



Roll of social actors in the construction of citizenship and the municipal development of Condega

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Summary

The efforts, achievements and advances that the Municipal Government and the social actors have done on behalf of the construction of the citizenship and the municipal development is manifested in: a) the municipality of Condega since the 1990s different local initiative of participation of citizens have been promoted, which have allowed men and women their active and protagonist participation in processes of citizenship construction. b) The identification and analysis of the factors that make possible or obstruct the construction of the citizenship. C) The communication and coordination mechanisms, existing organizational spaces and structures of citizen participation in the township, based on which its linkage is proposed to be constituted as a mechanism of social articulation that permit to guide the actions, to make available working contents, to make possible the conditions, to strengthen the organization and integration in the different processes of citizen participation of men and women so that they can be informed; analyze, discuss and make proposals for the decisions; actions that can make possible the construction of the citizenship in the township.

Key words: Participation, organization, citizenship, development, township.

Introduction

The active participation of the citizens is an integral part of human development and constitutes the base for the consolidation of a democratic political culture. A retrospective assessment of the events occurred during the past 20 years permit to know that substantial advances on this topic have been achieved, but that a significant emptiness persists, this emptiness generates fragile institutions, specially in rural areas of north central and Caribbean area of Nicaragua.

There fore, to overcome the formerly mentioned, means to achieve the strengthening of a democratic political culture that requires the propitiation of basic conditions to keep and widen the spaces of citizen's participation and gradually to modify the ways to carry out the authority from the government instances. In that sense the analysis and reflection consisted in deepening on the knowledge and the performance of the social actors in the spaces of the citizens' participation, and the municipal development of Condega through the identification of local initiatives that have had major achievements, to precise providing or obstructing factors and to know mechanism of social articulation that could be established to make good use of the scattered and uncoordinated efforts and to insert them in a strategic plan of construction of citizenship.



Materials and methods

The research was carried out from September 2003 through March 2003 and embraced a radius of action of three micro-regions (one of them with a good level of development, another with medium development, and the other with a low organizational development) that integrate 16 rural communities and one of a city neighborhood, as well as the Municipal Council and the Comity of Municipal Development (CDM). The host communities for the research were El Bramadero, Santa Teresa, Los Corralitos and the neighborhood Solidaridad.

The research was carried out through a participation-action research through workshops and interviews, in which participated a total of 158 people; municipal authorities, representatives of organizations and institutions, community leaders and/or neighborhoods and people of the civil society of the township.

Outcomes

Local initiatives of citizens' participation have contributed to the development and strengthening of the forms of organization and participation of all local participants. This fact makes possible Condega to have a community and municipal organization, a strategic plan of municipal development, an agro- socio-economical diagnose of the township, and the participation in the process of decentralization of the government.

On the other hand the most relevant factors that make possible or that obstruct the construction of the citizenship in the town are the following: the democratic processes developed by

the population in the communities for the election of their representatives, the spaces and the opportunities that the community organizations offer to men and women to participate in the promotion of the community development since the structures (assembly, community council, working committee and commissions), the considerable emigration of the population searching for jobs that limits the renewal of the community leadership, and the participation in the construction of the citizenship.

Another outstanding aspect is the need of an active involvement of men and women representing the local government, institutions, organizations, unions, associations, and groups of interest in the country and in the city, to make possible the mechanisms of social articulation work. More over, it is requested the local government responsibility in the assurance of the linkage of those mechanisms as a guarantor of the citizens' participation as well as its appropriation of social actors through processes of training and transference that encourage citizens to dig in their duties and rights of participation, searching the improvement of conditions and quality of life of the population of the town.

Conclusions

1. The organizational processes developed in decades have gradually contributed to integrate the social actors in structures of citizens' participation, and it actually makes possible the town to count on an organizational potential that is expressed in the will, experience, and



- organizational capacity of the social actors, and there fore, the citizens’ participation compared to other townships is outstanding.
2. There is a lack of proper working methods in the local government as well as in the organizations that in a more positive way influence peoples’ participation. Together with this, the lack of institutional mechanisms of the structures of citizens’ participation that are present in the absence of rules, procedures, allowance of human and economical resources that join the processes that promote the local government; institutions, organizations and members of civil society on behalf of the socio-economical development and the citizens’ participation of the town.
 3. The citizens’ participation in Condega is, (in mid to long terms), in risk of deadlock and rejection, which means that the population do not take part in the local government decisions, if the working methods that have been used so far in the promotion of the citizens’ participation are not renewed.
2. The rules and regulations of the Municipal Development Council must take into account the representation of women and young people in the decision making of the organizational structures, to guarantee the incorporation of their needs and interests in a specific way in the strategies of municipal development.
 3. To formulate projects individually within the frame of the prior needs that the Strategic Plan of Municipal Development embraces in order to look for resources together with the Local Government.

Recommendations

1. To carry out processes of inter institutional coordination promoted and joined by the local government so that they lead to optimize the resources of the town.



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