Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) - Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance (CEDG) – Final Report

Building Alliances for Local Advancement Development and Investment (BALADI CAP) Lebanon

December 19, 2019
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACRONYMS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDG OVERVIEW</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA OBJECTIVE AND IMPLEMENTATION METHODS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA FINDINGS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA LEARNING</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY 1: TANNOURINE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Tannourine</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDG Interventions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA Findings</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY 2: BIKFAYA</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Bikfaya</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDG Interventions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA Findings</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY 3: AL QRAYEH</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Al Qrayeh</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDG Interventions</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA Findings</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY 4: BARJA</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Barja</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDG Interventions</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA Findings</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY 5: QOB ELIAS</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Qob Elias</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDG Interventions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA Findings</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACRONYMS

AFDC  Association for Forest Development and Conservation
AGIS  Arabia GIS
ARM  Automated Receipts Module
BALADI CAP  Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment – Capacity Building
BU  Balamand University
CBC  Capacity Building Component
CEDG  Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance
CLA  Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
CPI  Counterpart International
CSO  Civil Society Organization
4DEV  For Development
ECB  Electronic Collector Book
FBO  Faith Based Organization
FY  Fiscal Year
GCSS LWA  Global Civil Society Strengthening Leader with Associates
GIS  Geographic Information Systems
HR  Human Resource
ISO  Intermediary Support Organization
IT  Information Technology
KMP  Knowledge Management Portal
KII  Key Informant Interviews
LBP  Lebanese Pound
LU  Lebanese University
MSI  Management Systems International
MCAT  Municipal Capacity Assessment Tool
MoI  Ministry of Interior
MoIM  Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
MPOC  Municipal Public Outreach Committee
NGO  Non-Governmental Organization
OCA  Organizational Capacity Assessment
OJT  On-the-Job Training
PPP  Public Private Partnership
PTP  Public Training Program
QSC  Quick Solutions Corp
RMF  Rene Moawad Foundation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Service Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY</td>
<td>State University of New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWM</td>
<td>Solid Waste Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTAP</td>
<td>Tailored Technical Assistance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) is a conceptual framework and set of practices that aim to improve the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) effectiveness through the application of an iterative process of learning and evidence-based program adaptations. The central function of CLA is to ensure that progress toward development objectives is guided by continuous learning through analysis of a wide variety of information sources and knowledge that bring to light new best practices. This emphasis on a learning approach to development seeks out ways to improve the process of generating, capturing, sharing and using knowledge to support and improve development outcomes.

Aligning its programming with USAID, Management Systems International (MSI) integrated CLA activities into its Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment – Capacity Building (BALADI CAP) program cycle and implemented its second series of CLA activities to extract the program’s best practices and lessons learned. This report covers the CLA assessment findings and learning results under BALADI CAP’s Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance (CEDG) component.

CEDG OVERVIEW

BALADI CAP is a USAID-funded seven and a half year, civil society and municipal capacity-building Activity implemented in Lebanon by MSI, as prime technical implementing sub-partner, under the Global Civil Society Strengthening Leader with Associates (GCSS LWA) held by prime contractual partner, Counterpart International (CPI). In June 2015, the BALADI CAP Cooperative Agreement was modified to add a new component, Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance (CEDG). With CEDG, the BALADI CAP Activity was expanded to include an additional Task 3 that aimed at:

- Fostering greater civic engagement in the conduct of municipal affairs, and
- Building municipal capacity to better respond to citizens’ needs.

CEDG aimed to build the capacity of municipalities and municipal unions in the primary areas of organizational development, financial management, information technology (IT) and disaster management. CEDG also targeted local civil society organizations (CSOs) and sought to build their capacities on issues of local government transparency, citizen engagement in and oversight of municipal governance, and participatory planning. The primary objective of CEDG was to build the capacity of:

1. Thirty-five (35) Tailored Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) municipalities and municipal unions, through standard and specialized trainings; on-the-job training (OJT); and coaching and troubleshooting visits in various technical areas, such as financial management, organizational development, disaster risk management, advocacy, outreach, communication and IT.
2. Seventy (70) Public Training Program (PTP) municipalities, through standard training and “light” OJT.
3. Thirty-five (35) non-BALADI CAP CSOs working within the geographical boundaries of eligible municipalities, through targeted capacity development on issues pertaining to improving
communication and citizen engagement with municipalities and their constituents to achieve better service delivery and project implementation at the municipal level.

Slated to begin in early 2016, the implementation of CEDG was twice delayed; first, with the municipal elections of May 2016, and then by an unsuccessful attempt to find one intermediary support organization/service provider (ISO/SP) that could provide the broad range of planned capacity-building services to BALADI CAP municipal partners. Following approval by USAID, CEDG was redesigned to enable BALADI CAP to sub-contract with multiple SPs to provide the required municipal capacity-building services.

Pending the selection and signing of grant agreements with the selected municipal capacity-building SPs, BALADI CAP, through a sub-contract with a local company, implemented the following activities: (1) conducted 38 municipal benchmark assessments using the BALADI CAP-adapted Municipal Capacity Assessment Tool (MCAT), and developed 38 tailored action plans that detailed each municipality’s identified gaps and priorities and planned capacity-building interventions; and (2) provided a series of training sessions to both TTAP and PTP municipalities to enhance their board member and staff knowledge and skills in conducting key municipal functions. Training topics included municipal governance, strategic planning, budget design and implementation, fee collection, cash management and procurement.

Between October 2017 and January 2018, BALADI CAP signed grant agreements with five competitively selected municipal service providers - Association for Forests, Development and Conservation (AFDC), Arabia GIS (AGIS), Rene Moawad Foundation (RMF), For Development (4DEV), and Quick Solutions Corp (QSC) - to deliver the required capacity-building services in the following nine areas:

1. Disaster Management (AFDC)
2. Geographic Information Systems (AGIS)
3. Specialized Trainings (4DEV)
4. Internal and External Communication (QSC)
5. Automated Financial Systems (QSC)
6. Automated Complaints Systems (QSC)
7. Municipal Organization and Financial Management (RMF)
8. Strategic Planning for Local Development (RMF)
9. Advocacy and Outreach/ Communication (RMF)

By the completion of the CLA activities and close-out of CEDG in July 2019, these ISOs/SPs had concluded all activities required under their contractual agreements and had delivered innovative, practical and specialized technical assistance to BALADI CAP’s municipality partners. Specifically, QSC had fulfilled all its contractual obligations by delivering a range of IT solutions, including electronic financial management systems, complaints systems, receipt systems, fee collector books, and websites and e-mail systems to selected municipalities. AGIS delivered more than 15 GIS to municipalities, then populated those systems with financial management and cadaster data where available. Additionally, AGIS provided laminated property maps to partner municipalities as an incentive to continue using the installed GIS. 4DEV concluded all its trainings to BALADI CAP’s TTAP and PTP municipalities, raising the total number of trainings provided to 67. As planned, AFDC concluded the development of
emergency preparedness and response plans in 21 municipalities. Finally, RMF successfully concluded a range of capacity-building trainings and coaching sessions on a variety of organizational development and citizen engagement topics.

CLA OBJECTIVE AND IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

The objective of the CEDG CLA activity was to assess the effectiveness and potential sustainability of BALADI CAP’s municipal capacity-building program in achieving the stated objectives, i.e. assessing the CEDG capacity-building model for improving municipal services and fostering greater civic engagement of local governments. Emphasis was placed on assessing what worked, what did not work so well, what were internal and external impediments that limited effectiveness, how sustainability could be enhanced, and what lessons were learned that could be integrated into future capacity-building models addressing municipalities.

The CLA design originally included a series of workshops with selected municipal leaders and staff to seek their feedback on a set of pre-determined CLA questions. This design was later changed to a case study approach wherein five municipalities (out of the 35 TTAP municipalities) were selected. The case study approach was deemed more appropriate since it would (1) get more in-depth insights on the program achievements and inherent challenges and, (2) avoid placing additional demands on the municipal councils, which were already stretched under by their schedules, particularly with the intensive nature and pace of BALADI CAP’s municipal capacity-building interventions.

