

CityLinks

Global challenges, local solutions

2003-2008



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ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities



Foreword

Over its five-year lifespan (2003-2008), the ICMA CityLinks program has improved the capacity of cities worldwide to provide quality services to their residents and to sustain those improvements over time. ICMA is pleased to offer this report, which highlights the successful work done through CityLinks across the spectrum of local government activities—including solid waste and environmental management, road construction, local economic development, disaster preparedness, financial management, and citizen participation.

CityLinks built on the success of the Resource Cities program, which was created by ICMA and USAID in 1997. At that time, many countries were struggling with responsibilities that devolved to the local level with decentralization of functions and services that were once provided by national governments. These new responsibilities frequently came to local governments at a time when burgeoning populations were already stretching the resources that were available for service delivery in many cities.

CityLinks is committed to fostering democratic local governance—on the principle that transparent, effective governance and service delivery at the local level are the keys to successful self-government in any society. Using flexible models that suit local needs, the CityLinks program has helped empower local governments, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and citizens to arrive at solutions that can be implemented effectively, readily adapted to other locations, and sustained after CityLinks involvement has ended.

To do this, CityLinks establishes professional partnerships between local government entities in the United States and their counterparts in developing and transition countries.

Participants learn from one another through peer exchange and the transfer of skills and experience. Together, Resource Cities and CityLinks have established more than 75 of these partnership arrangements, and more than 450 dedicated U.S. city and county professionals have shared their experience and expertise with their counterparts in other countries. Many of the relationships continue beyond the duration of the program.

CityLinks can point to many achievements. Among them:

- Three cities in Thailand increased citizen participation in decisions about redevelopment plans, fees for services, and other policies that affect their lives.
- A consortium of cities in Bulgaria, together with the Bulgarian Foundation for Local Government Reform, established a local economic development certification program, launched a Web site to market local assets to investors, and institutionalized training for economic development

(Foreword continued)

professionals. Their efforts resulted in the creation of 2,500 new jobs and the investment of 140 million Euros in new and expanding businesses.

- Two tsunami-ravaged cities in India designed and built community playgrounds, educated citizens about public services, and increased access to reliable, safe drinking water for their residents.
- Three municipalities in South Africa created plans for local economic development and took steps toward growing their economies.
- In Jordan, CityLinks partners designed and implemented centralized medical waste collection and disposal practices that helped safeguard the health of the community.
- CityLinks partners provided technical assistance and training that helped the municipality of Kabul, Afghanistan, establish systems for solid waste management and infrastructure repair and maintenance, including its first public-private partnerships. Based on the program's success, CityLinks was awarded a contract to replicate the program in seven provincial capitals.

ICMA thanks the many organizations and individuals who have contributed to the success of the CityLinks program. We are grateful to the USAID missions worldwide and to USAID/Washington for their support of CityLinks, to the city and county professionals who shared their knowledge and experience, and to the organizations in the United States and other countries who partnered with us to foster local development around the world.



David Grossman
Director of International Programs

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CityLinks Program in Ethiopia

- ▶ **Local Economic Development**
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Sound local government is becoming increasingly important in Ethiopia with the decentralization of power from the national to the regional and local levels. At the same time, many municipalities in the country contend with significant poverty levels, unemployment, in-migration of rural residents, and a limited capacity to provide basic public services. Strengthening local economies has become a high priority.

Program Objectives

In September 2005, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) granted ICMA an associate award under ICMA's CityLinks program to provide assistance to the Ethiopian cities of Addis Ababa and Adama for a period of two years. ICMA began by establishing a partnership between the city of Adama and the U.S. city of Portland, Oregon. That partnership was intended to facilitate Adama's local economic development (LED) by attracting investments to the city and enhancing the relationship between the public and private sectors there, with the ultimate goal of creating more jobs.

