Final Program Report
Local Government and Infrastructure Program

October 2010 - February 2017
Program Information

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<th>Name of Program</th>
<th>Local Government and Infrastructure (LGI) Program</th>
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<td>West Bank &amp; Gaza</td>
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<td>The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)</td>
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Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations ........................................................................................................ 4

1.0 Executive Summary ............................................................................................................. 6

2.0 Infrastructure ....................................................................................................................... 12
  2.1 Participatory Decision Making and Infrastructure Design ............................................. 22
    2.1.1 Construction in Area C ......................................................................................... 24
    2.1.2 Infrastructure Sustainability .................................................................................. 27
  2.2 Quality Standards in Infrastructure Design, Construction, Safety ................................. 30
    2.2.1 Green Building ..................................................................................................... 32
    2.2.2 “A Green Standard”: Aqqaba Girls School .......................................................... 36
  2.3 Job Creation and the Engineering Sector ........................................................................ 38

3.0 Governance .......................................................................................................................... 42
  3.0.1 Metropolitan Zones: Ramallah, Al Bireh, Beituniya .................................................. 46
  3.0.2 Grand Municipality: Bethlehem, Beit Sahur, Beit Jala .............................................. 47
  3.1 Governance Excellence .................................................................................................... 48
  3.2 Community Strategic Planning ......................................................................................... 50
  3.3 Institutional Development ............................................................................................... 56
    3.3.1 Municipal Capacity Index Scores Change Over Time .......................................... 59
    3.3.2 Business Restructuring and Process Improvements .............................................. 62
    3.3.3 Citizen Service Centers ......................................................................................... 70
    3.3.4 e-Municipality ...................................................................................................... 74
  3.4 Local Economic Development (LED) ............................................................................. 76
    3.4.1 LED Community Projects and Activities .............................................................. 78
    3.4.2 House of Expertise ............................................................................................... 80

4.0 Participatory Governance ................................................................................................... 82
  4.1 Gender .............................................................................................................................. 84
  4.2 Youth Local Councils ...................................................................................................... 88

5.0 Humanitarian Assistance ..................................................................................................... 94
Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARIJ   Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem
CBO   Community Based Organization
CGE   Center of Governance Excellence
CSC   Citizen Service Center
CFW   Cash for Work
EAJC   Engineers Association – Jerusalem Center
EDRMS   Electronic Document and Record Management System
EPA   Environmental Protection Agency
FGD   Focus Group Discussion
GIS   Geographic Information System
HIMII   High Impact Micro Infrastructure Initiative
HA   Humanitarian Assistance
ICA   Israeli Civil Administration
JSC   Joint Service Council
LED   Local Economic Development
LEED   Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LG   Local Governance (sector)
LGI   Local Government and Infrastructure (Program)
LGU   Local Government Unit
LOP   Life of Program
MDLF   Ministry of Development and Lending Fund
M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS   Management Information System
MoEHE   Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoLG   Ministry of Local Government
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>MoT</td>
<td>Ministry of Transportation</td>
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<td>MSCP</td>
<td>Municipal Strategic Corporate Plan</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>PA</td>
<td>Palestinian Authority</td>
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<td>PCRHTS</td>
<td>Palestinian Committee for Restaurants, Hotels, and Touristic Services</td>
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<td>PHGBC</td>
<td>Palestinian Higher Green Building Council</td>
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<td>PFI</td>
<td>Palestinian Federation of Industries</td>
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<td>PWDs</td>
<td>Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<td>SDF</td>
<td>Strategic Development Framework</td>
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<td>SDFP</td>
<td>Spatial Development Framework Plan</td>
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<td>SDIP</td>
<td>Strategic Development and Investment Plan</td>
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<td>UBC</td>
<td>Uniform Building Code</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>YLC</td>
<td>Youth Local Council</td>
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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Global Communities’ Local Governance and Infrastructure (LGI) program improved the quality of life for Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza. In addition to impactful infrastructure, LGI enhanced local service delivery, promoted good governance, engaged citizens in community decision making, increased local capacity for building and management, created new opportunities for employment and local economic development, enabled gender mainstreaming, implemented green practices and educated adults and children about green building.

The overall goal of the Local Government and Infrastructure (LGI) program was to promote an enabling environment for good local governance and provide the basic infrastructure necessary for sustainable improvements in the quality of life of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Between 2010 and 2017, the program focused on two main components, providing quality infrastructure to build community potential and supporting excellence in local government to enable communities and their local authorities to effectively manage their resources and meet their needs, with cross-cutting initiatives that positively impacted local economies, youth, women, the environment, and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Program Context

The breadth and depth of LGI’s impact in the West Bank is unparalleled. LGI worked in 130 communities in the West Bank, 77 of which were assessed as the most vulnerable communities. LGI’s achievements were built on the foundation of Global Communities previous Local Democratic Reform program, from 2005 to 2011.

During LDR, Global Communities supported national and local Palestinian authorities to build a foundation for the current local governance system. Many of the early decisions on levels of delegated authorities, local financial and administrative systems, local planning and service delivery, and the engagement of civil society were taken during LDR roundtables of national and local government authorities.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) was established through the Oslo Accords in 1993, and thereafter began the process of translating previously-established government systems into a new system as the foundation of a future state. When the LDR program began in 2005, the PA had previously established a Ministry of Local Government and enacted a new Local Government Law. It was in that context that LDR supported MoLG in its efforts to refine a legal framework for local governance. However, much work remained to turn that framework into a democratic, participatory, robust, functional local governance system.

In the past, the municipality’s role had been narrowly focused as a basic service provider. One challenge tackled by LDR was to expand the understanding of the role of the local government unit (LGU) to be based on good governance practices, long-term planning, and a more active role in social and economic development with the cooperation and participation of civil society and the private sector.

LGI built on the advancements made during LDR. It supported the further development of the framework for governance and management role of the MoLG. It helped operationalize the vision for efficient and effective management in local government units throughout the West Bank.

Global Communities are “partners for good.” We build long-term relationships with our partner communities, helping them identify and address their needs and providing tools for long-term development. The continuous engagement with communities throughout the West Bank and Gaza for the past 22 years, and the intense support provided through LDR and LGI are manifestations of that long-term partnership.
Quality Infrastructure

LGI’s infrastructure projects gave communities the resources and opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods. New or refurbished roads gave citizens access to economic opportunities, new markets, social and basic services including health and education. New and rehabilitated schools reduced overcrowding and the distance many students had to travel every day. Some students moved from learning in crowded basement rooms to a full state-of-the art education facilities. Youth centers and community centers gave children a place to play and develop other than the streets, and provided a safe space for youth, women and the elderly to network. Health clinics and water distribution facilities met the needs for basic services in some of the most vulnerable communities in the West Bank.

LGI applied a holistic approach to identifying, designing, and constructing infrastructure projects. Vulnerable communities identified infrastructure packages through participatory community planning, in order to identify the overall needs and resources of the community and decide together what the priorities are. This process built community cohesion and investment into the projects leading to a high sense of ownership of the provided assistance, as opposed to an outside organization entering a community and simply building a new road. The result was a long-term commitment by communities to maintain the projects, and impressive levels of volunteerism and contribution. Citizens donated land next to roads being rehabilitated landscapers volunteered to beautify new community centers, and municipalities invested their own scarce funds to expand projects and add new features. Overall, partner communities invested around $16 million of their own resources towards the implementation of the LGI Program.

In coordination with USAID and the Palestinian Authority, LGI complemented other development programs and initiatives to expand their impact by providing necessary infrastructure. For example, eleven schools constructed or refurbished in Area C through LGI were identified as national priorities with the Ministry of Education, Health, and Environment (MoEHE). Additionally, several youth centers were refurbished to enable the implementation of other USAID-supported youth engagement programs.

LGI set a standard for quality control and construction in infrastructure in the West Bank. The program built the capacity of the engineers and the construction industry as a whole, most simply by adopting high levels of performance and ensuring all projects’ designs and construction met the standards of the International and Uniform Building Codes, quality and safety standards. LGI also ran an annual Engineering Fellowship that became the most valuable and prestigious engineering internship in the West Bank. The graduating fellows immediately integrated into the Palestinian engineering and construction sector contributing to elevating its standards.

LGI pioneered environmentally-conscious designs and construction in the West Bank. With local construction firms and associations, Global Communities supported the development of the national Palestinian Green Building Guidelines, and enhanced environmental protection awareness in country. LGI applied the green building guidelines as broadly as possible in its infrastructure projects, sourcing materials locally, reusing and conserving construction materials and especially water, and including environmentally friendly products such as solar powered electrical systems and water heating. This brought more experience with the green building concepts to the Palestinian engineering and construction sector as a whole, given the size and breadth of LGI’s infrastructure projects. LGI constructed the first “green school” in Aqqaba, earning a Gold rating – the first of school of its kind in Palestine!

APPROXIMATELY

645,624

beneficiaries reached as a result of the infrastructure projects, half of whom are living in vulnerable communities
557 classrooms were built or renovated, benefiting 8,555 students.

10,783 short term jobs; 442,969 days of employment.

CSCs established in 14 municipalities.
Governance Excellence

The lasting impact of the LGI program is an overall vision and framework for local governance in the West Bank, underpinned by a broad consensus among local and national government leadership and professionals on how effective and democratic good local governance functions. LGI impacted the culture of local governance, with local government staff across the West Bank now believing in and committed to the principles of good governance.

LGI supported the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) to advance that vision through well-designed policies and regulations for local government operations. With LGI’s support, the Ministry worked through such issues as how decentralization should be applied in the Palestinian context. LGI built the capacity of Ministry national and regional staff, and the institutional relationships between the Ministry and local government units (LGUs), to improve coordination and oversight of governance throughout the West Bank. While the answers to these questions are continually evolving, Global Communities has – through the LDR and LGI programs over the past decade – helped define the local governance sector vision, the MoLG mission, relevant and responsive strategies and policies, and a regulatory framework that contribute to building a viable foundation for statehood.

With LGUs across the West Bank, LGI built an understanding of the importance of leadership and strategic planning, while being inclusive and responsive to citizen needs. Partner LGUs applied Global Communities’ model of Governance Excellence, which sets measurable benchmarks of government performance in the areas of Leadership, Service Delivery, and Public Participation built around the good governance themes of effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness. LGI led communities and LGUs through inclusive strategic planning processes, resulting in long-term strategic development and investment plans (SDIPs) that reflected the needs and desires of the citizens and a vision for economic and social community improvement. Infrastructure projects and local government initiatives supported through LGI followed these SDIPs, which were renewed by the community annually.

LGI revolutionized the internal operations of local government units. With customized, flexible packages of support, LGI took Ministry-approved regulations and international best practice and applied them to the local context of each partner community. LGI produced customized manuals and procedures that helped partner municipalities apply a new, systematic approach to human resources management. The new systems built transparency and accountability among staff and supervisors, so staff management became easier and decisions on hiring and advancement were documented and less subjective. National laws and regulations on procurement, internal audits, and public outreach were translated into municipality-specific manuals and systems. These new systems not only regulated local government work, but improved staff efficiency and job satisfaction.

Electronic record management systems improved overall efficiency in local government service delivery, most notably in the 14 Citizen Service Centers (CSCs) established through LGI. These 14 contribute to a total of 27 CSCs constructed by Global Communities since 2005. CSCs serve as a one-stop-shop for citizens to request, receive and pay for services, obtain building and other types of permits, or register questions and complaints to the municipality. In the past, citizens would need to roam from office to office in the local government building requesting information, forms, or signatures in order to get anything done. Now, they can go to the CSC, a professional and open space and staff can coordinate almost any request centrally, that is processed through the electronic data management system provided by LGI. The system builds accountability into the local government unit, as the CSC can now provide up-to-the-minute reports of citizen requests met, services provided, and complaints.

MORE THAN 1,300 LGU staff, YLC and community members trained
Citizen Participation

LGI emphasized public participation as an equal component of governance excellence. Community planning for LGI’s infrastructure packages, and strategic planning for community development, were all inclusive and participatory processes that ensured broad representation from all stakeholders in society. This continued in the implementation of projects, with citizens participating in ongoing committees to monitor and support the implementation of the LGU’s SDIPs, for examples.

Youth were a key target for increased engagement through LGI. Global Communities supported the creation or activities of 20 Youth Local Councils (YLCs) during LDR and LGI. More than 17,000 youth participated in the YLC process through LGI, either as members of the YLC general assemblies, as democratically elected members of the council itself, and through volunteering in youth-led activities. YLCs have become an integral part of their communities, as constructive partners for the local government unit, as a voice for youth to become more engaged and as actors for positive change responding to priority needs. YLCs implemented initiatives and campaigns throughout the West Bank on such topics as the environment, literacy, road safety, employment, local tourism, volunteerism, persons with disabilities, and fundraisers for the needy.

LGI also sought ways to promote women’s inclusion and leadership. In 2013, LGI conducted a comprehensive gender analysis of its program, approaches, partners, and impact to date. Out of that review was produced a comprehensive gender inclusion strategy, with gender sensitivity and inclusion training for LGI staff, gender analysis of activities, and more inclusive program policies.

Humanitarian Needs

In addition, in response to the 2014 crisis in Gaza, LGI has implemented humanitarian assistance that has benefited more than 170,000 individuals. In the earlier stages of the crisis, LGI distributed food and non-food emergency supplies to vulnerable and displaced families. LGI implemented a cash-for-work program in Gaza that provided short-term employment opportunities for the conflict-stricken region, and provided the potential for long-term job sustainability.

LGI in Numbers:

- 16 volunteerism campaigns in 16 partner LGUs
- 8 SDIP support committees established and supported
- 26 HR systems installed
- 23 SDIPs, 17 GIS Spatial Data Management and 14 physical plans
- 23 LGUs obtained coding and numbering of building and streets
- 27 LGUs conducted business restructuring and process re-engineering
- 4 LGUs piloted the e-municipality framework
- 11 LGUs implemented LED initiatives
2.0 INFRASTRUCTURE
Inadequate infrastructure is a leading cause of poor quality of life and negatively impacts the ability of any community or nation to achieve its full potential. Without reliable access to roads, farmers have trouble getting to their fields and to larger cities to sell their produce and mothers have trouble shopping for their families. Schools without enough and appropriate space or facilities for all the students restrict the ability of children to learn and grow into productive members of society. Inadequate municipal buildings result in disorganized and inefficient government, which costs everyone in the community more time and money in the long run.

The Local Government and Infrastructure (LGI) program bridges the gap by creating sustainable, impactful infrastructure, and fulfilling the priority needs of the communities in which it works. LGI supports Palestinian communities to rehabilitate roads and to build or improve community and youth centers, schools and clinics, and citizen service centers. These infrastructure projects provide short-term benefits of design, construction, and project management jobs and direct investment into the community, as well as long-term benefits building local capacity for community development and increasing citizens’ quality of life. LGI has implemented 147 infrastructure projects, in 130 communities around the West Bank.
LGI implemented infrastructure projects that have been selected through a participatory, strategic community planning approach at the local level, or that have been prioritized by the Palestinian Authority and international donors to complement other development initiatives in the West Bank. These mutually reinforcing infrastructure projects were implemented in selected vulnerable locations throughout the West Bank, selected based on need and prospective impact.

Package sizes averaged $730,000 and were designed to provide depth of impact in a community/cluster, while also enabling LGI to benefit an optimal number of communities throughout the West Bank.

At the outset of LGI, the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ) conducted a vulnerability assessment of the 458 West Bank local government units (LGUs), using data to measure vulnerabilities in the areas of education, health, the economy, food security, water and wastewater, and general physical infrastructure, as well as external factors, such as the separation barrier, population size and geographic distribution.

Global Communities, with ARIJ and USAID, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, developed a list of priority communities for targeted infrastructure interventions based on the vulnerability ratings. Results were shared with the Ministry of Local Government and reviewed jointly to ensure consistency with their strategy of clustering and amalgamation and to encourage economies of scale.

In 2013, the United State Special Envoy for Peace in the Middle East and the Palestinian Authority (PA) consulted on the key priorities for development, economic growth, and peace throughout the West Bank, which resulted in a list of 60 **High Impact Micro Infrastructure Initiative (HIMII)** projects for LGI to implement. Most of the infrastructure projects on this list matched the priorities previously identified by the community-driven discussions as part of LGI.

As LGI’s program goals encompassed both infrastructure and governance objectives, the program also targeted a second type of community: those striving and capable to become a **Center for Governance Excellence (CGE)**. In addition to the extensive support to build governance capacity in these LGUs, LGI also provided each CGE with key infrastructure that would support more efficient, effective, and responsive government.

Projects were selected based on strategic planning conducted with LGI, with the prerequisite of demonstrated commitment by the relevant line Ministries and the LGU to future operations and maintenance of the facility. Fourteen of these projects were **Citizen Service Centers (CSCs)**, also known as One Stop Shops where citizens can access their municipality and the services it offers. (See page 73 for details.)
It took me three hours each day during the harvest season to reach my land walking on foot because it was impossible for cars to use this road, and we faced many problems in transferring the crops using donkeys. This often caused damage to crops while waiting or transferring crops and was very costly. Now, any taxi will be happy to take me to my land or transfer my crops for a reasonable price, and it only takes about five minutes.

