Global Communities’ economic development programs aim to catalyze sustainable and inclusive economic growth by strengthening the capacity and integration of economic actors to effectively pursue market-based opportunities. Our programs increase incomes and support local economies through assisting in the development of micro, small and medium-size enterprises; strengthening household resiliency; fostering private sector-driven workforce development; creating expanded access to financial services; and supporting local governments in creating business enabling environments—being especially mindful of the needs of youth, women and marginalized groups. We use a systems-based approach that relies on comprehensive analysis, local capacity building, market facilitation, and sustainable solutions identified and implemented in collaboration with the private sector and local partners.
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) and Value Chain Development

Using a pro-poor value chain approach, Global Communities works with micro-, small and medium enterprises to leverage opportunities for growth through improvement in production and quality control, business management and facilitation of new market linkages. We build the capacity of new and growing entrepreneurs with technical skills development, management training, access to finance and access to market information—leading to increased sales, employment and incomes.

Global Communities also works with innovative and influential enterprises to facilitate activities that lead to growth for firms throughout the value chain, with a particular focus on generating jobs and increased income for the value chain’s smaller producers and micro-entrepreneurs. By strengthening leading firms to implement activities aimed at improvements in production, quality, standardization, and access to markets, we ensure that results are market driven and sustainable.

Agribusiness Investment for Market Stimulation (AIMS) is a five-year initiative to bolster trade in key agricultural sectors in Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi by increasing access to financing and markets for small and medium-sized agribusinesses. Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), AIMS includes a USD 50 million loan guaranty facility backed by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). In partnership with the Eastern Africa Grain Council and business development service providers, Global Communities builds the capacity of agribusinesses and improves access to regional markets through enhanced buyer-seller linkages and access to market information.

Locations of ongoing and recent MSME and value chain development programs include: Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, India, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Mongolia, Montenegro, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.
Global Communities’ workforce development approach is demand-driven, focusing on market-led employment opportunities and entrepreneurship. We work with the private sector to customize technical training programs, provide soft skills and entrepreneurship training, and place trained youth in internships and apprenticeships for on-the-job learning and skills development. Through linking private sector firms, training providers, government and vulnerable youth in a collaborative action approach, we foster systemic change in the transition of disadvantaged youth to sustainable livelihoods by improving the alignment between the demand for and supply of skills in the marketplace.

The Youth Inclusive Entrepreneurial Development Initiative for Employment (YIEDIE), which means “progress” in the Twi language) is designed to create economic opportunities in Ghana’s construction sector for disadvantaged youth. YIEDIE aims to directly reach at least 23,700 of these youth with training in technical, life and/or entrepreneurship skills leading to employment. The project applies an integrated market-systems model to improve the capacity of youth and service providers across the value chain. Key objectives are to: 1) provide employment opportunities in the construction sector, including self-employment, for young people in five of Ghana’s largest cities: Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Ashaiman and Tema; and 2) provide increased coordination and support for a better enabling environment by construction sector stakeholders.

Locations of ongoing and recent workforce development programs include: Armenia, Bolivia, Colombia, Georgia, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Rwanda, Tajikistan, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.
Livelihoods and Resilience

Global Communities takes a comprehensive approach to build resilience and reduce household vulnerability, working with households who have experienced or are at risk of economic, social, health and environmental shocks and those dealing with factors such as disability or lower social status. We build and protect livelihoods and assets while linking people to local networks of social, health and education services that provide critical safety nets. Using a market-based approach to income generation, Global Communities also mobilizes savings, provides technical training, develops cooperatives and market linkages, and promotes entrepreneurship.

USAID/Twiyubake aims to improve the resilience of at least 50,000 households and 250,000 individuals from vulnerable populations in 15 target districts of Rwanda, including people living with HIV, orphans and vulnerable children, very poor households, and out-of-school youth. USAID/Twiyubake is working with these groups to improve nutrition and food security, address economic vulnerability by fostering income generation and market linkages, and to increase access to education and social services including vocational skills training. Participants engage in a wide variety of activities such as savings mobilization groups, agricultural production assistance and nutrition training. We also build the capacity of key government entities and local civil society organizations to provide and monitor services for vulnerable populations.