The five municipalities—Qob Elias, Barja, Tannourine, Bikfaya and Al Qrayeh—were selected jointly with BALADI CAP staff based on a broad range of criteria, including diversity in size, geographic location and pre-assessed effective interventions and known limitations. The in-depth case study assessments were conducted through field visits and a total of 23 key informant interviews (KIIs) with municipal leaders and staff and other relevant stakeholders, including municipal committee members, community volunteers, BALADI CAP project management and CEDG staff, and the five municipal ISOs/SPs. KIIs were supported and complemented by a desk review of BALADI CAP CEDG progress reports, selected municipalities’ benchmark assessments and action plans, municipal documents produced through BALADI CAP interventions, such as Outlook Plans, Emergency Preparedness Plans and municipal By-laws. The CEDG CLA series of activities began on June 6, 2019, with a kick-off meeting and was completed in July 2019, with the last municipal field visit.

CLA FINDINGS

Broadly speaking, the municipal case studies used a framework of questions from the CLA’s initial design which focused on assessing the effectiveness of CEDG’s municipal interventions in improving municipal services and fostering greater civic engagement of local governments. Appraisal of sustainability was

---

1 PTP municipalities were not included because their involvement with CEDG was confined to participation in general training workshops and light OJT.
2 Average of three interviewees per municipality.
challenging, however, as CEDG interventions had just been completed at the time of this CLA and shortly before project close-out. Hence, municipalities had not at that time had sufficient time to fully use and institutionalize the new skills and services.

This section summarizes the findings and conclusions that are common to the five case studies and can be generalized across the CEDG program to avoid repeating them in each case analysis. The case studies follow this section. These cross-cutting findings are as follows:

**A holistic, demand-driven capacity-building model is well-suited to the diverse needs of municipalities with varying capacity levels.** Given the wide disparities in the capacity levels, sizes, and resources of Lebanese municipalities, BALADI CAP’s capacity-building model under the TTAP program provided a highly adaptable approach based on diagnosis of municipal gaps and needs, design of tailored capacity-building plans, and delivery of customized assistance in a variety of fields relevant to municipal governance.

Capacity-building training was especially valuable because many newly elected councils had little knowledge of municipal governance issues, but it was also demanding on municipal council and staff work time. Public and specialized training and light OJT were provided to both TTAP and PTP municipalities’ councils and staff. These CEDG training workshops offered capacity-building on such topics as Feasibility Studies, Municipal Payrolls, Municipal Fixed Assets, Municipal Fees, Fiscal Stamps, Archiving and Documentation, Needs Assessment, Project Cycle Management and Proposal Writing, Gender Equality, Public Private Partnerships (PPP), and Solid Waste Management (SWM).

Almost all the interviewed municipality stakeholders noted the value of these trainings, specifically that many of the newly elected councils lacked experience and were not particularly informed about municipal work prior to their election. While appreciating the learning benefits of the CEDG training workshops, municipal stakeholders also commented on the significant time that was demanded to attend these trainings and the burden it placed on their daily work schedules, especially when they were expected to commute to Beirut.

One particular senior municipal expert, [name redacted], was consistently commended for his extensive and in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of administrative requirements and legal processes involved in municipal work. He was also praised for his continuous availability and unfailing responsiveness to participants’ queries post-training. At the same time, many interviewed trainees wished that trainings were more practical, for example by including case studies or practical applications.

**Municipal Outlook Plans offered a comprehensive analysis of the community but needed an explicit action plan.** A thorough review of the four case study outlook plans resulted in the following findings: (a) the municipal outlook plan is very useful in that it provides a comprehensive

---

3 The fifth case study, Qob Elias, did not include an outlook plan as it was not requested during the benchmark assessment.
analysis of the community’s history; availability of infrastructure; social, health, education, economic and tourism sectors; municipality; and cooperation with the local community and donor organizations; (b) the plans lacked an explicit action plan (with a list of priorities) that could “guide the municipal council work during its terms;”\(^4\) rather, they provided an overview of what exists, what is missing, and existing potential in general terms; and (c) interviewed municipalities were nevertheless satisfied with their outlook plans and commended RMF for its extensive work in delivering this document.

**Deviations from the municipal capacity-building plans were caused primarily by internal municipal shortcomings and delayed CEDG implementation.** Multiple municipal plans incurred some degree of change during the CEDG implementation phase. Some of these changes were minor, such as municipalities that declined to receive one or two of the planned capacity-building services, while others were more significant, as in the case of Bourj Hammoud withdrawing from CEDG altogether. These deviations from the agreed upon plans stemmed from two main sources:\(^5\) (a) the time gap between the signing of the action plans (end of 2016) and launching of the implementation phase (beginning of 2018), which caused uncertainty about CEDG and prompted newly elected municipalities to secure some of these services directly or through the support of other donors; and (b) internal municipal impediments, such as conflict or disagreement between members of the municipal council, inability or unwillingness of municipal staff to provide the requested data, staff unwilling or unable to accommodate change, or resistance to the introduction of new technology.

Another potential reason for the difference between the plans and what was ultimately done by municipalities was the fact that the benchmark assessments were implemented with newly elected municipal councils who were both eager to succeed and probably unaware at that time of the challenges involved in municipal work. As one municipal president explained, “We were newly elected and we wanted everything, but we did not really know much at that time about how to run a municipality.”

**Geographic Information System (GIS) technology proved to be one of the most valued technical resources provided by the program, although the system faced technical hurdles in becoming fully functional.** Municipalities that requested and received a system through BALADI CAP were effusive in describing how the GIS system had improved their operations, specifically, their financial management, municipal fee collection, real estate certification, and property mapping. At the time of the CLA activities, the GIS systems had been installed and municipal staff trained in operating them. However, technical hurdles still needed to be resolved for the municipalities to take full advantage of the GIS technology. In particular, municipalities were facing problems converting and/or inputting their data on the GIS, a task which was originally foreseen as part of the municipality’s responsibility rather than planned under the ISO/SP Arabia GIS contractual deliverables.

**The condensed program implementation time prompted more emphasis on outputs and short-term outcomes.** Due to the contextual issues that the program had faced (municipal elections and a change from a single to multiple service providers), the initial proposed timeframe for the

\(^4\) This was the stated purpose of the municipal action plan included in the signed agreements with the municipalities.

\(^5\) Reportedly, some municipalities refused to work with RMF (one of the ISOs/SPs) because of its well-known political affiliation.
implementation of the core CEDG municipal support services was confined to 15-16 months, from January 2018 until April 2019. This relatively short implementation period prompted BALADI CAP, as well as the five ISOs/SPs, to focus their efforts on completing the delivery of the planned program outputs and the achievement of short-term outcomes at the expense of being able to ensure a more in-depth change management process. This was specifically the case when a strategic planning process was replaced by a simplified strategic outlook plan, with its development confined to working only with the municipal council, an emergency preparedness plan that did not include a practical simulation that would allow stakeholders to conduct exercises on the identified plan in cases of emergencies, and an electronic complaints mechanism that was installed but not properly advertised to its communities. The challenges of working within a short timeframe were compounded by unforeseen impediments at the municipal level, such as the limited ability of municipal staff to provide ISOs/SPs with data on a timely basis, or to respond simultaneously to the data needs of multiple ISOs/SPs, and the need to attend numerous capacity-building training events.

**CLA LEARNING**
The main learning points extracted from the case study findings, document review, and feedback of CEDG leadership and five service providers are as follows:

- **BALADI CAP CEDG** has undoubtedly applied a new process and model approach in municipal capacity-building. Specifically, the TTAP component entailed a comprehensive approach to the identification of municipal gaps and needs, design of adapted capacity-building plans, and delivery of customized assistance in a variety of fields relevant to municipal work.

- **Program Time:** Time is of the essence when implementing such a comprehensive capacity-building program as was planned under CEDG. A longer time frame is necessary to enable such an effort to implement a strategic planning process that would engage community groups in planning for the development of their community, space out trainings, increase the number of OJTs, and thus ensure greater application and integration of the learning / change.