—Zuhdiye Mohammad, 65, lives in Raba village and is a land owner in the project area. Rehabilitation of Internal Roads – Raba, Jenin Governorate.
LGI implemented 35 projects on West Bank schools, constructing and repairing 557 classrooms

In Hebron, LGI constructed a brand new primary boys school in Beit Kahil, which enabled more than 230 boys to attend school much closer to their homes. Some children in Beit Kahil now save two hours of walking to and from school per day. The new two-floor school building included one classroom on the ground floor and four classrooms on the first floor, as well as a cafeteria, library, and computer lab, and facilities for teachers, counselors, and the principal and secretary.

This new school benefited 237 young boys’ lives. The project created 11 permanent jobs, as well as 56 temporary jobs during construction, with 5,878 days of work for Palestinians.

In 2015, LGI completed rehabilitation of the existing buildings, and the construction of a second floor for the Yasuf and Iskaka amalgamated community’s secondary girls’ school in Salfit governorate. The school serves as the only secondary girls’ school for both Yasuf and the neighboring village of Iskaka, both found among the most vulnerable communities in the West Bank. Prior the project, community members raised funds to purchase the adjacent land, and secured 120,000 Euros with complementary donor funding for construction.

In addition to adding a second floor, the project connected and upgraded the school’s two existing buildings with a horizontal extension. The completed school now has seven classrooms, a computer lab, crafts room, science laboratory and a library, as well as a new administration room, teachers’ room and office.

Now completed, the new school offers more classrooms and educational facilities for the girls of Yasuf and Iskaka, currently serving 197 girls. The project created 52 temporary jobs that provided 4,457 days of work to Palestinian workers.

“We The new school definitely pushed up our grades as we are now we arrive on time without being tired. In fact, we look forward every day to going to school, now.

Mohamad Sleiman, 12 years old, Beit Kahil boys school.
Top and bottom: Construction of additional classrooms and rehabilitation of Yasuf secondary girls’ school
LGI implemented 68 roads projects, constructing over 57 kilometers of roads in the West Bank.

In 2014, LGI rehabilitated 590 meters of the Khallet Al Daw internal road in Tarqumiya, in the Hebron Governorate, as one of its High Impact Micro-Infrastructure Initiatives prioritized by the Palestinian Authority to advance the Palestinian economy. The construction work included excavating, leveling, and asphalt ing the existing road, as well as constructing sidewalks, curbstones, and a drainage system and the maintenance of culverts, retaining walls, and stone walls. LGI also included road marking and the installation of traffic signs.

This project aimed to help improve the quality of life and economic opportunities of people in Tarqumiya, designated a vulnerable community by the Palestinian Authority Deputy Prime Minister’s (DPM) office.

Now completed, the rehabilitated road provides safe access to vehicles and pedestrians, especially to students who use the road every day to reach school. Safety features are highly appreciated by the community, including the sidewalks, drainage and culverts, and traffic signs. Small business owners near the road project in Tarqumiya acknowledged the impact of the project on improving access to their businesses, which positively affects the local economy in Tarqumiya.

The new road benefited 4000 men and 3400 women in the Tarqumiya community, and created 40 temporary jobs that provided 2,624 days of work to Palestinian workers. The community demonstrated high levels of investment in their own future by providing a funds match of $115,108, alongside LGI’s USAID funds of $291,244.

The new wide asphalted road improved the accessibility to my supermarket and better organized the traffic flow. In addition, the project improved the road environment by eliminating dust and debris.

—Mohammad Thabayneh, shop owner in Tarqumiya

In the past, the road was full of pits filled with rainwater during the winter. This hindered traffic and resulted in several vehicle damages. The width of the road was 5.5 meters, and there was no pavement which resulted in citizens walking and splashed by water during the winter and dust during the summer. Moreover, there were no traffic lights. Today, the road is leveled and its width is 7.20 meters, while the pavements width is 2 meters allowing citizens to just go for a walk.

—Abdul Latif Masa’eed, Head of Engineering and Projects Department, Tubas Municipality
LGI constructed 2 water facilities and 2 health clinics in the West Bank.

LGI constructed a circular ground water tank in Yasuf village in Salfit with a capacity of 500 cubic meters, connected to the main water supply line and domestic water network. Before the project, sudden water cut offs from the Israeli supply created water shortages in the community and complicated daily life and health of citizens. Some citizens used to buy individual water tanks, which was a large financial burden in this vulnerable community.

The Yasuf local council was dedicated and invested to the success of this project, intensively engaged with LGI staff throughout and dedicating resources and additional work to ensuring the water supply would reach all community members. The local council worked to ensure that Yasuf households were properly connected to the main water network, and installed water pumps to overcome low water pressure in places, with the support of the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA). Now, water cut-offs don’t impact citizens thanks to the large capacity of the new tank and its level control system, responsive to water flow alteration.

The water tank benefited 1560 men and 1440 women in the Yasuf and Iskaka amalgamated community. It created 31 temporary jobs that provided 1,694 days of work to Palestinian workers.

LGI partnered with the Ash Sheikh Village council to construct a health center. Prior to the project, the community had rented small clinic far away from the village center. The old clinic was open to the public only twice a week and provided limited health services mainly for maternity and child care. Community members used to be required to travel to Ramallah hospital to receive basic health care services given that they need permits to be hospitalized in Jerusalem.

The new facility provides modern facilities, such as the X-ray room, which was designed according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) standards to prevent X-ray radiation leakage, by installing lead insulation in the X-ray room walls. It will also provide a wider variety of health care services for citizens of Ash Sheikh Sa’ed, as it will be furnished and operated by the Ministry of Health (MoH).

The health center benefited 2400 men and 3100 women in the Ash Sheikh village, and created 73 temporary jobs that provided 3,684 days of work to Palestinian workers.

“We used to worry much about water cut-off from the Israeli side and how it would affect our daily life. Now, we worry less since the tank storage capacity exceeds the population’s daily water consumption rate.”

—Rana Obeid, a citizen
LGI constructed and/or refurbished 17 Youth Centers and 9 Community Centers across the West Bank

Throughout Palestine, youth and community centers function as the heartbeat of the community, used for activities, events, and community gatherings.

LGI partnered with the village council in Jaba, in the Jerusalem governorate, to add a third floor to the village council building to serve as a community youth center.

LGI also built a new wall surrounding the building and asphalted the yard. This project will provide expanded opportunities for youth, providing a larger space for activities, workshops and events. Before the construction of the club, many young boys were playing in the streets. Now they have options for a breadth of safer activities, such as dabkeh and karate.

The youth center benefited 267 males and 68 females in Jaba, and created 133 temporary jobs that provided 784 days of work to Palestinian workers.

LGI constructed a new two-floor building to house a community center for the Al-Mutilla and Al Mughayyir villages in 2013. The community center provides a meeting place for the community for group activities with a large multipurpose hall and special space for the village’s women’s committee, but also provides the community with much-needed services with a new health clinic and a counter for charging pre-paid electricity cards. LGI also constructed a septic tank and boundary walls and fences for the building, as well as asphalted the front yard.

The Al Mughayyir village council participated in the overall process as a full partner including, also purchasing the land, preparing the land survey, and providing project supervision by hiring a site engineer. Following the completion of the project, the LGU provided the center with the required furniture and part-time employees. The new community center benefited 185 males and 185 females in the Al-Mutila and Al Mughayyir villages, and created 40 temporary jobs that provided 1,873 days of work to Palestinian workers.

—Zahida Tawwam, Jaba citizen
Completed Al Mutillah community center
2.1 Participatory Decision Making and Infrastructure Design
Based on more than 60 years of experience around the globe, and nearly 20 years in the West Bank and Gaza, Global Communities understands that communities themselves best understand their needs. Citizens from a neighborhood are the best sources of information on what needs to be improved there. LGI did not simply enter a city and announce the intention to build a new school. Such a school was set as a priority by the community, based on a participatory process to identify the local challenges and needs, work together to design a solution that solves the problem, and determine whether that solution was feasible given the resources at hand.

LGI took a holistic approach to infrastructure development. Global Communities coordinated with the local government units, the relevant Ministries and PA, and supported broad inclusion with the relevant stakeholders from the community. Global Communities ensured broad inclusion – from local government staff to local business leaders, from parents of young students to members of academia – and made sure that traditionally marginalized voices, such as women and youth, were afforded a way to contribute.

The process ensured community satisfaction with the solutions identified by building community ownership, through consultation and responsiveness.

Global Communities worked in both vulnerable communities and communities that are potential Centers for Governance Excellence. In those CGEs, often larger, more urban municipalities with more resources to leverage and variables to consider, LGI guided the community through a strategic development and investment planning (SDIP) process, which applied participatory discussions to identify the long-term development needs and opportunities for the municipality, and prioritize those needs strategically. (See page 51 in governance work for more details.)

LGI recognized the need to undertake a similar participatory community planning and visioning process in the vulnerable communities. Even though these vulnerable communities are smaller, often rural, with far fewer resources, LGI adapted and applied the key elements that make the SDIP process successful. These include community involvement in visioning, the identification of priorities, and strategic planning that complements national and district level priorities.
Throughout the first years of the program, LGI held a series of participatory planning workshops in vulnerable communities and clusters of communities across the West Bank. These resulted in community-specific integrated infrastructure package proposals. These packages defined infrastructure projects that would meet key community needs, and ranked them in priority order. The proposals for implementation through LGI included those projects which fit within the budget available for each community, including the amount contributed as a shared cost by the community itself. Another key component of local ownership of the infrastructure was the requirement that the community identify funds, human or material resources, or other donations to share the cost of the infrastructure packages.

2.1.1: Construction in Area C

Following the Oslo Interim Agreement, the West Bank was divided into three areas: A, B, and C – each under a different administrative regime. Area A is under full PA civil and security control, while Area B has divided responsibilities, with Israel controlling security and the PA with civil authority. Area C lands are under full Israeli civil and security control, and all development and construction matters are subject to review and approval by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA).

Areas A and B are each about 20% of the West Bank, while Area C is 60% of the area. Most Palestinian urban centers are in Area A, while villages are mostly in Area B. Area C is therefore largely rural, with few human and material resources at hand. Area C residents face challenges accessing basic services and other areas of the West Bank.

Citing security concerns, the Israeli Civil Administration does not permit building in 70% of Area C and requires permits on a further 29%. Acquiring such permits can be a challenge.

With support from USAID, and well designed, documented, and justified projects, LGI was able to get ICA approval for the construction of 11 Area C schools. Some of the impacts these schools had on Area C communities include:

- Schools are closer to communities that previously had to travel long distances, resulting in some students not being able to continue;
- Provided safe and modern environment for students, instead of inadequate, temporary rooms and the constant threat of demolition;
- Schools are now able to provide more study tracks, when for example, some previously couldn’t offer science courses;
- Schools able to provide different teachers and classrooms for different grades, whereas previously some were housed in one room and taught on rotation;

Communities in the West Bank contributed $16,143,543 in shared costs, land, materials, and labor throughout the duration of the LGI program.
Global Communities built a new co-ed primary and secondary school in Dhaher Al-Abed, a small village 30 kilometers southwest of Jenin City. As a result, about 83 students now enjoy a comfortable educational environment in line with Ministry of Education standards in the West Bank.

The previous school only had two classrooms, forcing students to co-locate in the same classrooms despite age and curriculum differences from first through eleventh grades. The teacher would teach to one grade, assign them work, and begin teaching the next grade while the previous group was completing homework. Shifts would continue late into the day so all grades could attend class.

Now, the school can provide classes for each grade on a regular school day schedule in a brand new building with nine classrooms. Outdoor sanitary stalls have been replaced by two modern bathroom facilities, one for girls and one for boys. Both are handicap accessible and within the school building itself. The classrooms are complemented by new laboratories, a canteen, library, and extensive play area with a basketball court.

Because of the new laboratory facilities, students were able to participate for the first time in a science fair held by the Jenin Governorate. In addition, Dhaher Al Abed is now one of only eight Palestinian public schools with a class dedicated to kindergarten per a new MoEHE policy.

Mr Odeh Hamarshe, Arabic teacher at Dhaher Al Abed School, compared the new school with the previous one, “When we used to go to the old rented building you could smell the humidity in every room and only a small amount of light penetrated the rooms, which affected the students’ and teachers’ ability to learn and teach. Now we have nice, clean, bright classrooms which allow us to experience the educational process every day with gratitude.” Teachers explained that prior to the new school, most teachers had requested to the Ministry of Education to be transferred to other schools. Now their school is one of the best, if not the best, in the surrounding area and they have rescinded their transfer requests.

“The [old] school was only two rooms. There weren’t any bathrooms. There was no playground for you to relax… I am proud of this new school. That it was built.”

—Wasim Ala Omar Kamal Amarni, 14 years, Dhaher Al Abed student
Ad Deirat, Hebron Governorate

Prior to LGI’s involvement, the Deirat Co-Educational School, 25 kilometers south of Hebron, had moved forward with expanding the school without ICA prior approval. As a result, they received notification that they could not finish or use the additional floor they had built, leaving the school with only four classrooms for about 160 students. “Less than two months before [LGI] obtained the permit, we received notification from the Israeli Authorities that we could not use the classrooms we had built.” Mohammed Makhamreh, the Khallat Al Maiyya village council head, told Global Communities, “I was shocked when we were able to get the permit to renovate the whole school, and add an additional floor!” LGI’s support resulted in the completion of the four classrooms the village council had begun building, renovation of the original four classrooms on the ground floor, an additional floor with one more classroom, a library, science laboratory, and a full scale play area with basketball court.

Ad Deirat students had to travel to Khallat, Al Maiyya, or Yatta, to attend classes after the 9th grade. This added a financial burden to local families covering the cost of transportation. In addition, it reduced the number of girls who would complete their secondary school education due to concerns about them traveling away from their home village.

Students are now able to reach a school in their own community more easily, and without significant cost. More girls can now continue school beyond 9th grade in Ad Deirat. This also means that there is less overcrowding in neighboring schools who no longer host students from neighboring communities.

“Psychologically, this project positively affected teachers as well as students...It also had a significant impact in raising the willingness of the students to study and reduce number of students leaving school. They either had two options - either travel a long distance to Yatta or leave school altogether. And unfortunately, they usually just withdrew from school.”

—Jamil Mohamad Ibraheem, school teacher, Ad Deirat
2.1.2: Infrastructure Sustainability

Central to LGI is ensuring the commitment and interest from communities and stakeholders in sustaining their community infrastructure projects and governance practices over the long term. LGI developed a sustainability checklist to track the function and progress of the operations, maintenance and durability of new facilities, as well as ensure clarity of ownership one year after project handover. As a result, LGI tracked the involvement of key stakeholders and people in the targeted communities, as well as the capacities of local government entities and stakeholders, such as management skills, to ensure their ability to independently operate and run each facility after it is handed over to the community.

During project design, LGI helps communities develop an Operations and Maintenance Plan for infrastructure projects to ensure they are prepared and able to manage and maintain the infrastructure long-term. These plans are developed by the LGU and the community stakeholders involved, and cover such topics as responsibilities for maintenance and operations, functionality, technical expertise, financial matters, ownership, and durability. For clarity over legal and functional ownership of the facilities, the maintenance and operations plan also requires a list of any formal documentation, such as letters of commitment from owners of the project, engineering maintenance plans, staff allocation/commitments to maintenance and a summary budget of the estimated cost of running and maintaining the infrastructure facility yearly with anticipated sources of income. Finally, the plan also details how the partner intends to discuss and share the sustainability plan with the community to ensure buy-in and ownership.

Sustainability Reviews

There are two types of sustainability reviews completed by the LGI team. The first, the sustainability and impact evaluation, is conducted a few months after the completion of the project and focuses mainly on the community’s utilization of the project, sense of ownership, and impact of the project. To conduct the evaluation, LGI conducts surveys of project beneficiaries and administrators, and holds focus groups with a number of communities to provide a qualitative assessment on the sustainability of projects from the perspective of the beneficiaries.

The second review, the site visit, is completed by LGI engineers and partner representatives 1.5 years after project completion to ensure the ability of the partner to properly maintain the project in the long-term. These reviews are distinct from the regular site visits undertaken by LGI engineering staff during the lifetime of the project to evaluate the quality of work and ensure timely remedial/corrective action, if needed during the 6 month maintenance guarantee period. This review focuses on three main aspects of project sustainability: maintenance and operations, functionality, and durability of construction.

In the Site Visits, LGI found that nearly all projects were being properly maintained by the local government or community. In the first round of site visits in 2012, LGI found three projects of 28 that needed some additional maintenance. Two road projects had asphalt damage or degeneration, and one youth club had broken door locks and a need for repainting. Through this, LGI identified the need to place additional emphasis with the LGU on their ongoing responsibilities for maintenance after the project is completed.

