ASSESSING THE POLICY IMPACT OF THE CÓMO VAMOS PROGRAM IN COLOMBIA
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Executive Summary

This report aims to assess the policy impact of Fundación Corona’s Cómo Vamos program. Fundación Corona is a Colombian non-profit organization based in Bogota that focuses in education programs. The Cómo Vamos program is part of their citizen education initiatives.

The main objective of the Cómo Vamos program is to produce quality information about the quality of life of cities and about citizen perception in order to empower local governments and citizens. The SIPA Team worked to design a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to assess the effectiveness this program. The SIPA Team reviewed the Cómo Vamos mission, activities, and current framework in order to articulate a theory of change, design a logical framework that evaluates the progress of the program, and develop recommendations that clarified the Cómo Vamos program mission. This report provides background information on the Cómo Vamos program as well as the theoretical framework under which it works, presents the team’s main findings from its fieldwork, and outlines the logical framework and a set of recommendations for the program.

The team’s findings informed the recommendations developed in the areas of social media, data use and collection, citizen engagement, and the Red de Ciudades network. In particular, the team based its recommendations on the common, overarching themes that emerged from the research and interviews. The recommendations entail an increase in the use of innovative information technology to serve as a vehicle for effective communication amongst citizens, public officials and the Cómo Vamos program. The SIPA team recommended the expansion of partnerships with academic institutions and think tanks to analyze data and harness innovate information technology to facilitate data collection. Lastly, to increase citizen engagement, the SIPA team recommends the need to provide capacity-building for community leaders engaging in Cómo Vamos activities so that they can better service their communities. Additionally, identifying influential people to serve as champions for Cómo Vamos to increase the programs presence in the media and amongst citizens will motivate citizen engagement in public policy.

With the implementation of these recommendations and the monitoring and evaluation tool, the SIPA team hopes that Cómo Vamos can achieve its main function of collecting and providing reliable data that informs citizens and politicians about the state of their cities. As citizens and politicians become informed, Cómo Vamos can eventually have an incidence – although indirect – on citizen participation and political accountability.

This report concludes with recommendations aimed at facilitating further programmatic development within Cómo Vamos and its impact on citizen engagement and policy. These recommendations are meant for all the Cómo Vamos programs throughout Colombia, with the consideration that contextual differences should inform their implementation in each city. In providing these recommendations, the SIPA Team hopes that the Cómo Vamos will be able to have a more sustained impact on public policy and citizen participation in Colombia.
I. Objectives

Fundación Corona commissioned the SIPA team to help design a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Cómo Vamos program in Colombia as it relates to public policy and citizen engagement. The SIPA team reviewed the program’s mission, activities, and current framework through primary and secondary research and found that the Cómo Vamos program needed improvements in how it works with citizens, how information is disseminated, and how to gather and produce information that will influence public policy.

This project seeks to improve the ability of Cómo Vamos to empower citizens and increase citizen participation across different citizen groups in order to generate better policy outcomes.

To accomplish this, the SIPA team was tasked with providing a theory of change, a logical framework, and recommendations. The theory of change and logical framework are supposed to provide a path towards improving the effectiveness of the Cómo Vamos program. This process starts with increasing public awareness and ends with improving the responsiveness of public officials. The recommendations are concerned with the use of social media and information technology, improving citizen involvement, data use and collection, partnering with organizations, citizen engagement, and the Red de Ciudades.

II. Methodology

To execute the objectives, the SIPA team set out to conduct extensive research in three main phases.

The first phase entailed background desk research on Colombia and the Cómo Vamos program. The background research on Cómo Vamos included an extensive review of program materials, description, documentation and the quality of life survey. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with staff from Fundación Corona and with current and former staff members of the Cómo Vamos program in Bogota, Ibague, and Manizales. The SIPA team also participated in the 2015 launch of the Informe de Calidad de Vida to review the Quality of Life report, engage in their yearly management meeting, and gain a better understanding of how the Cómo Vamos program works throughout the various cities in Colombia.

The second phase of research occurred in country. The SIPA team conducted multiple interviews with journalists, local councilmen, academics, local community leaders, and program staff members. The team visited three Cómo Vamos programs in Bogota, Ibague, and Manizales. These three cities were identified based on their particular characteristics. Bogota Cómo Vamos is the oldest and largest of the three programs studied whereas Manizales and Ibague Cómo Vamos are more recent and have experienced different outcomes.
The SIPA team conducted 11 interviews in Bogota, 10 interviews in Ibague, and 18 interviews in Manizales with both internal and external stakeholders to gain a holistic perspective of the Cómo Vamos program. The interviews allowed the SIPA team to acquire information related to the program’s achievements, challenges, and constraints.

Furthermore, by conducting various interviews, the SIPA team aimed to explore the challenges faced when engaging media, academic partners, increasing citizen engagement, and creating linkages when working to influence public policy. In interviews conducted with external stakeholders, the SIPA team sought to explore ways to increase and diversify the demographics of its partners. All interviews provided key recommendations to improve the Cómo Vamos program.

The final phase of research involved linking secondary research with findings from field research to create the logical framework, M&E tool, and to formulate the set of recommendations.

### III. Background

Fundación Corona is a Colombian non-profit organization based in Bogota and founded in 1963 by the Echavarría Olózaga family. The Fundación focuses on issues related to education as they relate to three main areas: innovation in education, vocational and job training, and citizenship education. The Cómo Vamos program – the focus of this workshop project – falls under this last pillar of citizenship education.

Since 1997, Fundación Corona has been supporting the Cómo Vamos program together with various partners throughout the country. The Cómo Vamos program began in Bogotá under the aegis of Fundación Corona, the newspaper El Tiempo, the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, and the Universidad Javeriana. The program has since been replicated in various cities throughout Colombia. Each city has its own coordinating team and they are connected to each other through the Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos, a network that oversees the work of each Cómo Vamos and that attempts to ensure that all the Cómo Vamos are working towards the shared goals of the program.

These goals are, broadly speaking, to enhance citizen participation in the political process, to improve public management, and to generate accountability and dialogue between citizens and local politicians. The program emerged in response to a perceived lacuna of information about local issues and the degree of accountability of politicians. The program seeks to fill this absence of information by generating reliable and comparable indicators about the quality of life of the city and citizen perception. The program tracks indicators in a variety of sectors, including education, poverty, public spaces, labor markets, citizen culture, public management, the environment, among many others.
To achieve its objective of providing information, the Cómo Vamos carries out several activities. Each Cómo Vamos chapter collects data from government offices in order to create its quality of life report. Each chapter is also in charge of coordinating a citizen perception survey in order to collect data about how citizens feel about various local issues. Both the report and the survey’s findings are presented during separate yearly events that are attended by a broader audience and, importantly, by representatives from the local administration who are expected to explain and justify the state of salient indicators.

In addition, each Cómo Vamos program is engaged in various other activities meant to expand the reach of the information and promote public participation. The activities vary widely from city to city. In Bogota, for example, the program supports Concejo Cómo Vamos, which evaluates councilmen, the Yo Voto Yo Sumo program, which is meant to enhance political participation during electoral periods, and Juntos a Construir Ciudad, which supports local leaders. In Ibague, the program supports the Ibague Imagina Joven program, which seeks to promote participation among students. And in Manizales, the program supports the Premio Cívico, which rewards organizations promoting civic engagement.

A communication strategy accompanies the events and the activities of Cómo Vamos with the aim of getting more people familiarized with the program and, crucially, with the information. A solid and innovative communication strategy is key for Cómo Vamos as it is what enables citizens to learn about the information the program produces.

Finally, in evaluating the possible impacts of the Cómo Vamos program, it is important to define what the program is meant to do, what information can do, and what the program can do given exogenous limitations. Internally, staff members of Cómo Vamos view the impact of the program through two pathways: public policy and citizen participation. They observe their impact on public policy when the local administration mentions Cómo Vamos in their official web page, when data from Cómo Vamos is included in the Local Development Plans or is mentioned as a source of verification, and when the local administration request meetings and advice from Cómo Vamos. As for citizen participation, they observe impact through indicators measuring their reach on social media, newspapers, and through their yearly events.

