

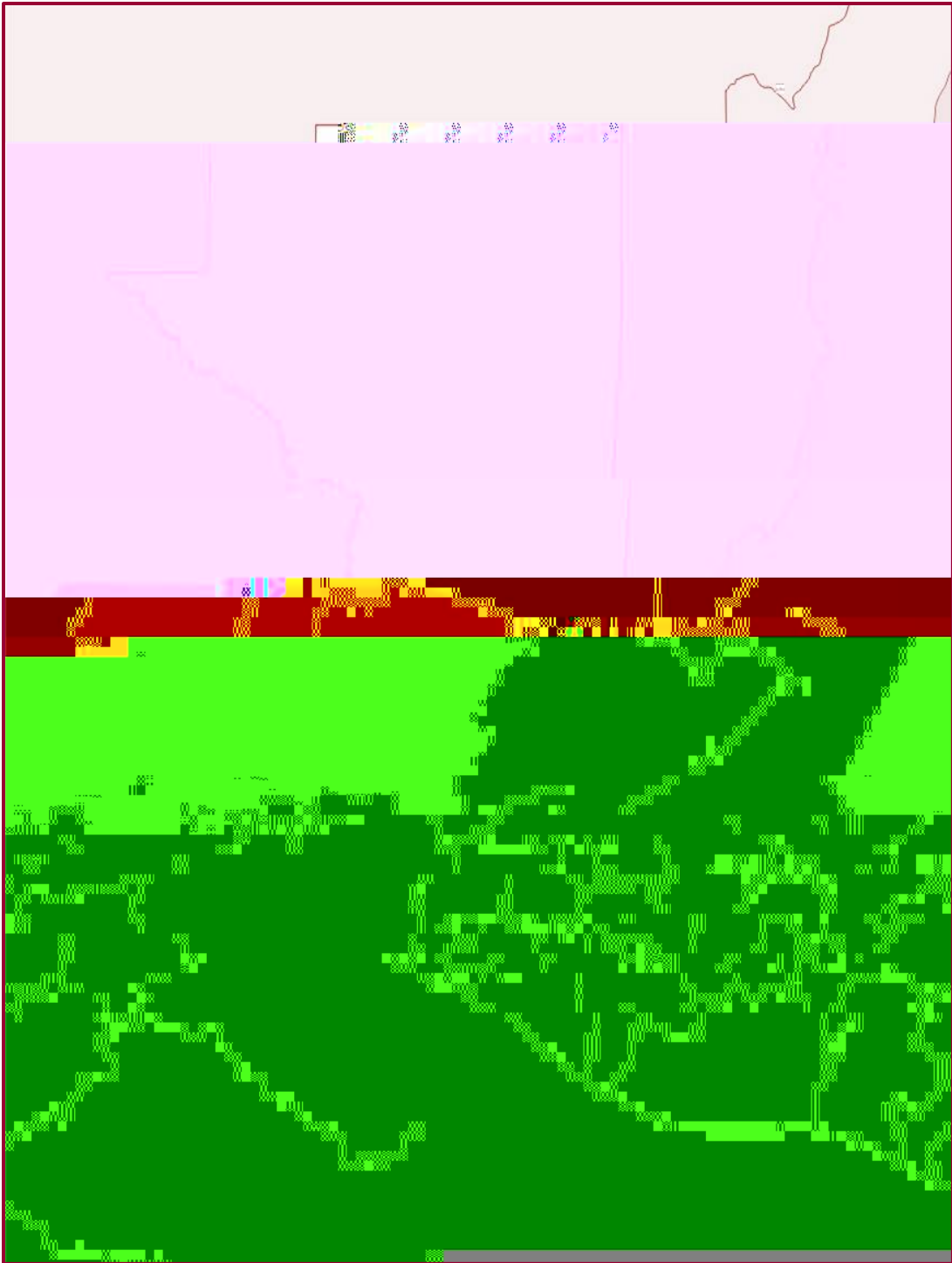
THE



What is Access to Information?

