

Local Government & Infrastructure (LGI) Program

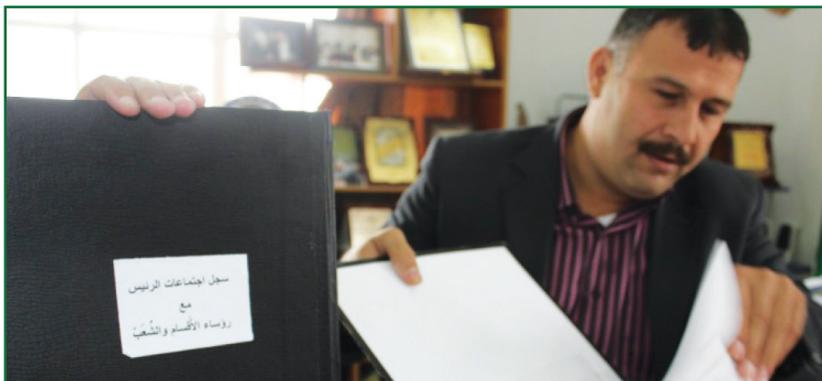
Across the globe, local government units (LGUs) are engaging local citizens and leading social and economic development. To support Palestinian municipalities and village councils, the Local Government and Infrastructure (LGI) program, implemented by Global Communities (formerly CHF International) with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is providing LGUs and local communities with the tools necessary for improving government service delivery, basic infrastructure, and quality of life for Palestinians.

At the heart of LGI's approach is the Model for Governance Excellence, developed as a result of over nine years of Global Communities engagement in the Palestinian local governance sector. In both vulnerable communities (identified through a rigorous socioeconomic needs assessment) and larger, more established potential municipal centers for governance excellence, LGI's interventions are designed to support local government responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency within three critical categories: community participation, leadership development, and service delivery.

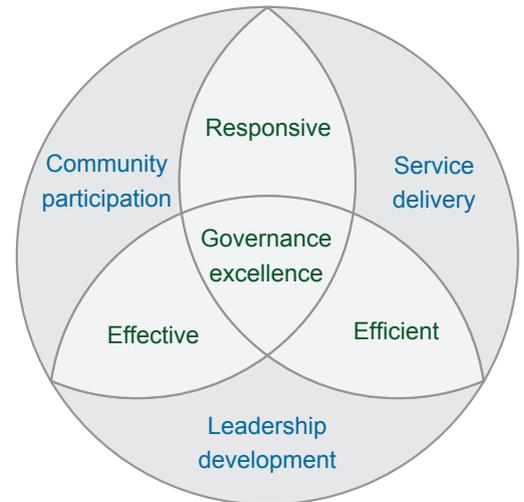
Leadership Development: Municipal Capacity Index and Corporate Planning

Global Communities has introduced the Municipal Capacity Index, a new standardized tool based on the Governance Excellence model that enables municipalities to self-assess their ability to lead local development and meet citizen needs. Based on the results of this assessment and their existing strengths and weaknesses, LGI supported 27 partner municipalities in developing Municipal Corporate Strategic Plans, which outline their key institutional development priorities and implementation plans.

Though this assessment process began recently, in 'Illar Municipality, the mayor and staff have already made significant changes to how they operate, including the installation and use of the fully automated Electronic Document and Record Management System (EDRMS), and requiring action plans and recorded minutes for all council meetings.



Mayor Sufian Shadid of 'Illar Municipality sharing new practices, including documenting meeting minutes, following the institutional self-assessment



Model for Governance Excellence based on three core pillars – community participation, leadership development, and service delivery.

At a Glance

- As of April 2014, LGI completed 83 community infrastructure projects, providing 64 communities with new or rehabilitated schools, community centers, and roads.
- Costing over \$16 million, these projects have helped improve the lives of approximately 165,000 community members.
- Youth Councils have been established in 19 municipalities, engaging nearly 10,000 youth in local governance.
- 148 young engineering fellows have worked with Global Communities, Engineers Association, and municipalities.



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Community Participation Strategic Planning

Key to leading local development is participatory planning. To this end, Global Communities has supported 27 municipalities and local communities in updating their strategic development framework or developing their strategic development and investment plans (SDIPs) per the unified SDIP methodology adopted by MoLG in 2009. The partner communities will take the lead in following up on the planning process to ensure citizen engagement in identifying needs, setting priorities, and democratically deciding how local resources are utilized.

LGI is leveraging the results of the SDIPs to design and implement key infrastructure projects in partner LGUs. In addition, to streamline MoLG's efforts in master and physical planning, LGI is currently developing physical plans for six partner LGUs based on the outcomes of the SDIP process and guided by the recently released *Physical Planning Manual: Procedures and Tools for Physical Planning in West Bank & Gaza* developed by MoLG.



A community member from Bethlehem participating in a strategic planning workshop

LGI will also support the development on the first Metropolitan Plan in the West Bank for Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahur, and the surrounding villages. Physical and master plans ensure forward-thinking development in line with population needs, service requirements, and participatory planning processes.

Youth Leadership in Local Governance

LGI aspires to establish sustainable mechanisms that facilitate youth engagement in their communities. One key mechanism is the Youth Shadow Local Council (YSLC), which is a democratically elected youth body that mirrors the composition, functions, and roles of the local council in its community. To date, Global Communities has supported 19 elections engaging nearly 10,000 youth.

Once elected, council members work with their respective municipal councils and youth general assemblies to lead local initiatives, including community beautification, fundraising for local NGOs, and other volunteer activities.

Most recently and as the result of the youths' outstanding accomplishments, the YSLCs are no longer "shadowing." They are now referred to as Youth Local Councils (YLCs).



Youth Local Council (YLC) elections in Anabta

Service Delivery: Building Efficiency and Transparency through Automation

LGI focuses on two key automation interventions – Citizen Service Centers (CSCs) and E-municipalities. CSCs were first implemented by Global Communities under the USAID-funded Local Democratic Reform program and continue as a critical intervention under LGI. CSCs provide citizens with a central location for accessing municipal services, such as obtaining licenses and permits or paying bills.

Each citizen receives a ticket number upon entering the CSC and, once called to a service counter, engages with municipal staff able to process requests via the EDRMS. E-municipality, a relatively new concept in the region, will enable 5-6 target municipalities to offer online services to local citizens. As part of both E-municipality and CSC efforts, Global Communities will support target municipalities in redesigning critical business processes to ensure efficient and fully automated service delivery.

To complement investments in local infrastructure and government performance, LGI also focuses heavily on the enabling environment for both governance and infrastructure development at the national level. Governance interventions tested at the local level are being used to influence national policy developments (i.e., standardized citizen participation guidelines and procedural manuals for directorate offices) in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG).

At the same time, LGI works with the Engineers Association - Jerusalem Center on developing the knowledge and skills of the next generation of Palestinian engineers through the Engineering Fellows Program, and promotes green building practices conferences, workshops, and training opportunities. In addition, LGI promotes gender awareness and mainstreaming in governance, infrastructure, and youth activities.