Here, it is important to take a step back and consider what Cómo Vamos is meant to do: generate high quality information about cities. In the words of one of the experts interviewed for this workshop project, the Cómo Vamos program is supposed to be a mirror of the city, showing the city how it is doing on a variety of sectors. In order to be a reliable mirror, Cómo Vamos cannot take positions on issues or advocate for certain policies or else the reflections it gives will be distorted and its credibility compromised. As a mirror, it can prompt city administrators to take action on aspects that do not look good and it can motivate citizens to pressure politicians – through popular opinion, elections, or other mechanisms – to improve on those aspects.
Cómo Vamos, however, cannot force citizens or politicians to look into the mirror they are providing. But Cómo Vamos can certainly provide more mirrors in order to increase the probability that a citizen will take a passing look and will be aware of issues that require attention. And maybe if enough citizens are aware of those issues, there can be a critical mass pressuring for change and improvement.

One final aspect that should inform any assessment of Cómo Vamos is the context in which it works. Bogotá, for example, is a large city and its work and the challenges it faces will differ in many ways from that of smaller cities, like Ibagué and Manizales. Cities like Bogotá and Cartagena have the added challenge that their political structures include local mayors that are appointed by the mayor at large (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2013; Alcaldía de Cartagena, 2005).

With regards to political history, historical processes can largely determine political dynamics and the impact of one program on these dynamics will be marginal at best. For instance, in Ibagué, it was said that the current clientelistic networks in the city respond to the history of violence of Tolima, which resulted in protection networks and later, as the violence subsided, clientelistic networks. In addition, as one of the Ibaguerenos the team interviewed explained, the violence meant that people felt identified as part of a party that would provide them with protection instead of feeling identified as citizens.

In contrast, Manizales has experienced a different history that has set the city on a different track. Manizales has become one of the most important touristic sites in Colombia thanks to its cultural diversity. Today, the city has positioned itself as an ideal place to live and is ranked first in the "Easy To Do Business" ranking. Manizales also has many higher educational institutions that are actively involved in the city and its citizens have a strong preference for investments in education, as evidenced by the 2011 democratic exercise in which citizens overwhelmingly voted for education to be the city’s highest priority (Ministerio de Educación, 2011).

IV. Theoretical Framework

A classic problem in the social sciences is the principal-agent problem. The principal does not have enough information to monitor and control the work of an agent who may have different interests and preferences. Without the oversight of the principal, the agent may engage in work that is not beneficial to the principal and the principal will be made worse off (Stiglitz, 1988).

This problem may sound abstract, but it describes the relationship between citizens in democratic societies and governments. Citizens through their vote hire public officials with the hopes that they will act in the benefit of the majority. But too often, citizens cannot observe the work and performance of politicians in government, making it difficult for citizens to know if their elected
representatives are actually working well or if they are shirking or misusing public funds. The difficulty in monitoring the work of the government can result in citizens becoming less active in the political sphere and in government underperforming because it is not being held accountable. One of the best solutions to this problem is providing information about the work of the government. Citizens can use this information to monitor the government and complain if they detect any behavior that is misaligned with their preferences. Information, moreover, may alert citizens to shortcomings in the performance of the elected officials. Cómo Vamos, in particular, aims at fulfilling these functions by providing information that citizens need to hold their politicians accountable and by providing information that would alert them about problems or risks in their cities that require attention.

On the other side, government may behave better and work towards better outcomes if it knows that citizens are observing its behavior. Political initiatives like transparency and accountability laws are rooted in this idea that information can help resolve the principal-agent problem between citizens and the state. Moreover, if government has information about the preferences of citizens, it can realign its work to those preferences, ensuring that its work serves the needs of citizens and that it remains responsive to its constituents. Cómo Vamos aims to do this by providing government with information from its citizen perception survey.

Empirical studies from different contexts have supported this assertion about information. For example, a study in Brazil showed that making public the results of local government audits results in a lower probability that a corrupt mayor will be reelected (Ferraz & Finan, 2008). In Uganda, providing information to parents about how local officials managed funds earmarked for education reduced corruption and improved school attendance rates (Reinnikka & Svensson, 2005). In Mexico, information about how federal funds were spent by mayors reduced support for incumbent mayors if there were incidents of corruption (Chong et al., 2013). Information, however, is not a silver bullet; the study from Mexico also showed that information about corruption reduced voter turnout, suggesting that information could also result in political apathy. Finally, Besley and Burgess (2002) find that in India, the states that are most responsive to citizen needs are those where newspaper circulation, electoral turnout, and literacy rates are the highest. These findings suggest that the behavior of public officials can be modified when they are more closely monitored.

In the Colombian context, information has the potential of affecting certain outcomes given the political restructuring that the country experienced following the Constitutional Reform of 1991. This reform devolved many powers to local authorities and mayors and it brought citizens closer to power. It also compelled candidates running for mayor to present cogent policy proposals during elections so that citizens can debate and vote based on actual proposals instead of simply on popularity.
Without information, however, these political changes may not have any major impact. Being closer to power can help citizens observe the performance of local politicians. But without accessible information, citizens will not be able to monitor the work of government. Policy proposals may be well developed, but if citizens do not know about them or do not participate actively in the public sphere, then voting will continue to be a popularity contest. Information, then, can potentially help resolve these issues by empowering citizens with a tool they need to hold their government accountable, enhancing the participation of citizens in politics, and making government aware that it is being monitored.

The Cómo Vamos program is a response to the information asymmetry problem in local Colombian politics. It tries to address the information gap between citizens and government by generating and disseminating high quality, reliable, and comparable information on a set of indicators defined by a group of experts and with the input of popular opinion (Red Cómo Vamos, 2014). If citizens are aware of how their cities are doing in terms of education, health services, environmental protection, public governance, public spaces, and a host of other sectors, they can reward governments that have done a good job and push governments that have underperformed to do better work.

Information can flow both ways. The program also has a survey component that gauges the opinion of citizens in each city where it operates. Local governments can use the information from these surveys to be more responsive and work in those areas that citizens mostly demand. Moreover, governments can use the information from the indicators to know how they are doing and hopefully be motivated to work better in those areas where they are lagging.

The expected outcomes of the Cómo Vamos program rely on a set of assumptions. For instance, citizens are actually interested in the information, that they react favorably to it, and that the government has the capacity to be responsive. It is not obvious that these assumptions will hold in the Colombian context. For instance, it could be the case - as it happened in Mexico - that citizens react to negative information by withdrawing from the political process and not voting in elections. For these reasons, it is necessary to think carefully of the causal mechanism through which information can result in improved outcome, identify the steps that need to occur for information to have positive effects, and single out potential pitfalls that can occur given the idiosyncrasies of Colombian society and political system.

It is insightful to consider Joseph Stiglitz’s observation that “becoming informed implies a cost. Voters have a threshold, that is, a limit to the amount of time and energy they are willing to invest in pursuit of the public interest” (Stiglitz, 2001). The observation is a reminder that citizens, on their day-to-day life, are generally worried about optimizing their private interests and investing in public interests represents a trade-off from their private ones. As one community leader said in an interview, “we want to take care of the state, but then if we do, who takes care of us?” This is an indication that it might be unlikely to observe much of an impact on citizen
participation, but rather that Cómo Vamos will most likely have a greater incidence on the behavior of politicians. For them, the information is actually beneficial for their day-to-day work and ignoring it can actually represent a cost to them. Any assessment of Cómo Vamos should take into consideration the limitations imposed by the costs and incentives that citizens and politicians face when it comes to processing information about public affairs and investing in public interests.