Based on the success of that work, the CityLinks program increased its presence in Ethiopia, working in the city of Dire Dawa (one of the two "chartered cities" in Ethiopia); the Gambella region (state) and that region's capital city, Gambella; and the Somali region and its capital city, Jijiga. The Somali and Gambella regions are considered to be "emerging," with limited institutional

capacity and areas that are prone to conflict.

Program Activities

Following the successful Adama-Portland partnership, the program increased the level of resources to promote additional peer-to-peer exchanges from the United States to Ethiopia and among cities in Ethiopia, as well as to build the institutional capacity of local and regional governments by utilizing technical assistance and training provided by local professionals and international experts.

Three cities in Florida—Oldsmar, Flagler Beach, and Port Orange—were paired with the cities of Dire Dawa and Jijiga. While continuing to work with Adama, Portland began a partnership with Gambella region and the city of Gambella.

The partnership with Adama has continued to facilitate local economic development there. The city agreed to establish the position of LED specialist. The position will be central

Ethiopia partner cities: Adama (in Oromia region [state]), Dire Dawa (a "chartered city"), Gambella (in Gambella region), and Jijiga (in Somali region).

Populations of the Ethiopian cities: Adama, 200,000; Dire Dawa, 350,000; Gambella, 50,000; Jijiga, 150,000.

U.S. partners: Portland, Oregon; Oldsmar, Florida; Flagler Beach, Florida; and Port Orange, Florida.

Program dates: September 2005 to September 2009.

Key program issues in Ethiopia: Decentralization has put increasing pressure on regions and cities to provide basic public services, and many of these local entities have limited institutional capacity to perform essential functions. Local economic development has been identified as a priority as cities face rising poverty rates, unemployment, and in-migration from rural areas.



Adama city staff meet with pro bono professionals from the partner city of Portland, Oregon, to plan a new industrial district.

to developing LED policies for the municipality, establishing public-private partnerships and other forms of synergy with the private sector, and implementing a long-term vision for increasing Adama's competitive advantages and future economic growth.

In addition, Adama agreed to host the city's first economic development conference, which promoted its economic potential and advantages for investors. Finally, Adama is progressing in planning an industrial district that will emphasize agro-processing, thus providing opportunities for producers in the Oromia region (of which Adama is the capital) to process their products and market them to other regions of the country.

To kick off the extension of the work plan, ICMA staff and pro bono advisors completed a rapid assessment of decentralization and an institutional study in Gambella and Jijiga. The assessment focused on institutional relations and intergovernmental coordination, selected urban services, regional and local revenue, and community participation. The main objectives of the study were to gain useful information and insight that would lay the foundation for a work plan and future project interventions and guide the development and implementation of training and capacity building programs.

Under the program extension, all the Ethiopia cities and regions in the CityLinks program are working on public finance, public service deliv-

ery, citizen participation, peer-to-peer exchanges, and training in leadership skills for citizens and government officials. In addition, the city of Dire Dawa is focusing on emergency preparedness and response, and Gambella and Jijiga are focusing on sanitation and public transit.

Following are the most important activities implemented since the program began:

- A workshop on basic concepts and best practices in emergency management was conducted in Dire Dawa. The workshop included presentations on the role of government in disaster preparedness, emergency management best practices of Florida, and the all-hazards approach to disaster management.
- At a sanitation workshop in Gambella, city officials and citizens came together to discuss the state of sanitation in the city and to agree on interventions. Their consensus was to create a sanitation desk in the municipality immediately, to make it accountable, and to develop a sanitation system. The system will include the mobilization of communities to provide door-to-door trash collection and roadside solid waste collection services; selection of temporary disposal stations and the development of a final disposal site and transportation facilities; and a liquid waste disposal system that includes improving existing public toilets.