After that, LGI’s site visits found that 100% of the reviewed projects were maintained properly, and that the responsible government bodies were taking corrective action when needed. Out of 120 site visits in five years, only 6 projects were found to need corrective maintenance.
EXAMPLES OF RESULTS FROM SUSTAINABILITY REVIEWS

Citizen Service Center

While a significant contribution of funds, materials, or labor from the community was required for each infrastructure project in LGI, many municipalities exceeded their originally pledged contributions. In Illar, the municipality contributed cash for the rehabilitation of the municipal building that hosts the newly established Citizen Service Center and covered the expenses of installing a new elevator. The sustainability review after the project completion found, however, that the municipality exceeded their planned contribution by buying a piece of land near the municipal building to provide a parking area for municipality employees and CSC visitors.

Schools

In Salfit, LGI renovated the Bilddya Primary Girls School, adding two new floors to the existing building. The project included removing four classrooms and replacing them with five new ones, a computer lab, a teachers’ room, and an administration office.

In the sustainability survey, LGI found that the community had made contributions to furnish the library and resource room to further upgrade the school’s facilities, and had also volunteered their time and skills to support any maintenance in the school.

The refurbishment of the schools in Salah Eddin and Al Maniya enhanced the sense of ownership among students, who in the sustainability reviews, demonstrably cared more about their school cleanliness and prevention of any damage to the school premises and furniture. Additionally, the local council in ‘Anata hired a guard to look after Salah Eddin school premises.

In Deir as Sudan, the village council is currently rehabilitating one of the roads that lead to school by donation from the community and from their own budget.

The sustainability review of the construction of two new floors and rehabilitation of the existing building of the Az Zeer Secondary School for Boys, in Jannatah-Harmala in Bethlehem governorate, found that the community began devoting its own limited resources into the school. The contractor carried out voluntary maintenance after the expiration of the project warranty, and one community member provided free landscaping services for the school.

“The librarian bought some nice covers for the shelves and tables for the library from his salary, and the teachers shared in buying a satellite dish to provide students with educational channels. This is just because we now have a valuable place we should take care.”

—Mrs. Ghada Qabaha, Principal, Dhaher Al Abed School
“After the completion of the rehabilitation works in Az Zeer secondary boys’ school, my two sons started to go to the school earlier and their grades were much improved.”

—Tariq Asakreh, parent

Roads

In several areas, the LGUs took immense pride in the new roads provided through LGI and took extra steps to improve the road environment after construction was complete. For example, sustainability reviews in 2013 of the road between Akkaba and Qaffin and the main road within Al Maniya found that the LGU planted trees on sidewalks and built stonewalls at the edges of the road, respectively. In Beit Surik, the local council took the responsibility to install street lighting for the road, provide garbage containers, and clean the road on a daily basis.

In Qaffin, the LGU took the responsibility for the internal roads constructed by LGI by constructing separating beams at the edge of sidewalks to prevent erosion, regularly cleaning the road and drainage system, and establishing water grills at various points in the road to drain rainwater. The municipality exceeded its originally pledged contribution by planting trees and constructing walls to replace ones damaged by weather, and hiring an artist to paint attractive wall designs for the community.

Youth Club

After the renovation and construction of an additional floor for the Jabal An Nar Youth Club in Nablus, the staff began pursuing creative projects and partnerships to build the sustainability of the club. Low public resource levels result in insufficient support from the Ministry of Youth and Sport and Nablus municipality, according to the general manager (pictured right), “[This led us to] look for new opportunities with new partners based on mutual interests. For example, we partnered with Al’Isra’ software accounting Company who support us financially while we provided them with professional marketing films for their products.”

The additional floor consists of a training room, multi media center, meeting room and a multipurpose hall. Osama Fityan, the Media Center Coordinator, explained that this enabled the youth center to meet increasing demands, such as for youth summer camps, without renting additional space elsewhere in town. The saved money allowed them to expand their activities and look for other income-generating activities, explaining, “We are working on a new marketing plan by producing our own films…to spread our work and encourage other organizations to get benefit from our new equipped spaces and techniques and based on that the functionality of project is increasing.”
2.2 Quality Standards in Infrastructure Design, Construction, Safety
LGI has set a new standard for quality construction within the Palestinian construction sector.

LGI implemented infrastructure projects of the highest quality standards to meet international best practices throughout, from designs that meet safety standards for earthquakes, to high quality and durable materials, locally sourced whenever possible.

Quality control is assured by LGI throughout all stages of project implementation. During the design stage, a close review of all tender and design documents is conducted by the LGI Design Review team, in coordination with the construction management team. All project designs met the Uniform Building Code (UBC) and for certain projects the International Building Code (IBC) was adopted. In some cases, LGI contracted international design firms for complex projects requiring fire safety special designs, or peer reviewers to support local design firms working on the seismic resistance of projects when local expertise was not available.

LGI employed engineers specifically tasked with quality assurance and safety reviews of ongoing projects. This role served to ensure that Global Communities’ systems for construction management were applied as per the Construction Manual Practices and Procedures (CMP), throughout the infrastructure project cycle, using standard quality assurance and safety checklists and protocols.

During the implementation of the projects, quality control was ensured through a series of steps and requirements, including:

- Contractor submits a safety plan, for review and approval by LGI.
- All project designs are reviewed by LGI to ensure they meet international codes and regulations, as well as environmental impact standards and accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Onsite inspection of construction safety practices, per regulations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- On site tests required contractually, such as compressive strength tests for concrete and compaction tests for backfilling.
- Contractor conducts quality tests according to standards set for each material upon delivery to the site, and prior to use.
- Contractor provides formal documentation and reports during project implementation, including measurement and approval of work on site according to Palestinian requirements.
- Substantial handover of the site in accordance with drawings and technical specifications to ensure completion is done according to the beneficiary/end-user needs.
- LGI inspections conducted at handover to ensure a high standard of workmanship and use of high quality, local materials where available.

ENVIRONMENT IMPACT REVIEW
For each project, an Environmental Documentation Form (EDF) was prepared and approved by USAID prior to launching construction. The environmental mitigation actions were defined in the EDF to prevent any negative environmental impacts related to construction activities. These mitigations adhere to Palestinian Environmental Law No.7 (1999), the Environmental Assessment Policy of 2000, and USAID Regulations of 22 CFR-Part 216, in addition to the Exclusive Regulation Law of 4/1994. This included construction waste management and preservation of project site archaeological and historical findings.
2.2.1: Green Building

With the support of LGI, Engineers Association – Jerusalem Center (EAJC), and the Palestinian Higher Green Building Council (PHGBC), the national Palestinian Green Building Guidelines were launched in 2013. Today, the Palestinian Green Building Guidelines, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guidelines from the United States, and the ISTIDAMA (sustainability in Arabic) from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) serve as the foundational premise for a well-defined rating system to achieve green building classification status.

Throughout all of its infrastructure projects, LGI promoted green building in the West Bank as a more sustainable, environmentally-friendly option. LGI followed the Palestinian Green Building Guidelines that it helped establish, applying green, environmentally friendly approaches in the following categories:

Site Sustainability

In project selection with partner communities, LGI prioritized the rehabilitation of existing buildings or vertical construction of additional floors. This practice contributes to preserving undeveloped green sites, and provides improvements to sites which are served by existing transportation and utility infrastructure.

The design and implementation of LGI building projects included consideration of the ease of access to project location through public and private transportation and by pedestrians living in the surrounding residential areas. Additionally, all schools, community centers, and CSC projects have dedicated parking areas for users.

Indoor Environmental Quality

The quality of the indoor environment affects the health of occupants and productivity of building users. Green elements to improve indoor environmental quality were mainstreamed into all of LGI’s building projects, including improvements to the indoor air quality, the materials emissions, thermal comfort of occupants, and daylight and glare.

In addition, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems were installed in select buildings and rooms, such as the Citizen Service Centers, to enhance internal air quality when the building is overcrowded with community members. HVAC systems were also placed in multipurpose rooms in youth and community centers, as well as emergency, X-Ray, and pharmacy rooms in Ash Sheikh Sa’ed health center.

Open air corridor in Al-Haffasi school

Sunbreakers on Beit Kahil School building
Thermal Comfort

Thermal comfort is naturally achieved through orienting the building such that the east-west building length is equal to or greater than north-south lengths, and east-west axis is within 15 degrees of geographic east-west. Such building orientation will reduce the cooling and heating requirements and provide a comfortable environment for users. This technique was used for Ash Sheikh Sa’ed health clinic, Al Yamun multipurpose hall, Sinjil community center and Dinnabeh youth club.

Additionally, interior design best practices were utilized to overcome improper orientation of pre-existing buildings rehabilitated under LGI. This was especially true in the CSCs built in existing municipal buildings. Crowded areas such as the reception, service counters and the meeting room were re-located to the north western side of the building, while kitchens and lavatories were placed in the southern sides of the buildings. This practice contributed to the provision of natural thermal comfort in the most crowded areas of buildings.

The number, size, and location of windows in LGI’s building projects enhanced the utilization of natural daylight and leveraged natural ventilation, with the set standard of 75% of the available spaces providing direct visual contact with the external surroundings.

Water Efficiency

LGI promoted efficiency of water management in buildings by monitoring and reducing water consumption and practicing water efficient landscaping, taking into consideration the national recommendations and guidelines in water consumption. These measures included installing water-saving devices, and applying practices that collect and re-use water for irrigating surrounding green areas.

Roads

Although the national Palestinian Green Building Guidelines focus only on building projects, LGI also incorporated green elements in the design and implementation of road projects. In the form of pollution prevention measures and sustainable site development.

Similar to building projects, Environmental Documentation Forms (EDFs) were prepared and approved by USAID prior to launching the rehabilitation works for all road projects. Additionally, there was an approved construction and operation waste management program implemented by each project contractor and inspected by the LGI team.

Road projects addressed potential flooding with the construction of pipe culverts to manage storm water runoff during winter. LGI also encouraged the use of durable local varieties of trees surrounding the road projects to help reduce the urban heat island effect, provide air filtration, and ease effects of erosion.
Building Materials and Resources

LGI promoted the use of local, non-polluting, reused, and recycled materials that contribute to reducing the negative environmental impacts resulting from construction wastes and depletion of natural resources. Durable and locally manufactured stones, paints, and coating materials were used in the construction and finishing of completed projects.

For all building projects, there was an approved construction and operation waste management program implemented by each project contractor and thoroughly inspected by LGI. For example, the metal terrace and the OBC wood used in the roof of the additional floor for Jabal An Nar club are considered sustainable building elements that can be easily recycled or reused.

Environmentally Friendly and Cost Effective Retrofitting Techniques

LGI worked extensively on five schools in “Area C” of the West Bank, an area burdened with limited infrastructure facilities, extensive building restrictions and severe poverty. In all infrastructure projects, in addition to ensuring the best quality of construction, LGI aims to implement high standards of safety and reduce the negative environmental impacts of construction activities according to international standards and environmental protection measures. To this end, retrofitting of the existing school buildings was undertaken in three of the five Area C schools as a cost effective, green and sustainable approach for providing improved and safer educational facilities in the marginalized communities of Aba Ash Sharqiya in Marj Ibn Amer in Jenin Governorate, and Ras ‘Atiya and Ad Dab’a in Qalqilya Governorate.

Also, retrofitting school buildings helps upgrade the existing structures to better withstand shocks from earthquakes and also strengthens the buildings to accommodate vertical and horizontal construction of additional floors. This was done following the standard requirements of the Uniform Building Code UBC97; hence providing a safer educational environment and additional space for more students who are normally forced to pursue education in neighboring villages due to overcrowding in the schools of their communities. The new available spaces in the retrofitted schools will also comply with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) standards for school facilities.

From a solid waste management perspective, retrofitting minimizes the utilization of natural resources and reduces waste and emissions that result from demolition and construction activities. The cost-effectiveness of retrofitting is also an advantage. On average, it is estimated that the cost of retrofitting and rehabilitation of the three schools including the new extensions was $640/m2 compared to $800/m2 for the demolition of the existing schools and building new ones.
Installation of Solar Energy Systems in Selected Schools

In the final year of the program, LGI started to install high performance solar energy systems to cover most of the schools electricity needs. In adherence to the technical requirements and regulations of the Palestinian Energy Authority, LGI installed solar panels on a total of eight schools, five of which in Area C. In particular the following schools were equipped with the systems: Ras Atya and Ad Dab’a in Qalqiliya Governorate, Aba Ash Sharqiya and Aqqaba in Jenin Governorate, Qalqas and Ar Ramadin in Hebron Governorate, Nazlet ‘Isa in Tulkarm Governorate, and Hindaza and Bureid’a in Bethlehem Governorate. After covering each school’s electricity needs, the excess generated electricity will flow back into the grid and is sold to the distribution company according to a tariff agreement issued by the PA.

Solar energy systems for Ar Ramadin and Nazlet ‘Isa secondary schools

Palestinian Engineers Apply Green Building Principles

The dedication to green sustainability trickled its way down to Hamdi Ideis, a Project Engineer. He was inspired to use recycled material being produced at a local sponge mattresses factory, also used as highly dense sponge sheets under the flooring of mosques and kindergartens.

Hamdi Ideis thought to repurpose this material to act as a barrier or filler between seismic joints. Expansion or seismic joints create a separation between different parts of a single building or between adjacent buildings in order to reduce the impact of lateral movements during an earthquake or thermal expansion. Usually the separation between slabs, beams, or columns of two parts is filled with an artificial material like polystyrene. Following approval from the designer, the recycled sponge mattresses were used in school projects in Hindaza and Bureida in the Bethlehem Governorate.

Project engineer Hamdi Ideis was inspired to use recycled material as filler

I wasn’t sure if it was a viable idea at first. However, when I presented it to my colleagues, we all began brainstorming on how to solve the existing problems using the material at hand to make it efficient and practical for usage”

– Hamdi Ideis, Project Engineer, Global Communities
2.2.2: “A Green Standard”: Aqqaba Girls School

One of LGI’s proudest achievements is the school built in Aqqaba, Tubas governorate. This is the first school in the West Bank that complies with the national Green Building standards, including water saving technologies, energy efficient techniques, and modern architectural elements.

The project focused on the construction of a two-floor green school building. Originally designed as the first green school in Palestine to be silver certified, design elements were improved throughout the construction process resulting in a final assessment of Gold Certification. Specific components of the design contributing to Gold certification include site sustainability; indoor environmental quality; energy use; water efficiency; materials and resources.

Site Sustainability

Specific considerations were made in developing the plan for the area surrounding the project site. Where possible reclaimed water was used for irrigation of green areas rather than potable water. Further, those green areas were planted with native durable plants in an effort to reduce the need for irrigation. Construction equipment worked around olive trees already present in order to preserve ground cover and, along with retaining walls, reduce erosion. In the few situations where mature trees had to be removed from the site, this was done so in a way that did not harm the tree and they were replanted at the village entrance.

Additionally site access was a key consideration in the design. The Aqqaba village master plan stated that the project location should be easily accessible via public and private transportation and by pedestrians living in the surrounding residential areas.

Indoor Environmental Quality

In accordance with PHGBC guidelines for optimal thermal comfort, horizontal and vertical shutters were installed to provide the ability to adjust light and thermal radiation from windows. Double pane glass windows helped reduce heat transfer from windows, which can be a main source of energy inefficiency.

Since no HVAC systems are utilized in Palestinian schools, passive techniques such as insulation, shading and natural ventilation were utilized in order to achieve the highest possible level of human comfort with minimum use of energy. Every effort was made to ensure appropriate temperature management, including simulations to identify the most appropriate insulation for external walls. All of this helped to achieve thermal comfort and meet the low energy requirements for both heating and cooling that were required under the national green building standards.

Water Use Reduction

By both reducing water consumption and practicing water-efficient landscaping, the school was able to achieve effective results in their water usage. Dual flush valves were used in all lavatories, needing less than 4.5 liters per flush, and automatic water saving faucets were installed. Grey water collection fed the drip irrigation system for landscaping, along with utilizing storm water runoff, accounting for 90 percent of the irrigation needs. The entire water needs of the school were designed to maximize reduction and reuse.
Energy Use

Lighting design for a green building is important to ensure both low energy use and an effective and conducive atmosphere for learning. The number, size, and location of windows in the school building emphasize the use of daylight. About 82% of the school’s spaces have an average 389 Lux of daylight, which is above the recommended value that 75% of spaces having 300 Lux, outlined in the Palestinian Green Building Guidelines. Where additional lighting was needed high efficiency lamps were installed, powered by a 15kW solar panel system on the roof of the building. This has proven to be more than sufficient for the school’s electricity requirements and excess energy is fed back into the grid following a tariff plan adopted by the Palestinian Authority.

Materials and Resources

LGI worked to promote the use of local, non-polluting, and recycled materials in all projects including the Aqqaba school. Use of these products contribute to reducing the negative environmental impacts resulting from construction waste and depletion of natural resources.

An approved construction and operation waste management plan was implemented by the project contractor and inspected by the LGI team and the PHGBC evaluation committee. Additionally, durable and locally manufactured stones, paints, and coating materials were used in the construction and finishing of the school project. The materials were supplied from local resources near the project site to reduce the cost and air pollution caused by emissions from transporting construction materials.

