



Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) – Capacity Building Component (CBC) – Final Report

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

December 19, 2019

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OVERALL LEARNING II

ACRONYMS

BALADI CAP	Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment – Capacity Building
CAT	Capacity Assessment Tool
CBC	Capacity Building Component
CEDG	Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance
CEI	Civic Engagement Initiative
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA)
CPI	Counterpart International
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GCSS LWA	Global Civil Society Strengthening Leaders with Associates
ISO	Intermediary Service Organization
KMP	Knowledge Management Portal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSI	Management Systems International
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OJT	On-the-Job Training
ToT	Training of Trainers

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's) 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. In January 2018, it implemented the first set of 'pause and reflect' sessions with program staff and beneficiary/partner organizations, based on which adaptations were introduced and implemented. BALADI CAP is now in its eighth and final year of program implementation and during its sixth year, it commissioned a second series of CLA activities to extract the program's best practices and lessons learned. This final report covers the CLA assessment findings and learning results realized under BALADI CAP's Capacity Building component (CBC).

CBC OVERVIEW

CBC is one of three original components of USAID-BALADI CAP's seven and a half year, [REDACTED] civil society support and municipal capacity-building project implemented by MSI in Lebanon under the Global Civil Society Strengthening Leader with Associates (GCSS LWA), under which MSI is the prime technical implementing sub-partner to contractual prime partner, Counterpart International (CPI).

BALADI CAP's CBC component aimed to build the institutional capacity of 51 civil society organizations (CSOs) so that they could become direct recipients of donor funding and primary players in activity implementation, ensuring compliance with USAID rules and regulations and the delivery of tangible, measurable results. Towards that end, the CBC component focused on building the institutional capacity of CSOs mainly within the three pillars of organizational development, financial management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The CBC component was designed for implementation under two main tasks:

Task 1: Benchmark Assessment and Action Plan of Selected Local CSOs: Using a customized and adapted version of USAID's Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool, or BALADI CAP's Capacity Assessment Tool (CAT), the BALADI CAP team facilitated a one- or two-day workshop with relevant members of partner CSOs board and management teams for the purpose of implementing a comprehensive CSO organizational capacity assessment. Supported with a semi-informal audit, the OCA capacity assessment findings allowed BALADI CAP's technical specialists to gauge existing organizational capacity and institutional gaps and needs, and estimate the degree of progress that had been attained by the organizations at the end of the CBC capacity-building cycle.

The CSO benchmark assessment constituted the basis for developing a customized action plan that provided a roadmap for CSO institutional capacity-building. Action plans highlight gaps, selected priorities and progress milestones towards meeting institutional targets. The CBC team ensured that all CSO action plans included components pertaining to its three pillars: (a) organizational development; (b) financial management; and (c) M&E.

Task 2: Capacity Development and Technical Assistance to Selected CSOs: CBC's capacity development program for selected CSOs encompassed different modules of capacity-building and technical assistance that targeted individual staff and addressed organizational level issues. This assistance included:

- **Group Training - Standardized Training Workshops:** Training and capacity-building workshops were provided to partner CSOs in financial management, organizational development, and monitoring and evaluation. In addition to these standardized trainings, and based on identified needs, CBC implemented specialized training workshops in specialized subject matters, such as social security tax law, fundraising techniques, project design and proposal development.
- **Coaching Missions, On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Mentoring:** Following the standardized training workshops, CBC provided partner CSOs with additional and complementary capacity-building support through mentoring, on-the-job coaching and technical assistance. This additional tailored assistance aimed to institutionalize the changes introduced in the workshops at the organizational level.
- **Policies and Procedures:** To reinforce and sustain change at the institutional level, CBC technical specialists worked with partner CSOs to develop and customize policies and procedures on financial management, organizational development, and monitoring and evaluation, and to ensure that CSO boards and management teams created buy-in and endorsement of these policies.
- **Communities of Practice:** These regional communities of practice meetings aimed to provide a space for partner CSOs to network and interact with specialists and experts, while reinforcing their knowledge and promoting opportunities to share information and exchange experiences. These community of practice sessions were geared towards further bolstering the capacity of participating partner CSOs.