- A workshop on basic concepts and best practices in public transit and transport was conducted in Gambella city in March 2008. The focus was the role of government and public-private partnerships.
- A local economic development conference organized in partnership between the municipality of Adama and the Chamber of Commerce of that city was held in Adama in May 2008 and served to market and showcase the city as a locality ready for investment and supportive of public-private relationships.
- Tourism and marketing brochures were developed and distributed in Adama to promote the city's economic potential among local and international investors.
- In Dire Dawa, emergency signal equipment was installed and an emergency operations plan (EOP) was completed.
- A pilot demonstration program in the city of Gambella promoted coordination between the regional government and the city to provide signage for a new road built with funding from the regional government. The project also included public education for citizens on the appropriate use of the roads by multiple users.
- In Gambella, a workshop on solid waste and liquid waste management was implemented to promote best practices and to jump-start collaboration between the municipality and three kebeles (administrative units) in the city limits.

Looking Forward

Among the noteworthy activities yet to be implemented are sanitation, public transit, revenue enhancement, and other public service delivery projects and training in the cities of Gambella, Jijiga, and Dire Dawa, as well as a comprehensive leadership training effort involving multiple cities. A key future element of the CityLinks program will be the promotion of more city-to-city exchanges within Ethiopia. For example, authorities from the city of Jijiga will participate in peer-to-peer exchanges with the city of Dire Dawa, in the areas of organization development, human resources, finance, and public service delivery.

In addition, over the 2008-2009 period, the CityLinks program will facilitate up to four workshops that will bring together representatives from Ethiopian cities to discuss common concerns and to share lessons learned. That, in turn, will contribute to the establishment of local networks in the country and facilitate learning among peers. ICMA will also promote the formation of associations of municipalities, which could build long-lasting learning networks among local government professionals in Ethiopia.

"The economic development conference was impressive. The best practices from Portland were remarkable. And the ideas presented by the private sector were very encouraging; they expressed their interest in cooperating with the city and playing a role in the strategic plan."

Bekele Shibru, head of Transport, Trade and Industry Office, Adama City administration

"I thank our professional colleagues from Portland for technical assistance and capacity building support in identifying and developing competitive advantages in the city, helping to improve our incubator program, and promoting local agro-business and tourism."

Sisay Negash, mayor, Adama City



Roads and other new infrastructure help promote economic development in Adama.

Results

- Dire Dawa is institutionalizing an urban disaster preparedness unit to better respond to flash floods and other hazards. As part of the institutionalization process, three of the most affected kebeles during previous devastating flash floods (2005 and 2006) are becoming important stakeholders in the disaster prevention and preparedness efforts.
- Emergency signal equipment was installed in Dire Dawa, and an emergency operations plan (EOP) was drafted for the city.
- The city of Gambella has identified its role in transit management and is developing the foundations for establishing partnerships with the regional government to coordinate in the implementation of that function.
- Through its local economic development conference, Adama is promoting the role of local economic development and the role of the private sector as a partner with the public sector. Two brochures were developed and distributed, highlighting Adama as a tourism destination and an agricultural center for investment.

Jordan University of Science & Technology— Jordanian Ministry of Health—East Carolina University, North Carolina

► Medical Waste Management

Jordan is a leader among Middle East countries in medical expertise and facilities. In fact, residents of neighboring countries travel more frequently to Jordan for their medical needs than to any other country in the region. This has placed immense pressure on Jordan's ability to manage medical waste appropriately. The handling and disposal of medical waste is critical to maintaining good public health and protecting the environment from diseases that can be spread to residents through contaminated drinking water supplies or through direct contact with waste. Like most Middle Eastern countries, Jordan is deeply concerned about protecting its precious and limited drinking water resources, and improperly managed medical wastes can contaminate the water supply through runoff.

Program Objectives

The Jordan University of Science & Technology (JUST), the Jordanian Ministry of Health (MoH), and East Carolina University (ECU) formed a partnership that focused on improving medical waste management in the northern region of Jordan as a model that other regions in the country could follow. The northern region was chosen primarily because of the readily available disposal capacity at JUST, which has two incinerators. The partnership objective was to improve medical waste management through training in the handling and overall management of medical waste, procurement of new collection vehicles and storage bins, implementation of a centralized collection and disposal system that allowed individual hospitals to discontinue the use of their incinerators and other disposal mechanisms, and regulatory review and discussions.

