# ABC CONSULTING
### ASSOCIATES IN BUILDING CAPACITY

# Evaluation Report

## "The Village Decides" Program

## Implemented by Dalia Association

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## Part One: Executive Summary

"The Village Decides" program is a trial program that aims to involve the public in the decision making and resource distribution process in a democratic, fair way through the enhancement of community participation in the process of grant awards, needs assessment and monitoring of implemented projects, enabling it to control its local resources and thus achieve social change. The program was implemented in two models; the first model was applied in 2008 in Saffa village (Ramallah) while the second, which we present here, was applied in Al-Zawya village (Salfeet) in 2009/2010.

The evaluation process of "The Village Decides" program aims to inspect the methodology of the program's work which is related to involving the public in the process of grant awards, enabling them to specify their needs, follow-up and monitor the implemented projects. In addition, it aims to evaluate all stages of the program, whether those relating to the selection criteria of the target location (as a model for the project), the course of the open meeting, the methodology of grant distribution and its impact on institutions and the local community as well as evaluation of the projects implemented by the participating institutions and their effectiveness and compatibility with the requirements specified by the public. This is coupled with the evaluation of the performance of the local monitoring committee and program team and finally the difficulties faced by the program during implementation, whether at the level of participating institutions or the team implementing the program. To achieve this, many means and tools were used, including a review of all the program's documentation such as its plan, project proposals, agreements, needs studies, meeting minutes, reports and many documents related to the implementation stages of the program, in addition to the meetings held with the program team and various project stakeholders individually and with a focus group comprising a sample of the various program stakeholders.

In the same context and in regards to the analysis of results and data on the evaluation process, the evaluation dealt with several themes, **the first of which was the examination and evaluation of the selection mechanism of Al-Zawya village from the nominated sites at the level of the West Bank**, where it was ascertained that finding and applying specific criteria to choose the appropriate location for the implementation of the proposed methodology is good, especially since it was done in consultation with a special committee from civil associations. Yet these criteria, although they focused on the selection of small target sites to test the methodology which contain limited, cooperating institutions and a calm local community not characterized by tribal or partisan tendency, turned out, through the process of analysis and evaluation, to be difficult criteria to achieve and apply. The choice of location based on the first criterion of the population of the target village could be achieved given the data is available and easy to access, but the second criterion associated with the number of institutions (not less than 8 and not more than 11) and the third one (that most of the institutions are active and effective at the town level and have the capacity to implement the program) are difficult to implement, for it is not easy to

determine the number of institutions located in each target site at the level of the West Bank, as well as determine their effectiveness, degree of activity, cooperation and neutrality. Thus, although the process of information gathering about the candidate sites took place through direct visits and filling out detailed forms for the different locations, it did not happen for all target sites, which could affect the process of choosing a suitable site for the application of the sample program and the idea of "The Village Decides" methodology. It is clear that the criteria used are somewhat complex and difficult to apply, and require high effort and cost, for setting criteria to choose one site out of hundreds of villages and towns at the level of the West Bank is difficult and requires strenuous efforts. These could have been replaced through choosing one suitable site for implementation from the villages in one governorate without going into a selection process from among all the villages and towns of the West Bank, for limiting the selection process in this way would make it easier and make the implementation of the criteria possible and viable.

**The second theme addressed the evaluation of the open meeting, the methodology of grant distribution by participation and the implications of applying that methodology, where it addressed the announcement process for the open meeting, its course and the mechanism of grant distribution.** It was ascertained by the various parties to the program that the process of announcing the meeting was transparent and professional, using appropriate means and sufficient time and allowing everyone an equal opportunity to participate. It should be noted that the process of announcing the meeting was under the framework of needs assessment without reference to the grant distribution, in order to preserve the idea and philosophy of the methodology. Regarding the course of the open meeting, all agreed that the management of the meeting by Dalia Association was marked by professionalism and neutrality, and that the mechanism of grant distribution was transparent and done in a fair and equal manner among all institutions without interference from Dalia Association or its work team. The importance was stressed of the participation of the largest possible number of people and institutions to ensure a true representation of the local community. As for the implications of the use of the "grant distribution by participation" methodology on Al-Zawya village, it can be noted that the majority of the parties to the project confirmed that the use and application of the current methodology did not have any negative impact at the village level, the relationship between institutions that received grants and those that did not or between the people and institutions, stressing at the same time the program's role in stimulating the institutions working in Al-Zawya village and drawing their attention to the people, their opinions and degree of satisfaction with services rendered and their quality. The implementation of this methodology enabled the institutions to cooperate, coordinate and benefit from shared experiences, and also contributed to strengthening the role of the public in decision-making related to funding, needs assessment and selecting the participating institutions, as well as carrying out the tasks of monitoring the participating institutions and projects implemented. The evaluation also touched on the risks and impacts resulting from the application of the methodology in terms of its being relatively new and not tested adequately except in two target locations, which may not help in knowing the effects of its

application whether at the level of institutions, people or the local community at large. Thus, the evaluation recommended the need to spread the application of this methodology at other target locations slowly, in order to make sure of the results and effects that may arise from its implementation, and after conducting a thorough, careful study of target sites to choose ones not characterized by a tribal, partisan or tense nature which may threaten the success of the program and the implementation of the methodology. A risk that was also touched upon is for Dalia Association to become the only one implementing this methodology, thus making it known and threatening its chances of success. The evaluation thus recommended the need to work on the implementation of this methodology at irregular time periods. It also pointed out that one of the main reasons for success in the use of grant distribution by participation in Al-Zawya village was the existence of an enthusiastic, professional and impartial work team with a thorough knowledge of the village, its institutions, nature and target audience. This means that the use of this methodology by an unqualified work team inexperienced with it and without a good knowledge of the target locations can make it difficult to implement the methodology and threaten its success, so it is necessary for its successful application to build the capacity of staff and work teams and enable them to understand the philosophy of the program and the methodology used and implement it properly. Finally, the report presented a set of recommendations that would develop the methodology of grant distribution by participation and improve it.

**Within the third theme, the evaluation dealt with the projects implemented, in terms of planning for them, follow-up and the compatibility of projects with community needs of Al-Zawya village, in addition to the positive effects and results of the program and projects implemented.** The institutions implementing the projects in addition to the members of the local monitoring committee agreed on the positive role of Dalia Association in follow-up and constant communication with the institutions and the committee and helping them in the implementation of projects. Many meetings were held during the planning and implementation stage which were intended to help institutions identify and choose projects and prepare needs studies and implementation plans related to them, as well as helping institutions with administrative and financial aspects. Regarding the compatibility of implemented projects with requirements approved by the public through the open meeting, most people said that the projects do not represent the community needs mentioned, for several reasons related to the small budget for the program which did not help to implement the majority of requirements, in addition to lack of specialized institutions and their inability to implement the requirements mentioned which need a large capacity and official specialized bodies. Also in regard to the positive effects and results of the program and projects, the program's role was mentioned in providing funding for four community-based institutions, enabling them to develop their capacities, cooperate and work jointly and collectively, as well as stimulating institutional interest in local and diaspora resources. The program also contributed to promoting community involvement of the public by enabling it to identify its needs and choose the institutions that it wanted to receive funding, as

well as strengthening its role in the follow-up and monitoring of projects and participating institutions.