Gold Certification

Representatives of the Palestinian Higher Green Building Council (PHGBC) visited Aqqaba school in Tubas Governorate to evaluate the green elements as the project became fully operational. PHGBC’s preliminary evaluation results revealed that the green elements mainstreamed in the project scored 144 points, sufficient to grant the school the gold certification for green buildings.
2.3 Job Creation and the Engineering Sector
One objective of the LGI program was to build the capacity of the construction sector in Palestine, helping to institutionalize some of the best practices in quality standards, the international building codes, and green building approaches. Through LGI projects, Global Communities created 10,317 short term jobs in infrastructure and construction, and 244 long-term or permanent jobs as a result of the new infrastructure. Contractors and construction firms gained on-the-job skills building in meeting international standards or building codes. Global Communities Engineering Fellowship provided nearly 200 up and coming young engineers with opportunities and training to further their careers – as the future of the Palestinian construction industry.

**Capacity Building for Palestinian Construction Sector**

Global Communities partnered with the **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)** for capacity building of the Palestinian Contractors Union (PCU). Through LGI, ICMA conducted a participatory assessment of the PCU’s capabilities as a membership association, with strategic planning on how the new PCU board can help steer the development of the union. LGI, ICMA, and PCU staff finalized new board orientation materials and conducted a training of trainers for PCU staff, who led the orientation with ICMA guidance. PCU staff are now poised to train any future elected PCU board members.

ICMA also led a study tour for PCU board members and staff to Washington, D.C. and Golden, Colorado in the United States in December 2013 to learn about American public private partners in the construction industry. Participants built professional connections between the PCU, ICMA, and other associations to exchange ideas and experiences of successful membership associations, government contracting and procurement, and transparency in operations.

PCU participants ensured they had a clear understanding of how local governments in the United States conduct competitive bids, and returned to Palestine ready to convey those lessons to PCU members and the Ministry of Public Works & Housing.

**Engineering Fellowship Program**

LGI was also committed to helping the future generation of engineers gain work experience through on-the-job training as well as temporary employment in the field. LGI, in cooperation with the **Engineering Association - Jerusalem Center (EAJC)**, provided fresh engineering graduates with the tools, experience, and resources needed in order to succeed in the highly competitive field of engineering.

Each year, after a rigorous application and interview process from among hundreds of potential candidates, about 50 recent engineering graduates were selected for what came to be considered the most valuable and prestigious engineering internship in the West Bank. The engineering fellows benefited from a series of technical and non-technical trainings, as well as site visits to selected Palestinian companies with exemplary projects and accomplishments in technical areas, environmentally friendly practices, and innovation. Throughout their internships, the engineers received on-the-job training, both at LGI’s offices and at active project sites.

Over the course of the LGI program, 10 of the fellow engineers were selected to participate in the Young Green Fellows Internship in the United Arab Emirates with LGI partner **Khatib & Alami’s** sustainable building unit. For two months, the “green fellows” learned about sustainable building practices, including Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building guidelines. The green fellows were supported and mentored by K&A engineers and participated in site visits to relevant UAE buildings.

An impressive 63% of 199 graduated engineering fellows received employment upon completion and 2.7% went on to complete and receive scholarships for postgraduate studies.
I had a blank CV before I came here (Engineering Fellows Program), but when I finished the program my CV was full. It made me feel good that I had real work experience.”

—Eng. Nadine Rishmawi, Engineering Fellow and Young Green Fellow in 2011
3.0 GOVERNANCE
Ministry of Local Government & the Local Governance Sector

Through LGI, Global Communities provided support to national, regional, and local levels of governance institutions, supporting stronger, and more responsive and transparent government in Palestine. LGI formed lasting partnerships with municipalities across the West Bank, and transformed the way they do business as local government bodies. However, to advance the local governance sector as a whole, Global Communities worked with the Ministry of Local Government to foster the institutional and regulatory framework for the local governance sector.

Global Communities supported the Ministry of Local Government to set its vision for the sector, and its mission as the regulatory body, guiding and monitoring the sector. With its Local Democratic Reform (LDR) program from 2005 – 2011 helping created a national consensus around this strategic vision, initiating the development of responsive policies and setting sector and ministry strategies and action plans, as well as regulations and guidelines on the local, regional and national levels. Under LDR, Global Communities held a series of high level roundtables, national and regional workshops for dialogue to develop a consensus among national, regional, and local stakeholders on what the role of local government should be in Palestine. In both LDR and LGI, Global Communities also carried out situational analysis and assessments, developed studies and policy papers, to support the deliberations and discussions among relevant stakeholders.

Over more than a decade of relationship building, consensus building, and testing models and tools, Global Communities has supported a stronger relationship between the Ministry and the local government units, as well as built stronger mechanisms for managements and oversight through the Ministry’s regional directorates.

Overall, Global Communities support to the Ministry and its regional Directorates enabled the institution to more effectively lead and regulate the local governance sector, setting clear and effective rules and regulations for local government operations. Directorates became stronger partners to LGUs in ensuring efficient, effective, and responsive services to citizens.

MoLG Leads the Local Governance Sector

As a result of LDR and LGI, the role of the Ministry evolved over time to become the leader of the local governance sector, as a regulatory and oversight body and a partner to local government units. Global Communities continually built stronger linkages and relationships between local government and Ministry officials through all its activities, while also providing targeted support to the Ministry to set clear and constructive policies and regulations.

LGI’s technical support provided ongoing guidance in MoLG efforts to set national policies on local government operations, such as public participation, human resources management, public procurement, internal audits, and other processes. LGI provided hands-on support to LGUs to implement new Ministry policies, and helped customize those where warranted to local contexts with municipality-specific manuals and guidelines. But overall policy handbooks for these issue areas were developed hand in hand with the Ministry of Local Government. This fostered their role as the regulatory body of the local governance sector, and provided them with the tools they needed to take on this role effectively.

Through LGI, Global Communities provided ongoing opportunities and forums for Ministry officials and staff to discuss the development of the sector together and gain feedback.
from regional and local stakeholders. For example, in 2013, LGI supported MoLG in conducting a conference entitled “Local Government Policies and Strategies,” which provided a forum to discuss the major issues and challenges facing the local governance sector, and how the Ministry’s strategic vision and plan can respond to them. These discussion topics included issues with donor support, decentralization, amalgamation of municipalities, and local economic development among others. Participants determined what official bodies were responsible for responding to or coordinating which issues, including the Ministry, the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA), the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF), and international partners.

Global Communities also supported the MoLG to review and update its 2010-2014 Strategic Plan. The review process took into account newly adopted policies that were supported by Global Communities, such as the Public Participation Manual, incorporating into the strategic plan the new requirements for LGU internal audits and public disclosures, for example. Global Communities then built on efforts under LDR that led to the development of the Palestinian Local Governance Sector Strategy for 2011-2014. Global Communities took the lead in supporting MoLG and sector stakeholders through the national committee in reviewing, updating and developing the second sectoral strategy under LGI for 2014 -2016.

**LGI at the Forefront of Decentralization Policy**

Working in cooperation with MoLG and its partner LGUs, LGI helped build a consensus among all relevant stakeholders on the type of decentralization Palestine wants to apply, and to formulate a practical implementation plan to achieve that concept. LGI conducted a holistic analytical study on decentralization entitled “Situational Analysis Study and Development of a Practical Implementation Plan on the Possibilities for a Future More Decentralized/Devolved Palestinian Local Government System”.

To ensure broad input to the findings, LGI held national and regional workshops for dialogue for all relevant stakeholders from the Ministry level through local government units to discuss all aspects of Palestine’s local government system, what aspects of decentralized system are being applied as envisioned, and what is working or not. LGI also conducted ongoing research on decentralization, with focus groups and in depth interviews with local government representatives from around the West Bank. The result was a holistic study that examined the current aspects of decentralization in Palestine, and what options are yet available. The Ministry then used the study to define sectoral strategies for further decentralization and cooperation with LGUs.

In addition, LGI introduced potential models for decentralization and the development of large, urban municipalities in Palestine. As more people move into cities or seek to expand and develop zones between neighboring municipalities, the governments must be ready with plans, resources, and services to effectively manage that development. The example of the Grand Municipality was applied in Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahur, (as well as Ad Doha), with four municipalities working in synergy to leverage common resources for development objectives, such as local tourism. The example of the large metropolitan municipality emerged in Ramallah, Al Bireh, and Betunia, as three large neighbors that need to coordinate solutions to common problems in service provision, such as traffic congestion. (See below for how these decentralization models were applied in these contexts.)

**DECENTRALIZATION STUDY TOUR**

Global Communities brought eight MoLG and LGU representatives to Turkey for a study mission in 2014. The delegation included the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister, six general directors, and seven mayors. The study tour allowed participants to learn from the Turkish experience in the areas of decentralization, metropolitan municipality, and public private partnerships.
MoLG Regional Directorates

Ministry Directorates act as regional hubs to coordinate with and support LGUs. As Global Communities worked to build capacity of LGUs throughout the West Bank under LDR and LGI, it found that Directorate staff also needed training and guidance on those skill sets to be effective partners to local governments.

In 2012, LGI reviewed all MoLG Directorate procedures and conducted a needs assessment for capacity building. The result was a standard operating manual for Directorates, reflecting procedures as they currently stood at that point. The manual covered such topics as how to audit LGU budgets, inspect and license new building, follow up on citizen complaints, and support capacity building of LGUs themselves. LGI held a broadly inclusive workshop with Ministry officials, Directorate representatives, and members of LGUs to discuss the current operational manual, and determine corresponding recommendations for improvements.

Global Communities, in coordination with the MoLG, conducted on-the-job training for the 11 MoLG regional offices to make sure that the manuals were adopted and integrated in the directorates’ daily work. Following that, LGI also created training package for the Directorates to further build on and help them implement the previously-provided reference manuals, such as the Public Participation Policy Paper, the Reference Manual for Public Participation, and the Internal Audit Manual. The training focused on community participation, internal audit, and related subjects identified in coordination with the MoLG. Global Communities also held a series of workshops for Directorate staff to discuss their roles and responsibilities, and improve communication and coordination between directorates on how their oversight and support to LGUs is applied.
3.0.1: Metropolitan Zones: Ramallah, Al Bireh, Beituniya

LGI supported the work of a Joint Coordination Unit (JCU) for the neighbor municipalities Ramallah, Al-Bireh, and Beituniya. This was one model promoted with the MoLG and partners by LGI for management of larger, interconnected metropolitan zones. The JCU set up a joint local planning committee to work with LGI to develop a Joint Physical Plan, including a spatial development framework for the metropolitan area, and conduct a joint traffic and transportation management plan.

Between 2015 and 2016, LGI supported the three large municipalities to coordinate with one another, as well as the JCU planning committee, other municipal representatives, and the MOLG to create the joint Strategic Development Framework. The process engaged citizens in planning, presenting them with information about existing challenges, and sharing vision for the cooperation among the three municipalities. In 2016, Ramallah, Al-Bireh, and Betuniya municipalities evaluated three proposed development alternatives for the grand municipal area and worked toward consensus.

LGI supported the JCU in conducting site visits to traffic junctions throughout Ramallah, Al-Bireh, and Beituniya municipalities to evaluate the status of transportation. This and other data LGI collected on housing, water, and sanitation networks in the Ramallah area fed into the sectoral assessment plan as part of the SDF study. LGI’s support to the JCU planning committee included developing a new roadway classification methodology, compiling an inventory of current roadway conditions, and aerial photography for the municipalities.

As part of LGI’s support, each of the three municipalities and the metropolitan unit received laptops with the transportation modeling software, Trans CAD. LGI trained municipal and JCU staff on Trans CAD, particularly selected applications that are relevant to current municipal conditions, with a focus on transportation planning and forecasting.
3.0.2: Grand Municipality: Bethlehem, Beit Sahur, Beit Jala

LGI is proud to have shepherded the establishment of the “Joint Service Council for Planning and Development” for Bethlehem municipalities. This model for a “Grand Municipality” was one put forth in technical consultations with the MoLG about how to manage broad, urban areas with diverse communities and interests.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Bethlehem Mayor Vera Baboun, Beit Sahur Mayor Hani Hayek, Beit Jala mayor Nicola Khamees, and Ad Doha Mayor Khaled Mahboub, on behalf of their respective municipal councils, in a formal ceremony in March 2016 at Bethlehem Municipality. Bethlehem Governor Jerbin Al Bakri, Minister of Local Government Hussien Al Araj, Deputy Minister of Local Government Mohammad Jabarin, and Global Communities Country Director Lana Abu Hijleh oversaw the signing ceremony.

This joint council is the first of its kind among Palestinian LGUs, and provides a platform for the four neighboring municipalities to work together in planning and development, thus maximizing resources and enhancing outcomes. The Council aims to: prepare master plans for the joint urban expansion; work towards unification of systems, procedures, fees, and tariffs; coordinate on a wide range of services; work to strengthen community outreach and citizenry; and develop new policies and procedures to develop tourism and attract local and foreign investments.
3.1 Governance Excellence
Centers for Governance Excellence

Local government can be the most tangible and impactful level of government to citizens, given its proximity to the people and day to day interaction with citizens’ lives and livelihoods. The Local Government and infrastructure (LGI) program took a holistic approach to enhancing the local government sector through participatory planning processes that built local government leadership while ensuring community participation and the inclusion of diverse stakeholders.

LGI supported local governments throughout the West Bank to more effectively manage local governance and more fairly and responsive provide services to citizens and meet the needs of the community. With support for long-term integrated community planning, self-designed capacity building plans for clear, improved procedures, and concrete community and citizen inclusion measures integrated throughout, LGI helped transform the quality of local governance in communities all over the West Bank.

LGI combined international best practices in transparent and responsive governance with adapted, flexible packages of assistance tailored to the specific needs of each partner LGU. Local leaders and LGU staff were put in the driver’s seat in each component of the program, building their ownership of these new approaches, and their capacity to identify their own weaknesses and how to address them in the future.

Staff in local governments and elected leadership at the local level have embraced the planning, efficiency, and inclusion espoused by LGI. They are not repeating slogans, but have instead applied new approaches and mentalities in becoming more professional, responsive, and efficient leaders in their communities.

Municipalities redefined their functions in the community by focusing on future investments, attractiveness, long-term strategies, and instilled the idea that their business is to lead community development. The establishment of Citizen Service Centers (CSCs) constituted a shift in municipalities to focus more on customer service, acknowledging the value of citizens, and the role of the municipality in meeting their needs. Awareness among constituents has risen leading to more active, participatory, and informed citizens, especially in marginalized groups.

To accomplish sustainable change in governance, Global Communities developed and applied a local government strengthening model to create Centers for Governance Excellence. This model supports the intersection and integration of three main local government functions: leadership, community participation, and management of service delivery, all centered on the good governance themes of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

To measure its own capacity and performance, a local government can examine each of these functional areas using a set of core competencies within each. LGI applied this model for governance excellence specific to the Palestinian context based on years of experience focusing on the local governance sector in the West Bank & Gaza.

While the actual performance of the LGU in each function is highly important, the integration and interaction of different competency areas, processes and institutional setup is actually the most important factor towards achieving excellence in governance by any LGU. For instance, an LGU with strong performance in Leadership and Management of Service Delivery functions can become highly efficient in terms of managing resources and delivery, but will by no means be effective or responsive to its citizen’s needs. Similarly, another LGU might excel in Community Participation and Management of Service Delivery and hence is highly responsive to its citizen’s needs; however unless that LGU excels in performing its other function, leadership, it will be neither efficient nor effective in terms of how and what resources they mobilize and utilize to meet citizen needs.

Within the framework of the above, one LGU can become a Center of Governance Excellence, not necessarily due to its ability to excel in each one of the above three functions, but rather due to the level of integration and sustainability of introduced best practices and processes. This integration is what drives the LGU towards achieving continuous and sustainable excellence in governance in all three functions.

MODEL FOR EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNANCE

1. **Leadership:** Developing, planning, and sharing a longer-term vision of the community, and supporting the LGU in assuming a leadership role in achieving sustainable community development.

2. **Management of Service Delivery:** Providing management and direction in organizational development to provide or facilitate high quality, efficient services to citizens in a fair and transparent manner.

3. **Community Participation:** Supporting the engagement of citizens and civil society in key decisions and planning efforts that affect their lives by (i) keeping them informed, (ii) consulting them on pertinent issues, and (iii) sharing in the decision-making role.
3.2 Community Strategic Planning
Community planning supports communities to be dynamic, self-reliant and resilient. Through community planning, communities can participate in shaping their own future by applying the principles of accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. LGI applied participatory planning processes that built local government leadership while ensuring community participation and the inclusion of diverse stakeholders. These participatory processes resulted in long-term strategic plans for broad community development, local investment, and the mobilization of local resources.

**Strategic Development Investment Plans (SDIPs)**

LGI supported local government units in creating SDIPs, per the process updated by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) with LDR support in 2010. This process requires all LGUs of a certain size to conduct a comprehensive strategic planning process, and submit the resulting SDIP to the MoLG for review and approval given it followed the requirements for a participatory process and community input.

The process includes a combination of open, public meetings to invite broad participation and more technical work by a series of committees formed during those public meetings. Each LGU formed a core Strategic Planning Committee, as well as a set of technical committees focused on specific development issues, such as the economy, health, or public services. Nominations of community members to participate were solicited with an aim to select a broad spectrum of community members, including women, youth, and representatives from civil society and the private sector.