Program Activities

The partnership began collecting medical waste from northern hospitals after the MoH and JUST formally agreed that JUST would collect waste from public hospitals in the region on a fee-for-service basis (the fee to be paid by MoH). The collection of the waste, in addition to the technical assistance provided by ECU and ICMA, was made possible by the procurement of two medical waste transport vehicles and waste bins provided by USAID.

In addition, the partnership conducted a series of medical waste management workshops on the campus of JUST in Irbid, Jordan. ECU provided guidance and training materials and participated in the training program. The workshops targeted hospital administrators, supervisors of doctors and nurses, housekeeping staff, and incinerator operators. The workshop focused on incinerator operations.

Jordan partners: Jordan University of Science & Technology (JUST) and Jordanian Ministry of Health (MOH).

U.S. partner: East Carolina University (North Carolina).

Program dates: May 2003 to October 2005.

Key program issues in Jordan: Jordan is a major center for medical care in the Middle East and thus generates a large volume of medical waste. Unless properly managed, the waste has the potential to spread disease, either directly or through contamination of the country's precious drinking water supply.



Improvements in medical waste management in Jordan included training for incinerator operators and the implementation of a collection system that centralized incineration at one facility.

The partnership also focused on improving the incinerators to meet MoH regulatory standards to adequately burn medical waste. Upgrading the incinerators required the installation of emissions monitoring and cleaning devices, an automated waste bin feeder, and other modifications. As the project ended, the partnership had secured a commitment from the Swiss government to financially support the upgrading of the JUST incinerators, as the incinerators are Swiss made.

Results

By the end of the project, the team had implemented policies and procedures in hospitals that ensure:

- Efficient and safe collection and transportation of medical waste from hospitals to the JUST incinerators.

- Appropriate separation of medical and regular solid waste.
- Limited or no exposure to medical waste by doctors, nurses, and patients.
- Development of a strategy for private-sector involvement in medical waste management throughout Jordan.
- Development of a strategy to improve the effectiveness of the regulatory enforcement of medical waste requirements.
- Increased hospital staff capacity to manage and handle medical waste.

Bamako, Mali—Athens—Clarke County, Georgia

► Solid Waste Management

Bamako, the capital of Mali, had been unable to keep pace with the additional service needs of a population that grew from 189,000 to 1.3 million over a 35-year period. Nowhere was that challenge more evident than in the area of solid waste management. In April 2003, Mali President Amadou Tourmani Toure delivered a major policy speech in which he identified the solid waste management issues confronting the capital city as a national priority.

Eager to assist in this endeavor, USAID/Mali identified the ICMA CityLinks program as a way to provide hands-on technical assistance to Bamako. After diagnosing the problem, developing possible solutions, and gathering information that would help identify a partner city, ICMA selected the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, because of its expertise in solid waste, its recycling program that had won national awards, and its approach to public education.

A key asset that Athens-Clarke County brought to the project was the engineering administrator in the Athens Public Works Department, who had served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mali. His ability to speak Bumbra and French, the languages spoken in Mali, and his understanding of the local culture and norms contributed significantly to the development and implementation of solutions to Bamako's solid waste challenges.

Program Objectives and Activities

The partners met in Bamako in January 2004 to develop an action plan based on a diagnostic study of solid waste challenges, interviews, and consultations with Bamako solid waste officials and stakeholders, including nongovernmental organizations and collection entrepreneurs. Bamako's solid waste challenges were vast, including trash disposal in areas that were not designated for dumping (which over time gave the city a "messy" and trash-strewn appearance); a lack of planning, coordi-

ination, defined roles and responsibilities, and accountability on the part of government officials; a lack of experience and technical expertise; and a lack of equipment associated with solid waste management. Given the scale of these challenges, the CityLinks project team decided to develop and implement a pilot project that would emulate a functioning municipal solid waste management system.

