

**EMPOWERING MUNICIPALITIES THROUGH LOCAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT (EMLED)
&
MUNICIPAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAM
(TAMKIN)**

PROGRAM EVALUATION

This report summarizes a mixed-method performance evaluation of the Empowering Municipalities through Local Economic Development (EMLED) program, implemented by Relief International (RI); and the Municipal Capacity Building and Service Delivery Program (TAMKIN) program, implemented by the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) under two separate Cooperative Agreements (CAs) with USAID/Lebanon. The evaluation was undertaken at the close of EMLED and during the third year (out of four) for the TAMKIN program. The evaluation was carried out by the Performance Management Plan for Lebanon (PMPL), a project implemented by Social Impact with Management Systems International.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the performance of EMLED and TAMKIN with respect to the achievement of their Cooperative Agreement objectives, outcomes and outputs and to better inform USAID of their overall performance. Specifically, the evaluation focused on assessing the degree to which:

- a. Target municipalities' capacities were built and strengthened to lead local economic development initiatives;
- b. These programs have created space for dialogue on local economic development issues between citizens and their municipality officials and promoted citizens, private sector and municipalities cooperation and collaborations; and
- c. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) were promoted and fostered with the objective of creating sustainable market-driven jobs and income opportunities.

The evaluation also seeks to understand the differential impact of the approaches adopted by the two programs.

Project Description

Implementation of both the EMLED and the TAMKIN programs began in May 2008 and was scheduled to end on April 30, 2011. The completion dates of both programs were extended so that EMLED will end on July 30, 2011 and TAMKIN on April 30, 2012.

Both the EMLED and TAMKIN programs were designed to promote participatory planning and implementation of local economic development initiatives. EMLED and TAMKIN's economic growth agendas specifically look at supporting three key industry sectors – information communication technology (ICT), tourism, and agribusiness. The two programs aim at enabling municipalities to play fundamental and visible roles in supporting and implementing transparent and accountable municipal programs, while at the same time creating space for citizens to voice which economic growth projects they want implemented in their communities.

Both the EMLED & the TAMKIN programs were also designed to contribute to USAID/Lebanon's 2007 Country Strategy aimed at producing increases in real incomes and jobs,

creating civil society and private sector pressures from the grass roots level for reforms needed in the political system, and mobilizing government and private sector resources to invigorate local economic development and growth. The EMLED and TAMKIN programs build on the previous successes of USAID and other donor programs in Lebanon focusing on enhancing administrative and financial capabilities, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of municipalities.

While there are similarities in scope, the municipalities and villages targeted by EMLED are different from those targeted by TAMKIN. Furthermore, the implementation approaches of each program were also different. For instance, EMLED followed a one-on-one approach in the Nahr El-Bared Camp 3rd Ring (NBC 3rd Ring) but it used a cluster approach elsewhere, where proximate municipalities and villages were put into eight clusters: Jezzine, Rihan, Jbeil, Dreyb Alaa, Dreyb Awsat, El Joume, Jered El Kayteh, and Sahel Akkar. EMLED used a community outreach approach in which the EMLED program team bypassed the municipality, directly reached out to the community, and identified program beneficiaries.

TAMKIN followed a participatory approach by which it worked directly with 44 villages and municipalities in Akkar, Dinnieh, and Zgharta areas and in Nahr El-Bared Camp 2nd Ring (NBC 2nd Ring). TAMKIN engaged citizens and the private sector with their respective municipalities in a three-phased process including the startup phase, a Local Economic Development Plan (LEDP) development phase and a project implementation phase. The municipality and the Municipal Development Committees (MDCs) identified projects and beneficiaries.

Evaluation Methodology

Data for the evaluation were gathered from (a) a program document desk review; (b) focus group discussions with Local Economic Development Committees (LEDCs) and Municipal Development Committees (MDCs) created by EMLED and TAMKIN, respectively; a representative group of citizens trained by the program; and samples of EMLED grantees and micro-finance and loan recipients; (c) key informant interviews with the USAID Assistance Objective Technical Representative (AOTR), EMLED and TAMKIN program teams, and target community heads of municipalities; and (d) a random sample opinion survey of citizens in target communities. The data were triangulated and analyzed to draw findings and conclusions. A two-stage data analysis was applied. In the first stage, program data for EMLED and TAMKIN were analyzed separately to ascertain the level of performance of each program with respect to achieving their expected outputs and outcomes as outlined in their amended Cooperative Agreement.

