

### Honduras Program Summary

Since early 2008, the International Republican Institute (IRI) has worked with municipal governments in Honduras, helping mayors and municipal government staff to effectively and transparently implement policies and initiatives that respond to citizen needs and priorities.

IRI began its work by conducting public opinion research looking at citizen priorities and experiences with municipal service delivery. The opinion research revealed two main issues of concern among citizens: gaps in communication between the municipal governments and the general public; and a lack of opportunities for citizens to participate in local government decision making. Working with the Honduras-based Foundation for Municipal Development, IRI has conducted training programs to help municipal officials respond to citizen identified priorities and has provided technical assistance on improving service delivery, citizen outreach and government transparency and accountability.

IRI currently works in the department of La Paz with the municipalities of Cane and La Paz. In 2010, IRI plans to continue working with current partners and expand its work by initiating partnerships with new municipalities.

### Government Outreach to Citizens

IRI works with its partner municipalities to develop practices that bridge the communications gap between those who govern and the governed. By promoting the use of traditional as well as innovative channels of communication, such as the publication of annual reports that highlight government activities and expenditures, a live interactive television show to inform the public, and citizen manuals that provide a user friendly guide of municipal procedures, the Institute is working to bring citizens closer to their government. Thus IRI's programming in this area has the dual objective of strengthening municipal communication capacity as well as reinforcing the importance of building an informed citizenry.

### Civil Society

IRI also encourages effective citizen participation in local government decision making, and offers trainings on the role of the public in performing government oversight to ensure transparency. For instance, IRI supported the establishment and training of a Participatory Budgeting Commission, made up of civil society members and citizens at large, to draft the 2009 municipal budget for Cane. In addition, IRI strengthened citizen oversight in Cane by providing technical assistance to the Transparency Commission focused on conducting thorough social audits of municipal public works and providing recommendations to the municipality.

### Program Highlight

The Honduran Association of Municipalities and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation awarded the 2006-2008 Good Local Governance Award to IRI's partner municipalities in Honduras. Cane received the first place prize for municipalities in its size category and La Paz was awarded the second place in its size category. These awards were given in recognition of the improvements each municipality made in the areas of citizen participation and government accountability, and they symbolize the municipalities' respective commitments to improving their good governance practices, policies and initiatives.