

FUND FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Advancing women's political and economic empowerment

Final External Evaluation Report

**Catalytic Programme for Political Empowerment funded by the Fund for
Gender Equality**

**“Strengthening Public Institutions in Favour of Equality and to Combat
Discrimination: Creation of an Equality Law in El Salvador”¹**

**Advocacy Programme of the Prudencia Ayala Feminist Coordination
Movement**



Final Report

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¹ The original title of the programme submitted to the Fund for Gender Equality: *Concept note online application Database*, September 2009.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACCP	Citizen's Alliance against Privatization
ANDRYSAS	National Association of Women Councillors and Mayors
ARENA	Nationalist Republican Alliance
ASPARLEXSAL	Association of Women Parliamentarians and Ex Parliamentarians of El Salvador
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFPA	Prudencia Ayala Feminist Coordination Movement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FEASIES	Autonomous Federation of Trade Unions of El Salvador
FGE	Fund for Gender Equality, UN Women
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
GANA	General Alliance for National Unity
GEL	Gender Equality Law
GSB	Gender Sensitive Budgeting
HR	Human Rights
HRAG	Human Rights Attorney General
IMU	Institute for Women
ISDEMU	El Salvador Institute for Women's Development
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINSAL	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPW	National Policy for Women
TOR	Terms of Reference for the Evaluation
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

Introduction

The multi-donor Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) was established in 2009 to accelerate commitments to gender equality, focusing on the economic and political empowerment of women at local, national and regional levels. The Fund provides grants directly to government agencies and civil society organizations in order to transform legal commitments into tangible action with a positive impact on women's and girls' lives throughout the world. The Fund was established with the Spanish Government's generous contribution of 65 million US dollars. Norway provided an additional contribution of 3.5 million US dollars, and Mexico contributed 800,000 dollars². The Fund disburses results-oriented grants in two categories:

- **Catalytic grants of a maximum of 500,000 US dollars for two consecutive years** that aim to accelerate processes for the development of gender equality plans and policies in countries where these plans do not yet exist;
- **Implementation grants of a maximum of 3 million dollars for 3 to 4 consecutive years** that support programmes in countries that have nationally or locally approved plans, policies or laws that advance gender equality and women's empowerment and that are ready for implementation.

Through the disbursement of these funds, the Fund is advancing in the two principal programmatic priority areas, which are inter-related:

Programmatic area of women's economic empowerment: aimed at "substantially increasing women's access to and control over economic decision-making, land, labour, livelihoods and other means of production and social protection, especially for marginalized women".³

Programmatic area of women's political empowerment: aimed at "increasing women's political participation and good governance in order to guarantee that decision-making processes are participatory, sensitive, egalitarian and inclusive, increasing women's leadership and influence over decision-making in all spheres of life, thus transforming gender equality policies into concrete systems in order to implement advances in gender justice".⁴

In its inaugural grantmaking cycle (2009-2010), the Fund for Gender Equality supported 40 programmes in 35 countries: 24 political empowerment programmes (including the programme funded in El Salvador) and 16 economic empowerment programmes. The programmes chosen reflect a series of interventions and strategies to either create or advance commitments related to gender equality laws and policies. On the one hand, Catalytic grants of up to 500,000 US dollars have been allocated to accelerating these processes and/or commitments in countries where they do not yet exist (legislative frameworks in favour of gender equality, advocacy by women's movements' and groups that work for gender equality and women's rights, gender equality agreements and policies). On the other hand, 13 Implementation grants of up to 3 million US dollars have been allocated to the concrete implementation of gender equality agreements and/or policies where they already exist. These 40 programmes of the Fund represent a unique combination of strategies, alliances and beneficiaries.

Following the Fund's announcement of the first Call for Proposals in 2009, disseminated in five languages through an online application format, demand has been far higher than the amount of funds available. 1,239 applications were received from around the world totalling 3 billion

² In December 2011, The Netherlands supported the Fund with 1.2 million US dollars and in the same month, individual donors began to contribute to the Fund.

³ Concept note application, September 2009.

⁴ Idem.

US dollars from 27 countries. In order to achieve a fair and transparent assessment of such a large number of proposals, an open process was introduced in which 39 experts on economic and political empowerment from around the world assessed the applications to the Fund using empirical criteria. As a result of this process, 40 programmes received grants from the Fund totalling 37.5 million US dollars.

Two years after its launch, the Fund commissioned its first five evaluations of economic and political empowerment programmes supported by the Fund, including the El Salvador programme. The Fund is committed to learning from and with its beneficiary organizations and it seeks to serve as a model of how to accelerate and apply gender equality laws and policies around the world. These Terms of Reference define the framework for the evaluations of selected programmes such as the catalytic programmes and they will contribute to the lessons learnt by the Fund.