The Strategic Planning Committee consisted of the Mayor, representatives from civil society, the private sector and the public sector, including community members and LGU staff, and was responsible for managing the overall planning process, as well as the integration of local planning efforts with established regional and national planning mechanisms.

The various committees would discuss and gather information on the current status of the community with regards to development issues and challenges associated with social services, land use and planning, institutional development, local economy, environment, public health, infrastructure, basic services, security, disaster management, culture, and sports.

They would prepare a community profile and descriptive report, and then hold a public strategic planning workshop to come to consensus on the community’s priority developmental issues and develop a collective community vision. Subsequent workshops would produce a Community Investment Plan and project matrix that translated the development issues and needs into projects to address those needs. The final step was to create a monitoring and evaluation plan to track SDIP progress and impact.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES**

LGI took 8 potential CGEs through the overall SDIP process during LGI (while other CGEs updated and applied the SDFs previously created under LDR).

The vulnerable communities identified for infrastructure interventions, however, went through a modified community planning process.

Many of those communities are much smaller, with fewer citizens, resources, and intersecting development needs. Nonetheless, every partner community undertook and inclusive strategic planning process that involved the first steps of the SDIP – including open community meetings and a visioning exercise, and forming committees to analyze and propose responsive development projects.

The result of these modified strategic planning processes were instead Five Year Community Infrastructure Plans, rather than full SDIPs. These infrastructure plans composed most of the packages of implemented under LGI.
Strategic Development Frameworks

During 2013, LGI supported 12 of its partner LGUs to reconcile their Strategic Development Frameworks (SDFs) with the SDIP manual and process now required of all LGUs by the MoLG. The SDFs were created in these 12 municipalities under Global Communities’ previous Local Democratic Reform (LDR) program between 2005 and 2011.

The SDFs apply a holistic, longer-term vision to the municipality’s strategic planning, creating a 20-year plan rather than the 5-year average of SDIPs. While SDIPs help identify and plan interventions and projects for sectoral-specific planning at the local level, the SDFs provided a broader picture of how local planning fits into regional considerations, with longer term strategic thrusts.

These planning processes are complementary, however, and LGI supported its partner municipalities to not only update their plans based on SDIP forms and templates, but also to produce action plans and monitoring and evaluation plans for the upcoming period (then 2013 – 2014). Each also produced a spatial description to complement the SDIP update, based on the long-term SDF information, and submitted these first to the local council, then to the community in public consultations, and finally to the MoLG for final approval.

Physical Planning

LGI also supported municipal governments in technical planning processes including zoning and land use practices, geographical and spatial data management, and streets and buildings coding and numbering systems.

Physical planning proposes a framework for optimal physical infrastructure in a municipality considering public services, transport, economic activities, recreation and environmental protection. The physical planning process in the West Bank also complemented LGUs’ SDIPs and contributed local input to the overall MoLG process for master and physical planning that was being conducted at the time.

Coordinating with the MoLG’s Urban Planning department, municipalities created local planning teams to manage the planning process, with LGI’s training and guidance. LGI conducted orientations and ongoing training with LGUs on implementing the terms of the MoLG’s Physical Planning Manual.

To create a Spatial Development Framework, each planning team first gathered basic planning information about the municipality, the surrounding area, major landmarks and resources, and current infrastructure. With LGI’s assistance, each LGU also prepared maps for the actual area that will be covered and current city boundaries, using aerial photography to ensure accuracy.

SDIPs fed directly into the spatial development framework for the future development of each community, applying the community’s developmental priorities, sectoral assessments, and opportunities for development. For example, if the spatial development plan sets out an industrial zone, SDIPs should align to relocate or build any new factories or vocational workshops to that zone.
The planning committee then publishes the spatial development framework, inviting public feedback and seeking LGU endorsement, before submission to the District Planning Commission and Higher Planning Council for approval.

Using the Spatial Development Framework, each LGU then created a land use plan that defines the planned future building and development, including zoning and building regulations, within their defined municipality area. The spatial development frameworks and land use plans were finalized and approved by the MoLG after extensive community consultations. Workshops were held to review development alternatives for land use, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each existing alternative. The resulting frameworks therefore enjoy a high level of citizen support in each municipality.

**Complementary Sectoral Plans**

LGI provided technical support to four partner LGUs – Al Bireh, Bethlehem, Beit Sahur, and Beit Jala – in the development of complementary sectoral plans for water, sanitation, power supply, transportation, housing, environment, tourism and cultural heritage. The detailed studies conducted in the development of these plans provided information about businesses, roads, vehicles, bottlenecks, environmental impact, among other issues. These complementary plans contribute to the overall SDIP and physical plan for each locality. LGI was the first to initiate such detailed, sectoral studies in municipalities in the West Bank.

**Spatial Data Management**

LGI also supported the adoption of a new Spatial Data Management and Administration/GIS system in 17 partner LGUs.

The municipal spatial data management and administration systems will eliminate the shortcomings of current municipal data scattering and fragmentation. The outcomes of these systems are a municipal GIS profile and database. The prerequisite for this intervention is a physical plan.

Each partner LGU participated in the development of a GIS profile for the municipality, including conducting required assessments to define needed tools, functions, and applications to be used and reflected in the GIS database. Each then also worked with LGI to design the base map and the GIS database.

Some partner LGUs also worked with LGI to design a web-based GIS application for the database, specifically those that worked toward becoming an e-municipality, given they have needed capacity and IT infrastructure. (See page 77 for more on the e-municipality)

This system is a major milestone in improving service delivery. It also facilitates staff’s ability to retrieve information or data. The system might need further development in the future; however, it currently serves the type of services provided by our municipality.”

—Dima Judeh, Al-Bireh municipality
Street Naming and Building Coding

As cities in the West Bank improve both their infrastructure and public systems, the coding and numbering of streets and buildings is the bridge that connects both types of development to help ensure the best possible service delivery to citizens. With 23 partner LGUs, LGI applied national coding approaches used by Palestinian telecommunications and postal authorities so that it will be consistent with the existing system. However, the existing system provides coding for large areas, much like zip codes in the US.

LGI’s coding and numbering of streets and buildings is more specific and will enhance service delivery in all sectors. For example, property will be identified by an exact address, not just the vicinity and/or name of the owner, which is important for land registration and property taxes. Planning and zoning for buildings, roads, electricity, water, and sewage will be improved and help enhance services. The coding and numbering will also provide more exact addresses which can shorten response times for emergency vehicles and ultimately save lives.

LGI conducted individual workshops for each LGU to explain the methodology, information needed from the municipalities, and the impact of the project. The team also explained the importance of forming local committees for coding and naming that consisted of the mayor and representatives of various ministries, the Land Authority, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and community members who are familiar with the city’s streets and neighborhoods.

The coding project was initiated after each partner LGU had completed its physical plan, but was often conducted in parallel to creating the municipality’s GIS profile and database.

LGI team following up on the installation of guideposts and welcome signs in Birzeit (left) and Al Bireh (right)
Al Bireh Land Use Plan

The Al Bireh municipality is a strong example of spatial planning for urban development in the West Bank. In late 2015, the Al Bireh municipality planning department hosted an inclusive gathering for representatives of the Ramallah and Al Bireh Chambers of Commerce, local institutions and community representatives, and the MoLG to discuss various development alternatives for the Al Bireh area. Based on detailed studies of nine main development sectors, the planning department proposed three developmental alternatives:

- **Alternative I**: Developing current built-up areas, considering nearby areas and gradually developing set city expansion areas;
- **Alternative II**: Developing the expansion areas to improve services and focus on social enhancement on local and regional levels; and
- **Alternative III**: Developing both existing built-up and expansion areas simultaneously with focus on commercial regions in both areas.

Participants rated the alternatives based on prospective impact and how it may support the Al Bireh municipality development goals, and ranked alternative two highest. The Al Bireh planning committee used this community feedback to review and finalize its physical plans and create an overall land use plan for the municipality.

Applying this new land use plan in an efficient way was the next challenge. The absence of an accurate and integrated database to enhance decision-making was identified as a weakness in Al Bireh’s LGU institutional strengthening plan. In the past, replying to request for data on land ownership, land use and infrastructure services took the engineering and planning departments a significant amount of time, also with a high margin of error. They only had an outdated database and sent surveyors to the field whenever they needed information about an area served by the municipality.

With the support of LGI, the Al Bireh municipality made significant strides in terms of physical planning when compared to other LGUs. Al Bireh applied a new GIS database for city mapping and planning, input into the Madinati System a web-based application to complement other municipality systems. The Madinati system can be further developed to further integrate into all other systems, resulting in a more flexible and dynamic application. The current scope of the application mainly serves the municipality to document, archive, and manage different processes provided by the municipality. This project is the first of its kind to be implemented in any municipality in the West Bank on such a large scale, covering three city blocks.
3.3 Institutional Development
Municipal Capacity Index, Municipal Strategic Corporate Plan

LGI worked hand in hand with local governments to strengthen their organization and operations as institutions. This institutional development approach built sustainable change into local government units by putting them in charge of their own progress toward becoming a Center for Governance Excellence. But in practical terms, how does one know when government capacity is really strengthened? How can local government units (LGUs, or municipalities and village councils), and most importantly citizens, tell if their local government’s performance is actually improving? Global Communities translated its Governance Excellence model into a Municipal Capacity Index (MCI), as a tool that allows LGUs to measure their own capacity, and help show trends in their performance.

LGI customized the MCI to the political and governance context of the West Bank, defining nine core competencies under the three main local government functions: leadership, community participation, and management of service delivery. In each category, the MCI set indicators, with benchmarks for success, across which LGUs could rate their performance and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Each local government conducted its own municipal capacity review, rating its own performance based on a Participatory Performance Management (PPM) scoring tool created by LGI. Conducting an institutional self-assessment ignited ownership of the process among LGU staff and leaders. In 2013, LGI partner municipalities used the MCI to set a baseline value of their performance and capacity, against which future improvements were measured during the program. Beyond program impact evaluation, however, the self-assessment tool that was introduced, conducted and managed by the municipality itself provided a sustainable way for LGUs to continue their institutional development assessment process beyond the life of LGI.

For example, some MCI assessments in subsequent years of the program saw ratings go down in some of the competencies, which was in fact a demonstration of a fuller understanding among LGU staff of what their capacity levels were and the potential for improvement. Going through that learning process allowed them to recognize what works and take full responsibility for their development needs, rather than being told by external evaluators how they were performing.

These self-assessments also defined individualized institutional needs for each LGU, which manifested in a Municipal Strategic Corporate Plan (MSCP) that determines the improvement measures required for each area of institutional development need. The MSCP is based on the scores of the MCI self-assessment and informs the areas where LGI or others should

### LGI MCI CORE COMPETENCIES

1. **Leadership**
   - b. People management.
   - c. Communication.

2. **Management of Service Delivery**
   - a. Planning and review.
   - b. Innovation and change.
   - c. Service management.
   - d. Resource/assets management.

3. **Community participation**
   - a. Citizen participation.
   - b. Alliance building.
intervene in order to promote Governance Excellence. The MSCP focuses on the enhancement of the LGU as an institution and its ability to implement the SDIPs created with community engagement.

Each MSCP included institutional development goals and measures for one year. Partner LGUs created an institutional development committee to work with LGI on an annual review of the MCI and MSCP. Consultations were held in each LGU to discuss their progress in implementing the MSCP on an annual basis. For example, the MCI assessments conducted in 2014 found an ongoing need for support in sustaining clear Human Resources policies and procedures, in addition to the HRMIS system LGI had provided in 26 LGUs. (See section 3.3.3 for more information.) LGI activities in response emphasized the development of municipal staff skills to design and implement clear HR systems to promote sustainability of the initiatives within the LGUs.

Examples of concrete progress based on the MSCPs and measured by the MCI abound throughout LGI. For instance, in Anabta, the MCSP assisted the municipality in developing clear policies for each department and unit. The departmental policies set out clear guidance for staff, provided necessary resources, and defined unit goals. Communication between departments improved as a result of regular coordination meetings. Staff satisfaction increased, resulting in positive behavior with citizens. The local council began to document its meetings with formal and public minutes to keep the public informed of their deliberations on the municipality’s priorities.

“The institutional development plan is the compass that allows any municipality to identify its staffing, internal environment, requirements, programs, and trainings. It also enhances citizens’ satisfaction through the provision of services in a quick, just, and transparent manner. Moreover, citizens become more aware of the municipality’s financial and administrative situation. In our case, the plan made us think seriously of reconsidering the fees for various services in order to overcome the financial difficulties. We are now considering building partnerships with local and international organizations, and we plan to involve the local community in the updating of the plan.”

—Tahseen Abdel Dayem, Administration Manager, Anabta

In Jenin, the local council installed a complaint box for citizens, which decreased the burden on the mayor of receiving daily visitors for complaints and questions. In Aqraba, the local council re-activated the LGU website. There are countless examples of immediate steps taken by local government units to improve its capacity and performance based on the identified needs and issues listed within MSCPs, some small and some large, but all intended to provide more responsive and transparent governance for citizens.
3.3.1: Municipal Capacity Index Scores Change Over Time

Municipalities conducted a self-assessment to determine their MCI score annually, in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 during the program. (Only 11 of the 28 CGEs participated in MCI assessments as program activities scaled back toward close out in 2016.)

Through a participatory self-assessment, the MCI collected information on the performance and capacity of each LGU in the nine core competencies defined in LGI’s Governance Excellence model.

Each year, MCI results were used to identify interventions and support for the coming year’s annual implementation plan. For example, the need for stronger application of new HR policies in partner LGUs, and measures to more fully integrate the HRMIS system into existing practices were a critical finding in several of the 2014 MCI self-assessments. Therefore, LGI geared its assistance in 2015 toward strengthening municipal staff skills in using the HRMIS system and troubleshooting issues within the HR manual to ensure the sustainability of the new system. As a result of this focus, 25 of the 28 partner LGUs saw significant increases in their scores in the People Management competency of the MCI.

In the 2014 MCI scores, there were noticeable improvements in the three areas of the local governance excellence model – leadership, management of service delivery, and public participation. LGI witnessed the largest growth in the leadership category, given the program’s focus on developing leadership through planning and engagement, and creating SDIPs in the first years of the program. LGU management also enjoyed significant new leadership tools with the strategic plans in place, new human resources tools and practices, and communication protocols.
Anabta, a city located in Tulkarm Governorate in northern West Bank, has been a key partner of Global Communities for more than five years. The LGU first partnered with Global Communities under the Local Democratic Reform to construct a scientific park and establish a Youth Shadow Local Council.

Under LGI, Global Communities provided a suite of governance support interventions throughout the program, including support to develop in 2011 and update in 2013 its comprehensive Strategic Development and Investment Plan (SDIP). In addition to the Citizen Service Center (CSC), which LGI helped open in August 2013, the program also helped the municipality through physical planning, provided a new HR procedures manual and job descriptions, and installed the HRMIS human resources management system.

To identify the areas of most urgent need, for which Global Communities could provide assistance and the municipality could conduct targeted capacity improvement efforts, Anabta conducted a self-assessment using the PPM tool for the Municipal Capacity Index.

The self-assessment tool that is part of the MCI process was not taken lightly by Anabta’s LGU. According to Tahseen Abdel Dayem, Administrative Manager, “The data collection phase lasted for more than one week. It involved all department heads and staff, as well as council members, who displayed outstanding efforts, honesty, loyalty, and integrity in identifying key strengths and weakness.”

He also added “Clearly, there was a noticeable level of transparency and accountability even when the indicators revolved around scoring the performance of the council members. When the institutional development committee felt that the score should be zero, for example, they were not hesitant to express their opinions before the Mayor or other local council members.”

The overall self-assessment score of Anabta LGU was 37.3%. This was a shocking indicator to all stakeholders; yet it also drove the municipality to focus on improving its performance. Immediately after finalizing the assessment, Anabta’s Mayor and council members began taking incremental steps to improve performance. These measures included major process changes with the newly opened CSC to improve service delivery and responsiveness to citizens, as well as business process restructuring in human resources, public procurements, internal audits, and citizen participation.

Under the leadership and management competency area, the LGU began holding regular meetings for department heads. They began documenting meeting minutes, circulating to all attendees, and archiving them. Action points are now regularly followed up by concerned parties. Additionally, the LGU now holds regular open meetings with the local community to share the LGU’s future plans. In the past, the LGU would consult the local community only during a crisis. This has strengthened the relationship between citizens and LGU staff, and built trust in each other’s capacity. The nature of the meetings also became more consultative rather than instructional.

In service delivery, the CSC resulted in revised service processes, producing clearer procedures and enabling the LGU to relocate staff where needed. The LGU was facing challenges in hiring skilled staff due to financial constraints, and the CSC work process improvements allowed relocating existing staff to increase their efficiency and delivery. The phenomenon of citizens approaching the Mayor directly with service requests decreased dramatically after opening the CSC. This also improved overall efficiency in setting clear roles and procedures for processing service requests.

