

# Managerial Strategies for the Optimization of Social Policies in Municipal Administration: Case of the Córdoba Municipality Mayor's Office, Táchira State

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## Abstract

This scientific article examines the operational effectiveness and socioeconomic impact of the social assistance programs "Las Arepitas Solidarias" and "Las 2F Solidarias", executed by the Mayor's Office of the Córdoba Municipality, Táchira State, Venezuela. The research was framed within a quantitative descriptive-propositional approach with a non-experimental field design. The purposive sample consisted of beneficiaries across the municipality's seven communal circuits and local public servants. A 10-item structured dichotomous questionnaire was used for data collection, validated through expert judgment and yielding a Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) reliability coefficient of 0.78. Findings revealed a highly favorable perception regarding quality of life improvement (92.78%) and family expenditure relief (82.50%). However, critical structural bottlenecks were identified: 22.70% irregularity in logistical distribution, 53.61% community exclusion from strategic planning phases, and 33.00% weakness in post-delivery institutional monitoring. In response, a comprehensive transformative plan was designed around three strategic modules: Participatory Planning and Co-governance, Logistical Reengineering via a Standardized Procedures Guide (GPLE), and Metric Automation using a Social Balanced Scorecard (CMIS). The study concludes that the sustainability of municipal public investment requires transitioning from centralized welfare models to modern, data-driven, and community co-managed managerial frameworks.

**Keywords:** *Municipal Public Management, Social Policies, Impact Assessment, Co-Governance, Balanced Scorecard, Córdoba Municipality.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The optimization of social public policies represents one of the most complex and urgent managerial challenges within contemporary local public administration. At the municipal level, the proximity between citizen demands and state structures requires execution mechanisms characterized by timeliness, equity, transparency, and technical feasibility. In the Venezuelan context, specifically in the Córdoba Municipality of Táchira State, the management of social programs demands effective response frameworks to mitigate socioeconomic vulnerabilities heightened by budgetary constraints and local environmental volatility.

Currently, the Mayor's Office of the Córdoba Municipality articulates its social protection policy through two core programs: "Las Arepitas Solidarias", aimed at the daily distribution of 100 nutritionally balanced meal units to vulnerable groups (predominantly school-aged children and senior citizens) coordinated by the Office of the Mayor; and "Las 2F Solidarias", deployed under the "point and circle" approach across seven communal circuits, delivering multidisciplinary outreach events providing medical care, medications, civil registry processing, and services from the Child and Adolescent Protection System (SEPNA).

Despite the high perceived value of these initiatives, empirical observation of their management reveals critical technical and procedural bottlenecks. Asymmetries in territorial distribution, interruptions in benefit regularity in areas distant from the municipal capital (Santa Ana), manual inventory controls, a lack of automated censuses, and a marked centralism in planning that excludes the community base are evident. These symptoms threaten financial sustainability, erode the transformative impact of public expenditure, and limit accountability.

From a theoretical perspective, this issue is addressed through modern public management science. Guerrero and García (2013) argue that state functions must be oriented toward the comprehensive support of society through substantive decisions sustained by multi-year planning. For his part, Moreno (2000) conceives social policy as an instrument for promoting equal opportunity rather than a mere palliative measure. Furthermore, Osborne and Gaebler (1992) and Barzelay (2001) emphasize the imperativeness of reinventing public administration by orienting it toward results, process efficiency, and objective citizen-centered performance indicators.

The general objective of this study was to design innovative managerial strategies to enhance the impact of social policies implemented by the Mayor's Office of the Córdoba Municipality, Táchira State, with special emphasis on the programs *"Las Arepitas Solidarias"* and *"Las 2F Solidarias"*, promoting their sustainability, transparency, and territorial expansion. In this way, the research offers concrete solutions grounded in the practice of auditing and municipal public management.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research adhered to the quantitative research paradigm, defined by Hernández et al. (2014) as one that uses data collection and numerical analysis to test hypotheses or characterize institutional phenomena. By design, it corresponded to a non-experimental field study at a descriptive and propositional level (Arias, 2012), as primary data were collected directly within the real territorial context of the Córdoba Municipality without deliberate variable manipulation, aimed at formulating a comprehensive improvement plan.