- **Benchmark Assessment – Municipal Action Plan:** It is recommended in future programs to implement a more extensive benchmark assessment and validation prior to committing to its implementation, to avoid the subjectivity and perhaps unrealistic aspirations of newly elected municipal councils. Validation would ensure that the necessary conditions for implementation (qualified staff, equipment, data availability and type of data, time commitment, etc.) exist and

---

6 A municipal strategic plan would have required at least six months per municipality to develop, along with the participation of representatives from different community groups in its development process.

7 Emergency simulations were implemented with the Red Cross and the Civil Defense, but only in a couple of communities.

8 This step is particularly important in order to practice cases of emergencies, but also to help identify the equipment and tools which will be needed for enhanced readiness in emergencies.

9 The use of an electronic complaints mechanism requires changes in behavior – instead of requesting a meeting with the council president or municipal staff - and a belief that complaints will be addressed through the system rather than simply ignored.

10 The current process engaged only with some members of the municipal council and in some cases select municipal staffs, with an average of 3 participants per municipality.
that municipal councils are aware of the extent of their own needed contributions to the success of the capacity-building process.

- **Geographic Information System**: Future programs need to consider a prior assessment of municipal technical and data issues that may impede the use of all GIS functionality and ways to address them prior to installation. Moreover, provision of GIS mapping technology should also cover additional assistance and technical support to convert and migrate existing municipal data and ultimately deliver a fully functional and populated municipal GIS database.

- **Emergency Preparedness**: Technical assistance for emergency preparedness should include training simulations on hypothetical cases of emergencies to practice the plan and ensure a rapid and efficient response. Additionally, and based on interviewed municipalities' feedback, municipalities are in need of some basic equipment and tools to be able to put emergency preparedness plans into practice. Hence, it is recommended that future programs incorporate the assessment of and provision of such basic tools and equipment to partner municipalities.

- **Strategic Planning and MPOCs**: Provided the program timeframe allows it, a strategic planning process that engages various sectors of the community would provide municipalities with strategic action plans that also reflects community priorities. Moreover, it would be advisable to form the MPOC at the beginning of the program to ensure time is available to support their work in effective outreach, communication and community organization (neighborhood committees).

- **Electronic Complaints and Municipal Reception Office**: Making a service available to the citizens does not automatically engage people to use it, particularly if this service requires a change in long established cultural behavior. An accompanying awareness campaign could have supported and encouraged such a change.

- **Municipal By-Laws**: Prior introduction of the CEDG program, coordination and agreement with Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) might have facilitated smoother and faster approval the amended municipal by-laws.

- **Capacity Building**: It is recommended that future programs merge all capacity-building trainings and OJT's relevant to municipal work, such as public procurement, fixed assets, archiving, municipal payroll, and municipal collection fees, under one service provider.\(^1\) Similar to the Capacity Building Component (CBC) component capacity-building approach, public trainings would provide municipal leadership and staff with introductory learning; they would then be followed by OJT in each municipality to reinforce the learning acquired during the group trainings and ensure it was applied and institutionalized at the municipal level.

On a final note, the CEDG program delivered mostly on the program objective of “building municipal capacity to better respond to citizens’ needs” and less on the objective of “fostering greater civic engagement in the conduct of municipal affairs.” Understandably, improving municipal governance and civic engagement is challenging for both the municipal council and its citizenry, but municipal governance

---

\(^1\) These are currently provided by both 4DEV as public trainings and at times the same subject matters repeated by RMF through their direct trainings, OJT's and technical assistance to municipal staff.
and civic engagement should not be understood only in terms of ‘improving communication’ between the municipal council and its public constituency.

**CASE STUDY 1: TANNOURINE**

**Overview of Tannourine**

Located in Caza Batroun in the North Governorate of Lebanon, Tannourine is regarded as one of the main villages/communities of Caza Batroun, with a surface area spanning 95 square kilometers (estimated to be 0.9 percent of the total surface area of Lebanon). The town of Tannourine is 80 kilometers from Beirut and 50 kilometers from Batroun, the center of the governorate.

According to the latest election records, the population of Tannourine is estimated to be 35,000, out of which 10,000 residents have left town and migrated to other countries. On the other hand, the permanent, winter season residents are estimated to be only 3,500, with this number rising to around 12,000 people during the summer. Tannourine also hosts around 400 Syrian refugees who are living in rented dwellings. Prior to the war in Syria, these refugees worked in Tannourine as daily labor in the agriculture and construction sectors. When the war broke out, these laborers brought their families to Lebanon to get them out of harm’s way. According to the local municipality, the Syrian refugees living in Tannourine do not constitute a heavy burden on the local infrastructure or local services due to their small number.

Elected in 2016, the municipal council is composed of 18 members, all men. This council won the municipal elections competing as members of one list, which had secured around 60 percent of the local votes. Council members are generally professional and technical people with degrees and work experience in a variety of fields, such as engineers, doctors, lawyers and topographers. The six-year presidency of the council was agreed to be split evenly between Mr. Baha’a Bou Merheb Harb (2016-2019) and Mr. Sami Yousef Yousef (2019–2022). At the time of this CLA, Mr. Sami Yousef, who initially acted as the municipality’s contact person for BALADI CAP, had recently taken over as council president. Women comprise around 23 percent of the municipality’s personnel, with 7 females out of a total of 31 municipal staff. Although the current municipal council does not include any women, they were elected to the council in the past. Tannourine has been a member of the Batroun Union of Municipalities since its inception in 2002.

**CEDG Interventions**

CEDG interventions with the newly elected Tannourine municipal council were launched with a benchmark assessment on August 4, 2016. Using a simplified version of the MCAT tool, the benchmark assessment reviewed the state of the municipality on the basis of the six main pillars – Organizational Development, Information Technology, Financial Management and Financial Planning, Strategic Planning for Local Development, Public Outreach to Local Community and Responsiveness and Management of Emergencies. The benchmark assessment identified the gaps and municipal capacity-building needs and
priorities based on the six MCAT pillars and components under each, enabling BALADI CAP CEDG technical specialists, with the support of the municipal council, to design a municipal capacity-building action plan. The Tannourine plan, which was signed on December 27, 2016, comprised capacity-building interventions through public and specialized workshops, coaching and light OJT, and related services that aimed to deliver on the following objectives/outputs:

- Amending and updating the municipal by-laws to include detailed job descriptions;
- Improving the financial department’s performance with respect to budget planning and implementation, collection of municipal and other fees, accounting and financial practices, procurement and contracting of works, supplies and services, and record keeping of municipal fixed assets;
- Developing a municipal action plan to guide the work of the municipal council during its term;
- Forming a committee to provide a communication channel with local communities;
- Designing an emergency response and management plan and a plan for the upkeep of public safety;
- Installing a GIS.

Implementation of CEDG’s direct capacity-building interventions other than the training workshops was delayed until the end of December 2017–early January 2018, when the selected ISOs/SPs were retained to provide the following interventions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Capacity Development - Service Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGIS</td>
<td>Needs assessment, training on GIS, coaching visits, OJTs, GIS installation, Peer-to-Peer Learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The benchmark assessment provides a numeric value to each of the components/pillars on the basis of which a post-benchmark assessment, to be conducted at the end of the CEDG capacity building cycle, appraises whether the CEDG interventions have reached their targets. This post benchmark assessment was being implemented at the time of the CLA field research, and its results will be reported in the quarterly/final project report. This case study provides a qualitative review of the CEDG interventions with the municipality.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Capacity Development - Service Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

CLA Findings

A field visit to the municipality and interviews with CEDG stakeholders, particularly the president of Tannourine’s municipal council and selected municipal staff, produced the following findings:

Outlook Plan. The municipal outlook plan came about as a result of the time and effort invested by RMF consultants in researching and collecting information from municipal and other sources, lengthy meetings with a number of municipal council members and staff, and review and correction of preliminary drafts until a final copy of the outlook plan was approved by the municipal council. As noted earlier, the outlook plan offers a comprehensive view of the community of Tannourine and in that sense, is a valuable resource document. Only the last couple of paragraphs, however, provide a list of objectives in general terms and based mainly on the council election campaign. The process of developing the municipal outlook plan did not involve any community members or groups and thus missed a potential opportunity to foster greater civic engagement in the conduct of municipal affairs. Nevertheless, the municipality was satisfied overall with the process implemented by RMF, as well as the end result.

