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**The Dissertation Committee for Javier Hugo Pereira Bruno Certifies that this is the  
approved version of the following dissertation:**

**Non Governmental Public Action in Adolescent Fertility:  
the Cases of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay**

**Committee:**

---

Ronald Angel, Supervisor

---

Bryan Roberts

---

Peter Ward

---

Cynthia Buckley

---

Charles Hale

**Non Governmental Public Action in Adolescent Fertility:  
the Cases of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay**

**by**

**Javier Hugo Pereira Bruno, Lic., M.A.**

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## **Dedication**

For Flavia

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# **Non Governmental Public Action in Adolescent Fertility: the Cases of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay**

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Javier Hugo Pereira Bruno, Ph.D.

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**Abstract:** This dissertation examines the role of nongovernmental public action (NGPA) in the controversial field of adolescent fertility in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Santiago (Chile) and Montevideo (Uruguay). Embracing a comparative perspective the study investigates the modes in which national policy and institutional environments shape the role of civil society organizations and their margins of autonomy vis a vis other powerful actors such as the State and the Catholic church. Forty one organizations whose mission includes the prevention of teenage pregnancy or the support of teenage parents were studied using a multi-method approach to explore cross national similarities and differences. An exhaustive account of national and subnational policies and programs in this field demonstrates the existence of isomorphic trends in the treatment and framing of adolescent reproductive behavior as a critical issue of public policy in each country. Similarly in all three countries women's rights organizations play a critical role in the legal recognition and enforcement of adolescents' sexual and reproductive rights while pro-poor organizations are fundamental actors in addressing the specific needs of teenage

mothers and their children. However, important cross national differences were found regarding the modes in which NGPA engages with governmental agencies. As distinctive national marks, the study reveals a strong presence of NGOs in the role of rights watchdogs and monitors in Argentina, a strong alliance between central government structures and technical NGOs to confront resistances to reforms in Chile, and the utilization of NGOs as service providers in detriment of their participation in phases of policy design in Uruguay. Although the language of rights has colonized most of the surveyed organizations, adult-centric practices and discourses are still defining the interaction with adolescents. Adolescent's demands are rarely voiced and only a few organizations favor their engagement in contentious politics and community activism. Nongovernmental autonomy is severely curtailed as a result of the influence of religion, and the lack of state modernization or financial opportunities, in the three countries. On theoretical grounds, the study highlights the importance of public policy as the arena where the potential of civil society can be maximized.



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# CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM, THE THEORY, THE FIELD AND THE METHODS

## Introducing this dissertation

This dissertation examines the nature of non governmental public action in the field of teenage pregnancy in three capital cities of the Southern Cone of Latin America: Buenos Aires (Argentina), Santiago (Chile) and Montevideo (Uruguay). The main objective of this research project – whose fieldwork was conducted between 2006 and 2007- was to understand the key factors that shape the role played by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in a particularly ideologically loaded field of social policy as is the one related to adolescent fertility. Our central interest was to identify the key forces that influence the variegated modes in which NGOs engage in policy responses in the specific areas of teenage pregnancy prevention and teenage parenthood support. More specifically, we sought to understand why and how do NGOs take part in the different phases of the social policy process (design, implementation, evaluation) and what defines their ultimate attitude and stands towards governmental agencies.

To attain this goal we have selected a group of NGOs in each of the capital cities formed by organizations with variegated strains of backgrounds (gender, faith based, pro-poor, grass roots organizations and professional associations), although sharing a common concern: **how to deal with the “issue” of teenage pregnancy?** How to articulate an institutional response to increasing incidence of adolescent fertility? We explicitly avoid the use of the term “problem” to refer to teenage pregnancy or parenthood, as this became a disputed perspective across national NGO communities, as we will see.

Taking advantage of the cross national perspective the research will draw primarily on comparative analysis of NGO communities in the three capital cities and their respective environments. By comparing the practices and discourses of a group of selected non governmental public actors in each country, we seek to understand the modes in which their action is shaped and determined. As we look for the determinants of non governmental public action we will pay particular attention to the influence of identity and ideological factors at the institutional level as well as policy and political traits at the national and city level.

Teenage parenthood has increasingly become the target of public interventions in all three selected countries, aiming to break the generational reproduction of poverty and the accumulation of social disadvantages in which it occurs. In this context, civil society organizations have become increasingly involved in this field in various roles and duties whose **meaning and purpose is the object of study in this project**. With this purpose we will try to understand the national institutional and policy environments in the domain of adolescent fertility and see how they constrain or enable non governmental action. More specifically we will examine the nature of the relationships that national NGOs communities establish with the governmental structures, agencies and programs, and what are the key factors explaining the NGOs approach.

Far from “essentializing” the NGO world, we acknowledge the heterogeneity and diversity of civil society organizations and the various stands they take towards governmental structures. As some will collaborate with the State in the delivery of social services, others will confront governmental agencies through advocacy campaigns or lobbying activities. Between these extreme poles, a vast array of middle grounds positions could be found, as we closely examine the type of services, projects and community activities deployed by NGOs in our specific domain. However, looking at

three different countries has helped us to find common patterns in the role of NGOs in national policy process and, furthermore, across national boundaries. Interestingly, our search has enabled us to identify some commonalities and differences that may enhance our understanding of the NGO postures and actions towards governmental structures as well as towards the communities they seek to serve (and in some cases, claim to represent). Additionally, the comparative approach of the project has provided good conditions to understand the potentiality of NGOs in representing the needs of excluded groups and the modes in which institutional and policy reforms may affect their autonomy.

It has become clear that adolescent fertility is a highly contentious field where meanings are disputed and non governmental actors are not just neutral and technical agents. What does it mean to “protect” the sexual and reproductive rights of the adolescents? How far should the state go in preventing teenage pregnancy? Or should it better use its always scarce resources to support teenage parents instead? Which stand do NGOs take the along this prevention vs. support continuum? To put it in Gramscian terms this particular domain of civil society can be examined as a “battlefield” (Gramsci, 1992) where ideological confrontations existing at large in society are internalized by actors who at time are belligerents, at time are partners, at time make alliances to confront the state, and at time allies with the state to confront another non governmental actor.

### **Understanding the Role of NGOs in Social Policy**

Three decades of social policy reforms in Latin America has established a new division of responsibilities among states and civil society organizations and new relationships between these sectors have emerged (Filmus 1997; García Delgado 2001;



Villasante 1994). Processes of economic liberalization, administrative decentralization and targeted policies have altered the balance in the provision of a variety of public goods and have transformed the manner in which public agencies and civil society organizations coordinate their efforts in social policy domains (Acuña 2003; Evans 1996; Tendler 1997) . These processes have redefined the boundaries between States and Civil Societies particularly at the local level where a new range of institutional forms are challenging the simplistic public-private dichotomy and claim for new conceptual categories (Bresser Pereira 1999; 1998; De la Maza 2000). Under the auspices of decentralizing municipal and state reforms, formal non governmental organizations (NGOs) and grass roots organizations (GROs) have become salient players in the new welfare structures emerging in the region (Dagnino 2004; Edwards 1996; Foweraker 2005; Meyers 1999). Assuming various roles, civil society organizations may collaborate with public agencies in the provision of an array of social services; they help prioritize the allocation of public resources, or advocate for the expansion or enforcement of citizen rights. The effects of this increasing “NGOization” (Alvarez 1998) in public policy on the democratization of the state structures, and the power dynamics involved in the relationship between NGOs and neoliberal democratic States has been at the center of recent academic debates (Franceschet 2005; Paley 2001; Picazo 2006; Roberts 2005).

In fact, the analyses on the expansion of the NGO phenomena written in the early 1990s already advised on the problematic effects of taking for granted the “natural” advantages of NGOs vis a vis public agencies (Bebbington 1993; 1994; Carroll 1992; Eade 1993; Fisher 1994). Influenced by these earlier works, authors like Arellano-Lopez and Franceschet have examined how modern neoliberal States constrain the critical capacity of NGOs by means of funding dependency and subtle power dynamics (Arellano-Lopez 1994; Franceschet 2005). Drawing upon Foucault’s post-structuralist

framework Gordon and Scott have emphasized the need to theorize the state as a non monolithic structure, -multifaceted and contradictory in nature- in order to gauge the complexity of state-civil society relationships (Gordon 1991; Scott 1995).

Stimulated by these ongoing debates, we sought to examine the various modes in which national NGOs communities engage with governmental action and policy, through relations of cooperation, cooptation, confrontation or indifference, in the field of adolescent fertility. We engage in these debates by trying to understand the purpose of non governmental action in this field and the disputed meanings that may arise around current trends of state “democratization”, widening spaces for “participation” and expanding a “rights approach” in governmental structures. (De la Maza 2003; Spink 2000).

As institutional theory would suggest, to understand the meaning of NGO as institutional actors we need to pay attention to the environment in which they struggle to survive (Scott and Meyers 1994) It is necessary then, to examine the political, institutional, economic and social environments in which these actors operate and the extent to which these factors constrain or enable nongovernmental public action (Howell 2006). Therefore, we must gauge the structure of opportunities and resources that NGOs encounter in their national policy environment if we seek to understand the mode in which they engage in the social policy processes. As we will see later in this chapter, whether NGOs seek to promote changes in public policy and services, build alliances with other organizations or just perform as service providers, is significantly affected by the environment in which NGOs are involved. However, from social movement theory movement, we also have learnt of NGOs capacity to give birth to new social actors, advance political agendas, expand new rights, gain access to external resources, and dispute over prevailing “meanings” in existing environments. As institutional and social

movements theories provide with powerful and developed frameworks for the understanding of NGOs role in our contexts, we will devote a particular section below to gain insights from their major analytical categories.

### **Seeking to explain NGO behavior**

Latin American social policy environments have become more complex in the recent decades with increasing numbers of actors involved at different stages of the policy process. Increasingly, we have witnessed the proliferation of actors such as municipalities, formal NGOs, grassroots organizations and private consultant firms, involved in processes of policy design, implementation, service delivery and evaluation. Non governmental actors currently engage in relations with agencies at various levels of government, as the State has also become more multifaceted and heterogeneous than before. This proliferation of actors in the scene has been mirrored by an increase in the ideological heterogeneity around policy formulation (Roberts 2001).

Frameworks that shape non governmental action may come from different sources, both national and international. In this respect, NGOs could be understood as institutional arrangements at the crossroads of competing discourses that provide a framework for organizational actions and decisions (Hilhorst 2003). In present global scenarios, we may acknowledge three main sources of discourses and practices that emerged as conditions as well as possibilities for non governmental action: a) discourses and practices from multilateral agencies and foreign private donors, b) discourses and practices of national States, c) discourse and practices from transnational advocacy networks. To be sure, these frameworks should not be seen as mutually exclusive nor as restraints to non governmental action. In fact, they will enact possibilities as well as

constraints, and will allow space to develop potentialities as well as limitations in the NGO sector.

This diversity of frameworks and approaches is particularly relevant in our selected policy field as there are a wide range of ideological stands about what should be the most appropriate responses and approaches to deal with the issue of teenage pregnancy. Just to mention an example, the simple fact of labelling teenage pregnancy as a “problem” has been a subject of debate and discussion, around which national NGO communities have been divided (as will see in the next section). NGOs in each country will respond to this “issue” in different manners, enacting different actions, putting in place different services, pressing for different governmental responses and advocating for different rights based on their ideological framework and convictions. Even the meaning they grant to apparently simple notions such as “sexual and reproductive rights” may be disputed, based on their institutional ideology. In this context, our goal is to understand the ultimate factors shaping non governmental action, their role in the policy process and the stand they take towards State structures.

To advance in this direction we may find it useful to bring to the fore some analytical categories from two theoretical traditions which have been widely applied to the NGO phenomenon: institutional and social movements’ theory. Among many possible definitions, non governmental organizations can be seen as *institutionalized social movements* whose membership, agendas and strategies have dramatically changed in the last years. This conceptualization enables the study of NGOs under complementary theoretical traditions such as social movement and institutional theory. Both thrusts have great potential for understanding and bringing new insight to the analysis of the nature and role of NGOs and their relationship with governmental actors.

## **GAINING INSIGHTS FROM INSTITUTIONAL THEORY**

The work of institutional theory scholars such as John Meyer, Richard Scott and Ephraim Yuchtman can provide us with powerful tools to gauge the performance of NGOs in their environments, identify possible standards for their effectiveness and understand their efforts to gain access to resource and information.

As discussed by the institutional paradigm, the definition of what is an institution, just this alone, raises theoretical traits that are helpful for the understanding of the NGO phenomenon. Usually institutional theorists see institutions as incomplete social systems with specific boundaries, concrete goals and a purposive design (Scott 2004a). The definition of goals and boundaries as well as the institutional design, bring to the fore interesting issues of control and effectiveness that are central to NGO relations with governmental structures. But also the notion of institutions as incomplete social systems provides interesting venues for theoretical elaboration. As incomplete as they are, NGOs rely on their external environments in order to obtain the necessary resources to survive. As described by Meyer and Scott (1983), in their search for external resources, institutions become dependent on their external environment, leading to tensions between control and autonomy. In fact, much of the recent institutional theory have focused on the ways and strategies that institutions use to “manage dependency” and the ways in which the environment may offer opportunities for autonomy (Scott 2004a; 2004b)

To be fair with institutional theorists, most of the *accountability* debate has been based and reshaped by contributions of institutional scholarship. For example, Ann Hudock (1999) elaborates on the effects that the external environment and the manners in which NGOs obtain their resources seems to be directly inspired and fueled by institutional theory. Her work has pointed out the existing contradictions between resource-seeking orientation and community-serving objectives, which can be

summarized in the basic principle of institutional survival as defined by institutional theory. Drawing upon an institutional approach Hudock assess the difficulties that emerge when NGOs are competing with other institutions for scarce resources. Hence, the principle of “*institutional survival*” constitutes a priority over strategies of cooperation and articulation, lessening the possibilities for greater impact and collective learning.

Additionally, the distinction between *institutions* and *organizations* provide useful insights for our analysis. As it has been studied by Alejandro Portes (2006), it is necessary to distinguish between the rules and values that define institutions, and the constantly modification and transformation of these rules in the course of daily interaction. In our study of NGOs, both dimensions should be acknowledged and distinguished as they are, simultaneously, *institutions* with assigned roles, prescribed norms and a developed cultures, and *organizations* with embedded power structures and status hierarchies. In fact, as pointed out by Portes, the latter are permanently reshaping and transforming the meaning of institutional norms, roles and cultures. Without ignoring these organizational dimensions, our emphasis will be placed in the institutional aspects of NGOs as we seek to understand the differences in terms of values, norms, ideology and strategies that characterize nongovernmental action in each national context. Our comparative strategy provides an interesting approach in this respect as cross-national differences in the roles and values that drive the performance of NGOs are normative and culturally based.

In chapter 3 we examine the national policy environments in which NGOs act, mobilize, negotiate and struggle to survive, in order to identify the structure of opportunities and constraints that they face, and how this affect the relationship with different levels of government.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORY

Using social movement theory to understand non governmental action may be advantageous to fully capture the “mobilizing” capacity of NGOs and their linkages with other actors in the local, national and global field. In this respect, the social movements’ perspective will emphasize aspects such as NGOs membership (*“the social movements are their members”*, they would say) and their mobilization capacity usually around a specific political agenda. Opposed to institutional theorists, social movement approach will prioritize analysis of NGOs as political actors over their more professionalized and technical dimensions. However, these distinctions should not prevent us from seeing institutions and social movements as convergent dimensions of the NGO phenomena. More than placing them as opposite categories we might argue in favor of a two-way continuum, in which social movements can become formalized entities through a process of increasing formalization and NGOs may give birth to social movements by means of mobilization of community’s resources around certain issues. Typically, scholars working under the identity politics framework (such as Arturo Escobar, Evelyn Dagnino and Sonia Alvarez) have identified increasing paths of bureaucratization and depolitization in the culture of social movements, leading to the consolidation of formal NGOs.

Sonia Alvarez has coined the term “NGOization” to refer to the process in which social movements give birth to NGOs in order to acquire greater levels of policy incidence, although weakening the political content of their project. In this respect, the feminist movement in Latin America offers an interesting case for study. Alvarez (2002) has seen the increasing multiplication of gender based NGOs in the region as the result of the demobilization of the feminist movement. In her perspective, this process entailed significant limitations as it implies a transformation in the political project originally

embraced by feminist activism. By turning into NGOs, feminism became more technical but less political, detaching the movement from its root basis, and depoliticizing the meaning of terms such as citizenship, democracy and participation.

Similarly, NGOs can also give birth to social movements as has been widely discussed in the actor's perspective literature (Long 2001, Hilhorst 2003). In some contexts, NGOs may become the activators of social mobilization, emerging as the cohesive actors for diverse community groups. Hilhorst's work shows good examples of how formal NGOs can organize grass roots and community organizations to confront prevailing discourses of development embraced by international development agencies such as the World Bank or the International Development Bank. For a social movement's perspective, NGOs may be seen as crucial players in articulating community demands and bridging them with policy decision makers.

Additionally, our understanding of non governmental action can be enhanced when examined through the categories of the *resource mobilization* and *political opportunities* work of Tarrow, Mc Adams, Zald and Mc Carthy. Concepts such as *resources*, *framing*, *opportunities*, *issues* and *strategies* can be very useful when applied to NGOs as explained below.

- **Resources:** NGOs may be gauged according to their capacity to successfully use and take advantage of existing resources. As theorized by Tarrow, the notion of resources not only refers to tangible issues such as money or skills, but also to intangible concepts such as information, knowledge and leadership.
- **Framing:** Like social movements, NGOs should be analyzed in terms of their capacity to frame certain issues in order to make them appealing to their constituencies or public opinion. NGOs can attain significant incidence in



shaping policy debates and reaching public opinion through massive campaigns.

- **Opportunities:** Like social movements, NGOs may be seen as actors in search of opportunities in their political context. The making of alliances between NGOs and governmental agencies or political parties, or the participation in private-public partnership may vary according to the opportunities provided by the context.
- **Issues:** As pointed out by Keck and Sikkink (1998) NGOs have developed a great capacity to identify purposive and intentional frames of action based on the identification of specific issues with symbolic meaning. By placing the focus on these specific issues, NGOs are capable of placing a particular aspect of a broader problem in the agenda.
- **Strategies:** Finally, NGOs can be seen as using the same strategies that social movements deployed. Concepts such as symbolic politics, information politics, accountability politics, leverage politics, so familiar to the social movement literature can also be used for the study of NGOs.

## **NGOS, ACTOR PERSPECTIVES AND INTERFACE ANALYSIS**

Finally we would like to introduce some insights from actor oriented perspectives applied to non governmental actors as developed in the works of Norman Long (1999; 2001) and Dorothea Hilhorst (2003). These scholars have drawn their attention to the role of NGOs in what they called the *interface zones*, as areas where social policies are effectively delivered encountering their allegedly ‘beneficiaries’. The expansion of social programs and policies has brought about the proliferation of *interface zones* where processes and results of social policies can be negotiated, confronted, or enhanced between involved actors. Interface analysis would suggest directing the analysis beyond

the explicit objectives of social programs and policies, examining the concrete effects that derive from actual implementation of programs at the community level. Interestingly, this perspective gives as much importance to its implementation process as to the policy contents, since there are unexpected effects that can alter the meaning of its results for the community.

For the case of our study, it seems important to acknowledge the direct and indirect consequences that the implementation of teenage pregnancy policies may have for issues such as gender equity, citizen participation and social rights enforcement, beyond explicit manifested policy objectives. We also need to address the role played by NGOs in the implementation of governmental policies and programs, and the margin of manouver they may have for autonomous action within governmental constraints. This perspective can help us to understand the relations that NGOs build with governmental and community actors, and identify the tensions derived from this relations.

In practical terms, interface analysis draws our attention to the different social interests that are at stake in the policy implementation zones, and how they are negotiated, disputed and resolved between actors in the field. It also urges us to examine the different interpretations and meanings that actors give to policy orientations, rules and conditions taking advantage from grey areas and unruled spaces. The ultimate content of these relations may be better captured by case studies at the local level -as the one we have conducted here- more than formal analysis of policies at the national level.

Finally, by paying attention to the actor's perspective, we are drawn to explore the multiple ideologies that converge around a specific and conflictive issue of social policy, such as "teenage pregnancy" or "adolescent fertility". In this respect interface analysis suggests that some types of interfaces are more conflict ridden than others, depending on the actors involved. Therefore, we intend to examine the role that institutional ideology

has in guiding non governmental action, and the way in which it is negotiated given the opportunities and possibilities provided by policy environments.

### **The field: adolescent fertility in the Southern Cone**

Although this dissertation is not about explaining the causes, consequences and particularities of increases in adolescent fertility in the studied country, we are urged to provide a brief reference to current trends to put our main focus in context. The three selected countries, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay have been considered pioneers of the welfare state architecture in Latin America, granting extensive welfare coverage to their working populations, compared with other countries in the region. They are also unique as they passed early demographic transitions during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when they witnessed significant declines in fertility and mortality rates, as well as significant process of urbanization and industrialization. Currently, these three countries are making their way into second demographic transitions with increasing aging trends (particularly in Chile and Uruguay), increases in divorce rates, higher incidence of new family arrangements, and delays in the assumption of reproductive roles and employment responsibilities.

However, socially excluded and vulnerable households in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay showed a completely different demographic pattern, with remnants of first demographic transition. Increasing processes of labor market segmentation, spatial urban segregation and higher incidence of unstable and less formal family arrangements have shaped higher and earlier reproductive patterns among poor urban households. In contexts of national fertility rates declines, adolescent fertility has increased its incidence and became a major policy challenge for national governments. In all three countries,

teenage pregnancy and young parenthood, has become invariably coupled with low educational attainment, weak ties with labor markets and poor access to health and social services. Demographic trends show that teenagers living in poor urban segregated communities initiate their sexual activity earlier, become parents at younger ages, tend to have more offsprings and exhibit shorter intervals between births. (Rodriguez 2004; 2005).

The “newness” of the above mentioned structural transformations has to be found not so much in the isolated impact of each one of them, but in the manner in which their effects are interconnected and mutually reinforced. The obstacles posed by changing requirements in labor markets, trends in residential segregation and emerging family structures tend to converge, increasing the chances of vulnerable young households to fall in poverty or “hardening” this condition among those already poor. Therefore, dealing with “the issue” of teenage pregnancy has become an outstanding social and public health policy goal in the Southern Cone countries in the last decade, as it came to be seen as a crucial behavior not only for the perpetuation of poverty among young mothers and fathers, but for the generational reproduction of poverty.

So far, governmental discourses and intended policies across the three studied countries have focused on preventive strategies seeking to avoid unwanted pregnancies. Common policy patterns in the studied countries show the implementation of sexual and reproductive health programs aiming to grant access to effective contraception, opening more adolescent-friendly services within the public health network, and timid attempts to introduce sexual education across national formal curriculums. Governments have also attempted to move beyond prevention, seeking to provide support to teenage parents although the results of these actions rarely attained to break the circle of social exclusion. Supportive actions, usually aim to break the chain of risks associated with teenage

parenthood such as school drop-outs, disengagement with learning, insufficient employability skills, low paid jobs, lack of housing, prevention of second pregnancies and the need of childcare support. Clearly, prevailing national policies have significantly drawn upon the “risk approach” which is based on the assumption that teenage pregnancy is a risky behavior that increases the odds of other subsequent risks. In consequence, like with any other risks, public campaigns are aimed at preventing this behavior, sometimes crossing the delicate line of stigmatizing those “risk takers” (teenage mothers and fathers in our case).

Public health discourses sustain the existence of biomedical risks for the health of the adolescent mother and her offspring (Conde-Agudelo et al, 2005), although the evidence has been widely disputed especially for adolescents of age 15 and above (Bingley et al., 2000, McPherson et al., 2000, Wolkind and Kruk, 1985). In the social risks domain, it is even more difficult to establish causality and gauge the effect of the age at pregnancy as an explaining factor for school drop-outs, lack of employment and other undesired outcomes usually associated with teenage pregnancy. Although some studies have tried to establish the chronological order in which risks proceed, it seems more appropriate to talk about a *configuration* of risks of which teenage pregnancy is an additional one. Therefore, teenage pregnancy along with school drop-outs, weak ties with labor markets, lack of skills and unstable family arrangements defines a tightly chained configuration of risks that tend to reinforce each other. Following the risk approach, national policy responses to pregnancy and motherhood in the adolescence have been driven by two basic assumptions. First, it is framed and treated as a *public health problem* with undesired biomedical consequences for the mother and their children. Second, it has also been considered a *social problem* that perpetuates poverty and social exclusion in the new generations and makes it harder for adolescent parents to

break out of the circle of poverty. Assuming these premises, national responses have relied significantly on the implementation of maternal and child health programs seeking to avoid the *epidemiological risks* associated with early parenthood, as well as birth control and family planning programs seeking to interrupt the perpetuation of poverty into new generations by means of avoiding their reproduction. In recent years, the irruption of the *sexual and reproductive rights paradigm* in governmental discourses and practices provided renewed ground for prevention policies. Supported by United Nation charters and International Non Governmental Organizations (INGOs) the new paradigm emphasizes the rights of women and men to make informed reproductive decisions, to access effective contraception methods and to bring about the children that couples *really* desire (Freedman e Isaacs 1993; Cook 1993). The widespread rights discourse gained significant purchase under New Leftist governments in the Southern Cone inspiring a renewed wave of preventive policies and programs. Since then, the emphasis has been placed in granting universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, the incorporation of sexual education into schools, and the implementation of age-specific health services for the adolescents. However, as will be examined in chapter 4, our studied countries show different degrees of accomplishments along these lines.

With the turn of century new perspectives on teenage pregnancy have emerged that place greater emphasis on the context of poverty and its cultural traits (Heilborn 2002; Novaes 2004; Brandao 2006; 2007). According to these authors, it is not possible to implement adequate and effective policies if teenage pregnancy is not addressed within the context of poverty and social exclusion in which it takes places. Drawing upon cultural perspectives, they approach teenage pregnancy in its cultural context where it gain new meaning and becomes a rational behavior. Instead of focusing on the risks associated with it, socio-cultural perspectives perceive pregnancy and motherhood as

meaningful steps in the youth emancipation process, one that grants a new status within the community where it take place. Furthermore, in the wake of lack of alternative projects such as continuing with studies, getting a well paid job or pursuing other similar middle class trajectories, maternity emerged as an attractive and rational choice rewarded with community praise.

Using life history interviews many studies have documented how frequently teenage mothers tend to repeat the accounts of their own mothers, following a pattern that can be tracked down for generations (just for the case of Argentina we can cite the works of Jelin 1998, Sacchi 1997, Checa 2003). Also from a male's perspective teenage pregnancy acquires new significance when examined through the lens of cultural meaning and community values. It may unveils as a token of masculinity and virility in contexts where is difficult to find other strategies to fulfill prevailing gender stereotypes. The role of fatherhood and its impact on masculinity in the case of teenage pregnancy has also been the subject of recent studies (just for the case of Uruguay we can cite the work of Lopez 2006 and Guida 2008). These approaches to teenage pregnancy have mirrored, with some delay, the work of American scholars such as Judith Musick in "Young, Poor and Pregnant" (1995) or Kristine Luker in "The politics of teenage pregnancy" (1996). Similarly, these works have addressed common policy assumptions around teenage mothers, bringing back the actor perspective into the analysis.

In fact, from a policy perspective these contributions may challenge mainstream governmental programs as they emphasize the enabling dimensions that young motherhood and fatherhood might have in contexts of poverty, more than the obstacles associated with it. They may also challenge the notion that teenage pregnancy is the result of lack of sexual education, insufficient information and lack of access to contraception. In their lens, sexuality and reproductive practices in adolescence become

better understood as part of a process of emancipation by which personal autonomy is attained and which cannot be understood outside the context in which it occurs. Although these new perspectives have not gained much leverage in governmental policy orientations they have found purchase in several NGOs and community organizations seeking for alternative frameworks to sustain their actions.

### **Research Questions & Design**

The previous account shows various approaches to teenage pregnancy which may shape specific national policies and programs. Prevailing policy frameworks inspire the implementation of appropriate type of measures and programs at each time. The assumptions that lay behind governmental programs are not neutral and cannot be discharged as undisputed under the labels of appropriate *technical solutions*. Whether governments allocate greater amounts of resources in preventive programs or they prefer to prioritize supporting programs for teenage parents, are decisions based on implicit assumptions that might be challenged from opposing perspectives. Even when actions are driven by the overarching goal of protecting *sexual and reproductive rights*, one may ask how are these rights defined and interpreted. As the work of Alejandro Cervantes (2004) has made clear sexual and reproductive rights comprises three main spheres: sexuality, procreation and rearing, although not all these reproductive rights are equally protected by current governmental policies. In the case of poor young couples, we may hypothesized that there are more efforts devoted to prevent than to support their parenthood, although there might be variations across our three selected countries as we shall see.



These policy preferences have significant impact in shaping the landscape of non governmental action as they define the institutional environment in which NGOs operate by setting program goals and pouring resources towards their attainment. Oppositely, non governmental organizations may influence public policy by pressing governmental structures as it has occurred in recent years with the feminist and sexual and reproductive rights movements. In fact, governmental efforts to enforce rights on these new grounds have frequently required the knowledge and expertise of NGOs staff, somewhat blurring the frontiers between these spheres. Less developed and resourced organizations may just witness these processes and participate as implementers of programs if they succeed in competing for the available resources.

It is in this context that we inquire about the factors that shape non governmental action and explain its engagement with public programs and agencies in the field of teenage fertility. Like public policy, non governmental actors also have their ideological preferences and biases, which define their identities and their positions in the policy field. However, their identity –we would argue- is subject to permanent negotiation with environmental opportunities as external resources are needed to secure institutional survival. Unveiling this tension between environment and identity, between access to resources and ideology, is at the core of our research project. To be sure, these tensions are context specific as they are shaped by political and institutional environments, which can be more or less friendly to various types of non governmental action.

Therefore, our first challenge would be to describe the NGO communities in each capital city, mapping the various approaches that we encounter to teenage pregnancy and teenage parenthood. Secondly, we will seek to understand cross national differences in institutional and policy environments, and how they influence governmental and non governmental approaches to teenage pregnancy. Thirdly, we will examine cross national

differences in the role of NGOs in expanding and promoting teenage sexual and reproductive rights paying particular attention to the situation of teenage parents.

In doing this we will be dealing with the following empirical questions: What cross national differences could be identified in political and institutional environments? What are the consequences that these differences have on governmental approaches to adolescent fertility? And how do these national differences elicit different responses and participation from non governmental actors? In more assertive language: How similar does a Catholic NGO in Uruguay performs compared with a Chilean or an Argentinean one? Do feminist NGOs take equally approaches to teenage pregnancy across the three countries? How much support can sexual and reproductive rights organizations gain from their national governments? Do all these institutional labels or categories mean the same in each country? What exact meaning is granted to sexual and reproductive rights in each national policy environment? How much space is left for NGO action outside the prevailing views of governmental policies in each country? How likely it is to find inter-NGOs alliances in favor of teenage-specific rights in each country? Are ideological barriers between NGOs groups equally difficult to trespass across country?

On more theoretical grounds, we would inquire about how NGOs make use of their policy environments to express their identity. Is it mainly the external opportunities that are available what explains NGOs performance as institutional theory would say? How loyal do NGOs remain to their identity traits in their struggle to survive? How do they come to terms between their ultimate survival interest and the autonomy and self-determination allegedly pursued for the group they serve? What factors determine governmental openness to NGO participation in policy design, evaluation and control over resources? What conditions favor NGOs roles of advocacy, raising rights consciousness, and control over public action?

## **RESEARCH STRATEGY**

Our research strategy proceeded in consecutive stages moving from a country level of analysis into a city level and then to the realm of institutions within each city. Decisions made at each step were part of an overall research design which comprises these three-fold stages. The central strategies in the research design could be summarized as follows: a) cross-national comparative analysis, b) sampling of NGOs at city level, c) multi-techniques approach to collect institutional data. In the remaining of the chapter we examine these strategies and discuss the methodological decisions underpinning our study.

### **Cross national comparative analysis**

As we sought to understand the influence of institutional and political national environments on non governmental action the cross-national approach was a clear decision since the beginning. The use of comparative analysis “can be very illuminating and rewarding, as they allow to better appreciate the importance of some aspect or aspects—that would otherwise escape attention if the focus were only on a single unit (country)” (Valenzuela 1998). However, as adverted by Patricia Kennett (2004) in her classic “*Handbook of comparative social Policy*” it is important to identify “appropriate functional equivalents to compare” in order to take good use of comparative analysis. In this respect common welfare states background, early industrialization and urbanization process, and similar demographic trajectories shared by Argentina, Chile and Uruguay provided an interesting ground for comparative analysis. Additionally, as Kennett suggests, what creates good comparative work is not just adding information from different countries but doing it within a common analytical framework or even set of common topics across the cases. Therefore, we have structured our work by bringing a

cross national perspective to each chapter (usually motivated by a central common analytical question), more than driving our analysis by separated chapters devoted to each country. Additionally, in the case of our study it was particularly relevant to understand the causes for convergence and divergence encountered across nongovernmental approaches and participation in adolescent fertility related policies.

Comparing just three countries falls in what *comparativists* would call “small-n” studies. The advantage of this type of studies is that they tend to treat countries as multi-dimensional backgrounds for comparing the content in specific domains of social policy. Oppositely to “large-n” country comparisons, comparing a few cases allows to conceptualize “national social policies as embedded within different, not always quantifiable, social, political, economic, cultural and ideological contexts which impinge on the shape and impact of particular social policies” (Kennett, 2004). The comparativist tradition has also acknowledged that, depending on the particular aim of the study, sometimes *subnational entities*, such as cities in our case, might be more appropriate unit of analysis. Under the assumption that greater presence and variability of non governmental action is encountered in capital cities, we have limited our focus to Buenos Aires, Santiago and Montevideo. In doing this, we also bear in mind the different decentralization regimes that characterize each country, setting important institutional differences that affect the environment for nongovernmental action. This implies examining the municipal and provincial programs in our field, and their interaction with NGOs in each city, as subnational levels of government have become increasingly salient players in the implementation of programs and the administration of resources. While in Buenos Aires this meant to pay attention to the G.C.B.A. (*Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*), in the case of Santiago, it implied examining the role that municipalities (*comunas*) are playing in targeting teenage groups. Although Uruguay still remains

politically centralized, some ongoing devolution to municipal government of Montevideo (*Intendencia Municipal*) -especially in primary healthcare- needed to be taken into account. Therefore, in all three cases, the inventory of national policies was supplemented with those programs that were taking place at the city level that may be of some relevance for the study of nongovernmental action. Differences and similarities across these lines are examined in Chapter 4, where national environments for NGO activity are discussed.

### **Sampling NGOs at the city level**

In each city we proceeded by initially identifying nongovernmental organizations involved in activities, projects or programs *specifically* related to adolescent fertility, whether in the field of pregnancy prevention, parenthood support, policy design or just raising awareness. Our early exploratory incursions in the field unveiled the existence of a wide range of organizational forms coming from various backgrounds (e.g. gender, feminist, grass roots, Protestant, Catholic, etc) involved in different sort of projects and activities within this field. This variation ranged from community organizations running youth centers in which they need to cope with the reality of teenage pregnancy to well established academic organizations providing new insights about the connections between teenage pregnancy and school attendance. In this context, we were urged to introduce some classificatory criteria that may help us to categorize and sample the heterogeneity of the NGO world. Two important decisions were made at this point.

The first one is that no non governmental entity would be excluded from our framework, based on its lack of formality, size or structure, as long as it was involved in teenage pregnancy/parenthood specific projects. In this respect, we found that the notion of “NGO” severely restrict our scope as many of the organizations we were encountering in the field did not fit with the usual definition associated with this term. Shelters for

teenage mothers run by religious organizations, neighborhood centers providing services for teenage parents and a community network seeking to support local educational projects for teenagers out of school, are some of the cases within this type.

For this reason I have adopted the concept of NGPA (*Non Governmental Public Action*) which found more inclusive and appropriate for this type of organizational expressions. Although the concept is still in a developing stage and somewhat misses a substantial literature, a group of scholars are currently advancing a growing body of research under the NGPA framework.<sup>1</sup> Basically, the NGPA notion broadens substantially the somewhat limiting definition of NGOs. Firstly, by making reference to “public action” it takes into account different sort of purposive collective action for public or private ends by a range of actors. Secondly, it includes not only the study of NGOs but also of a “broader range of formal and informal non-governmental actors concerned with poverty reduction and social transformation” (Howell 2004). These might include typical development NGOs, advocacy coalitions, faith based organizations, neighborhood and community associations, rights-based groups, social enterprise and professional groups as the ones we examined. In consequence, the strategy we pursued took an inclusive approach trying to reflect –to the utmost possible extent- the different approaches to teenage pregnancy encountered within the NGO sector in the cities of Buenos Aires, Santiago and Montevideo.

Our second decision, then, was to provide with a meaningful typology that would help us to organize this heterogeneity and serve as a route map to sample this universe. Keeping in mind our original interest in explaining the nature of nongovernmental action and based in the evidence that we were collecting in the field we identify some basic categories of NGOs, which we hypothesized were determining different approaches to

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<sup>1</sup> With the support of an ESRC fellowship I had the opportunity to become involved in the work of this network, mostly based in the UK and gain some insight from their ongoing research.

adolescent fertility. Our preliminary typology (later enriched and enlarged as the fieldwork advanced) included three main types of organizations: a) women rights, *gender* oriented or feminist organizations, b) religious, *faith based* organization, (disregarding the religion denomination), c) *grass roots*, local networks, community and pro-poor organizations. The idea behind this initial typology was to account for three distinctive ideological backgrounds that were clearly inspiring different responses and approaches towards adolescent fertility. The three original types grew into five at the end of our fieldwork as we realized that d) the *sexual and reproductive rights* organizations, were a type in itself that could not be fused with gender organizations (for reasons that we will later explain), and e) a group of professionals, *academic* and research centers were also significant players in the field of teenage pregnancy and parenthood.

As the types became clear, the typology served as a sampling tool to cover our desired universe in cases where more organizations than we could effectively study were encountered. As we initially proceed with snowball sampling in a “catch-all” mode we realized that for certain types we have almost covered all the existing organizations with projects or programs related to adolescent fertility (like it was the case of women rights, and reproductive rights organizations, in the three cities). However, in the organizational types where some selection was needed we went for the “typical” cases drawing upon the expert judgment or advice of key informants in each city.

Our snowball procedures were supplemented with other sources of information, such as NGOs directories, community resources guides, administrative and governmental documents, secondary electronic sources, which helped us to map the existing nongovernmental activity in this field. In the end, we manage to assure at least two organizations within each type in each city. Depending on the cities, some categories were relatively easier to fulfill while in others were more difficult. Obviously, scales also

matter as Montevideo has significantly less number of organizations than Buenos Aires and Santiago. In any case, as we largely exceed the two cases per category in some cities, we study a total of 41 organizations, distributed as follows: 16 in Santiago, 14 in Buenos Aires and 11 in Montevideo.

### **Collecting data about NGOs and their environment**

The selected organizations were surveyed using the following techniques: a) in depth interviews with NGOs directors and project leaders, b) participation in team meetings, staff/board reunions, or other project activities, c) archival analysis of institutional documentation, such as mission statements, evaluation reports and regular publications of the organizations, d) in site observation and informal contacts with participants (when this was made available). Additionally, to complete the characterization of national policy and institutional environments in which these organizations operate, interviews were conducted with key informants from a) central government ministries and programs, b) municipal staff specialized in adolescent policies and services, c) experts from multilateral development organizations or universities (such as UNDP in Montevideo, FLACSO in Argentina and OMS in Santiago).

To accomplish this large volume of fieldwork activities, I counted with the valuable support and guidance of local researchers, colleagues and advanced students. In Montevideo, the Department of Social Sciences at the Universidad Católica del Uruguay was the platform where the study was based. Lucía Martorelli, Fabiana Barrios, Denise Courtoisie and Mathias Dodel assisted me in collecting data and conducting interviews among Uruguayan NGOs. In Buenos Aires, the *Instituto del Conurbano* from Universidad Nacional General Sarmiento, directed at that time by Magdalena Chiara, was a frequent source of advice and support in several stages of the dissertation project. Also, I owe a lot to Lucia Colucigno who conducted and transcribed several interviews with



NGO members in Buenos Aires and the *Conurbano*. In Santiago, I should acknowledge the support of CEDEM (*Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Mujer*), a gender based organization (which finally became one of our studied cases) where Teresa Valdes generously endorsed the project and Rocío Ferrada conducted several interviews among Chilean organizations.

The most significant part of fieldwork activities were completed between October 2006 and February 2008, although exploratory activities were conducted previously and follow up tasks afterwards.

## **CHAPTER 2: SURVEYING ‘NGPA’ IN THE FIELD OF ADOLESCENT FERTILITY**

### **The organizational forms of Non Governmental Public Action**

In each capital city we have identified several institutions, programs and projects aiming to prevent teenage pregnancy or support teenage parents, through various sorts of strategies and mode of interventions. To become part of our object of study the selected organization must have had a specific program, project or activity seeking to address one of these two goals: prevention of teenage pregnancy or support to teenage parents. Since our main goal was to examine the nature of Non Governmental Public Action in a specific domain of public policy, we kept strictly to these criteria in order to allow a specific organization to become one of our units of observation. Different organizations were identified working in frontier themes or issues (such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, health promotion) but they were not included on the basis that they do not target specifically and explicitly teenage pregnancy or teenage parents. All the organizations in our universe were characterized by enacting a project, program, or specific service in the field of teenage pregnancy/parenthood, as part of their regular activities. However, this does not mean that the organization's activities would revolve solely and exclusively around these issues nor that this configures the principal area of institutional work and concern. In fact most of our selected organizations included projects or activities which target teenagers as part of wider institutional objectives related to gender, poverty, reproductive rights or community development domains.

A total of 41 organizations were studied in the three capital cities, allocated as follows: 16 in Santiago, 14 in Buenos Aires and 11 in Montevideo. The geographical boundaries were constrained to capital cities as a higher concentration of non

governmental activity was assumed in these areas *vis a vis* other regions, departments or provinces in the country. The name of each studied organization, a brief overall presentation of its trajectory and its relation with adolescent fertility is given below. Following the complete name, we also included the acronym by which it will be referenced in the future when a quick reference to the organization's name is required.

#### **ORGANIZATIONS STUDIED IN BUENOS AIRES:**

- 1) *Asociación Argentina de Planificación Familiar (AAPF)*. This organization was founded by a group of gynaecologists in the 1960s, to promote the use of contraception as a means to avoid unwanted pregnancies. It is a typical NGOs created under the Family Planning paradigm, originally funded by pharmaceutical laboratories and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). As most organization of its type it is currently experiencing a mission shift as government has widely included contraception in its agenda.
- 2) *Asociación Civil Sol Naciente (ACSN)*. This association began in 1998 providing meals and school support to children from the Villa 1-11-14 in the area of Bajo Las Flores in the city of Buenos Aires. They quickly moved into the opening of a house for girls and teenage living in the streets, mothers, and victims of violence. They now provide a wide range of services to young mothers including vocational training and employment support, as well as bridge them with public services.
- 3) *Campos del Psicoanálisis (CAMPOS)*. This is an association of psychoanalysts interested with three main areas of support to the community: adoption, foster care and teenager pregnancy and motherhood. The latter, is developed around a project called "Proyecto Cigueña" in which they provide psychological and community support to teenager mothers. More than providing services, they open a space for listening to adolescents and see what is needed. In contrast to the other organizations,

they work with upper-middle class teenage mothers. Their practices feed the research orientation of the project.

- 4) *Caritas Argentina (CARITAS)*. Caritas constitutes the social charity network of the Catholic Church in Argentina. They seek to outreach poor communities based upon the structure of Catholic parishes and dioceses in Argentina. Particularly in Buenos Aires Caritas runs several services for teenage mothers, of which we have selected “La Casa de Abu” a day centre located in the area of Quilmes with specific services for this group and their children.
- 5) *Consortio Nacional de Derechos Reproductivos y Sexuales (CONDERS)*. It is a consortium of NGOs formed by IPSM, the *Foro de Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos*, CLADEM and FEIM, with the objective of monitoring and evaluating the enforcement of sexual and reproductive health rights in Argentina. The consortium provides information and tools to local organizations in Buenos Aires and the provinces to monitor the provision of public services and their quality, while seeking to enhance citizen participation and gender equity in the field of reproductive health rights.
- 6) *Fundación Para el Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM)*. This gender NGO was founded in 1989 by a group of professional women specialists in gender relations. The objective of the foundation is to contribute with research, publications, intervention projects and courses to improve the social, labor, political, health and economic condition of women in Argentina. Since their creation they have developed programs in teenager pregnancy, HIV/AIDs and sexual and reproductive health with the support of national and municipal governmental agencies.
- 7) *Foro por los Derechos Reproductivos (FORO)*. The organization was founded in the early 1990s to promote debate and academic research on reproductive and sexual

rights. Although currently it is not so visible, the organization contributed in the past decade with publications and consultant services on the field of reproductive and sexual health. Currently it remains as an interdisciplinary team that collaborates to conduct research and monitor healthcare policies. .

- 8) *Fundación Felices los Niños (FFN)*. This is a well know Catholic Foundation that runs a large network of services for children living in poverty. Among them, the organization has a residence for teenage mothers called “Hogar Materno Laura Vicuña” founded in 1996 as a result of the increasing number of young mothers that demanded assistance. Mothers between 15 and 21 years of age are accepted with their children upto 7 years of age.
- 9) *Fundación Kaleidos (KALEIDOS)* The Foundation Kaleidos is a professional-led institution that runs a day centre for mothers under 18 years of age. The project, named “Jakairá”, embraces a rights approach based on strengthening the capacities of the adolescent and her bonds with family members. It has a day care service to allow the teenage mothers to reengage in school and vocation training programs.
- 10) *Instituto Social y Político de la Mujer (ISPM)* Focus on monitoring and enforcing access to contraception and reproductive health information. Four main areas of intervention: Violence against women, Women Health with emphasis in sexual and reproductive health, Gender relations and women leadership, and Employment. In partnership with others gender NGOs they founded CONDERS, a consortium to monitor governmental action on sexual and reproductive health. Projects funded by UNPFA, UNIFEM and the Social Development Ministry of Argentina. Main project related to the provision of sex education in schools and high schools under the new law of sex education passed by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires.

- 11) *PLENASSER (PLENASSER)*. This NGO was founded in 2005 by a group of young professionals interested in the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights among young people. They seek to achieve this goal by means of interdisciplinary and collaborative work in research, study and promotion activities in this field. The organization's principal activity is the training of teachers, professors, parents and adolescents in sexual and reproductive health topics, as the new law passed by the government of the City of Buenos Aires makes it compulsory.
- 12) *Red El Encuentro (RE)*. This network created in 1989 integrates 19 community organizations that provide children and youth services in the conurban area of Buenos Aires. The network seeks to support the work of each center through pedagogical and organizational training, negotiation with different levels of governments and joint fund seeking. Most of the centers evolved from childcare centers and five of them actually have developed activities for teenagers, as a means to keep supporting them as they grow.
- 13) *Red Nacional de Adolescentes en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva (REDNACADOL)*. FEIM's project in training young people to become sexual and reproductive health promoters in their communities resulted in the creation of a network integrated by former participants in the project. The participants created the network as a means to integrate other groups of young people in Argentina that work in adolescents' healthcare and reproductive issues. The network is coordinated by FEIM and funded by the Ford Foundation based in Chile.
- 14) *SEXSALUD (SEXALUD)* The organization was founded in 2001 by a group of professionals from different disciplines with specialization in sexuality and sex education. The main goal of the organization is to promote sex education through workshops and educational activities principally in schools and high schools of the

city of Buenos Aires. They also publish and provide orientation to policy makers and legislators on sexual health matters.

#### **ORGANIZATIONS STUDIED IN SANTIAGO:**

- 1) *Asociación Chilena de Protección de la Familia (APROFA)*. This NGO was founded in 1965 and has pioneered Family Planning policies under the auspices of IPPF. They promote sexual and reproductive rights by developing training and educational programs for teachers, professors and health personnel in clinics and hospitals. Also they provide clinic services such as counselling in breastfeeding, pregnancy, sexual and reproductive rights, and contraception, among others.
- 2) *Asociación de Damas Salesianas (ADS)*. It is volunteer female Catholic organization that has a program for teenage mothers called “Emprende Mamá”. They work in the municipality of La Florida in coordination with primary health centers. They form groups with pregnant teenagers and support them through pregnancy, birth and one year after the baby is born. The groups are guided by volunteers and they seek to reinsert adolescents in society. Focus is placed on mother and baby bonding but also include fathers when they are present.
- 3) *Centro de Estudios y Atención del Niño y la Mujer (CEANIM)*. The work of this NGO began in the year 1979 with the creation of Centros Comunitarios de Atención Prescolar (CCAP). Since then, they have developed an integral approach to family, mother and children bonding based on the notion of resilience and human development. Their methodology based in home visits and playing strategies has been innovative and received significant governmental attention. CEANIM has also conducted research projects, consultancy for public programs and publications.
- 4) *Centro de Estudios y Desarrollo de la Mujer (CEDEM)*. This gender NGO was formally established in 1990 with a specific focus on rural and cultural approaches to

women's situation in Chile. In 2006 a group of academics coming from FLACSO Chile were incorporated to the organization developing a Gender and Equity area, where they expand the organization focus. Significant social policy research and publications are developed related to teenage parenthood, private life and family, domestic violence, among others.

5) *Centro de Medicina Reproductiva y Desarrollo Integral del Adolescente (CEMERA)*.

The center belongs to the Universidad de Chile, and was originally created in 1981 under the name of Departamento de Obstetricia y Ginecología. The center provides sexual and reproductive health education in schools and clinics, to young people and also health team and educators. Services are targeted to unmarried females under 18 years of age undergoing their first pregnancy.

6) *Comité de Servicio Chileno (COSECH)*. The organization was originally established in Chile in 1974 as a branch of the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker faith based international network. In 1994 the organization became independent although remained focused on promoting the rights of poor communities, specially young and deprived families. They have a long lasting trajectory in working with teenage mothers and fathers, in both, support and prevention.

7) *EDUK (EDUK)*. The organization provides training to teachers, professors, children, adolescents and health workers in aspects related health promotion, gender, sexual and reproductive health. They embrace a community approach seeking to connect local resources and institutions in order to advance children and adolescents rights. Offering courses, workshops and consultancy services to schools, high schools and community organizations are central to their strategy.

8) *Fundación Cerro Navia (FCN)*. It is a Catholic organization that legally pertains to the Archbishop of Santiago in the municipality of Cerro Navia. They run several



community services including a program for teenage mothers. The strategy is based on the formation of member of the community as promoters, to help mothers to develop their life projects, not only related to their maternity but also to returning to school and finding a job. Offer workshops with the adolescents, participate in the local networks, and are funded by public partnerships (Sename, Conace) and Hogar de Cristo.

- 9) *Fundación Chile Unido (FCU)*. This foundation belongs to the Catholic Church and their members promote the value of family, marriage, and moral principles in Chilean society. Since 1999 the organizations run the program “Acoge una vida” which provides material, social and psychological support for pregnant adolescents and their children. Beyond service delivery they are considered a pro-life group with a strong stand against pro-abortion legislation.
- 10) *Fundación San José para la Adopción (FSJ)*. The organization was founded in 1994 to support women with unwanted pregnancies by providing medical, social and spiritual assistance. As a distinctive feature, this organization proposes adoption as an alternative for those mothers who do not want to keep their children. The program works also with adult women and only 10% of their cases are adolescent mothers. They work under the umbrella of the Catholic church and see adoption as a pro-life option.
- 11) *Hogar Refugio de Misericordia (HRM)*. This is a residence run by a Catholic Congregation founded to serve the needs of teenage mothers from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The residence was established in 1926 and currently addresses the needs of 20 young mothers who lived and are trained in this center. The project focuses on strengthening the bonding between mothers and babies, as well as reengaging the former with formal education or vocational training.

- 12) *Instituto Chileno de Medicina Reproductiva (ICMER)*. This academic center was formally established in 1985 with the objective of providing further scientific evidence about sexual and reproductive health. The institution is formed by a qualified group of medical doctors with high expertise in the fields of human reproduction, contraception, HIV/AIDs, adolescent fertility. They also provide training and services to adolescents in sexual and reproductive health.
- 13) *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (PUC)*. The School of Psychology of the University has built an alliance with Vicaría de la Pastoral social to assess the impact of the supporting project based on the role of “monitoras”. They got funding from the CONICYT to evaluate the middle term impact during the prenatal and postnatal period, until the child is two years of age. The main goal is to contribute to public policy design from a cost-effective perspective.
- 14) *Sociedad Protectora de la Infancia (SPI)*. This is a Catholic organization which supports teenage mothers who attend school. They seek to strengthen other dimensions of lives complementary to maternity while nurturing the bonds between mothers and children. The “Programa de apoyo a madres adolescentes” (AMA) extends from six months before and six months after the baby is born.
- 15) *Vicaría de la Pastoral Social y de los Trabajadores (VPS)*. Previously known as Vicaría de la Solidaridad (in the Pinochet era) this department of the Catholic Church played a significant role during the dictatorship in protecting human rights organizations and delivering social services. They now run several social programs, including one which specifically targets teenage mothers and fathers.
- 16) *Visión Mundial Chile (VM)*. This is a Christian humanitarian organization (World Vision) with presence in more than 100 countries all over the world. Their main goal is to combat the causes of poverty and establish long lasting partnerships with poor

communities to improve the lives of children and their families. In Chile they have several projects where they target young women seeking to prevent HIV/AIDs and teenage pregnancy. They also work to reengage mothers with educational or employment programs as well as strengthening the bonding with children.

#### **ORGANIZATIONS STUDIED IN MONTEVIDEO:**

- 1) *Asociación Uruguaya de Planificación Familiar (AUPF)*. This NGO was founded in the year 1963 under the influence of the family planning paradigm by Uruguayan gynecologist Hermógenes Alvarez. It is a member of International Planned Parenthood Federation, an international umbrella organization which is its major funding source. The organization promotes access to contraception in poor communities and train young people to be promoters of sexual and reproductive rights.
- 2) *CAIF Virgen Niña (CVN)*. The CAIF network is a public program funded by the national government originally aimed at providing child care service on a daily basis in poor communities. More recently, the program has moved into more specific type of support by delivering weekly workshops to pregnant mothers and supporting them with information and useful advice for the rearing of their children. Although the program is open to mothers of all ages, the CAIF Virgen Niña is particularly focused on the participation of young mothers.
- 3) *Casa de la Mujer de la Unión (CMU)*. This is a gender NGO founded in 1987 during the democratic restoration to support women lives in different aspects. It began by focusing on issues of domestic violence and sexual health, and expanded into other fields of intervention such as employment, vocational training, legal assistance and recreation. In their origins the organization did not focus on teenage mothers although they moved into this field after some years.

- 4) *Casa Lunas (CL)*. This organization was established in the year 2002 by a group of salesians alumni young women interested in providing services to the increasing challenges posed by teenage motherhood. They have a Catholic inspiration although the participation is open to every teenager coming from poor backgrounds in need of support. The institution has a day centre where the adolescents can participate in different activities, receive legal and other services, and their children are taken care of. Addressing the needs of teenage fathers is also a major challenge for the organization.
- 5) *Centro Bosco - La Tablada (CBLT)*. This community centre was founded by the Salesian Fathers, a Catholic Congregation devoted to work with children from underserved communities. This centre is located in Villa Colon, a very poor area in the outskirts of Montevideo where the organization runs a childcare center, support to school to those attending formal education, vocational training and other programs. In 2006 they received funding from the UNDP to run a nutritional and maternal program for teenage mothers.
- 6) *Centro Maria Teresa (CMT)*. This Catholic organization runs a social centre named “Centro Maria Teresa” established in the 1940s in a deprived area of Montevideo, to provide services to young mothers. In 1999 a public health clinic was based in the center following an agreement with the MSP (Ministerio de Salud Pública) which sent a medical doctor specialized in family medicine. Since then the clinics has focused on controlling and supporting teenage mothers, and more recently, changes in the centre has widened the scope of services provided.
- 7) *Iniciativa Latinoamericana (IL)*. This ONGs was founded in 2002 by a group of professionals with accumulated experience and expertise in the field of gender, sexuality, HIV/AIDs prevention and youth participation. The innovative approach to

social policies has been a distinctive characteristic of the organization. Also they promote new forms of relationship between the State, civil society organizations and private companies. The constructivist recreational orientation in their projects has become a trademark of the organization's work.

- 8) *Iniciativas Sanitarias (IS)*. This NGO was founded in 2001 by a group of medical doctors and health related professionals as a response to maternal mortality and morbidity due to unsafe abortions. The team of professionals developed their actions in the principal maternity of the country – Hospital Pereira Rossell- where most teenage mothers have their babies, and other public hospitals where they seek to minimize the risks of illegal abortions through counseling, informing and orienting pregnant women.
- 9) *Instituto Perinatal del Uruguay (IPU)* This is a professional oriented NGO created to promote new models of birth in Uruguay. The organization advocates for the humanization of birth, defending the rights of mothers-to-be, babies and fathers to make informed decisions, get the necessary information and avoid medical interventions not supported by scientific evidence. The organization supports families during pregnancy, partum and post-partum through workshops, talks, counseling and courses.
- 10) *La Bonne Garde (LBG)*. This is the oldest NGOs that we have contacted in Uruguay, being founded in the year 1911. The organization's name, characteristic of the French influence of those days, refers to the "good care" in which adolescent mothers were taken by religious sisters. The organization later was transferred to lay persons but still remain as a residential house for teenage that have become pregnant or mothers, although moved into more flexible responses.

11) *Red de Jóvenes DESYR (DESYR)*. This youth network was created in 2001 as a result of the international meetings held by REDLAC, a Latin American network of youth organizations working in the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights. As a distinctive characteristic, DESYR is totally autonomous from adults NGOs and is governed by its youth members. Although currently its activity has declined, it became significantly involved in campaigns for sexual and reproductive rights, workshops, courses and the implementation of advocacy activities.

### **Domains of Non Governmental Public Action in Adolescent Fertility**

As the range of initiatives covered by non governmental action was similarly heterogeneous across the three countries we sought to organize this vast world by grouping them in similar and meaningful categories, making explicit national differences when necessary. After reviewing the principal projects, services and activities being implemented we could identify four domains of intervention, unveiling some commonalities within and across each country<sup>2</sup>. These four domains refer to organizations: a) seeking to prevent teenage pregnancy, b) providing medical and social assistance during pregnancy and/or birth, c) supporting teenage parents in aspects related to their parenthood or their socially vulnerable situation (i.e. education or employment), and d) developing transversal actions that may impact on any of the previous mentioned areas (i.e. research or advocacy)

As shown in *Table 1*, organizations tend to diversify their activities and conduct several projects within their scope of their mission. However, their defining institutional identity tends to be primarily linked to one specific area of intervention by which the

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<sup>2</sup> Similar categories are identified in Gutierrez et al. 2006 for the Chilean case.

organization is acknowledged and legitimized (marked in bold letters in *Table 1*). In many cases dealing with teenage pregnancy or parenthood is not a primary institutional objective although targeting socially vulnerable adolescents or working with teenage parents may be strategic and meaningful for the attainment of institutional goals.

Across the three countries actions to **prevent teenage pregnancy** constitute a major field of intervention for civil society organizations. Despite their adscription to a feminist, religious or pro-poor framework the organizations tend to acknowledge the need to prevent pregnancies at this premature stage in youth lives. Among those explicitly enacting projects or delivering services in this domain principal actions seek to:

- a) **Increase awareness and promote adolescent health, with special emphasis on sexual and reproductive rights.** These projects seek to inform adolescents about their sexual and reproductive rights, HIV/AIDS and STD prevention, self-health care practices and the availability of public health services. Also, they seek to raise awareness about the consequences that pregnancy and childrearing responsibilities have on the adolescent's life.
- b) **Deliver sexual education for children and youth.** With the advancement of mandatory sexual education in formal curriculum in the three countries, several organizations provide talks, workshops, and courses for primary and secondary schools. These activities seek to inform and educate students at different ages in specific topics related to human sexual and reproductive behaviour, including sex/gender relations, HIV/AIDS and STD prevention, and pregnancy prevention, among others. In some cases NGOs charge schools for these services and in others they are funded by public programs.
- c) **Provide counselling on contraception services and sexual and reproductive health.** These organizations offer family planning services which include free or

subsidized delivery of contraceptive methods. They advise adolescents about the different contraceptive methods seeking to postpone parenthood until they want it and also inform about the risks of having unprotected sex. Confidentiality is a central issue in these services, although a controversial one as we will see.

**d) Train community monitors as local agents of sexual and reproductive health.**

The formation of community members as monitors, whether they are young or adults, has become a widespread methodology to inform and educate on reproductive matters. Technical organizations train monitors in aspects related to adolescent health, reproductive rights and services in order to reach community members and multiply the impact of their activities. Some projects train young monitors to increase awareness among health and education staff on adolescent health needs.

**e) Train parents and health/education staff in charge of youth services.** In some cases, we identified activities and projects for parents emphasizing the need to generate an adequate communication with their children about sexual and reproductive topics. In the wake of obligatory sexual education, technical NGOs have also developed special activities to train teachers, professors as well as members of public health clinics in sexual education.

Although the domain of **pregnancy and birth support** falls primarily in the orbit of public health clinics and hospitals, several civil society organizations have adolescent and youth specific services in this field. Although they are mainly oriented towards women, these services increasingly seek to include the father or male partner. The principal areas of intervention in this domain are the following:

**a) Medical pregnancy control or linkages with health clinic.** This includes pregnancy diagnostics and controls as part of more general women's health



services. Health staff takes opportunity of these instances to give advice on maternal and child health related issues. In some cases, the organizations bridge the adolescent with the public health clinics or hospitals as part of their support, assuring an adequate control during pregnancy<sup>3</sup>. In these cases, building efficient ties between the NGO and public health staff is part of the organization's goal.

- b) Psychological and social support during pregnancy.** Given the socially vulnerable conditions in which teenage pregnancy tend to occur, the provision of psychological and emotional support to cope with pregnancy –specially if unwanted- is part of what some organizations do. Also, some services seek to work with family members and the school, in order to enhance the supporting network to face the situation. Specific psychological attention is required in the pregnancies that are the result of sexual abuses<sup>4</sup>.
- c) Support during partum and post-partum.** Recent models of attention have included the training of *doulas*, usually a female figure who supports the mother during birth labour and the following days. The support may come from a member of the NGO or from a participant trained by the organization to provide this service. Training includes advice on postures during birth, pain alleviation, emotional support, breastfeeding and childrearing practices.
- d) Residences, shelters, homes for pregnant women.** As they may face adverse situations or run away from home, a few NGOs run shelters or residences for pregnant adolescents. These projects are usually funded by public agencies and

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<sup>3</sup> Contrary to the prevailing assumption, some studies have shown that teenagers tend to attend pregnancy controls more frequently than average women of similar contexts.

<sup>4</sup> Domestic violence, sexual abuse and child abuse configure a specific domain for non governmental action out of the scope of our study. However, as a significant proportion of teenage pregnancies are the result of sexual abuse, there is some overlapping with these services.

include a variety of social services such as vocational training and educational programs. In some cases, they may be linked with adoption services.

Another group of organizations concentrate on **supporting teenage parents** by helping them to cope with parental responsibilities and to harmonize them with other important dimensions of their lives beyond motherhood/fatherhood. Most common services and projects in this domain were related to:

- a) **Reengagement with education, learning or school.** Reengagement with the learning process has become the main goal for non governmental programs seeking to support teenage parents. Whether they want to return to complete their abandoned studies or find new education venues, reconnecting the adolescents with education has become a central objective in these projects. The support may pursue different strategies such as help with school activities, advocating for their rights as students, increasing awareness on school attendance, support with childcare during school hours.
- b) **Vocational training, employment support.** Alternatively or complementary with school reengagement, some organizations seek to develop practical or technical skills to increase the adolescents employability. Whether the skills are developed within the institution or pursued through third organizations, the goal is to promote some specialization that may enhance the chances of the adolescent in the labour market and to find a well paid job. Exceptionally, we found small business experiences run by NGO participants (i.e. handmade soap factory in Montevideo run by teenage mothers) with the double purpose of generate some income and develop basic entrepreneurial skills.
- c) **Prevent second or subsequent pregnancy.** Once the first pregnancy occurs, preventing a second one becomes a priority. In fact, several organizations

acknowledge that is not possible to prevent the first child given the cultural and social traits, concentrating their efforts in postponing a second pregnancy. Some organizations may encourage a full commitment to childrearing tasks during the first years, promoting the adolescent employment or school reengagement once the baby reaches preschool age.

- d) Support in child rearing, mother-baby bonding, child care.** Providing guidance and supporting teenage parents in childrearing practices has become a major goal in several social programs for this group. Projects in this field may combine different methodologies such as home visits, group activities and parents-baby time, seeking to promote early stimulation, age appropriate childcare practices and positive relationships between parents and their children<sup>5</sup>.
- e) Residences and shelters for mothers and children.** These services are usually linked to religious organizations and provide temporary shelter and support to mothers and their children. They also complement the housing support with other services such as vocational training or health related programs.
- f) Social and psychological support, family relations.** This category includes different type of actions seeking to provide support to adolescent parents and their children. Organizations may offer orientation or guidance about services available in the community, requisites to access state benefits, connect them with specific institutions to meet their needs. Also, they may provide psychological support to cope with parenthood and help them to face the new situation within their families.

