

Observatorio de los Derechos de la Niñez y Adolescencia

(National Observatory for Child and Adolescent Rights)

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ODNA, Ecuador

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Overview

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2. Who is involved in the observatory
3. How the observatory functions
4. What activities the observatory undertakes
5. What is the observatory's "specialty"
6. What the major problems have been
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8. What is the way forward/advice for Egypt



When and why was it established?

Established in late 2001: a time of institutional change and very slow social progress.

Negative contributing factors:

- During the 1990's Ecuador faced serious challenges: oil prices deterioration; natural disasters due to el "El Niño"; a war with neighboring Perú; growing public debt; low levels of public investment (particularly on social services); and, finally, a banking system crisis.
- As a result, the past decade can be considered "lost" for social development: economic downturn (GDP falls, devaluation and inflation soared); a fiscal crisis (sharp reduction in government revenues, high levels of debt service, budget cuts affecting social services); a social crisis (poverty levels double, unemployment, migration); political crisis (government overthrown).
- A climate of institutional instability with weak legitimate voices in the public sphere.

Positive contributing factors:

- A growing child's right movement in the midst of a variety of popular participation and civil society initiatives.
- The Convention in the Rights of the Child sparked the development of new rights-based legislation.
- The social crisis required information. The country saw the development of its first social indicator system, including the "Social Indicator System on the Situation of Children and Youth".

Who is involved?

UNICEF

Its contributions include funding the Observatory; technical assistance; funding new national social surveys; promoting the initiative in the public sphere; using the Observatory's information; mobilization of public opinion