It is in this context that the Final Evaluation Report is presented, being the third and last requested product. The document follows the headings defined in the Terms of Reference (TOR): description of the programme, aims of the evaluation; methodology; restrictions and limitations of the study; levels of analysis (criteria for the evaluation and questions); results/evidence; conclusions and lessons learnt; recommendations and annexes. We would like to thank the members of the Prudencia Ayala Feminist Coordination Movement, UN Women El Salvador, the sub-regional office and the Fund for Gender Equality headquarters who facilitated our access to the wide range of people who were interviewed.

1. Description of the Programme: “Strengthening Public Institutions in Favour of Equality and to Combat Discrimination: Creation of an Equality Law in El Salvador”

According to the Prudencia Ayala Feminist Coordination Movement (CFPA, 2009), the status of women in El Salvador has experienced progress and setbacks. Women’s rights legislation has been strengthened in recent years with the approval in 2010 of the Law Against Intra-family Violence and the creation in 1996 of the El Salvador Institute for Women’s Development (ISDEMU). However, at the same time the neoliberal model and the reductive economic policies of the State and Public Sector funding have become more entrenched, with consequent negative effects on women. Compensatory social policies that attempted to attenuate the consequences of the economic model for the general public were formulated without a gender perspective. Therefore, women’s practical needs remain invisible, a problem that perpetuates gender-based discrimination.

CFPA argued that to change this situation, it was essential for Salvadoran women’s needs to gain recognition from the State. They proposed a transformation of the current vision of public policies into one that considered women as truly equal, a position reflected in the aims of the Equality Law. Moreover, in addition to this ethical and political position, CFPA sought to establish gender equality as a State policy that would be institutionalized regardless of the particular government in office. This would form the foundation of progressive social transformation and cultural change, modifying the social order that endorsed inequality and discrimination.

For the law to be approved, CFPA proposed the need for a **national agreement**, strengthening alliances within the feminist and women’s movement at national and international levels as well as in the broader social movements. They sought to create alliances with public institutions, especially with ISDEMU, in order to strengthen the institutions and legitimate the proposal. They also sought to guarantee the necessary **adoption** of the law, so that it could become an instrument used by the population to demand new legislative change, to denounce violations of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, and to conduct the monitoring needed to guarantee that public policies incorporate a gender perspective. Finally, the law should have **political and social legitimacy**. Political legitimacy would be gained by achieving the support of an alliance among women beyond political parties. Social legitimacy would be guaranteed if the law were drafted based on broad consultation, which would strengthen alliances with the social movements, particularly the broad national and international women’s and feminist movement, and with civil servants. It would also depend on awareness-raising with the majority of the population through a mass-media campaign.

Programme objectives

The programme supported by the Fund for Gender Equality was designed and implemented in order to contribute to the reduction of gender inequality, creating the opportunity for women’s full exercise of citizenship. The specific objective was to promote activities that would create the possibility of approving the law.

The programme emerged from the platform of organizations called the Prudencia Ayala Feminist Coordination Movement⁵ and was led by the consortium established with the Association of Women for Dignity and Life (‘Las Dignas’) and the Mélida Anaya Montes

⁵ The Prudencia Ayala Feminist Coordination Movement received its name in 1999. In 1997 efforts were made to consolidate a space for working together on violence against women and women’s political participation. In 1998, it launched a campaign for women’s political participation titled ‘Prudencia Ayala’, in remembrance of the first woman to be a presidential candidate in El Salvador.

Women's Movement Association ('Las Mélidas'). These both had as allies the women's movement, the broader social movements, government employees and entities and representatives from parliament. At an operational level, Las Dignas was responsible for financial administration and the costs of the coalition relating to dissemination activities; meanwhile, Las Mélidas was responsible for the administration of funds allocated to alliance-building and advocacy activities.

Expected programme results

1. The Legislative Assembly has a draft bill for a law to promote equality between women and men, proposed by and agreed with various women's organizations.
2. Alliances for the promotion of the law are strengthened.
3. Public institutions and national and local authorities have the necessary tools and training for the future implementation of the Equality Law.

Programme Strategies

Three strategies were proposed for achieving the approval of the equality law:

1. **Dissemination**, consisting of generating public opinion in favour of the law, based on awareness-raising on inequality between the sexes. To achieve this, the following activities were carried out:

- a) Design and preparation of campaign dissemination materials in the media.
- b) Creation of tools to support the equality bill.
- c) Coordination with local organizations to disseminate the campaign among municipalities.