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<sup>5</sup> Chilean studies published in Hamel 1992 and Salvatierra et al. 2005 have shown that adolescent parents recur more frequently to verbal and physical violence to educate their children, and tend to provide them with less positive feedback

Whether in the field of prevention, pregnancy or parenthood, non governmental organizations have become extremely relevant through the development of transversal actions, such as research projects, advocacy campaigns or the preparation of educational material. As they may serve to any of the three above mentioned objectives, we present them separately. In fact, several of currently widespread models of intervention, whether used by governmental or other non governmental organizations derive from these experiences.

- a) **Public opinion campaigns, raise consciousness, lobbying.** Several NGOs conduct campaigns to promote greater awareness about teenage pregnancy, and to lobby governmental agencies to expand and increase funding for women's health, sexual and reproductive health services or to legalize abortion services. The three countries "celebrate" a national day for teenage pregnancy prevention (usually in the month of September) to which adhere several of our surveyed organizations.
- b) **Academic and policy research, publishing.** Technical NGOs and academic centers conduct research projects that are useful for policy design and policy implementation. Medical studies such as those conducted about contraception, or social research on school drop outs among teenage mothers, have been important inputs for policy makers. Supported by public funding, the results of these research projects may be disseminated through publications.
- c) **Policy making advising, public services monitoring.** Similarly, technical organizations are usually required to assist members of parliament or ministerial commissions in policy or legislation making related to their field of expertise. For example, NGOs specialized in women's health or sexual education may provide useful advice to governmental agencies in the developmental phases of services

or programs. They may also monitor rights enforcement or evaluate public services in issues related to their institutional mission.

- d) Preparing didactic and educational materials.** They also collaborate in the dissemination of information by preparing educational materials for adolescents, related to sexual and reproductive behaviour, health issues and related contents. Printed, audio-visual or internet materials have become common instruments for NGOs to disseminate information among young and adults. Specifically, we encountered organizations that prepare materials for teachers, professors and health staff, to enhance their understanding about adolescence and adolescent's needs.
- e) Youth or community networks related to teenage pregnancy issues.** The creation of spaces for youth participation has become another strategy pursued by NGOs in the field of adolescent fertility. Although they may not refer strictly to teenage pregnancy, the issue frequently becomes a matter of concern in community or local networks. In Buenos Aires the feminist NGO FEIM gave birth to a national network of adolescents, called REDNACADOL (also surveyed in our study). In Montevideo, another gender organization - Casa de la Mujer de la Unión – promoted the creation of a community network about teenage pregnancy in the neighbourhood of Villa Española.

Table 1: Categorization of NGOs projects, activities and services in Buenos Aires, Santiago and Montevideo. (Circa 2006-2008) (\*)

		ARGENTINA	CHILE	URUGUAY
Preventing teenage Pregnancy	Awareness and promotion of adolescent health, sexual and reproductive rights.	ISPM - CONDERS - FORO - FEIM - REDNACADOL - PLENASSER	APROFA - CEMERA - VM - EDUK	CMU - IL - AUPF - DESYR - IS
	Sexual Education for children, youth.	ISPM - FORO - AAPF- FEIM - REDNACADOL - PLENASSER - RE - SEXALUD	CEMERA - APROFA - VM - EDUK	CMU - IL - LBG - CL - DESYR -
	Counseling on contraception	ISPM - FORO - AAPF - REDNACADOL - SEXALUD -	APROFA - EDUK - VM	CMU - IL - LBG - CL - AUPF -

	and Sexual and Reproductive health.	SEXALUD		
	Formation of monitors, youth as local agents of health.	ISPM - <b>FEIM</b> - REDNACADOL	VM - <b>CEANIM</b> - FCN - <b>VPS</b> - PUC - COSECH	<b>IL</b> - AUPF - LBG
	Training activities for parents and health/education personnel	FEIM - REDNACADOL - PLENASSER - RE - KALEIDOS - SEXALUD	<b>CEMERA</b> - APROFA - <b>EDUK</b>	AUPF - IL - IS
Care and support during pregnancy and birth	Medical pregnancy control, or link with health clinic.	AAPF - RE	<b>CEMERA</b> - APROFA - FSJ - ADS	<b>CMU</b> - CL - LBG - CVN - AUPF - CMT
	Psychological and social support during pregnancy	AAPF - RE - CAMPOS	FCU -	<b>CL</b> - CVN - CMT - IPU - CMU
	Support during partum and post-partum.	AAPF	FCU -	<b>IPU</b> - CL - CMU
	Residences, shelters, homes for pregnant women	<b>ACSN-FFN</b>	<b>HRM-FSJ</b>	<b>LBG</b>
Supporting teenage parenthood	Reengagement with education, learning or school.	RE - CARITAS - ACSN - KALEIDOS	VM - <b>SPI</b> - COSECH - FCN - FCU - HRM - ADS	<b>CMT</b> - <b>LBG</b> - <b>CL</b> - <b>CBLT</b> - CMU
	Vocational training, employment support.	RE - ACSN - KALEIDOS - FFN - CARITAS	VM - COSECH - FCN - FCU - HRM - ADS	<b>CMT</b> - LBG - <b>CL</b> - <b>CBLT</b> - CMU
	Prevent second or subsequent pregnancy	RE - ACSN - KALEIDOS	VM - CEMERA - APROFA - ICMER - EDUK	CMU - LBG - CL - CMT
	Support in child rearing, mother-baby bonding, child care	RE - ACSN - KALEIDOS - CARITAS	VM - <b>CEANIM</b> - <b>SPI</b> COSECH - <b>FCU</b> - <b>VPS</b> - <b>ADS</b> - <b>FSJ</b>	CVN - LBG - <b>CL</b> - <b>CMT</b> - <b>CBLT</b>
	Residences, shelters, for mothers and children	<b>ACSN - FFN</b>	<b>HRM - FSJ</b>	<b>LBG</b>
	Social and psychological support, family relations.	RE - ACSN - KALEIDOS - CAMPOS - CARITAS - FFN	ADS - CEANIM - FSJ - HRM	LBG - <b>CL</b> - CMT
Transversal actions	Public opinion campaigns, sensibilization, lobbying	<b>ISPM</b> - FORO - FEIM	APROFA - EDUK	<b>IL</b> - <b>IS</b>
	Academic and policy research, publishing	ISPM - FORO - FEIM - PLENASSER - CAMPOS - SEXALUD	<b>CEDEM</b> - APROFA - CEANIM - <b>CEMERA</b> - <b>PUC</b>	<b>IL</b> - <b>IS</b>
	Policy making, policy monitoring, influence public services	<b>ISPM - FORO - CONDERS</b> - FEIM - SEXALUD	APROFA - CEANIM - <b>CEDEM</b> - <b>CEMERA</b> - <b>EDUK</b> - <b>PUC</b>	<b>IL</b> - IPU - <b>IS</b> - DESYR
	Preparing policy, didactic and educational materials	<b>FEIM</b> - REDNACADOL - SEXALUD	APROFA - CEANIM - <b>EDUK</b>	<b>IL</b> - <b>IS</b>
	Youth or community networks related to teenage pregnancy issues	<b>REDNACADOL</b> - FEIM - <b>RE</b>	VM - VPS - ADS	<b>DESYR</b> - IL - CMU

(\*) Acronyms correspond to the organization's names as described previously in this chapter.

A cross national comparison of non governmental presence in the above mentioned domains within the field of adolescent fertility yields some preliminary

conclusions. As *Table 1* shows there are important biases and emphases across the three studied non governmental communities in each country. Here we highlight what we considered are the most significant differences in this respect:

a) In **Buenos Aires**, non governmental public action shows greater vitality and dynamism in the subfield of pregnancy prevention. Also, a significant presence was observed in what we have called, *transversal activities*, which include advocacy, consultancy and other policy oriented initiatives. We encountered only a limited numbers of experiences focused exclusively or primarily in supporting teenage parents and their families. Although several organizations include actions toward this group within their scope of services in poor communities, only a few have developed specific projects to address the needs of teenage parents.

b) Similarly, in **Santiago** we have found a strong concentration of experiences in the field of pregnancy prevention. However, oppositely to what we have observed in Buenos Aires, we encountered a significant presence of NGOs that were particularly concerned with the situation of teenage parents and their families. In this respect, several projects seek to support young parents, paying special attention to their weak ties with formal education, or the crucial mother and baby bonding after birth. Unlike the other two countries, in Chile we encountered some projects which targeted specifically the needs of adolescent fathers. Also unique in Chile, was the existence of pro-life organizations (anti-abortion) providing services for teenage mothers.

c) Finally, in **Montevideo** we encountered a relatively strong presence of experiences supporting teenage motherhood during pregnancy, birth and the earlier stages of parenthood. Compared with nongovernmental responses observed the other two countries, in Uruguay there is less involvement with teenage pregnancy prevention, and even less participation in policy oriented activities. The latter should be acknowledged as

a significant difference observed in the Uruguayan NGO community when compared with the other two.

#### **NATIONAL MAPS FOR NGPA IN TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND PARENTHOOD**

In *Figures 1, 2 and 3* shown below we have grouped the studied organizations according to their main field of intervention and their mutual proximity in their approaches to adolescent fertility. By conducting this analysis we seek to introduce a new perspective on the role of NGOs in each country, assessing the degrees of intersection, collaboration and convergence across the subfields of intervention. Despite commonalities, the figures show important variations from country to country regarding the subfield's divisions and groupings across national institutional landscapes. *Figures 1, 2 and 3* show the following cross national differences in this respect:

- a) In **Buenos Aires** we observed a strong presence of feminist, women's, sexual and reproductive rights organizations. There is no intersection between the policy oriented organizations (mostly conducting advocacy and policy research activities) and those supporting pregnant adolescents or teenage parents. There is an interesting zone of intersection between those supporting motherhood and those working to prevent it. For the most part this overlapping subgroup is formed by non religious organizations which are working in poor urban contexts (such as Red Encuentro, Sol Naciente, or the Asociación Argentina de Planificación Familiar)
- b) Oppositely, in **Santiago**, those organizations supporting teenage motherhood do not intersect at all with those seeking to prevent it. As *Figure 2* clearly shows there is no one organization included in both subgroups at the same time, showing a clear division between the 'pregnancy prevention' and the 'parenthood support' clusters. In relative terms, there is a strong presence of the "supportive" group,



which includes those providing services during pregnancy, birth and early stages of parenthood. Also the “research and advocacy” cluster exhibits a substantial overlapping with the preventing and supporting worlds. In fact, all surveyed organizations in the preventive group belong to the research group. Interestingly we found that preventive programs are often combined with research activities to provide evidence that shows the non-abortive effects of some contraceptive methods, such as the *day after pill*.

- c) Finally, in the case of **Montevideo** two significant facts should be acknowledged. On the one hand, we found a scarce number of organizations performing advocacy, consultancy, research and other policy oriented activities in our field of study. As we will see in the next chapters, this nongovernmental exclusion from the policy design and advocacy arenas is directly associated with the political economy of social policy in Uruguay. On the other hand, in relative terms, NGOs in Montevideo were heavily concentrated in supporting teenage motherhood across pregnancy, birth and parenthood. This relegation of civil society organizations to the role of service providers, is closely related to their lack of participation in instances of policy debate and design.

Figure 1: Institutional sociogram for studied organizations in Buenos Aires (circa 2006-2008)

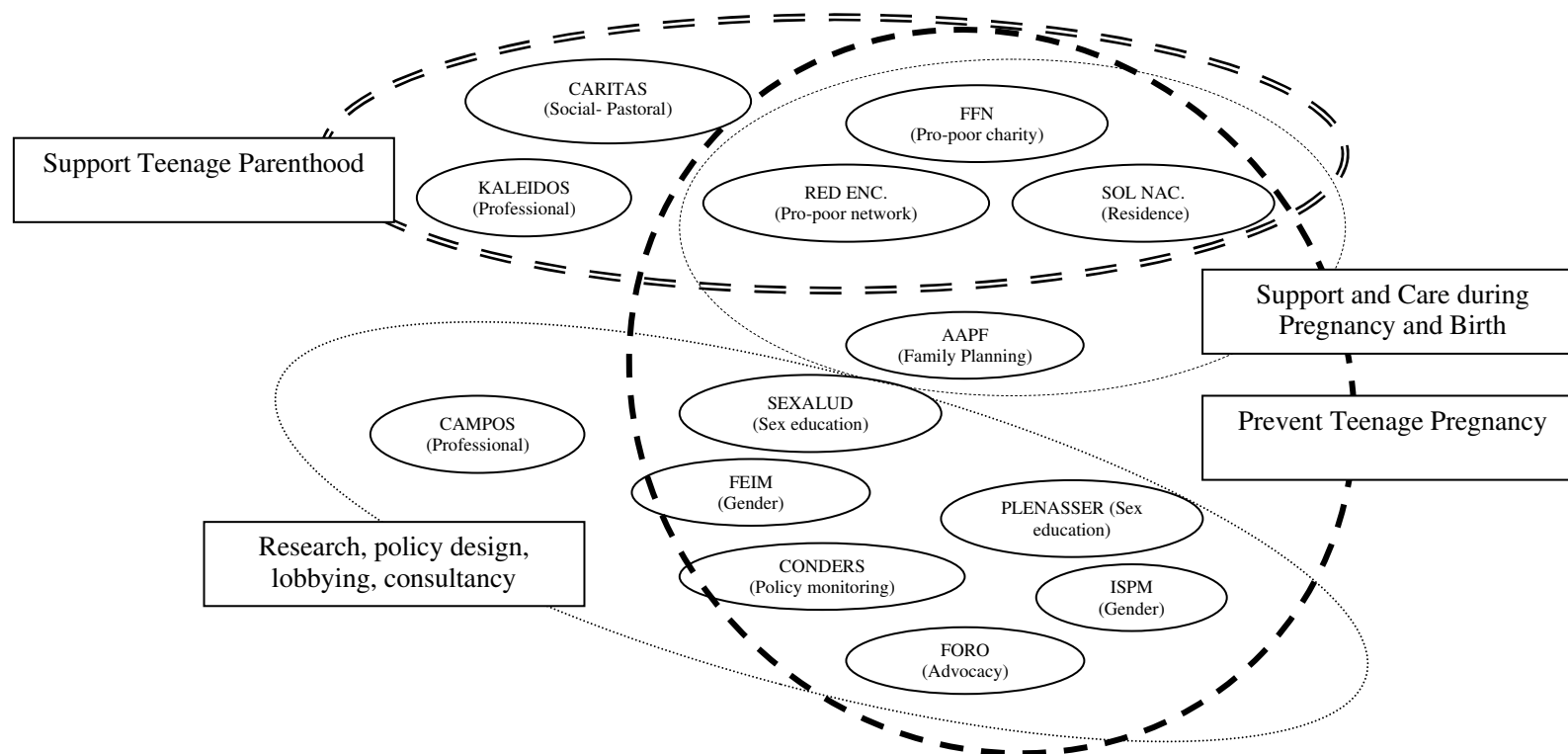


Figure 2: Institutional sociogram for studied organizations in Chile (circa 2006-2008)

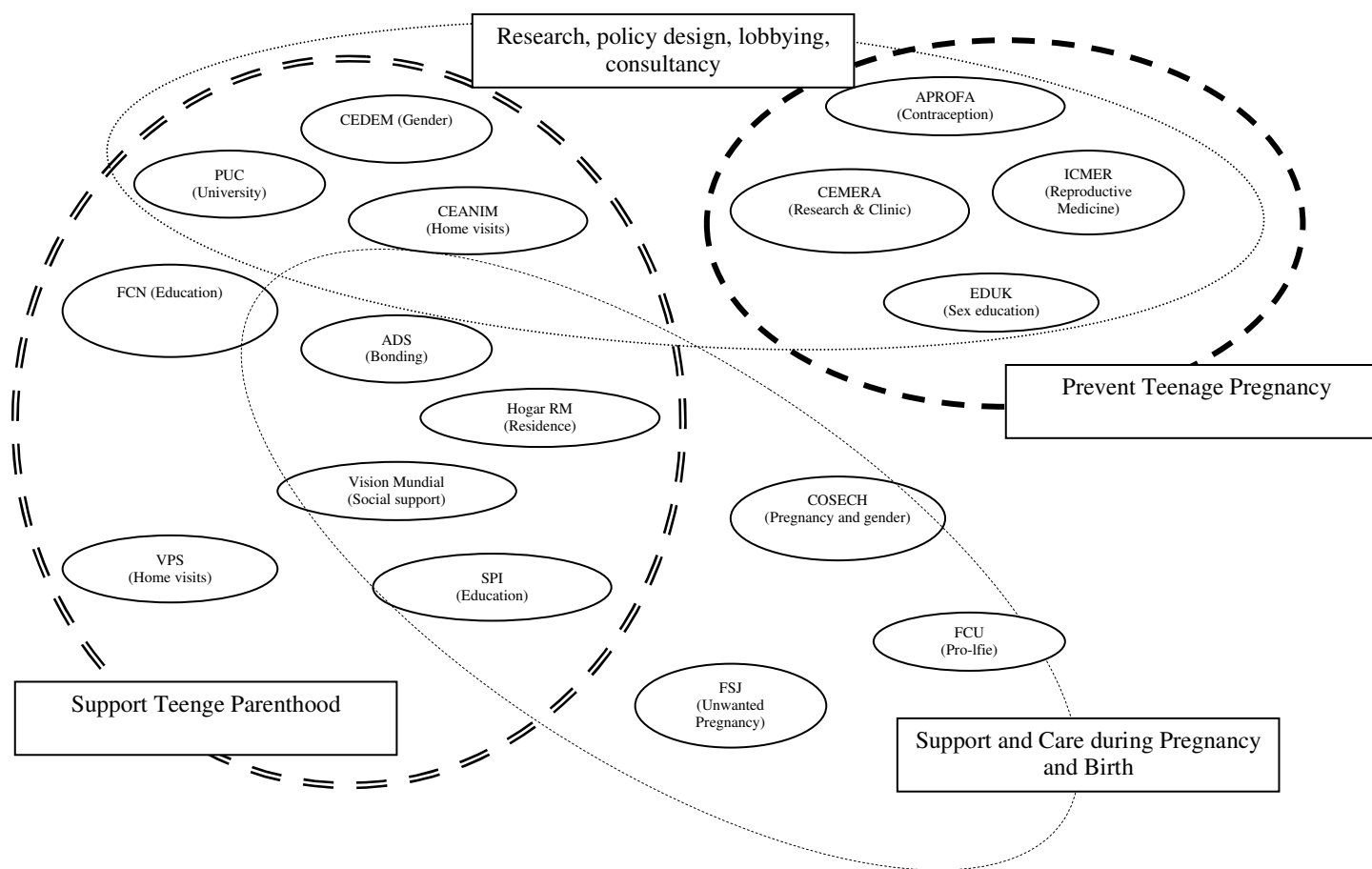
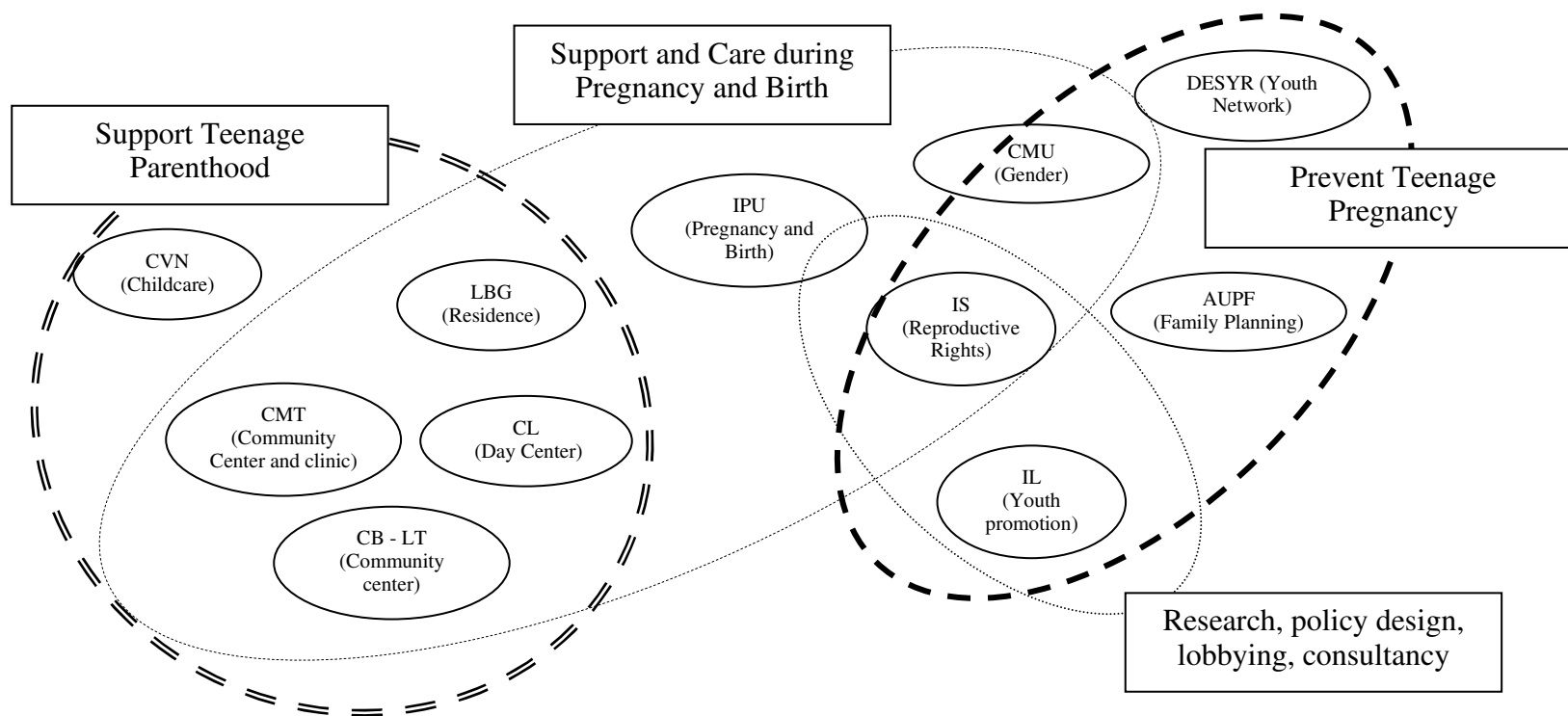


Figure 3: Institutional sociogram for studied organizations in Uruguay (circa 2006-2008)



## **The “Weltanschauung” of NGPA in Teenage Pregnancy/ Parenthood**

The German word “weltanschauung” refers to the worldview based on beliefs and deep rooted opinions through which a subject interprets the surrounding world and its own action. Each of the organizations we have studied has a specific worldview that gives purpose and meaning to their actions regarding adolescent pregnancy and parenthood. Their views in this respect –as well as in other fields of intervention- are directly related to the ideology that gave origin to their existence, which shapes their responses and approach to the social reality with which they interact. According to this criterion, the organizations could be classified based on to the dominant philosophical and axiological framework that structure and provide meaning to their actions. Although this may evolve later in time, this original purpose provides a persistent matrix of interpretation that constitutes a useful tool to understand the organizations approach towards teenage pregnancy. Although not always mutually exclusive, we could identify six different “frameworks” or “matrixes” that stand up to cross national comparative analysis. In the cases where more than one category applied, we sought for the most determinant one in defining the organization’s mission and activities, the one that better described its ideological framework. Thus, non governmental public action in the field of teenage pregnancy came from the following type of organizations:

a) Gender organizations: those founded to advance women’s rights, provide gender-specific services and foster gendered policies, research and political change (Rodriguez, 2003). These organizations usually “arrive” at the issue of adolescent pregnancy as the result of their struggle to reestablish gender equality in education, labor and healthcare domains. Although it tends not to be an “issue” in first place, it becomes part of the agenda as they realize the impact that becoming a mother at early ages has in

curtailing future opportunities in life. As we will discuss in chapter 6, dealing with gender relations and the need to bring males into their projects proves to be a major challenge for the identity of these organizations.

b) Faith based organizations: instituted by churches, religious congregations, or other religious agents these organizations tend to serve various purposes (educational, healthcare, social) although usually strongly driven and inspired by religious ideals (Hefferan and Adkins, 2009). These organizations tend to deliver support services to teenage parents more than embracing preventive strategies to deal with teenage pregnancy. Remaining close to daily needs of adolescent parents and their children is central to their approach to teenage parenthood. However, many of these organizations have incorporated preventative actions although they lean towards the support strategy. As we will see below faith based organizations are the ones of all types that resist the most labeling teenage pregnancy or parenthood as a “problem”. They also tend to acknowledge the role of males and mobilize “family resources” as a means to attain better outcomes.

c) Sexual and reproductive health organizations: this younger generation of organizations was established to promote sexual and reproductive rights, drawing upon the expansion of the “human rights paradigm” as it has been proclaimed by United Nations charters (Cervantes-Carson 2004). By integrating sexuality and reproduction as “new domains” of human rights, these organizations seek to influence legislative and executive branches to enforce reproductive and sexual rights. Their approach to teenage parenthood tends to emphasize the right to prevent pregnancy by granting universal access to contraception, legal abortion and sex education. As will be discussed in the next chapter, their institutional agendas usually take aim against national governments seeking to attain higher levels of enforcement of sexual and reproductive rights legislations. Also

they have become very active and vocal in campaigning for the legalization of abortion services, area in which they tend to make alliances with women's organizations. They tend to take a strong stand against religious and conservatives groups whom they blame for not passing pro-abortion legislation. Although they may coincide in many respects with the gender organizations, their point of departure and ultimate purpose of actions should be recognized as different.

e) Network and community organizations: these are local organizations created to support a wide range of community needs in poor or underserved areas. Their approach to teenage pregnancy is usually part of an overarching set of responses to the challenge of poverty and social exclusion faced in the area. In some cases, this category also includes networks operating in poor communities to strengthen and support the work of grassroots organizations challenged by surmounting social demand for their services. Although their members may be individually driven by specific religious, gender or professional motivations as organizations they exist to deliver services that may improve the life chances of the community members. In some cases, their approach to teenage pregnancy has not been sufficiently conceptualized or elaborated, taking a more pragmatic stand by seeking to resolve the needs and demands as they emerge.

d) Academic, professional and policy oriented organizations: those in this category were established for academic or professional purposes, to conduct research activities or develop a specific disciplinary approach (e.g. psychoanalysis). In some cases they are specialized units of academic institutions, or former university departments separated from their alma mater. For most organizations in this group the advancement of new models of intervention and the adoption of new professional, evidence based practices constitutes a central element in their missions and activities. Whether by means of collaboration or confrontation they challenge governmental practices as they offer

alternative approaches to standard services. Their perspective on teenage pregnancy and parenthood is diverse based on the professional discipline on which they draw upon their work. However, they share the common hallmark of being innovative and avant-garde institutions in their specific domains of action.

In *Table 2* we attempt to bring a cross national perspective by cataloguing all the studied organizations according to their founding principles and orientations using the above mentioned types. As these categories were initially theoretically built, we should acknowledge the existence of organizations of all types in the three cities included in the study. However, some “cells” were easier to fill than others denoting the scarcity or abundance of some types in particular cities.

Table 2: Categorization of NGOs according to their main institutional orientation in Buenos Aires, Santiago and Montevideo (circa 2006-2008).

	Buenos Aires	Santiago	Montevideo
Gender oriented, women NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instituto Social y Político de la Mujer (ISPM)</li> <li>• Fundación para el Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centro de Estudios y Desarrollo de la Mujer (CEDEM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casa de la Mujer de la Unión</li> </ul>
Religious organizations, Faith based NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundación Felices los Niños.</li> <li>• Caritas - Quilmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Vision Chile.</li> <li>• Comité de Servicio Chileno (COSECH)</li> <li>• Fundación Cerro Navia</li> <li>• Fundación Chile Unido</li> <li>• Hogar Refugio de Misericordia</li> <li>• Vicaría de la Pastoral Social y de los Trabajadores</li> <li>• Asociación de Damas Salesianas</li> <li>• Fundación San José para la Adopción</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La Bonne Garde</li> <li>• Centro María Teresa</li> <li>• Centro Bosco La Tablada</li> </ul>
Sexual and reproductive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asociación Argentina de</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asociación Chilena de</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asociación Uruguaya de</li> </ul>



health and rights NGOs	Planificación Familiar (AAPF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foro por los Derechos Reproductivos (FORO)</li> <li>• PLENASSER</li> <li>• SEXALUD</li> <li>• Consorcio Nacional de Derechos Reproductivos y Sexuales (CONDERS)</li> <li>• Red Nacional de Adolescentes en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva (REDNACACOL)</li> </ul>	Protección de la Familia (APROFA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDUK</li> </ul>	Planificación Familiar (AUPF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red de Jóvenes DESYR</li> <li>• Iniciativas Sanitarias</li> </ul>
Community networks, grass roots organizations, pro-poor NGOs, shelters, residences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red El Encuentro</li> <li>• Asociación Civil Sol Naciente</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centro de Estudios y Atención del Niño y la Mujer (CEANIM)</li> <li>• Sociedad Protectora de la Infancia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casa Lunas</li> <li>• Caif Virgen Niña.</li> </ul>
Academic, policy oriented and professionally driven NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundación Kaleidos</li> <li>• Campos del Psicoanálisis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centro de Medicina Reproductiva y Desarrollo Integral del Adolescente (CEMERA)</li> <li>• Instituto Chileno de Medicina Reproductiva (ICMER)</li> <li>• Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (PUC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iniciativa Latinamericana</li> <li>• Instituto Perinatal del Uruguay (IPU)</li> </ul>
Total	14	16	11

Some cross national observations should be highlighted at this stage. First, when seeking for civil society responses to teenage pregnancy, a relative large number of initiatives were articulated from faith based organizations in Santiago. In Buenos Aires, faith based response to teenage pregnancy and parenthood is also important as the Catholic CARITAS is a vast network of organizations of which we have only selected one as representative of its type. As Malimacci (1992) has studied for the case of Argentina, Catholic resources of social support are mainly concentrated and channelled through the CARITAS network. Oppositely, in Montevideo the three mentioned

organizations are the only faith based initiatives we could find, and “La Bonne Garde”, beyond its religious origin has become increasingly secular (a process that we have witnessed in several of our religious-at-origin organizations).

Second, a significant presence of “sexual and reproductive rights organizations” was identified in Buenos Aires where the role of “monitoring and controlling” governmental action seems to be greater than that observed in the other two cities. Particularly relevant has been the role of “CONDERS” -a policy oriented network of reproductive health organizations- which seeks to coordinate actions of its member and put pressure on public health authorities to enforce universal access to contraception. In Chile, although this type of organizations has a similar agenda, they have failed to create an overarching structure that coordinates effectively their actions. This role originally gave the impression of being assumed by the “Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos” (not included in our studied sample) but as our fieldwork progressed the organization dwindled and lost visibility. Finally, in Montevideo, the initiatives listed under this category are relatively weak and less visible compared with the ones examined in Buenos Aires and Chile.<sup>6</sup>

Third, the gender type of organizations are –in the three cities- well established and resourced organizations with acknowledged trajectories in advancing the women’s right agenda in each country. They have accumulated sufficient institutional expertise and capacities to capture national and international resources, which they channelled in a wide range of projects. Generally, this refers to areas of intervention such as domestic violence, vocational training, employment programs, sexual and reproductive health, and (except for the case of Montevideo) research, campaigning and publishing. In all three cities the organizations shared a common feature: they have played significant roles in

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<sup>6</sup> Although we found a group of active NGOs in the field of sexual and reproductive health, their engagement with teenage parents needs is limited and outside their core objectives.

creating new spaces for Non Governmental Public Action, either by funding new emerging grass roots organizations, sponsoring other organizations or simply creating networks. Undoubtedly, these organizations could be named as what is usually conceived as “intermediate NGOs”, given their connections with grass roots organizations and their access to international funding (Carroll 1992).

Fourth, cross national commonalities and shared patterns are more difficult to establish in the grass roots, local networks and pro-poor NGOs category. Here the organizations intervening in the field of teenage pregnancy ranged from typical NGOs defined around the specific issue of “teenage motherhood and fatherhood” (like “Casa Lunas” in Uruguay) to supporting networks of grassroots and community organizations (like “Red El Encuentro” in Buenos Aires). Although they share many features with the faith-based organizations (and in fact many references to religious identities were encountered in the members’ testimonies) the work of these organizations is driven by the community needs, setting a permanent agenda for increasing the quality and quantity of their projects and programs as the demand grows. As we will discuss later, governmental agencies play a significant role in funding these organizations, which severely limits their capacity of critique and advocacy in favour of the groups they work with.

Fifth, although originally we had not included a “research and policy” category, the contribution that innovative organizations like CEMERA in Chile or Iniciativa Latinoamerica in Uruguay have made to furthering new models of coping with teenage pregnancy and training health and education agents, persuaded us to include these as significant non governmental public actors in this field. In Argentina, the academic and research interests for teenage pregnancy was encountered in the gender as well as the reproductive rights organizations. However, we found two interesting cases of

professional organizations –both embracing a psychoanalytic framework- with specific programs targeting teenage pregnancy and motherhood. As we examined these experiences in further detail, it was clear that the professional and disciplinary interest took a priority over the participants’ needs or demands, therefore, making the case for including them in this category. For the cases studied in Chile and Uruguay, organizations in this category seek to promote changes in some aspects of public models of service-delivering, which usually entails some tension in their relationship with governmental services.

### **The Origins of Non Governmental Public Action**

A step further could be taken by comparing the different moments in time in which organizations were founded or established in each country. Finding cross national patterns in this respect, could be informative of the contextual factors in which NGPA originated. However, before moving into comparative analysis, some cross-national periodization is required in order to make comparisons compatible. It has been widely acknowledged that NGOs became a salient phenomenon in Southern Cone countries, in the later years of military regimes as spaces of non-governmental resistance and service provisions in the wake of state failures. In this vein, the name of “non governmental organizations” was completely sound and appropriate for the type of social formations that emerged in those years, and prolonged during the transition to democratic regimes. However, military regimes did not take place at the same time in these countries, with Uruguay and Chile’s coups occurring in 1973 (June and September respectively) and Argentina’s in 1976. Also the length of military usurpation of power was different, as the

Chilean case outlasted Argentina and Uruguay, regaining democracy just in 1990. Table 3 presents a cross national chronology of the different periods of NGPA emergence.

Table 3: Periodization of recent political phases in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

<i><b>PERIOD OF NGPA EMERGENCE</b></i>	<i><b>ARGENTINA</b></i>	<i><b>CHILE</b></i>	<i><b>URUGUAY</b></i>
Pre-dictatorship	Before 1976	Before 1973	Before 1973
Dictatorship	1976-1983	1973-1989	1973-1984
Democratic transition government	1984-1989	1990-1994	1985-1989
Second and subsequent democratic governments	1990-Today	1995-Today	1990-Today

Source: own elaboration

For determining the moment of emergence of non governmental public action, the year of foundation or establishment of a specific organization can be assumed as a reliable indicator. Although in most cases determining the year of creation entails no methodological complexity, there are situations where some caution is required. In most of the studied organizations the year of creation corresponds to the moment of its foundation or formal establishment. However, in the case of large organizations or those initially not specifically related to our policy field (such as the Universidad Católica or the Vicaría de la Pastoral Social y de los Trabajadores in Chile) we chose the date of creation of the specific program or project that relates to teenage pregnancy or parenthood. This tends to be the case of academic or professional organizations (such as Fundación Kaleidos or Campos del Psicoanálisis in Buenos Aires) that were founded based upon professional interests, but later started developing projects or activities in connection with groups of adolescents.

In the cases of historical organizations such as “Sociedad Protectora de la Infancia” in Chile or “La Bonne Garde” in Uruguay, the date of the organization’s

foundation was considered appropriate since their original missions explicitly targeted teenage pregnant mothers as a priority group. Oppositely, in cases where a specific service or project for teenage mothers was later incorporated into a larger existing organization (as it was the case of “Asociación Damas Salesianas” in Uruguay) the date of the project initiation was recorded. Finally, in those cases where the organization started working without legal recognition, we recorded the year when activities were initiated although legal recognition may have been attained several years later (or in some cases, like “Instituto Perinatal del Uruguay” is still in process). Table 4 groups our studied organizations according to the year of emergence of NGPA (year between brackets), taking into account the above mentioned considerations.

Table 4: Political period and year of creation of studied organizations in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay (1894-2007)

PERIOD OF NGO CREATION	ARGENTINA	CHILE	URUGUAY
<b>Pre-dictatorship</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Caritas Argentina (1956)</li> <li>2. Asociación Argentina de Planificación Familiar (1966)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sociedad Protectora de la Infancia (1894)</li> <li>2. Hogar Refugio de Misericordia (1926)</li> <li>3. Asociación Chilena de Protección a la Familia (1965)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. La Bonne Garde (1911)</li> <li>2. Centro Maria Teresa (1943)</li> <li>3. Asociación Uruguaya de Planificación Familiar (1968)</li> </ol>
<b>Dictatorship</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Comité de Servicio Chileno (1974)</li> <li>5. Centro de Atención de Estudios del Niño y la Mujer (1979)</li> <li>6. Vision Mundial Chile (1980)</li> <li>7. Centro de Medicina Reproductiva y Desarrollo Integral del Adolescente (1981)</li> <li>8. Instituto Chileno de Medicina Reproductiva (1985)</li> </ol>	

		9. EDUK (1987)	
<b>Democratic transition (first democratic government)</b>	3. Instituto Social y Político de la Mujer (1985) 4. Fundación para el Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (1989) 5. Red El Encuentro (1989) 6. Fundación Felices los Niños (1993)	10. Centro de Estudios y Desarrollo de la Mujer (1990) 11. Fundación Cerro Navia (1994) 12. Fundación San José para la Adopción (1994) 13. Vicaría de la Pastoral Social y de los Trabajadores (1994)	4. Casa de la Mujer de la Unión (1987)
<b>Second and subsequent democratic governments</b>	7. Foro por los Derechos Reproductivos (1994) 8. Asociación Civil Sol Naciente (1998) 9. Red Nacional de Adolescentes en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva (1999) 10. Campos del Psicoanálisis (2000) 11. SEXALUD (2001) 12. CONDEERS (2002) 13. Fundación Kaleidos (2000) 14. PLENASSER (2005)	14. Fundación Chile Unido (1998) 15. Asociación de Damas Salesianas (2001) 16. Pontificia Universidad Católica (2007)	5. Centro Bosco La Tablada (1997) 6. Casa Lunas (2000) 7. Red de Jóvenes DESYR (2001) 8. Iniciativas Sanitarias (2001) 9. Iniciativa Latinoamericana (2002) 10. Caif Vida Nueva (2004) 11. Instituto Perinatal del Uruguay (2005)
<b>Total</b>	14	16	11

Although only a few organizations can be traced to pre-dictatorship period, they shared some interesting commonalities in all three countries. In the first place, it is interesting to observe the foundation of “family planning” organizations in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, in the years 1965, 1966 and 1968 respectively. These organizations emerged in the region under the financial and logistic support of U.S. International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF was founded in 1952), support that in some cases has been prolonged until today. Their approach to teenage pregnancy is part

of a wider interest in promoting access to contraception and to support families to make informed reproductive choices. As national public health programs have included universal access to contraception, the “family planning” organizations experienced a severe mission shift, developing new strategies to survive such as selling reproductive healthcare services as private providers. The rest of the organizations pertaining to the pre-dictatorship period correspond to traditional charities founded in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century (with one being founded in 1894) mostly inspired by Catholic congregations seeking to provide relief and services to deviant groups –as were considered teenage mothers until recent decades. Organizations such as “La Bonne Garde” in Uruguay (1911) or “Hogar Refugio de Misericordia” in Chile (1926) were forged under the institutionalization paradigm as a need to provide shelter and protection to young mothers who were rejected by their families. Remnants of this approach can still be found today in some traditional organizations, although separation from the family of origin has become seen as a last resource regarding teenage pregnancy intervention.

As of the following period, none of our studied organizations in Argentina or Uruguay was established during the military regime era. However, in Chile these were prolific years for the irruption of Non Governmental Public Action in connection with teenage pregnancy. Interestingly, two Chilean organizations established in this period were founded by Christian church-related organizations based in the United States. On the one hand, the “Comité de Servicio Chileno” was established in 1974 by the Quaker organization “American Friends Service Committee” based in Philadelphia and “Vision Mundial Chile” was settled down in 1980 by the Christian organizations World Vision with headquarters in the state of Washington in the United States. Also from this period, CEMERA and ICMER are two research institutions with strong ties with universities. CEMERA, was founded as the Universidad de Chile’s specialized center in adolescent



reproductive health. ICIMER was created in 1985 by a group of biomedical researchers, expelled from the Catholic Universities due to their progressive research about emergency contraception and human reproduction. Also from this period are two experienced NGOs in the field of teenage pregnancy and parenthood: CEANIM and EDUK, established in 1979 and 1987 respectively. The former was founded to further new models of support to young mothers from poor communities, based on the notions of resilience and early stimulation. The latter, was established to promote spaces for sexual education by delivering courses and workshops to youth and gender groups as well as teachers, professors and health staff in direct relation with adolescents.

The first round of democratic governments in the region (usually termed as democratic restoration period) showed the emergence of gender and women's rights organizations in all three countries. Not surprisingly, within a five-year period four relevant gender organizations were founded in the region: Instituto Social y Político de la Mujer (ISPM, Argentina) in 1985, Casa de la Mujer de la Unión (Uruguay) in 1987, Fundación para el Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM, Argentina) in 1989 and Centro de Estudios y Desarrollo de la Mujer (CEDEM, Chile) in 1990. The creation processes of these organizations followed similar patterns, in most cases initiated by groups of professionals –some of which have been exiled in foreign countries during dictatorships- seeking to increase awareness about gender inequalities in the spheres of health, employment and family life, and to develop research projects to inform more gendered specific policies. Teenage pregnancy prevention programs tended to emerge some years later, as these organizations evolved and got influenced by the emergence of sexual and reproductive rights paradigms. The rest of the organizations set up in this period could be better described as social care charities, deliverers of basic services in the wake of state failures and omissions. Coming from different backgrounds, these

organizations reflect the social support networks that neo-liberal states were keen to favour to “fill in” the gaps where state provision was insufficient. It is not surprising then, that in Uruguay we did not record any organization dating from this specific period (beyond the gender specific above mentioned), as neo-liberal reforms were late in coming, although they were clearly put in place in the next phase.

After democratic restoration, second and subsequent democratically elected governments witnessed a significant irruption of non governmental activity. Far from dwindling, civil society initiatives in response to social exclusion, reproductive rights, sexual education and basic community services continued to emerge until the present. Particularly relevant has been the irruption of youth organizations and NGO networks seeking to promote and enforce sexual and reproductive rights, including better access to reproductive health care and contraception services, the inclusion of sexual education in all stages of formal education, and campaigning in favour of legalization of abortion. These organizations can be characterized by a younger membership and greater levels of youth participation in their activities. Furthermore, organizations like PLENASSER and REDNACADOL in Argentina, and DESYR in Uruguay, rely completely on youth mobilization and participation to attain their goals and deliver services. As we will see, it is not a coincidence that no organizations of this type were found in Chile, where adult centered visions permeated approaches to adolescent and youth policies.

Nonetheless, the dynamic and scope of civil society initiatives at the turn of the century can be best described as effervescent, diverse and heterogeneous. Even if we focus solely on institutions targeting teenage pregnancy and teenage parenthood, it is remarkable the wide range of ideological perspectives that sustain the various types of interventions and approaches in this field. Not only did we identify youth mobilization around reproductive rights, but also community projects such as Centro Bosco (1997) or

Casa Lunas (2000) in the outskirts of Montevideo. In Santiago, conservative groups have renewed their appearance with the emergence of new organizations such as the “Fundación Chile Unido” (a pro-life organization founded in 1998) and the “Asociación de Damas Salesianas” (a female volunteer association established in 2001). These organizations have been developing substantial work with teenage parents by supporting mother and child bonding through volunteer work, some of which have deserved governmental recognition as “innovative model of intervention” as the case of the “Programa Emprende Mamá” implemented by the latter in the *comuna* of La Florida.

### **ISOMORPHIC ORIGINS OF NGPA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

We take a different approach to the origins of nongovernmental public action in this field by grouping the experiences according to their decade of emergence (instead of political period as done in the previous section). Using this classification, a clear isomorphic pattern can be observed, shedding new light to the question: Which organization was concerned and taking responsibility for teenage pregnancy and parenthood in each period? As *Table 5* clearly reveals, originally the issue of teenage pregnancy was a matter of concern for religious organizations. Charities working under the umbrella of religious congregations were the first ones to provide responses to teenage mothers and their children. Their work was part of the traditional role of the Catholic Church which sought to serve the needs of marginalized and stigmatized groups, such as pregnant adolescents. The origins of these organizations can be traced to the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in some cases, like in Chile, to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (*La Sociedad Protectora de la Infancia* was founded in 1894).

In the late 1960s the notion of reproductive rights began to emerge as a subset of human rights, embodied in the *1968 Proclamation of Teheran* which stated that “parents

*have a basic right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and a right to adequate education and information in this respect".* The advancement of the reproductive rights paradigm was clearly coupled to the irruption of family planning services, which rapidly reached the realm of civil society organizations. It is not a coincidence then, that we encountered similar NGOs across the three countries, concerned with the issue of teenage pregnancy prevention, working under the family planning approach and founded within a short period of time (1965 in Chile, 1966 in Argentina and 1968 in Uruguay).

In 1979 the United Nations General Assembly approved the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), providing an international bill of rights for women. This charter empowered the work of women's organizations which became embedded in the defense of human rights that was taking place in the context of military dictatorships across the three nations. This new scenario favored the multiplication of women and gender rights organizations, some of which were part of our study, as they were conducting projects related to teenage pregnancy. Also in this period, the women's rights movement helped to reframe - in the language of rights - issues related to reproduction and sexuality, resulting in new initiatives dedicated to the advancement of sexual and reproductive rights.

Adolescent fertility also became the concern of pro-poor organizations and neighborhood associations working in segregated urban communities. In this respect, a group of our studied organizations were created in the late 1980s and 1990s to address the needs of children and adolescents living in socially deprived urban settings. Despite their variegated origins, these organizations emerged as civil society responses to increasing processes of social exclusion and the absence of effective governmental policies. In most of these cases, targeting teenage mothers and their families constituted

just one additional component of a wider range of community services and projects. Interestingly, we found that a significant proportion of these organizations had a religious background and operated under the umbrella of the Catholic Church. Also within the Church's structure we found some pro-life organizations enacting programs for pregnant adolescents, which include giving the child in adoption when maternity is unwanted. The Catholic Church served as a prolific platform for engendering institutional arrangements in the three countries. Secular trends, also affect the Church's structure eliciting different institutional responses in each period. Even when the notion of sexual and reproductive rights irrupted, a group of Catholic pro-choice women called "*Mujeres por el Derecho a Decidir*" became visible challenging the Church's moral teachings about abortion.

Finally, with the turn of the millennium the issue of teenage pregnancy and adolescent parenthood became the focus of professional associations such as groups of sexual educators, psychologists, sociologists and other specializations seeking to develop new approaches based on their knowledge and field of expertise. While serving the needs of vulnerable groups, these organizations also provide with employment opportunities to an increasing number of middle class professionals. Also the universities and academic centers become interested in understanding the dynamics of adolescent fertility, whether impulsed by mandates of "social responsibility" or pure academic instinct. More recently, a new generation of organizations has been forging a specific approach to adolescent rights, promoting the participation of this age group in community services and local development activities. These new approaches challenge the adult-centric perspective that prevails in most communities, where adolescent's demands and concerns tend to remain unheard and underrepresented.

Despite local variations and national rhythms, the evolution of institutional settings across our studied countries seems to follow an isomorphic trend as processes of

democratization, liberalization and decentralization expand in the region. Institutional responses to the challenge of teenage pregnancy and parenthood have been substantially inspired by the ideological framework prevailing in each period. From religious compassion to family planning or adolescent rights, at each time different set of values inspired the creation of institutional settings to serve the needs of this particular vulnerable group within society.

Table 5. Decade of creation of studied organizations in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay (1894-2007).

PERIOD OF NGO CREATION	ARGENTINA	CHILE	URUGUAY	INSTITUTIONAL TYPE
<b>1970s and older</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Caritas Argentina (1956)</li> <li>2. Asociación Argentina de Planificación Familiar (1966)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sociedad Protectora de la Infancia (1894)</li> <li>2. Hogar Refugio de Misericordia (1926)</li> <li>3. Asociación Chilena de Protección a la Familia (1965)</li> <li>4. Comité de Servicio Chileno (1974)</li> <li>5. Centro de Atención de Estudios del Niño y la Mujer (1979)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. La Bonne Garde (1911)</li> <li>2. Centro Maria Teresa (1943)</li> <li>3. Asociación Uruguaya de Planificación Familiar (1968)</li> </ol>	<div>RELIGIOUS ORG</div> <div>FAMILY PLAN.</div> <div>WOMEN RIGHTS</div>
<b>1980s</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Instituto Social y Político de la Mujer (1985)</li> <li>4. Fundación para el Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (1989)</li> <li>5. Red El Encuentro (1989)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Vision Mundial Chile (1980)</li> <li>7. Centro de Medicina Reproductiva y Desarrollo Integral del Adolescente (1981)</li> <li>8. Instituto Chileno de Medicina Reproductiva (1985)</li> <li>9. EDUK (1987)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Casa de la Mujer de la Unión (1987)</li> </ol>	<div>SEX &amp; REPR. RIGHTS.</div> <div>PRO-POOR</div>
<b>1990s</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Fundación Felices los Niños (1993)</li> <li>7. Foro por los Derechos Reproductivos (1994)</li> <li>8. Asociación Civil Sol Naciente (1998)</li> <li>9. Red Nacional de Adolescentes en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva (1999)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Centro de Estudios y Desarrollo de la Mujer (1990)</li> <li>11. Fundación Cerro Navia (1994)</li> <li>12. Fundación San José para la Adopción (1994)</li> <li>13. Vicaría de la Pastoral Social y de los Trabajadores (1994)</li> <li>14. Fundación Chile Unido (1998)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Centro Bosco La Tablada (1997)</li> </ol>	<div>NETWORKS</div> <div>PRO - LIFE</div>
<b>2000s</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Campos del Psicoanálisis (2000)</li> <li>11. SEXALUD (2001)</li> <li>12. CONDEERS (2002)</li> <li>13. Fundación Kaleidos (2000)</li> <li>14. PLENASSER (2005)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Asociación de Damas Salesianas (2001)</li> <li>16. Pontificia Universidad Católica (2007)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Casa Lunas (2000)</li> <li>7. Red de Jóvenes DESYR (2001)</li> <li>8. Iniciativas Sanitarias (2001)</li> <li>9. Iniciativa Latinoamericana (2002)</li> <li>10. Caif Vida Nueva (2004)</li> <li>11. Instituto Perinatal del Uruguay (2005)</li> </ol>	<div>PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC</div> <div>ADOL. RIGHTS</div>
<b>Total</b>	14	16	11	

## CHAPTER 3: THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NON GOVERNMENTAL PUBLIC ACTION IN TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Effective states deliver rule-governed environments  
which strengthen and increase the efficiency of  
local organizations and institutions.  
Peter Evans. (1996)

### The notion of “environment” in institutional theory

The notion of environment constitutes a major field in which we can gain insight from institutional theory for the study of NGOs. For institutional scholarship, institutional environments can strongly determine the development of formal structures in an organization. In this paradigm, environments are theorized as reservoirs of information and resources, allowing for scenarios of uncertainty and competition. As described by Meyer and Rowan (1977), some environmental dimensions are critical when assessing the possibilities of institutions in their environments. These authors identify some key factors that should be seen as crucial factors in determining and shaping NGO performance: a) Environmental supply (abundance of resources) b) Environmental concentration (how concentrated are the resources in the environment), c) Environmental heterogeneity (plurality of actors), d) Environmental hostility (capacity of the environment to allow for cooperative behavior and alliances).

For Meyer and Rowan institutional environments tend to promote and expand procedures and approaches that expand *technical efficiency*, legitimizing these innovations and forcing their adoption by existing and new institutions. As a result institutions will adopt what they call the “*vocabularies of structure*” (e.g. rights approach or participatory discourses) that rapidly tend to prevail in their environment. It is clear then that the adoption of the institutionally acceptable “*trappings of legitimacy*” will increase institutional chances of obtaining resources and surviving in their environments,



by means of gaining legitimacy. However, adhering to these structures of legitimization may overall reduce the efficiency of institutions and lead to isomorphism, which implies the homogenization of procedures and institutional behaviors. Interestingly, Meyer and Rowan notice that in this context is common that institutions will decouple their structures, with some appealing more to the legitimatizing structures while others seeking technical efficiency (leading to innovation).

Di Maggio and Powell (1983) make clear that overall the prevailing forces in institutional environments tend to increase *homogeneity* in institutional behaviors. As they put it, the pressures of environments may be framed in three different forms, which are worth mentioning: a) “*coercive pressure*” which are those legal procedures that institutions must following as mandate by legitimize authorities, b) “*mimetic pressures*” which refer to the adoption of successful patterns institutional behavior, especially in scenarios of uncertainty, and c) “*normative pressures*” derive from the spread of approaches and attitudes as common professional and technical staff pervade institutional structures. Finally, they argue that institutional isomorphism tends to increase when institutions are highly dependent on their institutional environments, when there are high levels of uncertainty or ambiguous goals, and when there is an excessive predominance of professionals.

## **National Environments for Non Governmental Public Action**

Drawing upon institutional grounds, this chapter seeks to understand the national policy environments in which our studied organizations struggle to gain resources. In the wake of severe reduction in international funding governments have become primary source of resources for non governmental organization in the three countries. Conceiving governments as providers of resources not only refers to funding, but also as sources of

recognition, legitimacy, and information (Stryker, 2002), Institutional environments are mainly determined by national policies, programs and legislations which shape, influence, constrain, enable and – to a greater extent – determine the nature and scope of non governmental public action. Therefore, it become crucial to understand the repertoire of polices and programs that are available for NGOs and the resources and opportunities that governments (at different levels) make available for them.

Therefore, we will characterize national policy, institutional and political environments, as main sources of resources, recognition and legitimacy for non governmental public action in adolescent fertility. In doing this we will be cross examining national environments in four main aspects. First, we will identify the main programs being implemented as national responses to the issue of teenage pregnancy. In this respect we are interested in knowing how much attention governments are paying to this particular policy issue and what are the prevailing approaches being followed in each country. Second, we will identify some institutional, cultural and political traits that should be taken into account as they also affect the field in which NGOs operate and gain resources from. Third, we will inquiry about the role that national policies and programs assign to civil society organizations and the effective resources that are made available to them. Fourth, taking advantage of our cross-national perspective, we will seek for commonalities and differences across national environments, particularly trying to understand what these differences mean for Non Governmental Public Action.

#### **GENERAL TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR NGPA**

The environment in which non governmental action occurs has striking similarities across the three countries. Teenage pregnancy and parenthood has become a central target in social policies with a wide range of interventions being planned and implemented at different levels of government. However, prevailing responses to

adolescent fertility have come from health sector agencies, particularly from national health ministries and municipal health networks. In all three countries major national sexual and reproductive health programs are being implemented which include among its top priorities reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancy. *Table 6* shows the principal initiatives being implemented in each country aiming to reduce the number the teenage pregnancies by granting universal access to contraceptive methods, providing sexual and reproductive health information and implementing adolescent friendly health services. The latter, has been another particularly salient objective in recent health policies across our studied countries, advancing the creation of age-specific services by implementing more adequate responses to adolescents needs and granting confidential and anonymous counseling. In none of the three countries abortion services are legal, although this constitutes a currently highly debated issue across the three nations<sup>7</sup>.

Before free access to contraception became legally recognized by governmental approved norms, NGOs played a major role in distributing or facilitating access to it, at low or not costs. First generation of sexual and reproductive health organizations (usually born under the family planning umbrella and supported by IPPF) played a prominent role in granting access to contraception in the three countries. As states partially become to incorporate free contraception, these NGOs began to retreat from this type of services although some still remain delivering this service. These NGOs have experienced a mission shift, as they changed from granting access to contraception to assuming advocacy roles in favor of the effective enforcement of sexual and reproductive services,

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<sup>7</sup> In Uruguay the “Sexual and Reproductive Health” law passed by parliament on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 included three chapters which legalized the interruption of pregnancy prior the 12 weeks of conception and established the creation of abortion services in public and private services. The President of the Republic, Tabaré Vazquez exercised his veto powers, to derogate these chapters although the remaining chapters of the law stood. In Chile, free access to “Day after pill” was approved by Health Ministry norms in 2007 but it was recently declared unconstitutional under claim that there was no sufficient evidence about its abortive condition. In Argentina in 2008 an alliance formed by 250 civil society organizations supported by some politicians, submitted a project of law to the Congress requesting the legalization of abortion

through coalition formation and other resource mobilization strategies. As one NGO director in Argentina explained:

*La asociación se considera que ya se ha cerrado un ciclo y que llegó el momento de redefinir los objetivos. Esto se debe a que después de cuarenta años, por fin el tema del embarazo adolescente y de la salud sexual y reproductiva ha pasado a formar parte de la agenda del Estado. Si el Estado se ocupa de eso, las organizaciones deberían ocuparse de lo que el Estado no puede o no quiere hacer. Entonces hay que redefinir nuestros objetivos. Y en este momento, estamos en eso. En este momento está en ejecución un plan estratégico y en el 2008, ya estamos elaborando otro plan estratégico, porque hay que cambiar, no la visión, es la misma visión pero enfocada hacia otro lado (Sexual and Reproductive Rights NGO, Buenos Aires)*

Another cross national commonality is to be found in on going initiatives to include sexual education in formal education curricula at all levels, from pre-school to higher education including primary, secondary and technical schools. Although showing different degrees of effectiveness and paces, national governments have enacted norms to progressively impart sexual education across educational subsystems and train their educational personnel in this field. This has also opened spaces for non governmental action as several NGOs have found niches for selling their services to schools, high schools and to train educators as well as students.

Another major challenge in formal education has been retaining pregnant adolescents in schools, although studies have proved that in many cases drop-outs precedes pregnancy.<sup>8</sup> In fact, teenage disengagement with learning and education has become an underpinning factor tied to low employment and educational expectations and teenage motherhood. In this context, several initiatives have been implemented by national and municipal governments to prevent drop-outs or reengage teenage mothers

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<sup>8</sup> A recent survey conducted by CELSAM (Centro Latinoamericano Salud y Mujer) showed that among teenage mothers who had contacted public hospitals in Buenos Aires, 52% had dropped out school before becoming pregnant. Data from Montevideo and Santiago show similar trends.

with the learning process. Across the three cities similar initiatives have been implemented seeking to allow teenage mothers and fathers to harmonize their parenthood with school responsibilities. Concrete measures include more flexible regimes of attendance, the establishment of childcare services as well as adequate spaces for breastfeeding within schools.

Beyond the implementation of these initiatives school abandonment remains rampant among teenage parents.<sup>9</sup> Several civil society organizations across the three cities work with teenage mothers and fathers to support their ties with formal education (when these still exist) and develop employability skills to increase their odds of finding jobs. Similarly, in all three cities NGOs are involved in *pilot* educational experiences targeting adolescents who have already abandoned or have never begun high school studies. *Table 6* includes the name of nation and city wide programs aiming to retain those still in formal education, and also more flexible experiences for those outside formal institutions.

More generally, the three countries have implemented different type of cash transfer initiatives as components of larger social protection programs for mean tested low income households (e.g. *Chile Solidario*, *Plan de Equidad* in Uruguay, *Programa Familias por la Inclusión Social* in Argentina). Although these initiatives are not age-specific, they tend to include cash subsidies to households headed by teenage mothers or fathers. Usually the money transfers are coupled with the provision of employment or vocational training programs, as well as social support services which are contracted to non governmental organizations. Also national programs to support childrearing and secure quality childcare and preschool services in poor communities, tend to outreach the offspring of teenage mothers. However, neither cash transfer nor early childhood

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<sup>9</sup> The same survey showed that 58% of teenage mother are not attending school.

programs target specifically teenage parents or their children as a particular objective group.

Table 6. Programs and national responses across shared approaches to adolescent fertility in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

Cross-National Initiatives	Argentina	Chile	Uruguay
Implementation of sexual and reproductive health services including free access to contraception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa de Procreación Responsable (Ley 25.673)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normas Nacionales sobre la Regulación de la Fertilidad (Decreto Supremo No 48)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ley de salud sexual y Reproductiva (Ley 18.426)</li> </ul>
Implementation of adolescent specific health services in public and private providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan Nacional de Salud Integral del Adolescente (1997)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normas para la Consejería en Atención en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva de los y las Adolescentes (2007)</li> <li>Programa de los y las Adolescentes (2007)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa Nacional de Adolescencia (2007)</li> <li>Atención especializada para adolescentes – Programa INFAMILIA (2004)</li> </ul>
Inclusion of sexual education at all levels of formal education from pre-school to superior education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral (Ley 26.150)</li> <li>Ley de Educación Sexual Integral del GCBA (Ley 2.110)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan de Educación en Sexualidad y Afectividad (2005)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolución No. 4 de la ANEP (Diciembre 2005) y Ley General de Educación (Ley 18.347).</li> </ul>
Prevention of school drop-outs among teenage parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa de Retención Escolar del GCBA (2007)</li> <li>Ley 709 del GCBA (2001)</li> <li>Ley de Educación Nacional 26.206, art. 81 (2006)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreto supremo de Educación No. 312 (2002)</li> <li>Programa “Un liceo para todos” (2000)</li> <li>Reforma de la Ley Orgánica de Enseñanza (Ley 19.688)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolución de ANEP sobre control de asistencias y apoyo para estudiantes embarazadas y puerperas (1999)</li> <li>Protocolo de Intervención de Agentes Socioeducativos/as. (2007)</li> </ul>
Pilot programs for those out of formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa Nacional de Inclusión Educativa “Todos a Estudiar” (2003)</li> <li>Programa “Deserción Cero” (2004)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa “Chilecalifica” (2002)</li> <li>Campaña “Contigo Aprendo” (2003)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa Aulas Comunitarias (2007)</li> <li>Áreas psico-pedagógicas de INAU (2005)</li> </ul>
Cash allowances to teenage mothers in poverty (mean tested)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa Familias por la Inclusión Social (2004)</li> <li>Plan Nacional de Abordaje Integral “Ahí, en el lugar” (2008)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sistema de Protección Social “Chile Solidario” (2004)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan de Emergencia / Plan de Equidad (2005)</li> </ul>
Public programs to provide childcare and parenthood support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Infantil “Primeros años” (2005)<sup>10</sup></li> <li>Centros CEDIS y CAF (Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programa “Chile Crece Contigo” (2007)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan CAIF – Centros de Atención a la Infancia y la familia (1988)</li> </ul>
State-run residencies for teenage mothers and their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hogar Eva Duarte (Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residencias de Protección para Madres adolescentes (SENAME)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unidades Materno-Infantiles (UMI - INAU)</li> </ul>
Coordination unit of policies and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministerio de Desarrollo Social.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministerio de Planificación (MIDEPLAN)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (MIDES)</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> Although the program preexisted this year, in 2005 the national government approved the “Ley de Financiamiento Educativo” increasing funding to extend coverage of childcare in poor communities.

Overarching plans and strategy to cope with adolescence challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan Nacional de Acción por los Derechos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes (2008-2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Política Nacional y Plan de Acción Integrado a favor de la Infancia y la Adolescencia. (2001-2010)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estrategia Nacional de Infancia y Adolescencia (2010-2030)</li> </ul>
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Beyond education and healthcare service, providing shelter and residential facilities for teenage mothers is another important field of public intervention. The three cities have state run homes or residences for pregnant adolescents or teenage mothers, although prevailing children rights approaches consider institutionalization as a last resource measure. However, there are cases when returning to parents home is not possible and collective institutional housing is the only alternative. Our visit to these facilities showed they tend to be overcrowded and the existing demand completely exceeds their actual availability. Adolescents in need of shelter are repeatedly denied accommodation, as capacities of public facilities are extremely limited. In this context, several civil society organizations – the majority of which belong to the faith based category – offer temporal residential services usually complemented with other type of social and health support. Generally, public residences (such as the *Hogar Eva Duarte* in Buenos Aires, the *Unidades Materno Infantiles* in Montevideo, and *SENAME's* residences for teenage mothers in Santiago) count upon non- governmentally run shelters to provide emergency responses. However, this not necessarily means the correspondent transfer of resources, as explicitly said by the responsible of a non governmental residence in Buenos Aires: “*cuando se abrió el Hogar de Madres, inmediatamente se enteró [el Ministerio de] Acción Social. Y ellos, a través del programa Buenos Aires Presente, nos mandan chicas, pero no ayuda económica*”.

Overall, *Table 6* shows very similar patterns of national programs in the fields of health, education and social care in response to the challenges posed by adolescent fertility. However, beyond discourses of integrality and coordination, cross national

comparison shows that policy approaches tend to be fragmented, sector oriented and without taking into account the interlocked nature of underpinning factors. As strong emphasis is put on the health and prevention programs, interventions usually fail to take into account the contextual factors of poverty and social exclusion that are intertwined with early motherhood and fatherhood. With the intention to overcome this problem, the three countries have allocated in one specific governmental structure the responsibility of coordination and articulation of policies (Social Development Ministries in Argentina and Uruguay, MIDEPLAN in Chile). Although results are somewhat variegated across countries, coordination of social programs and integral approaches to teenage pregnancy remains a major drawback in national responses.