Sustainability of Outcomes – CBC Legacy: BALADI CAP's CBC component aimed to sustain and further support organizational change through continued dissemination of training materials, technical tools and resources, including BALADI CAP's website and knowledge management portal (KMP), online communities of practice chat room, peer-to-peer training, training-of-trainers (ToT), CSO Centers of Excellence, and a National Conference on CSO Governance, Capacity and Innovation.

By Year 6, BALADI CAP's CBC component had provided capacity-building and institutional development assistance to 51 CSOs grouped under five individual cohorts. Partner CSOs were identified and selected through the following: identified sub-implementers of USAID's BALADI Core Activity, local organizations partnering with municipalities to receive grants under the BALADI Core Activity, intermediary support organizations (ISOs), CSOs involved under the Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI) component, ISO/CSO service providers involved under the Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance (CEDG) component; and other local organizations nominated in consultation with USAID.

All 51 CSOs have benefitted from CBC’s capacity-building interventions and assistance provided as part of tailored capacity-building cycles relevant to their component activities, while 26 of these CSOs achieved full compliance in the three pillars of organizational development, financial management and monitoring and evaluation, thereby achieving 100% of BALADI CAP’s development objective and indicator target.

CBC implementation of its first CLA exercise¹ led to minor program adaptations, primarily through changing its approach to ensuring a “legacy” institution to support peer-to-peer training, formation of a cadre of CSO ToT trainers specializing in CBC subject matters, identification and institution of CSO Centers of Excellence from within its partner CSOs, expansion of CSO communications, online resources and exchange of best practices through its KMP platform and chat room, and implementation of a national CSO conference.

CLA IMPLEMENTATION

The objective of this second series of CLA activities was to assess the capacity-building model implemented by BALADI CAP for improved learning effectiveness and enhanced institutionalization of the capacity-building interventions within CSO organizations.

This CLA review began during BALADI CAP’s CSO Governance, Capacity and Innovation Conference held February 21-22, 2019. The review ended by mid-May with the implementation of the second series of CBC CLA workshops. The CLA assessment took into consideration information collected through a desk review of BALADI CAP’s progress reports, internal and external evaluations, background documents and summary notes, including the final report of BALADI CAP’s CSO national conference and notes from the previous CBC CLA. This second series of CBC CLA activities also included in-depth interviews with BALADI CAP project leadership and technical staff, and two participatory workshops implemented on May 9 and 10, 2019, which were attended by a total of 15 CSO representatives.

The CLA exercise also confronted a couple of minor challenges which might have limited the extent of its findings. These challenges entailed the following: (1) unavailability of some CBC technical specialists due to impending project close-out; (2) the month of Ramadan which limited the workshop time to a mere three hours due to fasting by some CSO participants; and (3) CSO workshop participants belonging to different cohorts, which involved different capacity-building cycles and thus a different breadth and depth of program experience.

CLA FINDINGS – LESSONS LEARNED

The CLA assessment attempted, to the extent possible, to provide answers to the questions proposed in the CLA design report. These questions focused primarily on the CSO capacity-building model, reviewing the linkages between its various components, assessing the impact achieved at the end of the CBC capacity-building cycle and extracting the learning for future CSOs capacity-building programs.

¹ In addition to the findings of its mid-term performance evaluation implemented for USAID by Social Impact.

Analysis of the desk review documents, CLA workshops and interview discussion notes produced the following summary findings, structured and presented by CBC component/CLA question.

I – Selection and Clustering of CSOs

CSO selection was prioritized by USAID Activities' requirements, with some course correction introduced later during BALADI CAP's implementation. As noted earlier, CSOs selected to participate in the CBC capacity-building program comprised primarily – with the exception of Cohort 2 and some Cohort 5 CSOs - USAID's BALADI Core and BALADI CAP CSO partners. While this selection approach offered a definite advantage of building the capacities of CSOs who are current or potential USAID partners, it presented one drawback in the case of small or volunteer-based organizations, such as Beta² organizations that lacked the organizational capacity and setup needed to achieve USAID compliance. The shortcomings of this selection approach were later addressed with USAID by (1) opening CSO selection to other non-USAID partners and, (2) acknowledging that not all 51 targeted CSOs would be able to reach compliance at the end of their capacity-building cycle. BALADI CAP's CSO selection approach in the CEDG component also confronted challenges; in that case, many municipal-related CSOs did not show significant interest in attending the CBC capacity-building trainings.