• **The fourth theme discussed the evaluation of performance of the local monitoring committee**, in terms of its being a new and positive idea that promotes the role of people in community participation. Most parties in the program stressed the good performance and positive role of the members of the monitoring committee, while some stressed that some members were apprehensive at first to carry out the tasks of monitoring the participating institutions and did not have sufficient expertise or knowledge of the means and instruments of control that should be used. Thus, the importance was emphasized of developing their abilities to enhance the monitoring process and make it more efficient. **The fifth theme also dealt with the evaluation of performance of the program team**, where everyone agreed on their positive performance in terms of having the necessary expertise, skills and ability for detailed follow-up of all program tasks and its different areas. **In the same context, the sixth and final theme dealt with the difficulties encountered by the project team** in terms of choosing the appropriate location for the implementation of the methodology and the required efforts and field survey, in addition to the unwillingness of some institutions to operate within limited budgets, coupled with the difficulties faced by institutions in terms of the small budget for the program and the availability of community-based contributions relating to implemented projects. Finally, the evaluation indicated a set of recommendations which will develop the idea of the program and enhance the methodology of work in particular.

"The Village Decides" is the prototype of a program that Dalia Association applied in the summer of 2008 as part of a mechanism aimed at community involvement in the decision-making process, through the activation of resources and their distribution in a fair, democratic manner for the purpose of social change to achieve sustainable development. "The Village Decides" is a mechanism that aims to evolve into a permanent, comprehensive grant program giving local communities the opportunity to exercise their right in determining their priorities, participating in the distribution of resources, controlling them, achieving social change and promoting community participation. Thus, this program aims to work with Palestinian villages that contain the appropriate environment for change, within certain criteria, among them that the population ranges between 3000 - 5000 or just over, the number of institutions is at a minimum of 8 active and efficient ones and the social infrastructure of the village and the extent of receptivity of its community are suitable for participation and social change.

## Program Objectives

• Local community involvement in the decision-making process.

• Empowering the local community in the use of grants based on its priorities.

• Guiding the local community towards the exploitation of local resources and their investment.

• Activating the role of the local community in the process of monitoring and evaluation of civil institutions.

• Aiming to achieve social change leading to real and sustainable development.

• Activating the role of the Palestinian diaspora and involving it in the development process.

## Program Application

### Saffa Model - 2008

Dalia Association applied the first pilot model of "The Village Decides" program in Saffa village, governorate of Ramallah in the summer of 2008. This was part of a mechanism aimed at involving the local community in the decision-making process, based on Dalia's essential goal of activating resources and distributing them in a fair way for social change and to achieve sustainable development.

## Al-Zawya Model – 2009 – 2010

Dalia Association implemented the second model of the program in the governorate of Salfeet: Al-Zawya village, which has a population of 5,500 people. 4 institutions benefitted from the program at the village level to implement various community projects.

## Stages of Program Implementation

"The Village Decides" program was implemented in Al-Zawya village of Salfeet governorate for approximately 9 months,  from 15/10/2009 to 15/7/2010. **It comprised several phases, namely:**

1. **Target site selection**: For a period of one month, at the end of which Al-Zawya village was chosen after research, a survey and visits to candidate sites within the criteria established in the program.

2. **Holding the open meeting**: For a period of one month, during which the open  meeting was announced under the pretext of identifying the needs of the village, then the meeting was held and the grants were distributed by the people after they chose four institutions whom they saw were deserving of the program's grants.

3. **Implementation of planned projects**: For a period of 7 months, where the institutions helped each other through collective action among them to choose projects, plan for them and conduct their needs studies, in addition to building the capacity of institutions relating to all stages of implementation and administrative and financial aspects. This was implemented with the participation of the local monitoring committee, which was chosen by the people during the open meeting to monitor the implemented projects and participating institutions.
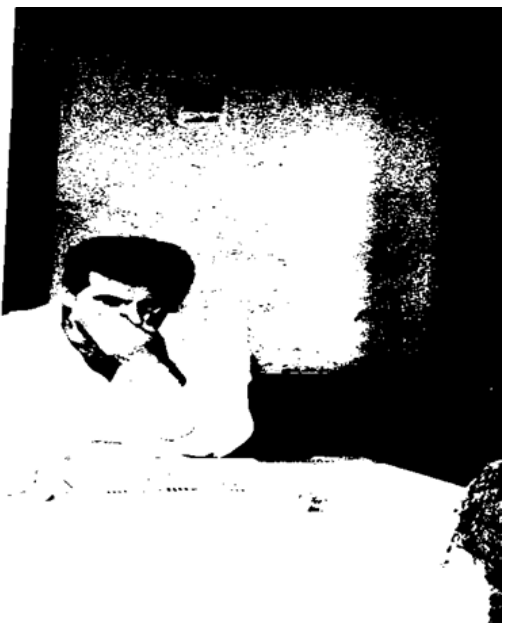
# Part Three: Evaluation Methodology

**To evaluate the various stages of the program, as well as the methodology of "The Village Decides," the outcome of its application and the extent of its effect, the following methodology was adopted:**

**- Review the program documentation**

In collaboration with program staff, all documents, reports and plans relating to all phases of program implementation were reviewed, as follows:

1 - The program plan and timetable for implementation

2 - Reports of the program, including the final report

3 - Project proposals and implementation plans

4 - Needs studies for implemented projects

5 - Signed agreements with participating institutions

6 - Project reports and minutes of meetings

7 - Report of the local monitoring committee

8 - Forms and correspondence

9 - The website of Dalia Association

**- Hold a meeting with project staff**

A meeting was held among the program staff of Dalia Association, composed of the director of programs and projects and the administrative assistant, in order to know the team's view and its assessment of the methodology and the various stages of the program (**details of the meeting in Annex 1**).

**- Meet with a focus group from the program**

To evaluate "The Village Decides" program, a meeting was held with a focus group representing the different parties of the program and in the presence of 13 participants, on behalf of the participating institutions as well as those who did not receive grants, in addition to members of the local monitoring committee and representatives of the public (**details of the meeting in Annex 2**).

# Part Four: Program's Strengths and Weaknesses

Through the evaluation process and the meeting between all parties to the program, the most important strengths and weaknesses related to "The Village Decides" could be identified as follows:

## 1. Program's Strengths

**• The idea of the program and the methodology used**

90% of the participants in the focus group indicated that the idea of the program is the most important strength, in terms of being a new, quality idea based on the methodology of community involvement in decision-making, identifying priority needs and selecting institutions that deserve project grants based on their degree of activity and presence in the local community. They pointed out that this represents a new culture of work that has not been implemented before.

**• The role of Dalia Association in monitoring all phases of the program and ensuring its success**

This is through constant communication with the institutions implementing projects and providing assistance and support to them, and through regular meetings and the provision of consulting services for institutions to succeed in their tasks and implement the planned projects, as well as transparency and clarity in the management of the program through the impartiality and professionalism during the grant distribution and the selection of participating institutions.

**• Strengthening the capacity of institutions and stimulating their cooperation and positive competition**

One of the main characteristics of the program is that related to its ability to gather institutions together, enabling them to cooperate and work jointly through planning meetings and collective implementation. The institutions chose the projects and designed the implementation plans and budgets collectively, which were then presented to the other institutions, giving them the opportunity for collective benefit and capacity development. This was aided through technical and consulting assistance provided by Dalia Association to the participating institutions, whether in administrative or financial aspects such as assistance in planning, preparing budgets and completing the procedures and requirements of the procurement process and the required financial procedures. In addition, institutions were encouraged as to the importance of using domestic resources, benefitting from them and the importance of contributions and resources existing within the local community and the Palestinian diaspora. Finally, institutions were

stimulated to compete mutually and prove their worth in the implementation and provision of services to the people and the town in general, thus giving attention to the local community, its views and the quality of services provided to it.