Assessing the impacts of implemented programs is not an easy task. On the one hand, all three countries exhibit progressive reductions in adolescent fertility rates in recent years as overall results of prevention programs and campaigns. On the other hand the incidence in overall fertility may remain stable or even increase, as overall fertility rates are declining at greater pace. Furthermore, teenage pregnancy remains equally correlated with poverty and social exclusion, as policies are not able to decouple it from socially disadvantageous outcomes. In all three countries, governmental and non governmental personnel coincided in asserting that *adolescent policy was not a priority in national policy agendas* and that more coordinated efforts were needed. In response, the three countries have pursued the development of *long term* national strategies, seeking to align efforts of all related actors to improve results. Coincidentally, these initiatives seek to provide a long run perspective (see *Table 6* for target periods) assuming the difficulties to find effective short term solutions and the need to combine efforts between governmental agencies and civil society organizations.



Beyond common programs and initiatives mentioned in *Table 6*, we have included a comprehensive and exhaustive inventory of all national and city level programs addressing the issue of teenage and parenthood in each country (Tables 5, 6 and 7). After identifying common trends in national responses, we will now move into more country-specific considerations that are relevant for explaining national environments for non governmental public action.

## **ARGENTINA**

The environment for NGOs operating in Buenos Aires on issues related to adolescent fertility could be substantially characterized by two main conditions: progressive norms and scarcity of resources. Legislation and norms protecting the rights of pregnant adolescents and teenage parents should be considered the most progressive of the three studied legal environments. In the federal Argentinean system, the government of the city of Buenos Aires (GCBA) shares a provincial status with the capacity of passing its own legislation and running its own decentralized budget. Compared with the other provinces in the country (included the Province of Buenos Aires), the government of the city has early adopted advanced rights based legislation, expressed in laws such as No 114 (Children Rights Protection<sup>11</sup>) approved in 1997 and No 2.110 (Compulsory Sexual Education) approved in 2006. Also, national laws such as No 25.673 (National Sexual Health Program) and No 26.150 (Sexual Education) created a rights-based platform for NGO activism. Particularly, the *Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual Integral y Procreacion Responsable* originally piloted in Buenos Aires in 1988 was a pioneer program, targeting women between 15 and 19 years of age. The law that finally approved the program was passed in 2002. According to this legislation the objectives of

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<sup>11</sup> Several NGOs members considered law No 114 model and exemplar legislation in the region, due to the wide and extensive recognition of children and adolescent rights, as well as its early adoption.

the program are to “a) grant universal access to sexual health and responsible reproduction, b) provide contraceptive methods, c) early detection of HIV/AIDS and STDs, d) promote sexual health of young women and men” (Law No. 25.673).

In this respect, women and reproductive rights organizations in Buenos Aires have been deeply involved in the elaboration of rights oriented legislation, providing technical expertise and taking leadership upon drafting many of the projected laws. However, public health, education and social services are not sufficient to meet the high standards consecrated in Argentinean norms and fail to enforce the rights to which the citizens are entitled. In this environment, non governmental organizations become key players in monitoring and controlling the enforcement of these rights. Unlike the other two cases, in Buenos Aires we encountered NGO coalitions, such as CONDERS (*Consortio Nacional de Derechos Reproductivos y Sexuales*) or FORO (*Foro por los Derechos Reproductivos*) – established in 2002 and 1995 respectively- which have assumed important roles in controlling the effective delivery of contraceptive methods and reproductive health information in public health system. CONDERS, for example, issues periodical reports monitoring the performance of municipal, provincial and national health providers in the field of sexual and reproductive rights. These reports are made public as a form of keeping health authorities accountable, and to provide users with information. They coalition has adopted a discourse of *social monitoring* reproductive rights, as a means to put pressure on public health facilities to comply with the law. Additionally, they have also trained several civil society organizations in Buenos Aires and the rest of the country to empower them so they can also exercise this role. The approval of progressive legislation constitutes a major instrument for the coalition’s advocacy strategies and a platform for rights awareness activities.

As part of the environment, the advanced legislation in sexual education has also brought some opportunities for non governmental organizations with expertise and experience in this field. As national and city legislation establishes the progressive implementation of curricular contents in this respect, public and private schools needed to train their personnel or subcontract sex educational services with third parties organizations. A group of NGOs have encountered some funding niches in selling their services to private schools or submitting projects for public funding to develop sex education curriculums in public education facilities. In a context of scarce resources, the program “*Nuestros Derechos, Nuestras Vidas*” appears as one of the few venues that civil society organizations have for funding sexual education activities and workshops.

This program is being implemented by the “*Consejo de Derechos de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes*” which is a council integrated by governmental and non governmental organizations in charge of promoting children and adolescent rights in the City of Buenos Aires. Despite some disputes over the legitimacy of the NGOs that become elected for the council, the experience was positively valued by NGOs as a space where civil society can express their concerns about the situation of children and adolescents rights. Among the functions that the law No 114 assigns to the council, it is mentioned the coordination and supervision of all children and adolescents policies within the boundaries of the city, and the implementation of new programs to promote and protect their rights. It is in this context that the program “*Nuestros Derechos, Nuestras Vidas*” was created in the year 2001, to increase awareness about adolescents rights through a series of workshops subcontracted to specialized NGOs. For women and sexual and reproductive rights organizations, this constitutes one of the few sources of funding that are locally available.

The provision of health and education services in Argentina has been decentralized being primarily a responsibility of provincial governments (with the

Government of the City of Buenos Aires being treated as a province in this respect). Each provincial government can transfer healthcare services responsibilities to municipal authorities, depending on the available infrastructure and service network. In describing the resource availability this note is important as most grass roots and community organizations which conduct social projects in the *Conurbano Bonaerense* (where poor households are concentrated) complain about the existence of clientelistic practices in the distribution of municipal funding based on the partisan affiliation of the *Intendente*. We encountered that for those organizations working in poor communities there is very limited sources of funding where they can resort to, if any. Except for the two large, highly professionalized and well resourced NGOs -FEIM and ISPM (both of them women's rights organizations)-, the rest expressed serious concerns about funding issues and project continuity amidst a context of scarcity of resources.

In this context, the Government of the City of Buenos Aires (GCBA) should be acknowledged as a resourceful actor with a relatively good provision of services although insufficient to meet the increasing social demands. The functioning of the only state-run residence for teenage mothers in Buenos Aires (the *Hogar Eva Duarte*) was praised by several organizations although they mentioned it was not sufficient to accommodate all requests. Also, the *Hospital Argerich* -run by the health ministry of the city- has developed a successful strategy to approach adolescent healthcare and teenage pregnancy, with very good results. However, as resourced and professionalized as these services may be, the demand exceeds their possibilities as they are frequently used by residents from the *Conurbano* where health and social services are less resourced, demand for public services is greater and -therefore- they are more difficult to access.

An additional problem in the Argentinean case, is the overlapping levels of responsibility between municipal, provincial and national governments, making integral

approaches and coordination a major challenge for effective responses to teenage pregnancy. Two significant initiatives can be mentioned in this respect, the *Red de Adolescencia* created in 1993 and the *Comision Intersectorial Salud-Educación* implemented in 1997, both seeking to overcome fragmentation and overlapping of initiatives and resources. The *Red de Adolescencia* promoted training of hospital personnel in adolescent healthcare and sexuality, favored the exchange of experiences across hospitals staff and implemented some collaborative research projects. The experience was interrupted in 1997 as a result of corporative conflicts between pediatricians and adolescents' specialists, and the network became dissolved into the *Red de Pediatria*. This same year, following a recommendation from the OPS/OMS the *Comision Intersectorial* is implemented seeking to promote healthy lifestyles in schools and high schools and close the existing gap between health and education approaches. Although piecemeal, some accomplishments of the commission were the realization of workshops for educators and the elaboration of didactic material to support their work.

Finally, to complete this brief description of key distinctive features of the context in which NGOs operate, we should acknowledge the role of the Catholic Church in both the social and moral terrain. As Catholicism is the religion of the State, confirmed by the Argentinean Constitution of 1994<sup>12</sup>, the Catholic Church remains influential on governmental structures, although these relations have been historically conflictive. On the social terrain the Church has been a major funding source for community faith based organizations working directly with poor children and adolescents through direct service provision. The Caritas network operating through a vast number of parishes, schools and social projects across the country has a significant outreach among poor communities, particularly children and youth.

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<sup>12</sup> However, the requirement for the president to be a Roman Catholic was removed in the 1994 constitution amendment.

On moral grounds, Church authorities have disputed and questioned governmental programs and reforms in the field of sexual education and contraception. Under the administration of President Nestor Kirchner, high profile confrontations occurred between public health authorities and Catholic bishops, due to the implementation of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health program. According to Gogna (2001) despite progressive legislation in Argentina, the alliance between members of the Catholic Church and sectors of the political establishment has prevented the enforcement of sexual and reproductive rights, especially, universal access to contraception. Despite criticism towards Catholic authorities from women and reproductive rights organizations, we did not find strong divisions across the NGO community which prevented collaboration and participation in projects of joint interest. That was the case for example, of sexual and reproductive rights NGOs providing services in Catholic schools, or mutual collaboration between NGOs of different backgrounds working in teenage parents support projects.

Table 7. Public programs related to teenage pregnancy/parenthood in Buenos Aires

Level	Name of program/legislation	Year	Description
National level	<i>Red de adolescencia</i> (Adolescence Network)	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main objective: improve health services for adolescents through exchange of experience between hospital services targeting adolescents.</li> <li>• Activities: Train and strengthen the capacities of members of health teams to work with adolescents and develop collaborative research programs</li> <li>• The network dwindled in 1997 as it was fused into the Red de Pediatría (Paediatric Network) (Gogna, 2001)</li> </ul>
	<i>Plan Nacional de Salud Integral del Adolescente</i> (Integral Adolescent Health National Plan)	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main objectives: promote and protect adolescent health from an integral perspective, grant the right to receive information and services to assume responsible attitudes towards sexuality</li> <li>• Central ideas: Health understood as socially determined by education, working and living conditions; holistic conception of health including its bio-psycho – social dimensions;</li> <li>• Age specific: recognize adolescents as a group with specific needs that deserves specific services. .</li> </ul>
	<i>Comisión Intersectorial de Salud-Educación</i> (Inter-sector governmental committee for health and education)	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main objective: promote health lifestyle across schools and educational centers of the country.</li> <li>• Also: Support schools in developing a sense of individual and collective responsibility in health care</li> <li>• Main activities: Workshops to train teachers and professors, elaboration of didactic materials,</li> </ul>

			meetings of integrations (Viamonte, et al. 2005)
	<i>Prohibición de acciones contra alumnas embarazadas</i> (Ley N° 25.584) (Prohibition of actions against pregnant students)	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The law forbids any action that may impede or deny the initiation or continuation of studies at education centers to any pregnant women.</li> <li>The law explicitly forbids any form of stigma, humiliation or marginalization of pregnant students.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual Integral y Procreación Responsable</i> (Ley 25.673) (Responsible Procreation Program)	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main objectives: provide access to family planning services and contraceptive methods, prevent STDs and promote sexual health in women and men.</li> <li>Target groups include women between 15 and 19 years</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Nacional de Inclusión Educativa “Todos a Estudiar”</i> (National Program of Educational Inclusion “Everyone to study”)	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program seeks to support the permanence in school of adolescents between 11 and 18 years of age.</li> <li>The attain this goal the program combines various instruments including tutoring students, providing scholarships and training professors.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Familias por la Inclusión Social</i> (Families for social inclusion program)	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main objectives: to promote social inclusion of low income families by granting access into the public network of services and delivering cash welfare support.</li> <li>Activities: monetary transfer to families according to number of children/adolescents under 19 with the condition of assuring regular health check ups and attendance to school; other non-monetary services.</li> </ul>
	<i>Ley de Protección Integral de los Derechos del de las Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes.</i> (N° 26.061) (Integral protection of the rights of children and adolescents)	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the U.N. Children Rights Convention this law defines the superior interest of the child, and the main guidelines for policy making regarding children and adolescence.</li> <li>The law defines responsibilities for the national (regulation), federal (coordination) and provincial (implementation) of children and adolescent policies.</li> <li>The law also creates the Secretaría de la Niñez within the Social Development Ministry.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral</i> (Ley 26.150) (Nacional Integral Sexual Education Program)	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main objective: schools at all levels should include sexual education in the curriculum with integral perspective.</li> <li>Seeks to prevent problems related with health in general, and with sexual and reproductive health in particular.</li> <li>Also includes specific objectives to train parents in sexual education topics.</li> </ul>
	<i>Plan Nacional de Abordaje Integral “Ahí, en el lugar”</i> (National Plan of Integral Approach “There, in your place”)	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan targets poor households in villas of the conurban area of Buenos Aires and 12 other provinces.</li> <li>It promotes a wide range of actions including fellowships to support permanence in education, public service infrastructure, housing, access to credit among others policies.</li> </ul>
	<i>Hogar para Madres Adolescentes “María Eva Duarte”</i> (House for teenage mothers “Maria Eva Duarte”)	1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is the largest and main public residence run by the city government teenage mothers.</li> <li>They target adolescents under 21 years of age, pregnant or with children under 1 year of age, with out a social network of support within her immediate family group, at social risk.</li> </ul>

Provincial / G.C.B.A <sup>13</sup>	<i>PROAMA</i> (Pilot program of responsible parenthood)	1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot Project in the Hospital Materno Infantil Ramón Sardá</li> <li>• The project aimed at teenage mothers seeking to prevent new pregnancies, STDs, perinatal pathologies, as well as provide guidance in childrearing.</li> <li>• The project was part of other pilot experiences implemented in public health facilities of the City of Buenos Aires.</li> </ul>
	<i>Ley de Protección Integral de los Derechos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires</i> (N° 114) (Integral protection of rights of children and adolescents of the city of Buenos Aires)	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main objective: Project the right of the children and adolescent according to the principle of the United Nation Children's Rights Convention sanctioned in 1989.</li> <li>• The law creates the "Consejo de los Derechos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes" as the responsible entity to promote and Project the enforcement of children's rights in the city of Buenos Aires.</li> <li>• Also creates specific services called "defensorías zonales" to protect the rights of children and adolescents in the city of Buenos Aires. These "defensorías" are decentralized offices of the Consejo de los Derechos de los Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes.</li> </ul>
	<i>Centros de Gestión y Participación Comunal – Defensoría Zonal.</i> (Participation and rights promotion centers)	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "Defensorías Zonales" provide services to Project and promote children and adolescents rights in different neighborhoods of the city of Buenos Aires.</li> <li>• They also are responsible of providing a a response when the rights of children and adolescents are not respected, or when is necessary to intervene to remover barriers to fully enforce them.</li> <li>• The council (above mentioned) runs 15 "Defensorías Zonales" in different points of the city of Buenos Aires where the children, family members, parents, and neighbors can claim the enforcement of children rights that are threatened or violated.</li> </ul>
	Programa de Salud Reproductiva y Procreación Responsable (Reproductive Health and Responsible Parenthood <i>Law 418/2000</i> )	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its main objectives were to prevent unwanted pregnancies, provide information and access to contraceptive methods (including among adolescents), promote condoms as a method of STI/HIV prevention,</li> <li>• Also sought to promote the involvement of men in reproductive health care and responsible parenthood and to train health personnel in these matters.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa "Nuestros Derechos Nuestras Vidas".</i> (“Our rights, our lives” Program)	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This program is implemented by the "Consejo de Derechos de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes" of the City of Buenos Aires. The objective is to organize workshops in all education centres to promote children's rights expressed in the Law No 114.</li> <li>• The program is aimed at all educational centers of preschool, primary school, and middle school, at seeks to involve all members of educational community.</li> </ul>
	<i>Regimen especial de alumnas embarazadas (Ley N° 709)</i> (Special regime of school attendance for pregnant students)	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The law establishes a special regime to compute absences to school in the case of pregnant women or fathers students.</li> <li>• The law justifies up to 45 days of absence for the mother (to be used before or after the birth) and 5 days for father, beginning the birth day.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Deserción Cero</i> (Zero school drop out program)	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program seeks to promote the return to school of those students who have abandoned middle education</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> Acronym for the *Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires* (Government of the City of Buenos Aires).



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program has four different modalities of insertion into the education system, one of which is the implementation of “reinsertion” schools with special regimes of courses.</li> </ul>
	<i>“Proyecto Adolescente” del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social del Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires.</i> (“Adolescent Project” of the Social Development Ministry of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires)	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The objectives of this project includes prevention of teenage pregnancy, as well as support to teenage mothers and fathers living in poverty.</li> <li>The project’s strategy combines cash transfer to the adolescents, with supplementary funds to the NGOs that submits the project, with the support of a municipality.</li> </ul>
	<i>Ley de Educación Sexual Integral (N° 2110)</i> (Law of integral sexual education)	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main objective: determines the compulsory character of sexual education in all education centres of the city of Buenos Aires, including pre-school, primary, high school and technical school, as well as teachers and professors training programs.</li> <li>Promotes an integral approach to sexuality based on a gender perspective.</li> </ul>

We now turn to the analysis of NGO environment in Santiago, where these issues tend to be even more divisive and create strong alignments and oppositions among our studied organizations.

## CHILE

The environment for NGOs in Santiago could be characterized by the combination of traditional perspectives on adolescent pregnancy from the side of society and a large array of governmental policies and programs being implemented in response since the mid 1990s. Until then the initiative in the field of adolescent sexual and reproductive health had been mostly from non governmental organizations which were developing pilot projects and experiences at local level. Compared with the case of Buenos Aires, governmental policies and projects in this field came later, replicating and expanding much of what NGOs were implementing on smaller scales. In 1990, a study commissioned by SERNAM (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*) and conducted by Ramiro Molina (the founder of CEMERA, one of our studied NGOs) showed the existence of 42 different programs for adolescents, including sexual education and adolescent health projects, being run by Non Governmental organizations (Molina, 1991).

A first hallmark in governmental response to teenage pregnancy was the implementation of the *JOCAS (Jornadas de Conversación sobre Afectividad y Sexualidad)* originally conducted in five high schools in 1995 and expanded later to eight *comunas* in Santiago in the year 2000. The NGO EDUK played a significant role in the organization of these activities, particularly in the coordination between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the SERNAM and the INJUV (*Instituto Nacional de la Juventud*). Also crucial was the participation of several NGOs and academic centers in developing the *Programa Nacional de Salud del Adolescente* in the year 1998.

For the Chilean government, the issue of teenage pregnancy became part of programmatic actions that were required to deal with the undesired consequences of the economic model, by means of targeting socially vulnerable groups. In this perspective, poor adolescents and pregnant young mothers became a group *at risk* that should be prioritized by health and social policies (SERNAM, 2001). The vast list of actions implemented by Chilean government followed common approaches based on sexual education and family planning programs, allocated within the corresponding ministries of education and health. Particularly relevant were the efforts to deter school dropouts and prevent school expulsion of teenage mothers.

Unlike the other two cases, in Santiago a strong stigma still remains attached to teenage pregnancy and motherhood, which is manifested in the manner in which school centers cope with these cases. The situation of pregnant teenagers or teenage mothers being expelled from their *colegios* (religious institutions in many cases) was not uncommon until very recently. During my visits to Santiago, on several occasions newspapers featured cases of pregnant teenagers that were “advised” to abandon their schools, as they were not a good example for their classmates. Although somewhat changing recently, the Chilean society still conceives teenage pregnancy and motherhood

as a shameful behavior, with social disapproval and misjudgments being placed upon those who faced this situation.

Interestingly, a first response to this problem was the creation of a pilot high school *exclusively* for teenage mothers in the year 1993, what came to be considered a pioneer experience in Latin America (UNFPA, 2000). The experience was originally implemented by CEMERA (one of our studied NGOs) and funded by the UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population). After closing for lack of funding, the project was reopened in 2001 by the *Municipality of Conchalí* with the support of the MINEDUC (Ministry of Education). Although the experience received some harsh criticism on the grounds of segregation and social isolation, it could be seen as an example of the first type of policies adopted by Chilean government in response to the issue of adolescent pregnancy.

Overcoming these critiques, less “targeted” and more universal models began to be adopted as the Law No. 19.688 passed in 2000 requires that education centers should not prevent pregnant mothers from their right to continue studying. More recently, in 2005 the program *Para que estudie contigo* was implemented in municipal high schools, promoting the inclusion of childcare services and spaces for breastfeeding, seeking to improve compatibility between schooling and maternity. In present days teenage mothers’ engagement with education continues to be a major concern for Chilean educational authorities, and the target of several programs seeking to retain them in school, as could be seen in *Table 8*. Based on the experience of the JOCAS the MINEDUC launched a very progressive, although highly resisted, *Plan de Educación en Sexualidad y Afectividad* including sexual education modules across all levels from preschool to higher education. Like in the case of Buenos Aires, this opened some opportunities for NGOs to train teachers and professors in this terrain.

In the year 2007, as we were conducting our fieldwork, two main public health initiatives with direct impact in the adolescent population were implemented. First, the highly controversial *Normas Nacionales sobre la Regulación de la Fertilidad* was approved by the MINSAL (Ministry of Health) which granted free access to contraception and the distribution of the “day after pill<sup>14</sup>” for those with more than 14 years of age. Second, the MINSAL implemented the *Programa de las y los Adolescentes y Jóvenes*, as well as the *Normas para la Consejería en Atención en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva de los y las Adolescentes*, seeking to improve adolescents access and environment in public health centers and the provision of appropriate information so they can make informed decisions about their sexuality and reproduction. Disregarding how progressive these plans might be, as occurred with the sex education plan, NGOs have indicated there is major gap between the written mandates and what is being actually implemented. Several obstacles are accounted for which prevent the fulfilment of program objectives.

In particular, political and religious resistances to this type of initiatives are a major obstacle in Chile, where Catholic Church remains very influential across the political establishment and throughout the entire society. Although it may share some commonalities with the situation we mentioned in Argentina, in Chile Catholicism is somewhat embedded within the governmental structures and centers of power. Conflicts tend to be not so much between governmental personnel and ecclesiastical authorities, but between conflicting viewpoints across political and civil society leaders. In Chile, debates are less personalized and much more moralized, as there is little need for the

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<sup>14</sup> There has been contested arguments and scientific evidence about the abortive effects of this pill. The academic NGOs we have interviewed for this dissertation they have all concluded that the pill prevents the formation of the zygote, operative as a contraceptive method. However, this evidence is disputed by other scientists who claim that the pill may refrain the nesting of the new zygote in the uterus. Another issue of debate refers to the age limit and the right to confidentiality that protects the adolescents.

Church to go outspoken on these issues since its moral views and standpoints are embedded within many policy and law makers. The case of the *Normas de Fertilidad* is a good example, as the issue was taken by a group of members of parliament (from the conservative party *Alianza por Chile*) to the *Tribunal Constitucional* which suspended the distribution of the “day after pill” on the grounds of protecting the right to live of the conceived individual<sup>15</sup>.

Although these disputes characterized the highly politicized environment surrounding adolescent and reproductive rights in Chile, recent governments - and especially Michelle Bachelet’s administration - has developed several programs aiming to prevent teenage pregnancy, which may explain some of the recent declines observed in adolescent fertility rates (see Appendix 1). Governmental concerns about teenage pregnancy in Chile have triggered an array of norms, dispositions and initiatives which - although may exhibit some implementation weaknesses- we have not seen in the cases of Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Our comparative analysis shows that the Chilean government has devoted more resources and governmental efforts to deal with teenage pregnancy, although these initiatives have been significantly concentrated on prevention programs. Much less attention and resources have been devoted to pregnancy control programs and effective support to teenage mothers and fathers. Particularly the latter, has been a field of intervention for a reduced number of NGOs, usually faith based or community organizations, embracing more paternalistic or patronizing approaches. In some cases these organizations are funded by the national agency of children and adolescents, SENAME, and they operate under severe budgetary restrictions, and therefore, providing their services to a limited number of cases. Their scope of

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<sup>15</sup> However they declared legal the distribution of other contraceptive methods included in the “*Normas de Fertilidad*” and the confidentiality of the counseling service, on the grounds that this does not violate the law of parents to educate to their children, as was solicited by the parliament members of *Alianza para Chile*

intervention is limited to the provision of the services that they are requested to provided by the state agency, with scarce margins to engage in more promotional type of activities.

While the presence of governmental programs and policies in adolescent fertility has significantly increased in past years in Chile, several members of NGO perceived a weakening process in non governmental action in this field. As they see it, the NGO sector is now more fragmented and with difficulties to engage in collective action, and influence public policies. They witness an increasing fragmentation of experiences, particularly within the feminist movement which was the principal actor pressing for sexual and reproductive rights with a gender and rights perspective in Chile.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, other studies have found that the variegated type of experiences and approaches to teenage pregnancy currently in practice create difficulties to move from particular projects to more general public policies (Gutierrez et al. 2006). Although there is a strong governmental culture of identifying *better practices* and *good standards*, there is a lack of systematization of results that may bridge these ongoing experiences with public policy process design.

Seeking to attain greater levels of policy coordination and articulation between different levels of government, ministries and agencies have become a major challenge for Chilean government in recent years. Although a unitary country, Chilean has moved into administrative and political decentralization by placing primary health clinics and educational services under municipal responsibility. Accompanying this trend, a process of regionalization (especially in the public health system) was implemented seeking to harmonize policies and avoid resources inequalities across municipalities. Most of our studied organizations in Santiago were involved in projects or contracts with municipal

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<sup>16</sup> The *Foro Red de Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos* in Chile, had almost disappeared in our third stay to Chile in the year 2007. As they dwindled down their activities we had to exclude the organization from our sampling list.

governments, acknowledging their role as a major source of funding and support for their activities.

Promoting cross-ministerial and multi-sector initiatives has become another major concern in order to deal with the different dimensions involved in adolescent fertility. In this vein, the *Plan Piloto de Sexualidad Responsable* implemented between 2000 and 2003 attempted to coordinate actions between the MINSAL (Health Ministry), MINEDUC (Ministry of Education), SERNAM (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer) and INJUVE (Instituto Nacional de la Juventud). The multi-sector approaches have been favoured in the Chilean case by the articulation role played by the SENAM and MIDEPLAN, two cross-sector entities with ministerial rank that have facilitated multi-agency coordination of programs. Again in this respect, our comparative analysis show that the Chilean case is attaining a better performance in the domain of policy coordination and articulation, compared with the other two studied countries.

Table 8. Public programs related to teenage pregnancy/parenthood in Santiago

Level	Name of program/legislation	Year	Description
National level	Circular N° 247 del Ministerio de Educación sobre estudiantes embarazadas (Regulation about pregnant students issued by the Ministry of Education)	1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The norm acknowledges the right of students who become pregnant or change civil status to continue their studies in the educational center of their parent's choice.</li> <li>A pregnant student was forced to change school in 1997, despite rights claimed by the student based on this norm.</li> </ul>
	<i>Liceo Unidad Operativa de Educación y Capacitación (UNOPEC)</i> Operative Educational and Vocational Training Unit High School	1993 (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This high school began as pilot project for pregnant adolescents and mothers, providing child care, vocational training, and development of parenting skills, initiated by the NGO CEMERRA and supported by the United Nations Population Fund. It was closed due to lack of funding.</li> <li>It was reopened in 2001 as a high school of the Municipality of Conchalí and the Ministry of Education.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Un Liceo para Todos (MINEDUC)</i> A high school for everybody Program (Ministry of Education)	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program's goal is to reduce school drop-out in the most vulnerable high schools of the country.</li> <li>The program seeks to create learning opportunities for all students, but particularly for those with higher risks of disengagement with education, such as pregnant teenagers or teenage mothers.</li> <li>Two strategies are implemented, one that focus on pedagogical development and other that promotes psychosocial development of the student.</li> </ul>
	<i>Ley No 19.688 – Reforma de la Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza.</i> Law No. 19.688 – Reform of Constitutional General Law for Education	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This modification to general the Constitutional Law that regulates education in Chile, granted right to female students who are pregnant or are breastfeeding to attend educational centres.</li> <li>The new law sought to avoid and prevent the expulsion or discrimination of pregnant students from educational centres.</li> </ul>
	<i>Objetivos Sanitarios Nacionales (MINSAL)</i> National Health Objectives (Health Ministry)	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the reform of the health system the Health Ministry defined a group of key objectives for the decade. Several of these goals sought to target “unwanted pregnancy in adolescents”.</li> <li>Other related goals sought to reduce “reproductive inequality” and “unsafe abortions”, specially among socially excluded groups.</li> </ul>
	<i>Política Nacional y Plan de Acción Integrado a favor de la Infancia y la Adolescencia 2001-2010 (MIDEPLAN)</i> National Policy and Integrated Plan of Action in favor of Childhood and Adolescence 2001-2010 (Planning Ministry)	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National plan seeking to implement a multi-sector and integral approach to children and adolescents living in poverty.</li> <li>Teenage pregnancy is a central issue and several governmental agencies are called to act upon, and coordinate actions..</li> <li>Particularly important is the participation of MINSAL (Ministry of Health), MINEDUC (Ministry of Education) and SENAME (Children National Service)</li> </ul>
	<i>Oficina de Protección de Derechos – OPD (SENAME)</i> Rights Protection Office (Children National Service)	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The OPDs are community services run by municipalities aiming to protect and promote the rights of children and adolescents, especially those socially excluded.</li> <li>The professionals that work at the OPDs provide social, psychological, legal orientation and support to children, adolescents and their families. They work in coordination with schools, health clinics, community organizations, and public services.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Beca de Apoyo a la Retención Escolar – BARE (JUNAEB, Junta Nacional de Auxilio Escolar y Becas).</i> Engagement with school allowance (National Committee to support schooling)	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program provides an allowance to students in middle school who are at risk of disengagement with education. Students must be registered at schools in socially vulnerable areas targeted by the Ministry of Education, with high risk of school drop-out.</li> <li>The main goal is to support students so that they can complete the 12 years of mandatory education. The benefit last during the four years of middle school</li> </ul>
	<i>Decreto Supremo de Educación No.</i>	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The decree establishes a monetary subsidy to be given by the</li> </ul>



312 (MINEDUC) Supreme Decree of Education No. 312 (Education Ministry)		Chilean Education Ministry to those students in risk of school drop-out. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main objective is to prevent early disengagement with formal education from at-risk groups, which includes teenage mothers.</li> </ul>
<i>Sistema de Protección Social “Chile Solidario” (MIDEPLAN)</i> System of Social Protection “Chile Solidario” (Planning Ministry)	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is largest system of social protection for low income families that has been implemented in the country. It entails the provision of a wide range of social services to support families at risk or living in poverty.</li> <li>The program promotes the integration of households to public service networks, through health, education, employment, training, and monetary support.</li> <li>Teenage mothers with their children and partner comprises a significant target group for the program.</li> </ul>
<i>Residencias de protección para madres adolescentes vulneradas en sus derechos (SENAME)</i> Residences for teenage mothers in vulnerable situation (National Children Service)	2005 <sup>17</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This service provides accommodation and social protection to the pregnant teenagers or mother with her children.</li> <li>This includes a wide range of social, psychological and medical support as part of the SENAME network of services.</li> <li>The residence program seeks to strengthen personal capacities for autonomy insertion in society and to assume motherhood.</li> </ul>
<i>Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio (Gobierno de Chile)</i> Millennium Development Goals (Chilean Government)	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the MDG reports to eradicate poverty by the year 2015, the Chilean government defines a series of concrete aims and indicators to achieved related to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers.</li> <li>Aims relate to levels in permanence in school, reduction of teenage pregnancy, improve sexual and reproductive health services, prevent STD.</li> </ul>
<i>Plan de Educación en Sexualidad y Afectividad (MINEDUC)</i> Sexual Education Plan (Education Ministry)	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan seeks to promote sexual education across the curriculum, aiming not only at students but also teachers, professors and parents.</li> <li>The plan includes topics such as psychosexual development, affection and sexuality, gender relations, HIV/AIDS and STDs, sexual child abuse, teenage pregnancy, sexual orientations, and non discrimination.</li> </ul>
<i>Programa “Para que estudie contigo” (JUNJI, Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles)</i> “Your child can study with you” (National Committee for Child Care Centers)	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program seeks to provide quality educational services to the children of adolescents students from poor communities attending high school.</li> <li>The child care services seek to support the adolescents engagement with learning as well as their role as mothers/fathers.</li> <li>The JUNJI provides a monthly subsidy to the institution to pay for food and educational materials.</li> </ul>
<i>Decreto Supremo No. 48 conteniendo “Normas Nacionales sobre la Regulación de la Fertilidad” (MINSAL)</i> Supreme Decree No 48 with “National Norms for Fertility Regulation” (Ministry of Health)	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The decree contains Health Ministry norms for public health systems about free access to contraceptive methods, embracing a gender perspective.</li> <li>The decree allows the public health system to distribute the “day after pill” for those with more than 14 years of age, without the need of parent consent.</li> <li>A central objective of the approved decree is to prevent teenage pregnancy.</li> </ul>
<i>Programa de las y los Adolescentes y Jóvenes. (MINSAL)</i> Program for Adolescents and Youth (Health Ministry)	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This program seeks to create adolescent-friendly spaces in the public health network, aiming to focus on several aspects of adolescent health, not just pregnancy.</li> <li>The creation of the program means specific resources assigned to adolescent health, and the develop of age-specific norms regarding adolescent fertility and counselling.</li> </ul>
<i>Normas para la Consejería en Atención en salud Sexual y reproductiva de los y las Adolescentes 2007 (MINSAL)</i>	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The norms define the conditions for delivering sexual and reproductive health counselling services for adolescents in the public health system.</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> Although residences for teenage mothers under the SENAME system might exist prior this year, we recorded the year when the law No. 20.032 was approved, establishing the new regulation for NGOs providing services like the ones described.

	Sexual and Reproductive Health Counselling Norms for Adolescents 2007 (Health Ministry)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It seeks to assure the delivery of timely and appropriate information so adolescents can make informed decisions about their sexuality and reproduction.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa “Chile Crece Contigo” (Presidencia de la República – Interministerial)</i> Program “Chile grows up with you” (Presidency of the Republic and several ministries)	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program seeks to support early childhood of poor families by assuring different type of health, educational, and monetary support.</li> <li>Main components of the program include pre natal and post natal controls, personalized follow up after birth, periodical health controls of children. Also free childcare services and a monetary monthly allowance is available for most vulnerable families (mean tested)</li> </ul>
	<i>Inconstitucionalidad de la “pildora del día después”</i> Suspension of Supreme Decree No 48 by the Chilean Constitutional Tribunal	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chilean Constitutional Tribunal decreed unconstitutional the use of the “day after pill” based on the argument that it does not protect the right of the conceived individual.</li> <li>The rest of the “National Norms for Fertility Regulation” remains approved.</li> </ul>
Municipalities	<i>Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Municipalidades (No 18.695)</i> Municipal Organic Law Several of the above mentioned programs are implemented through or in association with local municipalities. They particularly responsible for delivering of education, health and social assistance services, under the support, guidance and control of central government.	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the Municipal Organic Law, municipalities have shared responsibility for the delivery of education services, public healthcare, social and legal assistance, residence and housing, gender equity and local development programs.</li> </ul>

## URUGUAY

Although weakness has been a typical characteristic ascribed to Latin American civil societies (De la Maza, 2000b) in Uruguay a strong tradition of welfare state services, a liberal matrix of citizen rights (distant from populist leaderships) and a stable and effective political party system have forged an even feebler and less active civil society compared with others in the region (Caetano, 1994). In the context of adolescent fertility and teenage parenthood three main characteristics need to be remarked as outstanding features in the Uruguayan institutional and political environment for non governmental action: a) the welfare state architecture, although still resilient, has proved inadequate to face the new forms of social risks and poverty (Filgueira 2005), b) social policies and programs towards teenage pregnancy and parenthood have relied on traditional sector approaches, lacking specific and effective responses to emerging vulnerable groups such

as teenage parents, c) in consequence, there are limited resources and spaces for civil society initiatives and incidence in this field.

Before the state became involved in teenage parenthood, only a few religious charities have historically intervened in this field through the provision of shelter and social support services directed to teenage mothers and their newborn children. As teenage pregnancy came to be seen an issue of public concern deserving state intervention, the governmental agency *Instituto Nacional del Menor*<sup>18</sup> (INAME) opened the first *Unidad Materno Infantil* (UMI) in 1985, a state run center to shelter exclusively teenage mothers and their children. As the needs to support teenage mothers increased in the 1990s, new UMIs were opened, becoming the principal governmental response to adolescent parenthood. According to the prevailing approaches, it was not surprising that within the INAME's structures these centers were allocated under the "Rehabilitation" division, assimilating teenage pregnancy and motherhood to other risky behaviors such as delinquency or drugs abuse.

The state run UMIs followed the *institutionalization paradigm* that also inspired the work of religious organizations founded in the late 1800s and early 1900s, such as *La Bonne Garde* (included in our study). Conceived as substitutes of their original families, these homes assist and provide for a wide scope of needs of both – the mothers and their children- in cases when they are expelled or unable to stay with their parents. Placed under the protection of the state, the adolescents develop a strong dependency with the institution and their experiences with the outside world become somewhat limited. Only in recent years under the influence of the Children Rights Convention principles, the UMIs have begun to increase their openness, including greater levels of interaction with

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<sup>18</sup> In 2004, when a new children and adolescent code was approved under the influence of the *Children Rights Convention* the word "menor" was eliminated from the agency's name, adopting the new name of INAU (*Instituto del Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay*)

the families of the adolescents as a strategy to enhance their network support. Another major critique to governmental approach has been the excessive emphasis that UMIs place on the maternal and parenting roles, neglecting other needs in the adolescent's life. As a high ranking staff member of INAU said, when the adolescent cross the threshold of the UMI she

*Deja de ser una muchacha, deja de ser una adolescente, deja de ser una persona para ser una barriga con un niño. Esto me resultaba extremadamente brutal, violento, y creo que eso [hoy] se sigue reproduciendo tal cual. Porque en las casas que atienden muchachas, cuando tienen una situación de embarazo, son contadas las que incorporan el embarazo como algo más que le pasa en la vida a la chica. No sea cosa que el resto de las chicas que están se contagien y se embaracen también. (INAU staff member)*

In the year 1997 under a major organizational restructure, the authorities of the INAME created the *Programa de Unidades Materno-Infantiles* to coordinate the existing five centers, one exclusively to shelter pregnant adolescents and other to be used as a derivation residence for incoming mothers. However, in the year 2006 two UMIs were brought to closure as a result of lack of demand, budgetary problems, and the need to reassess the general program strategy. As the *institutionalization* strategy yielded obsolete under the influence of the U.N. Children Rights Convention<sup>19</sup> (CRC), civil society organizations began to provide new responses embracing more age and gender specific approaches aligned with the CRC principles. In recent years, small scale projects such as those developed by *Casa de la Mujer de la Union*, *Casa Lunas* and *La Bonne Garde* have received financial support from INAU as part of an increasing strategy to contract with civil society organizations to extend coverage, cope with financial restrictions and improve the quality of services. Despite this general trend only the three

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<sup>19</sup> The Children Rights Convention was sanctioned by the United Nations in 1989 and ratified by the Uruguayan parliament in 1990. It has been the U.N. charter with highest number of country's ratifications. However, its principles not effectively adopted in Uruguay until 2004 with the reform of domestic legislation. For further analysis on the application of the CRC in Uruguay see Pereira and Nathan 2009.

mentioned organizations have signed contracts with INAU to work specifically with teenage parents. The financial monthly payments provided by the government to these organizations is not even enough to cover the full extent of expenses that are required to deliver the agreed services. However, in a context of dwindling international cooperation, public funding tends to be the only permanent source to sustain a minimal structure that assures the organization survival.

In sum, the governmental opportunities for NGOs willing to work with teenage parents are piecemeal, offer little space to “add value” to service delivery and have limited impact on the target population. In fact, the UMIs constitute the only state run national program specifically implemented to address the social and housing needs of poor teenage mothers and their children. Additionally, at the age of 18 adolescents must leave the UMIs as they exceed the age limit established by law to remain under governmental protection. Frequently this becomes a crucial turning point in the life of the adolescents as they must face adult and parental responsibilities with limited support and usually lacking the necessary qualifications to earn a living by their own means. This is also a problem for NGOs as INAU stop paying for those adolescents who reach 18 even when they remain as participants in the projects<sup>20</sup>.

Since its creation in 1988 the *Plan CAIF (Centro de Atención a la Infancia y la Familia)* has become one of the principal programs to fight against children poverty in the country and also a pioneer program of its type in Latin America. The program seeks to provide integral attention and family support to vulnerable children between 0 and 3 years of age. Services are delivered at the local level by a nationwide network of childcare centers run by community organizations and NGOs which are funded,

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<sup>20</sup> The sum that INAU pays to NGOs varies according to the number of adolescents/children that participate in their projects. Furthermore, signed contracts establish that NGOs are obligated to serve a higher number of adolescent/children than they are effectively paid for, to assure more cost effective results.

supported and supervised by governmental agencies. Since its preliminary stages the program was conceived as a multi-sector initiative with the participation of several governmental agencies such as INDA (*Instituto Nacional de Alimentación*), MTSS (*Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social*), ANEP (*Administración Nacional de Educación Pública*), MSP (*Ministerio de Salud Pública*), MEC (*Ministerio de Educación*), and INAME (*Instituto Nacional del Menor*). As it significantly increased its coverage during the period 1995-1999 the program coordination was allocated within the INAME's structure somewhat resenting its original multi-sector and integral approach. However, the program still remains as one of the main pillars of Uruguayan social policy and CAIF centers have become references for the delivery of other welfare services.

The state-civil society articulation constitutes a defining element of the program. At the local level the activities are run by community and grass roots organizations which manage the centers, make the decisions and are responsible for the administration of resources transferred by the government. Since several CAIF centers are administered by neighborhood associations, there is some sense of community accountability that enhance responsiveness to local needs and promotes community involvement with the center goals. On the other hand, low social capital, lack of institutional capabilities and insufficient managerial skills are some of the problems that pose significant limitations in many cases, especially those allocated in most deprived areas.

Although the *Plan* does not explicitly target the children of teenage mothers or teenage families, given the program's objective population and the geographical allocation of the services, these children tend largely to attend CAIF centers. In our study we have surveyed one specific center called *CAIF Virgen Niña* which was selected due to its significantly large proportion of children born from teenage mothers. However, the

program targets on socially vulnerable and poor families, being the mother's age just one factor to take into consideration. As the national program director made clear,

*El ser madre adolescente por sí sola no es un factor de riesgo para los niños. Los CAIF se centran en la población de 0 a 3 años de edad. Y en muchos de ellos están trabajando con las embarazadas como una forma de ir previniendo y también de hacer promoción para una vida más saludable y abrir ventanas de oportunidad. Si nosotros pensamos que nuestro objetivo es la población de niños de 0 a 3, que una mamá sea adolescente, para el niño solo ese dato no se puede leer como un factor de riesgo. Uno necesita saber más cosas, si está sola o tiene apoyo. Porque cuando la madre adolescente tiene apoyo, ya sea de la familia, instituciones o amigos, tiene soporte social, y se siente apoyada para la crianza del hijo, [entonces] las probabilidades de éxito y de fracaso para el desarrollo de ese niño son iguales a cualquier otra mamá. A su vez, cuando la madre adolescente esta sola, es lo mismo que una madre añosa sola, las probabilidades de riesgo son iguales, me entienden? El ser madre adolescente si yo estoy sola en el momento de criar a mi hijo es igual que ser madre con mayor edad. Aunque suene espantoso. Es distinto para ellas como mujeres o para su proyecto de vida o para el futuro. (National Director of Plan CAIF)*

Seeking to expand coverage and to develop more cost effective policies a new mode of intervention began to be implemented in the year 2004 under the name of *CAIF modalidad semanal*. Drawing upon the CAIF model, this initiative also relied on civil society organizations but it seeks to intervene earlier in time by focusing on pregnant women. On practical grounds, the new modality seeks to increase awareness about pregnancy control, child-mother bonding and early stimulation by holding a weekly meeting between the pregnant mother or the dyad (mother-child) and the center staff. Like in the traditional intervention, this new program seeks to develop an integral, inter-institutional and inter-disciplinary approach, although activities can take place not only at the center but also in the mother's house or in the community. CAIF personnel are required to coordinate with staff from the local public health clinics to assure an adequate pregnancy control and receiving adequate and timely information. After the child is born, the program continues with early stimulation sessions, orientation on

childrearing practices, development of parenting skills, and the provision of health and nutritional information.

Like any other program in the country, the *Plan CAIF* relies on civil society for its implementation, being the one which involves the largest number of organizations and the one that transfer the largest amount of funds to civil society. Although there is little room for innovation and the development of new practices outside the pre-established format, the Plan CAIF has also become an instrument for community integration, the development of social capital and the development of institutional capacities in socially deprived areas. Despite they are not considered a specific target population of the program, the Plan CAIF constitutes a major national source of support to teenage parents and their children living in poverty.

Additionally, during the 1990s the Instituto Nacional del Menor (INAME) moved in two complementary directions that directly affected the environment for non governmental action. On the one hand, specific services were expanded to meet the needs of children and adolescents in vulnerable situations, fostering a preventive approach. On the other hand, increasing amount of contracts put these services in the hands of NGOs and community organizations that assumed increasing responsibilities for their provision. In this context, new *Centros Juveniles* (Youth Centers) were implemented by civil society organizations and funded by the government to address the needs of adolescents between 12 and 18 years of age. These centers seek to reengage adolescents with schools or other learning experiences, develop skills for employability, help them to find a job, promote healthy lifestyles and informed reproductive decisions. Regarding the latter, several *Centros Juveniles* work to prevent teenage pregnancy and support teenage mothers in the cases when they assist to their projects. One of the organizations surveyed in our study, *Casa de la Mujer de la Union* runs a specific project called *Espacio Joven*



funded by INAU under the format of a *Centro Juvenil*. However, in *Centros Juveniles* as well as the *CAIF centers*, little attention is paid to specific needs of teenage fathers as these programs tend to work primarily with the mothers and the children, somewhat reinforcing the absence of fathers from parenting roles (Güida 2007).

Less specifically, some of the welfare reforms implemented under the actual government might have direct impact on different aspects of teenage pregnancy and parenthood. This is the case of the *Plan de Equidad*<sup>21</sup> implemented in 2008 which included a significant increase in the amount of *Asignaciones Familiares*, a monthly cash allowance that poor women are entitled to receive for every children they have. In fact, a significant discussion took place in 2007 as the projected increase in the cash benefits might have encouraged adolescent fertility in poor contexts. To avoid this effect a regressive curve was adopted diminishing the amount provided for every subsequent child. Also the reform of the health system through the creation of the SNIS (*Sistema Nacional Integrado de Salud*) included several incentives for health providers to improve their maternal and child health services, which are expected to impact on teenage mothers and their children. The special need to improve public health clinics in poor neighborhoods and public hospitals, has been directly related to the increasing demand of poor women and children who have abandoned the mutual sector in past decades as they lack formal employment. Finally, the recently approved *Ley General de Educación* (Nº 18.347) sanctioned in December of 2008 mandates the inclusion of sexual education at all levels of formal education. Although not specific, these initiatives are part of a group of welfare sector reforms which are expected to have some impact on adolescent fertility and the quality of life of teenage parents and their children.

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<sup>21</sup> The actual *Plan de Equidad* in Uruguay is the continuation of the *Plan de Emergencia* established in 2005, based on cash transfers to poor households subjected to realization of some obligations such as medical checkups and children school attendance. Some components of the program might encounter similarities with the *Chile Solidario*.

With respect to the inclusion of sexual education in the formal curriculum, Uruguay situation could be considered backward, falling behind Chile and Argentina. Although the issue has been acknowledged as a matter of public concern, limited progress has been made. By the end of 2007 a proposal was approved defining some initial contents to be approached at the different educational levels. However, the incorporation of sexual education is still in an embryonic stage. Unlike Chile and Argentina, there has been very little space for non governmental participation, as the issue has been monopolized by governmental actors. However, as the formation of teachers and professors still remains a major challenge for the implementation of future sexual education curriculums (as mandated by the general law of education) there might be some space for specialized NGOs to provide services in this field, as exceptionally has occurred in the past.

Like in Chile and Argentina, it has been in the domain of teenage pregnancy prevention where efforts have been more visible and articulated. A wide scope of preventive actions were included in the design of the national program INFAMILIA funded by the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) established in 2002 under the presidency of Jorge Batlle. In a context of extreme social emergency after the financial and economic crisis of 2002, the program sought to assist poor children and adolescents through the expansion in coverage of existing services (such as the CAIF centers) and the development of new responses. Not surprisingly, preventing teenage pregnancy and improving adolescent health services became a crucial component of INFAMILIA, as it was seen a central strategy to deal with the reproduction of poverty. In fact, one of the main objectives defined by the program and approved by the IDB was the reduction of 20% of the number of children born from teenage mothers in the zones of intervention of

the project<sup>22</sup>, assuming as baseline the adolescent fertility rate of 4.09 per thousand corresponding to the year 2002. To attain these goals three main strategies were implemented:

- (a) Deliver sexual and reproductive health information to vulnerable adolescent population through by training a group of *promotores juveniles* (youth promoters) and the organization of workshops and other educational activities.
- (b) Encourage the attendance of adolescents to public health centers through the qualification of health personnel in adolescent health related issues and by creating adolescent-friendly spaces within the public health clinics.
- (c) One year of support and follow up since the moment of birth to teenage mothers and fathers (these are explicitly mentioned) living in poverty or vulnerable conditions, seeking to promote a sustainable life project, encourage usage of public services, avoid second pregnancies, and help to reconcile learning or employment experiences with parental responsibilities.

These strategies were primarily designed and implemented by governmental agencies with the support of IDB officials, opening piecemeal and limited opportunities for NGO involvement. However, three main experiences are worth noticing as singular exceptions in this process. First, for the formation and preparation of youth promoters in sexual and reproductive health (strategy a), the government contracted a NGO with expertise in youth participation called *Iniciativa Latinoamerica*. Second, the training of health personnel in sexual and reproductive adolescent health (strategy b) was delivered by a consortium integrated by a feminist NGO called MYSU (*Mujer y Sociedad Uruguay*) and an academic institution. Third, a pilot experience to test the methodology

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<sup>22</sup> INFAMILIA is being implemented in the 75 poorest areas of the country. These zones were identified according to their performance in critical indicators of social vulnerability. 27 of these zones are located in the capital city of Montevideo, and the remaining 48 are spread all over the remaining 18 departments.

to follow up and support of teenage mothers and fathers (strategy c) was conducted by a consortium integrated by the NGOs *PLEMUU (Plenario de Mujeres Uruguayas)*, *La Bonne Garde* and *Casa Lunas*<sup>23</sup>. In all three examples, specific windows of opportunities were opened to civil society organizations to test, develop or prepare the state for further implement of the specific strategy. Funds were assigned to the organization on a limited time basis to assure the transference of expertise to governmental personnel. Further analysis of the role and services provided by non governmental organizations in this field will be the subject of the following chapter.

Table 9 provides an exhaustive list of the principal programs implemented in Uruguay in the field of teenage pregnancy prevention and teenage parenthood. Overall, the policy and institutional environment in this field provides limited opportunities for non governmental action. NGOs and community organizations tend to operate as mere implementers or service deliverers in programs designed by governmental agencies and international banks. Only marginal spaces are open for consultation or test new methodologies and approaches through pilot projects. Public funding is basically channeled through the children and adolescent governmental agency (INAU) and the social development ministry (MIDES) to provide social, educational and health services in poor communities. It is worth noticing the implementation of a UNDP (United Nations Development Program) initiative aiming to support the life project of teenage mothers and fathers (*Programa de Fortalecimiento Nutricional y Desarrollo de Proyectos de Vida*). The program is directly implemented by non governmental organizations and the funding is provided by UNDP directly to the NGOs, without the mediation of any governmental structure. Interestingly, some of the organizations we surveyed for this

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<sup>23</sup> Despite participating in the preliminary instances of the project *Casa Lunas* quitted after disagreements with formal procedures of INFAMILIA to make the bid.

study were participants in this project, and coincided that the program provided a significant opportunity to move beyond governmental program implementers.

Table 9. Public programs related to teenage pregnancy/parenthood in Montevideo

Level	Name of program/legislation	Year	Description
National level	<i>Programa “Aduana” (MSP)</i>  (“Aduana” Program implemented by the Public Health Ministry)	1971 (1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The original objective of the program established in 1971 was to follow up babies born in the two main public hospitals with periodical health checkups in the primary care centers close to the mother’s area of residence.</li> <li>The program was expanded to babies born in all public maternities in the year 1996 and the follow up was extended until the child is two years of age.</li> <li>The coordination between hospitals and primary health care centers is a key aspect of the program (no civil society organizations are involved in the program)</li> <li>Teenage mothers constitute a primary target group of this program.</li> </ul>
	<i>Plan CAIF - Centros de Atención a la Infancia y la Familia (INAU)</i>  (Family and childhood attention centers, plan implemented by the Children and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay)	1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan consists of a nationwide network of centers that provide integral support to children and their families living in vulnerable conditions up to 4 years of age.</li> <li>The plan delivers a wide array of services such as early stimulation, child care, pre-schooling, nutritional and health services, family and community development initiatives.</li> <li>Centers are run by neighborhood and civil society associations supported and funded by governmental program.</li> <li>A new modality of intervention was implemented, operating one day per week targeting pregnant women and their children between 0 and 24 months of age.</li> </ul>
	<i>Unidades Materno-Infantiles (UMI) Protección Integral de Tiempo Completo (INAU)</i>  (Full time residences for teenage mothers run by the Children and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay)	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The UMIs are residences run by the state where pregnant teenagers or mothers live and receive social support until the age of 18 when they must leave</li> <li>Although before the year 1997 the government already had some residences for teenage mothers, in this year this became a program within the national agency for childhood and adolescence. With the establishment of the program, two more centers were added to the original three.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Integral de Infancia, Adolescencia y Familia en Riesgo - INFAMILIA (MIDES)</i>  (Childhood and Adolescence at Risk Integral Program - Ministry of Social Development)	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INFAMILIA is a national program aiming to support children and adolescent (and their families) living in poverty with a vast range of social, educational and health services.</li> <li>As general objectives, the program aims to the living conditions of households with children and adolescents living in extreme poverty.</li> <li>The program has set specific goals and strategies to reduce teenage pregnancy and support teenage parents and their children.</li> <li>Actions to prevent teenage pregnancy are being jointly implemented between the Social Development and the Public Health Ministry.</li> <li>Some of the actions included in the program are: the creation of new public health services for adolescents, expansion of child care services for their children, the formation of youth promoters of sexual and reproductive health, post partum support during the first year of life of the children.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa INFANCIA Y FAMILIA – INFAMILIA (MIDES – MSP)</i>  <i>Componente: Programa de Información, Educación y Comunicación en Salud Sexual (INFAMILIA – MSP)</i>	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This first strategy of INFAMILIA to reduce teenage pregnancy focused on training adolescents from socially vulnerable areas to operate as sexual health promoters in their communities</li> <li>This strategy also included a series of workshops and activities to increase awareness about sexual and reproductive health.</li> <li>The training of sexual health promoters was contracted to the</li> </ul>

(Sexual Health Information and Education Program – INFAMILIA and Health Ministry)		NGO <i>Iniciativa Latinoamericana</i> included in our study.
<p><i>Programa INFANCIA Y FAMILIA – INFAMILIA (MIDES – MSP)</i></p> <p><i>Componente: Fortalecimiento de atención especializada para adolescentes en Instituciones públicas de salud (INFAMILIA – MSP)</i></p> <p>Development of adolescent specific health services in public health clinics (INFAMILIA and Health Ministry)</p>	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A second component to reduce teenage fertility rates aimed to increase the contact of adolescents with public health clinics and public hospitals.</li> <li>• To attain this goal, the program included training medical and non medical public health staff on sexual and reproductive adolescent health.</li> <li>• The program also sought to create “adolescent friendly” spaces within public clinics in socially deprived areas.</li> <li>• The program targeted teenagers between 13 and 17 years of age, living in the poor areas of the city.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Programa INFANCIA Y FAMILIA – INFAMILIA (MIDES – MSP)</i></p> <p><i>Componente: Apoyo y seguimiento a madres y padres adolescentes en vulnerabilidad social</i></p> <p>Follow up and support program for teenage parents living in social vulnerable conditions (INFAMILIA and Health Ministry)</p>	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A third component of the program sought to increase pregnancy control and maternal and child health during the first year after birth.</li> <li>• The program included follow up services and support to teenage parents during their first year of parenthood.</li> <li>• A key objective of the program is to assure the connection of teenagers with public services and to promote reengagement with schooling or employment.</li> <li>• Another central objective is the avoidance of second pregnancies.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Clubes de Niño y Centros Juveniles (Atención de Tiempo Parcial - INAU)</i></p> <p>(Children Clubs and Youth Centers - Program of the Children and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay)</p>	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational centers for children and adolescents run by NGOs and civil society organizations funded by INAU.</li> <li>• The <i>Clubes de Niño</i> attends children in schooling age, providing assistance while they are not in school.</li> <li>• The <i>Centros Juveniles</i> (Youth Centers) provide a daily place for meetings, supporting them with studies, developing social and labor skills and doing some recreational activities.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Nuevo Código de la Niñez y Adolescencia</i></p> <p>(New Childhood and Adolescence Legal Code )</p>	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new code adapts domestic legislation to the principles of the U.N. Children Rights Convention, reforming previous code (from 1934). Despite substantial progress the new code still has some remnants of the “irregular situation doctrine”.</li> <li>• The article 22 of the Sexual and Reproductive Law approved in 2008 (mentioned below) reformed the code including the need to protect the adolescent rights to demand sexual and reproductive services in a context of confidentiality and reserve.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Programa de Fortalecimiento Nutricional y Desarrollo de proyectos de Vida (PNUD)</i></p> <p>(Nutritional Support and Life Project Program – United Nations Development Program)</p>	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program was implemented by the UNDP to support and strengthen the life conditions of poor pregnant women and mothers. The program particularly targets adolescents and young mothers.</li> <li>• The central objective is to promote healthy lifestyles and nutritional habits for themselves and their children under 3 years of age, through nutritional and psychosocial support programs.</li> <li>• The project seeks to intervene directly in most poor communities through projects implemented by NGOs.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Ordenanza 369/04 contra el aborto practicado en condiciones de riesgo (MSP)</i></p> <p>(Health Ministry norm against the practice of unsafe abortions).</p>	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Health Ministry sanctioned a norm developed by an NGO called <i>Iniciativas Sanitarias</i> promoting advice to pregnant women in risk of practicing unsafe abortion.</li> <li>• Although abortion remains illegal, the norm grants the rights to pregnant women to demand advice in public health hospitals, before and after the interruption of pregnancy.</li> <li>• The norm establishes the women’s right to receive professional information, support and company in making her choice.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Plan de Emergencia – Plan de Equidad (MIDES)</i></p> <p>(Social Emergency and Equity Plan of the Social Development Ministry)</p>	2005 (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Plan de Emergencia</i> was implemented in 2005 as a response to social crises, targeting families living in extreme poverty. The plan provides several benefits including a monthly allowance, health and educational services.</li> <li>• In the year 2008 the program’s name change into <i>Plan de</i></li> </ul>

Departmental level			<i>Equidad</i> in the year 2008 increasing the amount of cash transfer perceived by low income mothers for their children ( <i>Asignaciones Familiares</i> ), expanding coverage and increasing the number of service provisions.
	<i>Programa de Participación de Infancia y Adolescencia – PROPIA (INAU)</i>  (Children and Adolescent Participation Program implemented by the Children and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay)	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program seeks to promote the participation of children attended through the INAU's system, whether they assist to centers run by the public agency or civil society organizations.</li> <li>The objective of the program is to open spaces where children and adolescents can design and implement projects based on their own interests, accompanied by an adults.</li> </ul>
	<i>Casa Amigas - Centros de Protección de Derechos (INAU)</i>  (Children protection rights centers, run by the Children and Adolescent Institute of Uruguay)	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three centers were originally opened in Montevideo, offering orientation, advice and support in cases of abuse, rights neglect or any situation deserving rights protection.</li> <li>The centers main objectives are: a) to promote the rights of children and adolescents, b) assist and respond to situations where children's rights are not respected and c) strengthen social networks to protect children's rights.</li> <li>The project of <i>Casas Amigas</i> are part of a process of decentralization of children and adolescent services.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa de Educación Sexual (ANEP – CODICEN)</i>  <i>Sexual Education Program approved by the National Public Education Administration)</i>	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the result of the work of the <i>Comisión de Educación Sexual</i> a program of sexual education for all educational levels was approved by the ANEP in December of 2006.</li> <li>Although the program began its implementation in 2007, limited progress has been made. Principal actions has been referred to teachers and professors training in this field.</li> </ul>
	<i>Programa Nacional de Adolescencia (MSP)</i>  (Adolescence Health National Program, implemented by the Public Health Ministry)	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This program promotes an integral approach to adolescence health based on the development of age and gender-specific services.</li> <li>Also seeks to open adolescent-friendly spaces within public health network (called "<i>Espacios Adolescentes</i>") strengthening social networks and inter-sector alliances with other public services.</li> </ul>
	<i>Sistema Nacional Integrado de Salud - Ley No 18.211 (MSP)</i>  (National Health Integrated System - Public Health Ministry)	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The national health reform created the National Health Integrated System., which included universal health coverage to every children under 18 years age, since January 2008.</li> <li>The new health system provide coverage to every adolescent and her children irrespective of the mother's employment situation.</li> </ul>
	<i>Ley General de Educación (N° 18.437)</i>  (General Law of Education)	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The law approved by the Uruguayan parliament in December of 2008 seeks to provide a new legal framework to introduce some necessary reforms in the educational system.</li> <li>Among several general changes, the law repeats the necessity to incorporate sexual education in the curriculum.</li> <li>The sanction of the law was preceded by a controversial National Congress of the Education held in 2006 and a process of consult and meetings with related actors in 2007.</li> </ul>
	<i>Ley de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva (artículos sobre aborto vetados por el Poder Ejecutivo)</i>  Sexual and Reproductive Health Law (articles legalizing abortion were vetoed by Executive Branch)	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This law grants universal access to sexual and reproductive health services. It also promotes the inclusion of sexual education in the curricula and training for teachers and professors at all levels.</li> <li>The law, as it was approved by Parliament, legalized abortion prior the 12 weeks of conception. However, these specific articles were vetoed by the President Tabare Vazquez.</li> </ul>
	<i>Policlínicas Municipales (IMM)</i>  (Municipal Health Clinics administered by the Departmental Government of Montevideo)	1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although provision of health services remains a Constitutional responsibility of national authorities, in the wake of increasing demands municipal governments run several primary health care clinics, most of which are located in the periphery of the city.</li> <li>Some of the municipal centers run adolescent specific clinics seeking to provide integral services for this age from a bio-psycho-social perspective. The teams are integrated with professionals from various disciplines and their activities are coordinated with the youth centers (<i>Centros juveniles</i>) above mentioned.</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Programa de Atención Integral a la Mujer (PAIM-IMM)</i></p> <p>Integral Care Women Program (Municipality of Montevideo)</p>	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal health clinics have implemented a specific program to advance gender specific services in the field of sexual and reproductive health.</li> <li>• The central objectives of the program are a) the prevention of cervix and breast cancer, b) pregnancy and post partum control., c) make informed sexual and reproductive decisions.</li> <li>• The program includes free access to contraception, sexual and reproductive counseling, obstetric assistance, pregnancy controls, and preventive tests.</li> <li>• Several workshops and presentations related to women's health in the community are made.</li> </ul>
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## **Institutional and Policy Environments in Cross national Perspective**

The characterization of policy and institutional environments in each country proved to be a complex task as we have to deal with several dimensions. However we were able to identify significant commonalities in the policy templates that orient national and sub-national approaches to adolescent fertility. In this context, the role of NGOs in the policy process also encounters significant cross-country similarities. In the three studied countries governments have opened limited spaces for non governmental action basically looking for a) more cost effective responses to cope with the challenge of motherhood in poor urban contexts, b) the implementation of pilot projects seeking for *best practices* that may improve policy outcomes and results, c) the expansion of existing service and program's coverage into new geographical areas, groups or populations, through contracts with non governmental actors, d) training, expertise and knowledge accumulated by NGOs and CSOs to strengthen governmental agencies and personnel.

However, national environments also bring about institutional and policy differences that entail opportunities and restrictions for non governmental action. A first difference could be referred to the attention that governments pay to the specific issue of adolescent fertility. The case of Chile shows an array of specific initiatives and programs to target the particular challenges faced by teenage parents living in poverty. This



situation - coupled with a resourceful and decentralized governmental structure - creates more opportunities for non governmental involvement in program implementation, compared with the other two countries. However, the technical and resource strength of Chilean governmental structure constitutes at the same time a limiting factor for non governmental action. The adoption of top-down approaches (developed in many cases by former NGO technicians now working for governmental agencies) closes and restricts spaces for civil society participation and negotiation of the policy outcomes. As we will see in next chapters, the request of spaces for greater civil society involvement in policy decisions has become a frequent complaint of Chilean organizations.