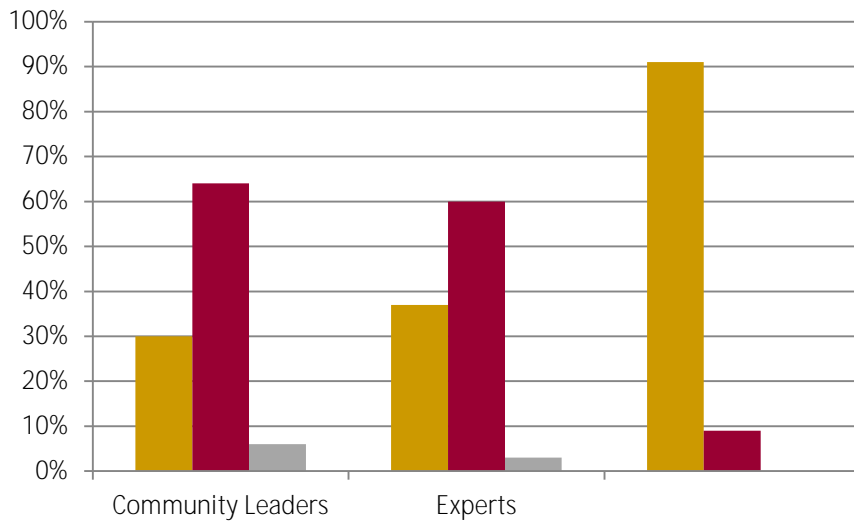
Access to information is a fundamental right listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is needed for people to exercise their political and economic rights. It is a tool that provides the power to make sure that social services reach those who need them. Access to Information supports true government accountability by helping people know more about government practices and policies.





Preliminary findings: National

Do you think women access good quality information at the same rate as men?



What are the greatest barriers women with respect to accessing

What information would be most useful to women for achieving greater economic empowerment and rights?

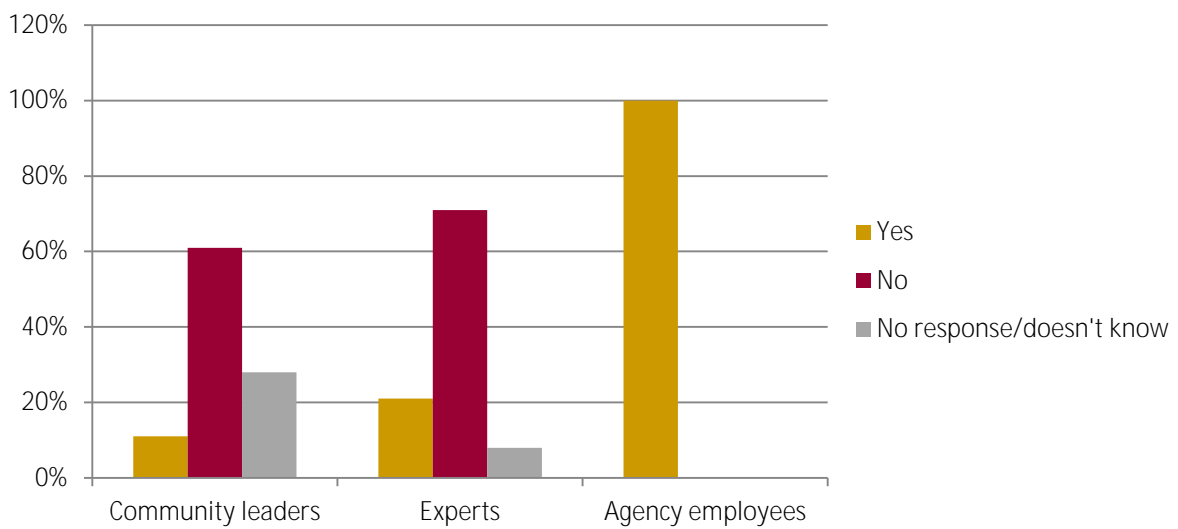


What kinds of information, on economic empowerment, are women generally most in need of access to?



Preliminary findings: Alta Verapaz

In Alta Verapaz 14 experts and 18 community leaders were interviewed. Additionally, 7 visits were made to public agencies to speak with visitors and public employees. As was the case in other departments, a majority of