The new HRMIS system eased HR services processing requirements, and facilitated the ability of employees to access their personal data. Moreover, following the installment of the HR system employees now submit their annual leave requests online. Many staff members are now requesting training courses to enhance their computer skills. Accordingly, the LGU began holding training courses for its staff.

After several years of investment, hard work, and changes, the Anabta municipality was able to increase its MCI score from 37.3% to 51 percent in 2016.
3.3.2: Business Restructuring and Process Improvements

LGi’s institutional development interventions build the capacity of local government entities to identify, prioritize, plan, and address opportunities to improve internal operations and citizen service delivery. Addressing the needs and concerns of citizens is a powerful, positive demonstration that citizen voices are heard and heeded by decision makers.

LGi helped partner LGUs improve existing or apply new practices on a spectrum of government business operations and public service issues. LGUs worked with Global Communities to redesign their internal management structure, processes and work flow to help them accommodate and sustain new processes and tools introduced by LGi. The assistance was tailored to each LGU’s specific needs based on the self-assessments and resulting MSCPs, described above.

In some LGUs, Global Communities supported a complete overhaul of all existing processes – developing new manuals, analyzing and improving workflows and tracking systems, and providing tools for better management. In other municipalities, LGi only reviewed and suggested improvements to certain areas.

In 14 municipalities, LGi constructed Citizen Service Centers (CSCs), which literally changed the entire structure of how those LGUs worked! In 4 large municipalities, LGi launched an e-Municipality system that allows citizens to access every aspect of its government electronically, and allows LGU staff to efficiently manage their operations with new electronic and web-based systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Process Targeted</th>
<th># of LGUs</th>
<th>Intervention and Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Customized Human Resources manuals per LGU, in accordance with MoLG and local regulations, and automated Human Resource and Payroll Management Information System (HRMIS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>MoLG endorsed Public Procurement Manual, with customized versions per LGU, including specific forms. Procurement databases provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Asset Registration and Valuation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Support to LGUs with Fixed Asset Registration and Valuation (FARV) mapping and Fixed Assets Valuation Schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Audit</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>MoLG endorsed Internal Audit Manual; established internal audit unit or function in LGU and/or local council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Outreach</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>LGU-specific Public Outreach and Notification Policies and Communications Plans created and applied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procurement Processes

Public procurement is an important government responsibility that can often be threatened by corruption when clear and transparent procedures are not put in place. Transparency in procurement decisions and processes builds public confidence in how government works and that decisions are being made in citizens’ interests.

Under LGI, 26 partner LGUs developed customized procurement procedures in line with the MoLG’s legal framework and best practices in the procurement field. The new procedures will streamline the procurement process and ensure transparency and accountability. LGI also provided LGUs with automated procurement database to facilitate the tracking, retrieving, and generation of reports.

Developing procurement procedures for Attil municipality was a major milestone for its work. In the past, needed materials were procured either over the phone or from the nearest vendor without paying attention to variables such as quality or cost. After applying the manual, tenders released by the LGU do not just evaluate the financial element of tenders, rather taking into consideration the technical specifications in order to guarantee the purchasing of best quality for cost.

In many municipalities, one of the major impacts has been the shift from procuring items over the phone to following the procedures and documentation requirements in the procurement manuals. In Aqraba, Ar Ram, Jericho, and Qalqiliya, LGU staff and leaders reflected on how much this simple change has enhanced the sense of integrity, transparency, and accountability at all levels. As a result, for example in Ar Ram, this led to more accurate data and results received by the finance department for final review and audit. Specifically, comments normally received by the Bureau of Administrative and Financial Audit, as well as MoLG’s Guidance and Monitoring Directorate significantly decreased. The MoLG’s audit visits used to last for 4 or 5 days, but in 2016 it took only one day.

Another important result of the new procurement procedures was the advent of annual procurement plans in accordance with the annual municipality budgets. The Adh Dhahiriya municipality created its first ever procurement plan in 2015, and found that this enabled the municipality to identify anticipated expenses, and better define budget items. Similarly, in Ar Ram, the procurement plan enhanced the municipality’s commitment to stick to its budget and financial targets, which led to a decrease in deviation.

LGI collected and analyzed data on the procurement processes and workflows in each LGU. Reports on each LGU included assessment findings, challenges, and development opportunities. Using this data, LGI created local government procurement manuals, customized for each LGU, taking

—Fathi Sayeh, Procurement and Tendering Committee, Aqraba

—Ahmad Al Khatib, Finance Manager, Ar Ram Municipality.

—Mujahed Al Tul. Procurement and Purchasing Manager, Adh Dhahiriya
into consideration differences between target municipalities in terms of size, classification, scope of work, available human resources, size of procured services and commodities, work flow, and institutional capacity.

Moreover, LGI conducted workshops for relevant procurement and financial staff from the targeted LGUs to present and review the public procurement procedures and templates. This included the procurement planning cycle and how it impacts the municipality’s annual budget. Participants went through the standard procurement procedures developed for each category of LGU (A, B, C, D, and E), and provided and feedback that was used to revise the standard procedures and produce customized versions, including forms and templates for each respective LGU.

**Human Resources Management**

LGI’s support to LGUs on human resources management led local governments to begin viewing their staff as resources to be invested in. New human resources procedures resulted in more accountability among staff and supervisors, enabling data collection and more effective tracking of employee attendance and performance.

LGI conducted an assessment of human resources practices in local governments, and created a standard manual in line with the legal framework, including MoLG regulations, the Labor Law, and Civil Servants Laws. With input from the LGU staff in each municipality, LGI then created tailored manuals, along with all the necessary forms and templates to be used as the basis for developing the HRMIS system. (Qablan and Nablus developed their own manuals.)

LGI provided 26 potential CGEs (of 27, excluded Hebron) an automated Human Resource and Payroll Management Information System (HRMIS) to improve their HR operations. This new system improves HR operations and reduces total operating costs, as well as improving responsiveness, accuracy and control of HR operations and functions. The HRMIS was also designed to integrate the payroll system with the unified financial system that is to be rolled out by the MDLF. (Salfit already has an upgraded system; and Nablus already has a system in place.)

The electronic Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) was comprised of:

- Payroll system including allowances and deductions,
- attendance management, leaves and annual vacations,
- recruitment and applications processing,
- appraisal management,
- employees’ profiles, training and staff development, and
- E-services for staff.

LGI trained LGU staff on the utilization of the HRMIS, covering all modules of the software to ensure that all LGUs have entered and reviewed the employees’ data and parameters. LGI provided ongoing training to ensure LGUs were effectively utilizing the system in processing the various HR transactions and in processing the monthly payroll. The testing and debugging of the software was conducted simultaneously with implementation.

> Nablus municipality believes that enhancing the skills of its employees is a critical factor for creating a modern institution. As such, the municipality adopted a comprehensive plan to train staff in various departments and units in coordination with local and international institutions, namely, Global Communities.”

—Sa’d Salim, Council member

> Prior to the development of the HR procedures, pulling out vacation balance required extensive time and effort as a result of having to go back to several files. Following the installation of the system, the process, now takes few seconds and in a push of one button. Add to that, all employees can individually pull out their vacation balance.”

—Nizar Al Atrash, IT Officer, Halhul Municipality

> The HR manual and HRMIS is a symbol for transparency in terms of the institutionalization of policies and procedures, such as, vacations, merit increases, salaries, and capacity building needs. This will ensure retention among qualified staff and will encourage positive competition among employees.”

—Susan Al Hathweh, CSC Manager, Beit Jala
TULKARM MUNICIPALITY: Human Resources Process Restructuring

In Tulkarm, the new HRMIS system demonstrated how the municipality was able to synchronize its work procedures across the HR, IT, Finance, and Administration systems to eliminate manual processes and support the municipality’s vision of a paperless, automated operation. The new system actually re-engineered organizational processes, maximizing employee performance and productivity and managing transformation and change across the board.

Before LGI’s intervention, Tulkarm municipality used an old HR system installed in 1992. The system was very limited, and used only for salary calculations. It could not show cumulative employee data, and deductions from salaries for loans, electricity or water bills, and vacations were done manually. For example, for overtime hours, a supervisor used to check the employee’s daily rate, and calculate overtime manually, which was subject to frequent human error. Moreover, the old system was not equipped to calculate the income tax based on the Palestinian system.

The HRMIS was installed across all departments and units, and all LGU staff (not only the human resources department) was trained and has been using the system since early 2014. Much focus was put on training staff on how to utilize the system for routine human resources requests, including submitting leave requests, reporting work hours, and checking salary slips. Now, current salary information, leave request, vacations, as well as personal employee data is available in one place.

Before, the municipality did not have reliable data, and was unable to verify the data given the lack of documentation. In a manual system, following up on the attendance of over 500 employees was nearly impossible. Gathering daily attendance sheets used to take hours and finalizing timesheets for employees used to take at least ten days at the end of each month, with HR staff manually collecting data from different departments and field offices.

LGI provided the municipality with 18 time clocks for the various departments. This eased the tracking of employees’ time, and controlling the attendance of laborers who work at water wells became manageable and more efficient. These time clocks were integrated into the HRMIS payroll system and allowed for easy tracking of employee attendance and calculations for salaries.

The LGU headed by its council members put extreme efforts in introducing this new technology to employees. Not only that, but the council members’ buy-in led them to spend great time with employees to convince them about the vitality of this new system and the positive results it will yield in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, accuracy, and transparency.

The municipality did not have any standardized performance evaluation forms or processes. The employee would get annual increments based on their years of service regardless of their actual performance. It was like a given right for the employee. At the instruction of the mayor, and with LGI’s new HR manuals in place, the municipality developed job descriptions for each employee and instituted new services for recruitment and performance management.

“Department Heads are the same, they didn’t change. What changed is their behavior in terms of seeing improvements and wanting to enhance performance. The council members’ commitment and belief is the main reason for where we are now.”

—Islam Yaseen, Human Resource Manager, Tulkarm Municipality
The HR manual and the HRMIS for Ar Ram positively impacted the municipality’s internal functions especially within the Administrative and Finance departments. In the past, the process of paying salaries was done manually and used to take a lot of time and effort. Preparing salaries used to take up to seven working days. Today, salary preparation takes about three hours. HR reports are generated instantly when requested, and manual errors have been eliminated. In the past, a large number of employees would appeal to the municipal director due to errors found in their salary slips. Following the installation of the system, there are zero errors.

The new HR manual and system increased employees’ productivity and efficiency levels, and expedited the ability to respond to employees’ requests. It also contributed to controlling HR procedures in a way that would guarantee transparency when dealing with various employees, recruiting qualified staff, as well as the presence of evaluation criteria that helps motivate employees to improve their performance in a way that would increase their chances to be promoted.

Ar Ram’s successful implementation of the new HRMIS system did not occur without challenges. For example, the finance department disagreed that salaries should be prepared by the HR department. However, the municipal director and Ar Ram council members held several awareness sessions between both departments to explain how the new mechanism will result in enhancing the work in both departments and will ensure additional effectiveness and efficiency.

Some municipalities also faced resistance from employees, especially technical staff and laborers, who were not happy about the concept of signing in and out using the time clock. Any delay in reporting to work would be deducted from their annual leave, which was a new concept in this more accountable system for employee management. However, municipality staff was firm and put in significant effort to convince employees of the benefits of the new system. In Ar Ram for example, after a year of using the system, fewer employees were coming in late, and there was a sense of higher commitment among the majority of employees.
Fixed Asset Registration and Valuation

An important prerequisite for the implementation of transparent and effective financial management is the clear registration of the assets owned and managed by the local government unit. LGI focused support to select LGUs in this area to help them prepare for future integration into a new financial management system.

The MoLG and MDLF had been pursuing efforts to implement a unified financial management system in all LGUs, to improve efficiency and so that financial data can be integrated across the West Bank. These measures, when fully implemented, will increase transparency and accuracy, and reduce the time and effort in processing financial transactions, as well as enhance the capacity of partner LGUs to respond to internal and external requests coming from other departments and citizens.

In advance of the approval of a fully integrated financial system, LGI supported three LGUs (Aqqraba, Halhoul, and Attil) to complete the Fixed Assets Registration and Valuation (FARV) mapping, which is a prerequisite in the MDLF’s planned unified system. Global Communities worked with LGU staff to better understand the methodology, and collect and compile data on current fixed assets in each targeted community. These assets include land, roads, culverts, water systems, wastewater treatment, electrical systems, social assets, heritage assets, investment assets, buildings, schools, vehicles, IT assets, retaining walls, road signs, and furniture.

In the past, allocating fixed assets, especially during the preparation of the annual budget, was a tedious and complicated process due to the absence of sound systems and clear criteria. The allocation was also limited to the registration of buildings and major facilities, only developing rough estimates for the cost of those buildings.

LGI supported the LGUs with ongoing physical site inspections and valuation to determine the year of acquisition of registered fixed assets and ensure they are in line with the estimated useful life. LGI developed a Fixed Assets Valuation Schedule with each targeted LGU for approval, and provided training for related LGU staff on maintaining and updating their Fixed Assets registers. After LGI’s support, the LGUs had realistic numbers and assets based on international criteria. Moreover, the LGU staff had acquired the necessary skills to conduct the process independently in the future. The council members’ active participation contributed to expedite the data entry, evaluation, and endorsement of the results.

The registration and valuation of fixed assets enabled the LGUs to come up with actual values within their budgets. This expedite the MoLG endorsement, and assist the LGUs to move up a category within the MDLF, which will ultimately result in increasing the LGU’s funding allocation.

“This intervention will allow the council to intervene in due time to maintain the assets market value and sustainability.”
—Mohammad Fatafta, Head of Engineering Department, Illar LGU. Sa’d Salim, Council member

“Knowing the actual value of our water project will allow us to put forth future plans for maintenance of the water network, pumps, and tanks.”
—Manal Qashou’, Head of Water Department
Internal Audit Functions

Most municipalities in the West Bank did not previously have an internal control or audit unit as part of the LGU institutional set up. With MoLG endorsement of the concept introduced in its 2011 policy paper, Guiding and Monitoring LGU Affairs, Global Communities supported the establishment of this function in 27 partner LGUs.

LGI developed an Internal Audit Manual in 2013 that was endorsed by the MoLG, and then rolled out to partner LGUs with orientation sessions and extensive staff training. LGI worked on creating a shared understanding of the components and function of an internal audit system that responds to the specifics of the Palestinian context, including the differences between LGUs size, classification, available human resources, and institutional capacity.

LGI supported partner LGUs in ensuring the institutionalization and sustainability of the internal audit function, providing newly established internal control units with needed resources, adopting relevant internal control recommendations, and facilitating communication with other departments to streamline the work of the internal control staff.

LGI analyzed current internal audit processes and capacities in each targeted LGU to identify the main challenges and opportunities for the improvement of internal audit processes. LGI then proposed a plan for each LGU to develop the internal audit function/unit, taking into consideration the standard organizational structure and the internal audit manual, as well as the variations between the LGU’s internal audit scope in terms of their organizational structures, job descriptions, and distribution of work.

Following the assessments, LGI held centralized workshops targeting internal audit staff from partner LGUs and internal control council committees on the instruments and tools in the Internal Audit Manual. Workshops included practical cases to demonstrate auditing technical, financial, and administrative functions of the LGU, and preparing audit reports, as well as the roles and responsibilities of related stakeholders, including the council internal control committee. These workshops assisted each LGU in identifying the necessary competencies for recruiting relevant internal audit staff.

LGI team continued support through reviewing and refining the existing internal audit systems and practices in the targeted LGUs. In addition, LGI provided technical assistance and guidance to help the LGUs overcome main challenges and enhance staff capacities, and also to identify opportunities for internal audit processes improvement in each LGU.
Public Notification Policies

LGI team supported partner LGUs in developing public notification and disclosure policies in line with the Policy Paper and Community Participation Manual issued by the MoLG. These documents aim to strengthen the relationship, partnership, and communications between LGUs and their respective communities.

With each municipality, LGI reviewed and assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of current public notification policies, and the tools currently in use. Global Communities conducted workshops for broad types of LGU staff to discuss current practices, and determine what approaches would work best in LGU public notification policies. With LGI support, each LGU then prepared drafts of proposed public notification policies, and prepared related communication plans.

The most important impact resulting from the public notification policies was that public notification and communication with the community became regular and institutionalized. In the past, LGUs would have an unstructured and occasional approach to public notices, based on what the PR department deemed necessary, rather than a holistic plan.

For example, Ar Ram had a strong track record of transparency and communication with its citizens. However, this was done in an unstructured manner. The public notification policy allowed for a systematic mechanism where the LGU constantly communicates its planned activities, budget, and planned projects to the public. As a result, there was a significant increase in attendance at Ar Ram's community activities, including more than 70 community members at an event to launch the CSC manual, and more than 100 community members attending a public meeting on accountability.

The public notification policy and communication plan were implemented in a comprehensive way in Bir Zeit municipality. The CSC manager routinely collects information from the various departments to publish on the municipality’s website and Facebook page. At first, employees resisted this new approach, fearing that it would create problems or negative feedback from the community. However, the local council held a number of meetings with employees to explain the public notification policy and underscore the value of constant communication with citizens. Currently, Bir Zeit publishes its news, reports, plans, and activities regularly, resulting in a stronger relationship between the LGU and local community. For example, there have been larger numbers of citizens participating in the LGU’s public meetings and the number of reaches on the municipality's Facebook page has also increased.