The pilot project was implemented in the Bamako neighborhoods of Bancouni and Korafina, with the idea

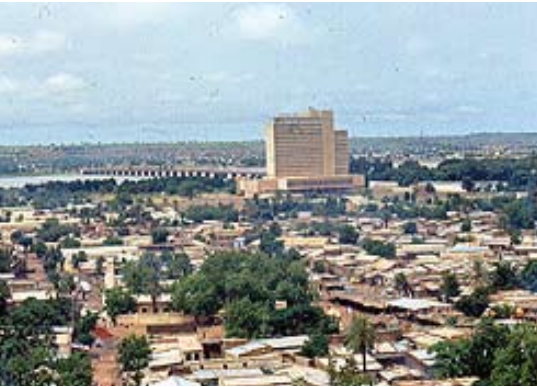
Mali partner city: Bamako.

Population of Bamako: 1.3 million (at the time of the program).

U.S. partner: Athens-Clarke County, Georgia.

Program dates: June 2003 to December 2005.

Key program issues in Bamako: Bamako, the Mali capital, was unable to keep pace with the needs of its rapidly growing population, particularly in the area of solid waste management.



Mali's capital, Bamako, has had difficulty keeping up with rapid population growth.

that, after successfully developing an operating solid waste management system in the pilot area, Bamako would be able to scale up the effort to other areas of the city. Through a collaborative process that included key Mali and Bamako government officials, private waste collectors, nongovernmental organizations, the city of Athens, and ICMA, the project team worked closely to identify the three principal areas that required attention: education and outreach, collection operations, and landfill operations.

Education and Outreach

A key aspect of an effective solid waste management system is ensuring that residents are fully aware of what they should be doing with their waste to ensure proper disposal—where it should go and when. It is also within the purview of the agency charged with solid waste responsibilities to attempt to change the behavior of the public so that they are willing and able to conform to a particular waste management practice or practices. This is often approached through a set of outreach activities.

In this case the CityLinks team implemented a beautification and educational media campaign focused on two objectives: (1) to inform residents about available collection services and (2) to change residents' attitudes and behaviors regarding the cleanliness of streets and public places, particularly in regard to dumping in areas that are not intended for trash disposal. The following activities were completed as part of the campaign:

- **Clean-up days:** Several sanitation days were organized in an effort to clean particular problem areas and provide information to community members about the importance of proper trash disposal and removal. These days were highly popular with residents. The CityLinks project sponsored the rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, and gloves that were used by community members to help clean up these areas.
- **Media and other outreach:** A skit was developed to heighten awareness of the importance of proper trash disposal and general cleanliness. It was aired on national television and resulted in an increased number of residents subscribing to collection services. (In Mali, private waste collectors are responsible for waste collection, similar to a franchise arrangement. Local officials designated specific routes and areas to particular collectors who became responsible for getting as many residents as possible to subscribe to their service.) The skit was supplemented with a beautification slogan, radio spots, and collection brochures.

Collection Operations

To ensure more effective collection of solid waste, Athens–Clarke County officials worked closely with the local Bamako team to undertake several studies aimed at identifying paying and nonpaying customers, the quantity and types of waste that were generated on each route, and the most efficient collection routes

possible. Based on these studies and the available budget, the project procured collection equipment that was distributed to waste collectors. The procured equipment included shovels, trashcans, rakes, gloves, and four tractors used to pull collected trash in carts. The routes within the pilot areas where the new equipment was used very quickly showed a marked difference in appearance.

Landfill Operations

The site used for landfill disposal was a significant challenge with regard to operations and was a social menace as well. During the rainy season deep pools of water formed on the site, causing a very dangerous risk for children from the surrounding community who scavenged and played on the dump site. The activities planned as part of the CityLinks project had to meet two objectives: to improve operations and to increase safety at the site. The CityLinks project met these two objectives by surveying and grading an entrance and exit road; stabilizing the actual cells into which waste was dumped; constructing a guardhouse to regulate the incoming and exiting traffic, as well as to provide security; constructing a wall and fence around the site to keep children out, as well as to improve the appearance of the community by preventing blowing trash from settling in streets and homes; and spraying the site with pesticides to control pests that affected the homes located around the site.