In the second stage, the performance of the two programs was compared in order to determine the differential impact of program implementation approaches.

Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions were designed to address specific characteristics of each of the two projects. Main questions addressed by the evaluation include:

- What capacities were built to enable the target municipalities to plan and implement socio-economic development activities?
- What approach was used to empower municipalities?
- What were the accomplishments of the assisted municipalities?
- What is the level of citizens' participation in local socio-economic development planning and implementation?

- What approaches were utilized to mobilize and engage communities / citizens with their municipalities?
- Which approaches were effective in increasing citizens/ community participation?
- What's the level of local business participation in local socio-economic development activities?
- What approaches were used to build public-private partnerships?
- How many public-private partnerships were formed and what was their impact in terms of job creation and income opportunities for the local community?
- What is the degree of cooperation and collaboration among municipalities in the same locality?
- How many Public-Public Partnerships were formed? What projects were implemented and what have been the benefits of these projects?
- To what extent were the needs of vulnerable groups addressed in local socio-eco development planning and implementation?
- What approaches were used to ensure the needs of vulnerable groups are addressed in the local socioeconomic development planning and implementation?
- How are LSDPs developed?
- Are plans based on needs assessments and community consultations?
- Are Municipal Development Committees (MDCs) / Local Economic Development Committees (LEDCs) elected or selected?
- Are they representative of the profile of the community?

Conclusions and Supporting Findings

Main conclusions and supporting findings of the evaluation were as follows:

1. Both EMLED and TAMKIN are relevant programs. They directly contribute to USAID's objectives and country strategy
2. The success of both EMLED and TAMKIN in meeting targets set for their respective performance management plan indicators is mixed.
3. The formation of local economic development committees (LEDCs) at the individual municipality level is more effective than their formation at the cluster level for creating space for citizens and private sector dialogue and collaboration for local economic development
4. The EMLED and TAMKIN programs have built capacities and empowered heads of municipalities, and selected municipal council members to be leaders of local economic development in target communities as part of the MDCs and LEDCs. However, some of this capacity was lost because of the handover to the newly elected municipal heads and council members after the 2010 local elections, and the fact that both EMLED and TAMKIN did not repeat the capacity building training activities for the new heads of municipalities and council members.

5. Both EMLED and TAMKIN have promoted public-private partnerships (PPPs) for local economic development. However, while some PPPs provide benefits to a wider range of community members (e.g., a milk collection center provides service to the area dairy farmers), others are limited in scope and the benefits accrue mostly to the business owners (e.g., snack bars or restaurants for tourists directly benefit the restaurateurs only).
6. Both EMLED and TAMKIN have increased income-generating opportunities and created a number of jobs, most of which are short-term in nature.
7. Both EMLED and TAMKIN were effective in targeting and engaging women and vulnerable groups in local economic development planning, implementation and monitoring.
8. The impact of both EMLED and TAMKIN may not be sustainable.
9. About half of the citizens in EMLED and TAMKIN target communities are aware of projects implemented in their respective municipalities; and only one-third of citizens are aware that some of these projects are funded by USAID
10. Socio-political parameters have affected the performance of both EMLED and TAMKIN.

Recommendations

The evaluation proposes the following recommendations:

1. To enable communities to assume responsibility and create momentum for local economic development in partnership with their respective local government, USG-supported projects should focus more on empowering local communities as rights-based demanders of economic development initiatives.
2. USG-supported projects intended for quick impact results such as job creation and income generation for a target group of beneficiaries should be unbundled and managed separately.
3. USAID needs to speed up the review process for funding projects nominated by MDCs/LEDCs.
4. Public-private partnership projects selected should ensure that they benefit the wider community through either employment generation or creation of income opportunities.
5. The USG requirement for high US visibility should be waived in situations where it might breed resistance.