Global Communities – Cross-Cutting Approaches

Over 60 years of operations, Global Communities has developed many unique approaches, which we bring to bear in our projects across different areas of technical expertise. This includes innovative methods, such as our Participatory Action for Community Enhancement or Appreciative Review of Capacity approaches to civil society capacity building; decades of experience in project management for infrastructure construction as an avenue for community cohesion; and work with disadvantaged groups, such as women, youth, and the disabled.

Civil Society and Capacity Development
At the center of Global Communities’ work for 60 years has been helping people mobilize the alliances and organizational structures they need to voice their needs, promote change, and realize their full potential. Developing a participatory, responsive civil society informs every aspect of our work.

Participatory Action for Community Enhancement (PACE)
Global Communities’ PACE methodology offers a structured process for strengthening the ability of local communities to work together to map their assets and strengths, identify priority needs, mobilize resources to complete community projects and set in motion a community-based development process. By modeling practical mechanisms that promote participation, accountability, transparency, ownership, and empowerment of citizen groups, this process typically results in elected community councils that guide the implementation of activities, support the maintenance of completed projects, and work in partnership with local government.

In Honduras, Global Communities’ PACE methodology enabled local residents to work together to map their assets and strengths, identify priority needs, and mobilize resources to complete an irrigation and water harvesting system.

In 2013, more than 3 million people in communities around the world were served by 145 Global Communities-assisted community councils or committees, which included 62,000 participants, 16,000 of whom were women. In addition, 488 civil society organizations received capacity building from Global Communities.
Organizational Self-Assessment and Support
Global Communities has developed several tools to help local partners evaluate their performance, including the Appreciative Review of Capacity (ARC). The ARC is a self-evaluation tool that helps organizations assess their institutional development in a positive, constructive way. The ARC Index lets organizations rate their level of capacity in 59 critical abilities across seven dimensions: Governance, Strategic Planning, Human Talent, External Relations, Project and Service Management, Resource Development, and Finance and Administration. After the initial self-evaluation, validated by Global Communities, we work with our local partners to develop an action plan for continual improvement based on their core strengths. We then facilitate connections to local sources of support for training and technical assistance and promote peer exchanges and mentoring so we and our partners learn from one another. Finally, partner organizations re-evaluate themselves to measure changes in their ongoing institutional development and ability to serve their clients. Global Communities’ collaborative approach builds trust as we help our local partners put in place systems to cultivate and sustain positive change. We have successfully applied this approach in Colombia, Ghana, India, Nicaragua, and Rwanda. Read about its use in Nicaragua on page 38.

Advocacy and Collective Action
From the slums of India’s largest cities to rural communities in Rwanda, Global Communities has found that lasting change comes when citizens work together to influence policy. We help our partners to develop advocacy strategies and campaigns, harness the power of technology, and form the networks and coalitions they need to be effective. We help communities to engage strategically with local universities, think tanks, and associations to broaden dialogue and share the potential for positive change with others.

Conflict Mitigation and Stabilization
Global Communities often works in communities that have been torn apart by conflict. To rebuild trust and confidence, we work with local partners and with all the communities affected by the conflict to understand the causes of instability and to find ways to reduce the likelihood of violence, lessen the impact of conflict, and reduce incentives to return to violence. Our approach is sensitive to the needs of those who are particularly vulnerable – women and children, the disabled, and the displaced.