Results

- The development of a landfill operations sustainability plan, including the creation of a tip fee.
- Improved landfill operations, with enhanced sanitary conditions, aesthetics, and safety.
- Improved collection of solid waste in the pilot area.
- Improved appearance in the pilot area, due primarily to a reduction in trash strewn in inappropriate places.
- A reduction in inappropriate dumping by the general public.
- A change in public attitudes and behavior regarding the cleanliness of streets and public places, thanks to the education and outreach campaign.

Working with government officials, private waste collectors, nongovernmental organizations, and U.S. partners, the CityLinks team helped Bamako improve its solid waste management services and change public attitudes and behavior regarding the cleanliness of public places.

Equipment procured by the CityLinks program helped improve solid waste collection operations.



South African Cities Network (SACN)— Virginia Beach, Virginia

South Africa partner communities: Buffalo City (East London), Mangaung (Bloemfontein), Msunduzi (Pietermaritzburg).

Population of the South African communities: Buffalo City, 765,000; Mangaung, 705,000; Msunduzi, 565,000.

U.S. partner: Virginia Beach, Virginia.

South African local partner organization: South African Cities Network (SACN).

Program dates: August 2004–May 2006.

Key program issues in South Africa: The integrated development plan (IDP) is mandated by the national Municipal Systems Act; however, the South African partners agreed that while local economic development was clearly established as a priority in the IDP, targeted action planning and implementation of specific project activities and the development of strong and effective public administration at the local level were lacking.

► Local Economic Development

South Africa's cities are the places of opportunity that drive the bulk of economic growth. Many indicators, including job creation and revenue generation, have demonstrated the significant growth that has occurred in South African cities and the potential for further development. Despite the opportunities, however, these same cities often have concentrations of poverty. Therefore, it is critical to explore and share ideas on how to continue to grow the urban economy while ensuring that it translates into jobs and a better life for all urban residents.

The structural framework whereby South African cities can provide for local economic development (LED) strategies begins with the adoption of each city's integrated development plan (IDP), in which economic development is an integral function of the city's overall planning strategy. The IDP is mandated by the national Municipal Systems Act. When the CityLinks program was initiated, there was widespread consensus that municipalities should be integrally involved in promoting economic development, but consolidations of jurisdictions and the expansion of local government authority and responsibility had forced them to focus instead on specific capital improvement projects and central government initiatives and programs.

With the help of USAID/South Africa, the nine largest cities in the country established the South African Cities Network (SACN) to share best practices and coordinate cities' engagement with the central government in planning, promoting, and implementing economic development. Within the context of strong, integrated governance, SACN focuses on the full scope of the urban management process. USAID asked ICMA to establish a partnership program to support the efforts of SACN.

ICMA recruited the city of Virginia Beach, Virginia (population 427,000), which belongs to the Virginia Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance. With a mayor supportive of local economic development, a talented staff, and a targeted strategy, Virginia Beach had successfully attracted investment (both foreign and domestic) and jobs and built up its tourism industry. The city was eager to share its experience with SACN and its member cities as well as learn from them.

ICMA led a diagnostic visit to SACN and to the partner cities of Mangaung and Buffalo City (Eastern Cape Province) in early 2005. This visit illustrated the top priorities and problems in South African cities with respect to local economic development. The team found that although planning and staff support for economic development were strong, the mechanisms and processes for implementing and operating economic development programs were weak. Based on these findings and priorities, the team proposed that the partnership should address three top priority areas: industrial development, tourism, and program planning and implementation.

Program Objectives

ICMA and the city of Virginia Beach collaborated with SACN to form a partnership for technical assistance and knowledge sharing in local economic development. This partnership capitalized on both SACN's goal of helping its member cities formulate and operate self-sustaining local economic development activities and ICMA's experience in facilitating municipal development worldwide.

