Governance

In a rapidly changing world, development organizations cannot ignore the important role played by local governments in their citizens’ lives. Health, sanitation, education, roads, and infrastructure are all vital communal services that depend on good governance to adequately meet the needs of citizens. As such, Global Communities works to strengthen governance and local institutions, partnering with local government and community stakeholders to promote transparency, accountability, and inclusion. Our work focuses on four main areas:

Leadership and Participatory Planning

Citizens rely on their governments for leadership. Citizens have strong ideas and opinions about what they need, and often about how to achieve those needs, but local governments must play a role in collecting broad information about community needs and strategically identifying priorities. Government leaders must make decisions on how to allocate resources and funds in their communities, such as which services to improve or what types of economic projects deserve investment.

Global Communities’ Participatory Approach to Governance Excellence enables governments to build citizen support for those decisions by including their voices. The model aims to support a province, municipality, or local community’s vision of becoming a more responsive, efficient, and effective center for governance excellence. Our work targets support to improve governments capacities in three core pillars – community participation, leadership development, and service delivery.

Citizen Engagement, Accountability, and Policy Reform

We apply participatory principles in all of our governance work, engaging directly with the community to enhance understanding and citizen engagement in sectors such as planning, budgeting, service delivery, housing, and employment. By promoting engagement we further support governing systems based on accountability, feedback, transparency, and inclusion. Paying attention to the voices of those most underserved in society is important to promote broad prosperity. We therefore support efforts to include voices of traditionally marginalized groups, such as women, youth, displaced, or people with disabilities. Our community-based responses are designed to meet all types of challenges from creating a culture of participation to improving local infrastructure.

We support civil society organizations to organize citizens and amplify their voice to impact the policies and decisions of local government. This provides for mutually reinforcing processes in which local governments become more transparent and inclusive, and citizens have support and resources to find ways to participate and hold their governments accountable.
Governance

Service Delivery and Performance Measurement
Global Communities provides technical support to local governments, utilities, businesses, and communities to improve service delivery and oversight, especially in relation to water, sanitation, roads, electricity, and solid waste management. To promote efficiency, we link service providers to the private sector and microfinance institutions and take a decentralized approach with an emphasis on pro-poor investment. We help local governments apply tools like GIS, organizational assessments, and surveys like the Citizen Report Cards to monitor and measure service quality and customer satisfaction, equipping them with the knowledge to help make proactive changes that can have the largest impact.

Municipal Financial Management
Global Communities provides assistance to all levels of government to facilitate effective, results-based public financial management. We assist in the development of policy and the use of technology to increase revenue and improve fiscal stewardship. We also focus on issues related to inclusiveness in the development and administration of budgets and financial management and emphasize mobilizing local resources.

RECENT GOVERNANCE WORK

Ukraine
The Decentralization Offers Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) program in Ukraine is a $50-million, five-year USAID-funded project implemented by a Ukrainian, Polish, and American consortium led by Global Communities. DOBRE supports the capacity of local governments to manage new responsibilities gained under the decentralization process, as well as the ability of citizens to organize and engage in their community for advocacy and oversight.

Over five years, DOBRE will provide direct assistance to 75 communities in seven target Oblasts: Dnipropetrovsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kirovograd, Mykolayiv, and Ternopil. DOBRE will support local governments to better manage resources, increase the quality of public services, stimulate the local economy, and improve citizen engagement. DOBRE will help communities thrive and prosper through stronger local governance and better conditions for development, while serving as a model and motivation to other communities to advance.
Mechanisms for citizens to participate in local government and decision making are emphasized throughout the program. DOBRE will support civil society and help the community better advocate for their interests and form a partnership with their local government, while also supporting anti-corruption, transparency and monitoring mechanisms to strengthen trust between governments and their citizens. DOBRE will encourage innovative methods for improving broad participation, particularly through ICT solutions.

**West Bank**

In the West Bank, we are implementing the Palestine *Local Government and Infrastructure (LGI)* program, a $100-million USAID-funded project. LGI is responding to community infrastructure needs in Palestine.

By working with community leaders, municipal governments, and other community-based organizations, Global Communities is identifying and implementing infrastructure projects and improving local governance strategies to better the quality of life for residents. Infrastructure projects have the dual impact of creating employment and raising the standard of living in vulnerable areas while also supporting community participation and government responsiveness. Currently, LGI operates in the municipalities of Al Bireh, Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah.

In addition, as part of the program Global Communities implemented the *Youth Local Council Program (YLC)*, a voluntary body composed of Palestinian youth aged between 15-20 years old who are elected by their peers to mirror the positions of their local council. Eventually, these councils function out of their own offices at the local councils, serving as a voice for youth needs and bridging the gap between local governance and an important demographic group. The YLCs also help promote youth participation in public life, setting the stage for increased engagement in local issues for the rest of their lives.

**Jordan**

Since 2013, Global Communities has been implementing the *USAID Community Engagement Project (USAID CEP)*, a $50 million, five-year activity operating in 20 communities across the Governorates of Irbid, Mafraq, Tafilah, and Ma’an. USAID CEP builds cohesion and enhances the resilience of communities to address evolving challenges associated with regional volatility, domestic policy reform, economic conditions, and demographic changes.
Working to build the capacity of community enhancement teams and municipal and local governments, USAID CEP helps establish community engagement mechanisms that will be sustained beyond the life of the project. Utilizing these mechanisms as dialogue platforms to assist communities in engaging with each other and connecting to their municipalities and local government entities, the program helps communities prioritize and ultimately address the problems that they are facing.

**Nicaragua**

Global Communities is working in Nicaragua through the USAID-funded **Local Governance Program (LGP)** to strengthen citizen participation and the capacity of civil society organizations to engage and influence key decision makers in order to improve local governance and development. This is being accomplished under a three-pronged approach which focuses on promoting citizen participation, building the capacity civil society organizations and increasing fiscal transparency in the municipal budgeting process. Additional components include capacity building of NGOs who support persons with disabilities and strengthening of climate change activities through awareness and a human rights-based approach.

**Ghana**

IncluCity, built upon on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded SCALE-UP program, enabled the urban poor in India and Ghana to have a meaningful voice in slum improvement programs. In Ghana, Global Communities worked with local organizations to expand access to credit, provide vocational training, upgrade water and sanitation systems and improve housing conditions for residents of slums in Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi. Through IncluCity, Global Communities increased the participation of slum residents in governance, inclusive planning and budgeting processes, while building the capacity of the local governments to generate revenue. At the same time, the **Our City, Our Say** program, funded by Making All Voices Count, worked to increase citizens’ participation in local governance in the metropolitan area of Sekondi-Takoradi. Working with the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA), the program improved public service delivery by increasing the STMA’s ability to track and solve service delivery issues.