The target population consisted of direct beneficiaries of the social programs across the seven communal circuits and public servants assigned to the Office of the Mayor and the Social Development Department of the municipality. A non-probability purposive or convenience sampling approach was applied (Hernández et al., 2010), establishing two units of analysis: Group A (Community

beneficiaries) and Group B (Local public servants). Rigorous inclusion criteria were established, including permanent residency, active benefit receipt during the last semester, and direct logistical-administrative involvement in the municipality.

For data collection, a structured questionnaire was designed, consisting of ten (10) items with a forced-choice dichotomous measurement scale (Yes / No). The instrument was structured in accordance with the operationalization of variables, measuring dimensions of socioeconomic impact (items 1 to 4), internal and external effectiveness factors (items 5 to 7), and strategies for sustainability and institutional innovation (items 8 to 10).

Content validity was certified using the Judgment of Three Experts technique in the fields of public management and methodology. The reliability and internal consistency of the instrument were determined through a pilot test administered to 20 subject peers, processing the data with the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) statistical coefficient, specific to dichotomous matrices (Merino Soto & Charter, 2009):

$$KR-20 = [K - 1K] \times [1 - \sigma^2 \sum p \cdot q]$$

Where K represents the number of items (10), p the proportion of affirmative responses, q the proportion of negative responses, and  $\sigma^2$  the total variance of the test. The calculation yielded a KR-20 coefficient of 0.78, which, according to social science standards (Hernández et al., 2010), classifies the instrument as highly reliable and suitable for definitive application. Data processing was conducted using descriptive statistics, organizing absolute frequencies and relative percentages represented analytically.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation of empirical findings is organized according to the three specific objectives established in the research, integrating quantitative data analysis with the theoretical framework and municipal public management literature.

### ➤ Social and Economic Impact of the Programs (Objective 1)

Results obtained regarding the perceived impact of *"Las Arepitas Solidarias"* and *"Las 2F Solidarias"* demonstrate a highly favorable social evaluation by citizens of the Córdoba Municipality, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Frequency of Responses Associated with Specific Objective No. 1.

| Item | Indicator / Question Description                                             | Yes (%) | No (%) |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| 1    | Do you consider that the social programs have improved your quality of life? | 92.78%  | 7.22%  |
| 2    | Have your family expenses decreased thanks to the social programs?           | 82.50%  | 17.50% |
| 3    | Do you believe the programs address the real needs of the community?         | 87.60%  | 12.40% |
| 4    | Do the benefits reach your community on a regular basis?                     | 77.30%  | 22.70% |

Source: Data Processed by the Author (2026).

As observed in Table 1, 92.78% of respondents state that the programs have improved their quality of life (Item 1), and 82.50% confirm direct relief to household finances (Item 2). These findings validate Moreno's (2000) thesis defining social policy as a pillar of public welfare. However, from a managerial standpoint, Item 4 exposes a core critical bottleneck: 22.70% of informants indicate that benefits do not arrive regularly. This 22.70% gap highlights vulnerabilities in the municipality's logistical

distribution chain, resulting in supply gaps across the most distant communal circuits.

➤ *Internal and External Operational Effectiveness Factors (Objective 2)*

The analysis of organizational and participatory factors conditioning the performance of social policies is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 Frequency of Responses Associated with Specific Objective No. 2.

| Item | Indicator / Question Description                              | Yes (%) | No (%) |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| 5    | Have you experienced any difficulty accessing the benefits?   | 36.10%  | 63.90% |
| 6    | Have you participated in the planning of the social programs? | 46.39%  | 53.61% |
| 7    | Do you consider that the mayor's office monitors results?     | 67.00%  | 33.00% |

Source: Data Processed by the Author (2026).

The diagnostic reflected in Table 2 highlights coexisting strengths and severe procedural gaps. While 63.90% report no access difficulties (Item 5) and 67.00% perceive municipal supervision efforts (Item 7), an alarming figure emerges in Item 6: 53.61% of citizens report having had no participation whatsoever in planning social events. Furthermore, 33.00% perceive an absence of post-delivery evaluation. This finding demonstrates the persistence of a traditional top-down welfare model, contradicting the tenets of Habermas (1992) and Avritzer

(2002) regarding deliberative management and participatory governance as guarantors of public transparency and efficiency.

➤ *Citizen Willingness and Improvement Strategies (Objective 3)*

The evaluation of perspectives regarding institutional transformation and community openness toward the viability of the improvement plan is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Frequency of Responses Associated with Specific Objective No. 3.

| Item | Indicator / Question Description                                               | Yes (%) | No (%) |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| 8    | Would you be willing to participate in citizen consultation spaces?            | 86.70%  | 12.40% |
| 9    | Do you believe the programs should expand to more sectors in the municipality? | 92.78%  | 7.22%  |
| 10   | Do you consider that the programs could be improved through new strategies?    | 88.00%  | 12.00% |

Source: Data Processed by the Author (2026).