The principal objective of the partnership was to empower the staff in the municipalities of Buffalo City, Mangaung, and Msunduzi to be more effective both at promoting local economic development and tourism and at engaging local stakeholders and institutions to plan and implement LED strategies. This would ultimately involve broadening the cities' LED vision as well as teaching them how to turn vision and theory into practice and implementation. The partnership also focused on strengthening SACN's capacity to support its membership in economic development.

Program Activities

ICMA worked with SACN to formulate and implement the three cities' individual city development strategies, with a focus on attaining national and local government goals, primarily with respect to urban economic development.

Buffalo City

Buffalo City Municipality, located in Eastern Cape Province, encompasses nearly 700 square miles. The residue of apartheid frames the design and performance of Buffalo City's government and economy. At the start of the CityLinks program, the result was a static economy and structural unemployment officially recorded at 40 percent; a thriving informal economy; and institutionalized antipoverty spending that had increased by 7 percent each year since 1996, without a concurrent rise in tax revenues. Census reports showed that nearly 53 percent of local residents lived below the poverty line—most likely, the true figure was much higher.

To work with Buffalo City, ICMA selected a former assistant city manager with sound economic



Local economic development was the focus of a partnership between professionals from Virginia Beach, Virginia, and the South African Cities Network.

Through a CityLinks partnership, the South African Cities Network shared ideas with Virginia Beach, Virginia—a city with a history of successful business attraction and tourism development—and set priorities for local economic development in three South African cities.

development experience, particularly in the areas of attracting business investment and employment in a large jurisdiction. In early 2006, this advisor worked with LED officers in Buffalo City for three weeks to identify the municipality's business development needs and plan an implementation schedule. Part of this work included a first-ever retreat that brought together local government and business executives to discuss the municipality's future economy and develop an action plan.

The retreat produced agreement on three broad objectives: (1) to strengthen quality of life; (2) to attract higher education; and (3) to recruit new industry and retain existing industry. Working groups were formed and implementation time lines established. Buffalo City asked for the advisor's assistance in developing a business plan and funding requirements for a nonprofit investment attraction organization.

In addition, the partners identified the need for a business retention plan and system to track the needs of existing industry in the city. The objective was to create a program to regularly interview major employers and track their responses as a way to strengthen and grow local employment and identify industry needs before a plant closes.

The partners worked together to develop an action plan that outlined the creation of a nonprofit marketing corporation with two goals: (1) increasing capital inquiries and employment and (2) developing and

executing a robust business retention program. An assessment of the city's LED challenges and opportunities resulted in an "Invest BC" plan. The plan identified the board for the marketing corporation and targeted investors as well as annual investment levels and related benefits, which can be adjusted to fit local norms.

In addition to outlining a marketing plan, the partners set organizational, qualitative, and quantitative goals for benchmarking. After the business retention plan was created, Buffalo City agreed to purchase advanced business-tracking software, Synchronist, to assist in executing the plan.

Mangaung

The city of Mangaung identified the development of an area known as the N8 Corridor as its primary development project to attract new investment and increase the quality of life of residents. The N8 Corridor stretches along a national road from Mangaung through Botshabelo to Thaba Nchu. The Botshabelo industrial area is one of the priority activity nodes along the corridor. The city hopes to facilitate LED activity to make both Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu self-sustaining and less dependent on Mangaung, by strengthening and accentuating their competitive advantages for a range of private investments along the corridor. Actions supporting this goal include upgrading infrastructure and intensifying economic activities along the N8 Corridor.

With an estimated population of 180,000, Botshabelo is reportedly the largest township in the Free State Province. It continues to grow in population and land area, fueling a growing need for jobs and public infrastructure. The Botshabelo industrial complex is home to 150 factories that employ more than 12,000 people in textiles, plastics, and other types of manufacturing. However, Botshabelo has a large, underutilized industrial complex. Both Botshabelo and the N8 Corridor also have significant amounts of unused or underused publicly owned land. Unemployment is high; moreover, the housing supply, public facilities, and infrastructure are in poor condition. These factors act as deterrents to the private investment that would help residents become more self-reliant.