• **Strengthening the role of the public in decision-making related to funding and needs assessment**

The program's role can also be noted in the creation of a new culture towards the promotion of citizen and target group participation in decision-making, related to funding and grant distribution to institutions that they deem appropriate, which enhances the role of citizens and stimulates institutions towards providing quality service and paying attention to the opinions and degree of satisfaction of the target group. This is in addition to the program's role in enabling public control over the implemented projects, their evaluation, and intervention in the planning and implementation process through expressing opinions and observations on the projects implemented and the services provided. This is through the involvement of people in all areas of the project such as planning, implementation, monitoring and follow-up by presenting financial and management reports to the public and through their participation in the follow-up and evaluation through the formation of the local monitoring committee of people and target groups.

## 2. Program's Weaknesses

• **Uncertainty about the long-term effects of the application of grant distribution by participation**

The methodology of participation used is a new one that has not been implemented except at the level of two towns, Saffa village in Ramallah and Al-Zawya village in Salfeet. Thus, the implications of implementation of this methodology may not be known in the near future; it could have negative effects in terms of creating disagreements between the people, institutions or various parties of the local community, as well as raising questions about the fairness of the grant distribution as the participants in the grant distribution meeting are usually limited in number and of a random representation, without criteria to ensure that they are representatives of the target site or village.

• **Lack of validity of the methodology used, except at the level of the small target sites**

"The Village Decides" methodology was applied at the level of Al-Zawya village, which represents one of the relatively small towns characterized by calm and cooperation between its various institutions as well as good relations between its people, all of which helped in the implementation of this methodology and the success of its application. This raises important questions about the extent of success of implementation of this methodology within larger villages and towns containing a greater number of institutions and people, the extent of the effect

that may be caused by people's participation in grant distribution to institutions and the mechanism that will be used to implement this methodology given the presence of a large number of institutions and people.

**• Limited value of the grants in the program**

Most people pointed out that the project budget was relatively small, at a value of $12,000 distributed to 4 institutions, which did not allow them to implement large projects or work on the priority requirements approved by the people during the open meeting, as the budget is limited and the community needs required higher financial resources to implement them. However, some also stressed that the limited grants to institutions enabled and motivated them to take advantage of the resources available in the local community.

**• Lack of continuation of the methodology implementation (no repetition)**

Although some projects may be deemed as permanent, income-generating ones that are possible to continue, the methodology implemented can be considered as ceasing and non-recurring after its one-time application in the target location after the end of grant distribution and implementation of projects. This prevents the continuity of the idea of the program and its philosophy based on the need to involve people in decision-making and enhance their community participation. The stopping of the program and lack of continuity in the same location means no accumulation of experience and the stopping of people's participation and choice, with no mechanism to ensure that other funding institutions will implement this methodology.

## Part Five: Analysis of Data and Results

### 1. Evaluation of Selection Mechanism of Al-Zawya Village

**In regards to evaluating the selection mechanism of Al-Zawya village from a group of villages and towns in the West Bank, we can refer to the means and mechanisms that were used to do so, as follows:**

☐ It was stressed that the selection process was carried out through the study and development of "The Village Decides" methodology, which is originally applied at the international level and which aims to strengthen the role of people and involve them in decision-making process, needs

assessment and selection of institutions to benefit from funding. In order to study and develop "The Village Decides" methodology, a programs committee was formed by Dalia Association, whose membership included members from different institutions with experience in community work, through which the methodology was discussed and developed to be more appropriate for application at the Palestinian level. Based on this, a certain set of criteria was identified related to the selection of the appropriate village to implement the program. The criteria were ones that must be adopted during the selection of target sites, and are as follows:

> ➤ Number of village townspeople must not be less that 3000 – 5000.
> ➤ Number of institutions in the village must be no less than 8 and no more than 11.
> ➤ Most institutions must be active and effective.
> ➤ Social makeup of the village, such that is has a good level of general awareness, openness and acceptance of change (this is not a basic criterion but is seen by observation, because it is difficult to identify or discuss with the people of the village or target location).

☐ After identifying the appropriate criteria, a list was made of the names of villages appropriate to participate in the program through information from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. 46 villages were identified out of all those within the governorates of the West Bank, and all villages and towns were excluded that do not fall within the first criterion of the population size, **as follows**:

**Villages Within the Scope of the Population Size Criterion**

| Number | Governorate | Number of villages | Names of candidate villages |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Jericho | 2 | Al-Oja, Al-Jeftlek |
| 2. | Ramallah | 14 | Al-Mazraa Al-Qibliyyah, Al-Mazraa Al-Sharqiyya, Bani Zeid, Beit Our El-Tahta, Birzeit, Deir Debwan, Deir Jreer, Kharbata El-Misbah, Niilin, Qibya, Saffa, Shuqbat Sinjel, Turmusayya |
| 3. | Nablus | 7 | Awarta, Burqa, Hawwara, Jmaeen, Qisra, Salem, Tal |
| 4. | Jenin | 10 | Al-Funduqomia, Jdeideh, Aneen, Zababdeh, Burqeen, Kufr Dan, Selat El Dhahr, Sanour, Sirees |
| 5. | Tubas | 1 | Aqaba |
| 6. | Qalqilya | 2 | Kufr Thulth, Hableh |
| 7. | Tulkarem | 2 | Beit Leed, Kufr El-Labad |

| 8. | Salfeet | 2 | Al-Zawya, Kufr El-Deek |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9. | Hebron | 2 | Beit Kahel, Deir Samet, Nouba |
| 10. | Bethlehem | 4 | Zaatara, Taqou, Nahaleen, Bteer |
| | **Total:** | | **46 villages** |

□ Regarding the second criterion, associated with the number of institutions (not less than 8 and not more than 11) and the third criterion (that most of the institutions are active and effective at the level of the town, and have the capacity to implement the program), the research and survey process conducted by the project team used a variety of means such as visiting the candidate towns and villages, filling in detailed survey questionnaires for local councils and institutions in these target sites and using external institutions who have worked within these sites to question them about the target villages and gather information about the nature of these locations, their orientations, institutions, activities, degree of cooperation and so on. Regarding the second and third criterion, therefore, five towns met these criteria, **as follows**:

### Villages Within the Scope of the First Three Criteria

| Number | Criteria | Total number of villages | Villages in accordance with criteria | Villages not in accordance with criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | First criterion: Population between 3000 – 5000 or just over | 64 | | - |
| 2. | Second criterion: Number of institutions is between 8 and 11 | | 7 | 57 |
| 3. | Third criterion: Institutions are active and effective | | 5 | 59 |

□ It was also emphasized that the first of the five villages to be excluded were the villages in Jenin and Tubas on the grounds that the World Bank report of 2000 (Source: program staff) pointed out that both governorates are suffering from difficult economic conditions and are among the poorest locations, so funding bodies focused on them during previous years due to their proximity to the Wall and their being considered among the most marginalized areas.

□ Regarding the governorates of Bethlehem and Hebron, visits were held to many candidate villages which fell within the program criteria set in advance, where the local councils and institutions were visited and special forms were filled out for most of them. Here, it was noted that the candidate villages are not suitable either due to lack of a sufficient number of institutions or because of the ineffectiveness of some of them and their reliance on volunteers to manage them and implement their programs. In addition, some villages were not appropriate in terms of

community structure in the form required and not eligible to participate in the program. Despite this, it was stressed that the exclusion of Hebron and Bethlehem from the current program does not mean not targeting them in the next stages.