Clustering CSOs brought together organizations with different initial capacities, but these variations did not affect the capacity-building program end results. BALADI CAP clustered CSOs by cohort, primarily based on USAID Activities' needs in addition to the projects' own organizational capacity to implement the capacity-building program and reach planned targets. Activity needs and capacity-based clustering, rather than needs-based grouping, resulted at times in the clustering of CSOs with different initial capacities in the program's three pillar areas under the same cohort. While this clustering approach did constitute a bit of a challenge in the program's public trainings due to attendees' different levels of capacity, this variation was addressed later during the mentoring and coaching sessions provided separately to each organization.

The USAID - BALADI CAP CSO selection model was further enhanced with a preliminary assessment of each CSO's organizational setup prior to enrollment in the BALADI CAP capacity development program. The preliminary assessment aimed to identify each CSO's potential to receive and benefit from the BALADI CAP capacity-building program in each of the three pillar areas of organizational development, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation.

CLA Learning

Clustering organizations with differing levels of capacity (Alphas and Alpha+s) need not be a barrier to group learning, provided less developed groups also receive additional support, such as mentoring.

² For assistance purposes, BALADI CAP divides CSO partners into three categories – Alpha+, Alpha and Beta – which are generally based on the complexity and size of operations. Alpha+ organizations have 11-50+ employees, Alphas have 3-10, and Betas have 0-2 staff.

II – Benchmark Assessment Tool and Process

BALADI CAP’s benchmark assessment is an important element of the CSO capacity-building model as it provides for CSO buy-in and helps organizations identify their areas of weakness. The OCA/CAT tool offers an excellent

instrument for the design of customized capacity-building plans that build on CSOs’ existing organizational capacity, as well as prevailing institutional gaps and needs. BALADI CAP also used the benchmark assessment workshops to ensure CSOs’ buy-in and long-term commitment to the capacity-building program. Furthermore, the OCA/CAT tool provided the basis for tracking CSO progress in each of the three

BALADI CAP organizational development areas by developing specific and measurable indicators for each development phase to track and report on the progress achieved by each of the BALADI CAP CSOs. Since USAID required that CSO capacity development areas cover organizational development, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation, the benchmark assessment focused on these three required areas and downplayed other organizational issues which might have been more of a priority or critical to some CSOs. For example, some CSOs pointed out their needs for capacity-building in fundraising, as “fundraising is critical for their own sustainability” to support continued programmatic operations.³

“The assessment was important to know where we stand.”

“The benchmark assessment helped us to know that we are weak in M&E.”

Quotes from CSO participants

CLA Learning

Setting the end objectives of USAID/BALADI CAP’s CSO capacity-building programs to achieve compliance in the three pillars of CSO organizational development focused the benchmark assessment and enabled the prospects of an effective CSO capacity-building program. Future projects can build on this effective approach by including some customization, such as offering the opportunity for assessment and potential capacity-building in a fourth area, such as a specific priority for the organizational development of one CSOs, but not necessarily all others.

III – Group Trainings

Group trainings or public trainings constituted the first element of CBC capacity-building interventions offered to BALADI CAP CSOs. CBC trainings covered primarily the main subject matter topics of financial management, organizational development and M&E, and were usually provided through one-day training workshops. CLA workshop discussions with a select number of BALADI CAP CSO partners provided the following findings:

CBC training workshops provided CSOs with value added, specialized knowledge. CSO representatives commented very positively on the value of the trainings in terms of the specialized knowledge they gained during these sessions, a knowledge that was missing and much needed at their organizations. Quoted here are some of the various CSOs’ feedback received on the effectiveness of the CBC trainings, as shared during the CLA workshops: “The trainings provided us with a knowledge that

³ BALADI CAP has provided some fundraising training, but seemingly not in a systematic manner to all CSOs.

we were missing”; “the capacity-building workshops by themselves were very motivating”; “the staff who attended the trainings are becoming more creative and tend to take more initiatives at work.”

The pace and intensity of CBC training workshops were more appropriate to Alpha-level organizations. CSOs participating in CLA workshops concurred that the pace and number of CBC trainings was adequate for large CSOs with many staff, but it was deemed ‘time consuming’ for small organizations with few employees, since often the same staff had to attend trainings in more than one specialty area. CLA participants’ opinions are expressed in the following quotes: “Some felt that the number of training sessions was intense, but for organizations that have enough number of employees they found it less demanding”; “the trainings were not intensive because we were sending people from different departments”; “the staff felt that receiving this big number of trainings was helpful and made them more knowledgeable.”