The Argentinean case exhibits a very progressive legislation and the early adoption of the rights discourse in governmental programs, specially in the city of Buenos Aires where we focused our study. Although the Government of the City of Buenos Aires (GCBA) has a resourceful structure of services, provincial and municipal decentralization of health and education services has produced an overlapping of programs and responsibilities that leads to misuse of public resources and difficulties to meet demands in underserved communities. In this context, some non governmental organizations have found a niche in helping governmental structures to align their practices to the mandates of progressive rights oriented legislation (like in the case of sexual and reproductive health services or the inclusion of sexual education in formal curriculum). Concomitantly, the existing gap between acknowledged rights and their effective enforcement has created opportunities for NGO coalitions and consortiums to mobilize in favor of adolescents rights claiming higher levels of accountability in public services and advocating for improvements in their quality. Interestingly, many of these organizations had been directly involved in lobbying, advising, or assisting politicians

and members of parliament in the making of the legislation or programs that now serve as the basis for their mobilization and claims.

In Uruguay, policy and institutional environments have basically relegated civil society organizations to the mere role of program implementers. In part, this results from the historical strength of the Uruguayan welfare state which seeks to be restored by current sector reforms proposed by the actual administration of President Tabaré Vazquez. After the severe economic and social crisis of 2002, and the electorate's loss of confidence in traditional parties, the *Frente Amplio* took office decided to regain some of the lost public initiative in the social policy arena. Particularly for children and adolescent NGOs this renewed state's leadership shattered some of the expectations about greater civil society participation in the policy process that were originally forged with the triumph of the moderate leftist party. In turn, civil society organizations tended to adopt a passive and contemplative attitude towards the new government, only confronting on issues related to their own institutional interest (Pereira and Nathan 2009) <sup>24</sup>.

In sum, despite similarities cross national comparisons unveils significant differences in policy and institutional environments which are conditioning the actions of non governmental actors. *Table 10* summarizes some of the principal variations observed in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay environments, which may be critical for NGO performance. Although coming from different sources, in all three cases we have observed severe restrictions to non governmental autonomy. In the case of Chile, top-down and highly technical policy approaches seems to pose some limits to civil society organizations. In Argentina, the clientelistic use of public goods may undermine the independence and critical role of NGOs. In Uruguay, the traditional inertia of a state

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<sup>24</sup> In a study commissioned by the ESRC we have examined the nature of state-civil society relations under the government of the *Frente Amplio* in Uruguay. The most visible conflicts in this relationship relate to taxing and regulating issues about non governmental activity.

dependent civil society auto-impose restrictions to non governmental mobilization, which have been reinforced under current leftist government. Additionally, we have also identified some institutional and historical factors that may enhance autonomous action of non governmental actors in each country. The visible conservative resistances in Chile for some reforms may play in favor of non governmental action as governments need allies in the arena of civil society. Also in Argentina, the early conquest of social rights and incorporation of rights-based legislation provides a unique platform for non governmental claims and mobilization. In Uruguay, the centrality of the party system and a liberal matrix in state-citizen relation, may free non governmental action from the pressures and forces that they face in other cases. Finally, the three countries offer interesting differences in the degree of influence that religious structures have on policy choices and decisions, specially Catholicism which remains the state religion in Chile and Argentina. All these factors should also be taken into account as part of the environmental forces that are shaping and conditioning non governmental action. The modes in which these factors are intertwined and influence non governmental activity will be examined in further detail in the coming chapters.

Table 10. Comparison of Environmental Dimensions Affecting Non Governmental Public Action in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay

Environmental dimension	Argentina	Chile	Uruguay
Programs and Welfare services in adolescent fertility	Progressive legislation and programs granting universal rights, although not enforced (i.e. sexual education, access to contraception)	Segmented access to welfare services supplemented by wide range of targeted programs and policies for vulnerable groups.	Welfare services being reformed, although not adequate for new groups at risks (i.e. teenage mothers)
Decentralization and resource availability	Autonomy and resourcefulness of the city of Buenos Aires allows for more responsive services.	Resourceful central government. Municipal governments have increased resource availability to civil society organizations.	Still centralized structure, high dependency on central government resources, although increasing role of <i>Intendencias</i>
Top-down vs. Bottom-up orientation of policy process.	Participation of NGOs in promoting new programs and legislation. Also NGOs consortiums and coalitions pressing the government for rights enforcement.	Top – down policy design process, dominated by ministerial technicians. Academic NGOs and Universities consulted at preliminary stages.	Scarce incidence of NGOs in policy formulation. Some participation as implementers of pilot or test projects. Greater openness shown in last period.
Clientelistic practices	Clientelistic practices conducted by the <i>GCBA</i> and municipalities favoring friendly organizations.	<i>Alcalde</i> 's religious or political affiliation may open or restrict spaces for NGO participation.	Retreat of traditional forms of clientelism, although becoming more visible at departmental level
Critical factors enhancing autonomy of non governmental action	Increasing role of NGOs providing critical collaboration to governmental agencies. Social movements initiated outside state intervention <sup>25</sup> (i.e. <i>clubes de trueque</i> , <i>piqueteros</i> )	Tradition of civil society mobilization and activism around health related issues (i.e. maternal and child health groups activism during <i>Allende</i> 's government)	More liberal culture of citizenship, less inclined to fall in populist leaderships. Political parties has direct ties with citizens, seen as channel for social demands.
Critical factors limiting autonomy of non governmental action	Widespread clientelistic practices and state cooptation of confronting groups tend to reduce autonomy.	State cooptation of technical and professional capacities from NGOs tend to reduce autonomy	Paternalistic attitude towards state and intrinsic lack of initiative tend to reduce autonomy.
Church influence and moral saliency of adolescent fertility related issues	Catholicism is the religion of the state, although relation between them is conflictive. Reproductive and sexual health issues extremely salient.	Conservative Catholic Church remain influential. Conservative groups embedded within governmental branches object some programs and policies.	Complete separation of State and Church structures.

<sup>25</sup> For further development of this concept see Roberts, 2004.

Table 11. Comparison of Different Types of Environments Affecting Non Governmental Public Action in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay

<b>Environmental Dimension</b>	<b>Argentina</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Uruguay</b>
Legal Environment	Early adoption of legislation but not fully enforced	Resisted and disputed adoption of legislation	Relatively delayed adoption of legislation
Institutional Environment	Weak capacity of implementation, lacking accountability	Knowledgeable institutions, top-down policy design (restrictive factor)	Bureaucratic, resilient institutions. Lack capacity of response.
Policy Environment	Several national and sub national programs uncoordinated, overlapping efforts. Biased towards prevention.	Several centrally designed programs targeting teenage parenthood (major policy concern) and prevention.	Centralized traditional welfare sector oriented responses do not address this group needs. Limited targeted policies.
Financial Environment	Resourceful environment in the GCBA contrasting with <i>Conurbano</i>	Resourceful central government, enhanced by increasing decentralization to municipalities.	Piecemeal resources transferred to CSO. In most cases to provide governmental services.

## **CHAPTER 4: THE PUBLIC ROLE OF NON GOVERNMENTAL ACTION IN ADOLESCENT FERTILITY**

*An interactive approach to institutional change suggests that pro-poor reforms require changes in three distinct arenas: within the state itself, within society, and at the state-society interface. Each of these three arenas involves both formal and informal power relations.*  
**Johnatan Fox, 2005**

### **Plugging into national policy schemes**

This chapter examines the different modes in which non governmental action plugs into the national policy schemes that we have presented in the previous chapter. In chapter 2 we have provided a descriptive picture of the principal fields of action, projects and services in which our studied organizations intervene. Here we will embrace a more analytical perspective comparing the role played by the NGO communities in each country and how do they interact with their respective governments in this particular domain. Drawing upon the data collected through in depth interviews with members of NGOs and CSOs we examine the modes in which these organizations participate in national policies and relate with governmental structures. In doing this, we have identified some of the national particularities that characterize state-civil society relationships in each country as well as cross national differences in the degree of autonomy and independence of NGO activity vis-à-vis state mandates. The central analytical question addressed in this chapter refers to the national differences in non governmental participation in national policies and the relative independence that NGOs have to attain their mission given the environmental policy and institutional constraints.

Also we seek to understand how the repertoire of non governmental actions takes form in national environments, and interacts with national and sub national policies presented in chapter 3. Although the four mentioned domains of intervention presented in

chapter 2 could be identified in the three countries, significant differences can be signalled in the role played by non governmental actors, the relationships they establish with national states and the influence they can attain in the different phases of policy design and implementation.

### **The Role of Non Governmental Public Action in Chile**

In the case of Chile, non governmental actors have made crucial contributions to policy design and the incorporation of new approaches to respond to the challenges of teenage pregnancy and parenthood. While governmental agencies and services have taken responsibility for implementing and expanding coverage of preventive and supportive programs, non governmental actors in Chile should be acknowledged for their capacity to innovate and challenge traditional approaches. Many of the initiatives listed as part of the policy environment in chapter 4 began as experiences and projects originated in the non governmental sector. The lack of governmental initiative during the years of dictatorship and democratic transition favored the irruption of a constellation of non governmental experiences related to reproductive health, youth sexuality and sexual education. Despite central government apathy, many of these experiences attained to articulate efforts with municipal health services and educational centers at the local level.

In general terms, during the 1980s the vacuum in youth and adolescent policies – including sexual and reproductive adolescent health- was fulfilled by non governmental and civil society organizations. Although many of these organizations are now disappeared, during the 1990s their experience was collected and systematized by the governmental agencies that began to take responsibility over these policies (SERNAM, MINSAL, MINEDUC, SENAME, etc.). It was based on these previous experiences that the Chilean government gave birth in 1993 to the *Política de Educación en Sexualidad*

*para el Mejoramiento de la Calidad de la Educación*. That same year, the NGO PAESMI and the MINEDUC (Ministry of Education) organized the *Encuentro Nacional de Educación en Sexualidad* which constituted a landmark in the history of sexual education in Chile.

Another major event in this process was the implementation of the *Jornadas de Conversación sobre Afectividad y Sexualidad (JOCAS)* organized by the MINEDUC in 1996 and replicated later by SERNAM in several comunas. This initiative was based on the expertise and experience accumulated by the NGO *EDUK*, a pioneer organization in sexual education projects. In the year 1995 *EDUK* provided technical assistance and advise to develop to include formal programs on affectivity and sexual education across the school system.<sup>26</sup> Besides this, NGO and academics experts played a substantial role in the creation of the *Programa de Salud Adolescente* during the years 1997 and 1998.

Since then, the government has increasingly taken responsibility on these fields, converting adolescent health, sexual education, and reproductive rights in subjects of public policy with their corresponding sets of programs and agencies. Simultaneously, the number of social organizations has declined and civil society lost the mobilization character that has previously exhibited in the 1980s and early 1990s (De la Maza, 2005). Several observers have adverted a general weakening of the non governmental sector in Chile during the last decade, and particularly of feminist and gender organizations which were directly responsible for significant advancements of women's rights and gender perspectives in governmental policies.

However, despite civil society loss of dynamism and mobilization, a sharp and sustained process of **state modernization** has opened some spaces for non governmental participation in the policy process. As public reforms seek to promote more efficient

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<sup>26</sup> The work of *EDUK* was supported by the MINEDUC (Ministry of Education) and the UNDP (United Nations Development Program)



services based on the principles of equity and universal citizenship, non governmental organizations have been required to collaborate in the design and implementation of a new generation of policies and programs. The current scenario has redefined the role of civil society participation in public management, placing higher expectations about the benefits that greater citizen involvement may have on policy outcomes (DOS, 2007).

In the field of adolescent fertility, the governmental endorsement of the sexual and reproductive rights paradigm has entailed niches for technical and professionalized NGOs to participate in instances of policy design and implementation. This participation has come more in the format of policy research, technical advice and academic consultation, than explicit opportunities for youth expressions of their needs. However, the current orientation of programs and policies in this field has implied a progressive recognition of new rights to the youth, and especially to young women and their children. In the eyes of NGO members, the advancement of these rights oriented policy reforms and programs are seen as the adoption of their own long lasting agenda.

*Los avances en la agenda, sobre todo en maternidad y paternidad adolescente, tienen mucho que ver con la agenda de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil. Pensando en el MINEDUC [Ministry of Education], si no hubiese estudios como el de maternidad y paternidad no podría haber política y eso surge porque estamos nosotros. Sin eso no hay política y el Ministerio como iniciativa política no era claro que lo hicieran ellos directamente. (Member of CEDEM)*

To advance in this agenda recent leftist governments in Chile have needed strong support from civil society organizations to enact some of the progressive and pro-rights reforms in the fields of sexual education and reproductive health. As conservative groups may offer significant resistance to the advancement and implementation of some programs, governmental agencies have counted on non-governmental expertise and mobilization to sustain and defend their reforms. As we have observed, state-NGO collaboration may transcend the phases of policy design and implementation – usually

signed by technical and administrative relations-, to move into more political grounds – marked by the public defense of governmental policies oriented to enhance the recognition of citizen's rights.

Simultaneously, the process of state modernization has brought about new opportunities for civil society participation, as the user's, recipient's or client's perspective is now required to formulate adequate and appropriate policies. The formerly dominant conception of public management as a matter subject to technical knowledge and specialists expertise have begun to open genuine spaces to voice the demands of citizens. More than central government, it is at the local level where spaces of community involvement in public decisions are enacted through micro experiences that show some possible paths to break the prevailing technocratic decision making model.

In this respect, the *municipalization* of health and educational services in Chile may offer some interesting opportunities to link non governmental action with local governments seeking to take into account the voice of adolescents in their decisions. However, some surveyed organizations have denounced the existence of local authorities that tend to resist civil society participation which they may perceive contrary to their partisan interests or challenging moral principles. In these *comunas*, organizations tend to feel discouraged, displaced and lacking spaces of participation.

*También depende mucho del municipio. Por ejemplo, en Renca, tenemos una Alcaldesa que no nos deja participar mucho, que ha cortado todas las redes y no hay mucho espacio de participación, por un tema político, de miradas distintas. Se desarmaron todas las redes, los colegios municipales están cerrados, entonces ahí se dificulta. Pero en todos los otros proyectos los jóvenes son bastante escuchados. (Member of VISION MUNDIAL)*

Following the institutional map in *Figure 2*, the most influential and visible organizations are those formal NGOs conducting policy research, advocacy and lobby activities, particularly the ones focusing on teenage prevention. The activities of these

NGOs (e.g. ICMER, CEMERA, APROFA, EDUK) are driven by *the sexual and reproductive rights paradigm* which they define in the following terms,

*[El] paradigma de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos es [...] el derecho a decidir de las personas de acuerdo a sus propios valores y principios y abogar por políticas públicas laicas que respeten esa diversidad existente en la sociedad, que su principal motivo de acción sea la realidad y no los valores o creencias de quienes están tomando las decisiones. (Member of APROFA)*

Whether through sexual education, contraception services or research projects in reproductive medicine these organizations seek to enhance the adolescents' rights to make informed choices and prevent unwanted pregnancies. More importantly, they all share the common objective of influencing public policy in their domain of expertise. In the cases of CEMERA and ICMER, they seek to attain this goal through the development of research projects in the area of reproductive medicine combined with the provision of clinical services, training personnel and community outreach. Similarly, APROFA -the local partner of IPPF<sup>27</sup>- seeks to influence public policy by promoting legislative and policy changes that enhance the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights especially among the youth. In the case of EDUK, the strategy is to promote sexual education through research projects, consultancy, policy advising, elaboration of dissemination materials and local development programs.

As their own members repeatedly express, influencing policy outcomes has become a central goal in their institutional missions and strategic plans. The statements of members of ICMER and CEMERA provide a good portrait of this group's viewpoint of their role in the policy making process.

*ICMER aporta desde la evidencia científica a las políticas públicas que tienen que ver con la salud sexual y reproductiva. Basarse en [el] conocimiento científico para hacer advocacy e influir en las políticas públicas. Y el conocimiento científico va en el área biomédica propiamente tal y cómo a partir*

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<sup>27</sup> International Planned Parenthood Federation.

*de esa información participamos en comisiones técnicas para aportar nuestro conocimiento científico. [...] Ese conocimiento también nos permite hacer actividades de advocacy que tienen que ver con cómo difundimos y hacemos promoción de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos, de la anticoncepción de emergencia, de los mecanismos de acción de todos los métodos [anticonceptivos] y cómo hacemos para que la gente tome conciencia de que tiene derecho a acceder a toda la información disponible. En general esto es para toda la población pero con foco en la población adolescente. (Member of ICMER)*

*Siempre hemos tratado de trabajar en coordinación con los ministerios y aportamos desde nuestra institución tanto al Ministerio de Educación como el de Salud. Nuestra política es que siempre, en cada uno de los gobiernos, nos hemos presentado a los Ministros y les comunicamos lo que estamos haciendo, estar presentes, pero el Ministerio es el que toma la decisión. Nosotros estamos absolutamente disponibles a que nos soliciten, nos pregunten. Hemos participado en algunas comisiones, por ejemplo, en la de salud sexual y reproductiva, pero eso es temporal. (Member of CEMERA)*

After advocating for so many years for the provision of sexual and reproductive services in public health clinics, the approval of the *Normas Nacionales sobre la Regulación de la Fertilidad* became a central issue in the agenda of these organizations. They played an important role as advisors and consultants in the ministerial commissions that drafted these norms, as it is acknowledged in the official documents<sup>28</sup>. When the norms were finally approved by the MINSAL (Ministry of Health) in 2007 the organizations experienced the governmental decision as their own success. According to these norms, free access to contraception to every person older than 14 years of age, including the “day after pill” became part of national public health policy, and therefore, should be offered in public clinics and hospitals.

As previously explained, these “fertility norms” were appealed by a group of conservative members of parliament and civil society organizations, who claimed that several dispositions were unconstitutional as they undermined the fetus right to life and the parental responsibilities over their children. The most controversial norms

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<sup>28</sup> ICMER and APROFA are explicitly mentioned in the official publication of the norms as editors and members of the document’s reviewing committee. (MINSAL, 2007)

dispositions impugned by the opposition referred to: a) the abortive nature of the “day after pill”, b) free access to contraceptive methods such as the Intrauterine Device (IUD), and c) the confidential character of counseling services for those adolescents under 18 years of age. On April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the *Tribunal Constitucional de Chile* declared unconstitutional the distribution of the day after pill in public health centers, although it was not prohibited its distribution by non profit or commercial organizations. The tribunal rejected the appeal against the IUD and the confidential character of services. After the tribunal decision was known, the norms were eagerly defended by advocacy organizations like CEMERA, ICMER and APROFA who lobbied members of parliaments from all parties. The issue served as a platform for the mobilization and coordinated work of the organizations against the tribunal’s decision.

*Tenemos un trabajo bien cercano con ICMER, CEMERA, básicamente ha sido un trabajo de advocacy en el tema de las Normas y ahora en la defensa de las Normas. Nosotros hemos hecho un trabajo donde hemos conseguido que 48 diputados de distintos partidos de la Concertación [center-left party] y algunos de Renovación Nacional [center-right party] interpongan un recurso a favor de las Normas. Y hay 26 diputados de la Concertación que también presentaron un escrito para pedir la recusación de dos de los miembros del Tribunal Constitucional. Así como los de derecha actúan tan coordinadamente por estos grupos a favor de la vida, que haya parlamentarios de derecha que hayan participado en esto es producto del trabajo en conjunto que hemos hecho con ICMER, FLACSO y hay un grupo de abogados amigos que nos ayudan gratis. Por ejemplo sacamos un díptico [pamphlet]... las matronas [midwives] están muy asustadas con el tema de la anticoncepción por que los Alcaldes han dicho, esto es ilegal, abortivo, y la prensa está tan copada [coopted] por sectores que tienen agenda propia en el tema y que más que transmitir información científica les interesa transmitir su propia visión. Entonces esta guía para matronas es para que sepan que están validados por el código sanitario para hacer botiquines ambulantes. Si ellos quieren tener concepción de emergencia y darla a alguien que lo pida, lo pueden hacer, a pesar de la voluntad del Alcalde. Entregamos información para que la gente ejerza sus derechos informadamente y sus obligaciones en el caso de los profesionales de la salud. (Member of APROFA)*

Compared with their governmental colleagues, NGO experts feel they have greater levels of freedom to defend the norms principles and make the necessary alliances

to support them. Although they may lack the necessary resources, they believe that civil society experiences are more appropriate to develop services aligned with people's rights and needs.

*Digo todo esto porque la apuesta nuestra es una apuesta política, ideológica, de avance en la construcción de la democracia y derechos humanos. Por lo tanto, todo el tema de advocacy, de incidencia política para nosotros es fundamental. No nos interesa competir con el Estado sino vincularnos con ellos para poder incidir en la política. Yo creo que las ONGs en general desarrollan una metodología de trabajo mucho más en sintonía con la gente, mucho más cercana, mucho más respetuosa. Yo siento que a través de la sociedad civil hay más libertad para plantear esto, es un desafío grande, no se cuenta con todos los recursos, pero creo que la posibilidad de autosustentar las acciones y no depender de nadie, en la medida de lo posible, y establecer alianzas que es una cosa fundamental. Sólo, ninguna ONG lo va a lograr. (Member of APROFA)*

The national program *Chile Crece Contigo*, launched by Michelle Bachelet to support early developmental stages of children, promote effective childcare practices and strengthen family capacities, shows a different pattern of state-civil society collaboration. A central strategy of the program was the identification of good experiences within the NGO community that could be taken as models for effective intervention. In 2005 during the design phase of the program, UNICEF, MIDEPLAN and FOSIS<sup>29</sup> supported the systematization of non governmental projects that were identified as "*Experiencias Innovadoras en Infancia*". As the program was seeking for effective pre-birth interventions, they funded and supported the systematization of the work that the *Asociación de Damas Salesianas* were conducting with teenage mothers in *La Florida* a working class *comuna* in Santiago.

*Hay muy pocas experiencias de intervención desde el momento de la gestación. Hay experiencias desde más adelante, a nivel de salas cunas y otros. Por lo tanto, la participación nuestra fue requerida desde lo público para sistematizar y aportar en la creación del sistema de protección a la Infancia a nivel país que es el que se está implementando hoy y que va de 0 a 10 años en su primera etapa de*

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<sup>29</sup> MIDEPLAN and FOSIS are the acronyms for the *Ministerio de Planificación* and the *Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social*.

*aquí al bicentenario. Lo que a nosotros nos tocó, que es la protección de la infancia, fue participativo y bueno. Hubo una convocatoria a participar y un reconocimiento de las acciones realizadas y una petición de sistematización de experiencias. [...] Ha habido una disposición a una construcción conjunta. (Member of the Asociación de Damas Salesianas)*

Also the work of CEANIM (*Centro de Estudios y Atención del Niño y la Mujer*) was a major contribution in the design of *Chile Crece Contigo*. CEANIM's experience in the fields of early stimulation, infant development and monitor's program was acknowledged and incorporated by the program. Specifically, the use of home visits as a tool to work with parents and children in their own environment was a substantial methodological contribution to the program design. The director of the organization, María Angelica Kotliarenko, was invited to serve as program committee advisor for the elaboration of the initial program's drafts

*La directora de CEANIM participó en el Comité Asesor para la construcción de la política de Infancia, que está muy reconocida. El gobierno reconoce lo que nuestra institución ha hecho por la Infancia en este país. Y lo reconoce porque nos nombra y porque nos financia. [...] En este momento al CEANIM se le están abriendo varias posibilidades justamente porque está de moda el tema de la intervención temprana, la cosa comunitaria. Nosotros hemos trabajado toda la vida con la familia. Hoy día las reformas curriculares hablan recién de un trabajo como el que nosotros hacemos hace mucho: incorporar a la familia, la comunidad. Trabajamos con madres adolescentes y primerizas, [en] temas relacionados con el apego al bebé. [...] Se trabaja con monitoras de la misma comuna. Nosotros las capacitamos. Llevamos trabajando muchos años en el tema de visita domiciliaria y es mucho más fácil que una chica le abra la puerta a su vecina que es una igual a ella, y no una persona diferente, extraña. (Member of CEANIM)*

Even more traditional organizations, such as the *Sociedad Protectora de la Infancia* founded in 1894 under the umbrella of the Catholic Church had their chance to disseminate their own experience. The organization's strategy to strengthen parental responsibilities and enhance resilience among children in the comuna of *Puente Alto* was one of the effective non-governmental interventions spotted by the program.

Also the municipalities have emerged as interesting partners for NGOs seeking to expand their services and promote their visions. In the wake of dwindling international funding, even the more technical organizations have resorted to municipal governments to sustain their structures. Non-governmental expertise and experience have become valuable and demanded assets for municipal agencies participating in rights oriented and gender specific youth programs. Partnerships between NGOs and municipal services can take various and sophisticated forms, as described below.

*Chile ha dejado de ser un país prioritario [para la cooperación internacional] por lo tanto tenemos que autosustentar nuestra práctica. Entramos en contacto con municipios o cualquier otra entidad que pueda ayudar a sustentar el pago de la prestación. Hoy tenemos convenio con la Municipalidad de Coquimbo, Talcahuano y con el servicio de salud respectivo; Valdivia y Melipilla. El municipio o el servicio de salud entrega los recursos para la contratación del personal, que es con lo que nosotros no contamos, y se pone con la infraestructura física para que esto opere, y nosotros hacemos las capacitaciones con enfoque de derechos, género, juventud que tiene que tener el persona. Nosotros también entregamos todo lo que son los suministros clínicos, condones, anticonceptivos y todo el tema de la asistencia técnica en la formación de los equipos y trabajo con los jóvenes como educadores de pares. En el caso de Melipilla sólo damos asistencia técnica y estamos en contacto permanente pero ellos son independientes de nosotros; se financian con el financiamiento de los municipios. El municipio nos entrega una subvención a nosotros; contratamos los funcionarios que ellos eligen, con orientación nuestra, revisamos los curriculum y los invitamos a capacitaciones que nosotros hacemos. (Member of APROFA)*

Specialized NGOs are the suitable partners also to train municipal employees under the rights and gender policies required by the new educational and health services agendas. In fact, several organizations in our sample have found a niche in training teachers, professors and clinic's staff in sexual and reproductive health. Furthermore, they may play a unique role in linking educational and health services, by aligning their discourses and practices, and more importantly, bridging and coordinating their teams. In cases like the ones cited below, NGOs may even be helpful to enhance coordination among governmental agencies.



*Pero desde los últimos 10 años estamos trabajando más en la prevención del embarazo adolescente. Prevención en el sentido de ofrecer servicios clínicos, por una parte, para los adolescentes que inician actividad sexual. Y, por otro lado, también como forma de prevención mucho más temprana es capacitar a los profesores en el tema de salud sexual. Y también a nivel de atención primaria, en los consultorios, a los equipos de salud, de tal manera que los colegios y servicios de salud trabajen en forma conectada. O sea, que los profesores y lo que hacen en la sala de clases tenga un apoyo en los servicios que presta el consultorio (Member of CEMERA)*

But the truth is that not all the municipal authorities are equally receptive to the participation of NGOs in their services. The lack of openness or insufficient support to their activities is a frequent complaint among NGO members. Despite having governmental support and being one of the “model experiences” selected by the *Chile Crece Contigo*, the NGO CEANIM is one of those cases that could not work with municipal clinics as they requested. They also complained that teenage pregnancy is not sufficiently prioritized by municipal authorities as mandated by central government documents, and they are not sufficiently open to coordinate actions.

*Cuesta mucho que el municipio priorice temas de embarazo adolescente y si la atienden es por algo puntual, pero estas chicas necesitan acompañamiento permanente. A nivel de Alcalde cuesta mucho que incorporen el tema. Pero es una estrategia trabajar coordinadamente porque tu ves los distintos proyectos y [todos] tienen la misma población beneficiaria. [...] Nuestro proyecto está en la agenda de la presidenta –el de las salas cunas- pero la presidenta no está en terreno y ahí es donde cuesta que se esfuercen un poco. Además nos invitan a mostrar nuestra experiencia, desde el MINSAL, INTEGRA, JUNJI, porque ellos tienen mucho interés en instalar este proyecto. Pero todavía están en pañales, a pesar de que tienen la intención. (Member of CEANIM)*

Interconnectedness, coordination and integrality have become the new mantras of public management in Chile. Governmental agencies are required to articulate their programs with municipal services, education and health services must be tuned in their approaches to adolescents, state run facilities and programs should coordinate with non governmental services. This scenario creates opportunities for technical NGOs to assume linking roles at the local level, putting in contact state run services with one another, and

also connecting them with other community organizations. Furthermore, some organizations such as the *Fundación Cerro Navia* recreates the old NGO “intermediary role” (Carroll, 1992), as a key principle in their intervention, although now referred to themselves as mediators between state and local resources. In their own words, “*los principios que orientan [nuestros proyectos] son trabajar en la comuna, privilegiar el aporte local, y mediar entre los recursos del Estado y los recursos locales*” (Member of *Fundación Cerro Navia*).

In some cases, interconnectedness, mutual cooperation and articulation tend to blur the limits between municipal and NGOs spheres, making difficult to draw the line between public and private sector (De la Maza, 2000) Non-governmental action may become embedded in municipal structures and services as reflected in the expressions of this Catholic NGO that works in the comuna of *La Florida*: “*coordinamos con los centros de salud y el municipio a través de la Corporación Municipal, para saber las personas que ingresan, transferir información, detectar casos de abuso, riesgo, trabajar en equipo con bastante sinergia. De hecho, el programa forma parte del municipio*” (Member of *Asociación de Damas Salesianas*)

As schools and high schools need to open themselves to the community to engage with youth needs, NGOs may provide the necessary contacts and linkages to attain this goal. Organizations like EDUK have been pioneers in bringing a community approach to sexual education and pregnancy prevention, promoting greater openness of educational centers to the community.

*Por lo tanto, nuestro enfoque se fue ampliando, y ya no trabajábamos sólo con profesores. Primero comenzamos a trabajar con los centros educativos y los actores que los conforman: estudiantes, docentes directivos y docentes de aula, para formar unidades de gestión dentro de los centros educativos. Esto fue antes en los [años] '90. Ahora trabajamos también con las unidades educativas pero en modelos abiertos hacia la comunidad, en trabajo con otras organizaciones en salud o las que tengan que ver con niños y jóvenes. (Member of EDUK)*

As the inertia of sector-specific and fragmented responses may still prevail, the intervention of NGOs can show feasible paths to build institutional bridges and nexus that allow for more integral approaches. Environments where schools authorities and health teams are keen to cooperate may facilitate the task for NGOs in this respect. In these contexts, NGOs can play significant roles in increasing awareness among public health and educational facilities, about the need to work more closely between them and with community organizations.

*Los jóvenes padres y madres adolescentes tienen necesidad de estar contacto con aquellas instituciones que puedan brindarles apoyo, para evitar un embarazo o para apoyarlos si están embarazadas. Esto porque el sistema educativo todavía tiene una serie de restricciones en cuanto, por ejemplo, a dar métodos anticonceptivos. Entonces, uno va creando nexos y lazos en que el establecimiento se abre, pero también la comunidad entra al establecimiento. Entonces, se establecen lazos en que los jóvenes pueden ir al establecimiento de salud más cercanos o personal del establecimiento de salud va al establecimiento a hacer el trabajo preventivo necesario. Nosotros hemos sido el nexo articulador necesario. (Member of EDUK)*

More often than not, ministerial responses may lack a global perspective of the adolescent situation as they tend to constrain their interventions within the limits of their area of jurisdiction. This situation may originate fragmented and partial responses, a waste of public resources and finally diminish the impact of interventions. In the discourse of some non-governmental organizations, fighting ministerial dividedness and policy fragmentation has become a common place. Furthermore, some have explicitly faced the challenge of integrality by bringing educational approaches when working with health staff, and bringing health perspectives when working in educational centers. Some of our studied cases show that NGOs may be helpful players for governments that really seek to break fragmentation and atomization in policy approaches.

*La intervención no sólo debe ser a nivel de salud sino multisectorial. Por ello uno tiene que capacitar -y eso es otra actividad que hacemos- a los proveedores de salud de manera que estén capacitados para saber como atender a un adolescente; capacitarlo en los derechos que tiene ese adolescente de ser atendido en la demanda que viene a consultar. Pero por otro lado, educar al adolescente que tiene derecho a consultar. (Member of ICMER)*

Advocacy and technical organizations have reacted against what they perceived has been an excessive “medicalization” of the programs in sexual education and reproductive health. As the MINSAL (Ministry of Health) has taken the lead in this field, these organizations have seen a risk in placing primary responsibility in the hands of medical doctors and health staff. The main role in this field, they say, should be placed in teachers and professors who have a permanent contact with the adolescents. In their view, members of the public health network should only play a subsidiary role in this domain.

*Yo no estoy de acuerdo con que sea un tema a cargo de los profesionales de la salud. Este debe ser un tema a cargo de los profesores, los que pueden pedir ayuda a los profesionales de la salud para un tema específico que los profesores desconozcan. Pero creo que la única forma de que un programa de educación sexual sea permanente, paulatino y sea consistente en el tiempo es que esté a cargo de los profesores. Porque el día en que no cuentas con la buena voluntad de un profesional o no hay recursos para traerlo te quedas sin educación sexual; o ese día el niño que no estuvo en la charla se queda sin educación sexual para siempre. (Member of ICMER).*

NGOs may also collaborate with municipalities by informing about the benefits delivered by public programs or granting access to the monetary subsidies that adolescent mothers are entitled to receive. They can help governmental agencies in the application of targeting instruments of mean tested programs -such as the *Ficha de Protección Social*- and orienting potential recipients about the procedures they need to follow to obtain the benefits.

*Generalmente la primera labor es que la madre adolescente pueda ser catastrada [registered] por la ficha de protección social, pueda optar a los subsidios que el Estado entrega. Entonces, ahí se establecen los vínculos con el municipio y, en*

*general, no hay problemas en ese estilo. La monitora se coordina con el municipio para brindar estos servicios. (Member of the VICARIA DE LA PASTORAL SOCIAL)*

Despite the high degree of participation and collaboration with governmental policies, there are generalized complaints about the scarce resources that are made available to NGOs. Most of our surveyed organizations, even those more technical and well resourced, mentioned the drastic reduction in international funding as Chile stopped being a priority for international funding agencies. Although this trend is shared with Uruguay and Argentina, it seems that Chilean organizations experience it with greater depth. Comparatively, the international cooperation last longer in Chile, as dictatorship was prolonged until 1990 and funding also continued during the early 1990s to support the consolidation of democracy. The increasing role of the state as funder for non-governmental action did not match the financial flows made available by international agencies and imposed new limits to the former autonomy that the organizations have in the past. The nostalgia for the past times is a common place in the perceptions of NGOs leaders.

*Chile cada vez está siendo un país menos prioritario y ese es un tema para nosotros. (Visión Mundial)*

*Chile ha dejado de ser un país prioritario- por lo tanto tenemos que autosustentar nuestra práctica; entramos en contacto con municipios o cualquier otra entidad que pueda ayudar a sustentar el pago de la prestación. (APROFA)*

*En el caso de investigaciones nos financia la OMS, la OPS, el UNFPA, la Fundación Ford, pero eso ha ido disminuyendo desde que Chile dejó de ser país prioritario. Ahora estamos solamente con proyectos de fondos de la Universidad (CEMERA).*

*EED [Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst] es una de las agencias que el año 2002 hizo un estudio de valoración de la [situación] en Chile y decidió quedarse cuando ya todas las agencias se estaban yendo porque Chile no era prioridad. En este momento se está haciendo un reestudio para ver si siguen, también porque en Alemania ha habido cambios políticos. (COSECH)*

For technical and professional NGOs the funding that Chilean governmental agencies make available is usually granted a) for short term periods, b) for the development of a specific project, and c) are obtained through bids or competitions. This situation makes difficult the sustainability of specific lines of research and the accumulation through stable staffs. Also reinforces segmentation within the NGO community as those with more professional capacities are more likely to success in competing for funding.

*Los financiamientos en los temas de maternidad y paternidad adolescente son limitados. [...] Si uno se situara en los financiamientos propiamente tal, la continuidad sería de meses, pero en la medida en que estamos es esa dinámica, en que en Chile no hay financiamiento a largo plazo, lo que tienes que hacer es presentarte a concursos. O sea, la continuidad que tiene esto es la que le hemos dado, pero no hay una institución ni una institucionalidad que apoye sistemáticamente lo que los centros de investigación hacemos. Surge de postular a concursos o establecer convenios, que nunca son a largo plazo. Ello afecta a que no te permite mantener continuidad en las personas del equipo; que los salarios son bastante más bajos que el mercado. Eso hace que sea más difícil trabajar. (Member of CEDEM)*

For service-oriented NGOs working directly with adolescents public funding is piecemeal and hardly enough to cover the project's daily expenses. Governmental agencies such as SENAME, CONACE or INJUVI transfer funds to NGOs based on a specific number of adolescents/children they are expected to attend. However, this modality allows very little space for other activities beyond strict service provision, such as systematization of their practices, reflection on their work, evaluation or exchange with other organizations. Indeed, it is usually the international funding what allows to create spaces for reflective action, trigger learning process and share experiences with other organizations. As a member of the NGO EDUK said *“los financiamientos que nos han permitido ir mostrando lo que hemos hecho han sido internacionales y los*

*financiamientos nacionales han sido mínimos. Los fondos a disposición y que nosotros tengamos conocimiento han sido muy pocos”.*

To move beyond the limits of survival, NGOs resort to umbrella organizations that provide additional funding to perform some of the activities that add-value to the mere provision of services. Interestingly, all service-oriented NGOs in our sample have some sort of connection with more resourceful organizations which allow them to complement the scarce public funds they receive. For example, VISION MUNDIAL is supported by World Vision International a missionary worldwide Christian organization; the ASOCIACION DE DAMAS SALESIANAS receives occasional funding from their headquarters in Caracas to complement their running budget; COSECH still maintains ties with the Quakers in Philadelphia securing financial support until 2009.

*La institución comenzó a funcionar por el año '74, '75 y comenzó como una filial de los Cuáqueros de Filadelfia. En el año '97 la gente de Filadelfia se fue y la institución la continuamos la gente que trabajaba en esa época. Y hemos subsistido hasta ahora –hasta el 2009 tenemos asegurado el proyecto institucional-. La gran ventaja que tenemos es que contamos con un apoyo institucional porque esto nos permite la continuidad. De todas maneras es más fácil encontrar el resto del presupuesto como proyecto aislados. Entonces, es una gran ventaja que tenemos. Ahora si EED se retira yo no tengo idea qué puede pasar, veo difícil honestamente que podamos continuar el trabajo. (Member of COSECH)*

Catholic organizations working in poor communities like the VICARIA DE LA PASTORAL SOCIAL or the FUNDACION CERRO NAVIA also acknowledge the support of international agencies or Catholic hierarchies to complement public funds. The latter for example receives funding from HOGAR DE CRISTO, one of the largest NGOs in Latin America that has become a significant funder for Catholic grass roots and community organizations in Chile.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For a detailed study about *Hogar de Cristo* and its role in funding other organizations in Chile see Pereira, Angel and Angel, 2007 in Social Science and Medicine.

*Tenemos convenios con el Estado y con instituciones extranjeras. La mayor parte de nuestro financiamiento viene de instituciones privadas. Somos tercero del Hogar de Cristo: representamos al Hogar de Cristo en Cerro Navia y entonces ellos nos hacen un aporte. Y la otra parte la financiamos con SENAME y ahí hay un aporte importante del Estado a través de convenios con SENAME, CONACE. Nosotros para ellos somos prestadores de servicios. Por ejemplo, con infractores de ley tenemos 12 cupos y el Estado nos manda 12 infractores; con la Junji igual: ellos nos mandan 90 niños y tenemos que cumplir la prestación para esos 90 niños. (Member of Fundación Cerro Navia)*

In sum, the scarcity of resources results in a competing scenario that poses obstacles for mutual cooperation and collaboration between the organizations. As a member of the NGO EDUK clearly stated “*las distintas organizaciones, para sobrevivir, comenzamos a competir en lugar de unir nuestros esfuerzos, entonces todas postulamos y competimos por fondos*”. The coalition built by ICMER, CEMERA and APROFA constitutes an exception in the Chilean competitive environment. The idea that NGOs are part of a market with competing providers for limited services seems to be particularly applicable to the case of Chile. The degree in which Chilean NGOs have adopted entrepreneurial management practices may also confirm this perception. By far, the Chilean NGOs are the ones that exhibited higher degrees of sophistication in the use of marketing, fundraising and accountability tools. In the wake of international cooperation reduction some organizations have begun to open themselves to further cooperation with local organizations, facing difficulties to build partnerships and alliances.

*Yo creo que además falta que nos organicemos nosotros como sociedad civil. Nos pasa mucho que al ser independientes financieramente, muchos años estuvimos trabajando con nosotros mismos porque no necesitábamos aliados. Ahora que, estamos saliendo, nos damos cuenta que no estamos organizados y que hay una competencia entre las organizaciones. Hay un mercado para este servicio. Entonces, en las redes que participo yo, que son redes de infancia, es complicado porque cada institución quiere aparecer más... es una competencia, de ser más visibles para el gobierno, para poder tener más financiamiento, o ser más visible en la sociedad para poder tener más empresas. Yo diría que en las mesas a nivel nacional, se da una dinámica bastante buena, de trabajo coordinado, pero al momento de hacer algún evento donde nos vamos a visibilizar más, predomina la*



*visibilidad individual [más] que la colectiva. Se busca más eso, lo que complica las cosas. (Member of VISION MUNDIAL)*

## **The Role of Non Governmental Public Action in Uruguay**

In Uruguay the participation of non governmental actors in the field of adolescent fertility could be characterized as marginal, unarticulated and with limited impact upon governmental action. Although process of social reform in Uruguay has opened spaces for non governmental action, this has been confined to the mere role of executor of public programs, excluding civil society organizations from major instances of policy design and planning. Whether we examine the spheres of pregnancy prevention, support to adolescent parenthood or policy research, nongovernmental action in these fields tend to be less relevant and less significant in Uruguay, compared with its role in other countries.

The transition to democracy in the mid 1980s brought several changes in the sphere of children and adolescent policy, ones that substantially shaped and influenced the role of nongovernmental actors. The universalistic pattern of social protection based on sector oriented policies - such as health, education and social security- was altered as new responses were required to cope with structural changes in the employment market and the its consequences on the urban landscape (Kaztman 2000). Like in other countries of the region, traditional welfare policies were challenged by the increasing demands of new vulnerable groups in which young mothers and their children were unquestionable included. However, unlike what occurred in other countries, in Uruguay the implementation of targeted programs did not imply dismantling the basic structure of public welfare provision, which coexisted and was improved alongside with the adoption of a new generation of policies (Midaglia 2000).

The restoration of democracy in 1985 also meant the initiation of a policy of contracts with NGOs for the provision of social services mirroring -with some delay- the prevailing trends in the region. The first contracts between NGOs and the governmental children agency (called at that time *Consejo del Niño*) were signed in 1985 to fund informal community schooling projects in poor communities and address the challenging situation of street children. Since then, the amount of money transferred to the nongovernmental sector and the number of contracts signed between governmental agencies and civil society organizations has been increasing year after year.

With the preliminary debates of the United Nations Children Rights Convention (CRC) in progress<sup>31</sup>, the traditional approaches to adolescent policy based on the notions of tutelage and institutionalization came under significant debate. The influence of the emerging CRC principles coupled with the new mandates of public management (Bresser Pereira 1999) led to the reorganization of the children's governmental agency which began to adequate its bureaucratic structure and developed new programs based on more preventive approaches. These transformations were reflected in the change of the agency's name in 1985 from *Consejo del Niño* to *Instituto Nacional del Menor (I.NA.ME.)*.

In the late 1980s some innovative experiences were implemented under the influence of the CRC paradigm seeking to address the situation of children and adolescents in their local communities and family contexts. Contrasting with the prevailing trends we observed in Chile, in Uruguay these initial experiences were mostly engendered and implemented by the specialized governmental agency. Although these

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<sup>31</sup> The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention and opened it for signature on 20 November 1989. It came into force on 2 September 1990, after it was ratified by the required number of nations.

projects have continued until present days, they are now implemented through civil society organizations contracted by the State specialized office (García 2008).

The above mentioned trends (targeted policies, openness to civil society and the advancement of the CRC paradigm) were reflected in the design of the major national children program known as Plan CAIF. Through a nationwide network of childcare centers, the plan - launched in 1988 – sought to build a system of protection for children under 3 years of age, based on the provision of educational, community and family services. The program constituted an important source of innovation for the traditional State-oriented Uruguayan social policy system, as centers were exclusively run by civil society organizations –mostly neighborhood and community associations- with the financial and technical support of a specialized governmental agency. Another singular feature that characterized the initiative was the inter-ministerial composition of the program, aiming to break a prevailing pattern of policy fragmentation and disarticulation. Although the program did not target specifically at children of adolescent mothers, the focus on socially vulnerable communities and its nationwide coverage, made it one of the principal social network of support for young mothers.

Since 1985 specific residential services -called *Unidades Materno Infantiles*- were implemented to address the increasing number of teenage mothers and the perception of this trend as a social problem. Until very recently, the *UMIs* constituted the unique governmental program which exclusively targeted mothers under the age of 18 and their children. On the side of civil society, the NGO *La Bonne Garde* - a religious organization founded in 1911- has been providing residential and social support although in a much smaller scale. As the CRC principles conquered discourses and practices, residential services came under severe criticism and community programs emerged as more appropriate alternatives to deal with “the problem” of the teenage motherhood.

Tuned with this perspective the NGO *Casa Lunas* was founded in the year 2000 by a group of Catholic professionals to run a day center for teenage mothers and their family in the periphery of Montevideo. Also the feminist NGO *Casa de la Mujer de la Unión* implemented a specific project to create new opportunities for teenage mothers and their partners in the neighborhood of *Villa Española*<sup>32</sup>. This project was initially one of many funded by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to enhance future opportunities and living conditions of teenage mothers although the majority of them were discontinued after the financial support ceased. *Casa de la Mujer de la Unión* exceptionally managed to continue with the project securing funds from European funding agencies, thanks to the contacts that the institution founder had built during the political exile in Europe<sup>33</sup>. More recently, the novel NGO *Instituto Perinatal del Uruguay* has been advocating for the rights of adolescents within hospital and medical environments, seeking to change the conditions in which poor adolescents give birth and are treated by health staff in public and private maternities.

Launched in the year 2001 under the presidency of Jorge Batlle, the nationwide program *INFAMILIA* might be considered the most resourceful and updated policy to address the situation of adolescents living in poor communities, targeting particularly those who are parents as well as their children<sup>34</sup>. The program was implemented in response to the disparaging levels of social exclusion among young families, specially females and young children. Amidst a context aggravated by a dramatic socio-economic

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<sup>32</sup> A former working class neighborhood decimated by the effects of deindustrialization and urban segregation.

<sup>33</sup> In a context of dwindling international cooperation, personal relationships built by political exiles with foreign NGOs and foundations during the years of the military dictatorship, constituted some valued opportunities to get external funding. Also solidarity among religious congregations in the Catholic and Protestant churches remains active channels for project funds.

<sup>34</sup> The program was funded with a soft loan of U\$S 40.000.000 provided by the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) and a local counterpart of U\$S 4.500.000, to operate during the period 01/2003-12/2009.

crisis that peaked at 2002 the program sought to increase coverage and reform social policies to reverse ongoing process of social polarization. Conceived as part of the “third generation” of social policies the program’s design sought to break with the prevailing pattern of compartmented actions and uncoordinated interventions, promoting an integral approach to the needs of poor communities in their territory. Additionally, the program’s strategy claimed high levels of civil society participation in its implementation echoing the mandates of multilateral financial agencies.

INFAMILIA’s strategy also identified teenage pregnancy as a central factor in the generational reproduction of poverty, devoting important resources to its prevention and the support of pregnant adolescents. In fact, one specific sub-component of the program explicitly aimed to *“reduce in 20% de number of children born from teenage mothers in the areas of intervention, assuming a fertility rate baseline of 4.09% among the female adolescent population”* (INFAMILIA, 2005) <sup>35</sup>. The program strategy also highlighted the adolescent’s responsibility in caring for their reproductive and sexual health *“emphasizing the work in prevention, reduction and attention to unplanned teenage pregnancy as well as supporting the construction of a personal life project”*.

To enact this goal three main lines of action were pursued: a) develop a specific program to disseminate information and educate adolescents on issues related to sexual and reproductive health, b) improve public health centers’ amicability and approach to adolescents, aiming to increase the number of consultations, and c) enhance the levels of social protection of young parents, providing support since the first trimester of pregnancy until the baby turns the first year of age, assuring privileged access to education, vocational training and health services.

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<sup>35</sup> This specific goal is mentioned in the sub-component 1.4 of the plan submitted to the InterAmerican Development Bank by the program’s authorities.

As a first step one or more NGOs were contracted to develop pilot projects, test methodologies and transfer accumulated expertise to the governmental structures. Therefore, in 2002 the NGOs *PLEMUU (Plenario de Mujeres Uruguayas)* and *La Bonne Garde* were requested to develop a follow-up methodology to improve pregnancy controls among adolescent mothers, promote healthy habits (including increasing the number of visits to public health clinics) and support the mother's life project after birth. In the year 2003 the NGO *Mujer y Sociedad Uruguay (MYSU)* was contracted to train public clinics staff in issues related to adolescent reproductive health, with the academic support of the *Cátedra Libre en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva* of the *Facultad de Psicología (Universidad de la República)*. Additionally in 2005, the NGO *Iniciativa Latinoamerica* was contracted by INFAMILIA to develop a pilot program to train young people as community promoters in sexual and reproductive health.

All these contracts allowed *INFAMILIA* to mobilize the knowledge and experience that NGOs have gained to further new approaches that could provide more effective responses to adolescent reproductive health. Although the intervention of NGOs had limited impact in terms of coverage, it contributed to develop State capacities that would remain beyond the implementation of the programs. *INFAMILIA* also relied on the assumption that these projects would trigger participatory mechanisms that would sustain their effects after the NGOs intervention ceased. However, in the eyes of the contracted organizations, whether they trained health staff or developed innovative follow-up approaches to pregnancy, their participation was perceived as only serving governmental needs and lacking sustainability. Furthermore, after the funding from *INFAMILIA* finalized, the organizations could not sustain the continuity of the projects, and some of them even interrupted their work with this target groups. Another significant limitation –

as noted by the organizations- was that the program did not succeed in strengthening institutional capacities on the side of civil society.

On a different vein, *INFAMILIA* also sought to expand the coverage of the *Plan CAIF* (above mentioned) by increasing significantly the number of childcare centers in poor communities, and inaugurating a new modality of intervention based on weekly workshops for pregnant women and recent mothers. The objective of the new modality was to foster mother and child bonding since early pregnancy, provide timely information related to the baby's health, nutrition and development, and improve childrearing practices. Like the traditional modality, these weekly workshops were also implemented by community organizations, some of which were CAIF centers that assimilated the new approach. Launched in 2004, the "*modalidad semanal*" was expected to increase significantly the number of families covered by the program by using the pre-existing network of community organizations to deliver a less costly model intervention (Cerrutti 2008). However, the experience did not yield the expected results, since the one-time-per-week service did not solve the childcare needs of the mothers and there were not sufficient incentives for them to participate. As expressed by a member of *CAIF Virgen Niña*, participation has always been a problem in this modality and in several occasions the number of attendees was insufficient to carry on the workshops.

As a result of this situation, the new model of intervention has been questioned and the centers that adopted this intervention are now being gradually recycled into the traditional modality. Similarly to the traditional CAIF centers, the new ones did not target on adolescents parents although many participants are young mothers under the age of 18. As the services tend to be established in poor areas, adolescent mothers have a significant incidence in the population covered by these centers. Paradoxically, the program explicitly avoids approaching issues related to the particular situation of

teenage parents since it targets low income families living in underserved communities *in general*, without acknowledging particular groups within this universe.

*El último taller contó con la participación de embarazadas adolescentes y muy jóvenes. Sin embargo, el taller apunta a tratar temas del embarazo en general y no hay un tratamiento especial a las adolescentes. Las adolescentes participan de la propuesta por el hecho de estar embarazadas y no por ser adolescentes.*  
(Member of CAIF Virgen Niña)

In conjunction with *INFAMILIA*, the public education administration board (*ANEP*<sup>36</sup>) launched in 2007 a project called *Aulas Comunitarias* seeking to reengage adolescents who have completed primary education but have dropped out middle school education. Like the CAIF centers, this program does not specifically target teenage mothers and fathers, although the eligibility requisites comprise the educational situation that most of them experience<sup>37</sup>. Regarding the role of NGOs in the program, the “*aulas*” are implemented by civil society organizations in agreement with the Secondary Education Administration Council. Although the program was planned and conceived within the governmental orbit without the participation of civil society organizations, its design was inspired in a similar initiative called *Maestros Comunitarios* designed by the NGO *El Abrojo*. The main idea of “*maestros*” was to bring education closer to the children’s environment through alphabetization in their homes. Building upon the same goal, *Aulas Comunitarias* seeks to develop a friendlier environment for middle school students, different from traditional high schools.

The precedent panoramic review of nongovernmental activity unveils some common trends that characterize the Uruguayan case. Overall, the main contribution of civil society organizations across the different phases of the policy process has been to

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<sup>36</sup> *Administración Nacional de Educación Pública.*

<sup>37</sup> To participate in the *PAC (Programa Aulas Comunitarias)* adolescents must have between 12 and 15 years of age, have dropped out school in the last three years, or have never been registered for high school after completing elementary school.



implement and deliver social services funded by governmental agencies. Only in a few situations, such as the ones mentioned in the case of *INFAMILIA*, did nongovernmental organizations collaborate in instances of policy debate, design and formulation. But even these experiences, when they are closely examined, had limited impact as they did not result in further state-civil society collaboration, and were only considered pilot interventions punctually financed by international sources.

Since democratic restoration in 1985 until present days, civil society organizations have increased their role as service providers although they remained excluded from policy making instances. The Spanish term “*tercerizacion*”<sup>38</sup> -used as a synonym for privatization- is the expression that NGOs leaders repeatedly use to depict the process in which they are immersed. For the majority of our studied organizations, signing contracts with the government is essential to secure their institutional survival and to maintain minimal structures in place. However, NGO leaders expressed their frustration as they see their role relegated to be mere executors or deliverers of social services. The most technical and professional organizations complained about the lack of spaces to contribute with their knowledge and expertise in policy debates and program formulation. Less professionalized local and community associations feel they could provide local knowledge about the groups and areas they serve, if public programs would request it. Overall, they considered themselves as qualified actors in their fields (whether of locality or expertise), ones that could help to improve the quality of policy outcomes if their views were taken into account by policy makers. In their perspective, the government has not been able to work in alliance or in association with civil society organizations, but rather, has ignored their potential.

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<sup>38</sup> The expression alludes to the intervention of a “third party” that will assume the responsibility to deliver the service on behalf of the state.

*En el momento del diseño de las políticas respectivas a los jóvenes, es poco el espacio de consulta o de participación abierto para nosotros. Yo creo que en eso el Estado, y en particular esta administración<sup>39</sup>, no ha abierto un espacio. Por ejemplo, en esta temática sensible, no se ha abierto un espacio de consulta explícita, así que se están perdiendo una gran experiencia acumulada. [...] Si el Estado funcionara o desarrollara políticas sociales en alianza con las organizaciones no gubernamentales, se obtendrían más resultados. [...] La cuestión es que siempre ha habido una tendencia general del Estado a ver a las ONGs como actores a los cuales se “tercerizan” [privatize] algunas funciones. Las instituciones del Estado no saben cumplir lo que las ONG saben hacer mejor y con mayor eficiencia. Ahora, yo me pregunto si ese papel, si esa relación de tercerización [privatization] es ideal. Yo creo que no, yo creo que lo que uno aspira es a que se reconozcan las competencias y que se haga un trabajo en alianza o en asociación, la cual puede tener múltiples formas jurídicas. Pero se parte de la base que es necesaria una relación de alianza para construir políticas públicas de mayor calidad, más focalizadas y más eficientes. En nuestra experiencia, desde el gobierno son sordos a reconocer que la relación implica cambios para ambos actores. (Member of Iniciativa Latinoamericana)*

Although governmental programs heavily rely on civil society organizations for service provision, policy decisions are usually taken without participation or consultation to the organizations. As it has been pointed out in other studies about the Uruguayan case (Leal 2003) governmental interventions tend to homogenize responses without taking into account the particular situation of the groups and communities they target. The governmental *Instituto Nacional del Niño y Adolescente* (INAU) has been particularly reticent to increase the participation of organizations and local communities in its evaluation and decision making processes. Even the Plan CAIF, considered a model of reference for State-civil society relations in the region, has become the target of criticism in this respect.

*Estas “imposiciones” por parte de los auditores de Plan [CAIF] están marcando una línea política que no da mucha libertad al centro, es decir, está reforzando un rol pasivo y de simple receptor de servicios estatales por parte de la organización social. Aparentemente, la articulación estado-sociedad civil no es tal, sino que las directrices y líneas de acción van en un solo sentido, y las organizaciones se quedan con muy poco margen de libertad y de creación para*

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<sup>39</sup> Refers to the administration of President Tabaré Vazquez (2005-2010).

*lograr una intervención adaptada a las necesidades de los beneficiarios de su zona de influencia. (Member of CAIF Virgen Niña)*

Nonetheless, in a context of national and international limited funding the organizations value the stability that public financial support entails, which allows them to sustain their basic services. However, the studied organizations also complain about the rigidities and lack of freedom associated with governmental contracts. The organizations cannot use the public funds they receive to conduct activities other than the mere provision of pre-defined services. This approach poses serious limits to the organizations' development, especially in their capacity to enact and improve new methodologies in their work with vulnerable young populations. Intermittently, the organizations may succeed in recurring to international funding to develop new projects, assess new modes of intervention, advocate for adolescent's rights and influence policy outcomes, although this type of support is usually granted on a one-project basis and for a limited period of time.

*El hecho de tener el convenio con el INAU lo que permite es la continuidad porque todo financiamiento del exterior se termina. En cambio **el convenio con el INAU es un convenio que no tiene fin**<sup>40</sup>, que se puede rescindir [interrupt] en la medida en que haya dificultades de una u otra parte, pero tiene que haber un fundamento muy claro. El convenio permite otra viabilidad y otra proyección. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

This dependency on public financing generates a series of tensions within the organizations, particularly among those with technical and professional staff. These organizations ventilated their frustration for lacking the resources that would enable greater degrees of engagement in policy debates and contributions to policy design. The professional staff in these organizations believes their role should be more influential in the policy process - something that governmental agencies conceal as they restrict NGO's scope of action to the mere role of service provision.

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<sup>40</sup> Bold is mine.

*A nosotros nos gustaría influir más en políticas sociales. Pero es más lo que nos gustaría que lo que realmente podemos ser. La cuestión es que el hacer a veces nos impide el estar en ese otro nivel, porque no nos dan muchos espacios de participación y cuando nos dan es ‘decime lo que tengo que hacer’. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

*[Uno de los desafíos más importantes es] intentar quebrar el gran vacío que hay, en las ONGs, que es la generación de conocimientos. En el área de sexualidad o de SIDA hemos intentado generar algo de conocimientos a partir de las actividades de intervención, sabiendo que es difícil acceder a esos recursos. **Todos pagan para hacer, pero nadie paga para reflexionar, pensar.**<sup>41</sup> (Member of Iniciativa Latinoamericana).*

In this respect, the *Instituto Nacional del Niño y el Adolescente* (INAU) concentrates the harshest criticisms, as it comes to be the largest funder of civil society's projects for adolescents. In fact, the following are the most repeated complaints about INAU's performance as expressed by the director of one particular NGO (*La Bonne Garde*) funded by the agency. Beyond specificities, the content of these comments are similar to those expressed by most organizations contracted by INAU to work with adolescents.

- d) Funding provided by the governmental agency is insufficient to cover the budget required to run the projects and assumes that the organization is also absorbing part of the costs (co-financing). Additionally, the agency payments procedures are based on the number of adolescents physically attending the project's location, rather than based on results and impacts, expected or attained. There is no link between funding and a project strategy which may takes into account the adolescent situation, specific need or goal to pursue. This mode of financing limits the strategy of intervention of the organizations, which end up putting to much emphasize on the mere presence of the participants in the project's location. Governmental mechanisms of control and supervision are basically based on

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<sup>41</sup> The bold is mine.

verifying the participant attendance, with very little attention being paid to results and to the effective incidence that the intervention may have on the adolescent's life and their families.

*Es una larga lucha que todas las ONG tenemos, si hay algo que debe ser es que se elaboren proyectos, se evalúen y se financie por proyecto y no por “cabezas” [per capita] entrantes y salientes, lo cual atenta contra el niño y el adolescente como sujeto. Tú recibís un determinado financiamiento por adolescente y no podés decir de ninguna manera que todos los niños y adolescentes necesitan la misma cantidad de dinero. Todas reciben lo mismo del Estado, pero algunas necesitan muchísima más inversión en salud, en atención, en acompañamiento personalizado. Si nos financiaran por proyecto, eso te permite distribuir ese presupuesto de acuerdo a las necesidades de las personas. Pero esto supone la intención del Estado de controlar que todas las ONG tengan sus proyectos y que sus objetivos estén dentro de lo que el estado tiene como responsabilidad ante el Código del Niño. (Member of La Bonne Garde).*

- e) Public moneys transferred by the governmental agency INAU to NGOs can only be used to fund services for participants under the age of 18. When combined with the above mentioned criterion, this requisite results in the reduction of funding when a participant reaches this age limit. The situation leads to perverse practices on the side of the organizations which may be tempted to prolong the permanence of these participants. Additionally, in a context where there is no public financing to work with young people after they turn the age of 18, the risk of financial instability is frequent.

*Por otra parte, la dependencia económica del INAU plantea grandes interrogantes sobre el egreso de las adolescentes, ya que en la medida que egresan, disminuye la financiación que recibimos por parte del estado. Este mecanismo de financiación puede llevar a un sistema perverso en donde la organización retenga a una adolescente -quien estaría en condiciones de egresar- para no perder esa partida de dinero. Por ese motivo es que venimos reclamando desde hace algún tiempo que el estado financie por proyecto y no por adolescente o niño que viva en la organización. Para nosotros este sistema de distribución de fondos no es ni inteligente ni equitativo ni solidario. (Member of La Bonne Garde)*

- f) The organizations also complained about frequent delays in payments due to bureaucratic problems. This situation generates additional levels of financial stress and instability which affects the normal operations of the organizations and their workers.

*A un nivel más operativo y con respecto a los pagos que realiza el INAU, se han planteado problemas por atrasos en los mismos, lo que dificultaba la gestión diaria de la organización. Debíamos recurrir a donaciones voluntarias o préstamos monetarios diversos para poder comprar la comida, para cubrir los gastos de funcionamiento del hogar, para pagar los sueldos del personal, etc. Si bien es cierto que ahora con la asunción del nuevo gobierno los pagos se vienen realizando en forma puntual. (Member of La Bonne Garde).*

Additionally, some organizations mentioned the lack of continuity and the permanent rotation of technical staff on the governmental side, as a factor that increases the level of uncertainty of the environment in which the organizations operate.

*Una de las dificultades de articulación con el INAU ha sido el cambio de interlocutores dentro de la institución estatal. En 12 años de trabajo han pasado 7 u 8 interlocutores diferentes y con perfil diverso. Eso ha llevado, inevitablemente a la existencia de miradas y énfasis variados, lo que demuestra que las políticas y estrategias del estado muchas veces dependen de las personas que ocupan –momentáneamente-- el cargo. Para nosotros, esos cambios implicaron un proceso de aprendizaje y de adaptación en lo que refiere a modos de relacionamiento interpersonal, respeto de los tiempos y de responder a los aspectos formales de los convenios. (Member of La Bonne Garde).*

*Por otro lado, el nivel de control por parte del INAU no es muy severo debido a que la figura del supervisor es, totalmente ausente. A eso hay que sumarle que estuvimos cinco meses sin supervisor, y luego incorporaron a una supervisora interina que tampoco estuvo mucho tiempo. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

To palliate some of the constraints and disadvantages linked to public funding dependency, organizations tend to look abroad for resources that usually entail greater margins of flexibility. Several organizations have resorted to international funding to initiate new programs, launch pilot projects or afford special expenditures, such as infrastructure reforms or the purchase of equipments. For example, the *NGO Casa Lunas*

receives periodical financial support from *Reaching-U*, a foundation formed by a group of Uruguayan immigrants currently living in the United States. Similarly the *NGO Casa la Mujer* is funded by a Swiss Foundation which supports the organization's work with teenage parents in *Villa Española*. In the case of *Casa Lunas*, this financial support is essential to cover infrastructure expenditures and the needs of those participants excluded from *INAU's* target guidelines (such as adolescent fathers, disabled children, and mothers above the age of 18). This has permitted the expansion of the institution's services beyond the strict limits of governmental bureaucratically defined age groups.