☐ The desire of Dalia Association to diversify the target sites and beneficiary towns caused it to exclude Ramallah, which was chosen during the application of the first model of "The Village Decides" program through Saffa village.

☐ After completing the process of research, information gathering, visits, filling out forms and analyzing them and reducing the number of candidate villages to 5, Salfeet was chosen and in particular Al-Zawya. The village was visited and forms were filled in with the municipality and existing institutions, 9 in number, and the analysis showed that Al-Zawya could be a suitable site for the application of "The Village Decides" methodology.

☐ The process of research showed that Al-Zawya village features an atmosphere of cooperation and positive relationship between institutions and townspeople, as well as lack of control of the tribal or partisan culture over the village. The collection of information also showed that that the institutions of Al-Zawya had good experiences that qualify them to participate in the project and to be a suitable model for the application of "The Village Decides" methodology, as a new one related to involving people in the decision-making process to enhance their role and community involvement.

**Observations on the selection mechanism and the criteria applied**

**Regarding the selection process through which Al-Zawya village was chosen to apply the methodology of "The Village Decides" and the criteria adopted in the selection process, and in order to develop the mechanism and proposed criteria, it is necessary to make the following observations:**

• First, regarding the criteria applied to determine the target site to implement the idea and methodology of "The Village Decides" program, it is necessary to review these criteria and evaluate them on the basis of their applicability and the possibility of measurement, **as follows**:

✓ The first criterion of population number is easily applicable and measurable, for the process of sorting target villages and sites on the basis of population can be carried out and identified through information contained in population surveys conducted by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics.

✓ Regarding the second criterion on the number of institutions, which must be no less than 8 and no more than 11, as well as the third criterion which relates to the need for institutions to be effective and active, it can be noted that the sorting and classification of towns based on the number of existing institutions at each site and the extent of their

effectiveness and activity is not an easy job, especially if applied at the scope of the West Bank and keeping in mind that there is no detailed and accurate information from the official or civil authorities about institutions in the various villages and towns. There is also no information on the effectiveness of such institutions or their degree of activity at the local level, thus it was emphasized that the project team relied on the collection of field data and conduction of visits to most of the candidate sites (it was emphasized that certain sites were excluded before a visit by collecting information about them and ensuring their lack of suitability for the criteria) in order to determine the number of institutions in the sites that were visited, the effectiveness of these institutions and their ability to participate in the program. This was done through the filling of detailed forms with council members to gather information on the town and with the institutions in the candidate site to determine the extent of their activity, ability to work and the possibility of their participation in the program. Having said this, it can be noted that visiting 64 villages and towns is not easy and requires a lot of time and cost, also that visiting some villages and excluding some of them (as a result of gathering external preliminary information) may affect the results of the selection process, for it is necessary in order to achieve this criterion to visit all sites that have been nominated and sort them after applying the first criterion, then use the additional information which may be regarded as supportive in the process of evaluation and selection of the candidate institutions. The exclusion of certain sites on the basis of collecting information before visiting them, and visiting some of the villages without the others, could create a kind of unequal opportunity among institutions and affect the selection process.

✓ As far as the last criterion related to the social structure of the village, and the need for it to have public awareness, openness and acceptance of change, it can be noted that it is good to consider this criterion as secondary and not essential in the selection process, because it is not easy to determine the degree of public awareness of the people and institutions and their extent of acceptance of involvement in the methodology of grant distribution by participation. This is despite the emphasis that the visits to these sites and institutions in them, filling in forms around them and analyzing them, in addition to gathering supportive information and building on the experience and impression of external institutions working in these sites, may help to know and specify the location most appropriate for the implementation of the program. As well, it may determine the extent of awareness of the people and acceptance of the institutions of the idea of competition and teamwork, without there being any sensitivities or problems within the target sites.

• From the above, and through the process of analyzing the criteria applied to choose the target site, it is clear that some criteria are difficult to apply and require high effort and cost, for setting criteria based on selecting a single site from hundreds of villages and towns at the level of the

West Bank is relatively difficult and requires great effort. Thus, the prototype of "The Village Decides" was possible to be applied on the basis of selecting a suitable site for implementation from the villages of one governorate, without going into the process of selection from among villages and towns within the governorates of the West Bank as a whole. The limiting of the selection process to villages located in one governorate would facilitate the process and make the implementation of the criteria possible and viable. In addition, it is easy and logical to move from one governorate to another during the application of each model of the program, where Saffa was chosen in the first model and Al-Zawya in the second model, and it is possible to move to another governorate in the application of the third model without the need to choose from among hundreds of nominated sites located within the governorates of the West Bank.

## 2. Evaluation of Open Meeting and Methodology of Grant Distribution by Participation

### 2.1 Announcing the Open Meeting

- The majority of parties to the project indicated that the announcement process for the open meeting was transparent and professional, where the means used in the announcement of the meeting were appropriate and the duration sufficient. The meeting was announced over a period of a week to ten days through formal invitation to all institutions, schools, kindergartens and health centers, in addition to distributing 78 invitations to important figures by hand, and general invitations that were displayed on the bulletin boards in the village, the notice board of the municipality as well as at different sites such as mosques, schools and kindergartens.
- With regard to the preparation and announcement of the open meeting, the project team confirmed that the process of preparing and arranging the meeting was in collaboration with the Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center of the Municipality of Al-Zawya, who had a key role in assisting with the preparation of attendee lists and distributing invitations with the participation of project staff, but without being informed of the course of the meetings, the grant distribution mechanism or the idea of choosing institutions by public election.
- It was also stressed that the invitation was for a meeting to identify the needs of the town without reference to the grant distribution or to the role of the people in the selection of participating institutions. The meeting was prepared for in total secrecy by Dalia Association, allowing for equal opportunities of competing institutions for grants, and preventing institutions from prior preparation and public gathering before the meeting so as to gain funding which may not be commensurate with the degree of satisfaction of the people with the institution or the services provided by it, or that disrupts the idea of engaging people in decision-making.

## 2.2 Course of Open Meeting and Mechanism of Grant Distribution

- As for the description of the course of the meeting, the open meeting took place with the participation of 38 people and 8 institutions, with one institution absent although it was invited. During the meeting, each institution was given the time to present its targets and achievements to the audience and people of the village. The people were then asked to elect 4 institutions out of the 8 participating ones. The audience was also told the value of the grant from the Dalia Association, namely $12,000, informing them of the possibility of donation to any one of the four institutions that were chosen, or to some or all of them, based on what each participant deems as appropriate according to his/her conviction of the institution's entitlement and value. Finally, at the end of the grant distribution, which had no problems, the people chose a monitoring committee from themselves and that had non-institutional representatives, in order to have a role in the follow-up and monitoring of the project.
- In regard to the assessment of the meeting and the mechanism of grant distribution, all parties agreed (including institutions that did not receive grants) that the management of the meeting by Dalia Association was marked by professionalism and neutrality, and that the mechanism of grant distribution was transparent and done fairly and equitably among institutions. The meeting was prepared for by inviting all the people, institutions and key figures, giving equal opportunities for all to participate such that grants were distributed based on the selection and desire of participants in the open meeting, and within a budget specific to each participant, which s/he had the right to grant to any institution or a number of institutions as s/he deemed appropriate.
- It was also stressed that the open meeting was a good way to introduce the institutions, where they were given equal time to make a presentation about their aims and achievements and define their role to the public and the townspeople, as well as enabling them to obtain a small grant through one meeting without going into the complex routine procedures of other grant programs.

