

PUBLIC RESOURCES

ARE FOR THE COMMON GOOD

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For civil society organizations, identified as non-governmental organizations (NGO), it hasn't been easy to accomplish their social goals. An important reason for this has been the difficulties to access public and private resources, both national as well as international. Confronting the initiatives focused on sustainable development and the integral vision of the full exercise of rights, that depend on the long terms for its fulfillment, there are philanthropy organizations, attending emergencies and social and productive projects.

In the middle of a wide debate over the last decades, on the modalities of social politics and some NGO's participation, whose goal is the search for development alternatives, it has been recognized the importance these initiatives have generating emblematic experiences that could eventually contribute to the search of models that can be reproduced.

Even though the federal government appears to be convinced of the universal social policy's virtues, without withdrawing from focused and compensatory projects due to inequalities that still prevail, groups and foundations for social assistance multiply and operate with another logic and under other guidelines.

Many of these foundations that support private assistance institutions, privilege disarticulated actions that are not worried about creating autonomous subjects, about contributing to the full exercise of rights, but

instead to give charity for people to survive, as is the case of Vamos México Foundation, created by Mexican president's wife, Marta Sahagún. Supported by our old political culture tradition that expects from "first ladies" actions of charity towards the least protected, it contradicts the universal social policy focus, which demands articulated actions from the state, with fixed budget and well-defined public policies.

The most worrying thing is that we didn't have to wait long to discover the irregular political management of some of these Mexican foundations, causing distortion and corruption. Vamos México Foundation on the lead, together with the Transforma Mexico trusteeship of the National Lottery, had used these structures to confuse the public and private spheres, giving the appearance of aid, when in reality they have been using these resources in their political campaign to keep the power.

In consequence, a wide sector of civil organizations believes that we are going through new times and that our actions and results must be shown in a transparent way. We understand the "Law of Civil Society Organization's Activities Promotion" as a recognition of the role we play in society, but also as an instrument of control to accomplish the goals and objectives they have been created for.

This is the reason why we can't help denouncing the mistakes in management

and deviations of the two foundations mentioned, in complicity with private companies and other Private Assistance Institutions (PAI) that have received high amounts of money without going through rules, contests and accountability that carry out those who access public resources under open convocation, with projects judged by collectives.

Some talk about disloyal competition in referring to Vamos Mexico Foundation; we say lack of competition and ethics. Not only they have failed auditorship and accountability. Those who know and have reviewed the documentation professionally, have found evidence of deviation. In addition, with the complicity of other historical institutions like the National Lottery, they "donated" millionaire sums to projects that were not fully accomplished or were cancelled.

The civil association Libertad de Información-México (LIMAC)¹ carried out a detailed auditing of Vamos México Foundation. It found that although KPMG Auditor's approval "they have avoided the most basic principles of accounting".² They consider it is incorrect and does not allow comparative figures.

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¹ Information Freedom

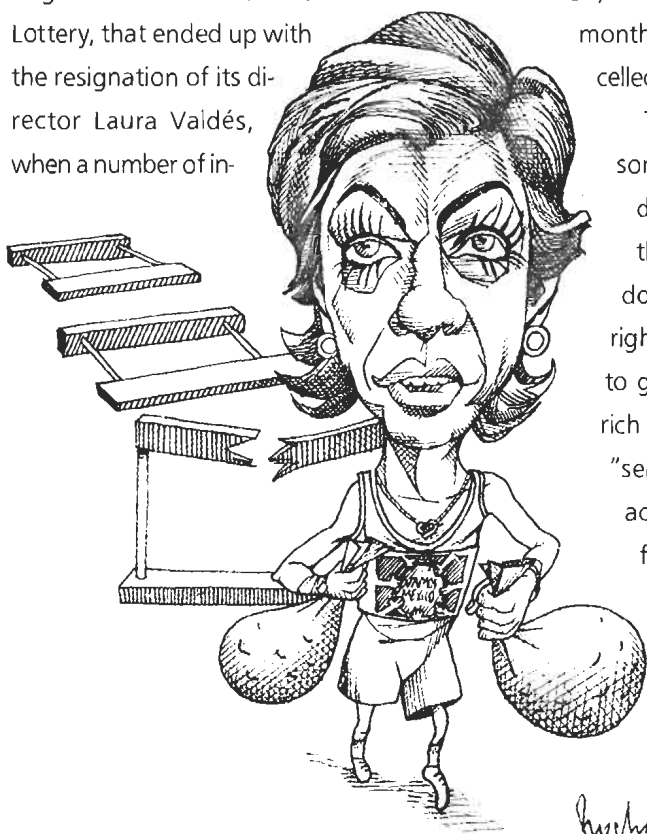
² Vamos México, un buen negocio, María Sherer Ibarra, Proceso 1445, July 11th, 2004