*El INAU nos da una partida de dinero por madre y padre menores de 18 años y por niño. Sin embargo, Casa Lunas tiene la característica de no limitar sus objetivos y trabajo a los requerimientos del INAU, sino que siempre busca nuevas maneras de cumplir con sus objetivos y brindar la mayor cantidad de servicios a las adolescentes, a sus hijos y a sus padres. Por ejemplo, vemos como prioritario la integración de los padres de los niños al proyecto, sean o no sean menores, es decir que en muchos casos no entran en el convenio con el INAU. Otro ejemplo es que en muchos casos hacemos un seguimiento a la adolescente en el proceso de egreso, aunque sea mayor de 18 años. El convenio con INAU incluye a adolescentes con niños solamente hasta 2 años de edad. Tenemos un caso de una madre que tiene 16 años y un hijo de tres años, ese niño está fuera del padrón [framelist] del convenio pero igual lo atendemos. El niño es discapacitado. A la madre se le ayuda a gestionar la pensión y otras cosas. Frente a la nada, por supuesto que venga acá y el papá también aunque tiene 20 años, y está fuera del convenio. Esa es una de las dificultades que tenemos, aunque también tenemos otros fondos. Estos fondos provienen de un grupo de personas que vive en Estados Unidos y juntan fondos para distintas organizaciones de Uruguay, quienes no sólo brindan recursos financieros mensuales sino que también han juntado dinero puntual para arreglar los baños. Así es que vemos posibilidades. No es que tengamos muchos proyectos, CL es un solo proyecto, es un centro diurno para padres y madres adolescentes y sus hijos. Ese es nuestro único proyecto, no es que tengamos un convenio con la Intendencia [Municipal de Montevideo], convenios laborales, aunque no descartamos esa posibilidad. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

However, international funding should not be seen as the panacea since donors have their own agenda and have been increasing their pressures and requirements over domestic institutions. Our studied cases are not exceptions to the largely examined

tensions that have been characterizing the relations between local organizations and foreign donors (Hudock, 1999). As their divergent interests respond to different constituencies, it has become increasingly difficult to reconcile the donor's expectations with the local organization's priorities.

*Al comienzo daban la plata y Casa Lunas la invertía en donde establecía las prioridades. Pero luego consideraron que los fondos se utilizaran en todo lo que tenía que ver con la alimentación, por una cuestión de marketing de ellos, para conseguir más socios de la fundación. Por ejemplo, si se invertía en poner rejas en todos lados por el tema robos, eso no era marketinero para que la fundación consiguiera más fondos. Entonces no servía. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

Despite all the above mentioned restrictions, some NGOs have succeeded in breaching the bureaucratic and resilient rules that govern policies and programs, forcing some innovation in state agencies. Such is the case of the National Children's Agency (INAU) where the institutional design of adolescent programs remained attached to individual and localized targeting procedures limiting the development of new and more effective approaches to adolescent parenthood. Civil society organizations embracing a familistic or community approach (seeking to work not only with teenage mothers but also with their children, fathers or significant others when present) have challenged traditional modes of funding and evaluation.

When the NGO *Casa Lunas* defined the mother and baby dyad as the target of its day center, INAU's bureaucracy could not move away from its traditional procedures based on individual recipients and initially only accepted to pay for services rendered to the adolescent participants. However, after a long period of negotiations with public officials *Casa Lunas* obtained recognition for their "new" model of intervention, being funded for services provided to both, teenage mothers and their children.

*Cuando firmamos el convenio con el INAU, no había perfil para nosotros, íbamos a firmar el padrón y nos metieron en la categoría "centro juvenil". Pero la computadora tomaba de 2 a 18 años, a los más chiquitos no, entonces al principio firmamos padrones con observaciones y no nos pagaban los niños. La*



*computadora no ingresaba a los niños (por un problema del programa), íbamos a hablar hasta con la supervisora. Después estuvimos mucho tiempo sin supervisora, y armamos un perfil de madres porque si no entraban en ningún lado. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

Another challenge was posed to the INAU when the NGO *La Bonne Garde* initiated a new program seeking to work with teenage mothers and their family networks in their own environment. The idea of paying for services provided outside the project's location also requested new modes of control and supervision, and a degree of trust in the organization that was beyond what could be accepted. The steady attitude of the organization leaders, summed to the conviction that this new approach was necessary, forced INAU to accept and fund the new project.

*La organización generó una nueva propuesta para atender a las adolescentes en el contexto familiar. A este proyecto lo denominó "Fortalecimiento de Autonomías" o "Pre-egreso" que consiste en atender a las adolescentes en su domicilio ofreciendo apoyo económico y socio-afectivo para que puedan permanecer en su contexto familiar. Hay una apuesta muy fuerte al fortalecimiento de las redes familiares. Las adolescentes "beneficiarias" de este acompañamiento pueden haber pasado o no por la residencia transitoria en el hogar. Este proyecto de fortalecimiento de autonomías también ha planteado desafíos y aprendizajes para el INAU, ya que no contaba con referencias y experiencias anteriores. El principal desafío para el estado fue determinar cuándo una adolescente egresa del proyecto de fortalecimiento de autonomías. (Member of LaBonne Garde)*

Although these changes may be seen as major revolutions for the daily routine of public employees, they should be considered piecemeal and with limited impact from a public policy perspective. In fact, these small breaches opened in the resilient bureaucratic structure of the agency's rules unveil the lack of governmental reaction to the situation of poor adolescent parents. Beyond the traditional areas of universal welfare services, there is a lack of public response to specific needs of young parents. Only a reduced number of civil society organizations have implemented specific actions to

address the particular needs of this group and their incidence is extremely limited given the magnitude of the problem.

Some NGOs have recognized their co-responsibility in this situation, as they do not prioritize participation in policy debates and influencing policy making process. Occupied in their institutional survival strategies and attending the daily demands of running their projects, they assume participation in policy debates, advocacy and briefing activities are not priorities. Exceptionally, one of our studied organizations has defined influencing public policy as a priority for the future, although acknowledging it will not be an easy task.

*Quiero reconocer con ustedes, que siento que muchas veces no hemos sido lo suficientemente protagonistas en la búsqueda de impactar. Siento que en realidad estamos reviendo una postura que hizo que en realidad nos articulamos con el estado pero siempre buscando adentro de la institución según nuestra logística, pero sin buscar impactar afuera. En general tenemos una muy buena evaluación, y por eso los organismos del Estado buscan conveniar [contract services] con nosotros porque ven un resultado positivo. Pero no hemos hecho énfasis en cómo trabajamos, de manera de poder ayudar a otras asociaciones a impactar en las políticas que se van diseñando. Creo que bueno, son todas cosas que hoy nos estamos planteando, salir de la Casa para poder transformar las estructuras con una experiencia que debería ser reutilizada, producto de una reinversión en distintos campos de las políticas sociales. Y bueno, ahí no quiero cargar al Estado con toda la complejidad, porque en los distintos gobiernos ha habido más o menos apertura, más o menos simpatía, pero también ha habido poca iniciativa desde la Casa. Es una cosa que nos estaba faltando muchísimo eso. Y estoy muy contenta ahora porque siento que lo estamos viviendo con fuerza (Member of Casa de la Mujer de la Unión)*

As it may become clear at this point, the role of nongovernmental public action is determined by the lack of efficiency and technical expertise on the governmental side. As mentioned in other studies, the Uruguayan government is characterized by low levels of professionalization and specialization in the fields of social policy (Garcé and Uña 2007, Leal 2003). In consequence, quality of policy design is at times inadequate to attain the

expected goals defined in social programs, lacking a strategic perspective for the long run.

As policy and program design for teenage parents requires a specific knowledge of the target population, governmental staff may realize they need support from professional NGOs to attain greater levels of efficiency. In a context of technical weakness, governmental units may seek to utilize nongovernmental expertise without being overtly explicit about their intentions to attain the capacities they do not have inside their structures. Furthermore, at times this search for “local” knowledge may be camouflaged under requests of greater civil society participation.

*Con la idea de abrir espacios de participación para Casa Lunas, el INAU aprovechó la buena voluntad de nuestro grupo profesional para que diseñáramos el perfil y los indicadores y, en definitiva, realizamos el trabajo que tendrían que haber hecho ellos. Lo que demuestra que **la ineptitud del Estado se encubre en un discurso sobre la importancia de la participación de las ONGs**<sup>42</sup>. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

Another important role of nongovernmental action as observed in Montevideo was to bridge the adolescents with welfare services. In the communities where the organizations operated, they may play a significant role in connecting the adolescents with or granting access to governmental programs, services and institutions. Complementarily, the organizations also seek to inform the adolescents about the resources and facilities they can use in their own communities. In doing so, they take the chance to inform them about their rights and entitlements, as well as advise them about available programs and their eligibility criteria.

*La idea es que si bien es fundamental que las adolescentes conozcan sus derechos a partir de formar parte de un convenio con el INAME también es importante que ellas puedan hacer un aprendizaje de los recursos de la zona para la inserción. Si bien los recursos de salud del INAU o del Pereira Rossell [Public Maternity Hospital] están, la idea es que también puedan participar de las actividades que*

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<sup>42</sup> Bold is mine.

*las policlínicas zonales les ofrecen así como también las guarderías de la zona o los centros juveniles. (Member of La Bonne Garde).*

Organizations like *Casa Lunas* or *La Bonne Garde* may play an important role in bridging a pregnant adolescent with the local clinic or support the continuation of her studies at school. In the domain of maternal and child care, contacts between the community organizations and public health clinics can contribute greatly to advance early pregnancy detections, regular pregnancy controls and medical checkups of newborns, among the adolescent population. Also, from the standpoint of the organizations these contacts with public services become strategic as they result sources to recruit participants for their projects.

*La coordinación con las policlínicas es nuestro fuerte. Siempre decimos que las adolescentes cuando están embarazadas dejan de tener contacto con muchas instituciones pero no deja de ir a hacerse los controles, porque las adolescentes son las que mejor se controlan. Y el lugar donde captarlas es en la policlínica. Y también coordinamos con los liceos; hace un tiempo nos cuestionamos coordinar con las escuelas, y entraron a llamar de las escuelas para derivar chiquilinas. Nosotros siempre en las policlínicas llevábamos folletos, hacíamos y charlas. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

However, as much necessary as these links might be, they are rarely institutionalized and most of the times they are based on informal contacts rather than institutional decisions. More often than not, education or healthcare services does not considerate relevant the formalization of links with civil society organizations taking for granted their collaborative role and support. Surprisingly, NGOs denounced cases where public high schools or health clinics do not even participate in neighborhood networks, missing opportunities to synergize with local and community organizations.

*“Cuando empezamos a ir a las reuniones en realidad nos dimos cuenta de que no era una red, yo pregunté **donde están los liceos? Donde están las escuelas? Dónde están las policlínicas?**<sup>43</sup>. Y nos dijeron que eso era una red de ONGs. Bueno ahí hubo mucha discusión en ese grupo de trabajo porque algunos*

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<sup>43</sup> Bold is mine.

*planteamos que eso no era una red. Por definición una red tiene que ser interinstitucional. Eso es un grupo de ONGs que trabajan en la zona de Casavalle, por lo que se denominó grupo de trabajo de la cuenca de Casavalle y decidimos igual participar”. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

Besides, the lack of continuity and the permanent rotation of technical staff on the governmental side tend to conspire against the consolidation of linkages that might help to attain greater levels of coordination and more effective responses to the community needs. NGOs complained about the negative effects that these permanent changes in personnel may have as they increase the level of uncertainty in which they operate. Not even to say the cases where there is an absence of state presence and the organizations lack feedback and linkages with governmental structures.

*Una de las dificultades de articulación con el INAU ha sido el cambio de interlocutores dentro de la institución estatal. En 12 años de trabajo han pasado 7 u 8 interlocutores diferentes y con perfil diverso. Eso ha llevado, inevitablemente a la existencia de miradas y énfasis variados, lo que demuestra que las políticas y estrategias del estado muchas veces dependen de las personas que ocupan –momentáneamente-- el cargo. Para nosotros, esos cambios implicaron un proceso de aprendizaje y de adaptación en lo que refiere a modos de relacionamiento interpersonal, respeto de los tiempos y de responder a los aspectos formales de los convenios. (Member of La Bonne Garde).*

*Por otro lado, el nivel de control por parte del INAU no es muy severo debido a que la figura del supervisor es, totalmente ausente. A eso hay que sumarle que estuvimos cinco meses sin supervisor, y luego incorporaron a una supervisora interina que tampoco estuvo mucho tiempo. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

In sum, the role of civil society organizations working with poor adolescents is directly related with the lack of an integral public policy designed to address this group's needs. By lack of public policy, we mean the absence of an agreed plan of action that includes nongovernmental actors, with concerted goals and defined strategies. Although some organizations are working directly with teenage mothers, fathers and their babies, this should be considered isolated projects and their impact is extremely limited to a small number of cases. The *modus operandi* that NGOs like *Casa Lunas* and *La Bonne*

*Garde* brought to the fore was not transformed into public policies templates, nor was its impact rise to a larger scale. Hence, although it should be acknowledged that civil society organizations have shown some innovative character in the field of teenage parenthood, these innovations remained insignificant and were not able to elicit more effective governmental responses.

### **The Role of Non Governmental Public Action in Argentina**

In Argentina, non governmental public action related to adolescent fertility issues has been very prolific, active and heterogeneous. Although this last characteristic makes somewhat difficult to identify common trends in the nongovernmental Argentinean landscape, there are key aspects worth noticing. First, gender NGOs and the feminist movement in general have played a decisive role in generating social consent – first - and public policy – later- that impacted positively on the recognition and expansion of adolescent's rights, particularly in the domain of sexual and reproductive health. Second, these same organizations and more recently created ones remained active after progressive legislation was accomplished, by assuming the role of monitoring and keeping track of governmental efforts to enforce legally sanctioned rights and programs. As we will see, this happens to be a distinguishable characteristic of the nongovernmental sector in Argentina, where progressive and avant-garde legislation contrasts with the effective enforcement of rights and access to public goods, such as quality healthcare and education. This is particularly the case for adolescents living of poor communities, who encounter particular barriers to meet their needs. Third, this same progressive legislation has operated as a driven force that opened opportunities for professional and technical NGOs to provide the required training to enact institutional changes. Fourth, although

heterogeneity and diversity are common features of civil society across all nations, in Argentina this characteristic is more profound, as State action tends to contribute significantly to this fragmentation and differentiation in the access to resources. In this respect, we will provide contrasting evidence about nongovernmental spaces working in the resourceful realm of the City of Buenos Aires, and those operating in the *Conurbano Bonaerense* under the piecemeal provision of the Provincial authorities. Finally, like we have observed in Uruguay, bureaucratic and administrative procedures have become significant obstacles for nongovernmental activity, particularly for those lacking administrative and technical staff. The excess of requisites to comply with mandated administrative norms is sometimes at odds with the daily challenges that these organizations face in the communities where they work and specially, with the piecemeal support they receive from their governmental counterparts.

During the 1980s and the 1990s, the women's movement played a significant role in Argentina in bringing to the fore the existence of sexual and reproductive rights, and the need to promote governmental actions to protect them. Feminist organizations such as *ISPM (Instituto Social y Político de la Mujer)*, *Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos* and *FEIM (Fundación para el Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer)* promote social and political debates that challenge the silent attitude of the Argentinean society regarding population policies (Petraccci et al. 2005). The feminist organizations that we surveyed give compelling testimonies of those years of militant compromise and steady resistance that led to the final approval of the *Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual Integral y Procreación Responsable (Ley 25.673)* by the Parliament in 2002.

*El eje de salud sexual y procreación responsable como les decía, es uno de los ejes que la institución trabajó desde el principio y con gran interés, se avanzó desde aquel entonces hasta acá con objetivos escalonados y se fueron trabajando con distintos proyectos, en principio tenía que ver con lo que es la impulsión de toda la legislación en relación a los derechos sexuales y reproductivos que en la*

*década del 80 no existían y que recién se sancionó la primera ley en el año 2002, durante ese período se hicieron varias campañas que tienen que ver con la promoción de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos, con darlos a conocer, con difundir cuáles eran y con el trabajo para la constitución de una ley nacional que avale y permita que se garantice. A partir de ahí desde que se sancionó la ley y que se empezó a aplicar el programa de salud sexual y procreación responsable en la Argentina, que es... la verdad un programa de avanzada para lo que es el resto de América Latina porque incluye la entrega gratuita de anticonceptivos y de información. (Member of ISPM)*

*Sí hemos participado muchísimo en todo lo que es los avances legislativos, se han hecho trabajos específicos con algunas legisladoras para acercarles información, para colaborar con la elaboración de los fundamentos y del articulado de las leyes, se han hecho en conjunto en el momento de sanciones de las leyes o que se estaban discutiendo, se han hecho acciones de discusión para lo que se estaba discutiendo, qué implicaba, qué incidencia iba a tener (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

*Nosotros nos organizamos [para favorecer] la participación de la mujer, como el nombre lo indica. Nos movilizamos fundamentalmente por temas de género, con el movimiento feminista y de salud de las mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe, alrededor de 1989. Por todo este tema Mabel Bianco convoca a un grupo de mujeres, un grupo de feministas, que había considerado formar una organización para defender los derechos de la mujer, que iba a ser la organización más importante, dentro de lo que era la política nacional en ese momento; estamos hablando de los principios de la década de los noventa, y empezó principalmente trabajando temas de género, los derechos y el acceso de las mujeres a los espacios de participación. Después empezó a recortar un poco su núcleo y también a abrir su abanico de investigación. Entonces surgió el interés por los derechos sexuales y reproductivos en las mujeres y después alrededor de casi... diez años más o menos, empezamos a especializarnos en un sector muy particular de la sociedad que son los jóvenes y los adolescentes. (Member of FEIM)*

The law approval constituted a major achievement for these organizations, a long lasting goal for which they have been working for many years. However, the mere sanction of the law that consecrated the institutionalization of the program did not assure the effective implementation of sexual and reproductive health services and their accessibility to those who need them the most. Therefore, some organizations like the *Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos*, -a nationwide alliance of feminist



organizations- shifted the focus of their mission to monitoring public policies and conducting research that might provide new guidelines for policy implementation.

*El Foro surge en los años '90, agrupaba a unas ochenta organizaciones que luchaban por la sanción de algunas leyes vinculadas a la salud reproductiva. La lucha se efectivizaba a través de campañas y movilizaciones. El objetivo principal de la organización es la defensa de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos. Hoy el Foro es una organización más pequeña que Susana define como un equipo interdisciplinario que realiza investigaciones en diversos lugares y confluyen en el Foro. Las actividades principales del Foro consisten en monitorear las políticas públicas de salud y realizar campañas de difusión sobre los derechos sexuales y reproductivos. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

Other organizations like FEIM encountered renewed modes of advancing sexual and reproductive rights by focusing on young people, and engendering a national network of adolescents called *REDNACADOL (Red Nacional de Adolescentes en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva)*. The network, currently a nationwide movement of adolescents' associations, had its origins in FEIM's program to train adolescents as reproductive and sexual health promoters in their own communities. With the support of *FEIM* the initiative spread throughout the country and gave birth to an active network of adolescent groups seeking to increase awareness about sexual education, public reproductive services and the availability of contraceptive methods in public health hospitals and clinics.

Working under a different paradigm, organizations like the *AAFP (Asociación Argentina de Planificación Familiar)* also played a major role in opening spaces for family planning services in times when their provision were severely questioned by the pronatalist ideology that dominated the country until the early 1980s. The approval of the *Programa de Salud Sexual y Procreación Responsable* in 2002 implied a major change in the environment in which these organizations operated. As defined in the text of the law, the State should now become a major service provider of sexual and reproductive health

services, including free access to contraception to all population groups with no age or sex discrimination. In consequence, organizations like the AAFP were affected in their incomes, as their main source of funding was based on the sale of contraceptive methods which could be now freely obtained from public health facilities.

*Pero qué pasa, cando salió la ley de salud sexual y reproductiva, nosotros que vivíamos dependiendo de la venta del DIU [IUD, intrauterine dispositiive] de preservativos [condoms], etc., ahora el Estado los da gratuitamente. Entonces, a nosotros se nos cortó, digamos. Logramos el objetivo. Por ejemplo, en la Municipalidad nos reconocieron, todo bien, **pero los recursos nos los cortaron. Porque ahora la municipalidad lo hace, la Nación lo hace, y nosotros no. O sea, no tenemos los mismos recursos.** (Member of AAFP)*

If legislative advancements are not easy to translate into effective enforcement of rights, this becomes an elusive goal in the case of adolescents' rights to access sexual and reproductive services in public facilities. Beyond legal prescriptions there are several barriers and obstacles that need to be removed in order to transform hospitals and primary health clinics into adolescent friendly environments. Furthermore, adult prejudices and misjudgments about the adolescent's social and sexual behavior increase the barriers between potential users and eventual providers. Several organizations expressed that adolescents feel they fear facing sexual and reproductive health specialists, and that they feel disconnection to the public health system in general. Consistently, several organizations claim for a change in the program's approach, one that could close the gap and outreach young people, although they acknowledge this imply a cultural transformation that will not take place immediately.

*Las otras dificultades tienen que ver con el acceso efectivo a la salud, para los adolescentes. Realmente las dificultades de acceso a la salud son enormes, no sólo tiene que ver con algún sector social o algún sector económico más vulnerable sino que tiene que ver con la imposibilidad de los jóvenes en general de insertarse en el sistema, en las decisiones públicas, en la educación y en la salud. Porque el acceso de los adolescentes al programa, por ejemplo, de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva es un obstáculo, para nosotras, porque hay una barrera que dificulta a los jóvenes la llegada al programa público o a las instituciones de*

salud. Por eso trabajamos con todo el tema de la difusión y del trabajo...[...] porque la realidad es que **la juventud tiene una percepción de aislamiento en relación a las instituciones estatales** y esto se ve muy claro en el tema de salud más que en el de educación si bien hay un sector de los jóvenes que también tienen... la mayoría es con respecto al tema de salud, hay un alejamiento de las instituciones públicas con respecto a la juventud y una falta de llegar a los jóvenes. El principal obstáculo es la sensación de que no me van a atender o no me van a dar “bola”, como te dicen ellos, [pay no attention] o no me van a dar las pastillas, y por otro lado los que llegan sufren algún tipo de discriminación, es muy raro que no sea así, o preguntas que consideran abusivas o que consideran que se entrometen en su vida individual, que esconden prejuicios, como en el tema de las chicas jóvenes cuando les entregan los anticonceptivos en muchos casos nos contaron que les preguntan cuántas parejas sexuales tienen pero con un tono medio agresivo, lo mismo para el caso del HIV, para hacer el test de HIV se hace un cuestionario a las jóvenes bastante... les preguntan por ejemplo, si tuviste muchas parejas sexuales, mucho como un concepto cuantitativo que... me pregunto cuánto es mucho y cuánto es poco; ese tipo de cuestiones genera una sensación de discriminación que tiende a aislar a los jóvenes. (Member of ISPM).

Beyond possible explanations for the malfunctioning of welfare services the fact is that poor adolescents faced hard times to get their basic human needs covered. As one interviewee clearly stated, at least in the case of the City of Buenos Aires it is not a matter of resources what prevents access to services, but the inadequacy and inappropriateness of implemented services, as they do not take into account the particular situation and specific needs of adolescents. Especially teenage mothers may require special support to navigate into health and education bureaucracies, one that State is still not eager to provide.

*[Los servicios] No están a disposición tan fácilmente de las chicas. Son buenos títulos que cuando uno entra ahí siempre hay un “pero”. Situaciones que te puedo decir: una chica de 16 años cuya madre ya no está, tiene un absceso dentario [dental abscess], nosotros lo vemos, viene con fiebre terrible, dolor, entonces la mandamos al Hospital Rivadavia para que la atiendan. Vuelve a la hora y no la atendieron, y nosotros llamamos para que la atiendan. Esto un ejemplo, pueden existir programas... Otro ejemplo, “Deserción Cero” [program’s name], entonces cuando hacés un llamado “tiene un hijo...” “ah! De eso nosotros no nos encargamos.”, “pero en el turno noche, no hay quien cuide*

*al bebé”, decimos, “ah! Bueno” [makes a movement of washing hands]. Entonces es difícil muchas veces. (Member of Jakaira)*

*El problema básico es la implementación sobre todo en la Ciudad de Bs. As. **Los recursos están, y por ejemplo los métodos anticonceptivos están**, ahora la forma de acceder además requiere de los jóvenes una constancia que no existe, por ejemplo, para las pastillas anticonceptivas ir todos los meses a sacar un turno para que cada mes te den las pastillas, eso es una práctica que si bien tiene como objetivo en el fondo mantener la cercanía, en realidad genera lo contrario porque es una dificultad a la posibilidad de que efectivamente puedas ir todos los meses a buscar las pastillas o a buscar los preservativos, esa es una dificultad real que existe, que no hay una constancia, entonces los obstáculos tienen que ver con eso, con el acceso efectivo. Después bueno... las salitas... son los Centros de salud en la Ciudad de Bs. As. y... hay algunos que funcionan, la mayoría no tanto, los horarios de atención son muy reducidos, las médicas relacionadas al programa no atienden todos los días, las dificultades son variadas, requiere que el adolescente vaya saltando una serie de obstáculos constantes para acceder realmente a los beneficios del programa. (Member of ISPM)*

Only a few organizations, like ISPM, have a clear idea of the significant role they can perform in bridging the adolescents with the effective enforcement of their rights. In order to make a motherhood and fatherhood a “real” choice in their lives, deep changes are required in the cultural, attitudinal and behavioral realms of individuals, families and communities. These changes cannot be forged just by the State alone, or by mere sanctioning a progressive law. As these processes implied transformation on values, beliefs, preferences, life-projects and subjectivities, they may even take several generations<sup>44</sup>. The modes in which communities and individuals experience maternity and paternity have been forged as the result of cultural process of meaning exchange that are time and space specific and should be therefore approached with profound respect and esteem. Therefore, the dimensions of the transformations that are at stake required the joint effort of the State and civil society working together, complementing each other and giving full meaning to the notion of what should be considered “public policy”. To

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<sup>44</sup> As documented later in this chapter, recent research projects have shown how adolescent motherhood can be tracked up to several generations in the maternal line.

be sure, only a few organizations in our sample were able to understand their role in these terms.

*La posibilidad de generar este tipo de articulaciones y de que lleguen efectivamente a los adolescentes es lo que resulta en un beneficio, digo una campaña de difusión a nivel de la opinión pública es efectivo en tanto difundir un derecho, o dar a conocer pero no en tanto garantizar el apoyo efectivo de los adolescentes, no porque vean una campaña. Por ejemplo, las que hay de HIV efectivamente van a generar una conciencia para cuidarse, en el medio de eso y de esto hay que generar un puente y eso es lo que me parece que es lo positivo del trabajo que realizamos las organizaciones sociales. El generar ese puente en conjunto con el Estado es lo que va a permitir que los adolescentes y las personas en general accedan efectivamente a los derechos y a la salud. En general creo que es buena [la ley], pero creo que falta un montón por supuesto. [...] Que sepan que en el hospital te dan preservativos, eso no alcanza para que accedan, eso implica un cambio de conciencia, lo mismo que en el contexto de los problemas de transmisión sexual o del embarazo adolescente, implica un cambio de conciencia de cómo perciben la sexualidad y la maternidad y la paternidad, ese cambio de conciencia es un trabajo como todo cambio social, implica revertir pautas que han aprendido desde muy pequeños, implica tener una visión distinta de la pareja y de sí mismos, un montón de cuestiones que hacen un trabajo más profundo. (Member of ISPM)*

After the *Programa de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva* was sanctioned in 2002, an extensive network integrated by more than 500 organizations, including feminist NGOs, youth associations, HIV/AIDs groups and a wide range of other associative expressions, converge into a nationwide coalition called *CONDERS (Consortio Nacional de Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*. As defined in their mission the goal of the consortium is to defend and guarantee the application of sexual and reproductive rights embracing a gender perspective, at a local, provincial and national level. The coalition became a very vocal and visible movement throughout the country in recent years, as they trained local groups to monitor the performance of public clinics and hospitals and assess their enforcement of the law. After they work enthusiastically to inform widely about the law and the program services, they move into a new stage, characterized by strategies of advocacy and accountability. Particularly the latter, has become a distinguishable feature

of the network, as they have developed specific tools to evaluate the performance of public services through baselines, indicators, and printed materials to support the work of the organizations in the field. During my fieldwork in Argentina these organizations have been at the front of visible and public confrontation with provincial and health authorities, demanding free access to contraception and the incorporation of sexual and reproductive health counseling services into public health clinics<sup>45</sup>.

Monitoring and assessing health services for female and male adolescents have become a major goal in CONDERS strategy. They have paid particular attention to issues such as privacy, youth participation, through the implementation of short surveys to adolescent users of health services to assess the quality and adequacy of the attention provided.

*El CONDERS es un proceso, [que ahora] está en una tercera etapa ya de lo que es el proyecto CONDERS en donde primero comenzamos con la promoción de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos y después con el conocimiento de la ley. Se hicieron una lista de chequeos, en donde empezamos a ver si, efectivamente la gente llegaba a los servicios, cómo les llegaban, y cómo era la atención. Ahora estamos en una parte de exigibilidad, que lo que estamos haciendo bueno, tenemos una etapa de herramientas, tenemos este material y ver qué es lo que pasa, por qué no llega [a ofrecerse lo servicios]. Si está la ley, tienen que estar los insumos, lo que estamos tratando es que se cumpla la ley, no es algo que... tienen que dejar que ya esta por venir. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

*Uno de los principales objetivos del CONDERS son los adolescentes y jóvenes. De hecho en los últimos meses hemos aplicado un instrumento que se llama la lista de chequeo que hicimos a mujeres adultas y adolescentes. Aplicábamos esta lista, sobre todo, para ver las características de la atención en salud, la prevención, sobre todo, la calidad de la atención de la salud adolescente. Ahí lo abordamos pero ya como CONDERS, como este consorcio que te comento. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

*Es bastante interesante, ahí en el folleto que les di está, hay como quinientas organizaciones adheridas al CONDERS que hacen acciones. Es decir, ahora nos*

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<sup>45</sup> A list of most visible confrontations between CONDERS and Argentineans authorities can be found at <http://www.conders.org.ar/incidencia.asp>

*estamos ampliando a dos provincias más. Es trabajoso hacer esto, porque es complejo, porque nosotros trabajamos con organizaciones que ya trabajan en las provincias con Derecho y Sexualidad, de Mujeres y Adolescentes. Entonces convocamos a esas organizaciones, las capacitamos para que hagan pequeños proyectos de monitoreo. Y que sean ellas las que hacen el control social o monitoreo en sus provincias o en sus barrios. Hacen el proyecto y los resultados son muy buenos en general, estamos ahora sacando un informe (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

Another strategy to increase awareness of current situation around teenage parenthood and the development of more effective public policies has been social research. In fact, another coalition of NGOs called *Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos* has become a relevant actor in the provision of research and studies to make informed decisions and increase knowledge of policy makers. That is the case of Susana Checha, a member of the *Foro* and prestigious sociologist, who has focused heavily on understanding the underpinning cultural traits behind teenage motherhood. Her research has been particularly relevant to understand the mode in which gender relations derived in unwanted pregnancies among adolescents and possible strategies to empower females in patriarchal environments. Using her double affiliation of academic and activist, Checa seeks to understand why despite having approved a progressive program, despite having free access to contraception, and despite the realization of massive campaigns, young women still get pregnant at high rates, especially in poor communities. Her current project is exploring the influence of formal education as a protective factor and the obstacles that prevent the transmission of information to be translated into behavioral change. As part of the same project, she seeks to understand the process of *naturalization* of young motherhood, which –she hypothesizes– seems to be the case of mothers coming from the provinces (other than Buenos Aires). Based on case studies of teenage mothers, she tracks back several generations through the maternal line, seeking also for previous cases of adolescent motherhood

*Por una parte [buscamos] generar instrumentos de investigación que permitan encontrar los puntos de inflexión en los que es necesario actuar. Yo creo que la investigación en sí no vale nada si no genera recomendaciones hacia las políticas públicas. Uno hace un pedacito, un cachito que vos tratás de destinarlo, de decir, bueno, las recomendaciones para quienes tienen que hacer, para los que están en el quehacer cotidiano son tales, hemos detectado esto en nuestra investigación. Entonces, recomendaciones que están destinadas a las políticas públicas, pero los hacedores son los otros, son los políticos, los legisladores, los ministerios. Pero yo creo que son útiles, que son hallazgos que a lo mejor los exponemos en el mundo académico, en un encuentro en Gino Germani [name of the Research Institute of Social Science in the Universidad de Buenos Aires] en esos encuentros. Yo ahora me voy a ALAMES [Asociación Latinoamericana de Medicina Social] a llevar esta investigación de Villa 20 (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

*Entonces, lo qué está pasando ahora es que tenemos ley, tenemos acceso a anticonceptivos, tenemos todo un capital que ganamos nosotros.. **Pero hay muchos bolsones de mucha pobreza donde las chicas siguen quedando embarazadas.** Entonces, tenemos varias hipótesis en un estudio. Una es que ellas acceden a los deseos del varón, tanto a una sexualidad a lo mejor no deseada en ese momento, a una práctica sexual, a lo mejor por la presión, porque no saben imponer el uso del preservativo. Entonces, tenés ley, tenés un montón de cosas, pero lo que no tenés todavía es el empoderamiento [empowering] de las chicas adolescentes. A pesar de que hay más que antes según lo que yo veo, pero para decidir protestar frente a un embarazo. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

*Además, queremos ver la línea materna- paterna, cómo juega ese factor. Aparte los temas de género, de formación, de esa brecha que existe entre la información y los comportamientos. Además, claro, por ahí es una chica de Capital, pero su madre es una tucumana que es donde está mucho más naturalizado el embarazo en la adolescencia... Es una investigación que recién comenzamos sobre población escolarizada y no escolarizada de adolescentes entre catorce y diecinueve años, embarazadas y/o madres para ver si hay una naturalización de la maternidad adolescente. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

In some cases research projects are just one strategy, coupled with others such as mass media campaigns, political mobilization or advocacy actions supported and financed by multilateral organizations. In fact, some members of the United Nations system such as UNIFEM<sup>46</sup> and UNFPA<sup>47</sup> have been funding conjoint projects involving

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<sup>46</sup> Acronym for the United Nations development fund for women



both governmental and nongovernmental actors. For feminist NGOs like the *ISPM* or el *Foro*, these projects entailed opportunities to promote changes at the governmental level and advance new approaches to sexual and reproductive health.

*Hemos ejecutado dos grandes proyectos que han sido financiados por UNFPA que es el Fondo de Población de Naciones Unidas [United Nations Population Fund] que tiene sede en Argentina, que depende de Naciones Unidas con los cuales hemos impulsado sobre todo antes de la sanción de la ley campañas que implicaban investigación y difusión a nivel de la opinión pública. Fueron muy importantes y con mucha repercusión. [...] Con UNIFEM también. Con ellos hemos trabajado con el Consejo Nacional de la Mujer de Argentina que nos permitió financiar un proyecto que implicaba viajar al interior del país, de otra manera hubiera sido imposible. Me refiero al Consejo Nacional de la Mujer del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Nación. (Member of ISPM)*

A new legal advancement was attained when the Argentinean parliament finally sanctioned the *Law 26.150* which mandated the incorporation of sexual education contents in the curricula of all levels throughout formal education. For this purpose, the law put in place the *Programa Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral* in charge of gradually introducing sex education courses in elementary and secondary schools, training professors and teachers as well as seeking parent's involvement in the initiative. As a similar legislation was also passed by the City of the Government of Buenos Aires that same year (2006), several NGOs were requested to give their professional advice and technical expertise to improve legislative drafts. This was a good opportunity for experts and technical staff from professional NGOs and academic centers to influence public policy and convey their accumulated experience. As this process was not exempt of conflict, civil society played a significant role in convincing members of parliaments, political parties and governmental authorities of the need to give impulse to the new legislation.

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<sup>47</sup> Acronym for the United Nations population fund

*A diferencia de lo que se cree, no es que se promulgo de un día para otro, fue un trabajo de la sociedad civil, de los partidos políticos, de referentes significativos y especialistas de lo que es la temática, y se discutió durante tres años; finalmente salio. (Member of REDNACADOL).*

*Bueno, el tema de adolescencia, más que todo [ha sido] nuestro tema. Hablar del embarazo adolescente, impulsar la preocupación de las autoridades en cuanto a la ley, ya le digo, el reconocimiento de la Municipalidad, hace dos semanas atrás, de que la ley no hubiera sido posible si la gente de la Asociación no hubiera apoyado. Dió los nombres, el doctor Calandra y el doctor Olivares, que fueron unos de los fundadores de la Asociación, fueron ellos los que impulsaron la Ley. Así, hay un involucramiento, un seguimiento desde la Asociación con todas las problemáticas vinculadas a los derechos de la mujer, adolescente y no adolescente. (Member of AAFP)*

*Por ejemplo en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires hace como dos, tres meses que están estudiando cómo reglamentar esto y cómo presentar los proyectos de la ley de salud sexual y reproductiva. Bueno, nos llamaron a tres organizaciones para que junto al Secretario de Educación ayudemos a ver cómo reglamentar este tema de la ley de educación sexual. Pero con nosotros [como asesores] no como implementadores. (Member of AAFP)*

As we could see in the testimonies provided by NGO directors, the new requirements for sexual education opened vast opportunities for technical and specialized organizations, whether with small or large staff roosters, to sell their services to private schools or participate in publicly funded programs. Several organizations recounted being hired by high schools to organize sex-education workshops, train teachers and professors, or just to discuss with the institution how to incorporate the new law mandates. It becomes clear that the law of sex education constituted a driving force that opened opportunities for middle class professionals, who grouped themselves under institutional arrangements to sell their services. Among all our surveyed organizations, PLENASSER and SEXSALUD are good tokens of that type of organizations that came to life and subsisted basically driven by the demand of expert knowledge and advice created by the new law.

Even before the approval of the law, the Government of the City of Buenos Aires (GCBA) has been supporting sexual education programs through the *Consejo de los Derechos de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes* (see Chapter 4). Among several initiatives engendered by the Council, the program “*Nuestros Derechos, Nuestras Vidas*” (*Our Rights, Our Lives*) emerged as an outstanding experience in the realm of sexual education in elementary and secondary schools. The requirement for mandatory sexual education boosted the program as it multiplied the demand of educational centers for nongovernmental projects. The majority of the organizations we surveyed within the limits of the City of Buenos Aires, not only did they mention having participated in the program, but also praised the fact that it has been one of the few successful experiences of State-civil society articulation. In fact, as mentioned by a member of *ISPM*, decisions related to the program are taken by a board integrated by members of the Council of the City as well as representatives of civil society organizations.

*Éste es un programa donde vamos a las escuelas, a los colegios de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Nosotros particularmente estamos trabajando con primer y segundo año que son chicos y chicas alrededor de los doce, trece y catorce años. Trabajamos sexualidad, género y derechos, eso en cuanto al área de jóvenes adolescentes. Este es un programa que nació en el año 2002, a raíz de la ley 114 que crea el Consejo de Derecho de los Niños y adolescentes, nosotros desde la creación del programa que estamos participando y bueno son seis años sin ser interrumpidos en donde, empezó siendo muy pequeño y como no es obligatorio, y ante la inexistencia de la ley era la voluntad del rector o de la rectora del colegio que solicitaban los talleres, pero bueno, a partir del año pasado, a fin del año pasado, que fue cuando se promulgo la ley, comenzó a haber muchísima más demanda. (Member of REDNACADOL)*

*Principalmente en este momento [...] estamos participando en un proyecto que se llama Nuestros derechos, Nuestras vidas que es del Consejo de Niños y Niñas de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, que se realizó en articulación con algunas organizaciones de mujeres. Nuestra institución tuvo una participación desde el principio y en la elaboración del programa desde que comenzó y hasta el momento, con un rol bastante fuerte y con un grado de articulación muy alta. De hecho el programa tiene algunos lineamientos generales pero las decisiones se toman en una mesa colectiva con las representantes del Consejo y de las*

*organizaciones de mujeres, o sea, es un programa ejecutado realmente en conjunto con la sociedad civil. (Member of ISPM)*

Among a wide range of topics covered by the program, teenage pregnancy is a significant one, as it is usually requested by school directors and professors, who seek orientation to support teenage mothers in their schools and classes, to discuss this issue with their students, or to implement preventive strategies. As the program allows enough flexibility, organizations were able to develop pilot projects seeking to increase awareness among children and adolescents on various issues such as gender inequality, domestic violence, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDs.

*El tema del embarazo adolescente está en la planificación, pero se toca también porque es un emergente, también lo piden los docentes. Los docentes, por lo general, dicen que tienen chicas embarazadas. Es más, los colegios muchas veces te llaman cuando tienen casos de chicas embarazadas. (Member of PLENASSER)*

*Con respecto a los adolescentes trabajamos hace más o menos 5 años con un programa en escuelas secundarias. Brindamos en conjunto con el Consejo de los Derechos de niños, niñas y adolescentes de la Ciudad talleres de sexualidad y género, que apuntan básicamente a trabajar el tema de género, los estereotipos de género y la posibilidad de la construcción de relaciones más equitativas y principalmente en todo lo que es salud sexual y reproductiva, prevención de embarazo adolescente y de contagio de enfermedades de transmisión sexual. (Member of ISPM)*

The impact of the program “*Nuestros Derechos Nuestros Vidas*” went beyond students, teachers and professors, as parents became particularly interested in knowing what type of “sexual orientation” their children were receiving. In some occasions, the workshops were a matter of conflict as parents (supported in some cases by school professors) understood that sexual education should be considered a private issue, and as such it should be taught within the strict orbit of the family<sup>48</sup>. In other cases, the experience favored spaces to increase parental involvement in the education of their

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<sup>48</sup> See chapter 6 for further discussion about moral and ethics implications of public policies related to adolescent fertility.

children, increasing their knowledge on how to deal with sexuality matters and providing them with useful advice to become closer to their children's lives.

*En el trabajo con adolescentes incluimos a padres y docentes. Esto no se había considerado inicialmente, pero que es algo que surgió “sobre la marcha” a raíz de las inquietudes que producía el tema entre los adultos. Antes de comenzar con los talleres realizamos una reunión con los padres para explicar el enfoque y el contenido de los talleres y las modalidades de cursada. Una vez finalizados, nos reunimos nuevamente con los padres para evaluar el curso e intercambiar opiniones y sugerencias. Estas reuniones suelen ser muy fructíferas para todas las partes y permiten que algunos padres adquieran conocimientos sobre algunas cuestiones que ignoran, por ejemplo, sobre métodos anticonceptivos. De todos modos me parece que no todos los padres se involucran de la misma manera. Hay una apropiación diferencial, entre los padres de diversos sectores sociales, de los cursos y talleres. Las clases medias participan más, tanto en lo que refiere a la educación de los hijos como a la propia, los sectores populares se involucran menos. (Member of PLENASSER)*

Notwithstanding the legal advancements registered in the case of Argentina, it became clear that the State could not make substantial progress without the support and commitment of civil society organizations. Although progressive legislation opened significant spaces for nongovernmental action, it is also clear that the latter become now indispensable to make some progress towards projected goals. Given the magnitude of the change at stake, it will take several generations before sexual and reproductive health services become universal services for every citizen. Interestingly, a member of REDNACADOL (the national adolescent network) expressed his expectation that after sanctioning the sexual education law, their work will decrease, and now the State will assume most of the responsibility. Conversely, what he has witnessed, after 10 years working in this field, is that their services are more required than ever before, and the State remains absent. As we will see later, request for greater presence of the State on the side of non governmental actors becomes a repeated request and complain. Some organizations request that the State should assume a leading role in the implementation of public policy, bringing the civil society and governmental structures together to attain

agreed and negotiated goals. So far, it becomes clear that the Argentinean process of rights recognition and expansion has triggered greater demands ones that governmental structures cannot currently attend, and, therefore, nongovernmental spaces, particularly those working in deprived communities, feel overflow.

*Esperamos que como antes yo te decía, halla un involucramiento por parte del estado gubernamental tanto de la ciudad como de la Nación, en lo que son parte de la promoción de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos y que nosotros acompañemos ese proyecto, sino vamos a seguir presentando los proyectos que tenemos, seguir desarrollando actividades para la sociedad, para las mujeres adultas y para los chicos y las chicas por medio de la red nacional, que vemos que no está abordado desde una política pública y ninguno desde otro aspecto, entonces seguiremos con esa perspectiva, que incluso, eh.... este.... bueno, viví diez años de trabajo con jóvenes adolescentes que cada vez tenemos menos actividades, sino que cada vez tenemos más... más actividades , más necesidades, más demandas también, entonces esto cada vez es ascendente en vez de tener como una limitación. (Member of REDNACADOL)*

In this context it comes at no surprise that governmental agencies would seek support from NGOs even in the cases when they are not being paid for their services or they are not publicly funded. The need of shelters for teenage mothers have become a major problem, specially when the *Hogar Eva Perón*, the only public shelter run by the City of Buenos Aires, has no more vacancies. Members of one of our surveyed organizations, *Hogar Sol Naciente*, ventilated their frustration for being asked to put up a teenage mother, when the Government of the City has repeatedly denied financial support to their project based on not fulfilling all the infrastructure requirements. One of the directors of *PLENASSER*, an organization operating outside Capital Federal, experience a similar feeling when the Provincial government request his organization to train teachers and professors through their courses, as his organizations could barely survive due to financial constraints. As he stated, it sounds unfair that instead of being funded by the Provincial government to provide their services, they had to assist the State to cover its own failures.

*Depende del llamado que tenés en el día, si llamó una chica de 17, de 15 que realmente no tiene dónde estar lo primero que hacemos es ingresarla. Después se verá si la chica se quiere quedar, si es para este hogar. Hay una intervención de parte de Dirección de Niñez. Cuando hay una intervención de la Dirección de Niñez, por lógica tendría que estar en un hogar que esté subvencionado por Dirección de Niñez, pero la mandan acá. (Member of Sol Naciente)*

*Por ejemplo, la otra vez, había ido a buscar un material al programa de Salud Sexual y me dice la coordinadora, encargada de la articulación con las ONGs: mirá, me llaman... me escribe mucha gente pidiendo capacitación para docentes, yo sé que ustedes están dando capacitación para docentes ¿les puedo decir que vayan al curso de ustedes? Sí- le digo- no hay problema, pasá el dato, mejor. Pero tendría que ser al revés, tendría que ser uno el que va a buscar apoyo allá [al gobierno] y no al revés. (Member of PLENASSER)*

As interface analysis would suggest, we also need to examine the role played by NGOs in connecting adolescents with public services, welfare facilities, education and health programs. Overall, the modes in which nongovernmental services connect with governmental agencies clearly imply a two-way relationship, as they may obtain prioritized access for their adolescents, while assisting the State to overcome its failures, as shown above. As several barriers may impede the normal access to governmentally run services, NGOs may patronage kids under their protection seeking for “deferential” treatment (something that in fact should not be a favor, but a universally enforced right for everyone). As a teenage mother would be admitted into the shelter *Hogar Sol Naciente*, the organization would immediately connect her with public services, booking an appointment in the local public health clinic, finding a space in the public high school, or just getting her ID documentation in the corresponding public office (CGP). Similarly, when *JAKAIRA*’s day center receives an adolescent mother living in the street, they immediately seek to activate required public services, although they take a more respectful approach towards the adolescent’s desires.

*Nosotros lo que hacemos es: una vez que ingresan la mamá, tiene 15 días para ver si se adecua al hogar o no se adecua al hogar. Si está con las normativas que tiene el hogar, dentro del hogar. Después las mandamos durante esos 15 días obviamente, a un control clínico, que lo hacemos en el centro de salud. Organizamos la documentación, la que le falta. Así que la mandamos al CGP [Centros de Gestión y Participación Comunal], trabajamos con el CGP de la zona que es el número 5. Después si tienen algún problema de un chico que no esté escolarizado, lo que hacemos es buscar la vacante en un colegio dentro de la zona y bueno después de los 15 días ella se queda. (Member of Sol Naciente)*

*Sí, recibimos a varias adolescentes que están en situación de calle. Una condición del equipo, al recibir a una chica en situación de calle es, inmediatamente, **activar todos los servicios públicos para que esto deje de ser así**. Entonces buscamos o un hogar, transitoriamente a ver si se encuentra un hogar o una beca para darle una habitación a alguna otra alternativa. Siempre que la chica lo quiera, ahora si una chica dice “quiero seguir en calle”. Nosotros ni denunciarnos, ni hacemos nada. Ofrecemos una oportunidad y la toman y construimos juntos el programa y el proyecto bienvenido sea. (Member of Jakairá).*

But at this point, it is necessary to acknowledge the significant difference that exists between the situation experienced by those NGOs operating within the boundaries of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires, and those working in the *Conurbano Bonaerense*<sup>49</sup>. A first distinction to be made is that typical middle-class, professional and specialized NGOs such as *Jakairá*, *Campos del Psicoanálisis* or *Sexsalud* – to name some examples of this type- are characteristic from the Capital but not so easy to be encountered in the *Conurbano*. Rather, our quest for organizations working with teenage mothers in the *Conurbano*, led us to a different type of organizations, **ones with a broader focus on poverty issues and a less specialized approach**. For them, teenage motherhood or pregnancy constitutes just another expression of social exclusion, one that is coupled with other disadvantaged situations that come along with extreme poverty and social deprivation. As we have observed, these organizations end up working with

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<sup>49</sup> The term refers to the surrounding areas to the capital, under the jurisdiction of the Province of Buenos Aires. The *Conurbano* is inhabited by more than 9 million residents, of which nearly half of them are considered poor or indigent, according to the figures provided by the National Statistics Institute (INDEC)



teenage mothers and their families, as a result of their engagement with the community needs in a much broader sense. In some cases, like in the *Red El Encuentro*, they were originally a network of child care centers operating in the *Conurbano* that developed a program for older kids. As their children became adolescents, they experienced the necessity to keep supporting them as their organization might be one of the few sources of support they can resort to. In the case of *Red El Encuentro* the work with teenage mothers, becomes just a natural part of their project as these are common situations in the contexts where they intervene. For them, supporting and working with teenage mothers, may imply unraveling more complex situations where sexual abuse, domestic violence or abusive gender relations are also at stake.

*Ahora son cuatro madres adolescentes que tenemos, una está participando activamente acá. Tiene 19 años y tiene un nene de 3 y uno de 1 año y medio más o menos...bueno ella participa de los talleres, hace todo acá. Ella, aparte, vive una situación bastante problemática, en cuanto violencia y un montón de cosas. Estamos laburando [working on] su vínculo con la violencia, acá en el grupo AMAR, que funciona los lunes. Son mujeres víctimas de hechos de violencia. Laburan con una psicóloga y una abogada. Particularmente con ella queremos que pueda volver a estudiar, que pueda contar con algunas herramientas mejor, para que pueda cuidar de ella y de sus hijos. Después tenemos 2 ó 3 casos que están con los padres de sus bebés, con ellas tratamos de trabajar todo lo que es cuidado de los bebés, la atención al bebé, el cuidado de ellas, el volver a acompañarlas para consultar con la ginecóloga sobre algún método anticonceptivo, para que no vuelvan a quedar embarazadas... y lo que estamos diseñando ahora, que no tiene mucha forma todavía, porque yo no había visto, nunca escuché, pero tenemos muchas ganas, de hacer un grupito con estas mamás adolescentes, para que laburen cosas de ellas, cosas particulares, pero lo estamos trabajando, nos estamos juntando las que fuimos mamás hace poquito, que ya tuvimos hijos, para hablar de igual a igual pero más allá de los hijos ver la particularidad de cada una de ellas. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

Another major difference we encountered between NGOs operating in the Capital and those in the *Conurbano* was the amount of funding sources and publicly funded programs that are available. While the Government of the City has several initiatives in place, there are fewer and less resourceful programs available under the jurisdiction of

the Provincial government. As a matter of fact, in the *Conurbano* there nothing like the program “*Nuestros Derechos, Nuestras Vidas*” exists. Furthermore, organizations have denounced the lack of specific programs to support adolescents from poor communities and also the very limited funding available for those NGOs willing to work with this population. The adolescent project implemented by *Red El Encuentro* was engendered by the child care centers, and originally funded by the network itself without any governmental support. After some time, they began receiving some funding from the *Ministerio de Desarrollo* of the Province of Buenos Aires that allowed them to cover the basic expenses of the project. Although the money they receive is granted according to they specific number of adolescents they attend, the project remains open to every adolescent in the community who is interested in participating. As a result, the number of participants exceeds significantly the number of adolescents that are effectively publicly funded for, being always on the verge of financial collapse. Interestingly, the money they receive is distributed among all parties involved: one part of the subsidy goes directly to the adolescent, another part goes to the institution and a small proportion is assigned to the network for administrative costs. In sum, unlike what has been observed in the Capital, nongovernmental projects for adolescents tend to be underfunded and disregarded by governmental authorities. As a member of *Red El Encuentro* clearly stated “*no se tiene como prioridad la infancia, o se la tiene solamente en el discurso, porque en los hechos, digamos, en los presupuestos provinciales y todo... te das cuenta que no hay prioridad, porque prioridad es destinar recursos*”.

*A [un integrante del equipo] que trabajaba en guardería, se le propuso trabajar con los jóvenes. El tema es que no había nada establecido con los jóvenes, empezó a hacer campamentos, talleres. Lo que hacemos ahora con ellos es un sistema de talleres tanto de capacitación de oficios, de arte, de naturales. Se le da de comer todos los días a una población de 10 jóvenes al mediodía. (...) Nos manejamos por proyectos. El que está ahora en funcionamiento es el Proyecto Adolescente del Ministerio de Desarrollo de la Provincia que nos dan unas becas*

*de \$150 por pibe. Ahí entraría, se les da \$75 a los chicos en mano, \$74 quedan en la institución para financiar actividades, con esa plata solamente se puede comprar materiales y \$8 para gastos administrativos, operativos de luz y todo eso. Si bien son 20 los que cobran las becas, nos abrimos al barrio. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

Furthermore, nongovernmental participation in provincial programs is usually coupled with some bureaucratic and administrative problems, similar to the ones we have observed in the case of Montevideo. Organizations complained about delays in payments and excessive bureaucratic requirements for the approval of their projects. One of the few provincial programs aiming to support NGO work with adolescents, called *Proyecto Adolescente* has been particularly criticized due to frequent delays in monthly transfers of fund. For local organizations with scarce resources, such irregularity creates a climate of financial instability that affects significantly the normal functioning of the projects. One of the organizations explained, it is not infrequent for the *Programa Adolescente* to skip one or two monthly checks and then, when they have the money, pay all at once, including overdue payments. At the beginning of 2008, when I was conducting my fieldwork in Buenos Aires, a budgetary problem in the Provincial governmental generated the cessation of payments to NGOs and Community Centers in the *Conurbano*. The situation went out of control when the *Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano* (Human Development Ministry) ceased transfers to a large number of soup kitchens which played a significant role in feeding large parts of the *Conurbano*. Several organizations denounced this situation, conceding interviews to nationwide newspapers such as *Página 12* featuring the dramatic consequences that this situation was generating in several communities (Dandan 2008).<sup>50</sup> Although that particular episode was remedied after the situation reach higher hierarchies, delays and disputes over funds transferred continued occurring.

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<sup>50</sup> For further details about this episode see the Argentinean newspaper *Página 12*, issue of 02/25/2008.

*Nosotros en enero, tuvimos que cerrar durante quince días, porque además pagan fuera de término. Nosotros, hasta hace un año atrás, aunque la plata no nos alcanzaba, nosotros con un préstamo interno, un fondo que sacamos plata de acá la ponemos allá, fiado [borrowed], pedimos fiado a todo el mundo, y bueno, así. Con el aumento que hubo hace un año atrás no nos alcanza, y encima, no llega a tiempo. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

In contrast with these feeble cash transfers, organizations in the *Conurbano* also experience an excess of bureaucratic requirements, making their daily functioning even more complicated and uphill. To participate in provincial programs, they are required to submit what they considered are excessive amounts of forms and paperwork considering the money they receive and the reduced human resources they have (usually devoted to do their fundamental work). After receiving and spending public funds, they are requested to show proof of every expense; something that they consider at odds with the informal economy that prevails in many of the communities where they work. Although their discourse shows an understanding of the need of transparency and accountability, they also believe there is a significant asymmetry between the administrative requirements and the support they receive. In the end, they say, the organizations have to divert valuable personnel from educational or community activities to do the paperwork required in order to get funded. In their perspective, this excess of bureaucracy may be more appropriate for professional and more staffed organizations, which have administrative personnel to do all this paperwork but not for local, grass roots organizations, usually lacking this type of resources.

*Y en realidad hay muchos documentos de técnicos muy fabulosos, pero para una organización como la nuestra, digamos, donde lo que hay que pensar que la tarea primordial es sostener la vida cotidiana, atender a los pibes que vienen de familias destruidas, todo eso... y lleva mucho tiempo toda la burocracia del Estado en los programas que proponen. Lleva mucho tiempo, no está mal rendir cuentas, tener un control. Lo que pasa es que está excesivamente burocratizado, no se ha pensado... **no hay un modo de garantizar que sea transparente pero que no sea tan complicado.** Esto tiene que ver con la legislación, con las normas que desde el mismo tesoro nacional o de la tesorería provincial tienen sobre*

*cómo se debe rendir. Por ejemplo, muchas cosas de las que hacemos nosotros no se pueden facturar. La mayoría de nuestros compañeros, salvo dos o tres compañeros de algunas organizaciones han conseguido sacar un monotributo [tax deduction] para alivianar... Pero bueno, con los incentivos que hasta acá reciben nuestros compañeros, sacar un monotributo significa sacar entre 80 y 100 pesos de un incentivo de 500 pesos por 8 horas de trabajo. Y la verdad que no se puede.. y de ahí eso lleva toda una bola [amount of work] de juntar tickets, pegar, para llevar la contabilidad. Nos obligan todo el tiempo a estar... a... y eso lleva a que uno dedique mucho tiempo a la burocracia y descuide la tarea que es central, o sea, el laburo con los pibes, con la familia... la calidad de lo que se está haciendo. Pero eso tiene que ver con el marco de legalidad en el que nos movemos. Habría que buscar una manera de rendir que, sin ser ilegal nos permita movernos. Por ejemplo, si el monotributo no se puede, bueno, ver otra manera. Inclusive, hay programas que nos han obligado en los últimos años a perseguir nosotros a nuestros proveedores. O sea, nosotros tenemos que denunciar a alguien que no nos quiera facturar. O sea, ese tipo de cosas que nos quitan tiempo y fuerza para lo que tenemos que hacer. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

*Pero tienen una cabeza tal que es lamentable que no puedan conocer... porque la macana es que plantean cosas que no facilitan a las organizaciones, para las organizaciones que tienen un equipo técnico que puede dedicarse a eso, que tiene financiamiento, perfecto; pero para las organizaciones que son pobres o que tienen un nivel de desarrollo menor, que están más en la cuestión de la cosa cotidiana y menos en lo que es la planificación y la gestión... Aunque nosotros tenemos recursos... somos una organización que está desarrollada y todo eso, nos sigue obstaculizando un montón. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

*Por lo general, proyectos para pagar a la gente no tenemos recursos...los estamos peleando ...hace tiempo [presentamos una propuesta al] proyecto Alternativo, del Ministerio de Desarrollo de la Provincia, que hace como 2años que venimos presentándolo y siempre nos falta algo. Ese también son becas y con ese si podríamos pagarle a gente para que nos venga a ayudar. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

*Las últimas gestiones, en Provincia sobre todo, ha sido muy complicado, nos han... como se dice, nos han bicicleado [abused of their work]. Nos han tenido cuatro años formando un equipo de trabajo, hemos preparado materiales para definir bien cuál es nuestra propuesta, qué es lo que nosotros consideramos qué esa una atención integral, cuánto cuesta, cuánto se necesita por menú, por pibe, por educador... Todo, todo, tenemos detallado todo. Hicimos ese laburo, cuando lo entregamos ya estaba un poco desactualizado por todo el tiempo que se demoró, pero de todos modos no nos dieron bola. La verdad es esa. O sea, se llega a un nivel de discurso en el que parece que nos entendemos, pero en el momento de la acción y la decisión no pasa nada... (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

Complaints about political favoritism and clientelistic practices were heard from organizations working on both sides, *Capital Federal* and *Conurbano*. In fact, organizations such as the *Hogar Sol Naciente*, a shelter for teenage mothers in Capital Federal, denounced that some organizations received much more food than needed, while they can barely meet their demand. They also inquire about the reasons for maintaining the current system of soup kitchens installed in local organizations, instead of distributing food supplies directly to the families. As they see it, changing actual situation will eliminate the patronage linkages that many of these organization have with citizens in their communities. Some organizations see current modes of distribution of benefits, as one supporting a small elite of *punteros politicos* [brokers] who they harshly qualified as “*intermediarios del hambre*” (intermediaries of people’s hunger).

In a recent book about social movements and politics in Argentina, Maristella Svampa (2008) documented how the expansion of social assistance policies during Nestor Kirchner’s administration was coupled with substantial increment in the clientelistic practices. As she claims, “*this return of the clientelism in its most obscene forms, was registered in several provinces, but even more in the Conurbano Bonaerense, where one fourth of the entire population lives (more than 9 millions of a total of 37 millions of Argentineans), including the poorest people in the country*”<sup>51</sup> Other modes in which this political favoritism takes place, as other organizations signaled, is through obscure and not transparent mechanisms for assigning public resources, favoring political friendly associations. As we have observed, this type of situations seems to occur more frequently at the level of municipal governments, or at least it is at this level where our surveyed NGOs have become more aware of it.

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<sup>51</sup> My own translation from Svampa (2008), p. 65.

*Cuando empecé con el comedor empecé también a tener problemas con otros lugares, que eran políticos. Empecé a tener todos los inconvenientes de la gente que hace. Hacer trae problemas, te ven como una competencia. Hay comedores que reciben 300 raciones de comida del Gobierno de la Ciudad, que en realidad alcanzan para cerca de 1000 personas, porque son muy abundantes. **Hay lugares donde se bajan camionetas y camionetas con comida del gobierno. Nosotros no recibimos nada. Nosotros tenemos que luchar día a día para la harina, para el almuerzo, para la leche, eso me indigna...** Además, ¿por qué las viandas [food servings] se tienen que repartir en los comedores, por qué no hacerlo en las casas? De esa forma no se lo estaría arrancando al niño de la instancia de diálogo familiar que implica la hora de las comidas. Pero, claro, así se acabarían **los intermediarios del hambre, los punteros políticos que manejan esas raciones.** (Member of Sol Naciente)*

*En todos los programas... Nosotros nos hemos presentado en varios programas de la municipalidad y a veces no entramos, **porque hay organizaciones que están más vinculadas con la Municipalidad por lo político.** O sea, por las relaciones, que son conocidos de éste, del otro... Y nosotros que tenemos una tradición, no es tradición, es una continuidad, desde hace cuarenta años, si bien nos reconocen como un actor importante, **ahora le dan los recursos a organizaciones que son afines a ellos.** (Member of AAFP)*

Despite the several problems that characterize Argentinean decentralization<sup>52</sup>, it has become a positive instrument to increment the amount of resources administrated by local authorities. However, the extent to which these resources have effectively benefitted civil society organizations is something to be examined in further detail. Just to provide an example of the complexities that the decentralization process may entail, we can refer to the experience of the municipality of Jose Carlos Paz. The Law 26.062 mandates the creation of *Consejos de Infancia y Adolescencia* (Children and Adolescent Councils) in each municipality, under the orbit of a municipal division called *DINAF* (*Dirección Integral de Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia*). According to the law, the *Consejos de Infancia y Adolescencia* should be integrated with representatives of the *DINAF* and civil society organizations, and is responsible for the administration of the resources to be used

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<sup>52</sup> We refer here to the complex design of Argentinean decentralization, especially in the fields of health and education, where national, provincial and municipal levels need to coordinate actions, leading to several problems such as overlapping responsibilities, wasting resources, lack of accountability, among others (Escolar et al. 2004)

in favor of children and adolescent projects (based on previous agreements about priorities within council members). Agreements and negotiations between municipal and civil society authorities are not always easy to obtain as they may pursue different interests and have divergent objectives. For the traditional *modus operandi* of municipalities, it might be difficult to give up some funds that could be “better used” if distributed to reward political loyalties among their constituencies. The following testimony can serve as a good illustration of this type of tensions.

*El órgano encargado de hacer cumplir la Ley 26.061 en José Carlos Paz es la Dirección Integral de Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia, llamada comunmente DINAF. La directora hasta el mes pasado por lo menos era Cristina Asnaghi, nosotros nos conocemos porque estamos tratando de conformar un Consejo de Infancia y Familia tal como se establece en la nueva ley y que descentraliza una serie de recursos a las organizaciones. Acá, en el Municipio, nosotros estamos participando de este espacio, del DINAF, pero es muy complicado porque los municipios tienen esta lógica de la política clientelar que... bueno. **Nos pusimos a hablar de cuáles son las prioridades y ahí no nos pusimos de acuerdo...** Hasta ahora, como se trata de un recurso que hay que descentralizar, bastante bien. Entonces, en ese marco, nuestra relación con el Estado siempre ha sido de poder... de intentar que se nos entienda desde dónde hemos partido y hacia dónde queremos llegar, que en la situación en la que estamos, queremos hacer muchas cosas pero necesitamos más recursos. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

## **The Public Role of NGPA in Comparative Perspective**

The Chilean process of state modernization has opened spaces for NGO-State collaboration around rights oriented policy reforms in the fields of reproductive health, sexual education and universal social protection. As some of these reforms may face resistance from conservative groups, NGOs may come to the defense of new policies creating temporary alliances with governmental agencies. The contribution of the NGO sector to policy design usually comes in the shape of research projects, academic consulting and policy advising, provided by highly technical and professionalized



organizations. These organizations tend to function as *think tanks* for governmental agencies, providing useful information for policy design and implementation.

Comparatively with Argentina and Uruguay, Chilean NGOs play a major role in assisting governmental agencies with updated and crucial information. Such is the case, for example, of the NGO CEDEM which members has a vast experience in researching the relationship between adolescent parenthood and school drop outs. Current policies implemented by Chilean government used the baselines, monitoring and evaluation instruments designed by this organization. It would be practically unthinkable to understand current MINEDUC programs to retain teenage mothers in schools without the role played by CEDEM.