In Kufr Thulth, the public notification policy also created a noticeable increase in the number of participants at activities and public meetings. Most notably, however, was the jump in the number of followers on the municipality’s Facebook page from 500 to more than 5,000 in less than a year. Moreover, the public notification plan contributed to enhancing the municipality’s MDLF classification, which can result in an increase in public funds allocation.

"The main departments that benefited from the public notification policy are the engineering, health, and water departments. They are responsible for implementing infrastructure and field projects; hence, they have direct relationships with citizens."

—Mayada Al Baou, Accountant, Halhul municipality

"Before the CSC we used to wait for long time to process any service. It was also difficult for the employees to manage the service application besides their daily work at the municipality. The establishment of Al Bireh CSC significantly facilitated service application process and saved our time and effort."

—Ahmed Al Taweel, a Citizen in Al Bireh
3.3.3: Citizen Service Centers (CSCs)

Citizen Service Centers (CSCs) are a key accomplishment of the LGI program, resulting in better managed, more responsive, and more efficient public services for Palestinian citizens.

Citizen Service Centers are centralized locations at which citizens can access a variety of vital services and engage with their local municipality. More than just a building, the CSC is also equipped with modern equipment and management information solution enabling fully automated records management and service delivery. In addition, Global Communities supported municipalities in streamlining their procedures before the CSCs were opened to ensure the greatest possible efficiency and reduced time spent by citizens and staff processing requests. To this end, LGI deployed an Electronic Document and Record Management Information System (EDRMS) in CSCs to support more efficient data management and the automation of service delivery.

Fourteen CSCs were established under LGI, and the improvement and automation of service delivery through business process restructuring continued in 14 more where 13 CSCs had previously been established under Global Communities’ LDR program.

LGI conducted routine evaluations of the effectiveness and sustainability of the CSCs established through the program. Some common themes emerged in these evaluations, showing an increase in staff productivity, more efficient operations, and higher interest and confidence among citizens.

In almost every CSC, one of the largest impacts was how the functionality of the EDRMS changed the way LGU staff worked, together and with citizens. CSC staff demonstrated high levels of competency in mastering the EDRMS, and municipal staff embraced the new CSC workflows.

Some of the key common findings were:

- **A reduction in the time spent for service delivery**: CSCs improved the quality of provided services to citizens. There is a noticeable decrease in time spent in service transactions, which used to take months before employing the new integrated computerized systems and workflow procedures. Furthermore, mobile message services update citizens about the status of their service applications and payments, which saves them time and effort in following up on transactions.

- **Increase in number of provided services**: Several newly established CSCs used the new service management systems and more efficient procedures to expand the services they could offer. Several began partnering with other local service providers and companies, expanding their offerings to include such things as payment processing for electricity recharge and water bills. This saves citizens time and effort with integrated services in one place.

- **An enhanced level of productivity, accountability and transparency among employees**: The EDRMS systematized employees’ time and work. The EDRMS generates regular reports regarding the status of all service applications including late and unprocessed services, which assists in services management and follow-up. Moreover,

Before this project, I was totally dependent on my family members. Despite the fact that I’m still dependent in many issues, now I can manage paying bills and attending public meetings like this focus group. I feel productive now.”

—Hanan Amer, a citizen with disability from Illar

The beginning was difficult but the culture among citizens is changing. Currently, citizens no longer have to go to the Mayor or other departments to ask for services. The CSC eased the pressure on them by more than 90%. In addition, training employees also helped in enhancing the understanding of the importance of the CSC in improving and enhancing service delivery.”

—Mr. Thabet Nimmari, CSC Director, ‘Anabta Ahmed Al Taweel, a Citizen in Al Bireh
customer complaints are addressed through the CSC with high level of transparency and in a systematic way. All of this contributes to higher productivity, efficiency, and sense of accountability among employees.

- **An Increase in the number of female citizens and PWDs visiting the CSC:** According to CSC staff, the location and comfortable environments in the newly established CSCs encourage many females to visit the building to find services. Moreover, the CSC considered ease of access for people with disabilities by having an external ramp at the entrance.

- **Changes in cultural behavior:** The CSCs resulted in a positive cultural shift among citizens and employees. Citizens showed a higher level of trust regarding service delivery by embracing the CSC concept. In many municipalities, citizens simply appealed to the mayor’s office to get any requests or complaints addressed. This has changed in most municipalities. Employees responded to citizen demand by effectively implementing the new workflows in the CSC and providing quick, quality service. **Not all employees were open to wholesale change immediately, but most adjusted well given the high levels of commitment from municipality leadership, intensive skills and on-the-job-training from LGI, and the tailored solutions in workflows that met their needs and automated systems that made their jobs easier. Normally, such a cultural shift in understanding, norms, and practice requires a long time, especially when introducing new concepts, ideas, and systems. However, this change materialized in a relatively short period of time in the majority of CSCs.**

- **Municipal councils enabled to focus on developmental issues:** The municipality management team and council members no longer receive service applications directly from citizens. Therefore, they have more time to focus on the municipality’s long-term development plans. Additionally, the regular EDRMS reports enable council members to better oversee the service delivery process and work on enhancing the quality of services provided in their municipality.

In the 14 municipalities with CSCs, Citizens report a 19% decrease in the time it takes to receive services. Overall, there was a significant decrease in time it took to complete services among CSCs measured.

"More women feel comfortable today to visit the CSC given it has open space, other female staff welcoming them. Women now come to the CSC to apply for permits as well. The CSC allowed females who face hardship to visit and explain in privacy their situation, which in turn, we transfer it to the public relations department. In the past, the woman would come in and have to explain her situation in front of a crowd of people."

—Suhad Rabba’, Engineering Department Head at Adh Dhahirieh LGU
EDRMS

The EDRMS was designed to be integrated within existing LGU infrastructure and to seamlessly support ongoing business processes and improve service delivery to citizens. LGI realized the importance of having a solution that was easy to use, as well as easily integrated with current LGU applications and databases. This ensured that the implementation of the EDRMS would minimize the burden on LGU staff, and only change the daily work of users for the better.

In addition to record and document management in existing LGU offices, the EDRMS has the functionality to manage operations in a modern CSC where citizens have only a single point of contact with the municipality. LGU staff are able to access electronic templates to compile daily documents or reports, as well as follow cases and track the current status of any active document or issue. In addition to the above, the EDRMS will add the following functionality and benefits within each targeted LGU:

- Case management: A system that provides the ability to manage the services provided by the municipality to its citizens. This system will help the LGU staff in assessing, planning, coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the sequence of services and resources to respond to citizen requests.

- Workflow management: In the EDRMS, workflow will be used to move electronic files, documents, and records between users, departments and application programs in relation to citizen services.

- Oversight and Efficiency: EDRMS will increase effective monitoring as the system provides automatic checks for atypical conditions, enhanced transparency and communication, increased staff productivity.

—Aisha Thawabteh, CSC employee, Beit Fajjar
Al Bireh’s CSC Makes Services and Municipal Planning More Efficient

Al Bireh is a large urban municipality that serves a high number of citizens, and coordinates services with neighboring Ramallah and Betunia. Automation of the service delivery and citizen request processing is key for such a large and complex municipality. LGI helped open the CSC in Al Bireh, providing all the necessary IT equipment, the EDRMS for service processing, and the Madinati system for GIS tracking of municipal services and physical and land use plans.

Formerly, the municipality accepted service requests through a help desk managed by two employees in the municipal building entrance hall. Those employees provided guidance to citizens regarding service applications and service requests, but only kept paper records of their work. Citizens used to follow up on their application by physically visiting several departments, resulting in wasted time and effort for both citizens and municipal staff. Now, the new CSC provides services in one stop, with a well-designed and furnished space that provides comfortable atmosphere and easily accessible information for citizens.

The council members are very satisfied with the level of professionalism in the CSC, they believe that citizen’s financial debts can be better addressed given the new workflow and systems: «In the past, social considerations and lack of documented proof limited us from litigating citizens who aren’t in need and have accumulated debts. Nowadays, and through the new CSC, we hired a lawyer who is following up on these cases in court supported by official reports generated from our EDRMS.» Said Jamal Shlataf, an Al Bireh Council member.

The number of services provided through the CSC has increased from seven to twelve now that the CSC has opened. Some of these services, such as building licenses and land use certificates, are integrated into the CSC system through the Madinati GIS software.

Because municipality financial systems set by the MoLG are not yet incompatible with the new features of the EDRMS, Al Bireh (and many other municipalities) open a fees collection department help desk in the CSC. This provide financial services directly to citizens at the one-stop shop, in-line with other services provided through the EDRMS. For example, citizens first check their debts through the financial services help desk before applying for a clearance certificate. The next step would be to integrate the EDRMS system with updated financial systems and software.

I’m a businessman working in Al Bireh. In the past, I used to send one of my employees to submit certain service requests. This used to take two or three visits to the municipality, running between different departments to finalize it. In the new CSC, I easily submit a service request by myself. The request is either completed instantly or I am given an exact date to return and receive the service. I’m gratified with this professional and effective way of work that saves my time and effort.”
3.3.5: e-Municipality

LGI was a driving force behind the concept of the e-Municipality in the West Bank. With ongoing coordination between national and local government representatives, LGI built interest in and commitment to the concept throughout the program duration.

As a result, four municipalities in the West Bank – Tulkarm, Jericho, Al Bireh, and Bethlehem – are now fully functional e-Municipalities. Citizens are now able to create online profiles, access information about their property and services, request information or assistance, and make online payments.

The e-Municipality solution helps to improve efficiency and quality of services in LGUs, and can reduce the cost and efforts for both citizens and municipalities. It also enhances efficiency and oversight of service delivery by improving transparency and accountability inside the municipality and increasing citizen engagement in the municipal decision-making.

Laying the Foundation

The e-Municipality approach built on LGI’s overall local governance support provided to partner LGUs, including the automation of service delivery, CSCs, GIS systems, and IT infrastructure upgrades.

In a series of consultations, workshops and conferences in 2014 and 2015, LGI worked with the MoLG and interested local government representatives to launch and apply a national strategic framework for the e-Municipality concept. LGI also supported Ministry leadership to participate in a study mission to Malaysia to learn about their approach to electronic solutions in governance.

LGI worked with national and local stakeholders to prepare the e-Municipality Implementation Strategy and Roadmap on the national level, which outlines the main elements of the implementation phases and describes each of the modules required to help targeted LGUs become e-Municipalities.

FOUR LEVELS OF AN E-MUNICIPALITY

1. Disseminate information: Provide citizens with information and data, including reports, meeting minutes, procurement data, projects, budgets, audit reports, procedures, service fees, etc.

2. One-way transactions: Receive citizen requests through a service portal to be processed and delivered to citizens through the CSC.

3. Interactional: Supports 2-way interactions through the internet between citizens and the municipality, with the ability to get feedback online.

4. Transactional and Integration: supports full service transactions including billing and payment modules through the e-municipality portal, beside the ability to integrate other institutions and departments in the portal.

STUDY MISSION MALAYSIA

LGI conducted a study visit to Malaysia in June 2013 for the Director General of Management Information Systems at the MoLG. The mission visited Kuala Lumpur for meetings and site visits, including the Malaysian Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the Prime Minister’s Office, and two municipalities. The purpose was to learn more about the ICT standards and strategy adopted by the Malaysian Government, explore the possibilities of benefiting from their experience in this field.
Deploying the System

Throughout 2016, LGI worked intensively with the four target municipalities on integrating the e-Municipality portal design with existing information management systems, and on system deployment.

Partner LGUs identified the infrastructure needed to operate e-Municipality systems including electrical networks, servers, firewall, operating systems, and technical staff.

In mid-2016, LGI completed the development and deployment of the beta version of the e-Municipality solutions, installing the system on the servers of the four target LGUs. After installing the e-Municipality solution, developing portals and conducting an orientation workshop, LGI handed the four municipalities the user manual, administrator manual and citizen guide manual.

LGI conducted follow-on training for the partner LGUs on the administration and operation of the e-Municipality solution on how to operate the tools, service delivery through the municipality website, online payments, security and privacy, and the impact of utilizing this system on enhancing transparency in service delivery.

LGI launched the E-municipality project in the four partner LGUs by the end 2016. A fully functional E-municipality solution is currently operational through the web portals in these targeted LGUs. Citizens are able to register, and once their profiles are checked and approved, they are able to apply for various services through the portals. The system includes an e-payment module to process electronic payments for citizens.

After installing the firewalls and security system, LGI guaranteed the LGUs three years of system technical support and maintenance to ensure e-Municipality functionality and sustainability.
3.4 Local Economic Development (LED)
LGI was continually responsive to the needs of LGU partners, and guided LGUs in harnessing existing resources from within their communities to help create better opportunities for the future of their communities. Building on previous LGU accomplishments, LGI supported its partner LGUs in 2015 to synthesize elements of its overall developmental plan for a Local Economic Development (LED) approach most suitable to Palestinian cities and towns.

In 2016, LGI facilitated a highly participatory process of creating social dialogue around the concept of LED, with an LED forum in each of the LGUs for consensus building and integration of community stakeholders into developing LED strategic plans. The LED plans and projects pursued by the eleven participating municipalities helped achieve incremental positive change, demonstrating to communities that the community could achieve different kinds of goals and experience new kinds of cooperation. LED initiatives took into account the socio-economic norms and values in communities, while ensuring wider participation from marginalized groups, especially women, youth, senior citizens, and people with disabilities.

Providing feedback and support to LGUs in implementing their LED plans, LGI guided stakeholders in each community on a path to discovering their economic development potential, all the while managing expectations. A common theme emerged in each LGU: previous ideas for LED initiatives tended to be “pie in the sky” and almost always failed. One of LGI’s achievements was building an understanding of how to leverage the scarcest of resources for moderate steps that could create new economic development opportunities.

Stakeholders learned to rely on local capacity and maximize available resources, which in turn materialized into almost immediate results, including new job opportunities and income for the community. Local officials and community members also realized that their previous approaches had resulted in many missed opportunities and they now have a new strategy and logic for identifying future opportunities.

**CSC Business Counters & Business Information Depositories**

LGI provided technical support to LGUs and relevant stakeholders on creating a business enabling environment (BEE) within their locality, especially with LGUs on promoting their role and services in supporting LED activities. LGUs began promoting their role in supporting the attraction, retention, and creation of investments at the local level, through the establishment of business counters in the CSCs, and the development of a Business Database Information Depository (BDID).

The BDIDs in the eleven participating LGUs help attract and support business investment, providing relevant and reliable information to potential investors to assess the environment and identify potential barriers. Each is equipped with a customized business and LED database, integrated into a GIS platform, called “Baldati” (“my town” in Arabic). The municipality are now able to use the CSCs to provide clear information and guidance on the steps required to set up a business, such as applications and licensing.

Screenshots from the Business Development Information System "Baladti" software program
3.4.1: LED Community Projects and Activities

The LED planning process was based on the inclusive, participatory community engagement approaches applied by partner municipalities throughout LGI. LGI activated social dialogue on the types of projects that communities can mobilize around, especially projects that empower women and youth to become more economically active and bring community-based organizations together. LGI promoted services provided by partner LGUs to support LED, and the mobilization of local resources to support the actual implementation of LED activities and projects.

While the specific steps and timelines for selecting initiatives and the economic resources available varied from LGU to LGU, in the end all LGUs agreed on similar projects. The selected projects signified a common agreement among Palestinian communities on the need to invest in opportunities that empower women and youth, and provide more work opportunities for unskilled laborers. All of the LGUs are demonstrating that the lessons of good governance have had a positive impact and are informing new LED efforts. A few of the LED initiatives are highlighted below:

**AL-BIREH:** Al-Bireh’s LED initiative focused on providing packaging and marketing assistance for women and youth cooperatives, who produce homemade foods and other goods through establishing marketing kiosks, a warehouse and packaging center for their products. This center will create new opportunities for women and youth to increase their skills and develop their capacities to enhance their competitive advantages, helping to increase sales and generate additional income. Al Bireh municipality celebrated the inauguration of this initiative on December 28, 2016 with the presence of representatives from Ramallah and Al Bireh Directorate, CBOs and community members.

**SALFIT:** The Salfit LED initiative is designed to enhance the skills of young women to increase their employment opportunities in the local labor market. In addition, Salfit YLC will work in cooperation with local CBOs to market the accessories. The women enrolled in the program possess diverse handicraft skills. One trainee, for example, made bracelets and other crafts from recycled plastic disposable bottles. Salfit’s mayor addressed the trainees, expressing pride and offering words of encouragement, and assuring everyone that the municipality was prepared “to give any needed support to achieve the aim of this project.”
‘ILLAR: ‘Illar’s LED initiative involves the establishment of various kiosks at the local park. The kiosks sell food, beverages, snacks, etc. at the park and generate new revenue sources for the municipality and vendors using the kiosks. To gain the maximum positive outcomes from this initiative, the municipality also sought ways for community members to benefit from the LED initiative. They chose to select individuals to run the kiosks based not only on experience, but also on need and potential to employ others.