V. Main Interview Findings

This section describes the main themes that emerged from the interviews carried out by the team in Bogotá, Ibagué, and Manizales. It is important to point out that the findings presented highlight recurring opinions expressed by the people interviewed as well as their general perceptions of the program. This section proceeds as follows. Section 1 identifies issues related to the program’s impact on public officials and their work. Section 2 focuses on issues related to citizen participation.

V.1. Impact on Public Officials

Public officials in city administration are one of the main audiences of the Cómo Vamos program. The data collected and produced by the program is meant to inform the decision-making of public officials, helping them make decisions that are in harmony with citizen preferences. If the Cómo Vamos program is not affecting the behavior of public officials – or if it is affecting it in unexpected ways – the program may not be realizing its desired impact.

The interviews the group held with government officials were particularly informative as they allowed the group to appreciate how they perceive the Cómo Vamos program, if and how they use the information shared by the program, and their views on how Cómo Vamos could improve. The findings are based on six interviews so the inferences the group can draw may have limited external validity and the views expressed by the interviewed politicians may be influenced by a selection bias that motivated them to accept an interview about the program.

The public officials interviewed had, overall, a favorable impression of the Cómo Vamos program. In general, it was found that Cómo Vamos is the only exercise of its kind in the cities and is helping fill an important vacuum in the political space with reliable information. It was said that the program is a serious exercise that enjoys much credibility and legitimacy, largely due to its data-driven nature. Moreover, many politicians lauded the program for promoting citizen participation and providing a tool for citizen control of politicians. No one accused the program of having a political agenda other than promoting informed citizen participation and political accountability. Many said that the Cómo Vamos program was a great source of free information on citizen perception that helps their political strategies. One interviewee did, however, point out that among his colleagues there is an impression that Cómo Vamos is used to
discredit the mayor, which may explain certain resistance on behalf of mayors to fully engage with the program. Nonetheless, it speaks highly of the program that many of those interviewed expressed a desire to see more out of Cómo Vamos and many of their observations related to making the program more visible and proactive in order to magnify its potential impacts.

One of the most important concerns that emerged from the interviews was that while public officials are, overall, well informed about the Cómo Vamos program, they do not think the program influences their decision-making on major issues. It was noted many times that policy-making is a political process and that Cómo Vamos, as a mirror of public issues, does not have the potential of changing these political dynamics that tend to be driven by political interests and strategy. As a result, Cómo Vamos is seen as an informational input that is often displaced by political considerations: at best, Cómo Vamos is a thermometer to which they can refer to in order to get a pulse of how the city at large is doing and what citizens in general feel; at worst, it is an effort that goes unheeded because it comes with an overabundance of information and a scarcity of suggestions.

Many of the politicians did express that Cómo Vamos is very useful for them as it provides them with information about what people care about. Public officials can use information about citizen perceptions in their political strategies. For instance, in Ibagué, a city councilman explained that he uses the perception survey to identify issues that citizens care about that the mayor is not addressing and then calls the mayor out on these issues. In Manizales, the Secretary of Planning at the Mayor’s office explained that the Cómo Vamos information has helped them design city plans and projects by providing data for benchmarking their performance indicators. Finally, the comparisons that Cómo Vamos facilitates with other cities has motivated the Manizales city administration to work towards maintaining their first place ranking. In addition, background research revealed that the information provided by Cómo Vamos has also been used to elaborate the development plans proposed by mayors.

While public officials did say that the quality of life indicators were helpful as red-flags to identify areas that need attention in their cities, some of them did point out certain concerns about these indicators. For instance, a shared concern was that the changes in the indicator could be due to a variety of exogenous factors and not exclusively to the work of government. The aggregated data used at the city level raised issues because it does not reflect how particular neighborhoods or districts are faring, so the utility of the data is very limited at a local level. As a result, many expressed a desire to have more disaggregated data.

Another issue raised by public officials was that Cómo Vamos needs to create stronger links between citizens and politicians to promote accountability. At least in Bogota and Ibagué, there was a generalized perception that the accountability exercise facilitated by Cómo Vamos ended after the yearly event in which Cómo Vamos presents its findings and asks the mayor’s office to respond. Many said that while these events are helpful, they need to be more recurrent and
involve citizens from different sectors. Otherwise, they feared that the events can be captured by one sector, which can discourage the mayor from participating in the event, as it seems to be the case in Ibague. Relatedly, many expressed a desire for Cómo Vamos to be more assertive in promoting policy solutions to the problems it identifies and in holding politicians accountable. However, given that the main role of Cómo Vamos is to provide a reliable reflection of the city, the team feels that this may not be ideal as it may compromise the legitimacy of the program and taint its image of rigor and neutrality. This echoes what César Caballeros said that Cómo Vamos should focus on providing quality information and not in providing solutions.

Lastly, an overarching concern with the program – one peculiar to the Concejo Cómo Vamos but still relevant to Cómo Vamos program at large because of its monitoring efforts – is the possibility that Cómo Vamos could create perverse incentives among politicians. For instance, since Concejo Cómo Vamos measures attendance, now the Concejo is able to achieve quorum, a positive outcome. But since it also measures areas like numbers of proposals passed, there has been a proliferation of irrelevant proposals. While this problem emerged from Concejo Cómo Vamos, it is not unique to the Concejos and it is easy to come up with similar cases in other contexts: a mayor who launches a branding campaign to obtain favorable evaluations but neglects important urban issues or a mayor who pushes issues citizens care about as shown in the perception survey, but ignores equally important but unpopular issues.

V.2. Impact on Citizen Participation

Across all interviews, a consensus emerged that the potential impact of Cómo Vamos on citizen participation is limited. In particular, the impact is limited by several factors: citizens at large are not receiving the information; citizens who do receive the information are overwhelmed by all the data provided and may not know what to do with it; the events hosted by Cómo Vamos are attended only by people who belong to specific sectors like academia, media, and advocacy groups; and the fact that for citizens, there is a cost to acquire and use information.

With regards to the dissemination of information, there was a generalized perception that the information produced by Cómo Vamos only reaches a very specific segment of the citizenry. Many of the people interviewed said that the information is largely used by the media, academics, students, policymakers, and people involved in civil society organizations working on urban issues. They also expressed doubts that the information reached citizens who are not involved in these issues.

It was said that part of the reason for this is because media attention on Cómo Vamos is limited to the events that Cómo Vamos hosts and there is no constant presence of the program in the media. Moreover, it was noted that the media many times distorts the information provided and focuses on indicators that have the potential for sensationalism over technical indicators that will most likely not spark reader interest. In Ibague, for example, the journalists interviewed acknowledged that they focus on the information pertaining to the mayor’s reputation and on hot
issues, like security, and that they rarely cover issues they think are not likely to cause controversy.

In addition, many of the communication strategies require increased monitoring to ensure that the information is actually being disseminated. For instance, Cómo Vamos invests significant resources in providing information through info-graphs and flyers, but there is no follow-up to check that people actually receive them. The team was told that in Teusaquillo, the community leaders do receive the flyers but that these are not widely circulated; the community leader said that they had boxes full of these.

Another contributing challenge is that the activities held by Cómo Vamos to disseminate the information is mostly attended by those people who are already involved in these issues - the politicians, the journalists, and the like. Many said that the events are not entertaining and unlikely to attract significant attention from the citizenry at large. More worryingly, even people interested in these topics expressed certain frustration with the events as they are repetitive and provide too much information in too little time.

Related to this last point, many of those interviewed believed that even if the information does reach citizens, it may be too much or too technical, so citizens may be overwhelmed and not know what to do with it. One expert said that in the Cómo Vamos events he can really only recall information about four of the indicators at most, which speaks to the need of formatting the information in a different manner, maybe along cross-cutting themes or as indices. Another example of this challenge emerged from the team’s conversation with the members of the local planning council of Kennedy. Asked about how the Cómo Vamos information has influenced their work, they all said that receiving the information has made them aware that they need training about how to interpret the information because they realized they did not understand. In addition, a local leader in Bosa explained that many people he knows value the information but do not know how or where to use it given the many participation mechanisms available.