"... what is on the web page (of the Foundation) are financial reports till 2003 and it does not show anything concerning 2004. We can't know for what purposes the donations have been given and stands out that the donors are enthusiastic Mexican businessmen seduced by the genius ideas of Marta Sahagún".³ The point is that these same businessmen were hired to carry out expensive governmental projects.

An example detected by LIMAC is the company Teleactivos, which is at the same time, client and donor; in 2003 it donated 25 million pesos and received a contract of 15 million that was later cancelled.

Thus, Villanueva's article concludes by saying: "One way or the other, the lack of transparency of Vamos México allows to observe that for the first time the presidential power is used to privatize public resources and exchange favors used for political promotion of the first lady in her ambition to be president of the Republic".⁴

There is also clear evidence on the triangulation with the National Lottery, that ended up with the resignation of its director Laura Vaidés, when a number of in-



ternal irregularities and a delicate financial situation has been discovered. In two years of operation, the institution received almost 500 observations. High costs of operation, low rentability margin along with many other defects were found, leaving it with an enormous financial vulnerability. The audit also discovered a list of health service contacts, with high paying costs to hospitals and drug-stores that formed associations and received millions of pesos. For example, El Fenix drug-stores got three contracts in a year for the amount of 24 million pesos.⁵

In spite of the recommendations of the Auditing and Administrative Development Secretary (SECODAM) against it, Laura Valadés created the Transforma México trusteeship, through which she supported Sahagún's activities of political promotion. The 30th of January, 2002 -only three months after trusteeship's creation- its technical committee, integrated by federal government members, authorized a donation of three million pesos for Vamos México Foundation, which had started operating four months before. The donation was cancelled because of the debate it caused.

The tendency observed between some federal government dependencies has been to favor mainly the conservative groups, which doesn't work for the exercise of rights and whose idea of justice is to give charity with the money the rich and middle layers don't need, "sensitive" to perform their good action of the day, even though the future is darker every time, because of the privatization of services. Even worse, they impose "values" against the free determination of the people.

The Interamerican Foundation Anáhuac for Social

connected to the Legionaries of Christ, established by priest Marcial Maciel (seen as ped-erast) and the National Provida Committee, catholic organization that represents the radical arm of the legionaries, are the most benefited groups by governmental public organisms, with close to 59 million and 33 million pesos, respectively, that were delivered directly from the federal treasury.⁶

The National Provida Committee has become the civil association that has received more economic support from public Mexican assistance. In 2002 it received from Transforma México, the three millions mentioned before, and in 2003, the public welfare gave it 29 millions. This amount is the same one November last year deputy Luis Pasos, then president of the Treasury Commission of the National Action Party (PAN), reduced from the budget to the fight against HIV AIDS and reassigned to the creation of 12 Women Support Centers (Centros de Apoyo a la Mujer, CAM), anti-abortion centers managed by Provida.

Therefore, we are in the middle of deviation of public resources, with businessmen and foundations that favor their own projects, don't fulfill the goals they announce, and support proselytism for the presidency of this country.

In the face of this disloyal dispute for the resources for the common well being, we must continue to promote transparency and accountability, establish the country's social policy priorities, that will really contribute to overcome inequalities and promote development, always based on the full exercise of human rights.

³ "Vamos México, transparencia y experiencia comparada", Ernesto Villanueva, Proceso 1443, 27th June, 2004.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Irregularidades, sello de Laura Valadés en la Lotería", La Jornada, 10th July, 2004

⁶ "La Santísima Triangulación", Rosalía Vergara,