

A Practical Guide

To Formation & Activation of
Youth Shadow Local Councils

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Introduction

This Guide offers a summary of good practices drawn from both of the theoretical notions of participatory governance and the actual experience gained in Palestine as the Palestinian youth assumed responsibility of a pioneering project entitled “Youth Shadow Local Councils” in the past few years.

Based on learning-by-doing approach, this guide contains the necessary knowledge and information to consult, and the mechanism and practical tools to learn and adopt, in the attempt to consolidate and institutionalize youth participation in local governance.

This guide is intended for use as a reference for active actors interested in establishing youth councils and going through such a unique experience with such a promising social group. It is directed at youth activists themselves and local councils and civil society organizations interested in or embarking on the process of institutionalizing youth participation in decision making partly through the creation of a youth shadow local council in their communities and building the capacities of their youth for constructive participation. Moreover, a large number of institutions may find this guide useful as it relates to their interest in participatory local governance especially those active actors who are continuously on the search for innovative ways to adopt and support local efforts aimed at the expansion of community participation and the creation of an enabling environment for a stronger involvement of youth in public life.

The objectives of this guide include:

1. Maintain a unified understanding of and approach to Youth Shadow Local Councils particularly in terms of the concept and overarching objectives of such councils, the various phases of construction and operationalization.
2. Provide the mechanisms and tools pertaining to the formation and running of the youth shadow local council and render them available to local councils, civil society organizations and youth groups interested in the idea.



3. Contribute to the preparation of youth leaders who are familiar with local governments, informed of their functions, and proficient in skills of public participation and community development.

Overview

1. Concept

A Youth Shadow Local Council is an informal voluntary body comprised of and led by youth. The concept of Youth Shadow Local Council is embedded in the wider notion of participatory governance at the local level and the best practices in the field. Central to this concept is the free and direct elections of youth representatives by young citizens aged 15 – 22 years for the formation of a democratic body representing the youth in the local community. In many aspects the Youth Shadow Local Council enjoys an internal structure and functions parallel to those of the Local Council. The formation and administration of the activities and affairs of the Youth Shadow Local Council are governed by youth – developed statutes or bylaws.

Youth Shadow Local Councils also serve as an effective mechanism for the institutionalization of youth participation in local governance in a structured, yet voluntary manner that guarantees the emergence of younger generations with the knowledge, attitudes and skills for proactive citizenship and democratic governance at the local level.

2. Objectives:

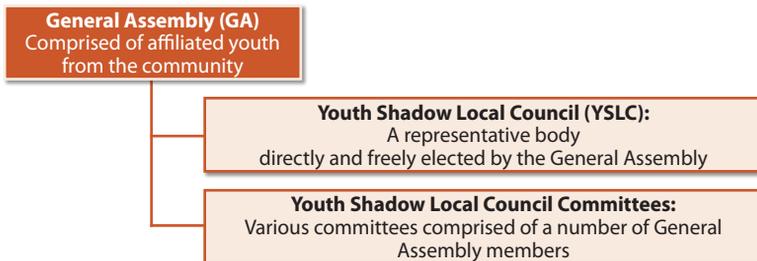
1. Promote practices of democratic good governance in youth activities and involvement in local government.
2. Educate the young generation in local governance and enhance their attitudes towards and knowledge of local councils including their mandates, roles and responsibilities in political representation, provision of public service and leadership of the development processes at the local level.
3. Provide youth with an opportunity for participation in democratic processes (such as elections, decision making, planning and participation in public life).
4. Develop the capacities and leadership potential of participating youth by ensuring the presence of multiple windows of opportunity for the assumption of constructive leadership tasks and roles by the youth.

5. Create a platform for the youth to voice their views, demands, interests and aspirations before the decision makers to influence their policies at the national and local levels.
6. Empower the youth and enable them to identify their needs and the obstacles they face in order to emerge as strong actors in the identification of effective solutions.
7. Promote voluntarism among the youth and encourage their positive contribution to the development of their communities and the entire Palestinian society.

3. Structure:

1. General Assembly: The general framework for the Youth Shadow Local Council is comprised of male and female men aged 15 – 22 years who are registered as members of this assembly.
2. Elected Council: A body of a certain number youth of (corresponding to the number of the Local Council in the community), directly elected by the General Assembly members. Each member of the youth council occupies the same position that his/her counterpart in the Local Council occupies.
3. Youth Shadow Local Council Committees: the committees formed by the elected Council are comprised from members of the General Assembly with the purpose of providing assistance to the Elected Council in the planning and execution of youth initiatives, activities and projects. Each committee is presided over by a member of the Elected Council. The number of these committees shall be equal to the number of their counterparts at the Local Council although the Elected Council is permitted to add one or more committees.

Structure of the Youth Shadow Local Council



4. General Framework

Youth Shadow Local Councils enjoy particular characteristics that set them apart from other youth groups. The major distinguishing feature is that all councils are required to recognize and respect a set of **basic criteria and standards** as well as **common principles and values** that the Youth Councils should adhere to in relation to their structure and operations.

5. Basic Standards

Context of Local Government: Youth Shadow Local Councils are part of the local government sector since they are parallel to the structure of the official Local Council in their communities and work in close coordination with municipal councils and their staff. Moreover, training, activities, and initiatives undertaken by the Youth Shadow Local Council are concerned with a wide range of concepts and issues pertaining to local governance and community development.

Adherence to Democratic Processes: The formation and running of Youth Shadow Local Councils are both entrenched in democratic practices. The Youth council draws its legitimacy from the General Assembly which elects this council in a democratic manner in order to serve as representative body of the youth in the community.