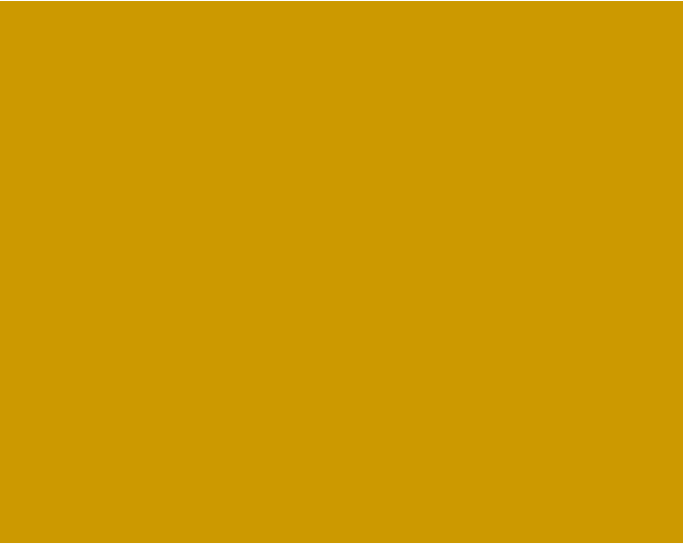




Preliminary findings: Guatemala City

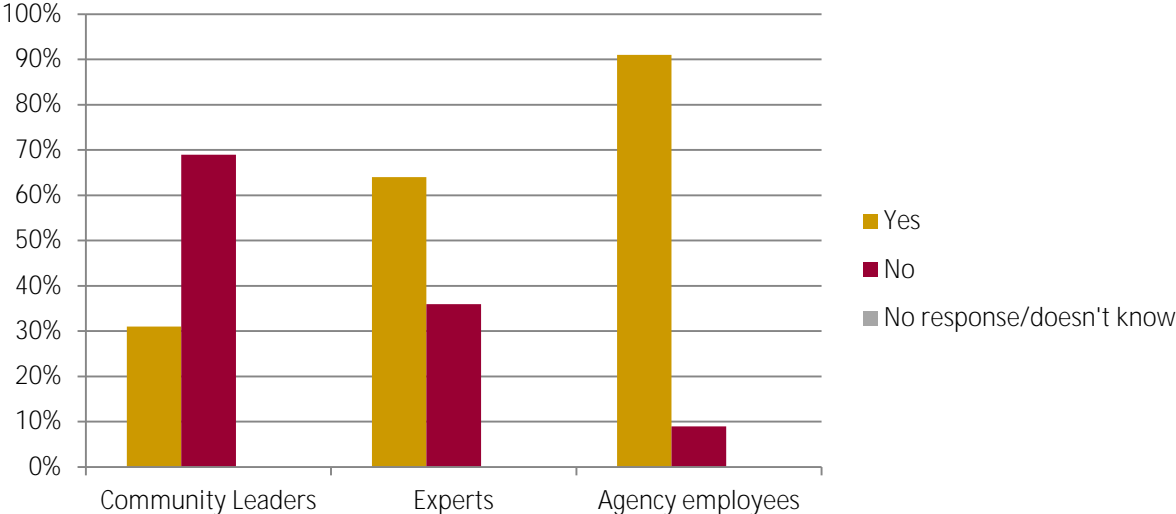






Preliminary findings: Huehuetenango

In Huehuetenango 11 experts and 16 community leaders were interviewed. Additionally, 7 visits were made to public agencies to speak with visitors and public employees. In this department, community leaders clearly express (6a6D.28 468 2(6D.26p)-5(re)44m26 46891 468.1 251.66 reW*ublic agencies to





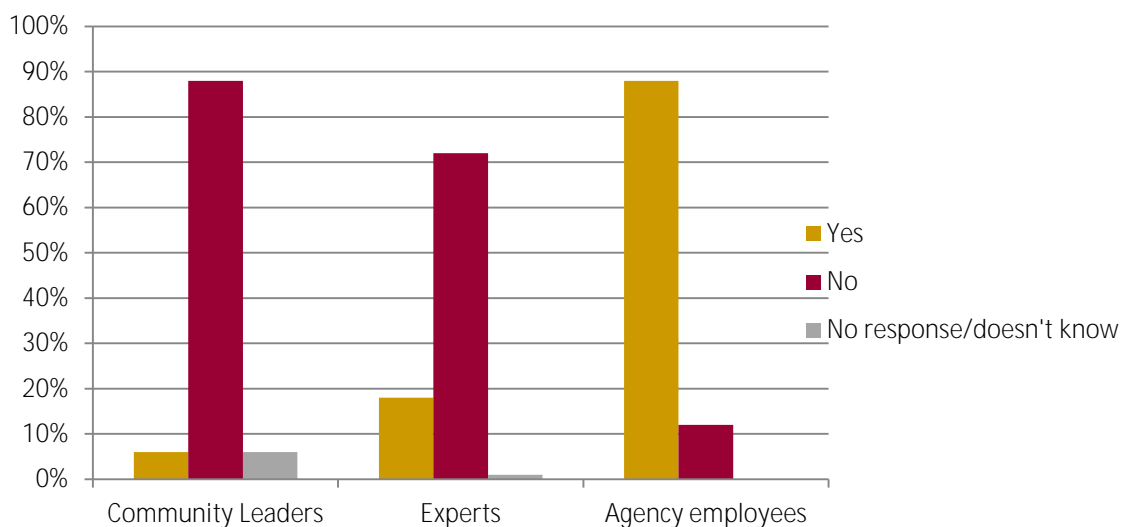
Preliminary findings: El Quiché

In El Quiché 11 experts and 17 community leaders were interviewed. Additionally, 9 visits were made to public agencies to speak with visitors and public employees. El Quiché was the department that most strongly expressed that women are in fact unable to access information with the same facility as men (88.2% of community leaders, 85.7% of experts).