- The majority of the parties to the project indicated that the idea of the meeting was good and the work style and methodology was new, in terms of opportunity for people to participate in identifying needs and providing grants to institutions that they wanted.

- The majority also confirmed that Dalia Association did not interfere with the process of grant distribution to institutions, but its role was limited to inviting the audience and facilitating the meeting, giving space for people to take over the grant distribution to institutions that they wanted.

- Most people also spoke highly of the mechanism used in the grant distribution in terms of its role in stimulating institutions and activating them to connect with townspeople and the target group and present their activities and achievements to the public, thus encouraging competition among institutions for the benefit of the townspeople.

- The importance was emphasized of the formation of a local monitoring committee, which had a role in the follow-up and control of projects, in addition to the role of the project in enabling the institutions that received grants to work and coordinate together.

- One party pointed out that the number of participants in the open meeting was not enough and does not represent all the people of the village, and that it would have been better to inform the institutions of the grant distribution mechanism so that they would be able to prepare and gather an audience in advance, but it was emphasized by the other parties of the program of others that the mechanism used in grant distribution without prior institution knowledge was good and that the people chose without pressure based on their vision of the degree of activity of the institutions, their presence within the local community and the services they provide.

- Some also pointed out that the needs identified by people during the open meeting were not adhered to, as the projects implemented through the program do not reflect those needs, but the other program parties explained that this is due to the budget of the program being limited, as well as that most requirements identified by people were inappropriate to the capacity of institutions, their specialization and their scope of work.

## 2.3 Effects of "Grant Distribution by Participation" Methodology Use on Al-Zawya Village

- Most parties to the project stressed that the use and application of the current methodology did not leave any negative impact at the village level or the relationship between the institutions that received grants and those that did not, or among the people and institutions, except for one side that pointed out that one of the institutions that did not receive a grant from the program had internal problems between its members and laying of responsibility and blame among them.

- When comparing between the application of the methodology in Al-Zawya village and Saffa village in the first and second models, it is clear that it no adverse effects or problems happened during the implementation of the methodology in Al-Zawya, unlike Saffa village, in which, during the open meeting, there was anger from the representatives of the local council

as a result of granting funds to institutions because they wanted to use the funds in the construction of the council headquarters. They referred to this by saying "you fooled us" after their knowledge of the manner of distributing grants by participation during the open meeting and that they were prevented from benefiting from grants within their capacity as local council of the town. This was in contrast to Al-Zawya where everyone praised the methodology used, saying that no problems or negative impacts occurred during its implementation.

- It was noted that holding the open meeting without the announcement of the grant distribution mechanism contributed to stimulating the institutions to participate in community activities ensuing after the meeting, where an increase in participation and interaction of the institutions was observed in the activities held at the town level later.

- Some institutions that did not get grants indicated that they did an internal assessment as an experience, in order to determine the cause of failure and benefit from the experience, but they noted at the same time that the system of grant distribution that was implemented had no action or means to object to the results of the meeting, during which institutions were chosen and grants distributed.

- The majority of participating parties indicated the program's role in stimulating the institutions working in the village of Al-Zawya and drawing their attention to the townspeople, their opinions and their degree of satisfaction with services rendered to them and their quality, thus increasing the interest of institutions in the degree of satisfaction of citizens in general through the application of the methodology of involving the townspeople in the choosing of participating institutions.

- The implementation of this methodology also contributed to enabling institutions to cooperate, coordinate and benefit from shared experiences, through regular meetings between the institutions and the project team during the planning and implementation process, which helped to inform each institution on projects of other institutions and how they are implemented.

- The methodology strengthened the role of the public and community participation of the target group in making decisions related to funding, needs assessment and choosing participating institutions, as well as doing the tasks of civil monitoring of the participating institutions and implemented projects.

**2.4 Evaluation of Risks and Effects Resulting from "Grant Distribution by Participation" Methodology Implementation**

It should be noted that the methodology of "The Village Decides" program (grant distribution by participation) is a global one, which Dalia Association worked on after developing and discussing it within a programs committee made up of a group of civil work and civil association experts. The first model was implemented in Saffa village in mid-2008 while the second model was implemented in Al-Zawya village in 2009/2010.

Thus, although we are aware of the importance of this methodology in strengthening the role of the townspeople and enabling them to participate in decision-making, and the ability of this methodology to link between satisfaction of citizens with their institutions and services provided by them and the degree of funding that these institutions deserve, but when talking about the application of this methodology, **it is necessary to make a number of observations as follows**:

- The methodology used is a relatively new one which was only applied and circulated in two models, Saffa village in Ramallah and Al-Zawya village in Salfeet, so knowing the size and degree of effects that may result from use of this methodology is not clear in the long run, especially since the implementation process took place in villages that the project team chose as sites that understood the idea of the project and had collaborating institutions receptive to the concept of professional competition. Thus, it is necessary to apply this methodology slowly, that is, not circulate it quickly in other target locations before checking the results and impacts that may arise from its implementation, and before undertaking a comprehensive and careful study of target sites to guarantee choosing sites not characterized by tribalism or partisan affiliations which could threaten the success of the program and the implementation of the methodology in question.

- Also, through the evaluation process it is clear that one of the main reasons for success in the use of grant distribution by participation in Al-Zawya village depends on the presence of a an enthusiastic, professional and impartial work team that has accurate information about Al-Zawya, its institutions, its nature and its target audience, gathered through field visits and using different means, in addition to the team's ability for detailed and diligent follow-up among the various parties to the project, which contributed to the successful implementation of the program without adverse effects. This means that the use of this methodology by a work team that is not qualified and has no experience of the methodology used, a good knowledge of locations to target or an ability to follow-up and work with professionalism and neutrality can make it difficult to implement this methodology and threaten its success. So it is necessary, before circulating this methodology, to build the capacity of work teams and allow them to understand and implement it properly to ensure good research processes, choosing appropriate target sites, detailed follow-up of tasks and working impartially and professionally to ensure the successful implementation of this methodology without any negative repercussions, whether at the level of the participating institutions or the target audience in the local community.

- The methodology used is appropriate for villages and small communities with a limited population density and a small number of institutions, but not for large towns that need a different methodology in community grant distribution. Thus, if target sites are large, do not meet the required criteria or are characterized by nepotism and partisan or political interest, it is necessary to apply another methodology such as grant distribution on the basis of sector or specialty among participating institutions.

- One of the risks is that Dalia Association becomes the only one implementing this methodology, and thus unable to do so for a long duration and on a regular basis because it will be known in advance, leading to loss of the factor of involving townspeople without advance preparation by the institutions, which will skew the result to choosing institutions that can bring larger numbers of people. Thus it is necessary to work on the implementation of this methodology in a non-periodic and irregular basis, based on good knowledge and study of target sites and after the availability of the required criteria.

