

# Local Authorities & Civil Society Organisations: Key to participation and services

Through local authorities and CSOs, it is possible to improve services for people and strengthen participation at the local level.

## Challenges and chances

Since 2014, the conflict in Yemen has led to one of the world's biggest humanitarian crises. The country faces wide-ranging social and economic challenges. 4.3 million people had to leave their homes. Almost half of all inhabitants live below the poverty line in 2022 and the number is rising due to increasing prices of services, petrol, food, and other goods.

Due to the ongoing armed conflict, Yemen is divided into different spheres of power and influence, in which various actors claim power. State institutions are often dysfunctional, and political fragmentation continues. Only some local councils are still in place. The election to the parliament (2003) and local elections (2006) are long ago.

Despite these developments, local governance structures still exist on governorate and district levels. Local Authorities (LA) play an important role in providing services to the population. They maintain state functions, albeit to a limited extent, for example by keeping schools and health centers running. Their capacities, resources, and quality of governance differ greatly from region to region, and they are strongly influenced by local conflict dynamics. Against this background, civil society actors play a key role in transparently and effectively communicating people's needs to LAs. Their involvement fosters inclusive decision-making and contributes to improving service delivery.

## Our objective

Our aim as the "Supporting Good Governance in Yemen" (SGGY) project, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is to strengthen

context-sensitive approaches to good local governance in selected governorates. Following the "Whole of Yemen" approach, we focus on the population of Hadramout, Ibb, Taiz and Aden.

Project name	Supporting Good Governance in Yemen (SGGY)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Hadramout, Ibb, Taiz and Aden
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration	04/2021 – 03/2025

## Our approach

We work with local authorities, civil society organisations (CSOs) and grassroots groups in three complementary action areas. In doing so, we pursue a context-sensitive approach that considers the impacts of the conflict.

The target group of the project is the population in the selected governorates; intermediaries include functionaries employed by the local authorities, civil society organizations, grassroots initiatives as well as traditional and private sector actors.



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*Workshop on social accountability and good governance for local authority representatives conducted by Gusoor for Peace and Enqath Foundation for Development in Taiz Governorate*

*Enhancing social accountability through collaboration and coordination with the support of Assistance for Response and Development in Salah-Al-Qahira and Al-Mudhafar Districts*

### Action Area 1 – developing evidence-based approaches for good local governance

Effective service delivery based on the needs of citizens is a major challenge. Consequently, it is important to know which approaches work and which do not. Together with local stakeholders, promising practices and lessons learned are documented and processed. The results are presented in short studies which include context-sensitive recommendations. They can be used to strengthen good local governance.



### Action Area 2 – strengthening cooperation & coordination among LAs for improved service delivery

To enhance service delivery, local authorities need to coordinate and cooperate with each other on different levels. Further, the involvement of actors from the private sector and civil society are of paramount importance for inclusive planning and decision-making processes. During workshops, we build actor networks and strengthen capacities of LAs regarding their roles and mandates in service delivery.



### Action Area 3 – strengthening civil society's capacities in the field of social accountability

Yemenis know very well what kind of basic services they need in their communities. But their concerns are sometimes not sufficiently reflected in decision-making processes. Therefore, we strengthen CSOs and grassroots groups to raise awareness of community needs. Through trainings, especially in the fields of project management and social accountability, we support civil society actors acquiring relevant skills for interacting with LAs in a conflict-sensitive manner.



## What we have achieved so far

Together with our partners, we have made significant efforts to support local governance in Yemen, fostering an environment of inclusive decision-making, knowledge sharing and improved service delivery:

- In Action Area 1, we supported the finalization of Context, Conflict, and Stakeholder Analyses in Hadramout, Ibb and Taiz by an independent think tank.

- We partnered with an international research centre to conduct studies aimed at strengthening local governance in Yemen. Through over 381 interviews with Yemeni experts, including 125 women, we explored key topics: Local Economic Development, Women's Participation in Local Governance, and Coordination & Cooperation of Local Authorities.
- In Action Area 2, we conducted workshops for local authorities in Hadramout Governorate (Hajr and Sah districts) to identify service delivery needs and held trainings for local authorities on roles and responsibilities and for representatives from public institutions, CSOs, and the private sector on participatory planning.
- In Action Area 3, we supported several projects of CSOs through grants and capacity development. The CSO partners are applying innovative methods to promote social accountability on district level. Amongst others, the "Community Assessment Portal" project, a joint effort between the CSOs Gusoor for Peace and Coexistence and Enqath Foundation for Development, reached over 2 million listeners through a Podcast Series on Taiz local radio. Simultaneously, we facilitated capacity development for social accountability, involving 230 CSO representatives, youth, and initiatives (116 women).
- Our partnership with Saferworld led to the successful implementation of ten grassroots initiatives on social accountability on community level. This marked the first use of structured techniques for conflict-sensitive social accountability in the targeted communities in Taiz and Hadramout. Additionally, in Aden, we initiated collaboration with Search for Common Ground to enhance community cohesion and local governance.

## Insight - Training on "Roles and Responsibilities of Local Authorities (LA)"

Through our targeted training sessions in Hadramout (Hajr and Sah districts) on 'Roles and Responsibilities of LAs' in Action Area 2, participants from public institutions, CSOs, and the private sector experienced a transformative shift. Many local authority members previously lacked clarity on their roles as well as access to internal information. However, following the training, individuals reported a significant improvement. They now grasp the importance of accessing internal information through various means such as meetings, role assignments, database creation, and beneficiary identification. One enthusiastic representative even highlighted "the importance of consultation and meetings for the success of any project."

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