CLA Learning

CBC training workshops provide an important learning base for the introduction of organizational policies and procedures.

Some CSOs suggested ways to improve the effectiveness of CBC training workshops by adding a more practical hands-on approach to newly introduced concepts: “Some training topics are very theoretical”; and “trainings can be improved if they are more participatory.” Other CSOs, possibly small or volunteer-based, requested different subject matter trainings specifically on project design, proposal-writing and fundraising, stating “we lack the know-how of proposal writing,” and “the fundraising training wasn’t enough.”

IV – On-the-Job Training

The second CBC capacity-building phase consisted of OJT, mentoring and/or coaching wherein BALADI CAP provided technical assistance to partner CSOs individually (in contrast to the preceding group trainings). CBC technical assistance during this phase was mostly geared towards supporting organizations in the introduction of policies and procedures in the three CBC pillar areas of organizational development, financial management and M&E.⁴ Throughout this phase, CBC technical specialists drafted the relevant policies and procedures, customized these documents jointly with each organization and then followed up with the CSO’s board of directors or executive directors for their endorsement or approval and subsequent implementation by CSO management and operations staff. The CLA assessment findings and learning result are summarized below.

CBC mentoring, coaching and OJT sessions were instrumental in introducing and setting up the institutionalization process within CSOs. With OJT,⁵ the CBC capacity-building process moved from individual staff and group training to the organizational level and customized technical assistance. In addition to providing tailored technical assistance to each of the CSO partners, these sessions focused on the introduction and drafting of relevant policies and procedures and ensuring

⁴ Introduction of policies and procedures applies only to CSOs planning to achieve USAID compliance targets.

⁵ Referring here to on-the-job training, as well as mentoring and coaching.

management buy-in to the next phase of ‘institutionalization.’ Workshop participants concurred on the need for and value of such sessions where CBC technical specialists provided them with customized assistance based on the specific needs of each individual organization. CSOs’ referred to the OJT sessions as follows: “The OJT sessions were conducted in a light and smooth way, and the staff appreciated the follow-up from BALADI CAP specialists;” “we always found great support from BALADI CAP staff;” “what benefited us most under M&E were the M&E OJTs because these visits were rich in discussions.”

CLA Learning

While the OJT sessions were focused on the institutionalization process, these sessions also provided excellent opportunities to enhance the learning acquired during the group training workshops through more hands-on, practical exercises and technical assistance on the practical work of each organization, as noted in this CSO’s comment, “[w]e were having additional questions which BALADI CAP people weren’t always providing an answer for [in the group training].”

V – Policies and Procedures

The final phase of the CSO capacity-building process consisted of the institutionalization of capacity-building, i.e. commitment to and application of the policies and procedures in organizational development, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation in the management and operations of partner CSOs.⁶ CLA workshops implemented with a select number of partner CSOs collected their feedback on the effectiveness and impact of the institutionalization of these policies and procedures into their work and operations. CSO feedback is captured in the following summary points.

The institution of written policies and procedures within the management and work operations of CSOs provided for a more efficient work environment and more effective CSO operations.

CSOs that had completed the long-term capacity-building cycle, which ends with the introduction and application of the relevant policies and procedures, shared a common view that there was value in the trainings and that they benefited their organizations by institutionalizing positive change. Though faced with some internal resistance in the beginning, CSO representatives reported that staff had bought into the change specifically when they experienced the positive impact of this change on their work organization and the added effectiveness and efficiency of their CSO operations. Numerous examples were provided in support of CSO representatives’ reports of the benefits and impact of these policies, some of which were: “The new procurement procedures allowed us a net saving of more than 20 percent;” “staff work is more organized, everyone knows what their work and others’ work and responsibilities involves...this minimized work stress and tension between employees;” “if someone left the

“Setting processes in place took us lot of time and effort. After three years of capacity building, we started to realize the importance of the new procedures. Only six months ago, we started to feel that all staff was finally convinced about the need to have documented procedures in place.”

“We were a small CSO (five employees) with only one project. After one year and thanks to BCAP we developed at a much faster pace”.

