

IN OAXACA, THE PUBLICATION OF THE STATE BUDGET DOES NOT ASSURE CITIZEN ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION

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In the case of Oaxaca, transparency and citizen access to information have been kidnapped.

In compliance with the state's Revenue and Budget Spending Law, information about government budgets is made public exclusively through the Official Bulletin of the State Government. Yet the entire press run is immediately distributed exclusively within the state government itself. One could call this a hijacking of information that belongs to the citizens, who by law have the right to know where public funds come from and how they are spent.

Moreover, at the municipal level, the law says that the municipal leaders must inform the population about the use of public resources through the Municipal Development Councils (Codemun).

In this context, the process of decentralization of resources to local government, without informing the citizens about the amounts and rules of operation, has ended up strengthening the local and regional elites that have traditionally controlled public funds, and has provoked intra-municipal conflicts between town centers and outlying villages. The state government's regional offices contribute to this information gap. Far from informing, training and advising municipal authorities about the law's provisions regarding citizen rights to information access and informed participation in decision-making regarding public budgets, they contribute to corrupt practices, in collusion with construction companies.

The work of civil society organizations, such as the Promotora de Servicios para el Desarrollo, has focused on doing outreach, distributing publications that inform both municipal leaders and the citizenry about the funds allocated to each municipality, the legal provisions for citizen participation in decision-making, as well as best practices for good government.