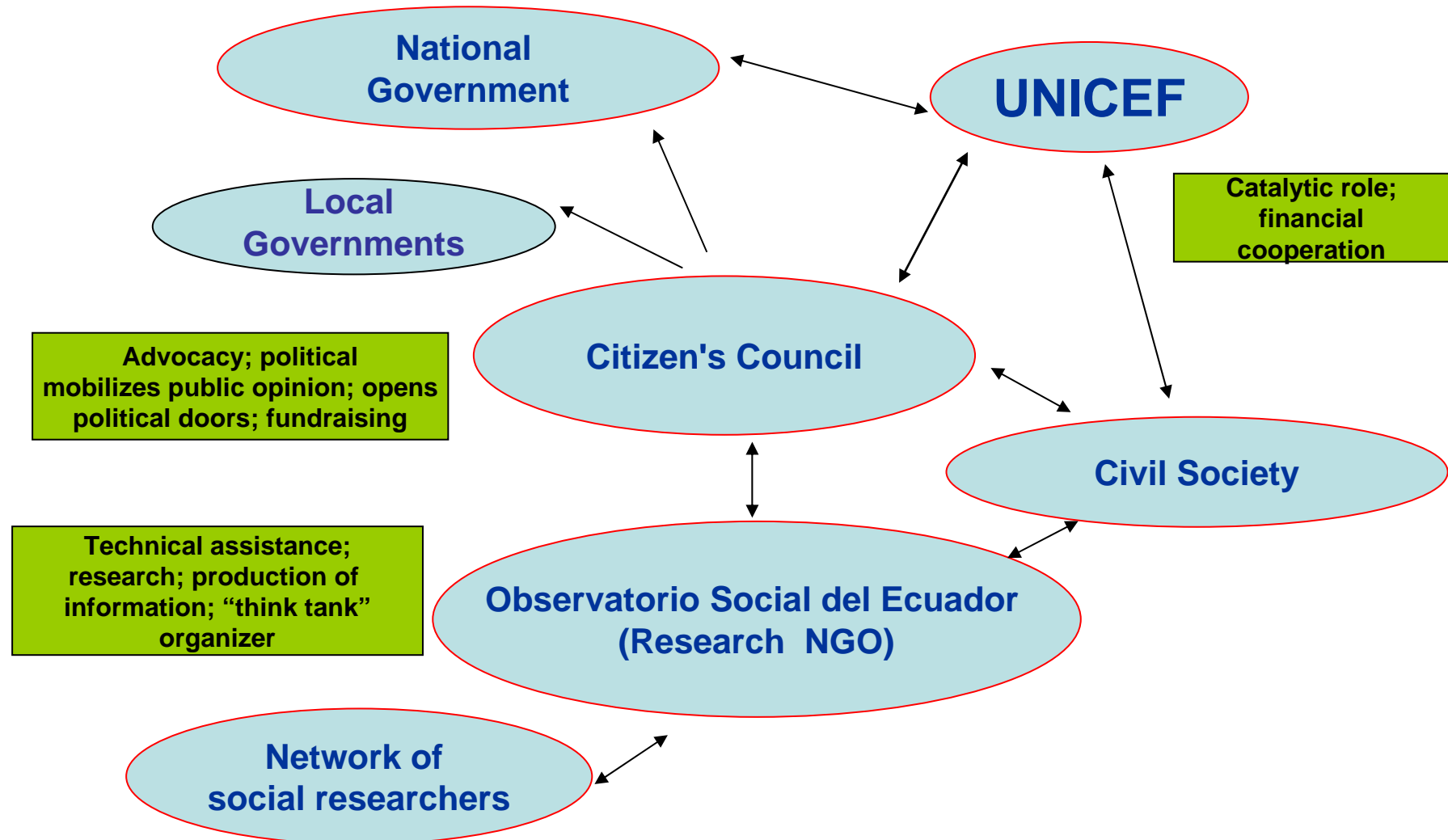
Civil society / social research network

A private, autonomous, research institution–The Social Observatory (OSE). It is an NGO with strong technical capabilities to produce reliable information and analysis on the state of children and adolescents. It has mobilized a network of researchers for the production of reports.

Citizen council

A group of prominent citizens committed to the realization of children's rights and raising awareness about social exclusion within civil society and the public policy community. It advocates the implementation of the policy recommendations, introduces the issue of children's rights into the public agenda, and mobilizes public opinion.

How does it function?



What activities does it undertake?

I. Monitoring (“social watch”)

Compile quantitative and qualitative social indicators to monitor the rights of children and adolescents; collaborate in national social surveys; conduct detailed studies on specific issues or problems.

II. Dissemination / publications / discussion

To inform, create awareness and influence public policy and social attitudes and behavior towards children: (1) periodic reports on the situation of provinces or smaller territorial divisions; (2) alert newsletters; (3) national bi-annual report; (4) workshops and training activities.

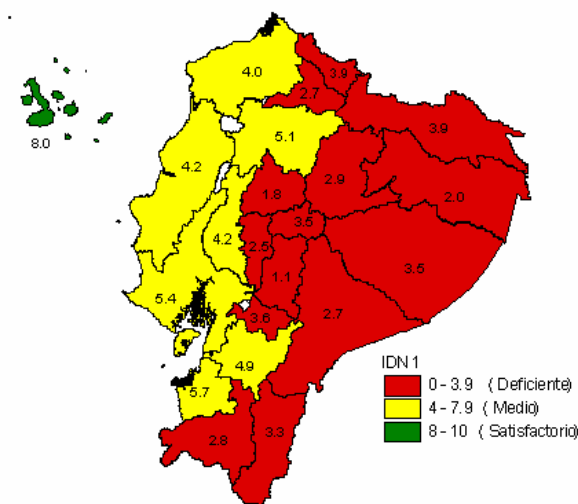
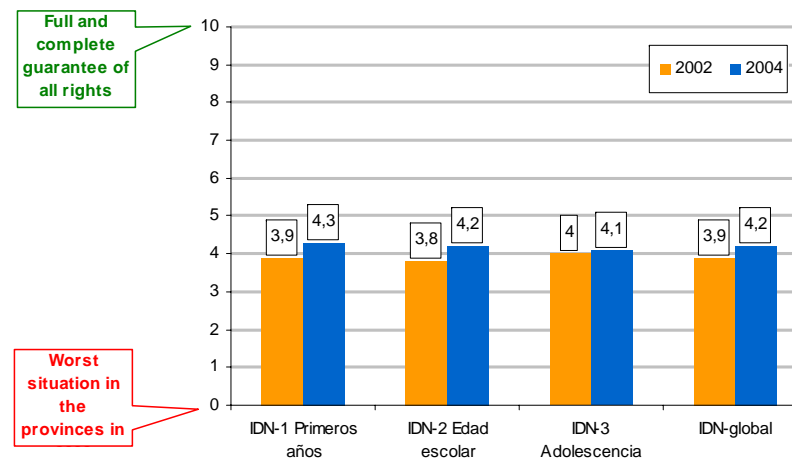
III. Advocacy / technical assistance