The local leaders did acknowledge that thanks to Cómo Vamos, and to organizations like Fundación Social and Transparencia por Colombia, they have been able to establish a greater credibility among the local politicians. The support of these organizations and the partners that finance them such as El Tiempo and Universidad Javeriana, which have greater political influence, gives the community leaders greater legitimacy and attracts the attention of local politicians. Many agreed that their partnership with the Cómo Vamos has made the administration see them with more respect and has paid more attention to them.

Finally, there is the issue of the costs associated with obtaining information and using it. While Cómo Vamos never charges for access to its information, citizens still face non-trivial costs in this domain that may deter them from seeking such information, especially since the benefits - increased accountability, improved public management - are abstract and too far into the future.
First there is the opportunity cost of participation. Time spent participating in the political process or going to Cómo Vamos events or reading about the indicators is time not spent in the labor market or in leisure activities; a tradeoff that many individuals may not want to incur. Second, there is the cost of obtaining the information. If the information is provided online or on social media, citizens have to find ways to access the Internet, which is not easy for many, especially given connectivity challenges in Colombia. If the information is provided through newspapers, citizens need to buy the newspaper. These costs make it challenging to enhance citizen participation and need to be taken into consideration when thinking about ways of engaging citizens.

Despite the challenges in promoting participation among the citizenry at large, it was recognized that among those citizens that the program does reach, the program has been valuable. For instance, academics appreciated the data provided by the program, as it is an additional input for their research and teaching. Journalists greatly valued Cómo Vamos as it gave them fodder for articles and reliable references to cite in their writings. In Ibague, the journalists said that virtually any article about urban issues would cite in one way or another a Cómo Vamos indicator. Finally, members of civil society organizations have been galvanized by some of the red flags raised by Cómo Vamos. For instance, the information provided by Cómo Vamos has helped Cebras por la Vida - an organization that advocates for pedestrian safety - provide data about pedestrian deaths in Bogotá. In addition, Combo 2600 - an advocacy organization composed by young activists - has cited data generated by Cómo Vamos in several of its opinion columns. Evidently, Cómo Vamos does influence certain citizens, but it still needs to reach and influence many more.

VI. Recommendations

VI.1. Social Media and Information Technology
Technology will form a key part of the programs strategy going forward. Social media will form the major part of the technology strategy to help spread the Cómo Vamos message and has the advantage of easy monitoring for effectiveness than traditional mediums. Social media will also serve as key vehicle in facilitating better communications internally so Fundación Corona and Cómo Vamos can share best practices internally.

Recommendations:

1. All Cómo Vamos staff over time should be trained in the use of social media so that its use is part of the Cómo Vamos culture. Social-media can be an excellent vehicle for information dissemination and attracting younger citizens both of which are core goals for Cómo Vamos. Building the technology capacity of the staff should include a technology champion who is tasked with finding and experimenting with new technologies and sharing findings with the rest of the organization.
2. Social-media tools should be used to facilitate communications internally. Mechanisms include blogs, wikis, and social-bookmarking. Social-bookmarking has many advantages as it facilitates the sharing of content and of best practices. These can then be shared among the Cómo Vamos network. Delicious, for example, is a free app that can be used in this effort.

3. Develop different social media strategies for different segments of the population. For instance, students will be reached more effectively through Facebook and Twitter; journalists tend to use Twitter more; and academics tend to be easier to reach through email campaigns.

4. Track social media presence and progress. Google Analytics is one mechanism to assist in this effort. It can help in monitoring Facebook likes and generate social tracking reports. As an example, Engagement is a tool that provides a report that can show how effective each webpage is in motivating users to Like or Tweet content.

5. Promote the use of alternative social media platforms for people with limited connectivity to the Internet. For example, there is now an opportunity to combine twitter with text messaging, which is more accessible to the majority of people. Users are now able to follow Twitter updates by linking to it through SMS. In New York, tweets sent from the account of the Office of Emergency Management can be received by citizens who text a specific number. Cómo Vamos can have a campaign to inform people about this service, especially among people in communities with limited connectivity.

**Rationale:**
While Cómo Vamos has begun putting more attention towards internal communications, it needs to be formalized and structured. Cómo Vamos must recognize how citizens prefer to consume information via social media so it maximizes the outcomes and the experience of citizens. This is already on the Cómo Vamos radar but the emphasis is to formalize and replicate. Conducting monitoring on an ad-hoc basis is not enough, rather it must be performed habitually so that efforts of Cómo Vamos are progressing towards better outcomes.

**Implementation:**
The above recommendations should not be considered exhaustive but rather a starting point. Technology can be costly to initiate depending on the platform so Cómo Vamos should focus initially on what can be replicated on a greater scale up front. From there, Cómo Vamos must start to build its capacity to expand its utilization of technology. Implementation of technology efforts will rest with each city coordinator. That said, Fundación Corona should take accountability for having these and other solutions formalized and included in any replication efforts. Fundación Corona should monitor implementation efforts to ensure follow through and identify bottlenecks so support efforts can be better directed.
VI.2. Improving Citizen Involvement

VI.2.A. Regarding the Cómo Vamos Events

Recommendations:

1. Limit the amount of information provided at each event to a maximum number of indicators. The exact number of indicators to use could be determined through trial and error but a maximum of 20 can be a starting point. This will facilitate improved comprehension among the audience members. Moreover, it will help avoid audience members feeling overwhelmed with data during the events.

2. Rather than hosting one big event, hold various smaller events throughout one month and deliver different information during each of these events. This will serve several purposes. It will facilitate organizing events along different themes that cater to different audiences. For instance, one event can focus on transportation issues, another on health, another on safety issues, and so on. This will enable Cómo Vamos to tailor the event to different groups of people and explore with greater depth the information it is presenting instead of giving a superficial treatment to each area. A final benefit of this recommendation is that it will prolong the attention that the media pays to Cómo Vamos. One drawback is that people may feel overwhelmed by too many events. There are, however, ways to avoid this. If Cómo Vamos varies the audience and location, such as by holding them in different neighborhoods, schools, or community centers, it will prevent one particular demographic from feeling overwhelmed. Another alternative is to hold the events throughout a period longer than one month.

3. Prioritize indicators during the events and focus on those that matter most. Caballero recommended choosing a couple of main indicators along a certain theme and expanding on those. To avoid valid concerns that Cómo Vamos may be editorializing - to not say censoring - the information, Cómo Vamos can invite experts and ask them to choose a set of indicators that they wish to explore.

4. One way to vary the format of the events is to include different presenters in the events. While it is informative to hear from experts, it would be novel to include average citizens on panels. After all, they are the experts on their own quality of life and probably have insightful knowledge about their neighborhoods. In addition, this can be a good way to involve traditionally uninvolved groups of citizens in the Cómo Vamos activities.

Rationale:
Much of the research uncovered that the events during which Cómo Vamos presents its reports provide too much information and they involve the same presentation each year. Some interviewees said they stopped going to the events because they found them repetitive and too long, despite being genuinely interested in the topics. Still others pointed out that the same groups of people tend to participate in these events. All of these factors limit the extent to which
these launch events can reach and influence the citizenry at large. The recommendations provided here draw extensively from the interview with César Caballero, who has experience in sharing technical data with a broad public.

**Implementation:**
Each Cómo Vamos city program will be responsible for collecting information from events and other sources so that they can better package the events per the above recommendations. Fundación Corona will play the role of coordinating all these efforts. First they will share experiences from each city program so the best ideas are put forward across the cities. They can also facilitate less successful experiences so others can avoid ineffective events. Second Fundación Corona must monitor these changes for impact and so that all cities are part of the process.