Locations of ongoing and recent livelihoods and resiliency programs include: Columbia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, India, Liberia, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Yemen.
Global Communities is an innovator in providing locally appropriate financial solutions. We operate a range of models from assisting community savings and lending groups with technical support and linkages to formal financial institutions to operating development finance institutions (DFIs) to providing loan guarantees. Over the past two decades, Global Communities has established DFIs in eight countries representing a growing portfolio of more than $215 million, mainly in the MSME and housing finance sectors. Global Communities is also a leading provider of loan guarantees, in partnership with OPIC, USAID and USDA. Our loan guarantee facilities help businesses that are too large for traditional microfinance and too small for commercial banks to access credit, by partially guaranteeing the loans of commercial bank partners.

Initiated in October 2011, the Jordan Loan Guarantee Facility (JLGF) combines a $250 million loan guaranty facility from OPIC with a $9.3 million USAID cooperative agreement. To date, JLGF has provided technical assistance and capacity building, and has issued over 320 loan guarantees, enabling Jordanian SMEs to access over $75 million in bank financing for start-up and expansion. The program has specifically targeted women operating enterprises larger than “micro” sized, which require higher levels of financing.

Locations of ongoing and recent financial inclusion programs include: Bosnia, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Romania, Rwanda, Tanzania, and the West Bank and Gaza.
Local Economic Development

We work with communities to develop and execute local economic development strategies that drive inclusive economic growth, providing jobs and market opportunities for local citizens and privately owned firms. We engage the government, the private sector and civil society in defining local economic development priorities and designing targeted interventions that lead to more vibrant local economies and broad-based economic growth.

The USAID-funded Local Government and Infrastructure Program (LGI) improves living conditions for Palestinians in vulnerable areas through implementing infrastructure projects to help communities meet their basic needs. Projects are identified and prioritized by the community and include repairing schools, building water networks and wells, and road repair. LGI generates local employment by emphasizing the use of local construction materials and businesses as well as placing an emphasis on projects that create long-term sustainable jobs. These projects are implemented with support of local government agencies. Global Communities has assisted 11 of these agencies to develop Local Economic Development strategies that focus on youth entrepreneurship and women’s economic empowerment, and is assisting them with market analysis and developing business information repositories.

Locations of ongoing and recent local economic development programs include: Bolivia, Colombia, Ghana, Haiti, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Montenegro, Pakistan, Serbia, and the West Bank and Gaza.
Global Communities: Economic Development

Cooperative Development

Global Communities works to promote cooperative enterprises by taking a comprehensive approach to supporting the cooperative sector in each country. Our programming works to promote cooperatives through all channels such as building capacity primary cooperatives, supporting apex organizations to strengthen their operations, fostering growth through new partnerships, engaging in policy development and collaborating with Universities on research initiatives to foster academic engagement in the sector. As a technical program we promote the independent transfer of skills among cooperative members and build the capacity of local government cooperative extension agents to continue to replicate good practices beyond the life of programming. At the public policy and macroeconomic level Global Communities facilitates cooperative forums and associations to spur discussion and engagement in their own sector. These approaches foster new forums that educate and advocate for increasingly supportive enabling environments that support cooperatives in the marketplace.

Our programming is based on a common philosophy that is rooted in five dimensions of cooperative development (governance, management, production, marketing and membership) that provides a sustainable foundation for commercial and social capital growth. Leaning on the seven Rochdale Principles our programming also promotes cooperatives through a series of capacity building programs that foster civic engagement, gender parity, financial inclusion and the importance of developing social capital and community interaction.

The Enabling Market Integration through Rural Group Empowerment (EMIRGE) Program is Global Communities’ flagship cooperative development program. EMIRGE supports over 90 primary cooperatives in Kenya, Mongolia, Rwanda and Uganda providing tailored technical and business development assistance and connecting them to markets and private sector actors that will help drive their profit margins, build human capital and meet market expectations. EMIRGE also helps cooperatives institutionalize membership based expertise in areas such as collective decision making, gender equity and conflict management to insure they have the organizational management strength to build on market successes and seize new opportunities.

Locations of ongoing and recent cooperative development programs include: Kenya, Mongolia, Rwanda, and Uganda.