Equal gender opportunities for participation: Youth Shadow Local Councils encourage young women participation in all aspects of public life. The participation of young women in both of the General Assembly and elected Youth Council is a requirement and a right guaranteed in the Bylaws.

6. Principles and Values

Independence: Denotes that the Youth Shadow Local Council independently takes its decisions through the regulatory frameworks governing its functions that guarantee its independence in the setting of the Council's priorities and mechanisms of actions.

Collective Action: One of the most important principles on which the Youth Councils are based is the collective action achieved through ongoing consultation between the Elected Council and its General Assembly, distribution of tasks among the members of the Elected Council, partnership and cooperation with various local institutions, and maintenance of strong relationships with the Local Council.

Democracy: Entails respect of intellectual diversity and differences of opinion among the members of the Elected Councils and General Assembly in addition to the exchange of power through regular elections and in accordance with the Bylaws.

Partnership: Denotes concentered efforts, building upon previous experiences and networking with the various institutions at the local and national levels.

Voluntary Action: Since the concept of youth council is embedded in voluntarism and community action without the expectation of material gains, both concepts constitute the basis for the Council's functions and activities. All youth members of the General Assembly and Elected Council shall volunteer their time in order to serve and advance their communities. The success of the council's work is dependent on this value.

Equality: In terms of ensuring equal opportunities between male and female youth for participation in all aspects of the Youth Councils' Work and the conviction that both genders have equal role in the Youth Council believes. In addition, this principle is the most important value to guarantee that the Youth Council provides all of its services without discrimination on the basis of gender, family or political or other affiliations of members and participants.

Terminology and Definitions

- **Youth Shadow Local Council:** A body directly elected by the General Assembly that corresponds to the Local Council in terms of structure and functions and provides the youth with an opportunity to participate in local government and enables them to acquire in-depth knowledge of the mandates, mechanism of work and functions carried out by the Local Council particularly while addressing citizen's issues, solving everyday problems and spearheading local development.
- **General Assembly:** Young men and women, aged 15 - 22 years old, who are admitted to the Youth Shadow Local Council as members of the General Assembly since they fulfill the membership criteria and conditions as specified in the Bylaws.
- **Head of Youth Shadow Local Council:** One of the winners of Youth Shadow Local Council election who is elected to head the Youth Council by the majority of votes of the elected youth council.
- **Election Campaign:** All media activities carried out by the candidates to influence or persuade General Assembly members to vote for him/her in the Youth Shadow Local Council elections.
- **Statutes / Bylaws:** The unified regulatory framework governing the formation and functions of Youth Shadow Local Councils set forth in a number of youth – devised chapters pertaining the following issues: General provisions, Objectives of the Youth Shadow Local Councils, Youth Council Membership, General Assembly, Composition of Elected Council and the Mandates of its Members, Responsibilities of the Head of Youth Council, Youth Council Elections, and Finances¹.
- **Community Action:** Any activity carried out voluntarily, formally or informally by an individual or group of individuals, independently or

¹ The Bylaws for the Youth Local Council are available for download at this link: <http://youthlocalcouncils.org/userfiles/BYLAWE%20sep%202009.pdf>

within institutional frameworks, that are executed with the purpose of serving social groups or addressing social issues.

- **Fundraising:** Seeking external financial resources that can be obtained in the form of grants or in kind or cash donations with the purpose of assisting the Youth Council in the implementation of its activities.
- **Local Council:** A Village or Municipal Council elected as a result of public elections held in accordance with the Palestinian Local Election Law No (1) of 1997 that provides for a legal definition of the Local Council as: "an independent local institution limited to a certain geographical area but enjoys independent financial status, falls under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Local Government, and managed by an council freely and directly elected by the citizens of the local authority".
- **Nomination:** The formal process through which any member of the General Assembly who fulfills the criteria and conditions to stand as a candidate for Youth Shadow Local Council Elections as specified in the Bylaws.
- **Candidate(s):** Young men and women who exercise their rights to nominate themselves for gaining the confidence of General Assembly members through democratic and fair elections.
- **Member of Youth Shadow Local Council:** Any young man or woman candidate who becomes a member of the Elected Youth Council as a result of winning a democratic and free election.
- **Resident:** Any young male or female youth permanently residing within the geographical boundaries of the local council and whose right to vote and be nominated for youth local council elections is not forfeited due to temporary residence outside the local council for study or other purposes.
- **Election Supervisory Committee:** A local committee formed with the sole purpose of organizing and overseeing the election process of the Youth Shadow Local Council in a certain community. The

committee is comprised of representatives from the ministries of Local Government and Youth and Sports, the Local Council, Central Election Commission and Civil Society Organizations in addition to a representative of the youth themselves.

Chapter One

Preparatory Procedures

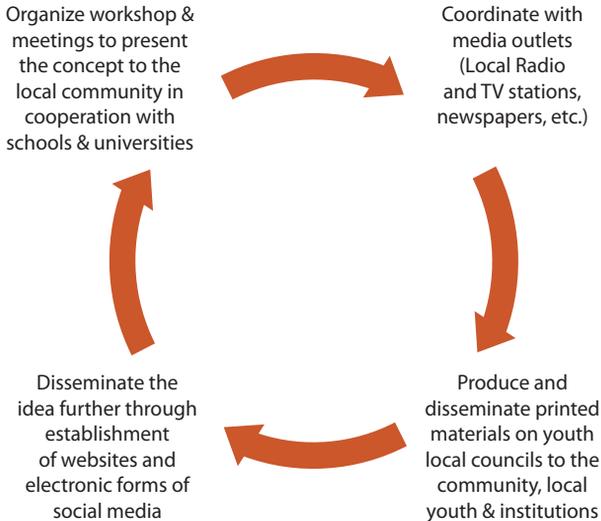
1. Preparations

The following outlines the set of preparatory action that should be followed when considering the possibility for forming a Youth Shadow Local Council in a certain area:

1. Coordination with the Local Council (municipality or village council) to discuss the idea with the Local Council and explore the prospects for its acceptance and materialization.
2. The Local Council studies the idea internally and convenes a formal meeting for its council members to take a decision on the formation of a Youth Shadow Local Council.
3. The concerned parties draw and sign an agreement/Memorandum of Understanding² so as to provide the legal cover for the local youth.
4. Develop a special mechanism to establish partnerships and coordinate with local institutions which desire to become among the actors involved in the formation of Youth Councils. It is preferable to involve a local partner from the same community (such as a civil society organization) experienced in youth activation and development in order to contribute to the development of the Youth Council and the empowerment of youth members and volunteers. (missing text on Entry points/ mechanism of action, ...)
5. Coordination with ministries and relevant government institutions such as the ministries of Local Government, Youth and Sports, and Education, which in turn would facilitate the work of the Youth Council particularly through the dissemination of the idea to all schools in the area.
6. Hold a preliminary meeting with a group of youth to discuss the idea with them and with representatives of the active institutions in the community.

2 See Annex No. (1) for a sample this MOU or agreement between partner institutions and the municipality.

2. Dissemination of the idea in local community



3. Formation of Election Supervisory Committee

The Committee is formed upon the nomination from the Local Council and implementing partner provided that an official session is held to present the idea of a youth council and explain the roles, responsibilities and mandates of this committee. The committee has the authority to:

- Announce the application period for General Assembly membership
- Determine the election schedule, day and venues
- Review voter registry of General Assembly members
- Administer all states and requirement to the election process.

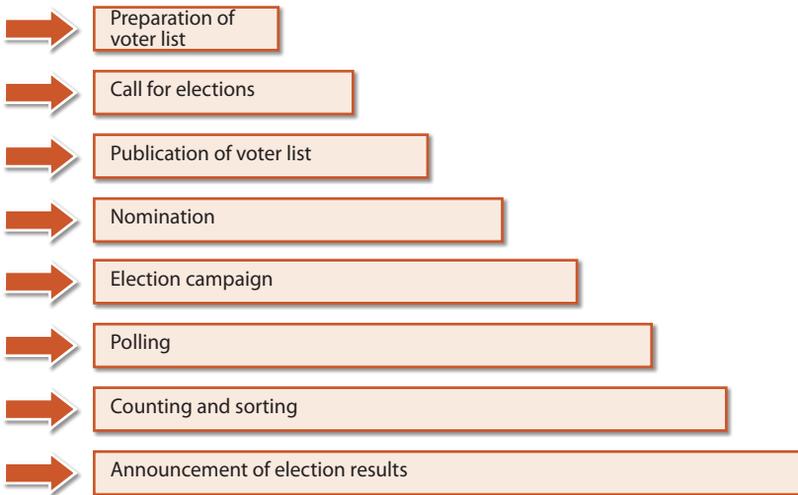
The Election Supervisory Committee is comprised of representatives from:

1. Local Council (such as Municipality or village council)
2. Implementing partner institution
3. Civil society organizations in the village/town/city
4. Governmental bodies (such as the Ministries of Local Government, Youth and Sport, and Education)
5. Palestinian Central Elections Commission

Chapter Two

Youth Local Council Election

Stages of the Electoral Process



1. Applications for General Assembly Membership

The Supervisory Committee publicly announces to the local youth the starting and closing dates for receipt of applications for General Assembly membership through adverts in public areas, online or through other methods.

The Supervisory Election Committee reviews the application and approves the admission to those applicants who have fulfilled the following criteria:

1. Belong to the age group of 15 – 22 years. Applicants younger than 18 years are required to obtain the approval of their parents or legal guardians.
2. Reside within the boundaries of the Local Council.

3. Are law-abiding citizens and respectful of rules and regulations.
4. Are committed to participation in the activities of the General Assembly.
5. Applications³ must have been submitted in person during the designated period.
6. Each application must be accompanied by a copy of the applicant's identity card or birth certificate.

At the end of the membership determination process, the Supervisory Committee prepares the official registry for the General Assembly. The committee publishes the official registry containing the names of all General Assembly members.

2. Educational Workshops

These introductory informational sessions are part of a specialized educational/awareness raising program that includes workshops and group discussions to increase the knowledge of youth of a number of topics such as: democracy, public participation, elections and local governance in addition to Youth Shadow Local Council bylaws and relevant previous experiences in Palestine.

3. Election Nomination

1. The Election Supervisory Committee declare the nomination phase open through a written announcement containing the following information: venue where the Nomination Registration Committee is stationed for receipt of applications, the period specified for submission of applications, and the closing date for their receipt by the Supervisory Committee.
2. The Supervisory Committee publishes a provisional list of candidates, arranged in chronological order in accordance to the actual dates and times of their applications.
3. The Supervisory Committee determines a specific period not exceeding three days for challenging the provisional candidate list.

3 See Annex (2) for General Assembly Membership Application Form

4. The Supervisory Committee determines a certain period for candidates to withdraw their candidacy. Upon expiry of this period, candidate withdrawal is not permitted.
5. The Committee addresses received challenges to the provisional list and published the final candidate list one week from the Election Day, in chronological order according to the date of submission of nomination application.