**VI.2.B. Regarding Media**

**Recommendations:**

1. Cómo Vamos must engage in a formal analysis of their media partners to ensure they have the desired reach. Key to this is ensuring the correct outlets are used. There are about 25 newspapers and circulation is about 1.2M with an average reach of about 41 per 1000 people in Colombia. Radio in contrast has approximately 515 stations with around 21M receivers across the country. The average reach is around 520 receivers per 1000 people. These figures should encourage Cómo Vamos to adopt a formal radio strategy. Using multiple platforms will also help maintain neutrality. Media can take political stances that could unintentionally allow the information of Cómo Vamos to serve political agendas.

2. Cómo Vamos must continue to innovate in how their information is delivered via the media. Manizales provided a couple of useful examples. First, different groups digest information differently. Academics like more technical presentations while many citizens prefer a story or graphics. A specific mechanism to be utilized is op-ed columnists. Multiple sources expressed that this is an effective vehicle to create greater discussions which can then occur across multiple media outlets. Manizales Cómo Vamos has already begun trying to insert indicators in op-ed columns.

3. The frequency and diversity of reporting must increase and should be mandated by Fundación Corona and monitored. Fundación Corona should set minimum standards for how frequent reporting is done with respect to Cómo Vamos related material. This may vary city to city but there should be mandated expectations like writing a column at least once a week. Coverage cannot be limited to the times around Cómo Vamos events. This point was emphasized in Bogota by academics and public officials. Citizens must have a regular space where they go to for updates on issues important to them.
**Rationale:**
A clear objective of Cómo Vamos is to reach broader audiences and all segments of citizens. Research from Bogota, Ibagué, and Manizales all showed an underutilization of the media that results in Cómo Vamos not reaching broader audiences. Ibagué highlights this point as their partner El Nuevo Día only reaches about ten percent of the population. When you factor in Q’hubo – a popular, sensationalist journal – it marginally increases its reach. Media is also not generating the consistent attention or discussion needed. Academics, in particular those in Bogota, stressed that the media must be used much more frequently and assertively.

**Implementation**
Each city program has the local knowledge of the media scene in each city, so each city should be in charge of implementing their communication strategies. Fundación Corona should set out guidelines and expectations.

**VI.2.C. On Capacity Building**

**Recommendation:**
1. Promote capacity building among key Cómo Vamos stakeholders that can magnify the reach of the information produced by Cómo Vamos.

**Rationale:**
To achieve their goals of increasing citizen participation and influencing public policy the citizens of Colombia must have at least a basic foundation of how to engage so that they have an interest and the confidence to do so. An example of how training could help is with the community leaders. Community leaders are part of the push by Cómo Vamos to increase citizen participation. It is reasonable to increase their technical skills on how to deliver the message to the other citizens. Building the capacity of community leaders is directly linked to improving overall citizen involvement.

**Explanation:**
Cómo Vamos does not have the resources or the full technical capacity to deliver effective and efficient capacity building to citizens. In this light they must utilize partners but also try to leverage other organizations. For example World Learning provides educational assistance to civil society. One such program is the Institute for Political and Civic Engagement (IPACE) in Burma (Myanmar). This program is funded by the US State Department. The program helps build capacity of local democracy, labor and, civil society activists in the area of education. Courses included civic education, human rights, and voter education. This can be coupled with leveraging their media partners to deliver education on key matters through radio shows, op-ed columns, and social media.

**Implementation:**
Each Cómo Vamos program city will be responsible for implementing the training initiatives including all partnership developments. Fundación Corona should be accountable for formalizing
these recommendations so they are mandated and replicated across the cities. Fundación Corona should also be accountable for selecting partners like World Learning or a University that will help develop programs to build the technical capacity of their people. Fundación Corona should also follow up to monitor effectiveness.

VI.2.C. On the Use of Champions

**Recommendation:**

1. Identify influential people to serve as champions for Cómo Vamos to increase the programs presence in the media and amongst citizens.

**Rationale:**

Champions are individuals with a strong presence in the media, whose research or specialization is aligned with the mission and goals of Cómo Vamos. Champions can provide stories about issues occurring directly within communities while referencing Cómo Vamos and issue specific data. Champions can also utilize their social media platforms like Twitter, which in some cases may have large followings to sale the message. The champion can speak to what citizens are keenly interested in, which cans serve to encourage them to participate more in civic and political affairs.

**Explanation:**

Identifying strategies and tools that can encourage citizens to increase their knowledge on public issues, interact with local government and develop trust will result in consistent and long-term citizen engagement. A champion will provide Cómo Vamos with consistent name recognition while working to increase public awareness about issues affecting various localities. Having a champion can help raise public awareness about issues affecting various localities and increase public interaction to promote effective dialogue between citizens and local government regarding quality of life. The champion can be a prominent community leader or a famous superstar passionate about these similar issues. There can also be various champions that are popular amongst the various groups that Cómo Vamos seeks to engage [i.e. youth and elderly]. Hence, the champion’s goal is to increase the knowledge and participation of groups that do not engage with local government.

**Implementation:**

Working with a champion will require the collaboration of the city coordinators and media partners at Cómo Vamos to assist in ensuring that the champion is in the media on a frequent basis in order to elevate awareness of the important community issues. Using a communications coordinator with experience in promoting citizen participation in cultural, educational, and community settings will help guide the champion in effectively targeting its designated audiences. These coordinators can come from Fundación Corona and can be mobile and be shared among the city programs. The communication coordinators can help in how champions share information about the Cómo Vamos program. This would provide Cómo Vamos with name recognition and an increase in website traffic and utilization.
VI.3. Data Use and Collection

VI.3.A. Regarding Data Use and Collection
The Cómo Vamos programs collect data every year from both governments and citizens for its quality of life report and its citizen perception survey, respectively. Cómo Vamos packages that data into reports, info graphs, and other formats to share with citizens and local officials. Cómo Vamos, however, can do much more with the data, especially given the diligence and consistency given to the data collection process that ensures quality data. In addition to giving the data alternative uses, Cómo Vamos can also innovate in its data collection mechanisms in order to ensure it has timely information throughout the year. This section presents recommendations on data collection and utilization.

Recommendation:
1. Obtain information on citizen perception from other reputable surveys and data sources.

Rationale:
Several other survey instruments collect data similar to the data collected by Cómo Vamos. Given that collecting data is a costly and cumbersome process for both Cómo Vamos and the people surveyed, Cómo Vamos should seek to obtain some of its data from alternative sources. This would help avoid redoing the work of other organizations, minimize costs related to the survey, and enable Cómo Vamos to present information from different time periods within a year.

Explanation:
An expert recommended that the program should compare its survey with other perception instruments carried out in Colombia and obtain information from those sources. This will help reduce costs and it will allow Cómo Vamos to have updated information on citizen perception during different time periods and not only when it completes its own survey. A quick search found several surveys that gauge similar perceptions as the Cómo Vamos survey (e.g. Citizen Perception Survey from the Observatorio de Políticas Públicas of the Universidad ICESI in Cali; the Encuesta de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana of the DANE; the Corruption Perception Index of Transparencia por Colombia), so it is not farfetched to think that this type of information is available elsewhere. Because the data is not collected by Cómo Vamos itself, this data will be complementary to the Cómo Vamos survey, but it can certainly help reduce the number of questions currently in the instrument.

Implementation:
This will require a careful comparison of surveys by an expert to ensure that survey items are comparable. To achieve this, Fundación Corona would have to hire an expert on this topic to establish what other surveys exist, whether they are reliable, whether the survey is representative or particular to a certain subgroup, and what information can be obtained from them.
Recommendation:
2. Create partnerships with academics and think tanks to analyze the data to find interesting interactions, trends, and to determine if the available data can help answer questions about citizenship participation.

Rationale:
Since the Cómo Vamos staff is focused on the day-to-day activities of the program, it would be helpful to form partnerships with organizations that can take a broader perspective on the Cómo Vamos data and find alternative uses and interpretations for it. Think tanks and academics can provide this type of perspective.