Regarding the barriers to access, community leaders expressed that the principal challenges were poverty and language, while experts added machismo to that list. The validation meeting focused heavily on machismo, and some participants expressed, "People in communities don't use the concept of machismo, because they don't know it, but it is in fact, a big obstacle" Participants noted that women are often asked to submit requests in writing, and are asked why they want the information, while men are simply attended to without being bothered.

During the validation process, some participants expressed the hypothesis that the politicization of local government results in a decreased capacity to be able to provide good service, which affects women. In addition to machismo and the politicization of local government, language and ethnic discrimination were identified as challenges for women to access information in this department.

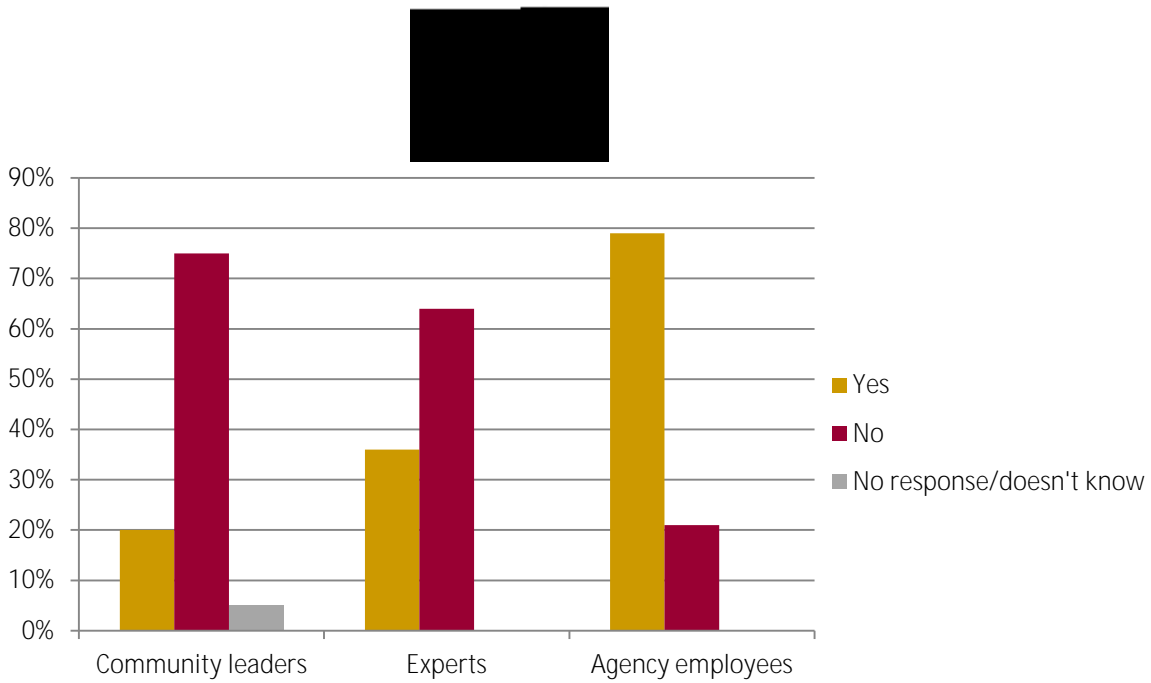
According to community leaders in El Quiche, the most important information for women to access is information about rights, education and business. The most difficult to access is information about women's rights, information about government and public administration, and information about access to information.





Preliminary findings: San Marcos

In San Marcos, 11 Experts and 20 Community Leaders were interviewed. Additionally, 8 visits were made to public agencies to speak with visitors and to interview employees. In this department, it was clearly understood that the information held by the local and national government is a key factor in improving the lives of women. One hundred percent of those interviewed responded affirmatively to the question, "Do you believe that the government (local and national) has information that women need to improve their lives?". However, despite the importance they place on information, the respondent still perceived problems with accessing information. When Community Leaders were asked about a situation when they tried to access information, only 30% reported being able to receive the information they





The methodology design, including lack of randomized sampling, results largely in perception-based findings to demonstrate the hypothesis that inequities exist and highlight trends related to women's access to information.

Nonparticipant observation sites were selected to provide illustrative examples of the interactions that take place within agencies representing key economic empowerment areas and rights. Due to variations in agency structures, the number of employees working on any given day, and other external factors, more interviews may have occurred at certain agencies, compared to other agencies in the sample.

Employees at nonparticipant observation sites were asked to comment only on access to information within the context of their agency or office. Therefore, in responding to the interview questions, employees may not have been considering barriers to women's access to information that occur outside of the agency's walls. Had the question been formulated to generate speculation about external barriers, it is possible employees might have been less likely to answer that women access information at the same rate as men.

The ways in which the questions were posed in agencies may have lead some employees to answer more in the ideal, than in the practice.

All data collection occurred in the field with limited supervision from the Carter Center's Access to