Municipal By-Laws. The outdated municipal by-laws were amended, and a new revised version with detailed job descriptions was delivered to the municipal council which approved it. Tannourine municipality submitted the revised by-laws to the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Municipalities for endorsement and will be following up on the endorsement process as the by-laws have to go through two internal control departments of the Ministry before they are legally approved.\(^{13}\)

Emergency Response Plan. AFDC managed the process of emergency preparedness with the municipality through training workshops, OJT’s, committee formation, SWOT analysis, risk profiling, and mitigation and preparedness planning, resulting at the end of the process in the drafting of an emergency response plan that maps major risks and details projected responses. Two points are notable: (a) While Tannourine fully cooperated with AFDC throughout the process, participants considered their major emergency to be the marketing of local apple production rather than some hypothetical manmade or natural disasters;\(^{14}\) (b) the addition of a simulation training on a hypothetical emergency scenario would

\(^{13}\) While some BALADI CAP municipalities managed to secure the ministry’s approval of their revised by-laws, others have on-going points of contention with the ministry, for a variety of reasons.

\(^{14}\) This speaks to a lack of awareness about emergency readiness and disaster management, which is becoming a major need with recent environmental changes.
have greatly benefitted the committee in helping it put the plan into practice and thus assess response readiness.

**Assets Management Records.** Although an element of its agreed-upon plan, the municipality sent BALADI CAP an apology letter declining this technical assistance on the grounds of internal impediments. During the interview, the municipal president clarified that the municipal employee in charge of this kind of work was old, retiring soon, and unable to integrate new learning, specifically inputting data on a computer. According to the president, the municipality would attend to this task when new staff are hired following the retirement of the current employee.

**GIS.** Partner municipalities considered GIS mapping technology to be an essential asset that could improve the speed, efficiency and quality of a number of essential municipal functions and services, such as financial management, municipal fee collection, real estate certification, and property mapping. As the service provider, Arabia GIS delivered, installed and trained relevant municipal staff on the management and use of the GIS and was proposing at the end of CEDG to handle its maintenance through a service contract to be signed directly with the municipality. At the time of this CLA, the system was not yet fully functional as it was still in need of some adjustments. Specifically, the municipalities faced technical problems with converting and migrating the existing municipal data to the GIS.

**Municipal Public Outreach Committee.** A primary step in the CEDG program design that aimed to foster greater civic engagement was the formation of a MPOC. This committee, formed from council members and community representatives, is tasked with supporting two-way communication channels between the municipality and the local community. Under the direction of RMF, the municipality formed its MPOC on October 10, 2018, with an eight-member team. This committee subsequently received communications skills training through RMF and were discussing a small CEDG grant of around $30,000 to help launch communications activities. CLA interviews found that the committee was somewhat disappointed with RMF’s communications training, which they felt was very basic. The interviews also showed that the committee was still discussing the CEDG seed grant and no major MPOC communication activities had yet been implemented.

**Public and Specialized Trainings.** Tannourine’s municipal president, selected council members and staff attended trainings provided through 4DEV. Participant feedback collected during the CLA field visit confirmed the following: (a) training subject matter was relevant to the trainees’ scopes of work; (b) trainings were beneficial in that they provided trainees with the correct legal processes to conduct their work and at times, corrected ineffective practices and (c) trainings were appreciated overall, though one or two participants had expected more on-the-job follow up after the trainings. One municipal staff reported that he relied on the learning acquired during the feasibility study training to develop a project proposal, which was later submitted to the Japanese embassy and received preliminary funding approval. Another staff said that he had accessed BALADI CAP’s KM Portal Help Line, posted a question and received a satisfactory response that facilitated more effective municipal work/services.
Summary
BALADI CAP’s CEDG component delivered on most of Tannourine municipality’s capacity-building action plan, with the exception of the asset management records activity due to some limitations within the municipality. The MPOC was formed but had not undertaken any action that would enable assessment of its viability as a communication channel for municipal engagement with the community. Overall, the municipality was satisfied with the technical assistance and other services provided through the CEDG, but it was disappointed that the GIS was not yet fully functional, specifically in light of the functionality that the system can provide when fully enabled.

CASE STUDY 2: BIKFAYA

Overview of Bikfaya
Bikfaya is in Caza Maten, in the Governorate of Mount Lebanon. Bikfaya is located between 650 and 1,200 meters above sea level and is 25 kilometers from Beirut. With a total surface area of 5.5 square kilometers, Bikfaya is designated as the administrative center of Northern Maten.

According to the latest election records, the population of Bikfaya is estimated at 5,000 residents. This number goes down to 4,500 in the winter season when some residents move down to the coast for work or education purposes. Additionally, according to the municipal police records, 250 Syrian refugees are currently living in Bikfaya in rented dwellings and work as laborers in agriculture or construction. Bikfaya had hosted a much higher number of Syrian refugees in the past, reaching 2,000 individuals at one point. This additional number of residents caused increased pressure on municipal services and infrastructure and created the need for additional measures to avoid potential security incidents. To address the situation, the municipality imposed a tax of 1,000 Lebanese Pounds (LBP) on each Syrian refugee residing in Bikfaya. Although this measure was deemed illegal and was ultimately cancelled, the number of Syrians in Bikfaya fell to 250.

Elected in 2016, the municipal council is composed of 15 members, 13 men and two women, with a woman elected as council president. This is not the first time that a woman is elected as president of the Bikfaya municipal council, as this also happened in the 2010 elections. This council competed and won the municipal elections as members of one list, which suggests a shared vision and consistent development outlook. Members of the council include professional and technical people from a variety of fields such as law, medicine, engineering, industry and commerce. Some members of this municipal council had previous experience in municipal work and were active in the service of their community prior to their election. The Bikfaya municipal council is supported by fifty-two municipal staff, some of whom are full-time, while others are contractually hired or work as daily laborers. Around 40% of the municipal staff are women, and the municipality is supported by a number of women volunteers who provide active assistance to it. The municipality is also seeking to enroll women in its own police force. The Bikfaya municipality is a member of the Northern Maten Union of Municipalities instituted in 1979 and is composed of 30 municipalities.
CEDG Interventions
CEDG interventions with the newly elected Bikfaya municipal council were launched with a benchmark assessment on September 6, 2016. Using a simplified version of the MCAT, the benchmark assessment reviewed the state of Bikfaya municipality on the basis of six main pillars – Organizational Development, Information Technology, Financial Management and Financial Planning, Strategic Planning for Local Development, Public Outreach to Local Community and Responsiveness and Management of Emergencies. The benchmark assessment identified municipal capacity-building needs and priorities on the basis of the six MCAT pillars and components under each, enabling BALADI CAP’s CEDG Technical Specialists with the support of the municipal council to design a municipal capacity-building action plan. This plan, which was signed on December 9, 2016, comprised capacity-building interventions including public and specialized workshops, coaching and light OJT, and related services that aimed to deliver on the following objectives/outputs:

- Amending and updating the municipal by-laws, to include detailed job descriptions;
- Improving financial department performance with respect to the collection of municipal and other fees, and accounting and financial practices;
- Developing a municipal action plan to guide the work of the municipal council during its term;
- Developing a communications mechanism with the local community through the institution of a communications committee, use of social media channels, and assistance in preparing and publishing of the municipal work report;
- Improving the municipality’s capacity to respond to citizen complaints through a hotline;
- Designing an emergency response and management plan and a plan for the upkeep of public safety;
- Studying the possibility of providing the municipality with a GIS to computerize its financial and administrative data.