*La mirada nuestra es desde la investigación y el aportar recursos, sugerir líneas de base y mecanismos de seguimiento y evaluación de las políticas públicas en este campo, particularmente en educación, en temas de cobertura y rendimiento escolar, de su comportamiento como alumno. Desde hace unos 15 años, algo menos, hemos estado trabajando este tema desde la investigación, tratando de caracterizar quiénes son los padres y las madres [adolescentes] y establecer la magnitud de cuántos y cuántas son, particularmente en el sistema escolar, pero también cuántas son las adolescentes que estando es situación de maternidad –en el caso de los hombres no se tiene ese dato- no están ejerciendo sus derechos, al menos en el ámbito de educación y salud. (Member of CEDEM)*

Technical and professional organizations aligned with international rights and gender based agendas have encountered in the Chilean state an attractive and resourceful partner seeking to move in the same direction. This group has found some opportunities in the current scenario, by providing technical assistance in the phases of policy design, enhancing integrality in policy implementation, and defending progressive policies against the opposition of conservative groups. However, for the vast majority of civil society organizations opportunities to participate in the policy making process are piecemeal and restricted.

In our perspective, the present pattern of State-NGOs relationships is better understood in the light of current process of Chilean state modernization. The strengthening of institutional capacities, welfare services reforms seeking to expand social citizenship, and the development of sophisticated policy instruments to reach vulnerable groups constitute salient features of the Chilean government compared with its regional partners. However, the counter effects of this process of state modernization *a la chilena*, we argue, show a weakening impact over civil society organizations, and particularly on their autonomous performance. As seen in our case studies, this weakness and lack of autonomous action emerge as the result of three related processes:

- a) First, the Chilean government has weakened civil society through the cooptation of valuable human resources that has dismantled the technical capacity of several NGOs. The MINSAL (Health Ministry) is a good example of a governmental structure that is currently employing former members of NGOs. Furthermore, some organizations have blamed governmental cooptation for the disappearance of several organizations in the field of health services.
- b) Second, the implementation of short terms and competitive modes of funding prevents the long run sustainability and strategic planning capacity of the organizations. In a context of scarcity, this has also reinforced the perspective of NGOs as competing providers to assure the survival of their structures. The prevalence of market relations among the organizations overrides the needs of mutual collaboration and exchange of experience and information.
- c) Third, despite governmental initiatives to protect adolescent rights several organizations have signaled problems of implementation. Greater openness to civil society participation and the effective adoption of a rights oriented perspective requires more than just central policy definitions and documents. It

needs the alignment of service directors, governmental officials and municipal authorities, who not always share central approaches.

It seems clear, that the Chilean case shows a substantial gap between the phases of policy design and policy implementation. As a matter of fact, several NGOs signaled difficulties in the execution of centrally designed programs, such as the need to improve the qualification of human resources or to increase the allocation of financial resources. Furthermore, NGOs working in poor communities like *Visión Mundial* mentioned the failure to involve civil society organization as another reason that affects the quality of policy outcomes.

*Sobre la política de infancia siento que la política que existe ahora se acerca más a lo que nosotros vemos que son las necesidades de la población. Sin embargo, hay una brecha grande todavía entre lo que se necesita y lo que se está planificando. O sea, yo creo que sobre todo la brecha está en la implementación de esa política, que puede ser súper buena y coherente en el papel, pero en la implementación está el problema. Haría falta para mejorar esta situación recursos humanos y financieros, la incorporación de las organizaciones civiles... hay un aparato de gobierno bastante complejo para poder implementar cosas... poder tener vías más expeditas y confiar más en la sociedad civil, no hacer tanto trámite para poder hacer algo. (Member of VISION MUNDIAL)*

It should also be acknowledged the heterogeneous character of the state, and the different speeds and rhythms in which ongoing reforms permeate governmental structures. As the modernization process advances, some governmental agencies may be aligned with the new mandates, while others remain untouched. In the case of Chile, for example, several organizations pointed out that the MINSAL (Health Ministry) has shown greater openness and disposition to work with civil society organizations than the MINEDUC (Education Ministry). However, in many cases this depends on the personal position of authorities more than long standing institutional definitions.

*Hablar de gobierno como unidad es una ficción porque es mucha la heterogeneidad. En general depende de quién es tu interlocutor y de las políticas de Estado en estas materias. [...] En Salud, las Normas nacionales de fertilidad y*

*anticoncepción que fueron dictadas el año pasado son un reconocimiento de los derechos de las personas y de los adolescentes de prestaciones en este campo y eso es nuevo. Lo mismo la política en torno a maternidad y paternidad adolescente del Ministerio de Salud también es nuevo. Lo que está por verse es cómo eso se va transformando en programas específicos a nivel de todo el país. Hay avances, al menos en esos sectores, y han considerado los aportes que uno entrega. En el MINSAL hay un consejo consultivo de la sociedad civil desde hace ya varios meses, donde el Ministerio somete a comentarios y propuestas que desde las distintas organizaciones de la sociedad civil se les hace comentarios a los documentos que ellos presentan. No sucede lo mismo con educación. (Member of CEDEM)*

In Uruguay, nongovernmental public action in the field of adolescent fertility is less dynamic and vibrant compared with Chile. Organizations found only marginal spaces to participate in policy debates and they are secluded to the role of mere program implementers. Only gender organizations may advocate for issues such as contraception, abortion, and access to sexual and reproductive health services, although adolescent's specific matters tend to be hidden and unnoticed in their wider agenda. Also, the few existing governmental programs which target the needs of teenage fathers and mothers create only limited opportunities for civil society organizations seeking to survive in this field. Even those hired by governmental agencies to provide social services have encountered serious difficulties in moving beyond the strict guidelines established in program templates.

The role of the nongovernmental sector in Uruguay could be seen as constrained by a resilient and bureaucratic state that has resisted recent waves of modernization. Unlike the Chilean case, in Uruguay the process of state modernization has been only partially successful, as veto coalitions have prevented some institutional reforms (Castiglioni 2005). The challenges that new forms of social exclusion -such as the situation of young parents- pose to the Uruguayan state, require new institutional designs which are resisted by the inertia of traditional governmental structures and corporative interests (Leal 2003). After its celebrated past, the Uruguayan welfare state exhibits a

lack of flexibility to adapt its traditional protective structures to the needs and demands of the emerging vulnerable groups (Filgueira 2005). Developed in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a context of an expansive and formalized labor market, the Uruguayan system yielded inadequate and insufficient to protect current social risks of young families living in poverty. Traditional modes of policy design based on the protection of formal workers and sector oriented provisions are now severely questioned as they cannot grant full social citizenship for young couples and their children, as they did in the past.

In this context, the traditional –now inadequate- structures of universal welfare services remain basically in place, although proved insufficient to cover the new social demands, as the ones posed by young families and poor adolescents. The situation of social exclusion faced by most teenage parents in poor communities has only elicited fragmented and incomplete responses, disconnected from main structures of welfare services. Only the PLAN CAIF, a childcare service program based on a nationwide structure of local associations, can be acknowledged as a robust source of protection for teenage parents and young families living poverty. Despite its limitations, this might be considered a successful story of State-civil society articulation, one in which it is possible to acknowledge the existence of a policy design that frames the work of local organizations and an institutional design that facilitates the coordination among different sectors of social policy administration. However, the plan is showing serious problems of coverage as it has not been able to attend the increasing demand for daycare services in poor communities. Also the local organizations encountered important problems to move beyond their nature of daycare centers, to widen their scope and role within the community.

Seeking to address the needs of new groups at risk, other programs like *INFAMILIA* have sought to strengthen State's capacity through the incorporation of new

public services, some of which were learned from civil society experiences. For a few specialized NGOs, this strategy implied punctual and limited opportunities of developing and funding some innovative experiences. More generally, the program sought to increase the coverage of existing programs in poor communities - such as *Plan CAIF*- which allowed some local organizations to be incorporated as service providers, a process which is still in progress.

However, unlike the Chilean case, only residual programs opened opportunities for civil society organizations seeking to work specifically with teenage parents in poor communities. As a matter of fact, we encountered only three organizations which were funded by *INAU* –the national agency in charge of adolescence policy- to support and address the specific needs of teenage fathers, mothers and their children. The stories about how they got financed are told as institutional victories against the bureaucratic resistances they encountered, as they did not fit into the established templates and procedures. Although piecemeal changes, they succeeded in introducing some flexibility into the original governmental rigid rules, conceived to support children under 18, whether infants or adolescents but not both. What organizations like *Casa Lunas* and *La Bonne Garde* narrated as major victories against a bureaucratic state agency, should be seen as minor concessions of a resilient and bureaucratic structure that resist to be modernized.

In our perspective, the excess of rigidities that characterizes the interface between nongovernmental actors and governmental agencies should be seen as another token of Uruguayan State's lack of modernization. As we have shown, several organizations complained about the constraints and lack of margins of maneuver that derive from governmental mechanisms of financing, supervising and controlling their participation in social programs. The prevalence of bureaucratic and financial indicators to evaluate

nongovernmental performance has overridden the necessary quest for effectiveness, results, and innovation that is expected in modern public management (whether delivered by State or non State actors). An excessive governmental concern about NGOs misuse of public funds has derived in constraints that limit the necessary flexibility and autonomy that the organizations need to work effectively.

*Entonces el rol de las ONG's es el de instrumentar servicios, no el de diseñar políticas. El Estado quiere controlar cosa por cosa, está preocupada por eso y no por los resultados que se generan ¿porqué el INAU me controla lo que gasto? ¿Por qué no se preocupa por los resultados? ¿Qué estándares de evaluación tiene el Estado? Ese es el nuevo discurso, te controlan todo, gasto por gasto, boleta por boleta. ¿Qué papel tiene la reflexión y la investigación en estas organizaciones si lo importante es el gasto y el control administrativo, no te dejan margen para nada?" (Member of the NGO El Abrojo<sup>53</sup>)*

Surprisingly, the expectations generated with the triumph in 2004 of the leftist coalition, *Frente Amplio*, about greater levels of civil society participation and consultation in policy design were not met. Although most of our surveyed organizations were sympathetic with the political party in power, they were very critical with the government's attitude towards NGOs, particularly towards those participating in publicly funded social programs. Alike *Frente Amplio*, most NGOs shared criticisms against traditional parties' approach to social policies and the claim for greater State's response to the unmet needs of large sectors of the population after the economic and social crisis suffered in 2002. In a context of generalized discontent with the social performance of traditional parties<sup>54</sup>, the *Frente Amplio* made of its pro-poor and social integration policies a flagship during the electoral campaign of 2004<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Not a surveyed organization, although a member of this NGO was interviewed as key informant.

<sup>54</sup> The expression "traditional parties" alludes to the "Partido Colorado" and the "Partido Nacional" (also known as "Partido Blanco") who exist since the early 1800s and has ruled the country since its independence.

<sup>55</sup> Frente Amplio's victory in 2004 allowed for the first government of a non-traditional party in the Uruguayan history.

Once in power, the government moved forward with its plan to assist poor households by creating the *Ministerio de Desarrollo Social*<sup>56</sup> and launching the *Plan de Emergencia*. Marina Arismendi, the designated Minister of Social Development of which most children and adolescent policies depend, was a prominent leader of the Communist Party (member of the winning leftist coalition) who embraced a centralized perspective of government control over social planning and policy. Her harsh commentaries about the NGOs reflected her mistrust and suspicious attitude towards the nongovernmental sector. Before taking office she said that “*algunas organizaciones dicen que son sin fines de lucro pero sabemos que después son las que lucran*” (Semanario Brecha 2005). Furthermore, she also made public her intention to investigate and control those NGOs that would participate in the recently created *Plan de Emergencia*, eliciting strong reactions from ANONG<sup>57</sup> (the national association of NGOs). The expressions of mistrust of the Minister were not consistent with the public discourses that the elected President Tabaré Vazquez had pronounced during the electoral campaign, when he clearly stated his intention to call the NGOs to participate actively in the design and formulation of social policies and programs (Semanario Brecha 2005).

Although the tone of the controversy was played down on both sides, the situation made clear the prevailing perception among the leaders of the *Frente Amplio* about the exclusive role that the State should have in social policy design and formulation. Indeed, **during the Vazquez’s administration the role of civil society in social policy was clearly one of service provider and project implementer, but not one of participants in policy dialogues as several children and adolescent NGOs leaders claimed.** In assuming this stand, they said, the government affected the quality of social policy by not

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<sup>56</sup> Uruguay was one of the few countries in Latin America that did not have a Social Development or Social Policy Ministry by 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Acronym for *Asociación Nacional de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales*



taking into account the NGO's experience and accumulated knowledge. Additionally, they believe NGO's participation in policy making is a good opportunity to increase legitimacy of social policy and build greater levels of consensus on policy decisions.

*Hay una cuestión de ideología del que está a cargo del ministerio, si puede estar todo dentro del Estado mejor, si no podemos convocamos a la sociedad civil [...] Hay muchas organizaciones que tienen años y años de experiencia de trabajo, lo que pasa que algunos organismos del Estado desconfían mucho de cómo algunas organizaciones han trabajado en los barrios. Y hay de todo, hay ONGs muy "truchas" [irresponsable] y otras muy serias. Como hay funcionarios del ministerio muy "truchos" y otros muy serios". (Member of Casa Lunas)*

*El saber técnico incrementado por la experiencia acumulada en el campo, les permite a algunas instituciones diferenciarse de los sectores estatales así como de otras instituciones. Esto debería permitir a las instituciones de la sociedad civil acceder a espacios de diálogo e incidencia en puntos centrales de la implementación de políticas públicas., pudiendo realizar de esta forma proyectos con impactos a largo plazo (Member of Iniciativa Latinoamericana)*

In consequence, unlike it occurred in Chile, in Uruguay professional and specialized NGOs did not find many opportunities to influence public policy or include issues related to the adolescents needs in the public agenda. Adolfo Garcé (2006) in his study about *Think Tanks in Latin America* claims that political parties in Uruguay did not recur to the support of research or specialized knowledge as it happens in other countries. After examining several possible reasons, he believes a key one has been the lack of political and ideological affinity between politicians of the traditional parties and academics or NGO specialists. However, after the first administration of the leftist coalition (2005-2010) the divorce between policy makers and professionalized NGOs seems to continue, despite the allegedly ideological affinities shared on both sides of the aisle.

The possibility of autonomy for the NGO sector in this field appears then severely curtailed by limited funding opportunities, rigid mechanisms of State control, and low incentives for innovation. Additionally, the organizations complained about the absence

of governmental policies aiming to build up their capacities or foster new social actors. Only a few organizations have succeeded in enhancing their autonomy by getting international funding to implement new projects or add value to the ones they were executing for the government. In fact, when international funding is obtained it is usually applied to expand institutional capacities, develop pilot modes of interventions or enhance citizenship skills among participants and local communities, aspects that tend to be absent from public funding schemes.

The situation of civil society organizations in Argentina can be contrasted with those in Uruguay and Chile in many different ways. As the main focus of this chapter is to understand the differences in the modes in which they interact with governmental structures and the effect that this interaction has on nongovernmental autonomy, we will center our attention on the principal similarities and differences observed in this realm, leaving for chapter 5 and 6 comparisons on different grounds.

Although the specific issue of adolescent's rights did not get in Argentina the attention it obtained in the Chilean civil society, the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents became a component of the platform of rights vindicated by the feminist and women's movement in Argentina in the 1990s. There is no doubt about the significant role played by the women's movement to break the silence that reigned in Argentina around family planning services and women's rights to be informed and decide about reproductive matters. It took almost ten years, after the first project of law was submitted to parliament, to approve the *Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva* in 2002. Although a generalized consensus was built around the need to advance new policies and legislation on this ground, the role of feminist NGOs was crucial to convince politicians and policy makers that it was worth facing conservative forces (Ramos 2007). In fact, it should be noticed the high legitimacy conquered by feminist organizations in

Argentina after so many years of political activism in the field of sexual and reproductive health. Nowadays, they are respected and vocal actors with a word to say and to be heard on issues related to women's rights such as contraception, sexual and reproductive health services, and teenage pregnancy. Beyond the most visible organizations, such as *FEIM* or *ISPM*, the women's movement has acquired a scattered and networked structure that has contributed to its mobilization.

More interestingly, after legislation on both fronts, health (2002) and education (2006) was passed and policy programs were at least formally launched, these organizations renewed their commitment by shifting their role with respect to governmental structures. They were able to create a nationwide consortium called CONDERS, which took an active approach on enforcing the rights and goals expressed by laws and public policies. As tenants of expert knowledge and using their nationwide connections with other women's and youth's groups, they become monitors and watchdogs of public sexual and reproductive health services. They empowered local and grassroots groups to follow up the quality and adequacy of services by developing pamphlets, dossiers, surveys, and reports in order to hold public hospitals and clinics accountable. More specifically, in the realm of adolescent health, they have targeted on issues such as: a) physical accessibility to services, b) adolescent friendly health services, c) easiness to get appointments, d) existence and length of waiting lists, e) respect to adolescent's privacy and intimacy, f) duration of the appointments, g) type of language used by medical team (easy to understand, too technical), h) provision of information about contraception, i) respect of adolescent's choice regarding contraception, j) right to attend the appointment with someone else, k) right to choose the sex of medical doctor they want to see, l) right to continue seeing the same doctor, m) friendly spaces for teenage parents, among others. Despite concrete results in the

improvement of services, there is no doubt that this “holding the State accountable” role constitutes a major feature in the performance of nongovernmental organizations in Argentina.

On less contentious grounds, the sexual education law also provided unique (and massive) opportunities for professional and technical NGOs willing to sell their services to private schools, or be publicly funded to introduce sex-education contents in the curricula of public schools. In any case, it becomes clear that the ambitious goals set by the Law of Sexual Education approved in 2006 could not been attained by the State alone, and specialized NGOs became crucial pieces in the machinery of institutional and cultural change around sexual behavior and gender relations. In particular, our research encountered long lasting, synergistic relations between the Government of the City of Buenos Aires and specialized NGOs to advance sexual education programs by engaging parents, teachers, professors and students in the process.

However, the situation in the *Conurbano* is completely different, due to lack of resources on both sides of the aisle, provincial government and civil society organizations. This poverty of resources mirrors the situation of social deprivation and social exclusion in which many communities and families struggle to survive. The lack of public resources is particularly visible in the hardships and unmet needs experienced by adolescents in these communities on a daily basis. As Maristella Svampa stated, among all population groups in Argentina, the adolescents are the ones who currently reflect the highest level of social vulnerability and risks (Svampa 2008). I would add that the *Conurbano*, of all the places I have visited during this research, is where the adolescent’s lives care and mean the least for governmental authorities. Despite some piecemeal programs, the provincial government devotes scarce resources to support the work of

local and grass roots organizations which seek to address the various demands presented by adolescent and young people.

According to Svampa, after the absence of the State was seen as natural in the 1990s, the arrival of the new left embodied by the Krichner's administration brought what she called a "*desnaturalization de la precariedad del Estado*" [stop seen the absence or irresponsibility of the State as natural]. Therefore, as the precarious presence of the State become not "naturally" accepted anymore, signs of protest and irritation against failure of basic services began to arise. In fact, most of the protests that took place in the *Conurbano* during the Kirchner's administration were to complain about the State's incapacity to address community needs or to assure the provision of basic services. The situation narrated by the *Red El Encuentro* about the closure of community centers during the early years of 2008, featured by mainstream newspapers, constituted an example of this type of situations.

Paradoxically, among all places visited in the three cities, it was in the *Conurbano* where we received more complaints from civil society organizations about excess of bureaucratic and administrative control. Maybe, the paradox reflects the desire of a State that pretends to be present by claiming greater control, but can only do it over the edges and margins of people and institutions lives. Meanwhile, it remains absent from its basic roles and fails to meet its core responsibilities. The demands of the organizations in the *Conurbano* towards the State were two-fold: on the one hand, they requested higher levels of support to their work; on the other, they claimed less bureaucratic control and paperwork.

Finally, we should mention the extent to which the expansion of social assistant policies and patronage practices are tied in the case of Buenos Aires. Although we would like to avoid the commonplace of featuring Argentinean politics as clientelistic and

patronage oriented, we can indeed say that the NGO discourses we heard, unveiled higher levels of political favoritism and lack of transparency, something that definitely affects the modes in which civil society organizations engage with governmental instances.

## CHAPTER 5: THE IDENTITY POLITICS OF NON GOVERNMENTAL PUBLIC ACTION IN ADOLESCENT FERTILITY

*"The young do not know enough to  
be prudent, and therefore they attempt  
the impossible -- and achieve it,  
generation after generation."  
- Pearl S. Buck*

In this chapter we will examine the capacity that national NGO communities have to empower the adolescents that participate in their projects and the exact meaning they attribute to this concept. As it happened with terms like “participation” or “citizenship”, empowering a specific social group may entail different meanings for different organizations. Our general objective is to understand the role that NGOs may play in helping the adolescents to empower themselves, their families and the communities where they live. In doing this we will be paying special attention to the top-down/bottom-up orientation of the organizations in each country and the main contextual factors that determine their approach. More specifically, we will examine the spaces that NGOs open for youth participation in the decisions, programs and services that directly affect them.

When specifically applied to the field of adolescent fertility the concept of “empowerment” becomes even more complex as it refers to a plurality of situations and experiences that need to be differentiated. As the notion of empower entails the idea of “give power” to a subordinated group, it is necessary to acknowledge the different sources of subordination. Beyond the generalizing labels of “teenage mothers” or “teenage fathers” different realities have to be acknowledged as they may unveil the different factors that shape the parenthood experience (i.e. age, social class, gender, localization, etc.). Teenage mothers are usually seen as subordinated in three main

dimensions as they share several disadvantageous situations: they are female, they are young and they are poor. In this respect the empowering perspectives embraced by NGOs may seek to address one or more aspects, depending on the adolescent's situation and the institutional approaches.

From a gender perspective, for example, empowering female adolescents may imply to increase their freedom by postponing maternity or expanding their life projects beyond maternal roles. For their male partners, it may imply assuming their fatherhood or share parental responsibilities somewhat contradicting the cultural mandates and role models they encounter in their communities. In both cases, empowering strategies may assume to challenge prevailing patriarchal stereotypes and promote more egalitarian gender relations between partners. From a generational perspective, empowering the adolescents may signify to give further voice to the adolescents in those decisions that will affect them directly. As public services and programs might be designed and implemented by adults based on their assumptions about the adolescent worlds, empowering strategies may seek to strengthen youth capacities to express their needs, enforce their rights and demand age appropriate services. From a community perspective, empowerment may refer to the development of collective capacities to improve their living conditions by means of self-organization, community mobilization or any other type of collective behavior.

The analysis of empowering capacities within the NGO world, should be acknowledged as a sensitive issue as participatory and rights based discourses has become fashionable and widely adopted by most organizations, although not always mirrored by institutional practices. The language of social policy and social project has dramatically changed in the last decade, aligning itself with the new normative mandates of United Nations children and women's rights charters. Also the exigencies of funding



agencies and private donors for more sustainable of projects have increased pressures to adopt the rhetoric of community participation and local development. Notions of children and adolescent's rights, social capital, empowerment and active citizenship have become ineludible references in NGO's projects seeking to appeal to national and international funding sources. Whether this transformation in discourses signifies real empowerment of the adolescents, families and communities that participate in NGO projects still remain to be seen.

Our analysis will focus on both, institutional practices and discourses paying particular attention to the meaning that NGO's members attribute to these concepts and to the concrete actions implemented to realize them. As teenage mothers tend to share a marginalized identity configured by their socio-economic, spatial, gender and age situation we found useful the notion of *identity politics* to capture the political nature of non governmental action with these groups. As an intrinsic part of this identity, we also compared cross national differences about the modes in which adolescent parenthood is stigmatized or socially sanctioned in our three studied countries and what stand do NGOs take in this respect. To be sure, non governmental action is never neutral in this field as it influences this group's identity by reproducing, reinforcing or challenging the prevailing cultural traits that define young motherhood and fatherhood in poor communities. At large, they may also influence societal stances towards adolescent parenthood through campaigns or advocacy activities as occurred in countries where strong prejudices and stigma are attached to this behavior<sup>58</sup>. Following the language of identity politics, NGOs may empower socially vulnerable teenagers and young parents, by raising their

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<sup>58</sup> An interesting case in this respect is the campaign conducted by the non governmental organization YWCA (Young Women Christian Association, female branch of the YMCA) in the United Kingdom to combat stigmatization of teenage mothers, under the consign "RESPECT Young Moms".

consciousness or they may naturalize their behavior as the result of ignorance, immaturity or lack of responsibility.

As identity politics' aim is to empower the marginalized group by articulating their oppression in terms of their own experience we will highlight three main aspects of this experience in our analysis of non governmental actions: a) their approach to generational relations (adolescents – adults), b) their approach to gender relations (females – males) and c) their approach to community participation (dependency – autonomy).

- a) A first aspect we examine refers to the capacity that national NGO communities have to promote experiences that give a voice to the adolescent vis-à-vis the adult world by which policies and programs are designed and implemented. As the adolescents are usually defined as “recipients” or “beneficiaries” of public policies and programs, it becomes crucial to understand the role that NGOs may play in challenging adult-centered visions in fields such as sexual education, reproductive health and parenting support. To what extent do NGOs create genuine spaces to voice the youth demands? How do the services provided by NGOs include the adolescent's opinions and interests? How does the understanding of youth empowerment and participation vary across the different institutional frameworks and national contexts? Central to our comparative perspective is the analysis of national differences in the conception and characterization of “adolescents” as subjects of public policies in the fields of sexual education, reproductive health and teenage parenthood, and the challenge that this poses for the NGO sector in each country.

- b) As gender relations constitute a defining component in relation to adolescent sexuality and reproduction we will pay special attention to the manners in which male and female identities are conceived and realized in the different non governmental projects and experiences. The modes of understanding motherhood and fatherhood and the concrete actions deployed to empower males and females vary significantly from one country to another and from one organization to the other. Different institutional approaches vary, for example, in the vision they have about the role of motherhood in the adolescent's life project, in the spaces created to incorporate the male partner, and the emphasis they place in challenging prevailing models of gender relations. In comparative perspective, our interest is to identify national patterns across the NGO communities in their approaches to gender relations and the challenges they face in this respect.
- c) As we analyze the “empowering” capacity of the organizations, another important element to examine refers to the community orientation of their work. Institutional approaches vary substantially in the role they assigned to the community and family members in their work with adolescents. As the territory or neighborhood constitutes a point of reference for the construction of identities several organizations have privileged the community as a relevant actor in their interventions. In some cases, supporting teenage parents or preventing teenage pregnancy constitute a component of a general strategy of strengthening local capacities, promoting self- organization and transferring responsibilities to community associations. In other cases, such as purely service oriented organizations, intervention takes just an individual character excluding any collective action perspective on their work. However, we

should move with caution in our analysis as most organizations have articulated discourses about the “teach to fish” versus “give the fish” principles as well as the need to avoid paternalistic and dependent interventions. In this respect we examine the specific role and strategies used by NGOs in empowering the community and the difficulties they encounter. Our comparative analysis will examine cross national differences in prevailing community and territorial approaches as well as country specific factors that may hinder or facilitate nongovernmental work at this level.

### **Chile: “Fighting back the adult-centric culture”**

The work of non governmental organizations in the field of adolescent fertility in Chile face a major challenge in the prevalence of an adult-centric model that tends to exclude the voice of adolescents from the policy process. As policy decisions are mainly guided by technical and professional expertise, governmental programs are based on pre-conceived assumptions that experts have about the situation and experiences of those adolescents defined as “target groups”. For the adult world, the adolescence emerges as a problematic stage in life, characterized by risky behaviors that deserved adult control and supervision. Discourses usually allude to the situation of the adolescents in terms of “the future of society”, “lacking maturity”, “sexually disoriented”, “population at risk”, “in need of adult intervention” among others. This perception is reinforced by the “risk approach” that dominates most public health policies and programs. In this perspective, teenage pregnancy is perceived as the result of lack of education and adequate information, blaming the adolescent for their irresponsible behavior. It is clear that this perception -far from empowering and enhancing adolescent’s agency- naturalizes their behavior, increases the stigma and reinforces their subordinated condition.

Nongovernmental organizations as policy actors navigate amidst these tensions, with some of them conceding to the adult-centric policy model and others trying to challenge it, with more or less success. Only few organizations are fully aware of the *adult-centrism* that dominates the Chilean society and take responsibility in challenging the prevailing views about adolescent sexuality and reproductive behavior.

*Hay también toda una cultura adultocéntrica que toca a la familia, la escuela, el sistema de salud, por lo cual uno tiene que trabajar para revertir. Hay que cambiar la mirada. Nosotros tratamos de que los niños, niñas y jóvenes sean los que representen sus intereses. Lo que tratamos es de canalizar sus intereses, pero que sean ellos capaces de exponerlos y representarlos a los adultos y para eso generamos fondos pequeños y mesas para que ellos planteen sus necesidades con los profesores, padres y apoderados, para que ellos puedan hacer propuestas desde su vivencia. Hemos levantado y construido participativamente una propuesta de política y educación en sexualidad en la comuna de Pedro Aguirre Cerda y lo hemos hecho levantando las necesidades y demandas de los jóvenes que tiene que ver con lo que es salud sexual y reproductiva, con lo que dicen padres y apoderados, profesores y la comunidad en general, salud, juntas de vecinos. Como institución somos facilitadores de aquellos que no tienen expresión: en este caso pueden ser niños y niñas que presenten sus demandas o personas adultas que no tienen voz y no se les escucha. Porque aparte del adultocentrismo, está el poder que tienen los profesionales frente a las personas que no tienen una capacitación o no han tenido la posibilidad de tener una capacitación sistemática. (Member of EDUK)*

*Con respecto a la política dirigida a los jóvenes yo la veo invisible. Es una política hecha por adultos y con la visión de solucionarnos a nosotros el problema de los jóvenes. Yo siento que está más dirigida a eso que a desarrollar jóvenes potentes para el futuro. (Member of VISION MUNDIAL)*

Another manifestation of this adult-centrism is seen in the lack of genuine spaces of youth participation. Rarely adolescents are seen as subjects with capabilities and potentialities that can contribute to improve the performance of a particular service, whether related to their education, healthcare or the community where they live. Most of the projects that have them as target groups are thought, designed, implemented and evaluated without assuming that they constitute crucial allies for the success of the selected strategies. Existing participatory experiences tend to reproduce the authorities'

preconceived ideas, more than being open to collect new viewpoints that may transform and re-signify interventions. Municipalities in Santiago have endorsed participatory discourses by creating spaces for civil society participation around specific fields such as the *Consejos de Salud* or the *Consejos de Infancia*. However, as expressed by participants in these instances, they fail to empower the youth and bring their stances to the fore, usually reproducing the adults and authorities viewpoints.

*En la comuna se encuentran las distintas organizaciones de jóvenes, que no son organizaciones necesariamente formales o legalizadas, pueden ser grupos, si uno va trabajando con ellos todos tienen el deseo y la necesidad que se le abran espacios de participación porque los problemas que ellos tienen son muy fuertes y no saben enfrentarlo solos. Pero la participación depende también de quienes son los directores de turno; quiénes son los directores del consultorio o del establecimiento educativo para que tengas entrada. En los últimos tiempos se habla de participación, por lo tanto las comunas tienen que lograr que la gente participe, los establecimientos escolares hablan de participación, hablan que los jóvenes tienen derechos, pero en la práctica no es así. Muchas de las instancias que se dicen de participación son, desde mi visión, de justificación de cosas. Porque las personas no tienen el suficiente grado de participación con decisión. Muchas veces se puede decir, yo tengo un Consejo Local de Salud, pero este no está empoderado para poder hacer el seguimiento, monitoreo y evaluación al consultorio, a los profesionales de la salud. O son manipulados para que digan muchas veces lo que las autoridades han programado y no lo que han decidido participativamente. Y eso pasa no solamente en salud, sino también en educación. Hay un “respeto” a la autoridad que impide decir cosas distintas a las que ellos opinan y, por tanto, nosotros hemos ido abriendo esos espacios de respeto, de encuentro de saberes, de que el poblador, el niño o joven tiene un conocimiento que tienes que tener en cuenta. (Member of EDUK)*

*También depende mucho del municipio. Por ejemplo, en Renca, tenemos una Alcaldesa que no nos deja participar mucho, que ha cortado todas las redes y no hay mucho espacio de participación, por un tema político, de miradas distintas. Se desarmaron todas las redes, los colegios municipales están cerrados, entonces ahí se dificulta. Pero en todos los otros proyectos los jóvenes son bastante escuchados. El ideal es que haya espacios que faciliten la participación de los jóvenes, que los escuche. Pero en general, los consejos de infancia de las municipalidades se hacen entre puros adultos. (Member of VISION MUNDIAL)*

Several organizations complained about the treatment that teenagers receive in public health clinics and hospitals. Despite the implementation of public

programs to grant universal access to contraception, some adolescent experience discrimination in health centers when demanding contraceptive methods. Health staff members still stigmatized adolescents who are sexually active, contradicting the governmental attempts to create friendly spaces for them. Again, beyond modern rights based public policies and discourses, the concrete organization of services fail to protect the adolescents in their rights to receive quality health care and health education. It seems as if the inertia of public health institutions cannot escape to cultural and societal prejudices that prevail in Chilean society. In this context, some NGOs seek to empower teenagers –especially women- to face up to discrimination and mistreatment in health clinics. Others prefer to work with health staff to transform prejudice and stigma, in order to create a welcoming atmosphere appropriate for the delivery of counseling services for the adolescents.

*Lo que se logró bastante fue que las mujeres no se dejaran avasallar en el trato en el consultorio, por ejemplo. Hubo un tema de empoderamiento de las mujeres y también de género, en forma bien transversal. A medida que fue avanzando el programa, y como equipo, fuimos descubriendo cuál era el enfoque real de género que quisimos dar. En esta época salió un trabajo en coordinación con el consultorio y este trabajo fue específico para adolescentes. En este periodo ya estaban llegando jóvenes hombres y mujeres y empezaron a detectar que había muy maltrato desde el portero en adelante a los jóvenes que iban a pedir anticonceptivos, etc. (Member of COSECH)*

*Pero no hemos avanzado mucho porque todavía no hay espacio para que los adolescentes puedan recurrir sin ser estigmatizados respecto del tema. Todavía no hay una parte del servicio que diga ‘Salud Adolescente’. No hemos avanzado en que los adolescentes tienen derecho a llevar una vida sexual, por lo tanto, no le podemos poner solamente obstáculos. Ni siquiera le estamos dando información. Te estoy hablando en términos generales. Información clara, oportuna. Si el adolescente toma la decisión de iniciar una vida sexual, darle recomendaciones. No se hace eso sino que se lo censura. Y la censura no viene sólo de la familia sino que de la sociedad en general. Parece que políticamente no es un tema que sea prioridad. (Member CEMERA)*

*Yo admiro que se haya aprobado las Normas de Regulación de la Fertilidad, después de 5 años de trabajo. Va a cumplirse un año de que la Norma se aprobó y todavía no se han capacitado los funcionarios, las matronas, que tienen que tener clara la película, que tienen que saber que ya no son ellas las que dicen los métodos a utilizar sino que tienen que dar el abanico y tu eliges. Hay planes, voluntad, pero no hay plata para ejecutar. (Member of APROFA)*

Confidentiality constitutes a crucial aspect in the provision of reproductive and sexual health services. This is particularly relevant in the context of Chilean society where social pressure may restrain adolescents from using this type of services. Despite conservative opposition to this measure, they have the legal right to request that their consultations remain confidential, even when the adolescent's parents are the ones requesting the information. In this context it is not strange that some adolescents prefer to use reproductive and sexual health services provided by NGOs, to avoid the risk of uncovering their sexual behavior to their families.

*Son adolescentes insertos en el sistema escolar, que vienen de todas las comunas del gran Santiago. Pero en general, los que acceden son chicos de nivel socioeconómico bajo. Pero tienen una característica especial: son adolescentes que no van al consultorio de su sector para acceder a servicios anticonceptivos, porque la actividad sexual que ellos mantienen es algo que no han comunicado a sus familias. El hecho de ir a su consultorio los expone a ser visto o reconocido por algún vecino u amigo que puede avisar a sus familias. (Member of CEMERA)*

The Chilean society may be considered the most traditional of our three studied countries, concerning the social sanctions and moral judgments that are placed upon teenage mothers as a consequence of what is considered an inappropriate behavior. This perception is encountered in some families who punish and sanction the adolescent, as well as educational centers that expel them claiming they are inappropriate role models for the rest of the students. In this context, some NGOs stand by these adolescents supporting them amidst social misjudgments and defending their rights to continue studying.



*Generalmente en las familias las castigan. Entonces no las dejan salir, no pueden ir al taller y, otras veces, cuando viven con las parejas, ellos también se oponen a que asistan. En general, las parejas son compañeros de colegio, chiquillos que no tienen medios de subsistencia, que viven a costillas de su familia original. [Los varones] sufren muchas menos sanciones sociales que ellas. Trabajamos mucho cuidando bastante el no enjuiciar, que no se culpen ni permitan que las culpen. (Member of COSECH)*

Despite governmental responses to the situation of teenage mothers, their rights are still insufficiently protected. Research projects conducted by the nongovernmental sector have provided concrete evidence of the difficulties that they encounter to continue their studies, bring up their children, find a well paid job and meet their financial needs. These research findings provide a platform to promote a rights' based agenda that claims State protection for the concrete needs of adolescent mothers and fathers.

*Lo que se puede hacer –y la gente del estado debería hacer, y nosotros lo hacemos- es una agenda que reconozca los derechos. Tu tienes madres y padres en las mismas condiciones y derechos que tienen los adultos madres y padres. Y en el ámbito de los derechos, se vulneran desde el derecho a los 12 años de educación. Entonces, hay dos líneas: una es el reconocimiento de los derechos por parte de las instituciones que trabajan con madres y padres adolescentes. Y lo segundo es cómo esos derechos se expresan en una agenda pública con recursos para eso. Hay dos o tres cuestiones básicas para madres y padres adolescentes: uno es el problema de dónde pueden dejar los hijos para seguir estudiando; no hay guarderías y salas cunas. Estamos hablando de una población que tiene muy pocos recursos, y entonces, el que no haya salas cunas no permiten que puedan seguir sus estudios. Otro tema es la colocación de puestos de trabajo para padres y madres que requieren de ello para sustentar sus familias, y en la cual los abuelos tampoco tienen recursos para hacerlo. Se requiere que ellos tengan lugares de trabajo que sean estables pero que además le permita estudiar. Lo otro que surge claro es que una proporción no menos importante va a la educación de adultos que es bastante menor en calidad que la educación media, por lo que les va a costar más llegar a institutos o la Universidad. Y lo otro es acceso a bienes como pañales que es lo más caro que hay y gran parte de los recursos de estos chicos se van en la compra de pañales, porque la alimentación a veces la consiguen de los abuelos. (Member of CEDEM)*

In their approach to motherhood, most NGOs work to expand the adolescent's horizon by promoting other dimensions of their life projects beyond maternity (e.g. education, recreation, employment). The majority of the organizations claim to work with

a gender perspective, trying to break the prevailing cultural role model experienced in their communities that propose maternity as the essence of women identity. Even more traditional and religious NGOs have adopted gender perspectives, sometimes by requirement of their international donors. A common empowering strategy is the formation of *monitoras*, who are members of the community that have been trained by the organization to expand this gender consciousness to other women in their neighborhoods.

*Se trabajaba [...] tratando de ampliar este universo de que la mujer, antes de ser madre y embarazada, es mujer, es persona, como para ir destruyendo el mito de que la mujer es sólo madre. Y luego a las mujeres se las invitaba a capacitarse como monitoras, las que a su vez, replicaban el programa a sus pares, en sus mismos sectores, lo que fue muy importante. Dejamos a unas 5 mil mujeres que quedaron preparadas para enfrentar de una manera distinta su embarazo, parto y puerperio. Y muchas de esas mujeres que eran monitoras terminaron organizándose autónomamente como grupo. (Member of COSECH)*

*El foco de la intervención cambia a partir de ANIDE [funding agency] en el sentido en que está interesado en potenciar mucho más el protagonismo de la adolescente. Antes nosotros teníamos el foco puesto en el desarrollo sicomotor de la niña, y se potenciaba a la joven en función de su rol de madre. [Promovíamos a] la madre como actor social. Hoy día, las monitoras tienen que tener nuevas competencias en el sentido de entender a la madre pero como joven, y trabajar el tema desde el enfoque de derechos. Un 50% de las monitoras son las mismas que vienen desde inicios del programa, pero se han ido renovando, lo cual ha sido intencional, por los cambios que van ocurriendo en el programa en términos de enfoque del programa. Las monitoras tienen entre 45 y 50 años y supone una dedicación de entre 10 horas semanales. (Member of the VICARIA PASTORAL SOCIAL)*

However, non governmental action aiming to empower young mothers faces significant challenges given the prevailing traditional gender role models. Identities are shaped by traditional forms of paternity and maternity which define responsibilities, expectations and behaviors. While fathers not always assume their paternity, mothers are heavily sanctioned if they fail to meet the maternal expectations placed upon them. Full

commitment to motherhood comes along with community recognition and the ascent to a higher status in the community hierarchy. However, the same commitment is not required from young males whose manhood is sufficiently demonstrated just by proving they are fertile. Hopefully, fatherhood may imply providing financial support if they have a job that make it possible. According to the experience of the NGO CEDEM, those willing to assume their paternity may be forced to abandon their studies to fulfill their “breadwinner” responsibility.

*Pertenecen a núcleos de hogares carenciados, distribuidos en todo el país. Sus recursos identitarios están muy marcados por las formas tradicionales de maternidad y paternidad y, por tanto, esto de madres criando y padres proveyendo es muy fuerte, lo que los lleva, casi por iniciativa propia, a que salgan del sistema escolar. Cuando hay parejas, son poco sustentables en el tiempo porque el tipo de vulnerabilidades que tienen hace difícil la continuidad de esa pareja como pareja. Por lo tanto, hay dificultad para la continuidad de ese núcleo familiar. Eso hace que la maternidad sea una que se ejerza con el propio hijo y los padres van siendo cada vez más distantes en la relación con los hijos si se quiebra la relación de continuidad afectiva.[...] Lo otro es que el hecho de la maternidad y paternidad los lleva a procesos de madurez más rápido y la asumen con más responsabilidad, desgraciadamente, cuando salen del colegio: las madres pueden ser mejores cuando están con sus hijos y padres que por tratar de proveer a sus hijos salen del sistema escolar. Entonces, entre las hipótesis que estamos trabajando es que aquellos que son responsables en su maternidad y paternidad salen del sistema escolar: salen, no a no hacer nada, sino a hacer lo que no pueden hacer si están estudiando. (Member of CEDEM)*

The majority of NGOs working with teenage parents tend to reduce the notion of “gender” to the implementation of projects that focus only on women. Only few organizations expressed their concern about integrating male partners or fathers in their activities and even less have implemented concrete strategies to get them involved. Although most organizations complain that fathers never show up and avoid assuming responsibilities, the truth is that they rarely define goals to address their needs or support them in their new role. By reducing the “gender perspective” to strategies that only seek

to transform women lives they neglect the relational dimension of gender and, therefore, limit the impact of their work.

As some feminist NGOs have realized, it is difficult to empower women and change their subordinated situation without working –at the same time- with their male partners and their masculine identities. A member of CEMERA acknowledged this bias in the following terms: *“atendemos más mujeres pero ello se debe a un sesgo nuestro ya que los especialistas que tenemos son, en su mayoría, ginecólogos. Tenemos una deuda con los adolescentes varones”*. This bias echoes the situation of public health clinics where reproductive and sexual health services are provided under the label of “women’s programs”, reinforcing the exclusion of young males. Some NGOs have begun to use Internet as a dissemination tool to reach males that feel uncomfortable when making questions face to face.

*Otra cosa necesaria, en el marco del advocacy, es multiplicar la información. Se abrió un sitio web, “infojoven”, y ha tenido una alta demanda. Entonces, las actividades de advocacy van dirigidas a actividades en terreno, pero también a través de Internet, porque nos damos cuenta que ese es el mejor lugar al que acceden los adolescentes porque no tienen que hacer preguntas cara a cara. Sabemos también que para los hombres eso es mucho mejor, porque las mujeres están acostumbradas a ir a hacer una consulta. Actualmente los servicios de salud resuelven los temas de salud sexual y reproductiva a través del “Programa de la Mujer” y, por tanto, cuando tu dices ‘programa de mujer’ dejas fuera a los hombres; el hombre entiende que la única forma de acceder a ese programa es a través de una pareja, y de una pareja estable que no necesariamente tiene un joven adolescente. Así, se manda un mensaje de que este servicio no está abierto a los jóvenes. (Member of ICMER)*

The spatial and territorial component constitutes another crucial dimension for non-governmental organizations in the field of adolescent fertility. Whether they seek to prevent or support teenage parenthood, the aim to empower community actors and coordinate actions between them has become increasingly present in their discourses. The language of NGO’s professionals is packed with permanent references to

communitarian social capital, local development, community participation, and institutional capabilities. Even more traditional and service oriented NGOs have aligned their discourses with the language mandates of the hour.

*Nuestra organización busca la construcción de capital social comunitario, responsable y comprometido con el desarrollo de las comunidades y la sociedad en general. Por ello, se ha hecho un gran esfuerzo -junto con otras organizaciones, el gobierno y las familias- en el desarrollo y construcción de capacidad ciudadana en las comunidades, a través de la realización de escuelas de dirigentes, gestión, diseño y evaluación de proyectos sociales. Los programas de desarrollo local que se implementan en las comunidades incluyen acciones de mejora en espacios públicos: plazas, caminos, alumbrado, mantenimiento de viviendas, alcantarillado, entre otros. Estos programas progresan cualitativamente el entorno donde transcurre la vida familiar y colectiva de los participantes de los proyectos. (Member of VISION MUNDIAL)*

Some organizations working directly with teenage parents have embraced community oriented strategies, in their search for better results and more appropriated approaches. The development of “home visits” and “community monitors” programs are some expressions of this increasing type of strategies. The NGO CEANIM, for example, implements bonding and stimulation programs in the house of the teenage mothers, in order to increase the involvement of family members in childrearing. “*Con las madres adolescentes y primerizas [first-time moms], se trabajan temas relacionados con el apego al bebe. Se trabaja el objetivo de empoderarlas de manera que puedan buscar sus recursos y soluciones en la misma comunidad. Por eso trabajamos con redes*” (Member of CEANIM). Training community members as monitors is a frequent strategy used by some organizations to support childrearing and mother-newborn bonding. According to these organizations, programs based on visits to the home of the adolescents by members of the community are likely to attain better results and keep them more engaged, compared with group meetings at NGO facilities.

*Se genera una estrategia de trabajo centrada en la madre a partir del desarrollo personal para ella y una estrategia que ya está consolidada que es la visita*

*domiciliaria a la madre. Una monitora voluntaria acompaña a la madre sobre cómo ir desarrollando el proceso de estimulación de sus hijos. Las monitoras son agentes pastorales o agentes comunitarios con un alto compromiso social. A ellas se les capacita; muchas de ellas, llevan muchos años, habiendo recibido largos procesos de capacitación y ellas acompañan a través de un esquema de trabajo que se les da, a las madres. Asisten a los consultorios, toman registro de las madres que se han registrado ahí y luego las acompañan. La estrategia de generar espacios colectivos de trabajo con las adolescentes no da tantos resultados como la visita domiciliaria. La participación a los grupos baja porque tiene que llevar a su guagua [daughter]. Baja en un 50% la participación. Además, hay que tener los espacios adecuados para trabajar con ellas. (Member of VICARIA DE LA PASTORAL SOCIAL)*

In Chile, teenage mothers tend to be stereotyped as a group that does not regularly attend health or education services. Thus, NGOs may deploy all their efforts and use various strategies to track and contact teenage mothers in their communities. In doing this NGOs are operating as extended arms of public services in their area of influence, seeking to assure they attend regular health check ups, keep turning up at school or go to hospitals appointments when required. As some observers have pointed out, NGOs have become important instruments in the machinery that monitors, controls and keeps track of the poor and socially vulnerable groups in our cities (De Martino 2007, Roberts 2004, Foucault 1991, Gordon 1991). In this respect, teenage mothers have become specially valued targets of NGOs intervention, sometimes conducting door to door searches and screenings in order to find them. Although inspired by goodwill, this approach may at times go too far and hamper the “empowering” goal, as it reinforces the adolescents’ passivity and lack of control over their lives. By feeling they know what the adolescent needs and ‘what is better for them’ NGOs may fall in the trap of acting on their behalf and taking away their initiative.

*Esta es una población que no demanda atención: hay que ir a buscarlas a sus casas. No va a la escuela, entonces hay una pesquisa [search] dentro de la comunidad para encontrarla, se visita el consultorio, se hace un puerta a puerta y la misma comunidad cuenta dónde hay una niña. (FUNDACION CERRO NAVIA)*

Also, teenage mothers are seen as reluctant to get out of their daily environments and attend meetings outside their communities. Therefore, as part of their empowering strategies, NGOs may include some visits to places outside their neighborhood, and contact with women experiencing different realities.

*También hemos detectado que es muy importante hacer trabajos de encuentro y jornada con las mujeres fuera de la comuna, porque en general, son sectores que no salen mucho de su población y están muy enrolladas en su entorno. Les hace bien separarse de su cotidianidad que es fuerte, que muchas veces las 'bajonea' [discourage] entonces esto les da más fuerza. Los empoderamientos se van produciendo mejor en la medida que dejaron su casa y son capaces de hacer cosas solas. (Member of COSECH)*

Sometimes to increase the community trust and confidence in the NGO work, the organization may seek governmental recognition or accreditation that acknowledges their contribution to public services. For example in the case of NGOs that have developed monitors programs to train community members as health promoters, the recognition of MINSAL is seen as necessary to increase people's confidence in monitors. Interestingly, after many years working in the community the NGO feel necessary to receive the validation of a governmental agency in order to establish contact with teenage mothers.

*Con el MINSAL se trata de reconocer el apoyo que se ha dado por años desde lo local. Ha habido buena relación: la monitora es reconocida como un agente comunitario que trabaja con estas madres. Entonces, la idea es ver cómo el Estado valida el trabajo de este agente comunitario, porque para el Estado y el MINSAL solamente esta tarea -la de representar a las madres adolescentes en el consultorio- la podría realizar una persona con otro perfil. Nuestra tarea es ver como el Estado acredita a esta monitora comunitaria que está capacitada o si se requiere capacitarla, pero para que realmente se reconozca ese trabajo, el aporte. Validar el rol que realiza esta monitora en una visita domiciliaria. Es central el tema del reconocimiento. Eso facilitaría que la gente confiara mucho más en ellas. (Member of VICARIA DE LA PASTORAL SOCIAL)*

As part of their institutional work with adolescents, almost all our studied organizations participate in networks of various types. In most cases networks have a geographical reference and include public and non public organizations actively working

in a specific territory. In some cases, NGOs may participate in sector oriented networks usually convened by the specialized governmental agency (e.g. MINSAL, MINEDUC, SENAME, SERNAM). The networks' goals may range from simple exchange of information about services and resources in the community, reciprocal derivation of adolescents, coordination of actions and activities, and –less frequently- the definition of strategic objectives in common.

*Se trabaja en redes comunitarias y sectoriales. Las comunitarias son trabajo con la parroquia, el consultorio, salud mental para la derivación. A nivel institucional con el Ministerio de Educación, Salud, algunas ONGs como el Programa “Emprende Mamá”. Con el MINEDUC [Ministry of Education] estamos recién en conversaciones con la idea de incorporar a las chicas al sistema escolar, sobre todo en el tema de salas cunas. (Member of VICARIA PASTORAL SOCIAL)*

*En el tema de la maternidad adolescente no hay espacios propiamente. Si lo ponemos en términos genéricos, de los jóvenes, entonces sí hay espacios municipales y comunales. Entonces ahí se participa y se habla de la maternidad adolescente, como hablas de los infractores de ley, de quienes consumen drogas, los clubes culturales, los talleres deportivos. Pero espacios específicos no existen. Así, está la red de infancia, la red de drogas, la comisión mixta donde está educación, salud, convocada por el municipio. También está la red de no violencia que es un espacio privado donde se trabajan temas de violencia intrafamiliar y nosotros participamos. La red de infancia también la convocan las instituciones de infancia y no el municipio. (Member of Fundación CERRO NAVIA)*

Some organizations complain that there are important variations across municipalities some of which do not share the same disposition to prioritize and strengthen the formation of local networks in their *comunas*. As we have observed, there are great levels of disparity in the support that municipal authorities provide to local networks, beyond the basic level of mere exchange of information and derivation of cases.

*Trabajamos con las organizaciones que existan dentro de la comuna: el municipio, los consultorios, la OPD [Planning and Development Office]. Las organizaciones varían dependiendo de cada comuna. Si el coordinador de la red cree en el trabajo la red funciona, pero si no, se reúnen unos poquitos no más. Yo*



*no veo una disposición muy buena. Cuando tuvimos que conseguir espacios tuvimos mejor recepción de la junta de vecino que de los consultorios, pero ellos no brindan muchos espacios. El trabajo va más en conjunto cuando se refiere a la derivación: tu me derivas, yo te derivo. [...] Pero es una estrategia trabajar coordinadamente porque tu vez los distintos proyectos y tienen la misma población beneficiaria. (Member of CEANIM)*

But not only governmental actors may disbelieve in the bondages of networking and coordination between different organizations with presence in the field. Some NGOs have experienced the existence of too many networks, which meetings and requirements may distract them from their “core” and “principal” responsibilities. Furthermore, in the discourse of some organizations, network participation and serving the youth are seen as competing objectives, sometimes difficult to combine. The tension between these goals can be clearly perceived in the expression of a NGO member working in the comuna of Cerro Navia: “*Entonces tenemos que hacer la opción de en qué redes participamos porque si no, te pasas la vida en reuniones de redes y elegimos según nuestras prioridades. Porque la primera prioridad de nosotros es la joven; si eso nos deja tiempo para formar redes lo hacemos*”. (Member of FUNDACION CERRO NAVIA).

However, there is a generalized recognition among most NGOs that territorial coordination is crucial for the implementation of successful strategies of sexual education and the support of young parents. The NGO EDUK, for example, has been a pioneer in the use of a community perspective in the development of sexual education programs, linking health clinics staffs with professors and teachers from educational centers. As they say, little can be attained if actors do not embrace a community approach.

*Ahora apostamos a hacer un trabajo de sexualidad a nivel comunitario. Nosotros apostamos a que más allá de las comunidades educativas, por supuesto que se tiene que trabajar, hemos ido ampliando nuestra perspectiva por todas las series teóricas y prácticas, que **es en la comuna donde se dan las condiciones para hacer educación en sexualidad, promoción de salud o trabajo de prevención de embarazos no deseados.** (Member of EDUK)*

Building reliable and stable links among community actors may face some challenges, especially between governmental and nongovernmental organizations. NGOs working in coordination with public health clinics and hospitals may have problems when there are changes in the responsible of the services. They complain that relationships are not institutionalized and they function on the basis of personal liaisons. *“No está institucionalizado que desde el centro se pueda derivar a un consultorio, para hacer un pap [pap smear or test]. Descansa en que yo tengo una amiga en el consultorio que me tramita las muestras. Esa es una deuda nuestra: poder oficializar los vínculos o que haya un reconocimiento institucional entre APROFA y otras instituciones”.* (Member of APROFA)

In sum, two different approaches of community participation and collaboration can be acknowledged among the Chilean surveyed organizations. For a large majority of organizations, community participation is somewhat related to the mobilization of local resources that are required to assure the sustainability of current projects. This mobilization may come in various forms such as volunteer work, local infrastructure or provision of useful information. Several organizations in our sample have included actions to develop and enhance community capacities to prepare local actors to assume new responsibilities. In some extreme cases, NGOs may even be reluctant to continue with their projects if the community is not able to assure its continuation. Using the terms of one interviewee, for these organizations community empowerment could be defined as “institutionalized solidarity” since it aims to develop embedded mechanisms of solidarity within the members and groups of the community.

*Como trabajamos el tema de la **solidaridad institucionalizada**, motivamos a la comunidad para que trabaje: nuestra organización tiene un alto porcentaje de trabajo voluntario. Entonces, la gente pone al servicio de los demás su trabajo en forma gratuita. En el trabajo con madres adolescentes trabajamos sólo con madres. [...] En el año '94 la Vicaría se va porque se le acaba el financiamiento*

*y la Fundación decide tomar el programa y ponemos como condición que la comunidad se haga cargo. Nosotros prestamos la asesoría técnica y la comunidad pone las monitoras. Llegamos a tener 25 monitoras trabajando con 70 chiquillas. Y ese es el sentido: **si no hay comunidad que se haga cargo, nosotros cerramos el programa** independientemente de la postura que tengamos con el embarazo adolescente. (Member of Fundación Cerro Navia)*

*Precisamente a partir del año 2006 en que comenzamos un nuevo proyecto trienal [three-year project], la apuesta que nosotros tenemos es que la gente se haga cargo de sus propios problemas, de la solución de sus problemas, de tal modo que vaya surgiendo su empoderamiento. Hoy seguimos con esa visión, pero por otro lado los grupos pequeños son muy autorreferentes y no logran salir hacia la comunidad. A nivel de financiamiento hay reparos en eso porque se invierte mucha plata pero se tienen resultados a muy largo plazo. (Member of COSECH)*

Another group of organizations –less numerous, more professionalized and politicized- have embraced the so called “active citizenship” approach. This perspective emphasizes the public responsibility that all members of the community have in the full enforcement of citizenship rights. Community participation and empowerment is not just a matter of resource mobilization to supplement the failure of a limited State, but the shared responsibility of governmental and nongovernmental actors. NGO alliances with public sector and innovative institutional forms that blur the limits between state and civil society are seen as instruments to improve the quality of public services and adequate them to the needs of local users. Thus, this approach highlights the public dimensions implicit in nongovernmental action as it plays a crucial role in improving citizen’s access to public services. Given the challenge of social exclusion and the limits that it poses to the full realization of citizenship in poor communities, grass roots, NGOs and service users should have a voice to improve, evaluate, and control governmental programs, they claimed. As described by some Chilean observers, the “active citizenship” approach may be different from previous forms of participation in that it accounts for the complexity of

poverty and acknowledges the potential contribution of every actor to fully enforce the citizen rights (Fernandez and Ochsenius 2005).

*Cuando nosotros hemos trabajado con el Ministerio de Salud desde el enfoque de derechos y **ciudadanía activa** y han comprendido lo fundamental de su intervención en relación a un joven, los cambios han sido muy grandes. Cuando hemos trabajado en educación o salud con todos los actores que la componen, los hemos juntado a todos y ha sido muy rico cuando comprenden que el embarazo adolescente es responsabilidad de todos, en lo que refiere al trabajo de prevención. (Member of EDUK)*

For adolescents in general and teenage mothers and fathers in particular, the *active citizenship* approach may open some spaces “from below” to enforce the rights that current reforms and policies have granted them in Chile. Our analysis of nongovernmental action shows an incipient number of organizations that are attempting to give a voice to the adolescents in the policy making process. The agenda of these organizations promotes the empowerment of adolescents groups as autonomous social actors, ones that are necessary to deepen current process of state modernization in Chile.

*Nuestra aspiración es que a través de la organización de nuestros centros podamos articular a la sociedad civil organizada [para] que pueda demandar política pública para los jóvenes. Pero yo creo que hoy estamos lejos de fortalecer ese nivel de liderazgo en los jóvenes que trabajan con nosotros. Creo que mucho de lo que se hace o no se hace descansa más en la experiencia que tiene la gente que en lo que podemos hacer nosotros. (Member of APROFA)*

### **Uruguay: “Nadie me va a felicitar que estoy embarazada?”**

In our analysis of the Uruguayan nongovernmental action we did not encounter as much ‘empowering’ discourses and practices as we found in Chile. This is not to say that they were absent, but definitely the rhetoric was less permeated by ‘emancipatory’ discourses seeking to promote greater levels of ‘active citizenship’ or ‘policy participation’ among the adolescents. Giving voice to the adolescents in the policy arena

or helping them to get organized is definitely something outside the core agendas of the organizations in Uruguay.

Of the three sources of identity we examined (age, gender, and community) demands based on gender issues were the most visible ones, although they do not create spaces to voice the demands of poor adolescents. Clearly feminist NGOs were the most confrontational in their discourses, although they marginally address issues related to the situation of poor young mothers and their children. As we will see, the issue of teenage motherhood represents a major challenge for the feminist ideology, as it confronts some traditional movement's assumptions. Additionally, claims in favor of teenage fathers as subjects of policy are almost inexistent and only a few organizations sought to include them as target groups in their projects.

Among our studied organizations, there was an absence of initiatives to promote adolescent's participation in public spaces where they could voice their demands on issues related to parenthood or reproductive rights. Two exceptions should be mentioned here, being the first one a group of young people who organize themselves to promote sexual and reproductive rights in schools, and the second one, a professional NGO that embraced an atypical approach centered on youth participation. At the time we contacted the first initiative (called *DESYR, Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos*) their activities had been discontinued as a result of lack of funding and governmental support.

The second exception we encountered was the case of *Iniciativa Latinamericana*, a NGO that put forward a path-breaking project (for Uruguayan standards) called "*Pintó cuidarse*"<sup>59</sup>. The project sought to train adolescents in poor communities to become active citizens who would promote and expand the recognition of adolescent rights in their own communities, including public services and institutions they regularly have

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<sup>59</sup> Is a slung expression that could be translated into English as "it is time to take care of ourselves".

contact with. The central idea of the project is to challenge the prevailing prejudices and stigmas attached to poor adolescents in their communities, by giving them responsibility in the organization of activities and projects in favor of their neighborhoods. *Iniciativa Latinoamericana* was the only organization that made an explicit reference to notion of ‘active citizenship’ and the need to challenge the ‘adult-centric’ vision that permeates programs and policies for adolescent groups. Of course the implementation of the project was not exempt of tensions, but it was acknowledged as a great learning experience for both sides -the adolescents and the institutions they work with.

*Pero ciertamente las tensiones en este diálogo fraterno han traído muchos aprendizajes. Y cuando uno ve que ya han pasado 6 meses de ejecución, ha visto ejemplos fantásticos de cómo los jóvenes están actuando con sus pares, con las autoridades de los liceos, las autoridades de las policlínicas, como están desarrollando actividades, con qué creatividad, con qué innovación, estamos hablando de gurises [young people] en los barrios más jodidos [poorest neighborhoods], porque Iniciativa Latinoamericana trabaja con los pobres donde INFAMILIA definió las zonas más vulnerables. (Member of Iniciativa Latinoamericana)*

The organization is completely aware of the limits of their intervention, beyond the strengths and the advantages of their approach. They have realized that empowering and training the adolescents to become health promoters and active citizens in their communities is not reversing the deep causes of poverty and social exclusion that they experience. Furthermore, they recognize that attaining this goal is beyond their possibilities and that it requires a renewed approach from the State to obtain better results.

*Sin duda los programas educativos como el llevado adelante por Iniciativa Latinoamericana, dan respuesta a una carencia de información sobre sexualidad, derechos sexuales y reproductivos, además de la importante formación que supone la educación para el ejercicio de la ciudadanía. Pero no dan respuesta a otros problemas como la pobreza, la ausencia de proyectos personales alternativos o que retrasen la maternidad como ser proyectos educativos o laborales. Desde el Estado se está respondiendo con políticas fragmentadas, que no abarcan la complejidad de la realidad social de estas adolescentes madres, o*

*las que no lo son pero lo desean, porque en su realidad social es muy difícil desarrollar otros proyectos de vida. (Member of Iniciativa Latinoamericana)*

For those projects working directly with teenage mothers and fathers, embracing a participatory approach has meant to open spaces for the adolescents to discuss the institutional decisions that may concern them. These spaces of deliberation may take the form of assemblies or regular meetings, but they basically constitute encounters between staff and participants, when responsibilities are distributed and rules about the functioning of the projects are agreed upon. However, these instances may bring to the fore some tensions between the adolescent's and the adult's world, that have to be negotiated, or finally make clear that some decisions are to be taken within the orbit of the organization's staff.

*Es fundamental el trabajo en equipo, todas las semanas todos participamos del trabajo en equipo, se construye eso también participativamente, hay asimetrías por las distintas responsabilidades, pero las estrategias del acompañamiento de las adolescentes se toma en colectivo, las decisiones en relación a la vida con ellas es participativo con ellas y entre todos nosotros [...] También hay desencuentros, a veces las adolescentes no entienden a los adultos y viceversa. A veces los adolescentes sienten que los adultos se meten mucho. Venir a este proyecto supone que de golpe va a haber mucha gente metida en el medio, involucradas en su vida, viendo como se alimentan, pero siendo menos un control social, a una cuestión de construcción colectiva, de proyecto de vida, personal, que supone encuentros, desencuentros. (Member of La Bonne Garde)*

*Cada 15 días hay asambleas con las adolescentes, donde se recuerdan las normas de funcionamiento y de convivencia; estas instancias se repiten ya que hay continuos ingresos. Hay mucho de participación y de toma de decisiones como la organización de los campamentos, pero hay cosas en que decide la coordinación. La participación más protagónica de las adolescentes también se da a nivel de talleres. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

Despite these examples, the initiatives to give voice to the adolescents needs and demands within their communities and institutions are not at all frequent. Those organizations working in direct contact with them made clear the need to open further spaces for participation, so the adult world can better understand their needs and design

appropriate policies and programs. This demand becomes an urgent one particularly within educational and public health institutions where poor adolescent feels strangers. However, NGOs tend to be reluctant to foster more political and confrontational strategies, as they may fear the consequences of taking a critical stand against governmental agencies.