(1) To press for commitments to actions for children; (2) ensure that information about their rights is taken into consideration when defining social policies and appropriating public resources both at the national and local levels; (3) accompany local governments and institutions in introducing a rights perspective into their social evaluation and planning activities.

What is its “specialty”?

A monitoring system: The Child Rights Index

- ✓ A annual time series of summary indicators that monitors children’s rights and calls attention to social inequalities affecting them.
- ✓ One indicator for each stages of the life cycle: infancy, school age, and adolescence.
- ✓ The index for each age group reflects how children exercise three fundamental rights: (1) the right to live, (2) the right to enjoy a healthy and dignified life; (3) the right to develop intellectual and emotional skills.
- ✓ The failure to guarantee each right is represented by a social indicator (e.g., infant mortality, school attendance, maltreatment, etc); these indicators, in turn, reflect the outcome of public policies.
- ✓ The calculation is simple and easy to understand by the lay public.



What have been the problems?

✓ **Limited grass roots involvement**

The indices have not been widely understood or used outside the children's rights movement.

✓ **Public advocacy is an incipient political technology**

The citizen council is still very passive regarding children's rights violations; has yet to develop effective strategies.

✓ **Underdeveloped national statistical infrastructure**

Available social statistics do not refer to rights and are not produced regularly.

✓ **Weak informational culture**

Social indicators are not widely disseminated and used in the public sphere.

What were the solutions?

Active dissemination and training of users

Reaching out to the news media; promoting the participation of Council members in media and academic events; training of news people; offering workshops and technical assistance to media and NGO; writing newspaper pieces;

Reaching out to the local level institutions

Develop a model to work with small local governments in generating (conducting social surveys) and using monitoring indicators (including ad-hoc Child Rights Index) for social planning and policy evaluation.

Collaboration with the new children's rights institutional framework

The new Child and Youth Code mandated the creation of a new institutional framework for the protection of child rights (including national and local public and citizen chapters). The Observatory has accompanied and assisted in this process.

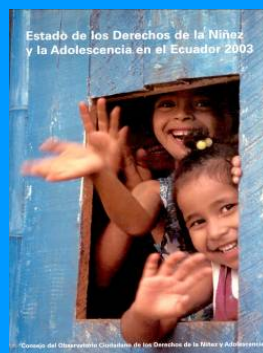
Institutional coordination for the production of information

The Observatory has collaborated with the National Statistical Office in the design of national surveys required to obtain the information to calculate the Child Rights Indices; it has also raised funds to undertake specific studies.

What is the way forward?

1. **Assure financial sustainability in the long-term (with local and international assistance).**
2. **Consolidate a technical / analytical model that is easily understood by the lay public.**
3. **Have solid technical assistance, research, and statistical information.**
4. **Promote the legitimacy of the Observatory's data and analysis in public discourse.**
5. **Develop national, regional, local monitoring systems.**
6. **Promote the participation of civil society and citizens and seek to empower them with knowledge and data.**
7. **Publicly commit elected authorities to implement policies that would raise the child rights index in their communities.**
8. **Work with governmental agencies but maintaining autonomy.**

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Website: www.odna.org.ec

National Observatory of Ecuador