LED initiatives at ‘Illar’s local park are elevating family fun, increasing local income, and providing new work opportunities during the Eid and remaining summer months

QALQILIYA: The Qalqiliya LED initiative involved the establishment of six agricultural greenhouses of an area of one dunum (1,000 m²) each. The goal is to help strengthen and promote the agricultural sector in Qalqiliya. The greenhouses will be loaned to local farmers through a corporate guarantee. The initiative specifically targets farmers who are experienced in managing greenhouses but do not own agricultural land that they can farm.

Construction of greenhouses in Qalqiliya
3.4.2: House of Expertise

LGI and the Ramallah Municipality have established the “House of Expertise” (BAIT AL-KHIBRAT), as a model of public private partnership and citizen engagement that supports local economic development. It is an innovative example of how local government can mobilize local resources and capacity to encourage effective use of resources, potential investments, and citizen engagement to enhance socio-economic returns for the community.

The House of Expertise is the first of its kind in the region. The House of Expertise acts as a community center that builds on active and dynamic partnerships between municipalities, the private sector, academic institutions, and think tanks, and civic organizations. It provides opportunities for senior community members with technical knowledge and cross sectoral expertise to volunteer their time, providing capacity building for CBOs, monitoring and guidance, mentoring and coaching, and training for young university students seeking advice on how to build their career or start business ventures.

The Ramallah Municipal Council allocated an existing municipal building and lot in the downtown area to serve as the location of the House of Expertise. The total value of the building and the land is estimated at $2.7 million. With technical support from LGI, the municipality also took responsibility for the rehabilitation of the building and landscaping, with a budget of $340,000. The municipality made the decision to increase the budget for rehabilitation and include some of LGI’s best practices for infrastructure development; including solar panels, water drainage and appropriate utilization of space both inside and out. This marks an incredible investment in the municipality’s future and potential.

LGI supported the municipality to develop the House of Expertise concept, framework, and terms of reference for required technical support, as well as a work plan, including milestones.

LGI coordinated with officials from An Najah National University, to exchange ideas and discuss potential contributions to the function of the House of Expertise. One suggestion was to establish channels of communication between national and international information centers (such as Public Libraries and University Information Hubs in the UK and the US), to help leverage the Resource Center within the House of Expertise once established.

Another partnership was established between the municipality and Birzeit University, from which student volunteers will work with the House of Expertise as part of their volunteerism program prior to graduation. In order to assess the appropriate sectors to support, House of Expertise staff will develop questionnaires and conduct site visits in the local community. A gradual rollout of services is planned from April 2017, working in only a few sectors and then seeking to expand further.

Leveraging municipal service improvements implemented under LGI, the House of Expertise will be able to provide high quality services to the Palestinian business community. For example, if an individual is interested in opening a new business, the experts can provide support in completing a feasibility study, identifying if the business model will work in the community, and by utilizing improved municipal services such as GIS mapping, can even help identify the best location for this new enterprise.

Additionally, this intervention strengthens the role the municipality will play in ensuring local economic development. Municipalities can induce change in the community, but as with Global Communities strategic approach to community development, this change needs to come from the bottom up. The House of Expertise will provide the municipality insight into the vision the people have for their economic future. Utilizing their new streamlined service delivery methods the municipality can maximize local resources and ensure appropriate economic development.

With Global Communities support, the Ramallah municipality approved a concept paper and long term strategic document on the functionality of the House of Expertise. Ramallah municipality also finalized the management and outreach plans, recruited and trained staff for the opening of the House of Expertise.
4.0 PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE
The capacity of local government to reach out to and involve citizens in identifying priorities, planning, and monitoring builds trust and solidifies the relationship between citizens and government officials. Citizen participation in the local governance process also creates an environment of transparency and accountability by allowing constituents to interface directly with their local government representatives and communicate the needs and priorities of their communities. LGI’s interventions were designed to enhance awareness of good governance practices and the important role of the community in local government. The program targeted LGUs, CBOs, and citizens, and emphasized the need for government and civic institutions to work together for the overall advancement of the community.

Palestinian local government systems have begun to increase the emphasis on civic engagement in the governance process. Through LGI and LDR, Global Communities played a significant role in introducing the concepts of participatory governance at multiple levels throughout the governance system, with the LGUs, the MoLG, and other stakeholder. New participatory instruments and mechanisms have been introduced in the areas of planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation to enhance citizen participation, namely youth participation, in the decision-making process at both the national and local levels. LGUs recognize the significance of participatory governance as a process that facilitates their work and contributes to community development.

For example, LGUs built long-term cooperative relationships with SDIP Committees in several municipalities around the West Bank. The SDIP Committees, which include a diverse cross-section of local government representatives and average citizens, were established as part of the strategic planning process each municipality undertook. In some places, those committees stopped working after the SDIP was created – only to be reformed for the annual review and update to the SDIP. In eight municipalities, however, the SDIP Committee remained engaged in the implementation and oversight of the SDIP by the LGU, and even conducted their own complementary activities to support the local government’s efforts.

For example, the SDIP support committees in Salfit, Al Yamun and Abu Dis conducted community-based initiatives in early 2016 that were derived from the SDIPs. The projects focused on providing safe and clean environment in their communities by installing safety signs and carrying out cleaning campaigns in Al Yamun and rehabilitating children’s parks in Salfit. In Abu Dis, the SDIP Committee held an event entitled, “Together We Are Safe,” focused on how community members and the LGU can work together on public safety issues.
4.1 Gender
LGI streamlined gender concerns into the design and implementation of its activities, and highlighted the need to consider gender with its partner organizations, municipalities, and beneficiaries.

Global Communities conducted a comprehensive gender analysis of its program, approaches, partners, and impact in 2013. Out of that review, the LGI team produced a comprehensive gender inclusion strategy for the program, resulting in gender sensitivity and inclusion training for LGI staff, gender tracking and analysis of program activities, and more inclusive policies for the program. For example, the team created a gender-sensitivity checklist for all LGI infrastructure projects.

LGI held gender and social inclusion orientation sessions for all program staff, created an open dialogue on gender mainstreaming in LGI’s interventions, enhanced LGI’s communication with the Gender Unit at MoLG, and finalized a gender and local governance assessment study by Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD). LGI also began requiring all partner LGUs to nominate a certain number of female council members or employees to attend LGI’s activities. As a result of this request, women’s participation at workshops increased significantly.

In addition to these efforts streamlined throughout the LGI activities, Global Communities began several specific initiatives targeting women and girls, building networking opportunities and amplifying opportunities for women role models.

**Female Role Models Initiative**

Global Communities and INJAZ Palestine established a new partnership to implement the joint initiative: “Breaking Gender Stereotypes: Promoting Leadership and Labor Opportunities among Young Women.” The initiative reached approximately 350 female students in ten schools across the West Bank. Young female students between 14 and 16 years old were exposed to female role models working in traditionally male-dominated fields during site visits, and heard their stories of success. Facilitators held discussions and carried out activities to raise awareness among young women about the gender stereotypes that exist in their culture and how these stereotypes can influence their choices later in life regarding the career path they should pursue. The girls participated in activities to learn new leadership skills, and worked on projects promoting women’s leadership and potential in their communities.

Yesterday, when my father told me that he is surprised and amazed by our role and what we were capable of achieving, I felt thrilled and more confident about myself. This initiative encouraged us to discover our inner power to help others. This experience made me feel strong enough to make my own decision regarding my future.”

—Ranan Salameh, 10th grade student, Al Umariya School, Qalqilia

The women leaders and INJAZ Palestine later returned to these targeted schools to announce a competition that challenged student groups to find and profile in creative ways local women leaders from their communities or neighborhoods. A ceremony was held to conclude the initiative where each student group presented their work to panel of judges who selected the winning group and presented them an award. Featured in local media, the event also brought greater awareness to the issue of women and stereotypes that inhibit their full access to male-dominated, leadership and decision making positions.
Workshop for Female Council Members

To further enrich and deepen AWRAD’s gender assessment, LGI and AWRAD held a workshop entitled “Women Members of LGUs: Empowerment through Understanding, Networking, and Exchanging of Experience” to identify the main challenges and opportunities facing women councilors, identify needs and priorities of women councilors, and provide networking opportunities for female councilors. Approximately 60 women council members from 22 CGEs attended, as well as the head of MoLG’s gender unit, heads of the gender unit in MoLG’s directorates, and USAID. The workshop was highly participatory and focused on giving female council members the opportunity to discuss and share their current realities, experiences, challenges, successes, and future recommendations.

“Let’s Change It” Project

At the Al Umariya Girls Secondary School, LGI worked to educate young women about their right to choose future careers based on their personal aspirations and how their skills fit in the Palestinian market. LGI invited selected female leaders to workshops to speak about their careers and the examples set by other prominent Arab women, and by designing posters to deliver motivational messages in order to enhance the image of creative working women.

Activities first built communication, presentation, and leadership skills of participants in order to ensure they could better communicate what they had learned with others, both students from other schools, as well as to their parents, other adults, and even the media. This was done by exposing female students to effective and polite messages that showcase a positive attitude to ensure the achievement of their goals.

The students then worked on an awareness campaign, developing the title “Let’s Change It” to describe their project’s goal: to change the status quo. The female students wished to change the impression that women can only aspire to socially
acceptable professions, or that their choices must be linked with their parents’ opinions. The students designed posters and other materials, and launched a Facebook page to promote their work. They also met with local women leaders with different careers to highlight their success and challenges, invited media to cover their initiative, and participated in a radio interview where they explained their goals to encourage more people to listen and accept the change in themselves.
4.2 Youth Local Councils
The capacity of local government to reach out to citizens and to involve them in identifying priorities, planning, and monitoring builds trust and solidifies the relationship between citizens and government officials. Over the past decade, Global Communities in Palestine has designed interventions to enhance awareness of good governance practices and the important role of the community in local government. Special emphasis has been placed on the role of youth through the Youth Local Councils (YLCs) initiative.

Although Palestinian youth constitute an overwhelming majority of the West Bank and Gaza population (52% are under the age of 25 years), there had previously been few opportunities for them to engage in community affairs and local governance. In response, Global Communities piloted what was then named the Youth Shadow Local Councils (YSLCs) initiative in 4 communities in 2008, with funding from USAID. After the success of the pilot, Global Communities expanded to an additional 9 communities in 2010 under the USAID-funded Local Democratic Reform (LDR) program. The initiative continued under the USAID-funded Local Government and Infrastructure (LGI) program expanding to a total of 20 communities in the West Bank.

The YLC Process

The initiative began as the Youth Shadow Local Councils because the councils, democratically elected bodies made up of 11-15 members aged 15-22, “shadowed” their local government leaders to learn about good governance practices. Each youth council mirrors the elected local government unit (LGU, or municipality) in size and formation. Working in partnership with the municipality, the purpose of the YSLCs has been to sensitize youth to good governance practices and to give them an opportunity to take a leadership role in their community. The YLC initiative has an impact on four levels: 1) individuals are becoming empowered, confident young leaders; 2) youth are viewed as proactive, hardworking, contributing members of society; 3) communities are building partnerships and implementing initiatives that improve quality of life; and 4) nationally, the YLCs have created a platform for youth networking, hosting national youth summits, informing local governance and youth policy, and creating the next generation of Palestinian leaders.

Through constant coaching and mentoring, Global Communities and local partners have supported the youth councils in the following phases:

- Establishing general assemblies in each municipality
- Campaigning and outreach to voters
- Holding democratic elections and forming the council
- Leadership and skills development
- Establishing local partnerships and alliances
- Youth-led local activities
Youth Leaders

The YSLC initiative has gone beyond engaging youth in citizen participation activities and increasing awareness of local governance issues. YSLCs, with Global Communities support, empowered youth, helping to create strategic partnerships to improve communities and to provide a networking platform within and among Palestinian communities. In light of the youths’ outstanding accomplishments and their determination, innovation, and independence, it became apparent that YSLCs were no longer “shadowing.” In 2014, the Youth Shadow Local Councils became the Youth Local Councils.

The buy-in and support of the YLC concept by local government units and organizations has been instrumental in the success of the YLCs. Often taking the lead, the YLCs have cooperated with their municipalities, police, fire and rescue, and community-based organizations to respond to the needs of their respective communities.

The YLC initiative has also empowered young Palestinian leaders in the West Bank; many have gone on to receive impressive awards and to take on new positions. YLC presidents have served as acting mayors, acting police chiefs, and acting ministers. Former YLC president Mohammed Taqaqa was one of a handful of youth to receive the prestigious “Volunteer of the Year” award from the Palestinian Prime Minister in 2012. Perhaps most impressive, former YLC member Yaqoub Marouf was elected to his village’s local council.

What began as a youth initiative in Palestine in 2008 – 4 pilot communities with 700 youth – has become a movement. In 2016, after only 8 years, Global Communities can boast that it has supported the establishment of **20 YLCs across the West Bank, with more than 17,000 youth involved**. The YLCs have become an integral part of their communities, woven into the tapestry of their societies. YLCs have implemented initiatives/campaigns on the environment, literacy, road safety, fire safety, employment, local tourism, volunteerism, persons with disabilities, emergency responses, and fundraisers for the needy.
YLC Initiatives

YLC engaged with their local governments and their communities, serving as a bridge for activism and community involvement, while also raising awareness of issues important to youth or advancing the development agenda of the community.

In November 2014, approximately 50 youth representing 16 YLCs in the West Bank participated in a Palestinian heritage tour, visiting three locations in the northern West Bank. The tour emphasized the importance of investing in historical and religious sites in Palestine, and highlighted how this investment can enhance the tourism sector. The trip also aimed to encourage mutual visits among YLC members to build better relationship between each other in order to share and discuss their mutual needs and experiences.

The tour began from Salfit where the youth met Salfit’s mayor and council members. The mayor and council members explained the importance of Salfit as a major producer of olive oil. After that, the youth watched a short documentary about Salfit and its heritage, including the historical water spring. The group then went to Anabta, where they met the mayor. This was followed by a visit to the Citizen Service Center, Al Mintar tourist resort, and Al Mintar historical museum. The final stop was Sabastiya where youth visited the ancient Roman amphitheater, Herod’s jail, and Yahya Mosque.

In February 2015, approximately 300 YLC and general assembly members from all YLCs participated in the 5K Run organized in Bethlehem. The event was organized by Bethlehem municipality in coordination with YLCs, the private sector, and the USAID-funded Compete Project. The event’s objective was to encourage local tourism and create an opportunity for Palestinian youth and families to visit, explore, and experience the various cultural and historic sights of Bethlehem.
5.0 HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE
Shortly after the start of the war on Gaza in July 2014, LGI, in response to an urgent request from USAID, developed and began implementation of its Rapid Response Action Plan (RRAP). The RRAP was developed as a phased approach to ensure the assistance that was delivered was responsive to actual needs on the ground. During Phases 1 and 2, LGI distributed food packages, hygiene kits, bedding sets, and water to more than 28,000 vulnerable and displaced families.

During Phase 3, which was implemented in early 2015, LGI distributed warm blankets, plastic floor mats, reinforced plastic tarpaulin, nylon sheets, duct tape, and plastic rope to provide protection from the winter weather in homes with broken windows and doors, leaking roofs, and open spaces to more than 3,500 vulnerable households.

In the first three phases of the RRAP, LGI provided 170,000 internally displaced and host population beneficiaries with basic inputs for survival, specifically: 39,552 liters of water for drinking and hygiene use; 29,985 non-food packages; and 28,668 food packages.

Gaza Cash for Work Program

In 2016, LGI commenced a Cash-for-Work (CFW) program in Gaza, as an immediate humanitarian response to the lack of economic opportunities resulting from the conflict. The CFW program provided short-term employment for more than 1000 eligible individuals in two rounds; 550 participated in the first round and 459 individuals in the second round.

LGI implemented the CFW program in partnership with the Palestinian Federation of Industries (PFI) and the Palestinian Committee for Hotels, Restaurants, and Touristic Services (PCHRTS) in Gaza. With PFI, the CFW program focused on the carpentry and textile sectors, while the PCHRTS portions focused on the service industry. Business entities that employed beneficiaries under the CFW program were subject to preset criteria and required to share in the cost of the workers' salaries.
Overall, LGI benefited 8,076 household members (4,529 males, 3,547 females) supported by the 1,009 workers (926 males, 83 females) employed with PCRHTS and PFI. The program also provided an important short-term labor development model for Palestinian associations, enhancing their management and workforce development skills to manage similar projects in the future.

An evaluation in 2016 found that the program contributed to improving living conditions of workers and their households. It enhanced their sense of financial security, positively impacting their general mood and relationships with family members. The majority of workers mentioned that they used the salaries to pay for basic needs (57.1%) and old debts (20.3%). In terms of job sustainability, 43% of surveyed workers stated that they have received or were promised a job offer at the end of the CFW employment period. However, they also worry that fluctuating economic conditions and insecurity in Gaza would prevent the offer from proceeding for the long term, or with similar salaries to that in the CFW program. Overall 92.2% of the surveyed workers would like to continue working in similar positions and 90% prefer similar employment projects, rather than receiving equivalent in-kind assistance.
Thank you USAID and the American people.