Demands and claims from feminist NGOs are definitely more vocal and visible. Like in most countries, also in Uruguay gender based NGOs have sought to advance health and reproductive rights as part of a wider women's rights agenda. However, for these organizations, women's identity may override other sources of self-identification, such as it is case of teenage mothers. As we have observed, gender oriented organizations may end up working with teenage mothers although their initial goal, was one of supporting women to avoid maternity rather than supporting the 'mother project'. One of our surveyed organizations, *Casa de la Mujer* -a genuinely feminist NGO- has a clear institutional goal:

*“Nuestro objetivo es crear un espacio de reflexión, capacitación y acción desde y para las mujeres, contribuyendo a la construcción de una nueva identidad del ser “Mujer”, como sujeto de cambio social. Buscamos impulsar programas tendientes a generar igualdad de oportunidades entre hombres y mujeres en todos los ámbitos de la sociedad” (Member of Casa de la Mujer de la Unión)*

The institution's initial purpose to advance an educational strategy to prevent new pregnancies promptly evolved into greater engagement with teenage mothers, supporting their life project and bringing to the fore the role of fathers. Interestingly, the demands of the adolescents forced new responses straining central aspects of the institutional identity. Although the classic *woman versus mother* discourse endured in the organization's approach, it was progressively turned into *woman and mother*, as complementary dimensions both of which require attention.



*Frente a la temática del embarazo adolescente en Casa de la Mujer nos planteamos la estrategia educativa como principal método de prevención. [...] Nuestras primeras acciones institucionales que intentaron dar respuestas a la problemática del embarazo adolescente, tenían como fin la prevención del embarazo, hasta que luego empezamos a incorporar proyectos de atención de la adolescente embarazada, con el fin de apoyarla, acompañarla en su embarazo y maternidad, al tiempo que se buscamos apuntalarla en la búsqueda de un proyecto de vida que no se limite únicamente a la maternidad. Con la acumulación de experiencia y reflexión sobre el tema **hoy tenemos una postura de contextualizar el tema y comprender el embarazo en la adolescencia dentro de una trayectoria de vida y de necesidades.** (Member of Casa de la Mujer)*

At times, working with poor teenagers may challenge the vision of middle-class professionals that usually work at NGOs. The policy mandate of pregnancy prevention can be so pervasive that it may create ambiguity in the reaction of NGO's staff when they face the news of an unexpected pregnancy in one of the participants. This tension was once made clear in *Casa Lunas* when a teenage got pregnant and directly inquired members of the staff why no one congratulated her. What the NGO staff saw as a failure according to the institutional goals, it was a reason of joy and pride for the participant.

*Al comienzo el enfoque de Casa Lunas apuntaba, entre otras cosas a evitar el segundo embarazo, hasta que una de las propias adolescentes nos hizo cambiar de enfoque. Un día una madre adolescente integrada a Casa Lunas aparece embarazada de su segundo hijo y preguntó: “¿nadie me va a felicitar que estoy embarazada?”. Al principio quedamos shockeados. Vino con la noticia y, bueno, fue un bajón; nos preguntamos en qué habíamos fallado, porque si el objetivo de Casa Lunas era que las adolescentes no se embarazaran una segunda vez .... El problema fue que el proyecto falló y dónde estaban las fallas. Hasta que ella – la madre adolescente - nos cuestionó. Entonces, nos preguntamos: ¿dónde están los objetivos, en nuestras expectativas que somos de otra clase social, con otros abordajes, con otra formación? (Member of Casa Lunas)*

This tension is a permanent one among the few organizations working with teenage mothers. In all the observed cases, organizations transitioned from an initial vision of maternity as a problem to one that sees it as a condition of possibility. In other words, most organizations recognize that in the past they were seeking to develop life-

projects, alternatives to motherhood. After working so closely to the adolescent's situation and grasping its real meaning, they moved into the need of developing 'complementary' projects to maternity. This need to develop 'complementary' projects rather than alternative ones summarizes the process experienced by most NGOs.

*Este cuestionamiento fue uno de los principales cambios de enfoque que tuvo Casa Lunas, lo que representó un desafío muy grande pues tuvimos que dejar de lado estereotipos de lo que es bueno o malo, prejuicios y valoraciones. Nuestro proyecto no es un proyecto cerrado, sino que se va adaptando a las necesidades y señales que dan las mismas adolescentes. En ese momento nos ponemos como objetivo plantear un proyecto complementario -y no alternativo- de la maternidad; se trata de ver a la maternidad no como un proceso excluyente a otro, sino complementario. La maternidad ya está, nosotros trabajamos con la maternidad, por lo tanto no se trata de hacer un proyecto alternativo. En realidad se trata de complementar esa maternidad, porque las dos patas del proyecto son, por un lado, el trabajo del vínculo temprano y todo lo que tiene que ver con el proyecto de vida en lo educativo, en lo laboral y, por qué no, otro hijo". (Member of Casa Lunas)*

In the case of typical gender based NGOs, like *Casa de la Mujer*, the change implied major discussions within the organization as it challenged the feminist mainstream approaches that see motherhood in poor contexts as unwanted and posing obstacles for other projects. However, in the light of their community work they centered their approach on the idea of autonomy, seeking to provide the necessary information so the adolescents can make informed decisions. Additionally, they conceive adolescence as a necessary transition period that tends to be usually shorten (if not inexistent) in poor contexts. Therefore, they hinder their condemnatory vision of teenage pregnancy, while embracing the notion of 'life project' at the core of their approach. Also, avoiding a second pregnancy becomes the 'second best' as they assume the first one sometimes is inevitable.

*Cuando trabajábamos el tema del embarazo adolescente, era desde la perspectiva de la prevención, como a evitar el embarazo, no? Y siento que después hubo como un cambio, digamos, consensual, incluso me acuerdo que fue muy necesaria la profundización de la discusión en el equipo (...) Entonces*

*incluimos esa perspectiva, para modificar de alguna manera el enfoque y poder aumentar el grado de autonomía frente a la decisión que se toma de tener un hijo o no. La prevención se enfocaba más allá, **trabajando mucho en un proyecto de vida**, legitimar el ser joven, porque muchas veces hay un tema ahí que es vital, que tiene que ver con ese sector de la población que se saltea la juventud y se pasa de la adolescencia a un rol adulto, un rol materno, no? Entonces, nos parece importante legitimar ese periodo de juventud, legitimar otros proyectos, la creación de otros proyectos, pero sin condenar el embarazo, en ese momento. (Member of Casa de la Mujer de la Unión)*

*Lo que hacemos mucho **es trabajar su proyecto de vida**, lo que hemos dicho siempre es que la maternidad no es la única opción de vida y que sí, está bien ser madre, pero que no es lo único que las puede salvar. Y sobretodo tratar de que no haya un segundo embarazo atrás de ese, porque con un embarazo podemos hacer algo, pero ya con dos o tres, olvídase vas a tener que cuidar niños. Y si no se forman a esa edad, después va a ser más difícil ingresarlos. (Member of Casa de la Mujer de la Unión)*

For *La Bonne Garde* and *Casa Lunas* teenage mothers should be considered in both dimensions of their identity: as adolescents and as mothers. Regarding the former, they will assure they have time for themselves, to continue their studies, to go out and party as every adolescent of their age might have. Regarding the latter, they will provide the necessary support so they can take appropriate care of and raise their children. Although in most cases the fathers are absent, they will foster spaces to encourage them to take responsibility on childrearing.

*También en esos primeros encuentros se puede llegar a procesar **que los padres adolescentes se hagan cargo de los niños**, porque a veces las adolescentes no están en condiciones psicológicas de asumir la crianza del niño. Hay como un encargo social de que la madre tiene que hacerse cargo del niño más allá de las ventajas psico-afectivas que uno puede depositar allí. Pero bueno, se plantea qué pasa con los padres adolescentes, qué pasa con las familias de los padres adolescentes y ese es un objetivo el trabajar con el núcleo familiar” (Member of *La Bonne Garde*).*

When fathers are present *Casa Lunas* seeks to integrate them during childbirth education sessions, and prepare them to support the mother during birth labor. As the father's age may vary considerably is not always easy to engage them in the project's

activities. Providing support to find a job or encourage them to do so, may be one of the manners that the institution may connect with their interests.

*Una vez vino un papá que tenía 29 años, y no trabajaba y no hacía nada; venía acá todo el día. Entonces nos cuestionamos cuál era el trabajo con el padre, ¿una asistencia cotidiana en la casa? Capaz que no. Después también había otro papá de 17 años que venía todos los días pero un día dijo: ‘yo quiero trabajar’. Entonces trabajar con el papá también es apoyarlo en el tema laboral. También integramos al papá el taller de embarazo para que pueda apoyar a la mamá en el momento del parto; y participar en el momento del parto ejerciendo su derecho; que participe también en la educación de sus hijos, hacerlo participe también en la crianza (Member of Casa Lunas)*

Getting rights enforced for adolescent mothers can become extremely difficult when the time of giving birth comes and they must face the overwhelming medical machinery at public hospitals. Although there is a law which grants the adolescent mother the right to be accompanied at all times by one person of their choice (see Chapter 2), medical staff would deny his/her entrance into the delivery room based on specious motives, such as their need to come with the ‘appropriate’ attire. To enforce their rights *Casa Lunas* would prepare the adolescent in advance by providing the necessary clothing and handling the printed law prior, so they will allow the adolescent companion to go in.

*La ley dice que las parturientas tienen derecho a estar acompañadas pero el hospital hacía un boicot, porque también hay que cambiar una mentalidad. Que al médico de golpe y porrazo le digan que “el tipo del cante” [the male partner from the ‘cantegril’] tiene derecho a estar en el momento del parto ... le cuesta mucho aceptar ese cambio. Entonces les decían que no podían entrar porque no tenían traje. Entonces compramos los trajes y **les dimos una impresión de la ley, entonces de alguna manera es empoderar [empower] a los usuarios de salud para que ejercieran los derechos**, con medidas concretas. Otro que exigían era la autorización del director del hospital, pero la ley no dice eso. No muchos se animaron, pero hemos logrado que la mamá, un familiar, una amiga, haya entrado en el momento del parto. En el parto y en todo el pre parto. Me parece que en eso se ha avanzado muchísimo. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

After examining the role of gender and age issues as sources for claiming rights or promoting changes, we will now turn to the role of community or locality as a central

dimension in the institutional strategies. For most of our studied organizations in Uruguay, the participation in territorial networks becomes a crucial part of the work they perform in favor of adolescents. Service oriented organizations experience territorial networks as means to mobilize community resources, get updated information about ongoing programs and services in the community, and facilitate their participants' privileged access to other institutional settings. Discourses about participating in networks, articulating efforts with other community actors and increasing the levels of coordination among services in the territory have become fashionable references in the language of NGO staff. However, the question still remains about to what extent are these networks empowering community actors and effectively advancing adolescents rights?

For the majority of our surveyed organizations in Uruguay, participating in a territorial network means opportunities to go beyond the formal institutional contacts and build more personal relationships that facilitate seizing opportunities in favor of the institution and its project's participants. On the one hand, the network operates as a source of contacts, funding and information that provides opportunities for the NGO's survival and mission attainment. This may come as new opportunities to participate in municipal programs, to recruit new participants who are referred to the organization by other members of the network, or to build a direct liaison with a health clinic or a high school director. On the other hand, these opportunities might be translated into concrete opportunities for the project's participants in the form of privileged access to public services, or seizing a job or learning opportunity. The presence of governmental services representatives in territorial networks –whether municipal or ministerial- can make a real difference for both, the organization and those who participate in its projects.

*La Casa ha trabajado en una relación estrecha con algunas áreas de la Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo [local government of the city] principalmente con el centro comunal zonal [municipal community center] y la*

*policlínica municipal. Tenemos un contacto muy fluido con ellos. Además pertenecemos a una red barrial en donde optimizamos los recursos zonales. Esta vinculación con dependencias municipales zonales nos facilita el contacto, las relaciones y el conocimiento mutuo con otras dependencias municipales con las que tenemos convenios laborales y educativos-laborales. Sin embargo con aquellos organismos estatales donde no trabajamos desde lo local el relacionamiento no es tan fluido, y está más estructurado por los lineamientos de cada convenio. Ahí no tenemos mayores posibilidades de intercambiar ideas, apoyo, articular nuevas propuestas por parte de la institución. (Member of La Bonne Garde)*

For those NGOs working directly with teenage mothers and fathers, building linkages with other community experiences may enhance the scope of opportunities they can offer to the participants. As one NGO made clear, overcoming social exclusion requires the interconnected support of several community actors, each of which may address a particular need in the adolescent situation. In a context where formal education is failing to grant the opportunities for social integration, other NGOs in the community may play a significant role in providing vocational training, transportation, employment orientation, or, hopefully, a job opportunity. In all these cases, the central idea is to maximize the use of the resources available in the community to enhance the adolescent's life opportunities.

*Pero el problema es que no dejaron el liceo porque quedaron embarazadas, dejaron en liceo porque sintieron que no iban a poder con el liceo, porque el liceo las expulsa, porque son pobres, porque no pueden pagarse los boletos, no puede pagar los cursos, porque tienen que salir a trabajar, entonces ¿el problema es la maternidad o el problema es la pobreza? Por eso buscamos otros contextos en donde las adolescentes se sientan más cómodas, como los cursos y talleres del Instituto Nacional de la Juventud (INJU), cursos que tienen ONG de las zonas. Estas derivaciones muchas veces son por iniciativa de las propias adolescentes que deciden capacitarse o también nosotros averiguamos a nivel interno quién puede estar interesada en esos cursos. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

For these NGOs, territorial networks can also play an important role in order to avoid participant's extreme dependency and increase their level of autonomy. In the eyes of external observers, organizations like *Casa Lunas* or *La Bonne Garde* could be

criticized for being extremely over protective, somewhat preventing the development of the adolescent's pursue of personal autonomy and independence. Being aware of this risk, these NGOs also look at the local networks as spaces outside the limits of their organizations where the adolescents can seek for extra-mural support and face more worldly experiences.

*La idea es que si bien es fundamental que las adolescentes conozcan sus derechos a partir de formar parte de un convenio con el INAME también es importante que ellas puedan hacer un aprendizaje de los recursos de la zona para la inserción. Si bien los recursos de salud del INAU o del Pereira Rossell [public hospital] están, la idea es que también puedan participar de las actividades que las policlínicas zonales les ofrecen así como también las guarderías de la zona o los centros juveniles. (Member of La Bonne Garde)*

*Casa Lunas apuesta a un trabajo en red como una forma de que las adolescentes no se institucionalicen y aprendan a utilizar los recursos tanto de la zona como a nivel de servicios centrales. Es decir que el objetivo de las redes es que las adolescentes no esperen todo del centro, sean independientes y aprendan a moverse en otros ámbitos. A modo de ejemplo, en Casa Lunas no hay médicos para que las madres sigan relacionándose y vinculándose con los centros de salud de la zona. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

Although the need of institutional coordination and articulation at the local level is always present, sometimes the creation of a network requires of a legitimated community actor with the capacity to enact the initiative and agglutinate local institutions. Unlike we have observed in the Chilean case, the State in Uruguay would be reluctant to take the lead and in most cases this role is played by a nongovernmental actor. Such was the experience we observed in the neighborhood of *Villa Española*, where *Casa de la Mujer* was advancing a project for poor female adolescents. The implementation of their project in the community triggered the formation of a local network to coordinate all existing adolescent's services in the area, responding to a long lasting demand unmet until then

*Hicimos una primera propuesta y llamamos a una reunión a todos los referentes de las policlínicas, a todos los referentes de los centros de enseñanza y en esa*

*primera reunión la idea era plantearles el proyecto que habíamos ganado. La idea de trabajar en esta propuesta nueva, la idea de aporte nutricional que se les iba a dar, sobretudo a las embarazadas fue muy bien recibida por las zona. Pero a nosotros nos llamó la atención, porque desde ese mismo grupo que nos reunimos esa vez, sale una idea de que en la zona no había absolutamente nada que coordinara todo lo que existía en la zona para adolescentes. Entonces tomaron ese punto y hace dos años que nos reunimos el segundo viernes de cada mes. El año pasado fue conocernos e irnos pasando cosas, porque es impresionante la cantidad de actividades que se hacen. (...)Y este año dijimos a ver que más podemos hacer que no sea solamente contarnos lo que estamos haciendo, y salta una y dice que lo precisamos es nosotros mismos perfeccionarnos en algunos puntos. Y el primer tema a perfeccionar es género, te digo género porque es algo que se está transversalizando (...), por lo tanto nosotras con mi compañera al mes siguiente hicimos un taller de género desde el inicio, de que es el género con ejemplos, con dinámica con todo y además todos los meses se hace una actividad, sobre la salud bucal, sobre discapacidad cada mes se va proponiendo un tema. El mes que viene es el mes de evaluación, o sea, que cada uno tiene que llevar una evaluación de todas las cosas logradas en base a la red. Y bueno, se consolidó sola como una necesidad y hemos logrado llevarla adelante. (Member of Casa de la Mujer)*

However, beyond the concrete importance of networks at the local level, they rarely gain leverage and acquire political influence as to generate transformations in public policy. Although some NGOs may aspire to move some steps forward and use networks as an empowering tool to gain negotiation power *vis a vis* governmental agencies, this does not happen around adolescent policy issues. In the vision of a member of *Iniciativa Latinoamericana*, the State is not to be blamed for this situation, as it is an inherent responsibility of civil society. In fact, the institution's experience in the field of HIV/AIDS shows that it is possible for civil society to self-organize and mobilize, despite the State failures and lack of support.

*Yo creo que acá en Uruguay en estos últimos años tanto con las dos administraciones han dado varios tipos de esto, pero en realidad la sociedad civil tiene que tener la capacidad y la competencia de auto-organizarse. Lo digo por ejemplo en el tema del sida donde realmente no ha favorecido para nada las políticas que se hacen, pero la sociedad civil ha tenido la capacidad de articular los diferentes actores, asociaciones, grupos de personas portadoras, grupos o personas que hemos tenido la capacidad de constituir un foro autónomo plural. Y bueno, yo creo que el Estado no es el que tiene que articular la sociedad civil. Yo*



*ahí asumo las responsabilidades propias de la sociedad civil. Yo creo que somos nosotros los que tenemos que organizarnos. Justamente si hay formas jurídicas, modalidades organizativas que no favorecen, es la sociedad civil que tiene que reaccionar para proponer otras modalidades de relacionamiento con el Estado. (Member of Iniciativa Latinoamericana)*

## **Argentina: “Hablar de derechos... es como hablarles en Inglés”**

The case of Argentina shows a good number of youth and adolescent groups mobilizing around issues that relate to teenage pregnancy prevention and sexual and reproductive rights in general. Although experiences may vary in their degree of development, we encountered high levels of agency and autonomy in adolescent collective action. Maybe the most visible case of this type is the National Adolescent Network for Sexual and Reproductive Rights –the *REDNACADOL*- who plays an active role throughout the country, helping youth groups to organize themselves and voice their demands to local services and authorities. New technologies and access to internet play a key role to keep the organizations connected and receive timely information. Also this sometimes operates as a restriction as not all the network members has equal access to technology resources.

*Sí, nosotros tenemos un grupo muy activo. En lo que es la página Web de la red están todas las organizaciones que trabajan con nosotros, hay algunas que son muy activas y que tienen un trabajo con jóvenes y adolescentes muy importantes, que tienen grupos de alrededor de treinta cuarenta chicos y chicas que participan y eso hoy por hoy nos parece fundamental y muy importante, Tenemos grupos por nombrarte alguno “Conciencia Joven” en Azul en la provincia de Buenos Aires, CEAT en Córdoba, el ProMuSIDA en Rosario, Jesere en Salta, Promoción salud integral en Santiago del Estero. Hay muchos grupos y lo que nosotros vemos como bueno, es que **son grupos de jóvenes para jóvenes**. Nosotros tenemos herramientas y accesos a medios que.... algunos chicos y chicas no pueden porque no tienen teléfonos o no los pueden pagar, o no tienen acceso a Internet, o no tienen computadoras en la casa, tienen que pagar un locutorio [private telephone facilities] , entonces la dificultad es un poco la comunicación, pero es*

*un poco también la forma de funcionamiento de una red, en la red tenemos momentos en donde estamos todos muy activos, muy conectados y muy participativos y hay momentos en donde nos vemos muy poco, pero, bueno. Me parece que es un proceso de toda red y lo que nos parece más importante es que tiene que haber una articulación y un vínculo entre las distintas organizaciones entre sí y no generar una coordinación central que sea administradora de lo que es... este.... ya sea los recursos o las integraciones. (Member of REDNACADOL)*

Another worth mentioning experience is PLENASSER, formed by a group of young university students from *San Miguel*<sup>60</sup> who created a small organization to promote sexual and reproductive rights, and contribute with their research to increase awareness about the situation of young people in the area. Unlike REDNACADOL they did not have the permanent support of a large and formal NGO like FEIM, although they acknowledged having received some punctual support of this organization.

Like in Chile and Uruguay, in Argentina the formation of adolescents as sexual and reproductive health promoters in their communities has also become a common strategy used by the organizations to get them involved and increase the outreach of the projects in the communities. Organizations like ISPM, FORO, SEXSALUD and many others have used this methodology by training adolescents not only to reach their peers, but also adults groups, such as professors, parents and medical teams. This is usually described as an empowering experience as the adolescents are recognized by the adults for their positive contribution to the community. More interestingly, we encountered projects in the *Conurbano* where those children who used to attend the activities as participants, became educators, sharing responsibilities with those who trained them in the past. For kids in these communities, this experience provides an opportunity to show showing alternative roles models, different to the ones they are normally exposed to.

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<sup>60</sup> One of the “partidos” (local jurisdiction) belonging to the second ring of the *Conurbano Bonaerense*.

*Por ejemplo el programa este empezó en el 2004 así que fueron también rotando, pero por ejemplo en ese grupo se formaron promotoras que impulsaron algunas acciones de difusión, se hizo una experiencia muy, muy linda en la Villa La Cava en el 2005 a partir de ese grupo de chicas que empezamos a ir también con talleres de salud sexual y reproducción responsable, después el año pasado pudimos replicar en conjunto con otro programa en la facultad y de ese grupo también muchos se formaron y empezaron a dar con nosotros otros talleres, pero bueno eso siempre es como una rueda que se va a armando, la verdad que es muy interesante. (Member of ISPM)*

*Nosotros nos llamamos educadores comunitarios, que es todo aquel que tiene a cargo alguna actividad con chicos. Educadores comunitarios, somos bastantes, incluyendo a los jóvenes. Hay como 2 tipos de educadores, por un lado está Mateo, que es fundador del grupo de jóvenes, coordinador, estoy yo y después hay un grupo de 4 chicos que formaron parte del grupo de jóvenes en su momento y **ahora están siendo referentes comunitarios de los chicos más grandes.** Hicieron todo un proceso de capacitación, muy rico, porque son del barrio, vinieron a la guardería desde muy chicos y ahora son educadores. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

After so many years, the language of rights has colonized the projects, and most NGOs talk about the right of adolescents to have a voice in the decisions that affect them, to participate in the decision-making process within the institutions that they normally attend, such as high schools or health centers. Several organizations have included in their workshops and activities the presentation of the U.N. Children Rights Convention principles, including the right to receive sexual education, access sexual and reproductive health services, receive contraceptive methods and make informed decisions about their sexuality. However, organizations working with adolescent from extremely poor communities such as those in the *Conurbano*, encounter significant problems to advance the “rights approach”. They claim it is almost impossible to talk the “language of rights” and advance participatory practices when participants in their project experience daily deprivations in basic needs such as food, health and education. It is difficult to talk about sexual and reproductive rights and the right to make informed decisions in a context

where the most basic rights are daily and systematically violated. As they eloquently say, it is “like speaking in English”.

*Cuando vamos planteamos la Convención Internacional de los Derechos del Niño que tiene carácter constitucional en nuestro país, que todos los chicos y las chicas menores de dieciocho años están contempladas en todo esto, lo desconocen totalmente, entonces ya a partir de eso, lo que pasa que ellos ven, en la realidad social, en el trato con su familia, cuando salen a la calle se vulneran todos los derechos, entonces, cuando un chico y una chica de cinco, seis años están limpiando los vidrios de un auto, en donde no tiene acceso a la educación, en donde sus padres no tienen acceso al trabajo, en donde ellos no tienen acceso a la salud porque tienen que ir a las cuatro o cinco de la mañana para pedir un turno, para que los terminen atendiendo a las diez o a las once, si los atienden. Entonces... eh... derechos básicos, a lo mejor ni el acceso a la alimentación y a la salud no los tienen, entonces... ya después nosotros vamos a hablar de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos... **es como hablarles en ingles.** (Member of REDNACADOL)*

The capacity of the organizations to make significant changes in the adolescent's lives is severely limited by the hardships and living conditions they encountered in the communities where they work. As they perceive it, the possibility to constitute and mobilize adolescent groups with effective capacity to demand for their rights is severely curtailed in these contexts of high deprivation. Even trying to reach the families becomes a difficult strategy as most of the kids live in unstable family arrangements.

*No hay muchas posibilidades de lograr un cambio real si no están garantizadas ciertas cosas. Nosotros terminamos siendo parche de la salita, de la escuela, no salimos de resolver la urgencia nunca. Si bien nosotros nos habíamos planteado una manera alternativa de educar a los chicos, todo... nos tapa la urgencia. Los chicos ven vulnerados la mayoría de sus derechos. Hay una cuestión con respecto a la educación, con respecto al juego, al afecto. Son chicos muy carenciados de eso, de un abrazo, de un ...están vulnerados también en su atención primaria [de salud]... y lamentablemente en la salita hay muy buena onda pero la salud no es lo mejor. El derecho a la identidad, para sacar un documento [ID card] es muy engorroso y sin documento no accedes a un millón de cosas más. El hambre, el plato de comida. Hay muchos chicos que trabajan, muchos chicos que tienen que ir a pedir, por ellos mismos, porque van a pedir porque van a ir al ciber pero no hay padres que los puedan contener. Nosotros vamos hablamos con las familias pero... las familias están destruidas. Acá se labura por el día, no se puede planificar por el mes, la semana, lo que se gana en el día se gasta en el día, es*

*así, y “mañana vemos”. Lamentablemente, mañana vemos. (Member of Red el Encuentro)*

Given this context, it is surprising that one of the organizations that belong to the *Red El Encuentro* runs a series of workshop oriented to deliver political and social formation to the adolescents in its community. The main objectives of the workshop is to increase the participant's understanding of the causes of poverty and try to find productive ways to introduce at least small changes. During their meetings they discuss authors such as Marx and other classic social theorists, seeking to gain a greater understanding of the economic and social system in which they live. For the organization, this is a space to increase awareness about the causes of social injustice, promote political citizenship, and engage the adolescents in concrete forms of collective actions.

*Con los jóvenes tenemos a nivel Red un taller que se llama, bueno le decimos de formación política, que lo que vamos viendo con los pibes es desde lo histórico porque la pregunta es porque estamos como estamos y poder tener una visión crítica de todo eso y uno está mal no porque es el azar de la vida sino porque hubo un proceso y vemos elementos de Marx, de lo cotidiano de cada uno. Antes lo habíamos dividido en dos grupos, venía un profesor de Sociología de la UBA [Universidad de Buenos Aires]. Teníamos un sábado por mes un taller teórico-práctico de algunas cuestiones y para los más chicos, que ahora lo unificamos, para los chicos de 14 años para adelante que no se le puede hablar de ideología, que no entienden, que lo tenés que trabajar de otra manera, de un método más ameno, a través de juego o de postas, fuimos elaborando sobre la dictadura. La colonización de América y de a poco ir adentrándole a algunos términos. La idea como Red es eso y obviamente fomentar que solos no vamos a lograr salir adelante y que unidos es mejor. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

Despite surmounting difficulties the organizations do not renounce to engender spaces for youth mobilization and increase awareness about the adolescent's rights. Youth groups in the *Conurbano* adhere to the “*Marcha por la Vida*” a yearly event to promote children and adolescent's rights that consist of a nationwide march crossing several provinces and ending in *Plaza de Mayo* in the center of the city of Buenos Aires. For the organizations of the *Red El Encuentro*, the preparation of this event is a good

opportunity to discuss with the adolescents about their rights and promote activities with other members of the local communities. Several organizations faced the tension between an assistant-oriented perspective (“*asistencialismo*”) and a more promotional or empowering approach, echoing the “give the fish” versus the “teach to fish” metaphor. In cases such as the REDNACADOL or Red El Encuentro, they believed it is important to create experiences of empowerment where the adolescents can gain consciousness about their rights and do concrete things to promote them in their own communities. In this respect, an important idea they work with participants is the notion of “*exigibilidad*”<sup>61</sup> by developing skills that encourage them to stand up and do not accept situations of mistreatment, abuse or any other situation where their rights are violated.

*Igual tratamos de hacer cosas para que los chicos conozcan sus derechos, constantemente. Para la Marcha de la Vida por ejemplo se hace una pequeña marcha en Barrio Obligado [neighborhood's name]. Los chicos trabajan, hacen papelitos con respecto a cuales son sus derechos, para ir repartiendo a las distintas gentes que los está viendo. Constantemente se labura [work] sobre sus propios derechos para que los conozcan. Es una piedra fundamental, nosotros nos queremos basar en la educación popular, la toma de conciencia como es primordial para eso. De hecho, siempre tratamos que los chicos sean partícipes de las decisiones, que ellos planifiquen las cosas, con los jóvenes hay un grupo de delegados, que ellos deciden algunas cosas para hacer o las mismas salitas, las más chiquititas. Se trata que ellos también sean protagonistas y no sólo receptores de una educación como puede ser la formal, que hay uno que sabe y otro que tiene que aprender y nada más. Acá esto es un constante ida y vuelta y es lo que se intenta con las familias. Es un trabajo muy duro por lo cultural.*  
(Member of Red El Encuentro)

*Bueno básicamente nosotros intentamos transmitirles a los chicos y a las chicas este... ese empoderamiento de lo que son los derechos y la exigibilidad de los mismos. O sea nos parece que son mucho más importante, más allá de todo esto, para que esto no sea un asistencialismo, digo, para que en vez de ir y hacerlo en función de.... darles herramientas (...), para tratar de cambiar está condición. Y en función de lo que traen, vemos que tipos de accionar o que tipo de trabajos podemos realizar. A lo mejor la vulnerabilidad de algún derecho o una situación particular de abuso, maltrato y violencia o lo que fuera, también estamos*

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<sup>61</sup> The notions that rights can be demanded and their enforcement required by citizens.

*dispuestos a acompañar lo que son los derechos de los chicos, las chicas y la participación de los mismos. (Member of REDNACADOL)*

The organizations that are participating in the implementation of the sexual education law, although they usually work within the context of a formal institution, such a school or a high school, they may also face similar tensions. However, only a few are able to approach their work, not just as a mere transfer of knowledge on sexuality and reproduction, but also as space where adolescents can be empowered, increasing their level of individual and collective autonomy and enhancing their social skills for self-organizing. For ISPM, for example, the instances of sexual education constitute privileged spaces for approaching other demands and needs in the adolescent's lives. As they have experienced, sexual education programs trigger a set of overwhelming demands and concerns from the participants that go far beyond the specific goals delineated in the curricula. For ISPM, the challenge is to take into consideration these demands, and see the adolescent's life integrally - *in totum*- not just from a sexual or reproductive perspective. Talks about sexuality may open new demands of support related to broader health issues, episodes of violence or abuse, family problems, drugs abuse, delinquency, feelings of insecurity, and many others concerns that would require specific assistance. The problem, as ISPM makes clear, is that schools and state services in general, are not really prepared to face all the demands that are untied when the adolescents engage in a sincere dialogue about their lives. Although there is a specific division in the Government of the City where kids could be referred to<sup>62</sup>, its effectiveness and capacity is largely surpassed by the demands. In these situations where ISPM experience the limits of their intervention, their strategy is to enhance the scope of intervention of the school, as would be expected according to the law.

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<sup>62</sup> *Dirección de la Niñez* (Children Division) of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires.

*La dificultad que nosotros le vemos a todo este tipo de programas es la continuidad que puedan tener, que tiene que ver también con obstáculos estructurales, cuando uno abre la puerta a un adolescente de cuáles son sus derechos, eso genera una demanda del otro lado y a esa demanda hay que darle cauce y ahí está la principal dificultad, eso tiene que ver con lo que les decía antes, con la falta de articulación entre las distintas instancias estatales, si las escuelas pudieran generar... desde el Ministerio de Educación hasta la directora de la escuela digo... es un canal que tiene que bajar, una articulación mayor con otras instancias, no sólo con los centros de salud, por ejemplo, en el caso de menores abusados que han surgido en las escuelas y que las autoridades escolares no tienen la menor idea de qué hacer al respecto, hay en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires una Dirección específica que es la Dirección de Niñez para este tipo de casos, lo mismo con chicos en situación de vulnerabilidad por otro tipo de casos, que puede ser violencia, que puede ser adicciones, infinitas cuestiones que afectan a los adolescentes que en la escuela no tienen la capacidad de articulación con ninguna otra instancia, esta es la mayor dificultad que le veo porque uno abre la puerta a la demanda y tiene que ser capaz de que esa demanda se pueda encauzar, el chico que a partir de una charla se le despierta una inquietud respecto de una situación que pueda haber vivido y eso nos es difícil realizarlo nosotras porque lo que hacemos es una acción concreta, lo que se quiere generar es la posibilidad de que la escuela tenga luego de eso una capacidad de decisión. Bueno eso un poco la ley de educación tiende a revertirlo que todavía aunque en la realidad no ha llegado. (Member of ISPM)*

For public policy programs, adolescents constitute just a group of “beneficiaries” usually defined between 15 and 19 years of age. However, it is difficult to homogenize the wide range of situations and needs of such a heterogeneous group under an age rank label. As said by a member of PLENASSER, the orientations, guidelines, curricula and materials produced by the program are convey a standardized version of an “adolescence” that only exist in abstract terms. What exists, in fact, is the concrete situation of adolescents of specific age groups, living in specific places, within specific families and communities. Along the same lines, a member of ISPM said that the goal of their organization is to overcome standardized guidelines defined in policies and programs and linked them to the concrete demands of participants. In other words, the objective is to overcome the mere notion of “beneficiary” which usually speaks to an



impersonal, unspecific subject, and approach the real person in her concrete circumstances

*Por ejemplo, el programa de Salud Sexual implica la entrega de material didáctico, de folletería, y hay lugares de José Carlos Paz donde yo sé que hay gente que no sabe leer, van al centro de salud, tienen el folleto pero no lo sabe leer. Se arma un mismo folleto y ese mismo folleto es el que tienen acá [en Buenos Aires] y tienen en Jujuy, y eso muestra una rigidez por parte del programa. (Member of PLENASSER)*

*Los programas consideran como beneficiarios a la población adolescente entre 15 y 19 años, pero eso no es una persona real, eso es un sector etéreo, ahora que ellos puedan bajar a ver cómo efectivamente alcanzamos a un adolescente de 16 años, no al sector etéreo esa es la mayor dificultad, y que tiene que ver con cómo hacemos para bajar el programa, cómo hacemos para que en las escuelas se dicte, cómo hacemos para que las demandas de esos chicos sean canalizadas, esa es la mayor dificultad, los programas han intentado saltar esa barrera, han intentado difundir información, han intentado generar acciones de incidencia concreta, y en menor o mayor medida algo se ha conseguido pero creo que la mayor dificultad sigue siendo esa. (Member of ISPM)*

Some NGOs expect that the space now opened by the law will increase debates on sexual and reproductive issues in other spheres of society, including the family and politics. As of yet, the law has been successful in addressing the inquiries and concerns of students within the realm of school environments, but has not moved far beyond. According to these organizations, the law should be able to bring to the fore the point of view of adolescents, amplifying their voices and needs at large.

*La ley de educación sexual en este momento no se está aplicando, lo que se está aplicando es este programa piloto que es un espacio concreto que abre la posibilidad de hacer preguntas, de hacer consultas incluso la posibilidad de preguntarse algunas cosas, porque cuando uno abre la posibilidad de ver otra realidad permite que las propias mujeres, los propios adolescentes se empiecen a hacer preguntas que antes no se hacían, ese es un espacio concreto, ahora falta abrir el debate a nivel social y poder hablar de la sexualidad por ahí más abierto y poder hablar en la familia, eso todavía creo que no se ha avanzado mucho pero bueno creo que algún que otro pequeño espacio se va abriendo (Member of ISPM)*

A central theme in the realm of sexual and reproductive rights is the degree of autonomy that legislation and public policy should grant to adolescents in these spheres, considering that they are still gaining progressive responsibility and parents may claim authority over some decisions that concern their children's lives. In this respect, in both spheres –health and education- public policy set progressive goals that may be disputed by parents and therefore, may interfere with the work of NGOs. In the case of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Program, the law protects the right of adolescents over the age of 14 to be attended, informed and provided with contraceptives without the presence of parents or the need of parental consent. This was a highly disputed and controversial clause, although finally feminist and youth organizations succeeded in its inclusion in the body of the law. Nonetheless, NGOs like ISPM denounce that this disposition is frequently violated by parents who oppose their children's access to contraceptives methods, contravening the clear spirit and the word of the law.

*En el caso de los adolescentes, la ley prevé que los adolescentes puedan ser atendidos sin autoridad del padre, madre o tutor a partir de los catorce años. Que a veces no se cumple. O sea, surgen dificultades por eso. Darle un anticonceptivo a un adolescente, la ley dice que hay que darselo, pero...Se prevé asesoramiento, provisión de métodos. Se peleó mucho esa cláusula y puede ser sin autorización de los padres, pero, es como con el tema del aborto, la cláusula del Código Penal ¿cuándo se cumple? (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

Similarly, some parents have disputed school's decision to impart sexual education within formal curricula. As NGOs have been largely involved in this process, being key actors in the delivery of workshops, classes and seminars in the City of Buenos Aires, they also have to deal with parent's inquiries, concerns, and at times, discrepancies. In one particular case, the NGO PLENASSER faced strong parental resistance to their sex-education workshops. To overcome this situation they sent a note to all parents explaining it was the right of the adolescent to attend these classes, in

agreement with the Children Rights Convention, the National law, the Provincial law and the Constitution of the Republic. Although the note eased most grievances, one student did not participate.

*La resistencia vino por parte de los padres, como es un colegio de ricos, muchos no querían, hubo muchos que se negaron, el colegio quería que nosotros pidamos autorización a los padres. Pero no, es un derecho, está en el marco de los derechos internacionales del niño, contemplados en la Constitución. El derecho a la información es universal, no hay que preguntarle a los padres (...) Lo que propusimos fue, bueno, hagamos lo contrario, mandemos una nota a los padres diciendo que es un derecho universal del niño, que está en la Constitución Nacional, en la Provincial, en la Ley de Salud Sexual y, en todo caso, el padre que no deja participar al hijo, es el padre el que está violando la ley, los derechos del hijo. Entonces, mandamos la nota, uno solo no participó. (Member of PLENASSER)*

Another specific issue addressed by most NGOs in their sexual education courses is unequal and asymmetric gender relations. Most organizations agreed on the need to work on this aspect in order to prevent teenage pregnancies. Specially feminist organizations have placed particular emphasis on seeing constraints to sexual and reproductive rights enforcement as direct consequences of manly driven gender relations, framing these as intertwined problems. As a result, this approach emphasizes the need to empower women in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and be respected in their reproductive decisions. The discourse of some of the feminist NGOs we surveyed may go further along these lines, by implying the need to empower women in order to put limits to men and their “machistas” attitudes.

*Nuestro trabajo apunta a revertir estas dos cuestiones por eso los talleres son de sexualidad, género y derechos sexuales y reproductivos, porque no hay forma de abarcar el campo de la sexualidad y de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos sin hablar de género, porque en general la maternidad adolescente tiene que ver con esta persistencia de patrones y de mandatos culturales, entonces lo que yo no quisiera que se mal interprete... es que no hay un prejuicio sobre la maternidad adolescente, hemos trabajado con chicas adolescentes embarazadas y madres jóvenes y no se trabaja ni desde el prejuicio ni desde... en absoluto, pero sí se trata de trabajar sobre esto que les decía, entonces entender el embarazo*

*adolescente en este marco, en el marco de un problema que tiene que ver con patrones culturales que marcan un mandato hacia la mujeres jóvenes (Member of ISPM)*

*Entonces, qué está pasando ahora que tenemos ley, tenemos acceso a anticonceptivos, tenemos todo un capital que ganamos nosotros. Pero hay muchos bolsones de mucha pobreza donde las chicas siguen quedando embarazadas. Entonces, tenemos varias hipótesis en un estudio. Una es que ellas acceden a los deseos del varón, tanto a una sexualidad a lo mejor no deseada en ese momento, a una práctica sexual, a lo mejor por la presión, porque no saben imponer el uso del preservativo. Entonces, tenés ley, tenés un montón de cosas, pero lo que no tenés todavía es el empoderamiento de las chicas adolescentes, a pesar de que hay más que antes según lo que yo veo, pero para decidir protestar frente a un embarazo. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

However, it is interesting to find some divergent approaches coming from youth organizations such as REDNACADOL or PLENASSER. Although they also put great emphasis on gender relations, their strategies grant equal priority to the institutional work with males and females. Embracing a relational approach to gender, their discourses insist on the need to include males as well as females in order to promote healthy sexual practices and effective reproductive decisions. Some of their assertions, such as the idea that reproductive decisions are a matter of the couple and not just women, may be at odds with some principles of feminist NGOs. For the above mentioned youth organizations, embracing a *genuine* gender perspective imply developing strategies to get men interested in their activities, including males as educators in their teams and presenting teenage pregnancy as a dual responsibility.

*Acá se habla mucho de lo que es la perspectiva de género, del rol de la mujer... pero nosotros hemos incorporado la perspectiva de género pero desde la igualdad. O sea, **el género es un concepto relacional**, existe la mujer en tanto exista un varón. Entonces, el protagonismo que tienen que tener todos es el mismo, la presencia del varón está en nuestro equipo, porque también hay varones. **En cambio, en otras organizaciones, por ahí más feministas, generalmente la figura del varón no está, en la nuestra, sí.** Y después está la presencia del varón en los talleres, en los colegios tenés población de varones cautiva, digamos, están en el taller porque están ahí. Después, están los talleres*

*que dimos en la universidad, donde se anotaba el que quería, entonces ahí no teníamos población cautiva, por lo tanto la presencia del varón fue mucho menor. (Member of PLENASSER)*

*Estaba antes como muy arraigado al pensamiento de la mujer independiente, como que no importaba demasiado la postura o la opinión que podía a llegar a tener el hombre a raíz del embarazo sino que, era algo, [en el] cuerpo de la mujer, solo importaba la decisión de la mujer y visto desde este sentido, seguía adelante o no con lo que podía llegar a ser el embarazo y después su maternidad. Nosotros más allá de la perspectiva de **género lo damos por igualdad de derechos y por responsabilidades compartidas**. Y el embarazo adolescente lo vemos de esa forma, desde una responsabilidad del chico y una responsabilidad también de la chica. Lo vemos en funcionalidad a la familia. (Member of REDNACADOL)*

To avoid unwanted pregnancies, professional organizations such as SEXSALUD with high levels of specialization on sexual education place a strong emphasis on the need to transform what they called “cultural” traits that are embedded in the way in which poor families live. They would teach the adolescents about the importance of intimacy and privacy, as well as encourage more respectful attitudes between partners. However, the discourse of the members of SEXSALUD is somewhat packed with loaded phrases that unveil some misunderstanding of the hardships and burdens faced by poor families, and the difficulties they encountered to enact “expected” behaviors. Being most of SEXSALUD members - middle class professionals somewhat distanced from the daily experiences of the families that they are trying to reach - they may end up looking down on their modes of performing gender roles, living sexuality and making reproductive decisions. Instead of framing their encounters as a meaningful dialogue between different cultures, their discourse talks about “lack of values”, “not understanding correct behaviors” and “people who do not understand what we are explaining”.

*La mujer desde la perspectiva de género no tiene capacidad, no puede conceptualizar el decirle que no al varón.[...] Encontrás una promiscuidad habitacional, en presencia de otros hijos o funcionando a recambio de cama caliente [colloquial expression meaning changing partners frequently]. Esto lo hemos visto en la villa de Retiro o de Florencio Varela. Como la realidad se*

*vuelve en contra de los métodos de educación sexual porque **tenemos que enseñarles cosas mínimas como poner una cortina, buscar, armarse un lugarcito dentro de la villa, privado, que les permita a ellos tener un poco más de intimidad. Recién cuando nosotros les explicamos los efectos que esto tiene sobre los hijos, recién ahí entienden lo que es un concepto público y privado. Estamos hablando a veces de padres grandes porque son chicos de primaria y secundaria los que tenemos. En la Villa de Retiro chicos de quinto grado y séptimo, o sea que son gente de treinta y pico para arriba, que no tienen estos conceptos. Porque a veces cuesta. Cuesta que entiendan. Porque su vida cotidiana está muy alejada de estos valores que queremos transmitir y que queremos hacer entender.***

Oppositely, the case of the NGO *Campos del Psicoanálisis* shows a different approach towards participant's sexual behavior. It is one of the few NGOs that do not define teenage pregnancy as a problem, and they make this a distinctive characteristic of their institutional approach. In fact, they seek to understand the meaning of pregnancy and motherhood for the adolescent, assuming in each case maternity will have a different signification that needs to be discovered. As they say, if teenage pregnancy is labeled as a problem beforehand, then all you need is just to "provide solutions". Instead, their approach is based on listening to the teenagers, trying to bring to the fore others spheres of their lives beyond maternity that may have been put aside. Working under a psychoanalytic framework, this group of professionals believes that pregnancy and motherhood lend an identity to the adolescent so she can gain a space and be recognized in her community. Similarly, the REDNACADOL also seeks to work with teenage mothers avoiding any type of judgment about their sexual and reproductive behavior. For them, suspending loaded value judgments is a key strategy in their approach to adolescent motherhood.

*Nuestra principal preocupación es escucharlos. [...] Si uno lo considera como problema [al embarazo] tiene que pensar en la solución, chau, ya está, ¿qué tiene que saber de la cuestión? ya está, ya sabés. No viste a nadie, no hablaste con nadie, ya está [...] Creo que en todo es esta lógica, que quien tome la palabra sean ellos, y nosotros poder acompañar y ser el partenaire de las decisiones que*

*van tomando. Esto en general a nivel de la institución, pero después... **Tenemos un problema si creemos que es un problema de entrada.** Me parece que lo que hay que hacer es problematizar la temática, de acuerdo a las coordenadas de la época. Pensar aquellos proyectos no antes, sino en conjunto, poder ubicar que se trata de esa población específica y no va a ser lo mismo para la otra que está a dos cuadras, por ejemplo. En otro centro de salud, ya se trata de otra cosa. En una misma escuela dos grados diferentes son otra cosa. Poder acompañar eso, después si en sí la maternidad o el embarazo es un problema para cada uno de los adolescentes, ya no en las generales. (Member of Campos del Psicoanálisis)*

*Y nosotros en los talleres que realizamos, no solamente hay chicas embarazadas, sino, eh... chicas madres y chicos padres a una edad muy temprana. Y nosotros tratamos de no ver y no transmitir pensamientos propios, ni evaluativos de lo que es la conducta del chico o de la chica, porque hoy por hoy nosotros desarrollamos talleres, no solamente para los chicos, madres y padres con chicas embarazadas sino con chicos y chicas que nacieron con HIV/Sida y bueno, que pudieron adherirse a un tratamiento y que hoy por hoy son adolescentes y que tienen, conviven y tienen una vida normal que se desarrollan de forma saludable en relación hacia el resto de sus compañeros y sus compañeras, entonces, siempre con estos cuidados en donde después empiezan a contar sus experiencias personales las chicas y los chicos cuentan situaciones familiares, de amigo o amigas que tienen HIV o que fallecieron, o que interrumpieron el embarazo, entonces siempre como no sabemos con qué historia nos vamos a encontrar. (Member of REDNACADOL)*

Some organizations may resort to the feeling of locality or belonging to a specific neighborhood to address adolescent's need of identity. As we have seen how organizations deploy strategies based on gender (female) or age (adolescents) aspects of their identity, we will now turn to explore a few experiences where belonging to a specific neighborhood or *villa* is what elicit collective action and youth participation. Even in the cases of socially deprived communities, NGOs may be able to develop a feeling of connection with their spatial environment that would encourage concrete actions for change.

In this respect, an interesting experience was the one carried out by the *Foro de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos*. As part of a research-action project, the organization implemented a program to train sexual and reproductive health promoters to

increase population awareness about the rights of adolescents in the *Conurbano*. The project included several communicational components such as preparing and broadcasting radio shows and elaborating and printing a magazine. The central objective of the initiative was to convey information and the adolescent's ideas about reproductive health, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDs and abortion. As narrated by a member of el *Foro* the adolescents put took the project seriously and obtained products of great technical quality. The *Universidad de Buenos Aires* granted access to communication facilities so they could prepare the radio shows. The magazine was titled *Los jóvenes de Lugano*, following the name of the neighborhood where most of them lived.<sup>63</sup> The experience served to develop a positive identification of the adolescents with their community and disseminate the information they have received as health promoters among other peers in their place of residence.

*Bueno, el tema es que, por el otro componente, que lo hicimos con el Ministerio, hicimos una estrategia comunicacional. Un componente comunicacional que consistió en proponerle a los pibes que trabajaran, que se acercaran por supuesto ¿no? que nosotros los íbamos capacitando y demás con talleres, aquellos que hicieron su propio aspecto comunicacional. Hicieron una revista muy linda que se llamó “Los jóvenes de Lugano”, la hicieron los chicos. Y dos programas radiales que se pasó on line, todo sobre salud reproductiva, embarazo adolescente, SIDA, sobre aborto. Todos los temas que ellos... Entonces, para ellos fue muy importante, porque se transformaron de hecho en promotores de salud para sus pares, digamos. Se entusiasmaron mucho porque no eran objeto de estudio sino sujetos de intervención. Y con sus palabras. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

Similarly, teenage mothers from the day center *KALEIDOS* run by the NGO *JAKAIRA* produced a video showing their daily problems and mistreatments they faced in public institutions. As part of a workshop focused on adolescent's rights, they performed and recorded different situations in which their rights where not respected, in hospitals,

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<sup>63</sup> Lugano is the second most populated neighborhood of the city of Buenos Aires, located in the southern part of the city.



schools, transportation as well as public offices. According to the lawyer who accompanied the experience, the process of making the video was a good instrument to empower the adolescents and help them to stand up against the discriminations they experience for being young mothers.

*Sí, la abogada está a disposición del equipo y de todas las chicas. Muchas veces por las problemáticas... cuando se mete el juez, o hay problemas con los padres de los chicos. Todos esos temas sobre documentos, identidad, etc. El trabajo con la abogada es clave a nivel individual. Sumado a esto durante dos años funcionó en Jakairá un taller de derecho, entonces la abogada se reunía con todas las chicas a hablar sobre los temas que les parecía. **Ese taller terminó con un video que filmaron ellas, escribiendo un libreto, una historia.** Fue presentado a un concurso de videos para cuestiones como ésta. En el mismo taller decidieron como trabajo sobre el derecho, escribir la historia de una de estas chicas y decidieron filmarla. **Entre todas salieron a filmar, actuaban, hacían los personajes de una chica de 14 años, abusada, maltratada, excluida, y cómo era el mundo al cual se enfrentaba en esas condiciones.** Como iba al hospital, y le decían “uh! ¿Te vas a quedar?, ¿vas a tener el bebé?”. Dos meses internada para ver si podía tener a su bebé, en situación de calle, consumo, etc. Hicieron todo un video como manera de trabajar en el taller de Derechos porque de esta manera discutieron e hicieron en imagen lo que ellas pensaban sobre sus derechos. (Member of Jakaira)*

Living conditions in some neighborhoods can be very precarious as the ones faced by residents over the *Rio Reconquista* in *San Miguel*. Dumping grounds, piling garbage, and surmounting levels of contamination can create conditions for the emergence of infectious diseases and other health risks. Also, during the time we visited the area, they were facing critical problems with water supply, as there was only one tank for the entire area, and it was not being regularly cleaned. Although politicians had visited the zone and made promises about bringing water tanks to this part of *San Miguel* these promise remained unfulfilled by that time. To increase awareness about the problem, a group of adolescents decided to take this as issue as the center theme of a cultural festival that usually takes place at the end of the year. Pictures showing the effects that contamination and lack of water have on residents' living conditions were exhibited to the community

as part of the festival. For the *Red El Encuentro* this was an empowering experience with various positive outcomes for the adolescents and the community.

*Acá hay muchos problemas de contaminación, hay un barrio que se asentó sobre la cuenca del viejo Río Reconquista, eso se tapó con basura y arriba se hicieron las casas. Entonces hay un solo tanque de agua, ese tanque no se limpia hace mucho tiempo. Es una pelea con la Municipalidad, en el verano escasea mucho el agua. A raíz de eso, hay muchos problemas de piel, enfermedades... hacemos prevención de hepatitis. Las enfermedades infecciosas... Con la pediatra tenemos charlas, donde según las enfermedades que vayan llegando -según la estación-, vemos que podemos hacer para la prevención, todo lo que tiene que ver con el agua, hervirla. Con los elementos que tiene el barrio, porque el barrio nuevo es muy precario (...) Es barrio de migrantes, la mayoría peruanos, paraguayos y bolivianos. Y con el grupo de jóvenes que nace en el 96, terminaban acá y el amor que sentían por la guardería los hacía quedar y quedar. (Member Red El Encuentro)*

*Acá el tema del agua, el intendente Zilocchi vino a prometer que iba a traer... traer camiones de agua, jamás! De hecho por ejemplo nosotros las fiestas de fin de año, que ahora las vamos a tener el 28 o lo que es "El Viva la Cultura" [Cultural Festival], lo que se trata de hacer es que tenga una temática y ahora... bueno la primera fiesta que hicimos así fue las temáticas, las problemáticas del barrio: el agua, la contaminación. **Los chicos fueron a hacer todo un trabajo fotográfico y de video, a ver lo que es la cuenca del río, la basura.** Todo lo que es el barrio nuevo ahora, tenemos registro de fotos, están buenísimos. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

It is difficult for small organizations or even for local networks such as *Red El Encuentro* to influence public policy or to reach high public officials in charge of making decisions that may affect them. A common strategy for scaling up their influence has been the conformation of "second level networks" (what could also be described as a network of networks). "*Interredes*" is one of the seven networks of this type that exist in the *Conurbano*, and they proved to be very powerful instruments to call the attention of public authorities and put pressure on public officials when urgent problems need to be addressed. As an example, "*Interredes*" played a major role in putting pressure on public

officials when community organizations in the *Conurbano* could not open their services in the early 2008 due to lack of funding from the provincial government.<sup>64</sup>

*También participamos de otro espacio con la Red Andando y otras redes más, que se llama “Interredes” [Network of networks]. Ahora creo que somos siete redes en todo el Conurbano, de la zona sur, zona norte, zona oeste... Son todas redes que están trabajando con pibes [kids], con centros comunitarios, la diversidad es enorme. De este espacio participan tres “Cáritas”, la de Merlo-Moreno, la de San Isidro, la “Cáritas” de Quilmes, después, bueno, la gente de acá de “Del Viso”, la “Red de Matanza” y nosotros... y la “Red de Apoyo Escolar”. Estos somos los que conformamos Interredes. **Todo el tema de gestión se realiza por el espacio de “Interredes”. En realidad, el eje fuerte de “Interredes” es poder participar en lo que es el diseño de políticas sociales, las políticas públicas, junto al Estado. Ése es nuestro eje y en función de este eje es que hacemos actividades de gestión, de presión a los funcionarios que están ahora, en el nuevo gobierno.** (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

As “Interredes” has become a crucial tool for channeling demands to higher levels of governments, the organizations also seek to participate in territorial networks to coordinate more concrete aspects related to their daily work, and the needs of the groups they serve. A member of *ISPM* provided a detailed account about the importance they attribute to networks as a central strategy to approach communities and to enhance the overall impact of activities. Also one of the organizations that belong to *Red El Encuentro* explained how despite belonging to the large regional network, they also participate in the neighborhood network where public and community services like the school, the health clinic and day care centers seek to articulate efforts and address more directly the family needs. It becomes clear, that networking operates at various levels, on the one hand for up-scaling and gaining influence among public spheres, on the other, for down-scaling and increasing the impact of activities within the specific communities.

*La potencialidad que adquiere el trabajo, cuando uno realiza un trabajo en aislamiento o solo, las posibilidades de resultados efectivos son mucho menores que la posibilidad de trabajar articuladamente, en eso, la potencialidad que tiene*

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<sup>64</sup> See reference to Dandan 2008, for the article in Página 12 featuring the participation of “Interredes” in the conflict.

*para desarrollar articulaciones y resultados concretos, muchísimo afecta la posibilidad de trabajo en redes. Nosotros todos los proyectos invitamos a articulamos en red incluso los que realizamos específicamente desde la institución, los fuimos convocando siempre a todas las organizaciones para participar en alguna instancia... y en los resultados, es eso, no es en absoluto el mismo alcance el que pueda tener... digo siendo una organización social con los recursos y las limitaciones que tenemos, lo que puede tener una sola que lo que pueden tener diez trabajando en conjunto. Lo mismo que el alcance territorial, cuando desarrollamos proyectos descentralizados siempre trabajamos con otras organizaciones en distintos barrios de manera que nos permita llegar mejor a la población en los distintos barrios, la inclusión y el alcance es muy difícil para una organización social (Member of ISPM)*

*Acá también funciona la Red de barrio Obligado, una Red de instituciones del barrio que se juntan una vez al mes y que participan. La salita, la escuela, acá la guardería, acá al fondo hay otra guardería que pertenece a la Red del encuentro, que se llama “Mis Pasitos” que también tiene grupo de jóvenes. Toda institución que pertenezca al barrio participa de esta Red y de hecho niños chiquitos participan de las marchas. Chicos de algunas guarderías participan en representación de la red del encuentro y van. (Member of Red El Encuentro)*

Finally, we would like to highlight the presence of several **migrant youth and adolescent networks** that we encountered in Buenos Aires. The *AAFP*, one of our surveyed organizations, has been particularly sensitive to migrant women and the situation they faced in terms violence, sexual abuse, and unwanted pregnancies. The *AAFP* participates in the foundation of *MI RED*, a network that groups about forty migrant organizations from several countries, most of which are integrated by women. Although there are migrant of all ages, the *AFFP* has developed close ties with youth groups and offer them the organization’s offices to be used as a meeting place. For a family planning organization, such as the *AAFP*, ties and linkages with these youth groups are considered strategic, as they provide opportunities to disseminate useful information about sexual and reproductive health. Although youth groups are from various different countries, the larger ones are from Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru.

*Participamos de dos redes, hemos creado una red de mujeres migrantes, en Jujuy, hace dos años, hemos creado MI RED junto con cuarenta organizaciones*

*más de migrantes de Ecuador, Bolivia, etc, mujeres la mayoría. Y somos parte fundacional de esa red. Es una red de mujeres y hombre migrantes, pero dentro de esa red hay centros juveniles. Y esos centros juveniles trabajan acá arriba, les hemos facilitado el año pasado para dar cursos de inglés con voluntarios norteamericanos, estudiantes universitarios que vienen acá y le dan clases de inglés a los peruanos, bolivianos, o usan nuestro salón para hacer danzas folklóricas, como punto de unión. La idea es unirnos, nos conocen, ya son como de la casa, entonces podemos hablar y charlar sobre el tema de la salud sexual. O sea, sirve para establecer vínculos de confianza, esto surge por pertenecer a la Red Juvenil. Así que sí pertenecemos a una red que es la de jóvenes migrantes y los resultados u objetivo que buscamos es tener identidad con ellos para poder abordar después nuestro tema.(Member of AAFP)*

## **The Identity Politics of NGPA in Comparative Perspective**

The main theme of this chapter has been the analysis of the role that nongovernmental action can play in opening spaces for adolescents' participation and supporting their demands particularly those related to adolescent fertility issues. So far, we have sought to examine the role played by civil society organizations in empowering adolescents to bring to the fore their perspectives, needs and concerns on sexual, reproductive and parental (those who have children) grounds. It proved to be very difficult for NGOs to engage in any meaningful dialogue with adolescents if they are not able to understand the deep meaning that sexual behavior, reproductive choices and relationships in general have for them. As we have framed it, three main aspects are central to understand these variations across different adolescent experiences: age (being adolescent), gender (being male or female) and locality (belonging to a specific place or community). These aspects, we claimed, constitute crucial aspects that define the meanings that adolescents give to their sexuality and relationships, and therefore, to their reproductive outcomes. It is important then, to understand the modes in which NGOs deal with issues of age, gender and locality, as potential empowering tools in the adolescents lives. Unraveling our ethnographic material, we have examined how different nongovernmental experiences acknowledge, ignore, underplay or integrate these factors into their interaction with adolescents across different type of environments, located in three different cities.

As a general statement, we can assert that the language of rights has clearly colonized nongovernmental discourses in the Southern Cone. It has become clear that most civil society organizations, community networks and formal NGOs acknowledge that adolescents are subjects of rights, as it has been established by the Children Rights

Convention and later translated into national legislation. Also the rhetoric of sexual and reproductive rights as a specific subfield within the former U.N. charter has become everyday language in most nongovernmental settings thanks to years of mobilization and campaigning of women's organizations. However, despite all these advancements a significant gap remains between discourses and practices, between rights recognition and rights enforcement, between rights declaimed and rights lived. Despite progressive legislation advanced in all three countries, it is still difficult for adolescents to get their voices heard and their demands addressed.

In particular, our focus on sexual and reproductive health shows how difficult is for both, governmental and nongovernmental instances, to open spaces that will effectively connect with their real lives, expectations and needs. Public policy in the domain of adolescent fertility, such as sexual education, reproductive health, and some anti-poverty programs, fail to connect with the so called "beneficiaries" limiting severely their capacity to introduce changes in the adolescent's behaviors. The capacity of NGOs to move out the fixed templates of public programs is very limited as they also face policy and financial constraints. Additionally, the participation of nongovernmental organizations in many of these programs consist of short terms interventions which also restrain the scope of their impacts. Except for those organizations with sustainable long term commitments with the participants it is very difficult to generate empowering experiences, with some real meaning in the adolescent lives.

Furthermore, several of the NGOs we have studied reduced their role to the mere transmission of knowledge and information. Whether it is under the form of sexual education programs or training reproductive health monitors, a vast majority of these experiences based their strategies in transferring information assuming these interventions will prevent sexually risky practices, defined as so by the adult world.

However, the mere transmission of information does not guarantee behavioral changes as they do not necessarily connect with the adolescent's lives experiences. Projects based on delivering training and information may reinforce the amount of concepts that the adolescents accrued (and even may repeat verbally to others) but does not necessarily affect their sexual behavior. Most public programs in which NGO participate, depart from adult defined notions of what is considered "risky" or "inappropriate" behavior, but do not work on the adolescents lives experiences, beliefs or expectations. Only a few NGOs are able to close the gap, by opening spaces to really listen to the adolescent accounts and opinions, taking their experiences as valid knowledge, without discarding it as "risky", "unhealthy", or worse, "immoral" or "illegal".

At large, projects seeking to prevent teenage parenthood and promote healthier sexual practices, such as avoiding STDs or HIV/AIDs, tend to rely on recommendations of practices based on scientific knowledge, proved research or specialized organizations briefings. Information provided as part sexual education courses or in reproductive health training instances, is in this sense "legitimate" information, coming from "legitimate" sources. Furthermore, the information is usually transmitted by adults who have the authority, and therefore, the "legitimacy" to recommend these practices, and discriminate between what is considered healthy or unhealthy, desirable or undesirable for teenager's lives. However, very frequently the adult world is not able to connect with the adolescent world, losing great opportunities to engage in productive and fruitful dialogues that could change both parts. As it is necessary to bring all the information to the table, and as it necessary to bring the adults perspective into these experiences, it is also important to give value to the voice and the experience of the adolescents in these spaces.

As one organization clearly expressed, the challenge is to move from considering the adolescents mere program "beneficiaries" or "target groups" to treat them as central



actors that not only should be listen to and taken into account, but also encouraged to participate and take responsibility in the change they want for their lives.

In general terms, the comments made above are commonly shared across the cases we have examined in the three cities. However some distinctions should be made for the sake of cross national comparison. In this respect, the case of Chile shows the most contrasting performance between discourses and practices. While rights approach has been widely adopted by governmental and nongovernmental actors, “adult-centrism” and vertical relations seem to leave little space for adolescent’s initiative and agency. In Chile we encountered limited spaces for youth participation, as most decision making spaces are dominated by adults who grant them scarce levels of autonomy. For the most part, adolescents are considered just as passive receivers of projects and programs thought and implemented by adults who make decisions on contents and methodologies based on what they considered is the best for them. Paradoxically, references about children’s right to participate and the need to get their voices heard, were very frequent in our dialogues with NGO members. Our studied organizations show great levels of awareness about the need to open spaces for youth participation and challenge the adult-centric perspective. In fact, it was in Chile where the notion of adult-centrism was mostly repeated across the nongovernmental spectrum. As a member of APROFA clearly stated *“nuestra aspiración es que a través de la organización de nuestros centros podamos articular sociedad civil organizada que pueda demandar política pública para los jóvenes. Pero yo creo que hoy estamos lejos de fortalecer ese nivel de liderazgo en los jóvenes que trabajan con nosotros”*.