## 2.5 Recommendations for Development of Methodology of Grant Distribution by Participation

The current methodology was appropriate and well implemented; however, some recommendations were proposed that would develop the mechanism for distributing grants through the involvement of townspeople as follows:

- Choose appropriate target sites, after the completion of the process of research, survey and collecting information, so that appropriate villages are chosen to apply the methodology and within specific and measurable parameters.
- Increase the number of participants in the open meetings that aim to distribute grants, through using different means to stimulate people to participate, in order to give greater transparency to the process of distribution and make the participating group diverse and representative of the local community in quantity and quality.
- Establish a mechanism to challenge the results of the implementation methodology, which enables any party to challenge the process of preparing and announcing the meeting or the results of grant distribution.
- Periodically evaluate the program, the methodology and their implications so as to ensure their development and improvement on an ongoing basis. During the implementation of this methodology in the first model in the village of Saffa (Ramallah) in 2009, there was no presence of the monitoring committee or the idea of benefitting from local resources and activating the role of the diaspora as part of the permanent funding resources. These were added during the application of the second model in Al-Zawya village.

## 3. Evaluation of Implemented Projects

Regarding the evaluation of projects implemented by the participating institutions, they will be referred to in several themes related to the process of planning, follow-up and implementation of these projects, as well as evaluating the priorities of implemented projects in terms of their compatibility with the community needs of Al-Zawya village which were identified during the open meeting, and an assessment of impact and positive results of implemented projects whether at the level of local implementing institutions or the local community in general.

### 3.1 Planning and Monitoring of Implemented Projects

• At the end of the grant distribution by the people among the participating institutions, 4 local institutions were chosen for the grant program out of 9 institutions present at the village level. The participating institutions received grants with different budgets depending on the decision of the public who chose the institutions and the value of the grant to each. This was as follows:

| | Institution | Project | Value of grant in US $ |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center | Provision of furniture and conducting social activities, which includes: buying tables and chairs for weddings and occasions, covering administrative expenses, competitions and talent discovery, festivals) | 4018 |
| 2 | Sanabel Women's Center | | 2083 |
| 3 | Al-Zawya Women's Center | Preparing a photography studio, which includes buying cameras and furniture | 2974 |
| 4 | Youth Leaders Club | Infrastructure and provision of furniture and supplies to the club, which includes: building hygiene units, renovating the kitchen, buying tennis table, goalkeeper's clothing, projector | 2574 |
| | **Total** | Note that the total funds did not reach $12,000 due to one of the participants in the open meeting not giving the value of his contribution to any of the participating institutions | **11649** |

The implementing institutions of projects and the members of the local monitoring committee also agreed on the positive role of Dalia Association in the follow-up and constant communication with the institutions and the committee, assisting them in the implementation of projects, through regular meetings and follow-up of the institutions step by step, starting from identifying the needs of projects, preparing implementation plans and budgets and assisting them in various aspects such as procurement, disbursement procedures, financial matters and every project aspect.

• Through review of the periodic meeting reports by the parties to the project, it is noted that at the end of the grant distribution phase and the start of the planning and follow-up phase, through to the implementation phase of projects and presenting the reports of implementing institutions, 7 meetings were held between the implementing institutions and staff of Dalia Association as well as members of the local monitoring committee (who were present in some meetings). This took place from 9/11/2009 to 26/11/2010, in monthly meetings, coupled with periodic follow-up by the program team through telephone, e-mail and direct meetings and visits.

• Meetings held during the planning and implementation stage aimed to assist the institutions technically to prepare needs studies relating to the proposed projects and implementation plans, as well as to help them in administrative and financial aspects such as preparing budgets, procurement procedures, quotations, claims and required financial procedures.

• The objective of preparing needs studies for proposed projects is to know the suitability of projects, their compatibility with community needs and their applicability. Among the studies

prepared was a needs study for a project to buy a bus for schoolchildren, which was revoked and converted to another project after discovering that it was not needed. Institutions chose projects based on priorities of needs they saw fit and without interference by Dalia Association.

• Some meetings were joint ones between the implementing institutions and the local monitoring committee, during which the institutions presented the projects intended to be implemented in addition to their needs studies, implementation plans, budgets, etc. All the details were discussed in the presence of members of the committee and questions were raised about budget items, procurement processes and various implementation procedures.

• The local monitoring committee contributed, during the implementation phase, to the follow-up of implemented projects, attending activities, organizing visits to participating institutions and reviewing procurement procedures, quotations, invoices and financial claims for the implemented projects. The committee issued a report on its evaluation of the projects implemented and the participating institutions, indicating the contribution of Dalia as a funding party and the community contributions that the institutions were able to raise from the local community, **as follows**:

| Name of institution | Project | Total cost (NIS) | Dalia's contribution (NIS) | Resource utilization (NIS) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Abdel Qader Center + Sanabel | - Renting chairs for weddings<br>- Publishing a magazine<br>- Talent discovery, competitions<br>- Operating the center | 44877.5 | 22600 | 22277.5 |
| Al-Zawya Women's Association | Al Shumou Studio<br>- Cameras<br>- Computer<br>- Photography equipment and supplies | 23620 | 12800 | 10820 |
| Youth Leaders Club | - Kitchen renovation<br>- Building hygiene units<br>- Sports clothing and equipment | 21928 | 12100 | 9828 |
| Total: | | 90425.5 | 47500 | 42525.5 |

• With the aim of building the capacity of representatives of the institutions implementing the projects and the local monitoring committee, a 6-hour training course was held on community participation, monitoring and evaluation, in order to encourage institutions to include the local community and strengthen its role as well as develop their skills relating to follow-up and evaluation of proposed projects.

• Finally, at the end of the implementation phase of the planned projects, a closing meeting was held in which the implementing institutions presented their financial and administrative reports and the monitoring committee presented its report to the public. The reports were discussed and commented on by the monitoring committee and townspeople in attendance.

**3.2 Compatibility of Implemented Projects with Community Needs of Al-Zawya Village**

Firstly, it should be noted that during the stage of organizing and holding the open meeting, work was done to identify the needs of Al-Zawya village by the participants, who represent a sample of the townspeople, in addition to representatives of institutions in the village (civil institutions, schools, health centers and mosques) and representatives of the municipality and key figures. During the meeting, a number of needs were identified, **which were as follows**:

✓ Providing sites for institutions working in the village.
✓ Establishing a kindergarten and model nursery.
✓ Adding two rooms to the health center and expanding it.
✓ Building a mall or consumer association.
✓ Building a gym for the governorate.
✓ Land reclamation.
✓ Establishing a student support fund to help needy students.
✓ Physical fitness courses and establishing a sports stadium.
✓ Providing a bus to transport students to schools.
✓ Creation of a services complex.
✓ Gathering institutions that have a common aim in a joint location.
✓ Interest in environmental health (providing a perfusion car).
✓ Building a new school.

• During the evaluation meetings, some project parties noted that projects that were implemented through "The Village Decides" were not compatible with the needs identified by the public during the open meeting to choose institutions and distribute grants through the involvement of the townspeople. The implemented projects included providing furniture and implementing community activities like the Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center and Sanabel Women's Center, preparing a photography studio like Al-Zawya women's project or renovating health units and a kitchen and providing supplies and equipment like the Youth Leaders Club. In view of the community needs that were approved by the people, none of the requirements that were worked on were among them.

• Despite this, it was stressed that a feasibility study was prepared by Abdel Qader Center and Sanabel Center on the provision of a bus to transport school students (which is one of the community needs that emerged during the open meeting) but the project faced objection by the

Ministry of Transportation because of related plans by the ministry. Thus, it had to be changed and replaced by the project that was implemented by the two centers.