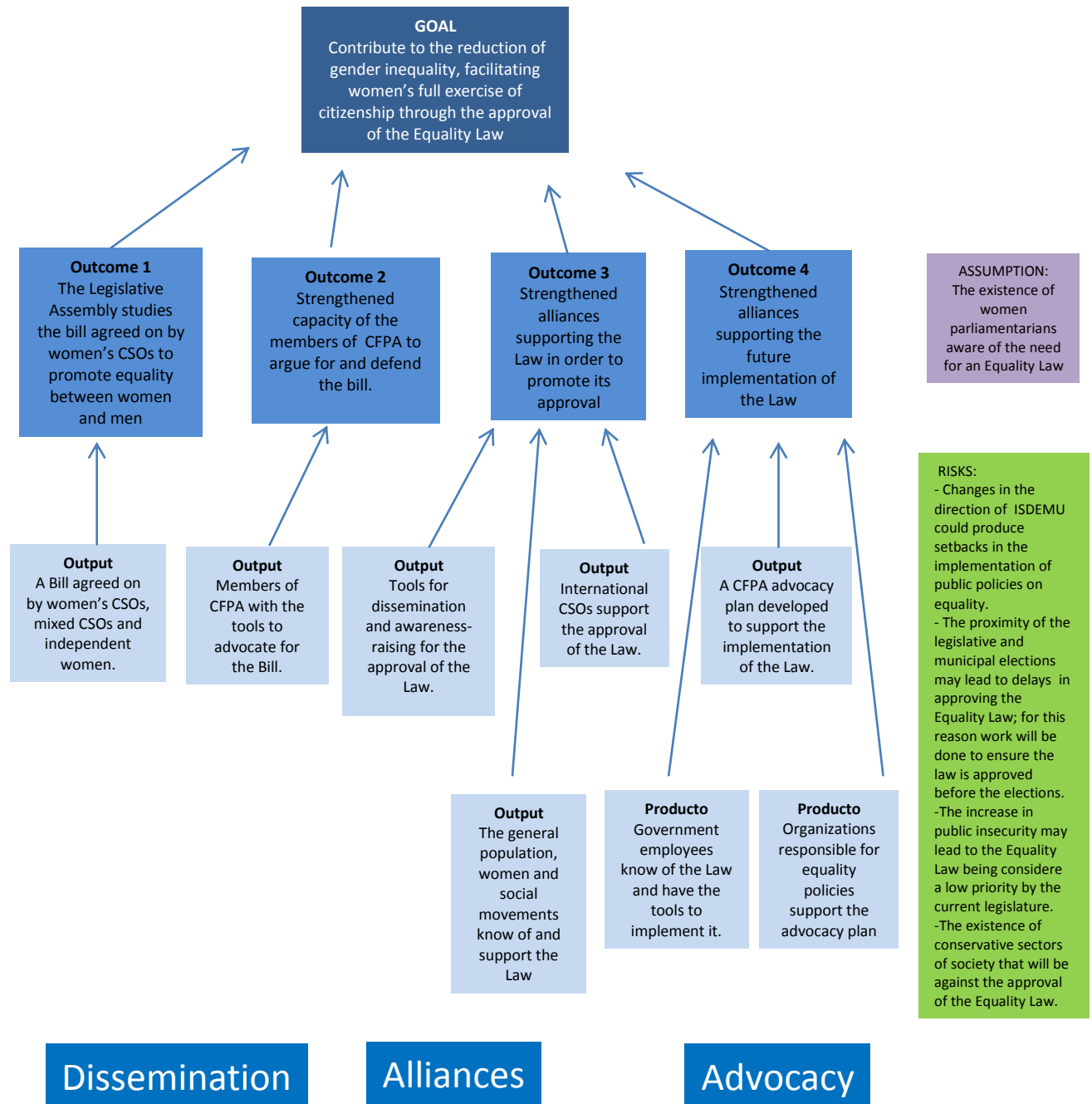
2. **Construction of alliances** consists of strengthening the networks supporting the law; overcoming the urban focus and the myth that equality is only women's responsibility, and thus seeking the involvement of mixed social movements.

- a) Construct a broad alliance of social movements in support of the bill drafted by the Prudencia Ayala Coordinated Feminist Movement.
- b) Strengthen the alliances with Salvadoran local women's organizations.
- c) Generate support from international social movements for the bill drafted by the Prudencia Ayala Feminist Coordination Movement.
- d) Strengthen the team monitoring the law, including the participation of women lawyers committed to the defense of women's rights.

3. **Advocacy** targeted at government employees and specifically members of the Legislative Assembly and strengthening the alliance with the El Salvador Institute for Women's Development (ISDEMU), as a form of strengthening its role in guiding policies for the advancement of women.

- a) Develop an advocacy plan that includes the analysis of allies supporting the proposal within different State entities, and especially the Legislative Assembly.
- b) Organize forums in the different national and local public institutions that will be involved in the future implementation of the equality law.
- c) Strengthen the alliance with ISDEMU so that the latter supports the promotion of the equality bill.

Programme Implementation Model



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