In Uruguay we encountered a similar situation but aggravated by the lack of consciousness about the need to open greater spaces for youth participation. Although the rights language has also been widely adopted, there is little awareness about the need to

open spaces for the adolescents to participate in project's and program's decisions. Only a few organizations –such as *Casa Lunas* and *La Bonne Garde*- mentioned the fact that teenage mothers were participating in some decisions about the functioning of the center. Additionally, with the sole exception of *Iniciativa Latinoamericana* we did not find experiences that seek to develop leadership and participatory skills among adolescent groups. For the most part, organizations think of themselves just as service providers, facing the challenge to meet the everyday emergencies posed by the tough realities of the communities in which they work. It seems as if supporting the kids getting out of a violent relation, a drug abuse crisis, or facing an unexpected pregnancy, does not leave enough room to encourage self organization initiatives or to promote changes in their school, hospitals or other community settings. Furthermore, for several organizations this notion of youth mobilization, or enacting any form of collective action was not an issue at all, and some even found it strange. This type of reactions seems consistent with the prevailing *Uruguayan* notion that it is the State's primary responsibility to enforce rights and assist poor communities with social programs, and therefore, the latter should not be privatized to nongovernmental actors.

Our interviews in Montevideo show lack of interest in the adult world to get into adolescents perspectives and meanings, or voicing their demands in the public sphere. Organization's discourses express more preoccupation for getting their service work done, serving the kids, but this by no means is tied to any effort to open the adult world to the adolescent world views. A recent report titled "*Adolescent perceptions*" requested by the governmental initiative ENIA<sup>65</sup>, expressed this idea in very clear terms:

*A pesar de declarar no contar con "alguien que se parezca a lo que quisieran ser cuando adultos", estos adolescentes parecen optimistas en cuanto a su futuro, y por sobre otras opciones se imaginan como "personas respetables". El suicidio y*

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<sup>65</sup> Acronym for *Estrategia Nacional de Infancia y Adolescencia*.

*el abandono de los hijos son algunos de los comportamientos y/o conductas ubicadas en el plano de lo inaceptable, por la mayoría de los adolescentes que constituyen uno de los grupos de análisis de este trabajo. **Lo más aceptado entre ellos: convivir en pareja, mantener relaciones sexuales y tener hijos, por fuera del matrimonio. [...] Demandan de los adultos, memoria, afecto y palabra: ponerse en su lugar, diálogo y comunicación, también comprensión y continentación.** (Baleato 2008)*

Finally, although conforming to the general delineated patterns, the case of Buenos Aires shows greater room for youth participation and agency. Although adult-centrism also tends to be the rule, and the sexual education program posed strict limits to the intervention of professional NGOs in schools and high schools, some spaces for youth agency are granted. Civil society organizations and networks working in poor communities have found the way to open spaces for collective action enacted by adolescents. In fact, Buenos Aires, has been the only city where we have encountered concrete examples of youth mobilizations, calling the attention of public authorities about community problems. In sum, *Table 12* compares the existing gaps between non governmental rights discourses and the spaces they have opened for youth participation and mobilization, across the three studied cities.

Table 12. Presence of rights discourses and spaces for/support to youth participation as observed in nongovernmental organizations in each city.<sup>66</sup>

Cities	Rights discourses and awareness	Promote youth participation	Observations
Buenos Aires	++	+ -	Youth mobilization and networks
Santiago	++	--	NGOs aware of adult-centrism.
Montevideo	+ -	--	Lack of awareness. Participation not an issue.

<sup>66</sup> Symbols: ++ presence, -- absence, + - mixed.

On a different vein, our analysis of the nongovernmental approach to gender in the three cities shows an interesting paradox. While the feminist organizations should take praise for introducing the issue of teenage pregnancy into the public agenda and making it a matter of public concern, they have not prioritized the situation of teenage mothers as much. For women's rights organizations, the principal concern is avoiding unwanted pregnancies, more than supporting those who already are pregnant. Although in both cases the rights of women are at stake, the result is that the rights of teenage mothers only constituted a marginal point in feminist platforms.

Feminist organizations across the three studied cities have major credits for increasing awareness about the need to implement free and universal contraceptive services and delivery sexual and reproductive health counseling, especially in poor and underserved communities. These points were major conquest in their years of mobilization and advocacy in favor of women sexual and reproductive rights. As they frame it, teenage pregnancy was the result of lack of access to reproductive health services, lack of information, or just unequal gender relations. Although this might be partially true, their approach may miss the cultural dimension underpinning young motherhood and the symbolic meaning that maternity may have for these women. Also, another consequence is that this approach tends to underplay the role played by males on reproductive decisions, focusing only on women's agency and forgetting the relational dimension of gender.

To be sure, in the three cities teenage parenthood projects tend to work exclusively with females, with only a few worth noticing exceptions. Although males are not explicitly excluded from the projects (and most organizations say they want to include them), the fact is that very little effort is made to tailor specific programs that would address their particular needs and get them involved. Several NGO members from

the three cities explained how difficult it was to get males interested in their activities, despite the efforts made. However, the question still remains, about whether it is difficult to bring them to the projects because they do not want to be involved, or they are not involved because they do not feel attracted by or interested in the projects.

*Los varones, en principio digamos, si los querés captar vía salud, en general son los que menos concurren a los centros de salud porque no tienen, en general no tienen... las adolescentes concurren mucho más porque tienen problemas de menstruación, temor al embarazos, el varón, en cambio, no va a preguntar qué pasa con las relaciones desprotegidas o con el tema VIH o con otras enfermedades infecciosas o de transmisión sexual. [Busan información] con los amigos. Es muy difícil penetrar al varón. De hecho, en el CONDERS, la lista que aplicamos es a mujeres adolescentes, a los varones no los captamos.[..] A los consultorios para adolescentes van chicas, no van los chicos. Van si tienen una gripe porque los llevan los padres, o van solos a los dieciocho, diecinueve años. A veces hay algún varón porque tiene algún dolor o porque tiene gripe. En el Hospital Argerich tienen una buena estrategia que se llama “captar la demanda oculta”. Cuando van por cualquier otra cosa ahí los meten en el tema de sexualidad y prevención. Pero es difícil llegar al varón, hay que darse una estrategia para poder incluirlos. Por eso el trabajo barrial es útil y los grupos focales mixtos. Siempre hay una desconfianza, así, entre chicos y chicas. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

Usually when feminist organizations talk about empowering experiences and increasing margins of autonomy, they refer to women's related projects. However, we have found a few cases focused on developing strategies to outreach males, seeking to get them involved with sexual and reproductive decisions (such as the case of *CEDEM* in Chile). A central theme when sexual and reproductive matters are discussed with young males is the meaning that they attached to the notion of masculinity, and how their experience of being males is related to situations of pregnancy and fatherhood. This becomes a central issue, in order to make male also responsible of reproductive decisions. In some way, involving male adolescents in contextualized discussions about what does it mean to be a man (within a specific community), how to assume fatherhood, how to

prevent an unwanted pregnancy or how to face it when this happens, could be also seen as empowering strategies.

But also in the realm of gender, we can point out some cross national differences that should be taken into account. As we have observed, although Chilean feminist organizations still remain vocal and visible, they have been losing some ground compared with the role they used to have in the past. As the Lago's and Bachelet's administrations have addressed most of the women's movement demands, the government took the leading role, becoming the driving force in the women's rights agenda. This is not to say that feminist movement in Chile disappeared, but it is clearly facing new challenges to which they have not been able to adapt yet. As a reflect of this situation, we were surprised to know that a prominent feminist network we have identified in our first visit to Chile, had almost disappeared due to lack of resources in our second visit. To put it in other terms, the Chilean government has take many of the flagships for which the feminist movement has been advocating for years, and now it needs to find its new place. This assertion is consistent with the idea that the Chilean government has been very active in coopting professionals and experts from feminist NGOs to into the governmental structures. Considering recent electoral results, it still remains to be seen what will happen in the future, with the right wing government in office.

Our account of the feminist organizations in Argentina, show some differences with their Chilean partners. Although they also faced some financial constraints, we encountered a renewed vitality in the movement, as they were able shift their mission and continue active. After getting sexual and reproductive related laws sanctioned and programs enacted, they were able to make a strong coalition to monitor governmental programs at all levels of public health services, from municipal and provincial, to

national. This enabled the activation of a vast network of youth and women's groups dispersed throughout the country, which would play a substantial role in denouncing services failures, lack of access to contraception and reporting other problems in sexual and reproductive services. For example, the NGO *FEIM* (one of the most well known feminist organizations in Argentina) gave birth to the national adolescent network *REDNACADOL*, which has remained very active on adolescent health issues. Interestingly, the network has taken some distance from more radical feminist approaches, seeking to work also with male adolescents and including a greater presence of males in their teams.

Finally, of the three studied countries, Uruguay has been somewhat delayed in moving forward public policies in this field. It has only been in 2008, that the Vazquez's administration approved the controversial law of Sexual and Reproductive Health, which included the legalization of abortion services (later vetoed by the president). Also, the governmental initiative to integrate sexual education has been moving at a slow pace, and is still in its initial steps. Like in the other countries, in Uruguay feminist NGOs also have been vocal and active about making sexual and reproductive health services a priority in public health policy. However, after the new legislation was passed and the president interposed his veto power to abortion articles, female organizations targeted their efforts on this issue as the central theme of their campaigns and mobilizations. Unlike the case of the Argentinean organizations, which followed the path of monitoring the enforcement of their legal conquests, Uruguayan organizations opted to widen legal rights recognition, more than monitoring the enforcement of those rights already attained.

As the overall adolescent fertility rate in the country experienced a significant descent in recent years and the feminist agenda concentrated on the legalization of abortion services, the situation of teenage mothers became even a less salient in the

agenda of these organizations. Only one feminist organization in Montevideo was the exception to the rule. In fact, *Casa de la Mujer*, a NGO historically linked to the women's movement, has recently developed a specific program to work with teenage mothers. Not surprisingly, they have arrived to this field as a result of their engagement in the community of *Villa Española*, a former working class neighborhood in Montevideo. In sum, while feminist NGOs have been successful in influencing health care services to prevent unwanted pregnancies, it has been for community and pro-poor organizations to address the needs of teenage mothers in Uruguay.

Finally, we will make a few comparative comments about the way in which locality and the sense of community is related to the empowering strategies deployed by civil society organizations in each city. As a common trend, we have noticed that community based organizations and local networks working in socially deprived communities are the ones that tend to encourage youth actions based on territorial identification. This is not surprising as they are the ones with developed ties to a specific area of influence, while the rest tend to focus on projects or activities lacking a specific geographical reference. Territory as an identity resource can be activated by the organizations through various strategies, such as supporting the adolescents to denounce the problems they faced in the community, demand solutions to public authorities for their neighborhood or connect them with larger youth movements in the area.

In Chile, most of the participatory experiences we witnessed were encouraged by adults, but they rarely resulted from autonomous initiative. Although adolescents may participate in community activities and attend meetings, usually these were organized by public services or local authorities. Municipal governments played a significant role in opening spaces for consultation although these were isolated experiences that did not evolve into any form of collective action. In Buenos Aires, social networks and



community organizations in the *Conurbano* are more eager to promote adolescent's involvement in concrete actions in favor of their community. In some cases adolescents would take responsibility in actions to denounce specific problems in their area such as lack of water supply or garbage contamination. Additionally, they would represent their neighborhood in nationwide organized events, like *Marcha por la Vida*, sharing their daily experiences as a means to increase awareness about children's right. Finally, in Uruguay, we encountered very limited experiences seeking to embrace a territorial approach as a central strategy in their work with adolescents. The group of teenage mothers in *Villa Española* and the team of health promoters trained by *Iniciativa Latinoamericana* may be considered exceptions in this respect. In general, projects tend to leave scarce room to connect the adolescents with community initiatives and concerns, reinforcing their place of service recipients or beneficiaries.

## CHAPTER 6: MORAL ISSUES IMPINGING UPON NGPA IN ADOLESCENT FERTILITY & CONCLUSIONS

“At heart, religion is transformational, not simply transitional.  
It looks upon the individual as a sacred being with the right to a life of dignity and worth.  
When religion informs social change, the effects of development transcend  
the material by reaching what is important to people”.  
**Judith Mayotte, 1998.**

In this final chapter we will address some moral issues that are implicit in NGPA related to adolescent fertility and conclude with some final comparative remarks attempting to highlight some significant differences encountered across nongovernmental action in the three cities. So far we have been examining the different modes in which civil society organizations interact with public policies and programs, and their capacity to enhance youth agency and rights mobilization, based on some identity threads such as gender, age and locality. Through these analyses we have been able to address issues relative to the NGO independence vis-à-vis the State at its different levels of administration, municipal, provincial or national. However, to fully discuss the autonomous capacity of NGOs we need to address the independence of these organizations vis-à-vis other major powerful actor such as the Church, particularly the Roman Catholic which is prevalent in our three studied countries. But we should also acknowledged the increasing presence of protestant Churches, such as the Methodists, Evangelical, and Pentecostal, which, like in other countries of Latin America, have experienced a significant increase in recent decades, and have also created their own nongovernmental forms.

## **The importance of moral environments for NGPA**

The influence of the Churches over NGOs is a relevant issue for several motives but we will basically highlight only two of them as they become the most relevant for the purpose of our study (Hefferan and Adkins 2009).<sup>67</sup> On the one hand, several of our studied organizations should be considered faith-based NGOs or have strong ties with religious structures. Although the numbers vary substantially across country, in all cases we encountered religious organizations working in the field of adolescent fertility.<sup>68</sup> But a second and maybe more important reason, is that the influence of the Church in matters related of adolescent fertility can significantly affect nongovernmental action in this field, whether this influence is exerted directly upon them, or indirectly through public policies and programs in which they participate.

At this point, it has become clear that the field of adolescent fertility is particularly loaded with several issues of moral debate some of which can become really controversial. Increasing State intervention through legislation, public health programs, education reforms and alike, has given prominent saliency to several moral issues in our studied countries. Such is the case of the debate triggered by the approval of mandatory sexual education in public schools of Buenos Aires, or the distribution of emergency contraception pills in the health clinics of Santiago. Even in Uruguay, clearly a more secular country than the previously mentioned, the recent sanction of a sexual and reproductive health law which legalized abortion and the later presidential veto installed a heavily loaded moral debate in public opinion.

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<sup>67</sup> For those interested in studying the complex relationships between religion and NGOs in Latina America and the Caribbean I recommend a recent volume edited by Tara Hefferan and Julie Adkins, titled "Bridging the Gaps: Faith Based NGOs in the Americas" (for details see Hefferan and Adkins 2009, in references)

<sup>68</sup> The numbers of faith based NGOs in our sample were 11 out of 16 in Chile, 2 out of 14 in Argentina, and 5 out of 11 in Uruguay.

Nongovernmental actors as institutions are particularly defined by the normative character of their structure assuming different stances and postures on these moral issues according to their ideological, philosophical or religious orientation. While in some cases NGO participation in social programs might be aligned with the moral assumptions behind public policy, in others, underpinning policy values may challenge –or at least tension- some of the institutional norms that define the organization, creating conflicts of value.

Although state intervention over issues related to the private lives of individuals is always sensitive, the sanction of governmental norms and policies seeking to influence reproductive and sexual behavior of the adolescents constitutes even a more delicate and contested field. Several moral issues are at stake when debating teenage pregnancy and teenage sexual behavior in general. In particular three policy issues emerge as morally problematic across the three countries in this field: a) mandatory sex education, b) the provision of contraception services and c) pro-abortion legislation. Less visible but also morally loaded can become national debates about adoption policies<sup>69</sup>, cash transfer programs<sup>70</sup>, implicit notions of family in fertility policy and the use of invasive contraception practices.

The incorporation of sex education to the formal curriculum tends to be disputed by conservative groups on the basis that it undermines parents rights to define the education they want for their children. A typical issue of debate is whether sex education promotes sexual activity or, on the contrary, it tends to delay the age of first intercourse. In any case, evidence is conclusive about the effects that sex education has on helping to

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<sup>69</sup> Whether NGOs can provide adoption services with the same prerogatives that governmental agencies have has become an issue of debate with different levels of intensity across the three countries.

<sup>70</sup> Cash transfer programs determine responsibilities about parental responsibilities, child care and alike, influencing gender division of labor. Thus, they may also influence reproductive behavior through the amounts of benefits conceded per born child.

avoid unwanted pregnancies and negotiate 'safe' sex among adolescents (MINEDUC, 2005). Arguments also revolve about the morality of sexual activity among teenagers and the perils that early sexual initiation may entail for their physical and mental health.

Objectors to the incorporation of sex education in formal curriculum tend to see it as opposing core traditional family values, such as the importance of marriage and stable relationships in bringing up children. The advancement of sex education may be seen as deepening the undeniable decline in the traditional nuclear family, of which teenage pregnancy is one manifestation.

The provision of contraception services to teenage groups has also emerged as another morally controversial issue in the field of adolescent fertility. Here the debate tends to be centered upon the defense of the traditional family and, upon the rights of parents over adolescent's conduct. The controversy is generally framed as a conflict of interest between the rights of parents to be informed about their children sexual behavior and the adolescent's right to receive confidential and anonymous reproductive health counseling. The central point of debate is whether doctors should give contraceptive advice and methods to adolescents under 18 without parental consent. As the opposing argument goes, granting free access to contraceptive methods would encourage sexual promiscuity among young people. Less frequent, although still in use by some conservative religious groups, is the refusal to contraception claiming that they dissociate sexual activity from reproduction, or plainly, because they are contrary to natural (or divine) laws.

However, the approval of pro-abortion legislation has emerged as the most controversial and divisive issues of all mentioned. Although the majority of our surveyed organizations tend to coincide –with variants- on the need to promote sexual education and reproductive health services (which include access to contraception)- the moral

views about the voluntary termination of pregnancy and its legalization (or decriminalization) is subject of polarization and division. Pro-abortion legislation is not only opposed by religious or faith based organizations (of all denominations) but also by some non-religious ones which have strong views about this issue based on philosophical or humanistic assumptions. The fetus's right to live or just the existence of genetically differentiated human life, serve as the principal arguments for those opposing pro-abortion legislation. Oppositely, those supporting the decriminalization of abortion and the implementation of abortion services, acknowledge the primacy of women's right to chose and to make informed decisions over her reproduction. Also, they see implementation of abortion services in public hospitals as necessary to eliminate clandestine and unsafe abortions, which are signaled as one of the principal causes of maternal mortality in the three countries (Romero 2009). As poor adolescents (and poor women in general) cannot afford secure abortion services, legalization is seen as necessary to close current existing socio-economic gap in safety conditions. Even some interviewees, who acknowledge the existence of human life since the moment of conception and oppose the termination of pregnancy, would agree with the implementation of abortion services, based on this argument.

As we have discussed in previous chapters, the "day after pill" constitutes an issue in itself, with some claiming it has abortive effects and should not be considered a contraceptive method. The debate has taken a sophisticated scientific format as both sides try to demonstrate that the pill intervenes prior or after the formation of the zygote<sup>71</sup>, depending on their position. Considering that access to contraception has become public health policy in all three countries, while pro-abortion legislation has been equally banned, it becomes crucial to provide convincing evidence about the mode in which the

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<sup>71</sup> Initial cell formed from the union of two gametes and constitutes the first stage in biological human's development.

“day after pill” prevents pregnancy, in order to catalogue it as contraceptive or abortive. Thus, this has become another major morally loaded debate in which NGOs has been heavily involved.

All the above mentioned policy issues have become particularly contested in recent years as new leftist governments in the region have promoted a series of reforms that encountered hard resistance from conservative religious and political groups. Public debates on the mentioned issues elicit ideals and notions about family life, sexuality and gender roles, that tend to polarize actors in the field, including nongovernmental organizations. To put it in Gramscian terms, civil society has also become a battlefield where contested models of society and core values confront for prevalence and dispute their hegemony over practices and discourses (Gramsci 1992). In this respect, the stances of nongovernmental actors on moral issues, and the formation of alliances within the NGO community and with governmental actors vary significantly in our studied countries. As we will see, the strength and power of influence of key players in the moral arena –such as the Catholic church- varies in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, and need to be carefully examined in comparative perspective.

### **Moral Dimensions of NGPA in Comparative Perspective**

Of our three studied countries, Chile is the one in which the Catholic Church has the largest influence over politicians and members of parliament. Nongovernmental organizations with high professional and advocacy profile like ICMER, CEMERA, APROFA and EDUK have denounced the excessive influence that Catholic Church has upon Chilean political establishment, as one of the central reasons that has deterred progressive reforms in the areas of sexual education and reproductive health services.

*La cuesta se nos hace mucho más arriba en este país donde los decisores públicos, más que atender a la realidad de la salud pública o a las cifras estadísticas del país, están mucho más atentos a lo que opina un sector de la iglesia o los grupos conservadores. [...] Siento que hay un divorcio muy grande entre los decisores públicos y la ciudadanía. Cuando se dice que Chile es un país conservador, yo creo que no lo es. [Los que son conservadores son] los decisores públicos, los poderes fácticos que manejan los medios y que controlan las decisiones a nivel parlamentario. Este es el único parlamento que decide no discutir un proyecto de aborto, y ese es el fundamento de un parlamento, sentarse a discutir, a parlamentar. (Member of APROFA)*

Paradoxically, our research suggests that while being more influential than the Argentinean, that Chilean Catholic Church shows a less confrontational and less vociferous profile. The reason for this difference, in our perspective, might be that in the case of Chile viewpoints and moral positions of the Catholic Church are expressed and firmly defended by politicians, members of parliament and governmental officials with significant veto powers in the policy making process. There is no need (or they do so only in limited occasions) for Catholic authorities to go to the public arena and oppose public policies overtly, since their influences operate embedded within the governmental structures. Unlike what happened in Argentina and Uruguay, in Chile pro-abortion legislation was not even discussed by the parliament. In the case of Uruguay, the influence of the Catholic Church upon governmental policy is strictly limited as there is complete separation between the Church and the State, and the State does not have an official religion (like in the case of Argentina). Also, in Uruguay the Catholic Church does not enjoy a privileged status nor receives any preferential treatment (like in the case of Chile, where governmental officials attend Catholic events).

In Chile public debates about the effects that teaching sexual education in schools and high schools may have on adolescent's sexual behavior have opened spaces for academic and research oriented NGOs to provide supporting evidence. Unlike in the other countries, more research oriented NGOs such as CEMERA, APROFA or ICIMER,



played a major role by permanently informing policy making. These NGOs have participated in various ministerial committees showing the importance of including sex education in formal curriculum, challenging the myth that exposing students to these contents increase sexual activity. However, NGOs express frustration as they do not feel that Chilean government take their contributions seriously, and act upon the evidence they provide. Furthermore, they feel that rejection to acknowledge the benefits of sexual education programs is derived from the excessive influence that conservative groups have on governmental structures.

*[Los grupos conservadores] son los que más se oponen a los tema de educación sexual. Se oponen a empezar con una educación sexual. Es gente que se sigue basando en el 'casi mito' de que la educación sexual significa que se iniciarán sexualmente o que van a tener mucha más frecuencia de actividad sexual. Sin embargo, múltiples investigaciones te muestran que la educación sexual lo más probable es que retrase la actividad sexual o los que lo inician lo hacen de una manera más protegida o, por lo menos, previenen más el embarazo. Entonces, esos grupos se niegan a tener esa lectura de la información entregada. Esos grupos tienen fuerza en este país. (Member of ICMER)*

*Constantemente nosotros estamos investigando en el tema y le mostramos a la gente de gobierno lo que pasa, cómo puede tratarse un tema para que tomen mejores decisiones. Les damos información. Sin embargo, nuestra experiencia no ha sido muy alentadora porque tienen otros criterios para tomar decisiones. (Member of CEMERA)*

The general perception among technical NGOs is that governmental structures tend to avoid decisions that might be disapproved by conservative groups, even when supporting evidence and previous nongovernmental experience would suggest a different path. However, this general perception encounters some exception or at least is tempered when NGOs refer to the MINSAL (Ministry of Health) which show higher levels of openness and dialogue with civil society, especially when compared with the MINEDUC (Ministry of Education).

*Yo diría que es muy difícil en general. Sigue habiendo un temor importante de parte de las autoridades para tomar decisiones. Menos en algunos sectores. Yo*

*creo que el Ministerio de Salud es mucho más decidido y receptivo a la investigación científica. Se da cuenta además, que existe una responsabilidad sanitaria al respecto. Pero hay otros sectores donde es más fuerte el temor a tomar una decisión y ser muy criticado, sin atreverse a avanzar (ICMER)*

For Chilean NGOs, higher levels of civil society participation and cohesion seem to be the antidote to counterbalance the effect that conservative groups have on governmental structures. Whether they refer to the implementation of sexual education programs or reproductive health services, they demand higher mobilization and pressure from civil society organizations to break current ‘equilibrium’ of forces, reflected in prevailing traditional conceptions of family, sexuality and moral values.

*En el diseño no se incluye a la sociedad civil como corresponde. Nosotros participamos en mesas de trabajo y fuimos una de las organizaciones que mostramos nuestra propuesta de política en lo que se llamó la ‘Comisión Bilbao’<sup>72</sup> pero creo que falta más voluntad de convocar realmente para hacer un trabajo fuerte. Yo creo que el Estado tiene que manejar muchos factores que influyen sobre el Estado, como el peso de las Iglesias –no sólo la Católica- o todas las posturas conservadoras de la derecha. Entonces, como tienen que tratar de mantener un equilibrio, no se mantiene el tal equilibrio. (Member of EDUK)*

*Hubo que hacer todo un trámite cuando esta propuesta<sup>73</sup> entró en el congreso; eso es lo que cuesta. También ocurre que, después cambian las políticas y hasta ahí no más queda. Yo creo, sin embargo, que todavía no ha resultado el tema de la presencia de la sociedad civil en la construcción de política, falta mucho que lograr en el tema. Además, incidir cuesta porque nosotros tenemos un lenguaje más académico y no manejamos la cosa política. Yo siento que, años atrás, estábamos avanzando con este tema, se puso el tema en el tapete. Pero después, parece ser que retrocedemos. (Member of CEMERA)*

This line of argumentation leads to a generalized feeling across advocacy and reproductive rights oriented NGOs that the Chilean government is putting aside what they considered is ‘the interest of the adolescents’ in favor of the moral values of conservative groups. Furthermore, rejection to implement sex education and grant access to

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<sup>72</sup> The “Comisión Bilbao” was established in 2004 by the Minister of Education Sergio Bitar to formulate recommendations about sexual education.

<sup>73</sup> The interviewee is referring to the “Normas de Fertilidad” that were debated in the Chilean Congress in 2007.

contraception, increase reproductive inequality as the children of middle and upper middle class receive appropriate services in private schools and health providers.

*Además, yo diría que es poco equitativa. Porque si haces un análisis, los colegios con más recursos tiene programas de educación sexual que van en la línea del proyecto educativo de cada colegio. El problema es en los colegios públicos, municipales y particular subvencionado, en que debería haber un apoyo de parte del Ministerio de Educación que es el que se hace cargo de esos colegios, esa población que es la más desprotegida, ahí no hay un estímulo adecuado. Existen bonitos programas, existe un plan de acción, pero como ese es implementado es donde hay una tremenda brecha. Y resulta que la realidad muestra que donde se produce la mayor cantidad de embarazo adolescente es en la población de más bajos recursos. Entonces, los grupos opositores no se dan cuenta que su poder lo ejercen de tal manera que afecta a los niños de bajos recursos y no a quienes tienen los recursos para acceder a un colegio que brinda un buen curso de educación sexual. Por otra parte estos grupos conservadores afectan lo referido al acceso a servicios de salud, ya que se oponen a las normas de atención que se aplican más estrictamente en el sistema público de atención de salud y no en el sistema privado. (Member of ICMER)*

In Argentina feminist NGOs also accounted for a strong opposition from Catholic Church authorities to the advancement of sexual education policies and programs. Especially during the early years when the theme of sexual and reproductive rights was introduced as an issue in public policy debates, these organizations became the target of harsh criticism from Catholic authorities. Some interviewees also recalled their experiences of being threatened for campaigning or advocating in favor of progressive legislation. To some extent the resistance to sexual education and reproductive health programs, seems to be eased off as the laws were sanctioned by parliament reflecting a higher consensus among the Argentinean society around these goals (Ramos 2007). However, as a member of ISPM says, opposition still remains, especially at the level of Catholic hierarchies.

*Hasta hace unos años la principal dificultad tenía que ver con ciertas amenazas u obstáculos que ponían algunos sectores con el tema de trabajar con educación sexual o sobre sexualidad con jóvenes y adolescentes, que venían principalmente de algunos sectores ligados a la iglesia o de la educación privada que*

*consideraban que eso era un tema restrictivo de las familias. Cuando trabajamos por ejemplo con campañas de difusión recibíamos llamados o determinadas personas de instituciones - en algunos casos más violentos y en otros no, por ejemplo, se han acercado instituciones privadas a decirnos, ¿por qué llevan esta campaña? Otros han sido agresivos y nos han amenazado, amenazas y han sido anónimos; bueno... eso fue cambiando, hace un par de años que ya no recibimos ningún llamado... Al haberse aprobado la ley de educación sexual, eso fue muy importante en ese sentido porque legitima socialmente una postura de la sociedad en relación al tema, avala que socialmente se exige que haya educación sexual (Member of ISPM)*

*La iglesia ha tenido en estos últimos años un rol activo, muy importante para evitar el avance en las temáticas de sexualidad, en el caso de la sanción de las leyes, por ejemplo, ha sido un campo de batalla político muy fuerte. La iglesia y los representantes, arzobispados y demás entidades han tenido un rol muy importante y muy visible además, claramente en oposición y principalmente con el tema de educación sexual; cuando nosotros empezamos algunas encuestas e investigaciones sobre el tema de la educación sexual eran principalmente algunos sectores de la iglesia los que se acercaban o nos enviaban cartas y demás, también enviaban a las legisladoras que estaban trabajando el tema cartas y demás oponiéndose. (Member of ISPM)*

In Uruguay, although the Catholic Church voiced some concerns about governmental programs on sexual education, this was never a major issue in the public agenda. As a matter of fact, most Catholic schools and high schools were having sexual education programs in place, when the government decided to make it compulsory throughout the educational system. Furthermore, the Association of Catholic Education (AUDEC)<sup>74</sup>, contributed to public sexual education debates by providing a proposal that resulted from its accumulated experience in this area. However, during the debates on the sexual and reproductive health law sanctioned in 2008, and the new legislation on children adoption from 2009, the Catholic authorities took a more vocal and visible stand seeking to influence members of parliaments. Although both laws were finally approved, the most controversial issues at stake them were somewhat tempered. On the first case, president Vazquez (who is a medical doctor specialized in oncology) interposed his veto

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<sup>74</sup> Acronym for Asociación Uruguay de Educación Católica (AUDEC)

powers to the legalization of abortion that was included in the law<sup>75</sup>. On the second case, the adoption legislation, which allegedly was supposed to grant adoption rights to same-sex couples, still remains to be regulated and therefore, this change has not been currently enforced.

In the eyes of reproductive and gender rights oriented NGOs, the discourse of Catholic establishment **across the three countries** is seen as disengaged with current practices of young people. In the case of Chile, although official Catholic moral guidelines are not followed by large segments of the populations, they usually speak on behalf of the ‘Chilean family’ in order to maintain their visions and values as the prevailing ones in the Chilean society (Dides 2006). In this context, civil society organizations see their role as one that should be oriented towards the representation of the ‘interests’ of citizens in general, amidst conservatives forces that have seized the state.

*Yo encuentro que es lamentable el sistema y la calidad del sistema político de nuestro país. Yo creo que también nos toca a nosotros como sociedad civil tener más fuerza para representar a la ciudadanía para poder entregar más herramientas de control ciudadano, de saber cómo están votando nuestros diputados antes de las elecciones. Igual, puestos ante un escenario de un gobierno de derecha y otros de centro derecha, uno cede en la segunda vuelta. Pero yo no siento que nos representen. Digo todo esto porque la apuesta nuestra es una apuesta política, ideológica, de avance en la construcción de la democracia y derechos humanos. Por lo tanto, todo el tema de advocacy, de incidencia política para nosotros es fundamental. No nos interesa competir con el Estado sino vincularnos con ellos para poder incidir en la política. Yo creo que las ONGs en general desarrollan una metodología de trabajo mucho más en sintonía con la gente, mucho más cercana, mucho más respetuosa. Yo siento que a través de la sociedad civil hay más libertad para plantear esto, es un desafío grande, no se cuenta con todos los recursos, pero creo que la posibilidad de autosustentar las acciones y no depender de nadie, en la medida de lo posible, y establecer alianzas que es una cosa fundamental. Sólo, ninguna ONG lo va a lograr. (Member of APROFA)*

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<sup>75</sup> Interestingly, although President’s Vazquez is married to a devoted Catholic woman, he is a public member of the Masonry and his veto justification was based on philosophical, medical and ethical reasons.

In Argentina despite criticisms, NGOs do not blame the Catholic Church for driving public health or public education policy, as we found in Chile. Although they opposed Church's conservative approach in matters of sexual morality, they seek to cross the bridge and articulate efforts with Catholic organizations, as they control at large the private education, and also play an important social role in poor communities. In fact, both Catholic and feminist organizations were involved in discussions about the modes in which the new sexual education law was going to be implemented. Despite differences they could agree on the adolescent's rights to receive information about sexual and reproductive health, while being exposed to the institutions' moral and religious values.

*En este momento se está discutiendo cómo se va a aplicar la educación sexual en las escuelas privadas y la iglesia también está teniendo un rol bastante activo para imponer los contenidos que se van a dar en la educación privada, así que el enfrentamiento continúa en algunos temas pero **nuestro interés es siempre poder dialogar de la manera más amplia y darles a entender a las escuelas y a las instituciones que en realidad ellos tienen la libertad de enseñar valores del cristianismo y de la religión, incluso enseñar valores que tienen que ver con la abstinencia y con demás valores que ellos consideran pero que eso no impide que los niños y niñas tengan derecho a conocer la otra información también entonces lo que siempre se intenta trabajar es la posibilidad de articular la enseñanza de los valores con la enseñanza de los contenidos que tienen que ver con los derechos humanos.** (Member of ISPM)*

This is not to say that relationships between Catholic Church and women's rights organizations are not difficult in Argentina. However, women's rights organizations made clear that the Catholic Church should not be treated as a monolithic entity as there are significant different stands between archbishops, bishops, priests, and Catholic groups. Despite official preaching, Catholic groups may differ substantially on their approach towards sexuality and reproduction. As we could observe, feminist organizations can get along and work together with some Catholic groups, to improve the living conditions of poor women and increase their margins of autonomy and independence. Furthermore,

ISPM mentioned their close relationship with the Catholic NGO, *Mujeres por el Derecho a Decidir*, a group of Catholic women in favor of the legalization of abortion rights.

*Nos relacionamos dificultosamente pero con ganas de que sea un poco mejor. Tuvimos muchas dificultades... Además la iglesia no es un ente que uno pueda identificar de esa manera [como una unidad], la iglesia son grupos, son corrientes, son alguna iglesia, algún sacerdote. Entonces esa diferencia nosotros siempre la hacemos, porque si bien la institución de la iglesia tiene una línea que reproduce los discursos de género y que obstaculiza la posibilidad de desarrollar una idea de una sexualidad más libre y demás, hay muchas personas relacionadas a la iglesia que tienen otra concepción respecto de la sexualidad, nosotros trabajamos con un grupo que son las católicas por el derecho a decidir que se enmarcan dentro de la iglesia y que trabajan muchísimo el tema de sexualidad, de prevención, incluso del derecho al aborto, así que bueno esa diferencia que queremos se haga porque hay grupos con los que se ha podido trabajar muy bien, ahora. (Member of ISPM)*

Despite the conflictive nature of relations, in Argentina Catholic groups were able to cross the aisle, cooperate and work together with feminist organizations. A member of the *Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos* shared the institution's experience of working with a Catholic parish in a joint project for adolescents, implemented in a poor community of Buenos Aires. The meetings were convene and held in the Catholic place although they were organized by the *Foro*. As the member of *Foro* clearly stated, the Churches (Catholic and non Catholic) play a major role in these communities as they may be the only organization providing services and addressing the people's needs. Because of this role, they engage with adolescents lives, and may know very well the cultural meaning that teenage pregnancy has in these communities. At the level of herarchies and authorities, stances and positions are more ideologically loaded, and therefore, are more difficult to reconcile with other viewpoints. However, at the community level where daily work with the adolescents takes place, they can perfectly come to terms as Catholic priests and lays understand the hardships and struggles of the people who live there.

*Las relaciones son conflictivas, conflictivas. Por supuesto que no con toda la Iglesia, digamos, con sectores de la Iglesia Católica. Con Católicas por el Derecho a decidir, tenemos una alianza permanente, pero con las jerarquías católicas es distinto. Pero, por ejemplo, cuando hicimos la investigación en la villa 20, entrevistamos a las iglesias, a la Evangélica, a la Católica, porque son actores muy importantes y le dan mucha bolilla los chicos a los curas, al sacristán que le dicen. Es un actor que existe, no lo podés obviar, no podés soslayar sus opiniones. Es más, la última reunión que hicimos la hicimos en un lugar que nos prestaron los curas. Además, están sensibilizados, ellos saben lo que pasa, tienen una mirada diferente. A ellos les preocupa que los chicos ahí en la villa... la violencia es brutal, los embarazos son numerosos... O sea, saben lo que es la vida de esos chicos, [lo que es] la vida ahí. Porque los matan... en la villa ha habido muchísimos adolescentes muertos. Entonces, nos prestaban el lugar... La Iglesia fue un lugar convocante. Para hacerles la devolución a los chicos, todo eso, lo hicimos en la Iglesia. O sea, son vínculos puntuales. Los vínculos ideológicos son vínculos de confrontación. (Member of Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos)*

The same spirit of collaboration was also encountered among youth organizations, seeking to transcend political differences, based on their mutual interest in advance sexual and reproductive rights in their communities. The national adolescent network REDNACADOL integrates groups from different points of the political spectrum and different religious backgrounds, sharing the sole commitment to promote sexual and reproductive rights. As an example, a member of the network highlighted the experience of a right wing Catholic youth group, that became part of REDNACADOL as they shared the need to work in favor of vulnerable women, and enhance their rights to make informed decisions.

*Incluso tenemos excelente relación con un grupo católico de derecha, una organización civil, en donde forman parte de la religión católica en este caso y que lucha y es un grupo fervientemente adherente a los derechos sexuales y reproductivos, sobre todo en las mujeres y demás situaciones de vulnerabilidad, que tienen muchos grupos de mujeres que en este caso, estamos hablando que no tienen la posibilidad de decidir como, cuando y por qué quedar embarazadas. Entonces todos los grupos que nos sentimos afines conceptualmente e ideológicamente, tratamos de formar un colectivo, en donde por medio de lazos de solidaridad, tratamos de instalar y seguir promoviendo los derechos sexuales y reproductivos. (Member of REDNACADOL)*



A singular difference observed for the case of Santiago, compared with the other two cities, is marked by the influence that municipal governments have on morally loaded policies and programs. The municipalization process in Chile has opened new fronts of resistances to the implementation of sexual education and reproductive health services for adolescents, since municipal authorities may have their own moral stances, opposing centrally defined policies. Some surveyed organizations denounced existing pressures from *alcaldes* to abandon or change the orientation of their work in their *comunas*, since they contravene family values and Christian morality. In some extreme cases, where *alcaldes* express their affinity with abstinence policies as the most appropriate response to prevent teenage pregnancy, they have prohibited the intervention of NGOs which do not abide to this approach.

*Cuando cambia el escenario nos vamos, [como] en aquellos casos en que se prefiere promover la abstinencia sexual. Hay un riesgo ahí. Nosotros en ningún caso mentimos y si llega un alcalde de derecha nosotros no cambiamos nuestro enfoque. En ningún caso. [Tenemos] un caso de un Alcalde –demócrata cristiano y evangélico- que dijo que quería que su gestión se notase, que los jóvenes llegaran vírgenes al matrimonio y **nos amenazó con cerrar el centro**. Nosotros hicimos una serie de gestiones, difundimos la noticia y aún no lo cierra. No sabemos cuánto va a durar. O sea, igual dependemos de la voluntad política del Alcalde que tenemos al frente. Pero es interesante porque en la Municipalidad de Valdivia el Alcalde es de Renovación Nacional [right wing party] y no hemos tenido ningún problema. (Member of APROFA)*

*Nosotros no trabajábamos mucho con redes y ahora lo estamos haciendo y, yo siento que en el tema, sobre todo de género, somos una voz bastante validada, porque siempre nos preguntan, desde la mesa, otras instituciones, los medios de comunicación. A nivel local, es distinto, [pues] también depende mucho del municipio. Por ejemplo, en Renca, **tenemos una Alcaldesa que no nos deja participar mucho, que ha cortado todas las redes y no hay mucho espacio de participación**, por un tema político, de miradas distintas. (Member of VISION MUNDIAL)*

In Chile, the debate about the confidential character of reproductive health counseling services to adolescents took a very high profile, eliciting a strong reaction from conservative groups. The legal dispute that took place about this issue in 2008 was

finally lauded with the recognition that adolescents have the right to receive reproductive health counseling under conditions of anonymity and confidentiality. Along this process NGOs played a significant role in defending these rights, and particularly when the contentious reached the *Tribunal Constitucional de Chile*, for a final decision.

*Hemos hechos intervenciones a nivel de política pública participando en comisiones técnicas de los ministerios y colaborando especialmente con el Ministerio de Salud, especialmente en la “Elaboración de las Normas de Control de la Fertilidad”. [Dentro de las normas] el capítulo sobre cómo deben ser entregados los anticonceptivos y atendidos los adolescentes con el tema de la confidencialidad ha sido uno de los temas más importantes y **que ha generado más problemas en términos de reacciones de los movimientos opositores**. Fueron ellos los que tomaron la decisión de presentarlo al tribunal constitucional de manera de criticar esas normas. Pero las normas están vigentes hasta que el tribunal no dictamine lo contrario. Los dos temas más complejos según la gente que se opone a las normas son la anticoncepción de emergencia y la entrega de anticoncepción adolescente. Ambos son temas fundamentales de trabajo de esta institución, primero porque la persona que dirige la institución es uno de los conocedores a nivel mundial más importantes sobre mecanismos de acción a nivel de emergencia<sup>76</sup>. (Member of ICIMER)*

Another major issue of debate in Chile, one in which NGOs were heavily involved, was the controversial decision took by Bachelet’s administration to grant free access to the emergency contraception pill (*aka* “day after pill”) in public health clinics. The issue became a matter of intense and passionate debates among politicians, who held accalorated confrontations on this issue. The academia, NGOs and political establishments were directly involved in high profile debates that were systematically covered in the media. At the center of the controversy was the discussion about the **physical mechanism by which the pill impedes pregnancy**. More specifically, arguments revolve around whether the emergency pill is abortive or not, a crucial element considering the strong influence that Catholic authorities still yield on political

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<sup>76</sup> The interviewee refers to M.D. Horacio Croxato, gynecologist, researcher and founder of ICIMER after being expelled from the Pontificia Universidad Católica. His research findings support the thesis that the day-after-pill does not have abortive effects.

establishment. *ICMER*, one of our studied NGOs, which has gained worldwide recognition for his pioneer research on this topic, took a visible stance in favor of the pill providing state-of-the-art scientific evidence about its effects which was used in the legal case.

*Colaboramos en la prevención del VIH-SIDA, a través del tema del uso del preservativo y también nos interesa difundir la anticoncepción de emergencia como un método anticonceptivo propiamente tal que, si bien, no es 100% efectivo, es el único que existe para ser utilizado después de haber tenido la relación sexual. Por lo tanto, es la última alternativa, después de haber tenido una actividad sexual no protegida, para prevenir el embarazo. Además nosotros seguimos haciendo investigación clínica acerca de cómo funciona el mecanismo de prevención de manera de aportar más conocimiento científico frente a la discusión sobre si esto es una anticoncepción de emergencia o es realmente algo que impide la implantación. (Member of ICIMER)*

Finally, in January of 2010 the Chilean parliament approved a largely debated legislation making mandatory the distribution of the “day after pill” in all public health clinics in Chile. Unlike Uruguay and Argentina where the pill became part of public health *vademecum* several years ago, in Chile this decision took many years of controversies and long debates, ones in which health and reproductive NGOs were principal actors.

But across the three countries the most divisive issue among nongovernmental communities was the **legalization of abortion services**, with very clear supporters on the side of feminist and women’s rights organizations, and very clear opponents on the side of religious and faith-based organizations. In this respect, the presence of vocal and visible pro-life organizations is another distinctive feature in the Chilean nongovernmental landscape. The strategies and campaigns that these organizations implement are comparable with those deployed by advocates of reproductive and sexual rights. They lobby members of parliament, used web-based instruments and try to influence public opinion to impede the sanction of pro-abortion legislation. As defined in

their institutional mission, their goal is to convince women not to terminate their pregnancy, even in the hypothetical case a

pro-abortion legislation is approved (something unlikely to happen in Chile). By stating this, they are clearly saying that their campaigns and advocacy activities will not come to an end in the eventual case that legislation makes abortion legal in Chile, since their goal is beyond legal issues but centered on women's choices. Pro-life NGOs tend to be well resourced institutions, supported by religious organizations and private corporations, with strong connections with the political establishment.

*Tratamos de influir y participamos en la discusión contingente a nivel de cartas, columnas, documentos informativos que sacamos todo los meses y difundimos a través de nuestra página Web. Se las mandamos al parlamento, a gente del gobierno. Si nos invitan desde el congreso asistimos. O sea, estamos en la discusión coyuntural al respecto. Sin embargo, no es nuestra finalidad influir. Queremos influir pero si no lo hacemos no dejamos de hacer lo que tenemos que hacer. Por ejemplo si hay un cambio en la legislación, igual vamos a seguir trabajando con mujeres apoyándolas en la decisión de no abortar. Entregar información a las personas que van a optar por el aborto y si lo va hacer que lo haga de manera informada. Desde ese punto de vista siempre tratamos de influir en la discusión, informando a los parlamentarios, a los políticos de turno. (Member of Fundación Chile Unido)*

Unlike the other countries, in Chile pro-life organizations have developed social programs to support teenage mothers. These programs are an intrinsic part of their strategy to oppose the practice of abortion and restrain pro-abortion legislation. By creating better conditions for poor mothers to give birth, raise and nurture their children, they try to show there are better alternatives to abortion. Organizations in our sample, like *Fundación Chile Unido* or the *Hogar Refugio de Misericordia* provided psychological support and orientation to teenagers who are considering the termination of their pregnancy. In some cases, these organizations provide adoption services as part of their strategy to support the prolongation of a pregnancy until birth occurs. Institutional discourses tend to present adoption as an alternative to abortion, one that should be taken

more seriously by governmental policies. Furthermore, giving the baby in adoption might be subtly encouraged by religious organizations when they realize the mother is determined to terminate with the pregnancy. Comparatively, giving babies in adoption is a socially accepted practice for teenage mothers in Chile, more than it is in Argentina and Uruguay.

*En el programa 'Acoge una Vida' lo que se hace es dar atención telefónica y hasta el año de vida desde el nacimiento del hijo cuando frente a un embarazo no deseado, para que esa persona se sienta acogida y pueda tomar la decisión de quedarse con su hijo o darlo en adopción como una alternativa concreta frente al aborto. Pensamos esto porque lo hemos comprobado y vivido, desde los 7 años que lleva el programa, que el aborto no solamente daña al niño, matándolo, sino también daña a la mujer que se practica el aborto, que hoy día es conocido como 'síndrome post-aborto' -mundialmente existe como síndrome, y no es solamente una depresión-. Nosotros acogemos a esta mujer para que baje su nivel de angustia, se sienta acompañada, pueda enfrentar su embarazo, hasta el año de vida de su hijo. (Member of Fundación Chile Unido)*

Religious shelters for teenage mothers such as *Hogar Refugio de Misericordia* has been accredited by the governmental SENAME (*Servicio Nacional de Menores*) to provide adoption services. This means they can work under governmental regulation as intermediaries between potential foster parents and mothers who do not want their babies. Oppositely, in Uruguay and Argentina the State has the monopoly over all stages of the adoption procedure, being reluctant to transfer these services to civil society organizations and banning the participation of NGOs as mediators in the provision of adoption services.<sup>77</sup> Paradoxically, given the obstacles and slowness encountered in State-only handled adoption procedures, the absence of civil society organizations as mediators in this process may lead to the expansion of a “black market” of adoption,

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<sup>77</sup> The Law of Adoption recently sanctioned in Uruguay eliminated the role of NGOs as intermediaries in the process of adoption.

particularly of children born from teenage mothers, as occurs in some provinces of Argentina.<sup>78</sup>

Being pro-abortion legislation such a divisive issue, taking a clear stand in favor or against it, can have financial consequences on nongovernmental access to sources of income. For example, some Chilean NGOs which actively advocate in favor of pro-abortion legislation complained that the Chilean government tends to relegate them in the allocation of resources. Although they acknowledge that some international opportunities may appear, they also must be ready to pay the consequences for their positions. As one member of APROFA said, “*Yo creo que uno igual paga un costo; hay una merma [reduction of resources] si tu trabajas en temas de aborto se te abren o cierran oportunidades*”. In Argentina the NGO AAFP, which was a member of the *International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)* decided to break apart after 10 years without receiving funding from the federation. As being associated with the IPPF exclude them from other sources of funding and there was no gain in continuing affiliated, they decided to break the relationship and seek further support in other organizations.

*Ahora podemos decir... para nosotros fue un alivio, porque como yo le decía, hace como diez años que no nos colaboraban, bueno, seguimos viviendo, pero teníamos la esperanza de que un día dijeran:- tomen, les damos algo para que implementen los programas, otros programas. Pero ellos no dan si uno no está de acuerdo con sus [lineamientos] (Member of AAFP)*

Across the three cities the discourse of Catholic NGOs **that work directly with teenage mothers** and their children, made explicit the connection that their work has with the prevention of abortion. In their perspective, working with pregnant adolescents to create favorable conditions to receive the baby and bring it up, is a concrete mean to defend life and prevent potential abortions. Almost all Catholic organizations made

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<sup>78</sup> According to the Fundación “Adoptar”, in the northern province of Santiago del Estero in Argentina, only 25% of the babies are legally adopted. The other 75% are provided following illegal pathways, which may include unlawful purposes such as children prostitution, children pornography and alike.

explicit this moral dimension in their work with teenage mothers. Early intervention and support projects not only ensure the protection of the adolescent's right but the fetus's right to live in first place. Some religious organizations may articulate this idea in more secular discourses, framing their anti-abortion approach as a matter of governmental interest, somewhat blurring the limits between politics and religion. Preventing an abortion and supporting teenage mothers, is working to protect the children's rights, not only in present but especially in the future.

*Este es un proyecto de promoción humana, que considera como misión la vida como un don para todas las personas y el amor y la acogida como un espacio primordial para construir esa vida desde la gestación. Es un programa que interviene no cuando el daño ya está hecho sino que es un programa fuertemente preventivo. **Prevención de maltrato, violencia, de los derechos de la infancia, de vulneración de esos derechos.** En nuestra vinculación con la Iglesia apuntamos a los principios básicos de defensa de la vida y promoción humana. Pero el problema en el que nosotros trabajamos es de importancia a nivel local y de gobierno; es una problemática social más que un tema de Iglesia. (Member of Asociacion de Damas Salesianas)*

In Uruguay, Catholic organizations working in poor communities coincided in the idea that teenage mothers living in poverty do not choose to have an abortion when they are offered emotional support and feel they are not alone. As they see it, abortion among teenagers is much more an issue of middle and upper classes, than lower socio-economic groups. However, in cases when an adolescent in their projects wants to have an abortion, the organization would not share the decision but stand by, providing emotional and legal support.

*El aborto es ilegal. Nos tocó acompañar a una adolescente que quiso abortar pero que sabía que la institución no la iba a acompañar en su ejecución; pero lo planteó y el compromiso afectivo y legal con estas adolescente es acompañarlas (...) La experiencia es que la abrumadora mayoría de las adolescentes que reciben apoyo no abortan, las adolescentes que se plantean abortar es porque se sienten desesperadamente solas o con temor de no poder dar de comer o tener abrigo. Cuando sienten que el mundo adulto las contienen [support them] como adolescentes y como madres en ese proceso, no quieren abortar. (Member of La Bonne Garde)*

At large, compared with Catholic organizations in Chile and Argentina, those from Uruguay are less orthodox in their adherence to the Church precepts. An interesting example in this respect is the case of *Casa Lunas*, founded by a group of Catholic lay persons with the support of the Salesian Fathers (Catholic Congregation). The organization has a clear Catholic identity, but they give information about contraception to participants, and promote attending the public clinic so they can make informed decisions.

*En los años que tenemos acá [8 years] solamente tuvimos un caso de aborto que se llegó a consumir. Es un tema que lo tenemos como cuestionamiento constante, la institución tiene un perfil cristiano, católico. Pero eso no quiere decir que nosotros tengamos que profesar determinados principios morales; por ejemplo **promovemos el uso de métodos anticonceptivos y eso para algunos sectores de la iglesia católica está mal.** Promovemos lo que tiene que ver con planificación familiar, cómo funcionan los métodos, evidentemente acá no damos los métodos, no traemos a un ginecóloga y no le ponemos a todas un DIU [IUD]; no es así, pero sí es el derecho de estar informados que tienen los adolescentes. (Member of Casa Lunas)*

We find appropriate to conclude this section with some final comments about the notion of *family* that nongovernmental organizations assume and enact in their projects and activities. In general, references to the adolescent's family are absent in the discourse of NGOs working under the paradigm of sexual and reproductive rights. Those organizations fostering a preventive approach to teenage pregnancy tend to concentrate their actions on the adolescents and the institutions that have contact with them, being less frequent the efforts to bridge their families. In the case of the organizations that work with teenage parents, strategies to contact and involucrate other family members are more common, although results are uncertain. These organizations acknowledge important difficulties to involve family members in their projects, as they usually encounter unstable family structures, absence of fathers or male partners, and a *naturalization* of



early motherhood. For religious organizations, working with the adolescent's family is a mandate in their strategy of intervention. However, the family structures that they encounter depart significantly from the idealized model of the nuclear family they promote. Their approach to teenage motherhood tends to include the activation of social and family support network, which includes an initial recognition of the adolescent's family structure and an assessment of its supporting capacities.

In general, NGO discourses about 'families' tend to unveil significant differences between the institutional expectations and the realities they have encountered.

*Y en el trabajo con la familia hay muy poco, porque es casi una tarea titánica, ya que a la familia no le interesa, porque es normal para estas familias. (Member of Fundación Cerro Navia)*

*En el trabajo con las familias, si hay maltrato en la familia, se evalúa a la familia, se hace un diagnóstico de ella y se ve qué capacidad tiene, qué herramientas y qué dificultades. Una dupla sicosocial hacen visitas domiciliarias para conocer a la familia. (Member of Hogar Refugio de Misericordia)*

*Cuando llama se le pregunta cuál es su red de apoyo y se ve si la pareja o pololo la apoya. Si su pareja está presente se incorpora inmediatamente, si no está presente hay que buscar una red de apoyo en la familia. (Member of Fundación Chile Unido)*

## **Conclusions**

As we stated in our initial chapter, our research sought to inquire about the factors that shape non governmental action and explain its engagement with public programs and governmental agencies in the field of adolescent fertility. So far, we have seen how NGO's identities are subject to permanent negotiation with environmental opportunities as external resources are needed to secure institutional survival. The analysis of the ongoing tensions between institutional agency and structure, environment and identity, access to resources and ideology, was at the core of our research project. As we have observed, these tensions are context specific as they are shaped by political and institutional environments, which affect the nature and form of non governmental action.

As a major trend, our research has shown the strength of isomorphism, accounting for the global and regional dimensions of social, political and institutional changes. In many respects, organizations surveyed in Santiago, Buenos Aires and Montevideo, share commonalities that cross city and country boundaries. Non governmental organizations have become major players in national political and institutional arenas, as public policy and citizenship could not be understood in present days without their presence. A good example of isomorphism across the three studied cities is the significance of women's organizations as the driving force that expanded sexual and reproductive health rights, and granted adolescents groups access to reproductive health services. Their mobilization and advocacy actions, deployed for more than two decades have accounted for many of the policies and programs, legislation and norms that are now in place in the three countries. Also, the significant role played by community and local organizations, as executors of public programs or deliverers of social services, especially in poor neighborhoods can be considered another token of isomorphism. As we have observed,

the lives of large groups of adolescents in the three cities are connected with the support and services provided by civil society organizations who played a major role in addressing their needs.

Yet, along with isomorphism we also encountered significant major differences in the roles and forms taken by nongovernmental public action in this field. National environments characterized by political, institutional and social conditions, shape nongovernmental action in unique forms accounting for national and sub-national differences. Also recent and long standing historical, institutional and political trends impinge upon the modes in which national States integrate, regulate, control, challenge or are challenged by nongovernmental action in each country.

Our research paid particular attention to the modes in which nongovernmental public action engaged with governmental agencies, and how civil society organizations plugged into public policies and social programs. Albeit common patterns, some interesting cross national differences are worth noticing. For example, we unveiled that professional NGOs have become important allies for Chilean government in confronting conservative trends and moving forward sexual and reproductive health services and sexual education. As conservative forces appeared embedded within governmental structures, the alliance between the women's rights movement and more recent pro-sexual and reproductive NGOs with Bachelet's administration was necessary to put forward and sustain progressive reforms. Also, we discovered that in Argentina this same type of organizations were able to redefine their role, becoming important watchdogs, controllers and monitors of the State in sexual and reproductive health programs. Furthermore, they were able to encourage the formation of adolescent and youth networks to promote the enforcement of adolescent's rights throughout the country. Finally we have observed that in Uruguay, nongovernmental public action took the place

of mere executors of governmental programs, with little room for, agency, innovation or criticism.

Table 13. Roles played by NGPA in adolescent fertility in cross national perspective, for our studied cities (Santiago, Buenos Aires, Montevideo)(\*)

Role of NGPA in Public Policy  City (Country)	Promote sexual and reproductive rights awareness and legal recognition.	Influence policy and program design, formulation, and monitoring	Deliver services, executors of public programs and projects
Buenos Aires (Argentina)	++	+++	++
Santiago (Chile)	+++	++	++
Montevideo (Uruguay)	++	-	+++

(\*) Meaning of symbols: +++ intense, ++ less intense, - absent.

Although there is significant convergence, it is interesting to recognize how national emphases are somewhat tied to defining features of local policy and institutional environments. It comes at no surprise, that professional Chilean NGOs become key allies of Bachelet's attempts to introduce sexual and reproductive health policies, given the strong resistance that these measures faced in a country like Chile where **Catholic Church is so prevalent, even within governmental structures** of the *Concertation's* administration. Also, the significant role played by Argentinean NGOs in monitoring the implementation of sexual and reproductive health programs in hospitals and public clinics is somewhat consistent with the **deficits of republican control** over governmental

authorities that some authors have seen in the functioning of public institutions in this country (Jones 2002; Spiller and Tomassi 2003). In Uruguay, confinement of NGOs to the mere role of service delivery and program executors, without genuine spaces for them to influence public policy or program's design is also consistent with **a strong welfare State tradition**, now revitalized by the new leftist government of *Frente Amplio*.

Besides this, analyses about nongovernmental autonomy and the margins of maneuver of NGOs vis-à-vis other powerful actors such as the State or the Church should also be examined in the light of isomorphic forces as well as national environments. In this respect, our study of nongovernmental action unveiled significant curtailments and restrictions for institutional autonomy and independence. Albeit variations, we observed strong limitations to the capacity of influence that NGOs and other civil society organizations can exert over public officials, in favor of socially excluded groups, such as poor adolescents or teenage mothers living in underserved communities. However, there are several distinctive factors that accounts for these restrictions, depending on national and sub-national environments.

We present below the principal factors that, according to our research, restrict or curtail the autonomy of NGPA and the mode in which civil society organizations operate.

- a) *Lack of or insufficient funding.* Civil society organizations participating in public programs sometimes get barely enough funding to run their activities. The amount of funds transferred or the modes in which funding expenditure is overseen, allows little room to perform other activities or projects outside the pre-arranged ones. Also, in a context of financial restrictions fear to loose funding may temper nongovernmental demands or criticism on public programs. (Examples: Uruguay and Argentina)

- b) *Bureaucratization and lack of State innovation.* Governmental organizations may lack a result-oriented approach to programs and projects, placing greater emphasis on procedures and rules, than on results and impacts. In consequence, NGOs may lack stimulus for innovation or creating more effective approaches to the social problems they deal with. Excessive bureaucratization tends also to give primacy to the demands of public corporations over claims of policy reforms, somewhat diminishing the spaces of influence for NGOs. (Example: Uruguay)
- c) *Social assistance policies tied with clientelism.* NGO participation in social policies and programs that are biased by political favoritism, tend to curtail autonomy by means of exchanging social benefits for political loyalties. This situation may also temper nongovernmental demands or criticism to public administrators of social programs. Furthermore, another clear consequence is the effect of discouragement that this produces among those organizations which are not favored by the clientelistic scheme. (Example: Argentina)
- d) *State technocratic leadership.* Process of state modernization may put forward progressive reforms and advanced policies, built upon NGOs experience and knowledge. At least at the level of policy definitions and programs orientation, the State emerges as leading social changes and policy reforms, leaving scarce room for NGPA. Additionally, this trend is usually coupled with processes of cooptation of professionals from the NGO sector, weakening the technical capacity of these organizations (Example: Chile)
- e) *Policy making process influenced by conservative groups.* Although this factor may reveal significant autonomy and influence from conservative groups (such as the pro-life organizations) it also have some indirect effects

on more progressive NGOs as it may close or shuttered spaces for influencing policy outcomes. Fear experienced by governmental official to open spaces for debates or to take some decisions against traditional approaches may restrict or limit opportunities for nongovernmental participation.

Table 14. Observed factors that restrict NGPA autonomy across different national and sub-national environments (Santiago, Buenos Aires, Montevideo) (\*)

	Buenos Aires (Arg)	Santiago (Chile)	Montevideo (Uru)
<i>Lack or insufficient funding</i>	+++	-	+++
<i>Bureaucratization and lack of State innovation</i>	++	-	+++
<i>Social assistance policies tied with clientelism</i>	+++	+	++
<i>State technocratic leadership</i>	+	+++	-
<i>Policy making process influenced by conservative groups</i>	+	+++	-

(\*) Meaning of symbols: +++ very intense, ++ intense, + present, - absent.

Table 14 summarizes the presence/absence of these factors across our studied cities. In the case of Santiago, the leading role of a technocratic State in social policies coupled with the persisting influence of conservative ideology impinging upon policy

makers seems to be restricting factors for NGO's autonomy. In the case of Argentina, lack or insufficient funding for social organizations, associated with the clientelistic modes used for its distribution, emerge as the principal curtailments. Finally, in the Uruguayan case, State's lack of modernization, bureaucratization and scarce funding should be considered outstanding elements.

In this conclusive chapter, we have also addressed the influence that Catholic Church has upon nongovernmental public action in the three studied cities and the different manners in which this influence operates. Interestingly, we encountered that while in Chile the influence of conservative groups tend to be embedded in governmental structures opposing reforms from within, in the case of Argentina, confrontation with the Church on issues related to sexual and reproductive morality have become very visible and frontal. In Uruguay, although the Catholic Church is as much influential as any other religious or civic association, slowness in changes may respond not so much to ideological opposition, but to State inertia and the veto power of bureaucracies.

In this last respect, let me conclude with a final reflection about my country of origin. Curiously, after conducting this research, I realized that Uruguayan NGO sector - of the three studied countries- was the one with less capacity of mobilization and the one less involved in contentious politics. Furthermore, it was the country where civil society encouraged youth the least to defend their rights or to make claims on their behalf. It may be survival instinct, it may be search of state acquiescence, or it may just be the remnants of a society that still expects responses from its long lasting party system who built a glorious but now exhausted welfare State. In any case, it is clearly the case of a civil society that, from a comparative perspective, is not doing much in taking the lead to promote the changes it wants. Today, March 1<sup>st</sup> of 2010, a new president called Jose Mujica, former leader of the guerilla movement *Tupamaros*, took office in Uruguay. In



his discourse to the members of Parliament after taking the oath, he said: *“After one period in office, we have discovered that governing it was more difficult than we thought, and that bureaucracy has its own life. It is likely that we are now all more mature”* (José Mujica, President of Uruguay, March 1st, 2010).

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## **Vita**

Javier Hugo Pereira Bruno, the eldest son of Hugo Pereira Millot and Graciela Bruno Alonso was born on January 15<sup>th</sup> of 1971 in the city of Montevideo, Uruguay. He is alumni of the Crandon Institute and the Instituto Juan XXIII where he completed his high school studies. He obtained his undergraduate degree in Sociology at the Universidad de la República Oriental del Uruguay in January of 1993. As a novel sociologist he worked for Research International Uruguay (a market research company), the Salesian Fathers (a Catholic congregation) and Programa Projovent (a public vocational training program). He started his academic career in 1994 as a teaching assistant in Social Research Methods at the Universidad Católica del Uruguay and was appointed Director of the Undergraduate program in Social Science in the same university in 1998. In 2002 he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to pursue graduate studies in the United States. He got his Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin in 2005. He is married to Flavia Previtali, with whom he has three children, Mariana (11), Martin (8) and Santiago (2).

Permanent address: Camino Hudson 5418, Montevideo, CP 12400, Uruguay.

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