Explanation:
Many of the Cómo Vamos cities have data sets of a considerable size and that spans various years. The Bogotá Cómo Vamos program, for one, has consistent data for over fifteen years. This can be enough to find interesting trends and, possibly, do time-series analysis. Of course, mining the data would not be the right approach, so it is necessary to combine this data exercise with academic work seeking to answer specific questions. Academics and think tanks can identify certain problem areas, including crosscutting problems, and find ways of using the Cómo Vamos data in their research.

Implementation:
Fundación Corona would assign a person to oversee this process and establish the partnerships with the academics. In addition, this person would serve as a contact point for the academic and think tank partners when they need to obtain data and can also help in identifying potentially useful data sets.

Recommendation:
3. Harness social media and information technology to facilitate data collection.

Rationale:
A criticism of the Cómo Vamos program - mostly from individuals in the public sector - is that the program presents lagged information that may not be relevant or accurate once it is formally presented. To counter this criticism, Cómo Vamos needs to find ways to have more periodic, up-to-date data. Moreover, this recommendation helps answer one question Fundación Corona has about how to leverage technology in their work.

Explanation:
One way to collect up-to-date data is to use novel surveying methods that rely on information and communication technology. In particular, mobile technology and crowdsourcing has enabled many organizations to speed up their data collection process, allowing them to make more timely decisions. For instance, Ushahidi is a software company that is able to swiftly collect and process reliable information. It does so by crowdsourcing the data collection process to individuals with...
mobile phones who can transmit information to Ushahidi. Although the company made its name by collecting data during emergencies, such as after natural disasters, it has expanded its work to other areas, including areas relevant to Cómo Vamos, such as governance, accountability, and citizen participation. Another example is Premise Data, which provides real-time and reliable data about economic indicators by leveraging information provided via cellphone by individuals all over the world; their data is good enough that it matches official data published months later.

Implementation:
If it is possible to collect good real-time data on economic indicators, it is possible to think of ways of adapting the model of these companies to the work of Cómo Vamos in order to get real-time data from citizens. This will not be an easy task and will require investments from both Fundación Corona and Cómo Vamos in order to develop these systems, but it is definitely feasible if it is something that the foundation and the program want to implement. In fact, Ushahidi is already developing a citizen participation program called All Voices Count that is working in similar areas. To implement this recommendation, Fundación Corona would have to hire a team to lead this effort and partner with organizations that have expertise on this topic.

Recommendation:
4. Develop indices using existing data.

Rationale:
This recommendation speaks to two questions posed by Fundación Corona. The first is how to use the Cómo Vamos data in a different way and the second is how to present information in a format that is easier to understand. Building appropriate indices is one possible solution. Indices help see the data in a different way and they also package various indicators into a more intuitive format that can help people take a broad view of the issues. For instance, it is easier to think about and keep track of the Human Development Index than it is to do so for the various indicators that go into it, like mean years of schooling, life expectancy, and gross national income.

Explanation:
Fundación Corona is already working on this area by creating a Social Progress Index that will track social progress at a city level - a first of its kind. This is a commendable first step towards using existing data more effectively. Fundación Corona should continue in this line of work and develop other indices with its available data. Some of the experts interviewed suggested developing a child health index, traffic and mobility index, and a recreational and green space index. It is possible to think of many other areas where indices could be helpful.

Implementation:
To implement this recommendation, Fundación Corona would have to partner with an organization - as they did for the social progress index - to identify an area for which there is sufficient data for an index and then determine the variables that would go into the index.
VI.4. Recommendations: Regarding Red de Ciudades

Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos promotes the development of citizen’s impact on local, regional and national public policy issues. Currently, the Red de Ciudades collects an abundance of indicators from all cities within the network with the intent to support the development of cities to impact local, regional and national policy. If the Red de Ciudades conducts joint events on Colombia’s societal challenges and new policies, it can promote national outreach that will better mobilize and equip cities with the tools needed to effectively engage its citizens on a national level. Furthermore, utilizing partnerships with external and internal stakeholders can leverage the resources available to efficiently disseminate the information provided by Cómo Vamos.

Recommendation:

1. Hosting quarterly national conferences to gather cities within the Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos to facilitate interactive workshops and programs in which they partake in a peer review process where they can evaluate each other, learn and strengthen each other’s programming.

Rationale:

Hosting a national conference aimed at gathering cities within the Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos to facilitate workshops and programs in which they partake in a peer review process where they can evaluate each other and learn from each other’s programming will foster dialogue amongst cities on how to better utilize the data they gather and mobilize external partnerships and maximize internal resources. This will increase the flow of dependable and action-oriented information throughout the network.

Explanation:

When focusing on national issues, Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos can seek a systematic method in identifying how they can contribute to policy changes so that government plans can be translated into development plans using the Cómo Vamos perception survey. The national conference will highlight current issues throughout the region and review current indicators to ensure that the Cómo Vamos programs are accurately capturing these changes. This strategic event will convene external and internal partners and focus on how to design and present crosscutting solutions using data gathered from quality of life survey to addresses issues faced throughout the country. This can serve as a platform to better mobilize and use the information formulated by Cómo Vamos. Through this event, Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos can engage both private and public stakeholders in forming partnerships and investing the utilization of the data collected to better impact policy change.

Implementation:

Coordinators from the Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos network can formally invite the primary stakeholders and local government officials that collaborate and partner with them within their cities to present the data from the quality of life surveys during the conference. Each city can present the impact that the Cómo Vamos program has had on the quality and equity of subjective and objective indicators within the city. This exercise will allow all the Cómo Vamos programs
to compare, discuss and provide feedback on the quality of services and programs within each city.

**VII. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

As the Cómo Vamos program continues to grow and evolve, it is important to evaluate how effective individual program activities are in achieving the program’s goals. The team has created an evaluation system to assess activities and monitor the progress of the programs towards fulfilling its goals. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan presented as separate manual, details the proposed system that will enable Cómo Vamos to evaluate systematically and objectively the strategic significance of individual activities in achieving the Cómo Vamos objectives. The manual includes a plan to collect and track progress on activities and outcomes of the operationalized theory of change in addition to tools to facilitate the implementation of this process.

The purpose of implementing an M&E system should be one of strategic learning – where Cómo Vamos can use this monitoring system to learn in real time what strategies may be working better than others and adapt this information to the strategic decision-making process. Thus, with this information, each Cómo Vamos program can learn to constantly evaluate itself and its strategies in order to make modifications to its approaches. This tool will help each city find out what activities, events, or mechanisms are more effective in achieving each of the Cómo Vamos goals while at the same time giving Fundació Corona a standard approach to assess individual program’s performance. A thorough manual describing the monitoring and evaluation framework as well as a detailed logical framework accompanies this report.

*Theory of Change*

The team has articulated a theory of change that guides the M&E system and reflects the shared goals articulated by Fundación Corona and Cómo Vamos’ programs. This theory of change builds upon the organization’s mission statement and presents, at a summary level, the organization’s goals and proposed actions aimed at achieving these outcomes. It is specific and focused and articulates both means and ends in the form of tactical strategies to attain organizational goals.

The theory of change for Cómo Vamos is as follows:

**If Cómo Vamos engages citizens by:**

- Providing unbiased information on quality of life in cities, in creative and effective ways,
- Training and educating citizens to become self-advocates of their community needs,

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† Ibid.
• Supporting and motivating citizens to engage actively in political and policy-making scenarios;

Then citizen participation in policy-making process increases

If Cómo Vamos influences policy makers by:
• Voicing citizen needs and concerns
• Creating discussion spaces for constructive debate between government and citizens
• Engaging all stakeholders to participate in policy-making scenarios

Then responsiveness, transparency, and accountability among policy makers increases

As a result, governments become responsive and accountable, improving quality of life for citizens.

Logical Framework
The team operationalized the theory of change using a logical framework approach. The logical framework expands on the theory of change and presents a detailed description of the program’s activities, outcomes, and indicators to measure progress. It seeks to identify areas where it is possible to measure the program’s effectiveness and relative progress on its goals.

