so, staff of the Office for Participation, Outreach and Liaison with the Citizen traveled to the capitals of participating departments to teach the courses and evaluate the participants. However, for reasons of time, budget and in order to replicate exactly the composition of the Congress, from now on, these stages will be virtual and each department will be represented proportionally, using the number of seats according to the last general elections held.

» Evaluation: Participants who pass the six courses contained in the three training modules, can take a general exam. This way, youth with the highest score by department, are selected as "young parliamentarians" until the number of representatives per constituency is reached, and they participate in the Plenary Session.

» General Session: The session of the 130 members of the Youth Parliament takes place annually in facilities of the Congress in the city of Lima. These sessions have a duration of three days and replicate the work of the caucuses, parliamentary groups and standing committees of the Congress, and bills are being discussed to reach agreements.

In the interactions of the young people to elect the authorities of the Youth Parliament, to define issues to debate or to reach consensus, the same behaviors and operations are replicated that occur with the members of Congress. Involving the youth in parliamentary practices provides a comprehensive understanding of the work of the members of Congress and of the functions they perform in the Congress of the Republic. Young people develop and exercise

	their leadership in various ways. In the case of the School Parliament, there was coordination with educational institutions interested in collecting contributions and suggestions on the project. Subsequently, supporting material based on the selected topics for the training of the students was produced. Finally, a pilot of the program was carried out.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The Youth Parliament program was formalized through an agreement of inter-institutional cooperation between the Congress and the Hanns-Seidel Foundation. This agreement was approved in November 2012, had a duration of 2 years and expired in June 2014. In 2014, a new agreement was signed with the Hanns-Seidel Foundation. For the execution of the program during 2015 an addendum was made to the same agreement. The School Parliament program began to be developed in January 2013 and the pilot started in June 2013.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** One of the main challenges of the implementation was to expand the scope of the call to regions with difficult access in Peru. It had the support of the parliamentary coordinators of the Congress members, local governments, media and institutions of civil society to transmit the call. In the process of 2012 the project didn't succeed because of internal institutional changes. There was no outreach materials to help explain the importance of the program. It did not have a budget to carry out the activities.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	The Youth Parliament trained 1185 young people during the first year (August 2012 - July 2013) and 1768 during the second

year (August 2013 - July 2014). In both years a total of 2953 young people were trained, covering the 25 regions of the country.

During both years a total of 40 activities, such as training, departmental plenary sessions and national plenary sessions were carried out.

With the School Parliament Program we have been able to improve the information that school students had about the Congress and the work of its members. Practicing in action as school parliamentarians, the students have been able to see how important legislative work is. The educational authorities have also requested to continue these practices, since they help to improve the leadership of the students in the country. School parliaments have been carried out in 21 provinces, in 11 departments of the country, and 4,402 secondary school students have been trained in 2014-2015.

WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	Operating costs are part of the regular budget of the Congress and have not been quantified since the human and technical resources used are part of the Office for Participation, Outreach and Liaison with the Citizen. In the case of the meeting of the Youth Parliament that takes place in the city of Lima, the Hanns-Seidel Foundation, financed the tickets, accommodations and food expenses of 130 young people participating in the activity, with an approximate cost of US$ 19,000.
CONTACT	Maira Nieto, Professional of the Office for Participation, Outreach and Liaison with the Citizen (parlamentojoven@congreso.gob.pe)
MORE INFORMATION	http://www4.congreso.gob.pe/participa/parlamento-joven http://www4.congreso.gob.pe/participa/parlamentoescolar/index.asp

PERU
Virtual Courses on Citizenship and Politics

WHY WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?	In 1999, it was observed that citizens did not have adequate knowledge about the organization and functions of the Congress, so a course was initially created entitled "Congress: Organization and functions". It was then expanded to the current courses, always in the field of democracy and the institutional structure.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?	To empower citizens breaking paradigms of the parliamentary system. To stress the education of citizens, democracy and the importance of the Congress.
HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED? HOW DOES IT WORK?	In 1999, the distance education program, comprising brochures with lessons that could be read from home and/or work, was implemented. Courses were initially carried out at distance, without any tutor and without any web application. In 2001, the application was developed in Lotus Notes and the education process was systematized, without the presence of a tutor and without deadlines to finish the contents, then taking evaluations online to obtain certificates and/or diplomas. In 2011, it was decided to go for a free platform where classes would be more personalized with a specialized and permanent tutor. New course content and the implementation of an e-learning platform were proposed within the framework of the agreement between the Congress and the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development. Different inputs were created to generate the new content: » Report that modifies the management procedure of the courses » Report that recommends the implementation of an e-learning platform » Evaluation on how to implement an e-learning platform

