

INDICATORS:

Bogotá

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Bogotá Indicators

The "Bogotá, How Are We Doing?" project is a local initiative aimed at carrying out a continuous evaluation of changes in the quality of life in the city of Bogotá, Columbia. Several indicators are compiled in ten areas: health, education, the environment, public spaces, infrastructure and services, traffic flow, public safety, public responsibility, urban development, and public administration. Such indicators periodically evaluate the progress with respect to targets set in the city's development plan, as well as the impact of different initiatives on the quality of life.

For instance, for the purpose of evaluating the city's environmental sustainability, which is analyzed within the framework of 'How Are we Doing with the Environment?', information is collected on pollution sources, mitigation measures, and the channels through which public awareness of the city's pollution problems are being developed. Indicators are collected regarding the collection of solid waste, the quality of water supply and the preservation of bio-diversity, especially wildlife and wetlands. In addition, public opinion surveys are conducted regarding these issues.

Evaluation results—the list of the different weighted indicators backed by expert analyses and public opinion collected from polls and surveys—are published periodically in the local press, the daily newspaper 'El Tiempo', and in a weekly publication known as 'Suburbia Capital'. The results are also broadcast on television, on the 'City T.V.' channel and sometimes on the 'Radio Santa Fé' radio station. The project also aims to involve the local population throughout the development of a forum for the exchange of opinions, in addition to conducting surveys, opinion polls and focus groups in the ten different areas.

Indeed, the exchange of ideas with the local population has been one of the project's main goals from the onset. The project focused on the local population's contribution, particularly in the identification of the different problems affecting the quality of life in Bogotá, and proposals to address such issues. In the early stages of the process, a survey of 1,500 households selected from the various neighborhoods to represent the different socio-economic groups was carried out. This survey was repeated periodically (a total of three times thus far) to identify the changing views and priorities. A number of focus group sessions were also held to discuss and evaluate various quality-of-life issues with the local population. The latter have also been strongly involved in evaluation sessions and workshops.

To date, a total of three annual perception surveys have been carried out, eight focus group sessions have been held, along with eight debates with experts. In addition to the annual conference which was attended by 200 people, these activities have catalyzed strong community interest and involvement in local issues. In parallel, public officials have learned to become more accountable to the community and major improvements with respect to the transparency of urban governance could be detected.

Furthermore, debates bringing together experts, members of the local population and public officials have been held in the fields of education, public safety and the environment with an emphasis on public spaces. An annual conference for the evaluation of progress in the ten above-mentioned areas has been held and was attended by close on to two hundred people.

In addition, the project has published a book and more than forty articles in the local press, in addition to publishing a quarterly bulletin. The development of a web page is underway.

The initiative coordinators have identified the project's actual sole dependence on information from public sources as one of the critical future challenges. To enhance the credibility of the initiative, action is underway to enlist universities and other groups, including NGOs, in the process. Such institutions would participate in the evaluation process by conducting parallel investigations to cross-check the publicly-collected indicators.

In addition, given the size of the city, the project coordinators have constantly striven to expand the effort and refine the process. Accordingly, measures were undertaken to initiate a participatory process, wherein the population is consulted regularly and their opinions are taken into account, particularly with respect to the evaluation of specific projects.

With respect to the process, the following methodology was elaborated: documentation of existing conditions, understanding what the quality-of-life concept means to the local population, analysis of development strategies in the official development plan, preliminary identification of pertinent indicators, definition of a publication strategy in the media, and the elaboration of sustainability participatory processes strategies that involve various local groups.

As a result of this initiative, the current administration's development plan has evolved towards becoming more consensus-based. The results of the indicators and their reference to the development plan's targets have allowed for more involvement at the local level. The negotiation forum that has ensued resulted in analyzing several strategies proposed in the development plans in light of the population's input, such as the installation of bollards in the streets, or the landscaping plan. Although drastic changes in these policies have not taken place, public officials and administrators started reconsidering their approach to urban planning and development.

The "Bogotá, How Are We Doing?" project has been awarded a Best Practice Award for excellence in the improvement of living environments, as part of the Habitat Best Practices Award cycle of 2000.

Indicators used in the Bogotá, How Are We Doing? Program

Health:

- Number of participants in subsidized health care programs
- Number of deaths of pregnant mothers
- Number of deaths of children under 5 years by pneumonia
- Number of deaths of children under 5 years by diarrhea.

Education:

- Number of new facilities for grades 1 and 2
- Number of public schools with extended day education
- Number of improved non-profit educational institutions

Environment:

- Number of newly planted trees

- Number of newly mitigated sources of noise pollution
- Number of newly mitigated sources of air pollution
- Number of newly mitigated sources of industrial waste

Infrastructure and services:

- Number of new connections to the water supply system (the aqueduct)
- Number of new connections to the sewage system
- Length of access roads that were paved and lit (in kilometers)
- Surface of newly rehabilitated public spaces with the participation of the community (in m²)

Public spaces:

- Length of pedestrian network (in kilometers)
- Area of newly constructed public spaces (in m²)
- Area of maintained public spaces (in m²)
- Number of newly rehabilitated neighborhood parks

Urban development:

- Number of potential solutions to the affordable housing problem
- Area of new urban revitalization projects (in hectares)

Traffic flow:

- Average commuting time in public and private transportation systems in six roads

Public safety:

- Change in number of homicides
- Change in number of holdups
- Change in number of residential assaults
- Change in number of residential thefts
- Change in number of vehicular thefts
- Change in number of bank assaults

Public responsibility:

- Number of accidents
- Number of violent deaths caused by alcohol
- Percentage of cases resolved without litigation
- Community involvement in the maintenance of newly rehabilitated parks

Public administration:

- Percentage of successfully executed local development plans
- Percentage of effective dispute resolution
- Percentage decrease in tax evasion
- Percentage increase in tax collection