The launch of CEDG’s direct capacity-building interventions, other than the training workshops, was delayed until the end of December 2017–early January 2018, when ISOs/SPs were selected to provide the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Capacity Development - Service Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGIS</td>
<td>Bikfaya municipality had started a project with Balamand University (BU) to provide them with technical assistance and GIS mapping technology. They therefore declined BALADI CAP’s offer. A change of leadership in BU caused Bikfaya to be dropped from that project, and the municipality ended up without a GIS system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSC</td>
<td>A website, originally in the plan, was developed by the municipality from its own resources in the period before CEDG launched its direct interventions. OJT on municipal financial applications – financial management applications. OJT and installation of an Electronic Complaints System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Provider</td>
<td>Capacity Development - Service Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OJT, installation and provision of Electronic Collector Books (ECBs).</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HR By-laws:</strong> Assessment of current by-laws, meetings and OJT, delivery of updated municipal by-laws.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipal Outlook Plan:</strong> Data Collection, OJT and drafting of a Municipal Outlook Plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formation and training of a MOPC.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching and drafting of the annual municipal report and Communication Guidelines.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipal participation in the following public and specialized training workshops:</strong> Municipal Payroll, Fixed Assets, Gender Equality, Feasibility Studies, PPP, Community Needs Assessment, Project Cycle Management and Proposal Writing, Public and Private Property and Commons, Financial Stamps.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLA Findings**

A field visit to the municipality and interviews with CEDG stakeholders, particularly the president of Bikfaya municipal council and selected municipal staff, produced the following findings:

**Outlook Plan.** The Bikfaya outlook plan was the result of meetings conducted by RMF consultants with selected municipal council members. Information collected during these meetings was augmented with data collection from municipal and other sources and organized into a final draft outlook plan that was submitted to the municipality for endorsement. At the time of this CLA, the outlook plan was being reviewed by the municipal council for final approval. The Bikfaya outlook plan offers a comprehensive view of the community of Bikfaya, making it a valuable resource document. But it lacks a well-developed action plan that identifies key priorities to be implemented during the council term and was developed without engagement from the community.

**Municipal By-Laws.** As the ISO/SP, RMF conducted a rapid assessment of the existing municipal by-laws and through regular consultations with relevant municipal staff, introduced needed amendments and submitted the final draft to the municipal council for review and approval. At the time of the CLA field visit, and despite regular RMF follow ups, the draft was still under review by some council members. Eventually, the municipality ended up accepting the draft by-laws and indicated that they would decide later how to proceed with its final endorsement and submission to the relevant ministerial departments.

**Emergency Response Plan.** AFDC managed the process of emergency preparedness with Bikfaya municipality through training workshops, OJT, committee formation, SWOT analysis, risk profiling, and mitigation and preparedness planning, resulting at the end of the process with a draft emergency response plan that maps major risks and details projected responses. The municipality was satisfied overall with the process implemented by AFDC and the emergency response plan, which was noticeably displayed along with other information brochures and municipal leaflets. The municipality president
commented during the CLA interview on the need for “tangible assistance” to support the implementation of the plan in the form of tools and small equipment.

**GIS.** At the start of CEDG, BALADI CAP conducted a rapid assessment on GIS and based on the results, decided to provide GIS capacity building to 15 municipalities, including the municipality of Bikfaya. However, the Bikfaya municipal council declined BALADI CAP’s assistance so as not to duplicate a similar activity they had planned with Balamand University (BU). BALADI CAP learned later that unfortunately, the BU program was put on hold and the municipality lost the opportunity to secure this very important municipal asset through CEDG.

**Electronic Financial Management.** The municipality benefitted in the past from USAID assistance through the State University of New York (SUNY) in the form of an electronic financial management system. However, this system was not fully functional due to inadequate maintenance and/or a lack of properly trained staff. As the CEDG ISO/SP, QSC addressed the outstanding technical issues and trained municipal staff on the electronic financial management program. As a result of QSC’s technical assistance, the municipality is now able to manage its financial operations and issue all its invoices through the electronic financial program.

**Municipal Public Outreach Committee.** A primary step in the CEDG program design that aimed “to foster greater civic engagement” is the formation of a MPOC. This committee – formed from council members and community representatives - is tasked with supporting two-way communication channels between the municipality and the local community. Under the direction of RMF, the municipality formed its MPOC with six members. While the municipality has delivered on its governance commitment by forming the MPOC, they argued during the CLA interview that the communications tasks of this committee were already being carried out through the various means by which the municipality communicates with its constituency, such as SMS, municipal Facebook pages (the official page and others that the municipality opens during the summer festival, or other municipal events like Bibickfaya and Biclean), Instagram, door-to-door, women volunteers and other committees, and a recent survey that was designed to assess the local communities’ opinion on certain municipal matters.15

**Municipal Website.** The capacity-building plan initially included the development of a municipal website. Due to delays in CEDG start-up, the municipality outsourced the design and development of its website to a company. The website was not yet up on the internet at the time of the CLA because the municipality was still working on developing its online content, which would be made available in three languages.

**Electronic Collector Books.** ECBs facilitate more efficient municipal fee collection and maintenance of updated records. The municipal collector is provided with an electronic tablet where he inputs all transactions as they occur in the field and then automatically updates the municipal records when he logs in at the municipality. QSC provided the ECB and trained municipal staff on its use.

15 The municipality reported that out of the hundreds of surveys placed in major shops in the community, they received back only 60 completed surveys.
**Electronic Complaints System.** QSC installed an electronic complaints system and trained relevant municipal staff on its use. The electronic complaints system will allow Bikfaya residents to inform the municipality about outstanding grievances by filling out a form and emailing it, rather than coming to the municipality to file a complaint in person. The written complaint record is then forwarded to the relevant municipal staff responsible for addressing the complaint. Following the municipality’s review of the complaint, the person who filed the complaint is notified by SMS of the outcome. In principle, the electronic complaints system will enhance municipal accountability and improve response time to citizens’ concerns. The new electronic complaint system of Bikfaya municipality had not yet gained much traction with the local population, possibly because it was not properly advertised to citizens who need time to change their traditional behavior.

**Public and Specialized Trainings.** Bikfaya’s municipal president, selected council members and staff attended the trainings provided through ISO/SP 4DEV. Participant feedback collected during the CLA field visit confirmed the following: (a) training subject matter was relevant and beneficial to trainees and provided them with the correct legal processes to conduct their work and at times, corrected ineffective practices; and (b) trainings were appreciated overall, although the extent of benefits varied among trainees, with experienced staff reporting impact as “confirmation of what they already know and have been correctly practicing.” In addition to the direct benefits of the training, municipal staff reported that the trainings afforded a space where municipalities met, networked and discussed common issues of concern.

**Annual Report and Communications Guidelines.** Additional services provided to the Bikfaya municipality through RMF were in the form of technical assistance to support the municipality in the design and drafting of its annual report and enhance the effectiveness of its online communication through trainings and the provision of online communications guidelines. Both these services were delivered, and the municipality was satisfied with the end results.

**Summary**

BALADI CAP’s CEDG managed the delivery of all outputs planned under the Bikfaya capacity-building plan. At the time of the CLA fieldwork, some outputs were still in progress, such as the by-laws which needed to be approved by the municipal council and endorsed by the MoIM. The MPOC was formed but had not undertaken any action that would enable assessment of its viability as a communication channel for public engagement. The municipality is already communicating with its constituency through other means, mostly online, which according to the municipality presents a challenge to older residents who are not familiar with the internet. On a final note, the president of the municipality recommended that (a) the benchmark assessment should be more-in-depth and take into consideration the specifics of each municipality (for them it was road safety), and (b) the training program should take into consideration municipal staff time and their intensive work load.
CASE STUDY 3: AL QRAYEH

Overview of Al Qrayeh

Al Qrayeh is in Caza Saida, in the Governorate of South Lebanon, at an altitude of 150-200 meters above sea level and a distance of 50 kilometers from Beirut. With a total surface area of 4.75 square kilometers, Al Qrayeh is considered the second largest village of the Caza.

According to municipal election records, the population of Al Qrayeh is estimated to be 2,862 residents, out of which only 1,880 are currently living in the village. The number of actual residents is much higher, estimated by the local municipality to be 5,355 persons. The increase, which happened over the past two decades, was primarily due to families relocating to Al Qrayeh in search of a safer living environment during times of security risks. Additionally, according to municipal police records, 952 Syrians have sought refuge in the village, bringing the total number of residents to around 6,307 persons. The rapid increase in the resident population, along with the influx of Syrian refugees, has burdened local infrastructure and municipal services.