• The program staff and implementing institutions of projects stressed that not choosing projects compatible with community needs previously identified is **due to several reasons including**:

- Lack of capacity of institutions to choose and implement most community needs that were identified by the public due to the small budget allocated for the projects intended to be implemented, where the value of funding for projects did not exceed $12,000.
- The inability of institutions to implement many of the requirements due to the weakness of their resources, such that some needs are bigger than the capacity of institutions, e.g. the establishment of schools, kindergartens, centers, etc. or because of lack of specialization of the institutions in these areas.
- The institutions focused through the vision of Dalia on finding simple development projects that are income-generating, which can provide a permanent resource for the participating institutions. Examples are the photography studio or renting chairs and tables for different occasions. Most institutions of the town suffer from a continuous deficit in securing their operating expenses.

• It was emphasized that during the planning stage, needs studies were prepared on projects intended to be implemented by the participating institutions, in order to make sure of the suitability of projects, their compatibility with community needs and applicability. Among the studies that were prepared was a needs study for the acquisition of a bus to transport school students (one of the requirements that were chosen by the public), which was revoked and replaced by another project as a result of the needs study that confirmed the lack of need for it, as well as the inability of institutions to implement it due to some unavailable legal requirements and logistics.

• **The needs study for the different projects showed the basic reasons for choosing these projects and working on them, which can be summarized as follows**:

| # | Institution | Project | Summary of Results of Needs Study |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center and Sanabel Women's Center | Provision of furniture and conducting social activities, which includes: **buying tables and chairs for weddings and occasions, covering administrative expenses, competitions and talent discovery, festivals** | The study showed that the proposed project is necessary because the townspeople used to depend on renting furniture (chairs and tables for general occasions) from neighboring villages, in addition to this project being permanent and income generating. Also, |
| 2 | | | |

| # | Institution | Project | Summary of Results of Needs Study |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | conducting social activities fits within the center's plan to enhance cultural aspects and reach the target group, as the Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center is a cultural one. |
| 3 | Al-Zawya Women's Center | Preparing a photography studio, which includes **buying cameras and furniture** | The proposed project relates to opening a photography studio which is needed for the townspeople because it is the first village studio run by women. Women are needed to be photographers inside homes and occasions due to being women, as this fits the social traditions of the village. The project can offer its services to neighboring villages and various institutions. |
| 4 | Youth Leaders Club | Infrastructure and provision of furniture and supplies to the club, which includes: **building hygiene units, renovating the kitchen, buying tennis table, goalkeeper's clothing, projector** | Project to build sanitary units, renovate a kitchen and provide equipment and supplies to the Youth Leaders Club, is a necessary project due to the sanitary units and kitchen being in desperate need of renovation and due to the center's lack of many basic requirements to activate it and improve its provided services to the local community, particularly for sportspeople. |

Finally, it was stressed that the participating institutions chose the projects that fit them based on the priorities of the needs that they saw fit and without any intervention or specification of priorities by Dalia Association.

**3.3 Effects and Positive Results of the Program and Implemented Projects**

**The effects and positive results of the program and implemented projects can be presented as follows:**

- Contributing by providing small grants for 4 target institutions and enabling them to implement small, permanent, income-generating projects such as the establishment of a studio for Al-Zawya Women's Association, which represents the first women's operated studio in the region and provided job opportunities for 3 women, or the furniture rental project for public events, of the Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center and Sanabel Women's Center.

- Empowering the people in Al-Zawya to identify the priorities of their needs, exercise their role in choosing the institutions they want, distribute grants as they wish and participate in the process of monitoring and follow-up of implemented projects. The latter was done through the local monitoring committee or through taking part in the meetings in which the project implementation was followed up and administrative and financial reports were presented.

- Enabling institutions to cooperate and work collectively at the level of Al-Zawya village through collective planning and follow-up of implemented projects, with the help of Dalia Association and its staff, which contributed to strengthening the relationships between these institutions and enabled them to collectively implement their activities under the supervision of a local monitoring committee. This boosted the pace of joint coordination and encouraged them to call for formation of a permanent projects committee for Al-Zawya institutions.

- Providing an opportunity for institutions to gain practical experience and skills related to the management of projects starting from needs assessment, planning and implementation through to evaluation and follow-up, thus developing their expertise and performance at the administrative, financial and technical levels.

- Contributing through the implemented projects to stimulating the institutions to search for local resources and recruit them, and drawing their attention to the importance of taking advantage of internal capabilities and resources, including support from expatriates abroad. Al-Zawya Women's Association, for example, called Mr. Mustafa Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa and got a contribution of $3000 euros to build a road on a piece of land they acquired, in addition to the contributions of other institutions which they were able to acquire through the local community, **which were as follows**:

**Contributions Mobilized Through the Local Community to Participating Institutions**

| # | Institution | Project | Community Contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 2 | Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center and Sanabel Women's Center  | Provision of furniture and conducting social activities, which includes: **buying tables and chairs for weddings and occasions, covering administrative expenses, competitions and talent discovery, festivals** | • Community contribution in providing human resources, where some activities were implemented through involving townspeople such as the students participating in preparing the magazine of the project, choosing volunteers for jury committees and forming a group of clowns from volunteers. |
| 3 | Al-Zawya Women's Center  | Preparing a photography studio, which includes **buying cameras and furniture** | • Local resources were approached to provide a site for the studio, where one of the townspeople donated a room that has been renovated in return for a nominal fee and a grace period of 4 months before rent is due.<br>• The women who currently work in the photography studio project did the course at their own expense.<br>• The association could presently acquire a piece of land and get approval to build a site, with funding from UNDP. |
| 4 | Youth Leaders Club  | Infrastructure and provision of furniture and supplies to the club, which includes: **building hygiene units, renovating the kitchen, buying tennis table, goalkeeper's clothing, projector** | • Workers and some of the building materials for the renovation were provided from club members and volunteers. |

- Revitalizing the institutions at the local community level through strengthening the relationship of the institutions that received a grant with the public, or stimulating those that did not get grants to develop their relationship and improve their image in front of the townspeople.

- Activating the cultural aspect of the town through the implementation of various cultural activities, such as those implemented by Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center and Sanabel Women's Center.

## 4: Evaluation of Local Monitoring Committee

**Regarding the evaluation of the local monitoring committee in terms of its composition, functions and performance, we can refer to the following:**

**4.1 Evaluation of Performance of Local Monitoring Committee and its Effect**

• All parties to the project agreed that the idea of forming a committee for local monitoring is new and positive, enhancing the role of townspeople and the local community in participating in decision-making and monitoring of projects and participating institutions. 5 members were chosen in the open meeting to serve as an internal monitoring committee for projects to be implemented by participating institutions in the town.

• Most parties to the project also confirmed the good performance and positive role of the members of the local monitoring committee, in terms of their relations with institutions and their role in the follow-up and monitoring of project implementation. The institutions indicated that the members of the monitoring committee visited them and looked at the plans for the implementation of projects, budgets, administrative and financial reports, quotations, procurement and billing, as well as attending group meetings held with the institutions and program staff, participating in community activities carried out by the participating institutions and issuing a final report that was presented to the public and posted on the web site of Dalia Association.

• In terms of the impact of the monitoring committee, most people noted that the presence of such a committee consisting of townspeople contributed to a seriousness of implementation by institutions and encouraged them to try to improve their performance and work in front of the public. This was done through cooperation with the monitoring committee, enabling it to exercise its role and giving it the opportunity to review project documents and stages of implementation and monitor financial matters and procurement.

• Despite this, it was asserted that some members of the monitoring committee were apprehensive at first in carrying out the tasks of monitoring for the participating institutions, and

did not have sufficient expertise or knowledge of the means and instruments of control that should be used.