	» Definition of the contents to revise » Installation and testing » Operation (December 2014) » Training of tutors (not only to manage the content, but to prepare them for e-learning) » Implementation (launch of the courses, with an attractive offer for the citizens) » Feedback (through satisfaction surveys, in order to work on improvements of the program) The process of moving the system was completed in 2015 with the launch of the first course on the Moodle platform.
HOW LONG DID ITS IMPLEMENTATION TAKE?	The implementation of the Moodle took two years, given the fact that until then the Congress did not use free software for their computer applications. Moodle is part of the second stage of the practice.
WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED?	**By the administration:** Delay of the Congress administration to implement the Moodle platform which took two years. There is no qualified staff for technical maintenance of the Moodle platform, or budget assigned for this purpose. Educational content has not been fully adapted to the Moodle environment, nor have all its features been exploited. The tutoring staff have not had previous experience with teaching virtual courses.
WHAT RESULTS WERE OBTAINED?	Benefiting citizens: » Lotus Notes Platform 1999-2014: 78,104 registeredand 21,499 trained people » Platform Moodle 2015: 19,116 registered and 2,240 trained people

WHAT WAS THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION?	The development of the virtual platform and its update, as well as the methodology and administrative technical procedure, has not been quantified since they were developed with the human and technical resources of the Congress.
CONTACT	Marion Figueroa, Professional of the Office for Participation, Outreach and Liaison with the Citizen (admincursos@congreso.gob.pe)
MORE INFORMATION	cursos.congreso.gob.pe www.congreso.gob.pe/participa/cursos

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The 2030 Agenda sets the goal to create effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels, within Sustainable Development Goal 16. In addition, States are committed to ensuring the adoption of inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels that respond to citizens' needs. The parliaments therefore stand as a crucial institution in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Similarly, at the hemispheric level, the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network drafted a Road map Towards Legislative Openness at its first gathering held in Paraguay in 2016, in which civil society organizations and legislators of 20 countries identified key commitments for each of the network's pillars of work, namely: transparency and access to public information, accountability, citizen participation and ethics and probity.

In addition to the commitments established at the 2nd gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network: *Strengthening the ties between citizens and legislatures*, held in March 2017 in Costa Rica, progress on legislative openness can be highlighted in Colombia, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Guatemala and Chile, where Open Parliament Action Plans have already developed. This parliamentary good practice stands out for its application of a co-creation model with civil society and for being the initial phase of an initiative that all parliaments could incorporate in their country's national action plans submitted to the Open Government Partnership, in accordance with its legislative policy.

It is necessary to stress that this publication seeks to provide a series of good parliamentary practices and guide for their implementation. However, it would remain necessary to perform diagnostics and adjustments before implementing any practice in a different context. It would also be important to determine the costs associated with the design and implementation of these practices for their possible replication. Finally, it is recommended to establish indicators linked

to the variables associated with the fulfillment of the good practices' objectives in order to be able to perform an evaluation of the project at least annually.

This document remains open for the incorporation of additional good practices, either those being implemented in parliaments today, and those that may be implemented in the future. The ParlAmericas website has an online form available, as well as contact details for parliaments to share their new practices.

The implementation of best practices on transparency and citizen participation in the countries of the region highlights the importance and commitment that parliaments have made to bringing their work closer to the public and allowing its constant oversight. However, this work is not complete and there is a need to continue to improve these practices and increase the opportunities for interaction between parliamentarians and their electors, so as to continue strengthening democracy.

ParlAmericas

PNUD

Al servicio
de las personas
y las naciones