4. Nomination Criteria and Rules

1. Any local youth holding a Youth Shadow Local Council membership card and whose name is enlisted in the registry of General Assembly members is entitled to nominate themselves to Youth Council elections.
2. Each nominee must obtain the signature of twenty members of the General Assembly endorsing his/her nomination in order to be permitted to stand as a candidate.
3. Nomination application's⁴ must be submitted within date, time and place specified clearly in the announcement.
4. Candidates must belong to the age group of 15 – 22 years. Those younger than 18 years are required to obtain the approval of their parents or legal guardians.
5. Must attend the workshops on the electoral processes.

5. Candidate Orientation and Workshops

The party responsible for organizing the elections holds a workshop to clarify the importance of electoral process stipulated in the bylaws, as well as the procedures for nomination and voting and the importance of youth participation in all aspects of this process (i.e. conditions for campaigning, applicable Electoral System, votes counting and sorting, etc.). The workshop aims specifically at ensuring the youth understand the significance that elections campaigns and voting progress smoothly and without interruptions. It also emphasizes self-control and acceptance of the results of democratic elections, and commitment of elected representative of local youth.

4 See Annex (3) for the nomination application of youth council

6. Election Campaigning

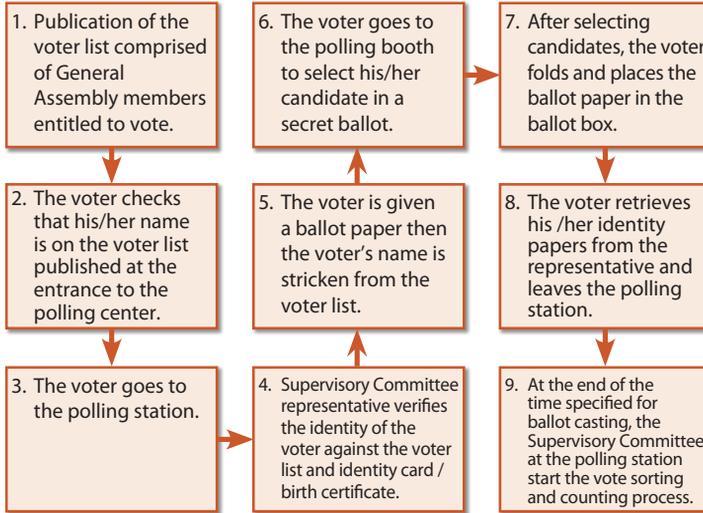
1. The Election Supervisory Committee determines starting and closing dates for the campaign period provided that must end twelve hours before the election date.
2. All candidates must be allowed to access to all voters within the area's electoral boundaries and exercise their right to influence their youth constituency and gain their confidence.
3. It is not permissible for Candidates to use inciting, intimidating or threatening language during the campaign period.
4. Weapons shall not be carried or displayed during the campaign period and Election Day.
5. Candidates must run their campaigns with integrity and respect for other candidates and their views.
6. Campaigning activities such as festivals and public meetings are not permitted at mosques and churches nor in the vicinity of hospitals or at buildings occupied by governmental agencies or public institutions.
7. Elections banners, posters, signs, written slogans or any campaign materials must not be placed on private property owned by persons, firms, or associations with prior approval of their owners.
8. Governmental logos must not be used in pamphlets, adverts, written materials, drawings and photos in conjunction with any candidate during the election campaign period.
9. Any campaign materials must not include any instigation or infamy of other candidates based on gender or religion or sect or profession or disability, or along any other line of inciting discrimination.
10. Campaigns must be made for the promotion of individual candidates not lists.

Note: A full day can be designated to host central election campaign activities and candidates' debates.

7. Electoral System

Youth Shadow Local Councils are elected on the basis of single member plurality system also known as "Direct Free Elections" or "Simple Plurality Vote" whereby individual youth candidates compete over a specific number of seats equal to that of the real Local Council. The system also guarantees

representation of both sexes through a “gender quota” of at least “one third” of the council’s seats assigned to the gender with least representation. The quota seats are filled by the candidates of the corresponding gender which obtained the highest number of votes in the Youth Council election.



8. Polling

It is the elections day where eligible General Assembly exercise their right to vote to elect their representatives from among the candidates. The Elections Supervisory Committee sets the date and the following details depending on the number of General Assembly members:

1. Number of voting polling centers (where to vote) which can contain more than one polling station. The polling station contains a number of voting booths and one ballot box which can be obtained with prior coordination with the Palestinian Central Elections Committee.
2. The Supervisory Committee must assign a director for every polling center and a manager for each polling station working under the supervision of the Director of Polling Center.
3. The voter list (of General Assembly members) must be displayed at the entrance to each polling station and distributed in accordance to the number of polling stations.

4. Each voter can vote for a number of candidates equal to or less than the number of Local Council.
5. The ballot paper must be prepared in sufficient time ahead of elections day but must not be made available in the polling center except on the polling day.
6. The Director of Polling Center receives the ballot papers on the polling day. The director and representatives of the Supervisory Committee sign on the closed envelope before they open it and count the ballot papers contained within.
7. Two forms⁵ for the opening and closing of ballot casting are prepared and signed but the Director of the Polling Center and two members of the Supervisory Committee.
8. Verification of voters' names is made at the entrance to the Polling Center and at the entrance to the polling station against identity documents. The voter then proceeds to the second step where Elections Supervisors verify the voter's identity and cross the name from the voter list. The supervisors hand the ballot paper to the voter along with instructions on the voting. The voter heads to a polling booth with the ballot paper pre-printed with the names of all candidates and cast his vote on a secret ballot. After filling the ballot paper, the voter folds and place the ballot in the ballot box.