Elected in 2016, the 12-member municipal council is composed of 11 men and one woman. The effective number of council members is 10, due to the recusal of one member and the forced resignation of another owing to a legal issue, namely a parental relationship with another elected council member, which is forbidden by law. Al Qrayeh municipal council members are from two different and competing electoral lists. Members include professionals in the fields of civil, electrical and mechanical engineering, and urban planning.

The municipal council is supported by four full-time municipal staff and 13 contract workers serving as treasurer, administrative clerk, collection officer, policemen, and agricultural and cleaning workers. Due to the central government hiring freeze, Al Qrayeh municipality has major gaps in key technical and administrative positions needed to support planning and development. Al Qrayeh municipal staff includes one woman (the administrative clerk). The municipality does not own a municipal building and is currently operating from two rooms in the local youth club. Al Qrayeh municipality has been a member of the Saida-Al Zahrani Union of Municipalities since 2000.

CEDG Interventions

CEDG interventions with the newly elected Al Qrayeh municipal council were launched with a benchmark assessment conducted on March 16, 2017. Using a simplified version of the MCAT tool, the benchmark assessment reviewed the state of Al Qrayeh municipality according to six main pillars – Organizational Development, Information Technology, Financial Management and Financial Planning, Strategic Planning for Local Development, Public Outreach to Local Community and Responsiveness and Management of Emergencies. The benchmark assessment identified municipal capacity-building needs and priorities based on the six MCAT pillars and components under each, thereby enabling BALADI CAP CEDG technical specialists with the support of the municipal council to design a municipal capacity-building action plan. The Al Qrayeh municipal capacity-building plan, dated March 21, 2017, comprised public and specialized workshops, coaching and light OJT, and related services that aimed to deliver on the following objectives/outputs:
• Amending and updating municipal by-laws to include detailed job descriptions;
• Enhancing the work of the municipal council through improving council members’ capacities and activating the work of municipal committees;
• Improving the financial department’s performance in budget planning, collection of municipal and other fees, accounting and financial practices, procurement and contracting of works, and supplies and services;
• Developing a municipal action plan to guide the work of the municipal council during its term;
• Strengthening municipal capacities to engage its community in planning and empowering women for municipal work;
• Developing a communications mechanism with the local community through the institution of a communications committee, in addition to assistance in preparing and publishing the municipal work report;
• Considering the possibility of providing the municipality with an archiving system and GIS mapping technology to computerize its financial and administrative data.

Implementation of CEDG’s direct capacity-building interventions, other than the training workshops, was launched at the end of December 2017–early January 2018, with selected ISOs/SPs providing the following interventions over the course of the capacity-building cycle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Capacity Development - Service Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGIS</td>
<td>Needs assessment, training on GIS, coaching visits, OJTs, GIS installment, Peer-to-Peer learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSC</td>
<td>Workshop and OJTs on municipal financial applications – financial management applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMF</td>
<td>HR By-laws: Assessment of current by-laws, meetings and OJT, delivery of updated municipal by-laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving municipal committees’ work: OJT and terms of reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget Preparation: OJT and budget preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal Procurement System: Coaching on and delivery of a municipal procurement system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal Outlook Plan: Visits, meetings, data collection, and drafting of a Municipal Outlook Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formation and training of a MOPC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching and drafting of the annual municipal report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLA Findings

A field visit to the municipality and interviews with CEDG stakeholders, particularly the president of the municipality and some council members, resulted in the following findings:

**Outlook Plan.** The process for developing the municipal outlook plan, as described by the president of Al Qrayeh municipality, differed from that in the other municipalities. The process was launched with a general community meeting with 65 people, followed by the formation of a committee of seven community representatives to cooperate with RMF in providing research information and data for the drafting of the municipal outlook plan. The process of developing the plan engaged the community. The document itself, though, is similar to the other municipal outlook plans in that it offers a comprehensive outlook of the community of Al Qrayeh, but lacks a well-developed action plan. Still, the president of the municipality was satisfied with this CEDG service. According to him, “the plan provided me with a ‘bank’\(^{16}\) of objectives.”

**Municipal By-Laws.** As the ISO/SP, RMF conducted a rapid assessment of the existing municipal by-laws and, through consultations and OJT with the relevant municipal staff, introduced needed amendments and submitted the final draft to the municipal council for review and approval. At the time of the CLA field visit, the municipal council was awaiting guidance from the MoIM as to whether municipal staff ought to be enrolled in the social security scheme or the civil servants’ cooperative before approving the revised version of the municipal by-laws and submitting it to the ministry for its endorsement.

**GIS.** As noted earlier, GIS mapping technology was considered by partner municipalities as an essential asset that can improve the speed, efficiency and quality of a number of essential municipal functions and services, such as financial management, municipal fee collection, real estate certification and property mapping. As the ISO/SP, Arabia GIS delivered, installed and trained relevant municipal staff on the management and use of the system. At the time of this CLA, the system was not yet fully functional as it was facing technical problems in converting and migrating existing municipal data to the GIS database. The problem of populating the GIS database with the municipal financial data was complicated by the fact that the electronic financial system is managed by a different service provider—a competitor company which might not be willing to cooperate.

**Electronic Financial Management.** The municipality benefitted in the past from USAID assistance through SUNY, in the form of an electronic financial management system. Prior to CEDG, the municipality was able to use only the most basic functions of the system due to limited knowledge of the municipal staff and, in all probability, lack of proper maintenance and system updates. As a result of QSC’s technical assistance, training and OJT, the municipality is now able to make use of all system functionalities, such as tracking and managing municipal fee collection, income and expenses, budgeting and other financial operations.

---

\(^{16}\) Meaning a set of objectives or targets.
**Municipal Public Outreach Committee.** A primary step in the CEDG program design that aimed “to foster greater civic engagement” is the formation of the MPOC. This committee – formed from council members and community representatives - is tasked with supporting two-way communication between the municipality and the local community. Under RMF direction, the municipality formed a seven-member MPOC. RMF then provided communications skills training. The municipal president was a firm believer in community engagement with the municipality and had already been working (prior to CEDG) on enhancing public engagement through various means, including: (a) a municipal website that not only publishes municipal information but also allows citizens to submit their suggestions, comments and complaints to the municipality; (b) various community committees that support the municipality in planning for various sectors or engaging with donors, such as the committee that coordinates with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) environmental tourism project; (c) social media communication through Facebook where the municipality provides updates and invites them to comment or make complaints; (d) SMS messaging and others. At the time of the CLA fieldwork, the president was planning a town hall meeting – a public accountability session to present the municipality’s achievements at the end of its first three-year term. According to the president, with all these efforts, public engagement, which had been practically non-existent previously, was picking up momentum.

**Public and Specialized Trainings.** The Al Qrayeh municipal president, select council members and staff attended training provided by 4DEV. Participant feedback collected during the CLA field visit confirmed the following: (a) training subject matter was relevant to the trainees’ scopes of work; (b) trainings were beneficial by providing trainees with the correct legal processes to conduct their work and corrected some ineffective practices; (c) trainings were especially appreciated by the president of the municipality who had no prior experience in municipal work or the public sector.

**Other Services.** In addition to the above, RMF provided Al Qrayeh with additional technical assistance through OJT and sample municipal formats in the following areas: Public procurement training; municipal annual report; municipal budgeting; municipal committee work; and archiving with the provision of an archiving manual.

**Summary**

BALADI CAP’s CEDG managed the delivery of all outputs planned under the Al Qrayeh municipal capacity-building plan. Some of these outputs needed additional work before they could be fully operational, such as the GIS. Other outputs were in progress, such as by-laws that had to be approved by the municipal council and endorsed by the MoIM. The MPOC was formed but had not undertaken any action as of the time of field work. The president of Al Qrayeh municipality strongly recommended that such a program continue to provide technical assistance, training and other support services to municipalities across Lebanon, given municipal needs and the unavailability of such support from the ministry.

