

BALADI Plus Program

Flashback



Started project in November 2012

Assessed capacity of 17 municipalities and developed action plans

Sub-contracted:
 - Public finance to KDC,
 - Good municipal governance, bylaws & local development planning to LTA
 - Contingency planning to AFDC,
 - GIS to Aylo Engineering
 - Website Design to Mira-Cle



95 Municipalities
 13 Unions of Municipalities trained on Fundraising, Proposal Writing, Project Cycle Management, & Feasibility Studies

40% of our trainees are women, and we integrate gender into every aspect of our program

28 CSOs trained on Active Citizenship, Good Governance, Transparency and Advocacy



-Wide outreach on social media
 -47 appearances on print and online media



Assessments finalized on:
 -Contingency Planning,
 -Financial Management
 -Local Strategic Planning
 -Website Development
 -GIS



Bringing good citizens and responsive municipalities together



ISSUE
01
 May
 2014

MONTHLY
 Newsletter Of Municipal
 Capacity Building

BALADI Plus



In this issue

- About BALADI Plus **P.1**
- Flashback **P.2**
- BALADI Plus Checklist **P.3**
- Meet Our Partners **P.4**

An opening note from BALADI Plus's Project Director, Hervé de Baillenx

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform municipalities and other stakeholders of the latest developments of the BALADI Plus project and to highlight good practices in municipal governance.

With this first issue, we chose to introduce our partners and to share tips on a key element of good municipal governance: **transparency**.

We intend this newsletter to be a platform for exchanges and to address key topics of concern to its readers. For this, do not hesitate to contact us, via telephone, email or Facebook and tell us what you want to read about. We need to hear from you.

About BALADI Plus

The Building Alliances for Local Advancement, Development, and Investment-Plus (BALADI Plus) program offers technical assistance to municipalities that have been selected by another program – BALADI for awards based on proposals they submitted. BALADI Plus aims to:

- Improve or adopt financial, administrative, and regulatory systems that promote transparency and effective governance at the local level through trainings and coaching
- Promote accountability and participatory governance by engaging Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with local governments

Besides supporting BALADI-selected municipalities for technical assistance, BALADI Plus also offers training workshops to Lebanese municipalities and unions of municipalities on Fundraising, Proposal Writing, Project Cycle Management, and Feasibility Studies.

So far, BALADI Plus coached 16 municipalities on fundraising and project cycle management, and two of those submitted proposals and received funding, thanks to BALADI Plus' support.

BALADI Plus is

- ✓ Funded by USAID
- ✓ Offering trainings and coaching
- ✓ Working with all municipalities
- ✓ Promoting active women's participation in local governance
- ✓ Closely following up with 15 BALADI municipalities

BALADI Plus is NOT

- BALADI or BALADI CAP (we are three different programs)
- Offering money or cash grants- even if you are trained by us
- A guarantor to win a BALADI proposal, but we can share with you techniques to write good proposals
- Providing hardware and salaries to municipalities
- Limited to one geographic region in Lebanon - we serve all municipalities interested in our trainings

Building Capacity... Building Institutions...

BALADI Plus trainings and workshops are targeted at informing local government representatives of their roles and responsibilities while simultaneously building institutions that serve the citizenry.

Lydia Farah, council member of Kousba

**Stay Tuned:
Upcoming Trainings**

May 2014

- T.O.T for CSOs (24,25)
- Emergency Preparedness and Responsiveness (24,25)
- Project Cycle Management (24,25)
- Fundraising (31)
- Coaching Starts

June 2014

- Introduction to Audit and Control (4)
- Audit and Control of the Court of Audit (5,7)
- T.O.T for CSOs (7,8)
- Public Procurement – Advance Level (13-14)
- Training of Trainers (19,20,21)
- Early Recovery after Emergencies and Disasters (21,22)
- Early Recovery after Emergencies and Disasters (28,29)
- GIS (26)
- Coaching in Progress

Riddles

R1 .Guess how many women are in municipal councils across Lebanon as of 2010?

R2. When are the names of the citizens who are eligible to participate in municipal elections issued?

R3. When is the municipal budget usually prepared and finalized?

Answers are in the next issue!

Contact Us

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/BALADIPlus

Email:
baladiplus@msi-lebanon.com

Phone/Fax:
+961-1749507

A Closer Look at Our Program through the Eyes of Our Partners

Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA):

conducted 13 workshops for 28 CSOs in all BALADI-selected municipalities. LTA discussed strategies to advance citizen understanding of their rights and responsibilities in local governance through effective advocacy and promoting municipal transparency.

LTA is also developing customized templates of bylaws/internal regulations for six municipalities: Tyre – Deir Ammar – Kahhaleh – Kawkaba – Kousba – Khenshara. Moreover, LTA will be designing three simplified local development plans in Ihmej, Khenshara and Kousba.

Aylo Engineering: Aylo Engineering has been selected to install a Geographic Information System (GIS) in the municipalities of Bezbina, Kousba, Ihmej, Khenshara, Abra, Kahaleh, and Ainata Al-Arz and Jezzine UOM to improve urban/rural planning, assets management, and infrastructure and produce a digital tax map.