9. Election Monitoring Committee

It is important for the youth elections to be overseen by a monitoring committee to ensure that elections are conducted in a free and transparent manner. The Monitoring Committee is comprised of representatives of the Local Council and organizations and fulfills its roles under the supervision of implementing partners and funders. The Monitoring Committee monitors the Polling, counting and sorting process where monitors independently prepare their reports on the electoral process.

⁵ See Annexes (5) through (9) for the following forms: instructions to voters, poll opening, poll closing, ballot paper template, minutes of Vote Count Opening and Minutes of Vote Count Closing, respectively.

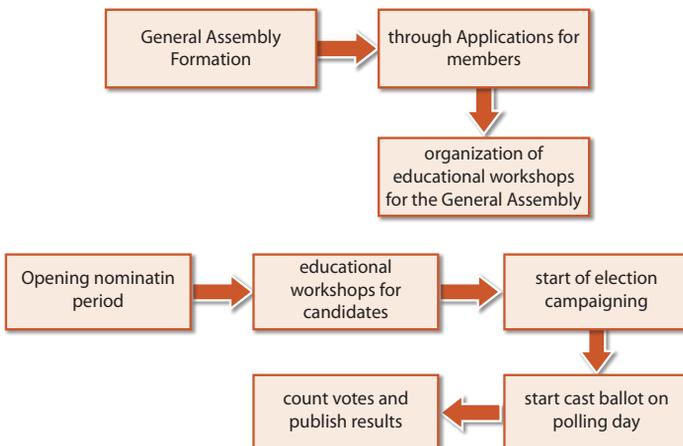
10. Vote Sorting and Counting and Announcement of Election Results

1. Vote counting and sorting is done by members of the Supervisory Committee
2. Vote sorting must be done immediately after poll closing.
3. Vote sorting and counting must be document and performed in public.
4. Candidates or their agents are entitled to attend the vote sorting and counting process.
5. The Supervisory Committee must announce results immediately after the completion of vote sorting and counting process.
6. Elections Monitors attend the sorting and counting process and their functions end after the announcement of the election results.

11. Seats Distribution by Internal Voting

1. The Supervisory Committee convenes an official session for the winners of youth council elections, presided by the eldest member.
2. Seats are distributed in accordance with the simple majority formula for the positions of Council Head, Deputy Council Head, etc.
3. Seat distribution is done through a secret ballot, (In the event of a tie between two or more candidate, a recast ballot is conducted).

For more information on seats distribution is provided in Chapter Five of the Youth Shadow Local Council Bylaws.



Chapter Three

Council Activation and Management

1. Capacity Building for Elected Youth Shadow Local Council

A capacity building program is necessary to be developed and carried out on the basis of a needs assessment study, or any other method for needs identification, for the General Assembly, elected youth representative, and their committees. The capacity building programs intends to strengthen the abilities and prepare them to perform their tasks and responsibilities in the best manner possible.

The three – tier program has the following components:

- **Knowledge and attitudes training:** Improve youth knowledge and educate them in a number of concepts including but not limited to: local governance, human rights, gender, democracy, citizenship, civil society and voluntary work.
- **Skill training:** to build a set of operational skills with focus on: internal and external communication, leadership, teamwork, fundraising, activity planning and implementation.
- **On-the-Job training:** ensures that training and practice mutually reinforce one another. The youth take part in purposeful exercises/ activities designed as part of a skill enhancement training program while assuming their functions at the youth council.
- Certain capacity building needs may emerge that require additional training. This must be taken into account in order to bridge any gaps in knowledge and skills through intensive training prior to launching the Youth Shadow Local Council activities and relationships as a new representative body in the community

2. Internal and External Communication

A network of effective relationships with the local community and institutions is critical for the Youth Shadow Local Council to successfully and effectively fulfill its functions while ensuring its sustainability and good standing in the community.

This should be done through the Public Relations Committee whose major task is to maintain interaction between the Youth Shadow Local Council and local communities through visits to public, private and civil society institutions and invitations for participation in all youth activities. This is essential for the Youth Shadow Local Council to gain the community's acceptance and support particularly in the start-up phase when activities can be dedicated to informing the community of its members, objectives and future plans to contribute to the development of youth and entire community.

It is equally important for the all committees to meet (semi) periodically together, with occasional invitations to participate General Assembly members, to discuss issues of common interest.

3. Activity Planning and Execution

Social movements and community mobilization are the most prominent acts in society because they open a wide space for meaningful participation and an agreement and opportunity for like-minded individuals to pool their efforts and resources in carrying out specific initiatives in service for the common good.

To enhance the success and impact potentials of youth-led community activities, it is important that the Elected Youth Council

- Takes decisions by consensus (during meetings for all members) on the activities types, date of implementation, and partners and funders.
- Consults with General Assembly members, through the various active committees, on the activities under planning, and involve the General Assembly in their implementation which should not be limited to the elected representatives.

- Documents all meetings elected representatives hold and prepares activity plans for the next quarter which is also important in facilitating the search for funding.
- Distributes tasks between the elected representatives and active General Assembly members who contribute to activity implementation and success.

4. Fundraising for Sustainable Activities

To remain operational, the Youth Shadow Local Council needs to raise funds sufficient to cover the cost of its planned activities. This can be done through various fundraising strategies such as collection of local donations or application for financial grants and in-kind contribution from various resources.

Community trust can be won through the constructed network of relationships along with innovative and creative activities other parties would be interested in funding (such as businessmen, private firms, dignitaries and community leaders, civil society organizations, and local councils, all of which can have a vital role in supporting the Youth Shadow Local Council and its activities).