• In terms of selection, committee members were chosen through nomination and giving the chance to everyone, thus they were selected at random and without any criteria related to expertise or skills required, except that they are not representatives of local institutions benefiting from the project.

• One participant from the representatives of participating institutions noted that communication of the monitoring committee with Dalia Association was greater than that with the institutions.

• The members of the monitoring committee indicated that they carried out the role assigned to them, and that institutions were cooperative so there were no problems in obtaining the required information. There were no difficulties except in communication between members of the committee due to each of their jobs.

• Finally, there was reference to members of the monitoring committee receiving the information necessary to do the tasks assigned to them, where Dalia Association informed the members of the detailed information and necessary forms to facilitate the process of their control of projects and participating institutions. In addition, the members received 6 hours of training to build their capacity in community participation, monitoring and control of projects, which were held in the presence of the 4 members of the committee as well as observers and representatives of participating institutions and the local community.

**4.2 Development of Performance of Local Monitoring Committee**

There were a number of observations to improve the performance of the monitoring committee **as follows**:

• It is known that members of the former committee were chosen randomly and without the presence of criteria to ensure that they have the experience and basic knowledge of community and civil work. Thus, it is necessary in the coming stages to choose members of the local monitoring committees from the audience but within certain criteria, **the most important of which can be summarized as follows**:

✓ To have a working knowledge of community work and civil institutions.
✓ Should not be an employee or volunteer in any of the institutions that will benefit from the program.
✓ Have sufficient time to carry out the tasks of monitoring the projects implemented.
✓ To choose a monitoring committee made up of several people, including an accountant or someone with experience of financial procedures.

• Build the capacity of local monitoring committee members, for them to become more aware of their role in exercising the control process and more knowledgeable of the means and methodologies related to the follow-up process and local monitoring.

• Identify tasks and responsibilities that the work of members of the monitoring committee requires them to do and follow-up, so as to avoid conflict and ambiguity of tasks and responsibilities which would negatively impact the performance of the committee or convert it to a mere formality.

• Design models of monitoring to help committee members to perform their duties and follow up all stages of the implementation of planned projects.

• Use an outside expert to assist members of the committee to perform their tasks, follow up implementation of projects and participating institutions and monitor them.

• Expand the functions of the local monitoring committee to include, as well as evaluating the performance of participating institutions, the monitoring and measurement of the degree of satisfaction of the public and local community with the performance of institutions and projects.

• Develop the performance of the monitoring committee to carry out oversight functions on various projects within the local community, and thus convert it to a permanent local committee.

## 5: Evaluation of Performance of Program Team

Regarding the evaluation of the program team of Dalia Association, composed of the director of programs and projects and the administrative assistant, and through observations of the different parties to the project and the evaluation process, we can note the following:

### 5.1 Evaluation of Program Team by Program Parties

The majority of parties to the program indicated the positive role of project staff, in terms of professionalism and impartiality during the application of the program and the process of grant distribution to participating institutions. In addition, they carried out their role in the follow-up and continuous communication with institutions, providing necessary assistance to them during the process of planning, preparation of implementation plans, budgets, procurement and financial procedures required, and through periodic meetings, visits and communication via phone and e-mail.

### 5.2 Evaluation of Program Team by Evaluator

The program staff is organized, with detailed information about the target location of the program and the ability to continuously follow-up all required tasks. The successful application of "The Village Decides" methodology relied on the good performance of program staff, the

ability for detailed follow-up and professional and impartial work. The program staff also helped participating institutions, provided all the facilities and information required for the success of projects and enabled the institutions to perform their tasks in the desired manner.

## 6: Difficulties

In reference to the difficulties encountered, it is necessary to address them at the level of performance of the participating institutions as well as program staff, as they represent the two main sides of the program, as follows:

### 6.1 Institutions Implementing the Projects

**Al-Zawya Women's Center**

• Financial difficulties due to the small budget which was only enough to buy cameras and some furniture without a site for the photography studio, which was provided through a contribution by a donor from the townspeople.

• Difficulty in preparing financial and administrative reports.

• Difficulty in advertising the studio project.

**Abdel Qader Abu Nabaa Center and Sanabel Women's Center**

• They faced difficulty in implementing a project to buy a bus for students, which was expected to be implemented jointly between the two institutions, where the idea was cancelled and replaced by the current project after encountering difficulties in obtaining licenses for the bus, and after making sure there was no need for the project through a needs study which showed the Ministry of Transportation intends to establish a central bus station in the region.

**Young Leaders Club**

• Budget was limited and not sufficient to renovate some of the club's facilities and buy some supplies and requirements for the club.

• Stubborn owner (landlord) did not agree to renovation of the facilities belonging to the club.

### 6.2 Program Team

**The difficulties faced by the program team were as follows:**

- The program team faced difficulties in choosing the target site because the selection process was among the villages and towns across the West Bank, which required many field visits, conducting a field survey and collecting detailed information about the candidate sites to choose a village suitable for the implementation of the program.
- There were also difficulties related to the participating institutions in terms of ensuring constant communication with them, following them up and providing all the needs and technical assistance to ensure that they exercise their role and are able to implement the proposed projects.
- At the start of the program's implementation, the institution faced some resentment from some institutions due to working within a small budget, in light of the culture of access to large and rapid funding.

## Recommendations

- ➢ Re-examine the criteria for selection of target sites and modify them to become more appropriate and applicable, in a manner that reduces the time and effort necessary to choose the target site.
- ➢ Choose a target site for each model among villages and towns within one governorate only, without having to choose among those located within the West Bank as a whole.
- ➢ Not to expand the application of "The Village Decides" methodology (i.e. not spread it quickly) before checking the long term results and effects of the application of that methodology, and before doing a thorough and careful study of target sites to ensure the selection of suitable ones.
- ➢ Build the capacity of staff within "The Village Decides" methodology through enabling them to understand the methodology and implement it correctly, for the success of its application and the avoidance of any negative implications depends on the ability of the team to implement it properly.
- ➢ Implement the said methodology in an irregular manner so that Dalia Association does not become known for grant distribution by participation, which would cause the methodology to lose the style of the work associated with giving the public the opportunity to choose freely, without interference from any party.
- ➢ Increase the number of participants in the open meetings for grant distribution to the public, through the use of a variety of means to enhance public participation and ensure the involvement of the largest possible number of people and institutions, thus having a greater representation of the local community.

- ➤ Align projects implemented by the program to community needs identified by people in line with the ability of the program, the experience of institutions and their degree of specialization.
- ➤ Establish a mechanism to challenge the results of implementing the methodology, that enables any party to challenge the process of preparation or invitation to the open meeting or the results of grant distribution.
- ➤ Develop the capacities of members of the local monitoring committee relating to the use of practical tools and means of monitoring and control, and expand their role to include, as well as control over the institutions and projects, measuring the degree of satisfaction of townspeople and the local community in the participating institutions and implemented projects and their impact on them.
- ➤ It is also necessary in the coming stages to choose members of the local monitoring committees from the public but within criteria to be determined, which ensure that people are chosen who have a basic knowledge of community and civil work and have enough time to perform the tasks of community monitoring.

*Annexes*

- ✓ Summary of the project team meeting (Annex 1)

- ✓ Summary of a focus group from the parties to the program (Annex 2)

- ✓ Evaluation form of participating institutions used by the program team (Annex 3)

- ✓ Assessment report of the local monitoring committee (Annex 4)

- ✓ Final reports of the participating institutions (Annex 5)