

Case Study 'Anabta Municipality

Written by: Rana Mousa, M&E and Reporting Manager
Local Government & Infrastructure Program, Global Communities/ West Bank & Gaza
October 30th, 2013

'Anabta, a city located in Tulkarm Governorate in northern West Bank, has been a key partner of Global Communities for more than five years. The LGU first partnered with Global Communities under the Local Democratic Reform to construct a scientific park and establish a Youth Shadow Local Council.

Under the LGI program, LGI constructed and completed a Citizen Service Center (CSC) in August 2013¹ as part of its Automation of Service Delivery intervention. LGI, also, finalized the development of HR procedures and job descriptions, and the installment of human resources management system. Lastly, the physical plan and the GIS are planned to begin during FY14. 'Anabta's Strategic Development and Investment Plan (SDIP) was developed in 2011 and updated in 2013 in a participatory manner involving hundreds of community representatives, and based on MoLG's adopted methodology. It is worth mentioning that all of LGI's interventions in 'Anabta were part of the projects listed in the SDIP.

92% of all committed, obligated, or implemented projects are found in 'Anabta's SDIP

'Anabta LGU consists of 13 council members; three (23%) of them are women. The LGU has five departments (Administration, Finance, Engineering, Water Services, and Public Relations) and employs more than 70 staff members. Approximately 80% of them hold either Tawjihi (high school) diplomas or associate degrees.

"Due to the large number of staff, 'Anabta Municipality is trying to reallocate staff based on their respective skills in order to enhance efficiency and service delivery within the municipality. We are trying to deal with the situation in a positive and constructive way; a way that would ensure mutual benefit for both parties." – Tahseen Abdel Dayem, Administrative Manager at 'Anabta

The LGU is currently facing a major challenge in terms of hiring skilled staff –due to lack of financial resources- as well as relocating existing staff to increase their efficiency and delivery. Other challenges facing the LGU was the weakness witnessed in administration and management, which disabled the LGU from improving their services, soliciting necessary funding, as well establishing a participatory planning process with citizens.

The self-assessment tool that is part of the MCI process was not taken lightly by 'Anabta's LGU. According to Tahseen Abdel Dayem, Administrative Manager, *"The data collection phase lasted for more than one week. It involved all department heads and staff, as well as council members, who displayed outstanding efforts, honesty, loyalty, and integrity in identifying key strengths and weakness."* He also added *"Clearly, there was a noticeable level of transparency and accountability even when the indicators revolved around scoring the performance of the council members."*

Photo Caption: Tahseen Abdel Dayem, Administrative Manager at 'Anabta Municipality.



¹ The CSC will be inaugurated following the completion of the debugging phase of the EDRMS expected to be finalized during November 2013.

When the institutional development committee felt that the score should be zero, for example, they were not hesitant to express their opinions before the Mayor or other local council members.”

The overall self-assessment score of 'Anabta LGU was 37.3% (out of 100%). This was a shocking indicator to all stakeholders; yet it also drove the municipality to focus on improving its performance. Immediately after finalizing the assessment, 'Anabta's Mayor and council members began taking incremental steps to improve performance.

Under the leadership and management competency area, the LGU began holding regular meetings for department heads. Minutes of meetings are currently being documented, circulated to all attendees, archived, and action points are regularly followed up by concerned parties. Additionally, the LGU now holds regular open meetings with the local community to share the LGU's future plans. In the past, the LGU would consult the local community only during a crisis. This has strengthened the relationship between both parties and built trust in each other's capacity. The nature of the meetings also became more consultative rather than instructional.

“Now is our chance to start from a realistic rather than an imaginary or fictional standpoint. Our evaluation must be truthful, genuine, and representative of our existing situation. It is our only way to move forward towards improving our performance.” – Collective opinion of Municipal Council Members at 'Anabta Municipality.

Furthermore, individual meetings are also held now with community members that have negative image about the LGU, providing individuals with a clearer understanding of the LGU's role. The ideology among the leadership has changed. Today, the focus is on participation and every person has a clear understanding of their roles versus responsibilities, and commitments versus expectations.

Under the management of service delivery, the revision of the CSC's services processes resulted in identifying clear work procedures which enabled the LGU to relocate staff where needed. The HR policies and procedures became clear to all LGU staff members. The system eased the processing of HR services, and facilitated the ability of employees to access their personal data. Moreover, and following the installment of the HR system, employees now submit their annual leave requests online. Many staff members are now requesting training courses to enhance their computer skills capacity. Accordingly, and as part of its annual budget's operation steps, the LGU plans to hold training courses for its staff beginning in January, 2014.

Furthermore, the CSC and the automation of its processes have enhanced service delivery of the LGU. The phenomenon of approaching the Mayor directly is decreasing. Although the debugging/ trial phase is not over yet, the LGU decided to utilize the CSC to receive requests from citizens although these requests are still sent in hard copy to the LGU. This was decided in order to allow for sufficient space for citizens to get used to the idea of the CSC instead of going back and forth to the LGU. The CSC also allowed sufficient time for LGU engineers to focus on their work, and put more effort on planning and monitoring of LGU projects.

“In the past, youth were not aware of the role of the LGU due to the LGU’s leadership and management styles in terms of being overly centralized, and the fact that the LGU never reached out to the youth. Today, I personally know 90% of the LGU functions. I act as an advocate for the role of the LGU and I ask people to go and inquire rather than being simply critical..... Overall, our awareness of local governance has improved. This is due in part to the fact that youth council members are relatively older, and more mature.” – Alaa’ Saboobeh, YSLC President

Under the community participation area, the LGU became more supportive of youth and their vital role. The various initiatives and interventions held by YSLC members encouraged the LGU to involve youth in LGU affairs including attending meetings and coordinating with council members on YSLC’s future initiatives and joint activities. The perception of older generation is improving as well. They are becoming more supportive of youth. Moreover, the various initiatives led by the YSLCs, the networks they have established on the local and international levels, the trainings they received to enhance the leadership, communication, and advocacy skills, as well as their active role among their community have contributed to position them as the future generation of leaders.

The YSLC consists of 13 elected members, and approximately 450 general assembly members (around 60%-70% are regularly active). When asked about his future aspirations, Alaa’ said **“Our YSLC must focus on implementing all initiatives that were agreed upon with Global Communities although some large scale initiatives. I want to ensure the YSLC’s sustainability by providing income generating projects for it.”**

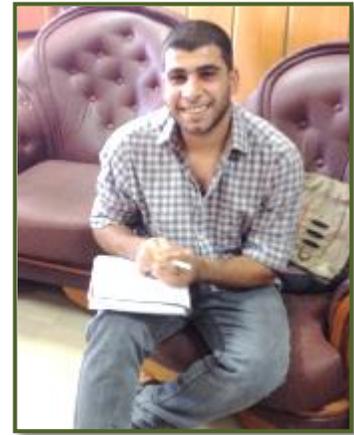


Photo Caption: Alaa’ Saboobeh, President of ‘Anabta YSLC.

Overall, and despite the early stages of the process and prior to any future interventions by LGI, one can witness a shift in the methods, procedures, and mechanisms within the LGU, as well as a shift in ideologies, behaviors, perceptions, practices, sense of pride, and ownership among the LGU and the community at large.