The summarized version of the logical framework presented below highlights the main outcomes and the overall goal of improving quality of life in cities. Additionally, it includes the proposed indicators designed to gauge the progress towards the goal.

The desired program outcomes (e.g. improved quality of life in city, increased transparency and accountability in governments, citizen engagement and increased participation in the political process) depend on many other factors and not just on the program. Several factors that directly impact the aforementioned outcomes are outside of the program’s scope and control. Hence, a set of assumptions and risks are listed for each outcome. A complete version of the logical framework, which includes program activities and activity indicators is included in the M&E Manual.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT SUMMARY</th>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>MEANS OF VERIFICATION</th>
<th>RISKS / ASSUMPTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Quality of life in cities improves.</td>
<td>• Number of policies implemented, modified, or administered in accordance with requirements identified issue identified as imperative by citizens and Cómo Vamos data.</td>
<td>End of year self-report by coordinator assessed through desk-research of policy changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Funding levels sustained for policies or programs on issue identified as imperative by citizens and Cómo Vamos data</td>
<td>End of year self-report by coordinator assessed through desk-research of policy changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improvement on Quality of Life indicators of city.</td>
<td>Yearly comparative Quality of Life indicator report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased voter turnout.</td>
<td>Government Reported Statistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Risks**

- Increased information on city issues does not motivate citizens to engage in public policy.
- Increased information on citizens’ perception on city issues and citizens’ demands does not motivate policymakers to be more transparent and accountable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th></th>
<th>End of year report by coordinator.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Citizens’ and policymakers’ awareness of issues of quality of life in the city increases.</td>
<td>• Increase in use of data presented by Cómo Vamos by:</td>
<td>• Providing relevant and appropriate information allows citizens to use this information to pressure government to be more responsive to their demands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Public officials</td>
<td>• By proving information on citizens’ perception on city’s quality of life, policymakers become aware of issues and work towards improving these.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Media</td>
<td>• Citizens are receptive to information and are interested in it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. Academia</td>
<td>• Cómo Vamos’ social media activism is effective in reaching and engaging citizens.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of audience with knowledge of an issue (i.e. key issue from event).</td>
<td>• Percent of audience with knowledge of an issue (i.e. key issue from event).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A focus group/research panel rates as favorable the level of comprehension of the information presented by Cómo Vamos in the reports/events.</td>
<td>• Yearly focus group/research panel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Total yearly page views of online reports</td>
<td>• Yearly Google Analytics for online report on website.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of requests for Cómo Vamos products or information with qualification of who requested it and for what purpose.</td>
<td>• End of year report by coordinator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number and types of invitations for Cómo Vamos to speak or review</td>
<td>• End of year report by coordinator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Risks.**

- Information overload.
- Information takes too long to process and people do not pay attention to it or understand it incorrectly.
- Information or events platform is used by stakeholder(s) to pursue personal agenda.
- Cómo Vamos goals and missions are perceived as biased and protecting special interests.
- Surveys, events/mechanisms and, issues selected are deemed to be biased by some citizens.
- New initiatives or efforts continue to ignore citizen groups previously absent from participating (rural, youth, etc.)
- Ineffective mechanisms and media forums are chosen that do not appeal to wider citizen
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</table>
|2) Citizens are engaged and empowered to act as catalysts of change in improving quality of life in cities. | **Materials as experts.**  
- Increased participation in advocacy and civic activism  
- Increased citizen understanding of participatory mechanisms and spaces for debate  
- Number of local partnerships Cómo Vamos formed with support groups  
- Number of collaborative actions taken between organizations | **Groups or are not consumed by them.**  
- Forming alliances with support groups helps expand the reach of information to public at large.  
- Willingness of non-policy making stakeholders to act in support of issues that affect the city.  
- Trainings and information conducted to educate citizens empowers them to act. |
|   |   |   |
|   | **Citizen Perception Survey** - Question PC.1 and Question PC8A.  
- Yearly research panel. |   |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
|3) Increased responsiveness, transparency and accountabili ty of policymakers. | **Meeting and letters from government officials acknowledging Cómo Vamos work.**  
- Public officials ratings improve over time  
- Number of references made to Cómo Vamos data in City Development Plan and any other formal policy document | **End of year report by coordinator.**  
- End of term evaluation of mayors and public officials  
- City Development Plan and policy documents | **End of term evaluation of mayors and public officials**  
- City Development Plan and policy documents | **End of term evaluation of mayors and public officials**  
- City Development Plan and policy documents |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
|   | **Risks:**  
- Public opinions on program and city issues may be biased and inaccurate.  
- Attracts only specific interests group that may distort results and/or focus on only certain problematic issues.  
- Forming alliances with support groups may be time consuming and ineffective. |   |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
VIII. Conclusions

The main functions of the Cómo Vamos program are to collect and provide reliable information about the state of cities in Colombia as well as on citizen perception. To do so, the program carries out a yearly survey, collects data from government sources, and shares its information during events and through various media platforms. The end goal of the program is that this information affects citizen participation and the behavior of politicians.

Through interviews and secondary research, the team came to realize that Cómo Vamos is able to collect data in a rigorous manner and that the information reaches those citizens who are already engaged with these issues or that have a vested interest in them, such as journalists, academics, and members of civil society. The research revealed that the ability of Cómo Vamos of transmitting its information to a broader audience is affected by various factors, such as communication challenges, the format in which the information is presented, the frequency with which the program is mentioned in the media, the ability of citizens of interpreting information, and the costs that citizens face in acquiring information.

Importantly, the team also found that political dynamics and historical patterns largely limit the role that information can have in affecting the behavior of citizens and politicians. These are factors beyond the control of Cómo Vamos, so the program should not be expected to directly influence policy decisions or levels of citizen participation. Rather, the program should be expected to produce information of high quality and to share it in a format that is easy to interpret and to do so with as many citizens as possible. The recommendations provided in this report seek to enhance the ability of Cómo Vamos to do so, acknowledging that the impact of the program on citizen participation and governance will be indirect and on the margin. The tools generated by the team, such as the theory of change and logical framework, are meant to help guide Cómo Vamos to better track its activities against its goals.
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Appendix I – Impact Evaluation Recommendations

In order to rigorously identify the true effects of the Cómo Vamos program, it would be necessary to understand what would have happened in the cities in which Cómo Vamos is working had the program never been implemented. This is, of course, infeasible and evaluating the impact of the program in relation to a counterfactual is beyond the scope of this project, but it is still important to consider potential impact evaluation strategies.

This section proposes possible experimental designs that Fundación Corona could implement in coordination with Cómo Vamos to evaluate the impact of the program. Since the design for a field experiment depends on the question being asked and on idiosyncratic factors in each city and time period, this section is mostly speculative. This section seeks to illustrate through examples from academic studies that it is possible to carry out controlled trials to answer questions related to the role of information in citizen participation and political accountability.

Careful experimentation can help Fundación Corona and Cómo Vamos fine-tune the program to better serve Colombian citizens and society at large. This is particularly important because while theory would predict that more information is better for citizens and makes everyone better off, findings from psychology and political economics have shown that this may not always be the case [expand and cite]. The effects of providing information about quality of life to citizens and local government are not inherently obvious, which is why rigorous studies of this program are so necessary.

Moreover, carrying this type of evaluations can foster new partnerships and help strengthen existing ones with universities and think tanks in Colombia. In fact, this section responds in part to some concerns echoed in interviews that universities and academics could be more involved with Cómo Vamos through research activities in addition to the support they provide for events and the dissemination of information.

Encouragement Designs and Field Experiments
Encouragement designs provide a way to get around the fact that Cómo Vamos is already up and running in many cities and non-trivial proportions of the target populations have already been exposed to the program. In essence, encouragement designs provide an additional nudge to a randomly selected sample of individuals and enables researchers to observe the marginal effect of the nudge on those individuals who were exposed to it. In technical jargon, an encouragement design is a form of instrumental variable.