⁶ This final phase was applicable only to the CSOs that committed to achieving USAID compliance.

organization now, it would not affect the work as deeply as it used to in the past;” “all our processes and procedures are now on an internal online system, so any employee can go to the cloud system, read the procedure and act accordingly;” “it was a huge positive shift--HR processes weren’t documented;” “we used to think that we were organized, but after BALADI CAP we got a better vision on how an organization should look;” “policies were customized as per our needs;” “we tailored the policies according to Lebanese law and the new hierarchy;” “M&E improved our fundraising especially when we developed sectoral log frames;” and “the progress we made under M&E helped us in getting new grants.”

Organizational change in M&E was more effective on the project level than the institutional level. BALADI CAP was faced with challenges in the technical area of monitoring and evaluation due to changes in their CBC M&E specialist on more than one occasion during the project. This staff turnover potentially limited the effectiveness of the change that could be achieved by the end of the CSO capacity-building cycle. This limitation was noted in the CLA workshops, with numerous CSOs concurring that learning in the M&E training was less systematic than in the other two areas. The CSOs also indicated that the M&E training was limited to projects’ M&E rather than the institutional level of the organization. CSOs’ feedback with reference to M&E was expressed during the CLA workshops as follows: “The lack of continuity in M&E was demotivating for us;” “seeing a different M&E specialist every now and then was very discouraging;” “BALADI CAP started M&E with us very late-- M&E should have been given more time because it’s about a way of thinking and required change in the organizational culture;” “M&E should go a step further and become more systematic;” “the first M&E policy was not user-friendly;” “the change that we managed in M&E remained at the level of individuals and projects.”

CLA Learning

BALADI CAP needed to address its challenges in finding and retaining M&E specialists so that it could provide more systematic and continuous support to CSOs in such a manner that M&E could be more institutionalized by the end of the capacity-building cycle.

VI – Internal and External Factors

When asked directly, workshop participants were unable to identify or point to any factors, internal or external, that had affected the effectiveness of BALADI CAP capacity-building or institutionalization of the policies or procedures introduced through BALADI CAP’s CBC interventions. Feedback received on other CLA questions pointed to the following factors impacting the extent of CBC outcomes:

- **CSO size and scope.** Organizations with a very limited number of staff, CSOs that relied on volunteers, or organizations that did not have active projects (Beta category CSOs) were not able to benefit from the full extent of the capacity-building or institutionalization opportunities offered through CBC. Though these organizations reportedly gained valuable knowledge by attending the CBC trainings (for example, “CBC trainings helped us ensure volunteer participation”), they were unable to move beyond this initial capacity-building phase because they did not have the necessary internal infrastructure to do so.

- **High level commitment.** Some participants pointed to the commitment of the executive director/board of directors as having a very important role and positive influence on the institutionalization of the policies and procedures introduced through CBC OJT.

CLA Learning

Small or volunteer-based organizations needed a different level of capacity-building that could address their specific ‘start-up’ needs. Moreover, if assistance to Beta organizations is to continue, it would be more effective to pool them in a different cohort/cluster than with the much larger Alpha or Alpha+ organizations.

VII – Program Adaptations: Legacy Institution or Resources

CBC’s initial sustainability plan involved a handover to a legacy institution to continue the work in CSO capacity-building being implemented under BALADI CAP. Due to the challenges involved in finding such an institution, CBC opted to adapt this strategy, substituting multiple initiatives designed to sustain and disseminate CBC trainings, tools and resources. To that end, BALADI CAP introduced its *ToT training program* to support the formation of a cadre of qualified trainers from within its pool of CBC graduate trainees, initiated its *peer-to-peer training program* to expand access to this training knowledge to other CSO staff within the same organization, organized *Centers of Excellence* to showcase CSO “champions” that can model superior achievements in specific organizational development areas, and supported *Communities of Practice* along with a *KMP*, including a new online *chat room* within the *KMP*, to promote and support virtual communications and the exchange of best practices between partner CSOs. CSO representatives reported during the CLA workshops the following views of the relevance and usefulness of these resources:

Training-of-Trainers (ToT): A couple of the workshop participants confirmed having attended and completed the ToT seminars and became part of the local trainer pool available to provide training assistance and listed in BALADI CAP’s *KMP*. Since this ToT initiative had just recently ended, there had not been any requests for their training services from the CSO community as of the time of the workshop. Additionally, one of these ‘trainers’ pointed out “feeling the need for additional trainings on the technical subject matter issues to become more confident in her abilities as a trainer.”