---

17 We note that the RMF OJT with the committee took place in March and May 2019, which did not provide much time for this committee to launch its work with the community as of the time of the CLA visit.
CASE STUDY 4: BARJA

Overview of Barja
Located in Caza Shouf in the Governorate of Mount Lebanon, Barja is administratively one of the villages of Iqlim el Kharroub. With a total surface area of 7.29 square kilometers, Barja is situated at an altitude ranging between 300 and 450 meters above sea level, and is 34 kilometers south of Beirut.

There are no accurate statistics on the population of Barja, but an estimate based on fee collection lists indicates that it may have approximately 30,000 people. It should be noted that election records list only 16,000 people. In addition to the original Barjawi, the village hosts around 5,000 more people who relocated to Barja from Beirut and neighboring communities for safety and stability reasons during the events of 2006, or due to lower real estate costs in Barja. The number of Barja residents is further inflated by 9,000 Syrian refugees who sought refuge in the village. This brings the total number of Barja residents to around 44,000 persons. The rapid increase in population placed additional demand on municipal services and community infrastructure. This challenge is compounded by the large number of Syrian refugees competing with local labor and Lebanese commercial shops and businesses.

Elected in 2016, the municipal council is composed of 18 members which is made up of 17 men and one woman (a lawyer). Members come from two electoral lists, with 15 members from one and three from the other. Following the elections, the council members agreed to divide the council presidency into two three-years terms, with the first term ending in June 2019. The handover to the second-term council president took place a week before the CLA field visit. Some members of this municipal council had prior experience in municipal work while others were new to this field.

The council is supported by a team of five full-time staff which includes a treasurer, administrative clerk, collection officer, health monitor and policemen, as well as 13 contract hires. Three staff are women. Reportedly, Barja municipality has numerous staffing needs, specifically for technical specialists. Women in Barja are active through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social, cultural, sports and other clubs. Barja municipality is a member of the Northern Iqlim El Kharroub Union of Municipalities, which was instituted in 1998 and is currently composed of 17 member municipalities.

CEDG Interventions
CEDG interventions with the newly elected Barja municipal council were launched with a benchmark assessment on September 20, 2016. Using a simplified version of the MCAT, the benchmark assessment reviewed the state of Barja municipality according to six pillars – Organizational Development, Information Technology, Financial Management and Financial Planning, Strategic Planning for Local Development, Public Outreach to Local Community and Responsiveness and Management of Emergencies – and their subcomponents. The benchmark assessment identified gaps and municipal
capacity-building needs,\textsuperscript{19} enabling BALADI CAP’s CEDG technical specialists with the support of the municipal council to design a municipal capacity-building action plan. The Barja capacity-building plan, which was signed on December 13, 2016, consisted of public and specialized workshops, coaching and light OJT, and related services that aimed to deliver on the following objectives/outputs:

- Amending and updating municipal by-laws to include detailed job descriptions;
- Improving the financial department’s performance in collection of municipal and other fees, accounting and financial practices, procurement and contracting of works, supplies and services;
- Developing a municipal action plan to guide the work of the municipal council during its term;
- Strengthening municipal capacities to engage its local constituency and empower women for municipal work;
- Developing a communications mechanism with the local community through the institution of a communications committee, use of social media channels, a hotline, and assistance in preparing and publishing of the municipal work report;
- Improving the municipality’s capacity to respond to citizen complaints through a hotline;
- Designing an emergency response and management plan and plan for upkeep of public safety;
- Improving the municipality’s capacity to manage Syrian refugee case files;
- Considering the possibility of providing the municipality with an archiving system and GIS mapping technology to computerize its financial and administrative data.

Implementation of CEDG’s direct capacity-building interventions, other than the training workshops, began at the end of December 2017–early January 2018, with the selected ISOs/SPs providing the following interventions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Capacity Development - Service Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGIS</td>
<td>Needs assessment, training on GIS, coaching visits, OJT &amp; GIS installation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMF</td>
<td>HR By-laws: Barja municipality had already updated their by-laws prior to RMF intervention and therefore did not need additional assistance in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training, OJT and Archiving Manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop on municipal procurement systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal Outlook Plan: Data Collection, OJT and drafting of a Municipal Outlook Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formation and training of a MOPC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching and drafting of the annual municipal report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{19} The benchmark assessment provides a numeric value to each of the pillar components. A post-benchmark assessment, to be conducted at the end of the capacity building cycle, appraises whether CEDG interventions reached their targets. This post-benchmark assessment was being implemented at the time of the CLA field visit, and its results were to be reported in the quarterly/final project report. This case study provides a qualitative review of CEDG interventions with the municipality.
CLA Findings

A field visit to the municipality and interviews with CEDG stakeholders, particularly the new and previous presidents of the municipal council and selected of municipal staff, produced the following findings:

**Outlook Plan.** The Barja municipal outlook plan came about as a result of meetings conducted by RMF consultants with selected municipal council members. Information collected during these meetings was augmented with research and data collection from municipal and other sources and organized into a final draft outlook plan which was later submitted to the municipality for endorsement. During the CLA interview, municipal leadership indicated that the outlook plan provided them with a “broad outline and overview of Barja” as a community, but that their aim went beyond this “simplified community outlook.” Due to the dearth of information and data available on Barja, the municipality partnered with the Lebanese University (LU) to implement a large research survey project to collect information and statistical data on Barja’s population, housing units, available infrastructure, existing businesses, etc. When collected and analyzed with the assistance of LU experts, this data base would give the municipality a more accurate picture of the community and allow it to plan municipal services and development activities.\(^{20}\)

**GIS.** As noted earlier, GIS mapping technology is considered by partner municipalities as an essential asset to municipal service delivery, as it can improve the speed, efficiency and quality of a number of essential municipal functions such as financial management, municipal fee collection, real estate certification and property mapping. Arabia GIS delivered, installed and trained relevant municipal staff on the management and use of the system. Unfortunately, at the time of this CLA, the system was experiencing some technical hurdles. Various solutions were discussed to address the issues of slow internet connection, such as replacing the present GIS with an offline version, and of migrating and converting current financial data, which is managed by another service provider, to the system.

**Emergency Response Plan.** AFDC managed the process of emergency preparedness with the Barja municipality through training workshops, OJT, committee formation, SWOT analysis, risk profiling, and mitigation and preparedness planning, resulting at the end of the process in the drafting of an emergency response plan that maps major risks and details projected responses. The municipality was satisfied overall with the process implemented by AFDC and with the emergency response plan. They noted that they would have also liked, if possible, to practice on a hypothetical emergency simulation exercise to assess response readiness.

\(^{20}\) The project had not been completed at the time of the CLA.
Municipal Public Outreach Committee. To foster civic engagement, RMF helped the municipality form a MPOC. Barja’s committee, made up of 12 council members and community representatives, was tasked with supporting two-way communication channels between the municipality and the local community. The committee received communications skills training through RMF and, at the time of CLA field work, were discussing a small CEDG grant of around $[REDACTED] to help launch communications activities. The municipal leadership noted during the CLA interview that they agreed with the ‘communication purpose’ of the committee, as it aligned with election campaign promises to form neighborhood committees, but they had not yet begun implementation.

Municipal By-Laws. The outdated municipal by-laws were amended and the revised version, including detailed job descriptions, was delivered to the municipal council which reviewed it, introduced some changes and then approved the final version. The amended by-laws were to be submitted to the MoIM to be processed and legally approved as of the time of CLA field work.

Public and Specialized Trainings. Selected council members and staff attended the trainings provided through 4DEV. Participant feedback collected during the CLA field visit confirmed that training subject matter was relevant to trainees’ scopes of work and trainings provided trainees with correct legal processes by which to conduct their work and corrected some ineffective practices.

Other Services. In addition to the above, RMF provided Barja municipality with technical assistance and trainings on the following subject matter: Public procurement training, municipal annual report, and archiving system with the provision of an archiving manual. During the CLA interview, the president of the municipality noted that they were not able to implement the archiving training and use the archiving system because the staff in charge of this work was “set in his old ways” and not open to change.