Data in Table 3 demonstrate undisputed social feasibility and the urgency of the managerial proposal. 86.70% of the sample expresses active willingness to join consultation and co-management spaces (Item 8), 92.78% call for territorial expansion of service goals (Item 9), and 88.00% confirm that existing initiatives urgently require new modernization strategies (Item 10). Consequently, a high level of social capital supports transitioning toward a participatory, auditable managerial model.

➤ *Structure of the Transformative Proposal*

Grounded in the triangulation of these findings (22.70% regularity gap, 53.61% planning exclusion, and 33.00% monitoring weakness), a proposal titled *"Managerial Strategies for Human Talent Development in the Mayor's Office of Córdoba Municipality, Oriented Toward the Operational and Social Strengthening of 'Las Arepitas Solidarias' and 'Las 2F Solidarias' Programs"* was formulated. The alternative is structured across three strategic modules:

- **Strategic Planning and Local Co-Governance Module:** Trains institutional personnel in Theory of Change methodologies (Arenas, 2021) and social mapping, institutionalizing Social Coordination Technical Committees composed of municipal directors,

community leaders, and street leaders to reverse the 53.61% community exclusion rate.

- **Logistical Reengineering and Municipal Public Supply Chain Module:** Introduces the Standardized Logistical Procedures Guide (GPLe). It standardizes minimum/maximum inventories, technical storage, and transport routes under the "point and circle" approach, permanently resolving the 22.70% supply irregularity gap.
- **Performance-Oriented Management Control and Metric Automation Module:** Designs and implements a digitized Social Balanced Scorecard (CMIS). This tool replaces manual logs with dynamic community censuses (Ramírez, 2024), eliminating duplicate deliveries and providing leadership with real-time coverage and efficiency indicators to correct the 33.00% gap in monitoring weaknesses.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

The execution of this study and the rigorous processing of empirical data lead to the following fundamental conclusions for municipal public administration:

- The social protection programs "*Las Arepitas Solidarias*" and "*Las 2F Solidarias*" constitute tools of immense strategic value and economic relief for vulnerable populations in the Córdoba Municipality (favorably rated by over 90% of users). However, the persistence of a 22.70% irregularity rate in logistical distribution threatens equitable access and continuity of welfare rights.
- A structural weakness prevails within the municipality's management model, characterized by administrative centralism and low community inclusion during planning phases (53.61% exclusion). Furthermore, the absence of formalized metric tools leads to a 33.00% gap in post-delivery impact evaluation, limiting transparency and social accountability.
- The feasibility of the transformative proposal is fully ensured by widespread community willingness to engage in co-management (86.70%) and a majority demand for renewed public management strategies (88.00%). Municipal modernization does not necessarily require larger budget allocations, but rather the technical training of human talent and the institutionalization of internal control and digital tools.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ➤ *Based on the Conclusions Reached, the Following Institutional Actions are Recommended:*

- To the Executive Authority (Mayor) and the Office of the Mayor: Approve and institutionalize the managerial training plan via Internal Resolution, and sign an Academic Cooperation Agreement with the Universidad Politécnica Territorial del Norte del Táchira "Manuela Sáenz" (UPTNT) to ensure module accreditation and financial viability.
- To the Social Development Department and Operational Staff: Formally implement the Standardized Logistical Procedures Guide (GPLE) and migrate manual records to the digital Social Balanced Scorecard (CMIS) to guarantee traceability, eliminate duplicate services, and secure regular provision.
- To Communal Councils and Communal Circuits: Permanently establish Social Coordination Technical Committees, liaising with the mayor's office to exercise effective social oversight backed by objective data and dynamic censuses.

### ➤ *Conflict of Interest and AI Assistance Statement*

The authors declare no financial, personal, or institutional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the development of this research or the results presented herein. Furthermore, in compliance with IJSRMT ethics and editorial transparency guidelines, it is declared that Generative Artificial Intelligence tools were utilized exclusively for syntactic translation support of the Abstract and initial typographic formatting of the manuscript. The authors retain absolute responsibility for authorship, scientific rigor, data analysis, and interpretation.

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