MIRA-CLE: is developing five websites for the municipalities of Khenshara, Tyre, Qosaybe, Barouk, and Kahaleh as well as one official Facebook page for Al-Bouhaira Union of Municipalities.

MIRA-CLE already assessed municipalities’ requirements to produce customized websites.

KDC-IOF: Knowledge Development Center (KDC) has partnered with the Institute of Finance (IOF) to strengthen local government capacities in public financial management. KDC-IOF finalized their assessments and scheduled trainings for all BALADI-selected municipalities during May and June of 2014 on Budgeting and Tax Collection, Public Procurement, Audit and Control, Financial Documentation and Archiving System.

In the coming weeks, the KDC-IOF team of experts will provide tailored coaching and on-the-job training to ensure that knowledge and skills are implemented in a practical sense. Also, KDC-IOF will build/improve an archiving system at the municipalities of Abra, Barouk, Tyre, Kousba, Saïda, Qosaybe, Khenshara and Kawkaba



BALADI Plus supported municipalities

Association for Forest, Development & Conservation (AFDC) was selected to improve the skills of selected municipalities in contingency planning, create local committees as well as provide technical assistance in the drafting of a contingency plan. The municipalities benefiting from AFDC support are: Deir Ammar, Bezbina, Kousba, Abra, Ainata and Barouk. AFDC has already finalized initial assessments, scheduled trainings, and is in the process of drafting contingency plans.

BALADI Plus has also identified **independent consultants** to assist the municipalities of Tyre, Khenshara, Kousba, Deir Ammar, Ainata Al-Arz, Barouk, and Bezbina in designing and implementing a Tax Collection plan to enhance revenues as well as assist the municipalities of Ainata and Abra in designing and implementing a Fundraising Plan.

“BALADI Plus trainings are very interesting and engaging. They provide us with rich information about project design and how to conduct needs assessments. What is even more interesting is the positive atmosphere and collaborative team work that adds to our learning as municipal staff and council members.

Jessica Saouma from the municipality of Hasroun, Bharre



BALADI Plus CHECKLIST on Transparency

Topic #1 A Transparent Municipal Website needs to include:

- ✓ About the Municipality
- ✓ Portfolios of the council members and the committees
- ✓ Major achievements
- ✓ Major decisions and budget
- ✓ Complaint/suggestion box
- ✓ Links to other social media tools
- ✓ Electronic forms of transactions that citizens can use

Topic #2 Promoting Transparency & Community Outreach in Municipalities

- ✓ Publish all municipal decisions
- ✓ Publish the yearly budget upon its approval by the municipal council
- ✓ Publish the yearly financial statement upon its approval by the municipal council
- ✓ Invite citizens to speak during municipal council sessions (including those who did not win the elections and marginalized groups)
- ✓ Organize open meetings (town hall meetings) with citizens on a regular basis
- ✓ Promote the active inclusion of citizens in municipal affairs through municipal committees
- ✓ Issue a newsletter highlighting the municipality’s main achievements, activities, and projects
- ✓ Establish a mechanism to receive suggestions and complaints from citizens
- ✓ Use online media and social media to communicate with citizens (official website, Facebook Page, Twitter)

“We equip CSOs not just with an advocacy toolkit, but also with a full spectrum of information of their roles and duties as citizens, as well as the prerogatives of the municipalities --so that CSOs constructively advocate for transparency and good governance at the municipal level.”



Jihad Jradi, Civil Society and Advocacy Specialist at BALADI Plus

This Issue’s Q&A on Good Governance

Q: Why is the municipality’s financial information considered public information?

A: Since part of the municipality’s revenues come from taxpayers, the latter are entitled to know how much the taxes they pay amount to, and how the taxes are being spent by institutions they elect. Moreover, it is the taxpayer’ right to know how the taxes they pay will ultimately benefit them and their community.



Q: How does the municipality enhance its image when the budget is made public?

A: The municipality builds trust with the citizenry when there is empirical evidence about activities being implemented and money being planned and spent for the collective good. In other words, public budgets signal transparency among the elected council and transparency is a pre-requisite for trust.

EYE ON IT Gender Mainstreaming

Our program strives to ensure equality between both men and women in all aspects of trainings, coaching, capacity building, and programming. BALADI Plus believes that good citizenship is best manifested when both men and women are actively engaged with their local governments, advocating for what is a public good and a personal right. BALADI Plus emphasizes that both men and women participate in training workshops, are present during any types of assessments, and are represented in capacity building efforts.

So far, BALADI Plus has trained 70+ women from municipal councils and staff as well as CSO representatives on a number of topics including good municipal governance, active citizenship, fundraising, project cycle management, proposal writing, and decision making.

She says:
“A woman needs to trust herself and push the bar above her perceived potentials, and programs like BALADI Plus are opening those doors for women- as well as men alike.”

Maha Maalouf Kassouf, council member of Zahle