Chapter Four

Concluding Remarks based on Lessons Learned

1. Democratic Practices

Based on actual experience, all efforts must be extended to document/strengthen the democratic experience of youth in Palestine particularly during the election of representatives to the Youth Shadow Local Councils. Youth elections are therefore important for the consolidation of democratic thought among the youth, and for the promotion of democratic practices and concepts to this group with emphasis on participation, pluralism, freedom of expression, tolerance, exchange of power and acceptance of the outcomes of democratic processes and public choices.

However, there are major reasons for the inclusion of practice of democracy under the framework of the most important caveats in the formation of Youth Shadow Local Councils. Keeping this experience democratic in spirit and practice is the major concern because, by contrast, it is far easier to render the experience non-democratic through disregard or violation of due procedures (nomination, campaigning, polling, etc.). A non-democratic experience in the formation of youth councils is worse than the lack of experience. It does not only create results opposite that the program intends, but is also locked deep in the youth memory to resurrect in the few years to come when they reach the age that allows them to practice all political rights.

2. Public Culture and Traditions

In the Palestinian society, and the Arab world generally, public culture, customs and traditions are the most important driving force for individuals and groups. Therefore, there is no escaping that the influence of familism and sectarianism on shaping the Youth Shadow Local Council formation process and derailing the project and youth from its path and objectives of serving local community and develop their youth peers. Familism can

dominate elections and elected council as the prevalent gender-related exclusion can sometimes entail an exclusively male council and sometimes sidestepping equal participation when female representatives are elected. The elections Supervisory committee and all concerned parties should exercise all cautious to prevent the occurrence of such intrusions.

3. Influence of Political Parties

In the same vein, political parties and factions can exert influence on local councils in their capacities as representative of the young, as parties are likely to attempt direct or indirect interference in the nomination of candidates and election process, or attempt to draw the youth to adopt their political leanings, assume control of the Youth Council, or align its activities more with the political agendas of this or that party at the local level.

Care must be taken to keep this major issue under checks during and after elections in order to protect the youth council from politicization and possible internal fragmentation and conflict along political differences. The concerned parties should always emphasize the neutrality and independence of Youth Councils as apolitical voluntary bodies with no interest in dictating or reformulation political and social ideas of their members or youth peers in the community. Membership and participation in Youth Council's structures and activities are open to eligible Palestinian youth of all walks of life and acknowledges their political, economic, and social diversity. The major goal of this endeavor is to support youth to organize themselves as an age-based interest group through their representative bodies at the local level. In pursuit of this objective, it is essential to identify the best individuals to become their representatives and promote their rights in cooperation with and in front of all actors in the community.

Annexes

Annex No. (1): Memorandum of Understanding with Local Councils

Memorandum of Understanding

Between:

1., (hereinafter The Funding Agency), represented by the Director General,, who is authorized to sign on its behalf;
2., (hereinafter The Implementing Agency), represented by the Director General,, who is authorized to sign on its behalf; and
3. The Local Council of, (hereinafter The Local Council) represented by Mayor, who is authorized to sign on its behalf.

First: Preamble

Recognizing that the vision, mission and strategic plan of the Ministry of Local Government aims at the development of the local governance sector towards sustainable development, entrenched on the principles of democracy, transparency and the effective participation actors from all sectors of society (particularly the youth);

Bearing in mind that the project aims to contribute to the institutionalization of youth participation through the democratic formation of representative Youth Shadow Local Councils democratically elected by the youth in their respective communities;

Convinced that the proposed Youth Shadow Local Councils aspire to foster responsible citizenship in young men and women in Palestine of the age group of 15-22 years, and build their capacities for participation in public life;

Recalling that the Funding Agency and the Implementing Partner have signed a grant agreement for the implementation of a Youth Shadow Local Council in as of / /201X, in collaboration with local partners in the targeted areas:

Considering that The Local Council has expressed in an official letter to The Funding Agency its consent to the implementation of the project and its readiness to facilitate the elections and subsequent work of the Youth Shadow Local Council (hereinafter The Youth Council) and the functions of The Implementing Partner in this regard,

Based on the above, and with the support of the Ministry of Local Government, this Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter the MOU) sets forth the mechanisms of cooperation and partnership between the three concerned parties.

Second: Obligations and Responsibilities of Concerned Parties

1. Obligations of The Funding Agency

- Provide information, and financial, technical and media support to The Implementing Partner and the Elected Youth Council, in accordance with the project plan.
- Provide young men and women participating in the project with opportunities to participate and benefit from the other activities of the program within the framework of which the youth Local Council Program is supported.
- Ensure follow-up, communication, networking and consultation with The Local Council, the Ministry of Local Government, public institutions and civil society organizations.
- Create a website dedicated for all Youth Shadow Local Councils, updated constantly by the youth participants and The Implementing Agency.
- Promote the concept and objectives of the Youth Shadow Local Councils Program, encouraging the adoption of Youth Shadow Local Councils as an institutionalized mechanism of youth participation.
- Attend and participate in as much as possible of project activities and provide feedback to the participating youth and the three concerned parties.
- Report to donor(s) and obtain due approvals of mattered related to the execution of the Youth Shadow Local Council program.

2. Obligations of the Local Council

- Participation and Coordination with all relevant social groups, local institutions and municipal departments to ensure the success and development of the Youth Shadow Local Council.

