**Argentina: Recovering with Integrity:**

**Fostering preventive transparency in the health system**

**Overview**

Recovering with Integrity is the fourth project with Poder Ciudadano, the Transparency International affiliate in Argentina, seeking to increase the openness and accountability of the national health system in the purchase of vaccines. The initial project focused on the purchase and distribution of COVID vaccines and demonstrated the opaqueness and secrecy of the procurement process. Subsequent projects continued to provide information to the public on COVID vaccines but broadened the scope to include calendar vaccines. These projects generated a somewhat greater openness by the Ministry of Health to information-sharing and citizen engagement.

The current project builds on these experiences and seeks to use the immunization system to broaden the effort to make public health procurement an open and transparent process. It will do so in four explicit ways. First, it will continue to press for decisions from the judiciary on formal complaints on citizen rights to information. Second, Poder will extend its examination of procurement action to vaccines produced and bought locally. (In the past, most vaccines were provided by PAHO, the WHO program in Latin America). Third, it will establish accountability labs in three provinces—Cordoba, Mendoza, and Buenos Aries—and help build the capacity of local civil society organizations to monitor the distribution and delivery of vaccines. Fourth, Poder will create a “preventive transparency toolkit” that will identify the kinds of information the public has a right to know and tools for analysis, reporting and monitoring responses. It hopes to engage the Ministry of Health in the preparation and demonstrate the value of citizen engagement in regaining the trust of the population seriously eroded by the COVID response.

The unique nature of this program is Poder’s long-term commitment to promoting transparency and integrity in vaccine procurement. Poder and PTF have collaborated on four projects over four years, recognizing that reforming public agencies is a long and incremental process. The goal is to make health information accessible to all and engage citizens more actively in a health system badly in need of regaining public trust.

**Objectives**

The following objectives are designed to enhance the openness and accountability of Argentina's national health system in vaccine procurement. This effort will not only build public awareness and citizen participation but restore public confidence in a struggling health delivery system. The creation of regional programs focused on vaccine storage, distribution, and delivery establishes a sustainable and decentralized approach, promoting efficiency and accessibility on a broader scale. Together, these objectives not only strengthen the national health delivery system but also help restore public confidence in a struggling health system.

* *Objective 1:* Strengthen the national health integrity environment through persistence and adaptation.

Entails fortifying the national health integrity environment by consistently applying efforts and adapting strategies over time to ensure resilience and effectiveness in promoting transparency and ethical practices.

* *Objective 2:* Promote CSO — government cooperation in integrity systems.

Encouraging collaboration between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the government within integrity systems fosters a cooperative partnership to strengthen transparency and ethical practices in the health sector.

* *Objective 3:* Deepen accountability environment at the sub-national level.

Recognizing the significance of localized efforts in ensuring transparency, intensifying accountability measures at the sub-national level in Cordoba, Mendoza, and Buenos Aires.

**Project Activities**

To achieve the objectives, a comprehensive set of activities will be undertaken. Persistent efforts and adaptive strategies are crucial for strengthening the national health integrity of the environment. This involves continuous monitoring, evaluation, and refinement of processes to promote sustained transparency. Civil Society Organizations (CSO) seeking to work collaboratively with government agencies will help build a robust integrity framework, deepen an accountable environment, enhance monitoring mechanisms, community engagement, and tailored strategies to foster transparency.

* *Enhance Transparency:* Update the Procurement Observatory to provide real-time insights into vaccine procurement processes, ensuring transparency and informed decision-making.
* *Strengthen Accountability:* Pursue judicial litigation to hold stakeholders accountable, fostering integrity in the vaccine procurement system and addressing any discrepancies or malpractices.
* *Expand National Reporting:* Extend the report on procurement to include national purchases of vaccines, offering a comprehensive overview that supports a more inclusive and effective national vaccine procurement strategy.
* *Collaborative Toolkit Development:* Work with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to create a preventive transparency toolkit aimed at optimizing accountability in healthcare processes.
* *Information Dissemination:* Disseminate the developed toolkit to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), healthcare providers, and the public to empower them with the tools needed for transparent and accountable practices in the healthcare sector.
* *Regional Accountability Labs:* Establish accountability labs in three provinces (Cordoba, Mendoza, Buenos Aires) to serve as regional hubs for fostering transparency and accountability in vaccine-related processes.
* *Provincial CSO Network:* Create a network of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) at the provincial level to facilitate collaboration, information sharing, and coordinated efforts in promoting accountability within the healthcare sector.
* *Capacity Building:* Conduct training sessions for local CSOs in the targeted provinces, focusing on equipping them with the skills to effectively monitor vaccine storage, distribution, and delivery, thereby enhancing their role in ensuring accountable practices.
* *Collaborative Mechanisms:* Promote collaborative mechanisms between CSOs and health authorities at the sub-national level, fostering partnerships that contribute to transparent and accountable vaccine-related initiatives.

**Project Team**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pablo Secchi | Karina Kalpschtrej | Ana Pichon Riviere |
| Executive Director  Poder Ciudadano | Deputy Executive Director  Poder Ciudadano | Public Sector Coordinator and Institutional Strengthening  Poder Ciudadano |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Daniel Ritchie | Stephani Gutierrez |
| Executive Committee, PTF | Project/Operations Office, PTF |

**About Our Partner**

Poder Ciudadano is a non-partisan and non-profit foundation born in 1989 as an initiative of a group of people concerned about the defense of civic rights in Argentina.

<https://poderciudadano.org/>