A classic example of encouragement design involves interventions in which a random selection of individuals receives a flyer or a call encouraging them to sign up for a job-training program that is already running. It is possible to think of three types of individuals under these
circumstances: those who would always sign up for the program, those who would never sign up, and those who would only sign up if they get the encouragement. If the encouragement is successful, then, it will prompt individuals in this latter group to sing up for the program and it will allow researchers to observe the effects of the program on this sub-group relative to those who did not get the encouragement since the only reason they signed up was because of the encouragement and not because of their own characteristics.

Encouragement designs are really a type of field experiment in which the instrument is the random assignment to receive the encouragement or not. The advantage of field experiments is that they allow researchers to test specific interventions and not just the effects of nudging citizens. With regards to citizen participation, this design has been used by researchers to study citizen’s political behavior and how that is affected by nudges or by information.

In an influential study, Gerber and Green (2000) sent various types of nudges meant to increase voting rates to a randomly selected group of individuals. They found that compared to individuals who did not get the voting nudge, individuals who received a home visit or a direct mail were more likely to vote. In the case of the Gerber and Green study, the instrument was the random assignment that decided whether a citizen received a direct mail or not (the treatment).

In Mexico, Chong et al (2013) sent out flyers to a random selection of citizens that contained information about who is in charge of public works in their cities and how their local government has managed public monies. They find that in cases in which the flyers hinted at corruption, voter turnout fell probably because voters may become apathetic about the political process if it is entrenched in corruption. This finding, of course, has to be informed by the local context, as voting is not mandatory in Mexico, so citizens may opt not to vote as a show of protest. In contrast, Ferraz and Finan (year) find that in Brazil, where voting is mandatory, providing information about corruption in local governments reduces the probability of reelection of corrupt mayors.

Humphreys and Weinstein (2012) provide a very informative study for the Cómo Vamos program. Together with an NGO, they created scorecards for the performance of members of parliament of Uganda. They informed a randomly selected group of members of parliament that the scorecards would be distributed to their constituents and they shared the scorecards with citizens in randomly selected areas. They find that the politicians do not modify their behavior in response to the greater exposure that the scorecards entail and that citizens in zones exposed to the scorecards were not better informed about politicians’ performance even though they were aware of the cards. Moreover, they found no evidence that reelection rates were affected by the scorecard campaign.

This last study is particularly relevant for Cómo Vamos because it suggests that politicians may not always be responsive to increased public information about their performance. More
importantly, it suggests that even if citizens are aware of the information, they may not necessarily understand it well. This shows how the effects of information on citizen participation are not immediately obvious, which should encourage Cómo Vamos to experiment in order to discover how the dynamics of information, citizen participation, and political accountability function in the Colombian context.

It is possible to readily apply this type of design to the case of Cómo Vamos. The design, of course, would depend on what is being asked, but for the sake of illustration, let the research question be whether people who are exposed to Cómo Vamos information and campaigns are more likely to participate in a working group or to vote in local elections. There will be citizens who will participate or vote whether or not they have the information provided by Cómo Vamos; others who will never participate; and others who can be swayed to participate or vote by receiving an encouragement. The design will help uncover the effect of Cómo Vamos on this last group.

A possible intervention could be to send out flyers encouraging citizens to check the information on the Cómo Vamos website or to remind them about the importance of such information and where to find it. The researchers can then compare the behavior of those citizens who received the flyer versus those who did not. Alternatively, the flyer could provide summarized information from the Quality of Life Indicators generated by Cómo Vamos or information about how to participate more actively in the local political process; the contents of the flyer would vary as a function of the question being asked. Flyers and direct mail campaigns are alluring because of their low costs, but another option could also be to send groups of people to go door-to-door to inform people about possible participation venues or to make them aware about the importance of participating actively. A scorecard could also be designed in an effort to transmit information in a more visual manner. If done well, a field experiment can also help detect differential behavior among groups to see who responds more to the information.

Although encouragement designs and field experiments have many advantages, they also come with important tradeoffs. First, while the estimated effects can be internally valid as they hint at causal effects, they lack in external validity, as it is not possible to say that the same results would hold in a different context at a different time unless there is a compelling theoretical argument. Second, field experiments take time and can be quite complex in terms of logistics and implementation; the upshot is that the statistical analysis tends to be simple and straightforward.

These disadvantages, however, should not deter Fundación Corona or the Cómo Vamos programs from implementing field experiments in alliance with universities, academics, and think tanks. All those involved would learn a lot about how to improve the program, the evidence would be rigorous, and the contribution of knowledge to the world is immeasurable.
Appendix II – External & Internal Interviews

Bogotá Interviews:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cesar Caballeros</td>
<td>Director Cifras y Conceptos</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Sudarsky</td>
<td>Politician and Academic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monica Pachón</td>
<td>Associate Professor Universidad de los Andes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jorge Bernardo Londoño Gutierrez</td>
<td>Director Fundación Luker and Fundación Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlos Rodriguez</td>
<td>Community Leader Teusaquillo</td>
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<td>Ivan Marcel Fresneda Pereira</td>
<td>Local Mayor of Teusaquillo</td>
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<td>Henry Manrique</td>
<td>Community Leader Bosa</td>
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<td>Consejo Local de Planeación de Kennedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlos Vicente de Roux</td>
<td>Concejo de Bogotá</td>
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<td>Olga Lucia Acosta</td>
<td>Regional Director CEPAL</td>
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Ibagué Interviews:

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<tr>
<td>Camilo E. Delgado Herrera</td>
<td>Concejal de Ibague 2012-2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Jairo Uribe</td>
<td>Director del Programa de Ciencias Políticas de la Universidad de Ibague</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luis Carlos Esquivel</td>
<td>Profesor de Finanzas Públicas, Universidad de Ibague</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicolás Camargo</td>
<td>Periodistas de Elolfato.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dra. Victoria Kairuz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dra. Cecilia Correa</td>
<td>Directora de Centro AVACO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cristian Aroyo</td>
<td>Periodista del Periódico El Nuevo Día</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Alfonso Reyes</td>
<td>Rector Universidad de Ibague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos and Diana</td>
<td>Former Universidad de Ibague student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profesor Javier Castro</td>
<td>Director del Programa de Economía</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Universidad de Ibague</td>
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Manizales Interviews:

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<tr>
<td>Felipe César Londoño</td>
<td>Rector Universidad de Caldas</td>
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<td>Paula Andrea Henao</td>
<td>Asesora de Internacionalización</td>
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<td>Carlos Eduardo García Cortés</td>
<td>Chief of Media Relationships</td>
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<td>Jorge Alejandro García Ramirez</td>
<td>Entrepreneur Bive</td>
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<td>Leonardo Gamba</td>
<td>Student from the University of Caldas</td>
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<td>Fanny Osorio Giraldo</td>
<td>Department of Family Studies University of Caldas- Vice Dean of Projection</td>
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<td>Julián García Cortés</td>
<td>Political Science Professor Autonoma de Manizales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cecilia Maria Velez</td>
<td>Former Minister of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guillermo Calvo Mahé</td>
<td>Coordinator Political Science Universidad Autonoma de Manizales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catalina Rey López</td>
<td>Directora del Comité Intergremial de Caldas</td>
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<td>Jorge Hernán López</td>
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<td>Nicolás Restrepo Escobar</td>
<td>Director Periodico La Patria</td>
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<td>Jorge Fernando Olearte</td>
<td>Secretary of Planning</td>
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<td>Oscar Jimenez</td>
<td>Contractor for Cómo Vamos Manizales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juan Camilo Arrovaya</td>
<td>Technical Assistant Cómo Vamos</td>
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<td>Leonardo Gamba</td>
<td>Student/Data Visualization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santiago Castellanos Santander</td>
<td>Social and Education Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oscar Jimenez</td>
<td>Consultant for Cómo Vamos</td>
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