- Cooperation with *The Implementing Partner* during the Council formation and election phase through the establishment of committee designated for the follow up with this project.
- Contribution, in coordination with The Implementing Agency, to the development of, and adherence to, the project's operational plan towards the achievement of the desired objectives and impact.
- Provision of an appropriate office space designated for the Youth Council within the municipal buildings along with the basic services and Internet access necessary for its functioning.
- Grant the Implementing partner and members of the Youth Council and General Assembly access, with prior coordination with and approval of the Local Council, to municipal premises, machinery and public facilities for implementation of project activities, especially outside the official municipal working days and hours.
- Ensure respect and independence for the Youth Council in decision making and execution of action plan developed by the General Assembly and shared with the Local Council.
- Facilitate youth mentoring and the transfer of expertise between municipal council and/or staff members and between the elected Youth council in order to enhance their leadership and knowledge of local government.
- Provide Youth Council members and Field Coordinators with follow-up and support with regard to facilitation of their communication with official and civil society institutions in particular.
- Supply the Youth Council with information on municipal functions and performance in order to enhance transparency and enable the young people to participate in municipal affair, whenever possible, such as development of municipal plans, budgets, services, and other aspects of daily interaction with the local community.
- Permit Youth Council members to attend, whenever possible, official and periodical meetings held by the Local Council, and enable the youth to gain first hand experience in the sector and impart necessary knowledge and expertise to gradual develop the Youth Council as a parallel body to the Local Council.
- Allow the Youth Council to carry out public participation activities that aim to raise and debate issues of interest to the public and voice the needs and concerns of local community in general and youth in particular.
- Participate in the various activities held by the Youth Council to provide encouragement, support and feedback to the youth.

- Assist the Youth Council in carrying out its function with regard to fundraising, media coverage, and participation in official visits and events organized by the Local Council.

3. Obligations of the Implementing Partner:

- Manage the project's financial resource and activities in accordance with the provisions of the Grant Agreement and with the agreed upon implementation plan for all phases of the program.
- Communicate and consult with The Local Council on the implementation of all phases of the project in the target area(s).
- Joint selection of members for the Project Monitoring Committee and field Coordinator(s) in accordance with the established criteria.
- Provide full support to those involved in the promotion and dissemination of the Youth Council idea and all target groups within the municipal boundaries.
- Facilitate execution of all centralized and council-specific activities before and after their elections.
- Supply the elected youth councils with necessary office equipment, furniture, tools and logistical arrangement throughout the project's duration.
- Oversee all elections to Youth Councils in all target areas and supervise the implementation of youth activities and initiatives undertaken before and after elections, including the provision of financial, administrative, logistical and media support.
- Design and carry out activities to facilitate exchange of experiences with other youth councils at the district and/or national levels and strengthen their collective identity and mission.
- Throughout the project life, design and carry out capacity building program for the benefit of elected youth representatives and members of their general assemblies.
- Promote the project through various media outlets while respecting the media rights of each party.
- Facilitate youth participation in other projects, services and opportunities at the Implementing Partner.
- Coordinate with national and international institutions in issues pertaining to the established Youth Councils.

Third: General Provisions

- A. The preamble is considered an integral and indivisible part of this MOU and should be read in tandem with all provisions and annexes, if any.

- B. This MOU shall take effect upon its signing by all concerned parties and shall remain in effect until the end of the project, subject to renewal by agreement between all parties.
- C. All parties shall respect the peculiarities of the Local Council and its orientations, and directions with regard to youth action.
- D. All parties shall act to ensure youth's respect and responsible use of resources, facilities and property of both the Local Council and the Youth Council.
- E. All parties shall adhere to the law and maintain order and discipline during project activities in order to present a model of modern and responsible youth leadership.
- F. This MOU is governed by the Palestinian Law.
- G. Since this MOU consists of several pages, the signature of any party on the last page is considered as a signature on all of its pages. No party is allowed to contest any page of this MOU or any statement added by hand, on the ground of lack of signature.
- H. In case any dispute emerges in relation to the implementation of the obligations set forth in this MOU, arbitration shall be sought at a committee of three arbitrators, where each party nominates an arbitrator. The arbitration committee shall conduct their procedural and substantive work on the basis of laws and legislations in force in Palestine and takes its decision by simple majority.
- I. If at any time that any article of this MOU is in violation of one or more legal provisions is discovered, it shall not invalidate the remaining articles and this MOU remain valid as if the violation has not occurred.

This MOU is just, fair, and free from any deceit, fraud or injustice and signed by all parties in full consent and acceptance and in the presence of the Ministry of Local Government.

Signed in three original copies, one copy for each of the parties.

For the Implementing Agency	For the Local Council	For the Donor Agency
Signature:	Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:	Date:
For the Ministry of Local Government:		
Name:	Title:	
Signature:	Date:	

Annex No (2): Application Form to the General Assembly

Youth Shadow Local Council

General Assembly Application Form

1. Full Name: (Four parts)			
2. Address:			
3. Age:		4. Sex :	
5. Email:			
6. Telephone:		7. Mobile:	

8. What are the skills you are good at?

.....

.....

.....

9. Why do you want to become a member of the General Assembly of the Youth Shadow Local Council?

.....

.....

.....

Applicant's Signature:

Application Date:

Important Notice: In case the applicant is less than 18 years old, a written approval by his /her legal guardian should be attached to the filled membership application form.

Annex No (3): Membership Application Form

Application for General Assembly Membership (double check)

1. Full Name: <i>(Four parts)</i>			
2. Address:			
3. Age:		4. Sex :	
5. Email:			
6. Telephone:		7. Mobile:	

Important Notice:

- In case the applicant is less than 18 years old, a written approval by his /her legal guardian should be attached to the filled Nomination form.
- A list of names and signature of at least 20 General Assembly members supporting the candidate's nomination should also be attached to this application (**Annex No 4**)

Applicant's Signature:

Application Date:

Annex No (4): General Assembly Members Endorsing the Applicant

List of Signatories

(To be attached to Nomination Application)

We, the undersigned, hereby declare our support and endorsement of the Nomination of Mr/Ms to the Youth Shadow Local Council elections. We sign accordingly.