Peer-to-Peer Training: Some of the workshop participants confirmed implementing peer-to-peer trainings to expand CBC training knowledge to other staff within their organization. This is specifically the case with CSOs from cohort 5 who participated in the second CLA workshop on May 10, 2019. Those peer-to-peer trainers reported a positive experience from these trainings within their organization and stated that their colleagues appreciated the opportunity to expand their knowledge to subject matters that relate to their CSO’s work.

Communities of Practice: A couple of participants from the first CLA workshop implemented on May 9, 2019, recalled participating in the Community of Practice regional meetings.⁷ These participants

⁷ It is possible that other CSO representatives have attended such events but were unable to differentiate between the Community of Practice meetings and other CBC events.

agreed on the need for and usefulness of such meetings, although they suggested some ways to improve their effectiveness as networking and communication exchange opportunities, specifically to organize meetings with a smaller audience, and preferably by cluster, such as sectoral or regional workshops to enhance communication exchange between participants and with the speaker(s). It is worth noting that participants in both CLA workshops appreciated the exchange of ideas and experiences that took place and considered them as examples of a community of practice where CSOs have gained access to others' experiences and challenges with similar issues and even agreed to pursue some of these discussions outside of CBC events.

Knowledge Management Portal: CSO representatives conveyed the importance of BALADI CAP's KMP, specifically the training resources published on its website. The majority of CSO participants confirmed visiting the website regularly, downloading CBC training materials, and referring to them when working on relevant issues. In short, they considered these materials as relevant references and resources on these subject matters.

Chat Room: The KMP online chat room was the least 'sought after' of the BALADI CAP 'sustainability and dissemination' initiatives. CSO participants provided numerous and diverse reasons for their reluctance to communicate via the chat room. These reasons varied, including "a different culture," "sensitivities involved in posting their opinion online," "the time it takes to think their answer through and write it in a comprehensive manner," "shyness...maybe I am not the expert on this," "prefer direct communication," and "why would I write if I can pick up the phone." Seemingly, the BALADI CAP chat room approach and/or the topics of discussion did not trigger an urge or create a need strong enough for the participants to overcome their resistance to a new online communication tool compared to the value of traditional communication tools.

CLA Learning

Peer-to-peer trainings were a good dissemination approach within the organization as: (1) they enabled other staff to be informed about the training subject matter, and (2) they facilitated the introduction of the need for change at a later stage and its institutionalization at the organizational level.

Theoretically, the ToT was also a good strategy for making available a pool of trainers and trained resources who could further expand and disseminate BALADI CAP capacity-building trainings to other CSOs. This initiative was implemented but had not yet yielded any results that could be assessed. Feedback from one CSO representative who attended a ToT training suggested that these CSO trainers might need additional subject matter capacity-building before they could claim the technical confidence needed to offer training themselves.

The Communities of Practice platforms provided a good opportunity for networking and the exchange of CSO knowledge and experiences, but BALADI CAP needed to re-visit and refine its implementation approach to ensure continued interest and effectiveness.

The online chat room needed to be re-considered in terms of its specific objective. For example, one participant said that "the purpose of the chat room wasn't clear." BALADI CAP might have come up with a different approach or topics of discussion that could have elicited more interest or satisfied an

inherent need within CSOs to engage in open discussions over a new communications tool. Suggestions include considering something similar to LinkedIn where (1) CSOs can post links to articles of concern or new research findings, and other members of the KMP community could read, comment, post their opinion, engage in discussing controversial issues, or (2) CSOs can post questions or request help on specific issues that they are facing in the course of their own work, and other more experienced members could respond by providing a solution, an approach or a specific tool to be used or share their own experience in addressing this same issue. Generally, the online chat room needed to more effectively create within CSOs the need for and satisfaction with engaging with other members of this chat room community.

OVERALL LEARNING

BALADI CAP's capacity-building model is an excellent approach to the sustainable capacity-building of CSOs. If any improvements are needed, they lie primarily in implementation details rather than the capacity-building model itself.

Under the present BALADI CAP, CSOs were more or less recipients of the capacity-building assistance, rather than active participants in their own organizational development. Future projects should look to introduce ways in which CSOs can take more responsibility for their own organizational development.