Summary

BALADI CAP’s CEDG delivered on the majority of services planned under the Barja capacity-building plan with the exception of the institution of a hotline, use of social media channels, and assistance to improve municipality’s capacity to manage the Syrian crisis. Some CEDG assistance needed additional work before it was fully operational, such as the GIS system, while other interventions, such as the by-laws, were not finalized or approved (when they are endorsed by the MoIM). The MPOC was formed but had not undertaken any action yet. The archiving system was not implemented due to internal municipal challenges.

CASE STUDY 5: QOB ELIAS

Overview of Qob Elias

Qob Elias, an administrative division of the Beka’a Governorate, is located in Caza Zahleh in eastern Lebanon at an elevation of 950 meters above sea level. It lies at a distance of 15 kilometers from Zahlé, the center of the Caza, and 53 kilometers from Beirut. With a surface area of 41 square kilometers, Qob Elias represents the third largest city in Bekaa in terms of territory, after Zahlel and Baalbeck.
It is estimated that Qob Elias has a population of around 50,000, and the town is hosting an estimated 25,000 Syrian refugees, bringing the total number of residents to 75,000. This increase in population triggered additional demand on municipal services and is heavily taxing community infrastructure.

As one of the main towns of the Beqaa valley, Lebanon’s most important agricultural region, Qob Elias’ has long been built on agriculture and at times, has seen flourishing commercial activity due to its location midway between Beirut and Damascus. The town of Qob Elias contains an educational center complex for primary, intermediate and secondary schools, a central library, private institutes, a public garden, fire brigade, medical centers, mosques and churches in addition to commercial markets, shops and offices.

Qob Elias is administered by an 18-member municipal council which was last elected in 2016, for a six-year term. The municipality operates from a new, spacious multi-floor municipal building with good facilities. Qob Elias municipality is a member of the Beka’a al Awssat Union of Municipalities.\(^{21}\)

**CEDG Interventions**

CEDG interventions with the newly elected Qob Elias municipal council were launched with a benchmark assessment on August 12, 2016. Using a simplified version of the MCAT tool, the benchmark assessment reviewed the state of the municipality according to six pillars – Organizational Development, Information Technology, Financial Management and Financial Planning, Strategic Planning for Local Development, Public Outreach to Local Community and Responsiveness and Management of Emergencies – and their subcomponents. The benchmark assessment identified the gaps and municipal capacity-building needs and priorities, enabling BALADI CAP CEDG technical specialists with the support of the municipal council to design a municipal capacity-building plan. The plan, which was signed on December 27, 2016, comprised public and specialized workshops, coaching and light OJT, and related services that aimed to deliver on the following objectives/outputs:

- Amending and updating the municipal by-laws, to include also detailed job descriptions;
- Improving the financial department’s performance in budget preparation and implementation, debt management, and scheduling of municipal loans;
- Enhancing municipal capacity for strategic planning;
- Developing a communication mechanism with the local community through the institution of a communication committee, and preparing and publishing of the municipal work report;
- Improving the municipality’s capacity to respond to citizen complaints through a hotline;
- Designing emergency response and management and public safety plans;
- Improving the municipality’s capacity to manage Syrian refugee case files;
- Considering the possibility of providing the municipality with an electronic system and GIS mapping technology to computerize its financial and administrative data.

\(^{21}\) Additional information about Qob Elias municipal staff and gender information was not available from the desk review documents.
Implementation of CEDG’s direct capacity-building interventions, other than the training workshops, began at the end of December 2017–early January 2018, with following ISOs/SPs and interventions included in the capacity-building cycle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Capacity Development - Service Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGIS</td>
<td>Needs assessment, training on GIS, coaching visits, OJT, GIS installation, Peer-to-Peer learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSC</td>
<td>Municipal website and three email accounts: Designed, delivered with OJT. Electronic Complaints System: Installed and training provided. Automated Receipts Module (ARM): Installed and training provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMF</td>
<td>HR By-laws: Though originally in the plan, technical assistance for amending/updating the municipal by-laws was later turned down by the municipality. Budget Preparation: Though originally in the plan, technical assistance for budget preparation was later turned down by the municipality. Annual report: Though originally in the plan, technical assistance for drafting the municipal annual report was later turned down by the municipality. MPOC: Though originally in the plan, technical assistance for the formation and training of an MPOC was later turned down by the municipality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLA Findings**

A field visit to the municipality and interviews with CEDG stakeholders, particularly the president of Qob Elias municipal council and selected municipal staff and volunteers, produced the following findings:

**Emergency Response Plan.** AFDC managed the process of emergency preparedness with Qob Elias municipality through training workshops, OJT, committee formation, SWOT analysis, risk profiling, and mitigation and preparedness planning, resulting in the drafting of an emergency response plan that maps major risks and details projected responses. In addition, AFDC and the emergency committee implemented, with the support of the Civil Defense and the Lebanese Red Cross, two drills or simulation exercises to practice the evacuation of a building on fire. The committee was satisfied overall with the process implemented by AFDC and the response plan. It would have liked, if possible, to receive additional assistance in the form of small tools and equipment to enhance readiness.

**GIS.** Arabia GIS delivered, installed and trained relevant municipal staff on the management and use of GIS and was proposing at the end of CEDG to handle its maintenance through a service contract signed...
directly with the municipality. At the time of this CLA, the system was not yet fully functional, as it needed minor adjustments, specifically to deal with the migration of existing municipal data to the GIS database. During the CLA interview, the municipal president emphasized that one of their main objectives was to computerize all municipal functions. The municipality had already developed their own computerized municipal database and was recording and tracking all municipal transactions, even entering data going back five years.

**Municipal Public Outreach Committee.** Although approved in the municipal capacity-building plan, the municipality rescinded their commitment to form a MPOC citing internal differences as justification for the change. The municipal council had planned in their election campaign to form neighborhood committees, but they had not carried out these plans as of the CLA field work due to other priorities.

**Electronic Complaints System.** An electronic complaints system was installed by QSC and relevant municipal staff trained on its use. In principle, the electronic complaints system will enhance municipal accountability and improve response time to citizens’ concerns. As of the CLA field visit, the system had not gained much traction with the local population, possibly because it had not been effectively advertised.

**Municipal Website.** QSC designed and developed the website structure and main functions and populated it with basic municipal information before final delivery to the municipality. Municipal staff remained unconvinced of the advantages of a municipal website, noting that they already publish municipal information and post public notifications on Facebook, which has the function and advantage of enabling citizen feedback and comments.

**Automatic Receipts Module (ARM) and Financial Management Update.** The municipality had benefitted in the past from USAID assistance through SUNY, in the form of an electronic financial management system. QSC updated this system and linked it with an Automatic Receipt Module. As a result, the municipality is now able to issue all financial invoices and receipts “at the click of a button” where previously they had to complete all forms by hand.

**Public and Specialized Trainings.** Qob Elias municipal president and selected municipal staff attended some of the trainings provided by 4DEV. The number of trainings attended by Qob Elias municipality was noticeably less than the trainings offered for other case study municipalities (five out of a total of 10 4DEV training sessions). Nevertheless, feedback collected during the CLA field visit confirmed that the trainings were overall relevant and beneficial by providing trainees with correct legal processes with which to conduct their work. Interviewees also provided suggestions for improving the trainings:

- The president commented that a shorter training time would have better accommodated municipal staff workloads.
- Municipal staff commended the trainer, [name redacted] for his continuous availability and unfailing response to participant queries following training. They suggested he include more interactive approaches and practical applications.
• One municipal staff suggested training be followed by OJT to assess the extent to which trainees were applying the learning provided during the training.

**MOPC, Municipal By-Laws, Budget Preparation and Annual Report:** The municipality declined receipt of technical assistance and capacity building support for these services included in the capacity-building plan.

**Summary**

In summary, more than one modification occurred between what was initially agreed upon in the municipal capacity-building plan and what delivered by the close of the CEDG activity. These changes include work on municipal by-laws, municipal budget, debt management, MPOC and annual report. When asked why the municipality rescinded on their agreement with CEDG on multiple grounds, they noted during the CLA interview that “they did not really give it due consideration during the benchmark assessment.” Qob Elias benefitted primarily from AFDC with the emergency preparedness, AGIS with GIS, QSC’s AMR and electronic complaints system, and 4DEV capacity-building trainings.