	Name of General Assembly Member	Date of Birth	Signature
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

Annex No (5): Instructions to Voters

Instructions to Voters

Dear Voter:

For an electoral process with the highest levels of transparency and efficiency, make sure when you come to cast your vote that

- All forms of campaigning for any candidate are prohibited inside the polling station on polling day.
- Make sure you bring with you your identity card or your birth certificate (showing the same name you used in your application to the General Assembly).
- Make sure that you vote in the center or station where you registered your name (in case there are more than polling center or station) and that your name is in the Voters Registry for that station.
- It is strictly forbidden to take cell phones with you inside the polling station.
- Members of the Election Committee are responsible to provide you with instructions on the voting procedures. Do not hesitate to ask for their help and support.
- Make sure you use one of these signs **only (✓ or x)** in the box next to name of the candidate you want to vote for. The use of other signs will result in the cancellation of your ballot.
- Any marks or signs other than the above two on any part of the ballot paper will result in the considering your vote null and void.
- In case you made an error in casting your vote, you can return the ballot paper to the Ballot Box Officer who should provide you with a replacement in accordance with the established instructions and procedures in this regard.
- You must only vote for the specified number of candidates or less. If you vote for more candidates, your ballot paper will be considered void.
- Make sure you fold the ballot paper only once then place the paper in the slot at the top of the designated box.
- Remember, dear young voter, that voting is in the best interest of all youth. Let's have a model for free and transparent elections

Annex No (6): Minutes of Poll Opening Form

Poll Opening Report

A. Ballot Center

Location	Name of Center	Number of Ballot Stations	Station Number

B. Number of Registered voters and ballot papers:

Number of voters registered at the station in words and numbers (according to registration lists).					
Total number of Ballot cards delivered to the station					

C. Ballot Box:

Ballot Box Lock Numbers											
1.											
2.											

D. Time of Opening:

Date:	Day: dd/mm/yyyy	Comments:	
Hour:	HH:MM	AM	PM
		

E. Documentation

Name and Signatures of the Elections Supervision Committee

Name	Signature

Approvals of Project Team:

Field Coordinator:

Project Coordinator:

Project Manager:

Annex No (7): Minutes of Poll Closing Form

Poll Closing Report

A. Ballot Center

Location	Name of Center	Number of Ballot Stations	Station Number

B. Number of registered voters and ballot papers

Number of unused ballot papers (in words and numbers)					
Number of voters who casted their votes (i.e. those whose names are marked in the Voter list)					

C. Ballot Box:

Ballot Box Lock Numbers											
1.											
2.											

D. Time of Closing:

Date:	Day:	dd/mm/yyyy			Comments:		
Hour:	HH:MM	AM	PM			

E. Documentation

Name and Signatures of the Elections Supervision Committee

Name	Signature

Approvals of Project Team:

Field Coordinator:

Project Coordinator:

Project Manager:

Annex No (8): Minutes of Votes Counting and Sorting

Vote Counting and Sorting Report

A. Ballot Center

Location	Name of Center	Number of Ballot Stations	Station Number

B. Number of registered voters and ballot papers:

- Before ballot box opening (in words and numbers)

1.	Number of registered voters (according to Voters Registry)					
2.	Number of voters (whose names are marked in the Voter list)					
3.	Number of ballot papers received by the Ballot Station's committee					
4.	Number of unused (undetached) ballot papers					
5.	Number of canceled papers (which were not put into the ballot box)					

- After ballot box opening (in words and numbers)

6.	Number of ballot papers found in the ballot box					
7.	Number of correct ballot papers					
8.	Number of voided ballot papers					
9.	Number of white ballot papers					

C. Numbers Matching /Double-checking:

The following equations must be true:	True	Not True	If not matching, please clarify the reason(s)
The sum of numbers in rows 4 + 5 + 6 must be equal to the number in row 3			
The sum of numbers in rows 7 + 8 + 9 must be equal to the number in row 6			
The number of row 6 must be equal to the number of row 2			

D. Numbers of votes for each candidate (in words and numbers)

1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
Etc.						

E. Documentation

Name and Signatures of the Elections Supervision Committee

Name	Signature

Approvals of Project Team:

Field Coordinator:

Project Coordinator:

Project Manager:

Annex No (10): Indicative Calendar for Youth Council Elections

Indicative Election Calendar

Timeframe	Requirement
30 days before the date set for ballot casting.	Formation of the Elections Supervision Committee
Immediately after the formation of the Supervisory Committee.	Updating of the voters registry through the revision of names of youth affiliated to the Youth Shadow Local Council
For a minimum period of 14 days.	Opening the door for applications for the membership of the YSLC General Assembly
3 days after the closing of the membership application period (or in accordance to the actual number of General Assembly members)	Educational sessions for the youth on the YSLC and its elections
3 days after the closing of General Assembly Membership application phase and the public display of the Voter list	Challenging of Voter list
7 days after the dissemination of voter list and end of objection period.	Opening of the nomination period for candidates for YSLC elections
Immediately after the end of candidates' nomination period.	Publication of candidate list
3 days after the Publication of the candidate list	Objection to the candidate list
One day or in accordance with the number of candidates	Candidates training session and/or orientation
	Election campaigning period
Specific date and place set in accordance with the number of General Assembly members.	Elections / Ballot casting day
Immediately after the closing of ballot casting period that should also take place in the same polling station? The Supervisory Committee announces the results directly after the end of ballot counting,	Counting and announcement of elections results