In 2006, the CityLinks team worked with the Mangaung director and her staff to develop a plan for the Botshabelo industrial area in the broader context of the N8 Corridor. Then they worked with the N8 Corridor Steering Committee, including public- and private-sector stakeholders, to develop a plan ultimately focused on leveraging improvements and economic growth for the Botshabelo area.

To reach the city's development goals along the corridor, the plan calls for innovative public and private tools and methods to create jobs, public infrastructure improvements, and new and rehabilitated housing and retail opportunities. Mangaung outlined a set of next steps to implement the plan drafted by the partners.

The partners also recommended that the steering committee evolve into a full-fledged quasi-public N8 Corridor Redevelopment Authority that included municipal and national agencies. To provide for nonpartisan continuity, it was designed with a board of directors that can work with the varying terms of mayors. In addition, the new authority should act as a private-sector development agent in the acquisition, disposition, development, and oversight of N8 Corridor actions and investments. This in turn should lead to economic growth, new investment, job creation, and infrastructure development. The development of the N8 Corridor was viewed as a realistic and attainable goal, provided that the plan could be carried out with structured coordination across all levels and would prove inclusive of all public and private stakeholders.

Msunduzi

When the CityLinks program started, the city of Msunduzi boasted a rapidly growing economy, although poverty and unemployment remained key issues. The city realized that its economic development strategy must further strengthen the economy and generate sufficient employment for its citizens. However, the recent designation of Pietermaritzburg (Msunduzi municipality) as the administrative and legislative capital of the Kwa-Zulu Natal province was expected to act as a catalyst for economic development and redevelopment of the city center.

In terms of economic development planning, the city had undertaken a

number of initiatives to further economic growth. For example, it hosted an economic development conference in which potential growth sectors were identified and key properties were put out for development proposals. The city also established an investment facilitation team to deal with concession applications and development proposals and to serve as a one-stop shop for investors. Job creation was on the rise, and business confidence was at an all-time high.

In 2006, ICMA recruited the project development manager of Virginia Beach to work with the city manager and LED staff in Msunduzi. He brought a comprehensive knowledge of planning, organizing, and executing economic development programs and strategic plans. To create an action plan that would lead to a strategic plan to increase investment in the city, the partners worked together for three weeks, first in Msunduzi and then via e-mail, to outline Msunduzi's economic development status, potential, and needs.

Short-term and long-term goals included: (1) revising the staffing structure to manage development initiatives; (2) developing a business retention and expansion program and tourism products; (3) increasing funding for the tourism sector; (4) creating industrial sites and city improvement districts; and (5) compiling an economic database.

After reaching agreement on a district-wide economic development strategy, the group appointed a con-

Buffalo City, Mangaung, and Msunduzi assessed their economic development needs and goals, developed action plans, and initiated steps to carry out LED programs.

sultant and established a project team that would develop the city's strategic plan. As part of the city's integrated development plan, the strategic plan would address the national goal of reducing unemployment by half by 2014; contribute positively to the financial viability of the municipality; yield a globally competitive and job-creating economy; and contribute substantially to a better life for all the people of Msunduzi.

Results

The results of the joint efforts of all the partnerships were illustrated and shared with a wide audience in Buffalo City at the 2006 CityLinks Local Economic Development Workshop, "Accelerated and Shared Growth in South African Cities: From Policy to Practice."

Buffalo City

- Assessed the city's business development challenges and opportunities.
- Created a business retention plan based on the beliefs that retention is preventive medicine and that ownership should be in the public sector.
- Developed a comprehensive action plan outlining the creation of a nonprofit marketing corporation to increase and support capital inquiries and employment and to develop and execute a robust business retention program.

Mangaung

- Developed a plan for the Botshabelo industrial area in the broader context of the N8 Corridor, with the ultimate goal of leveraging improvements and economic growth for the Botshabelo area.
- Recommended that the steering committee evolve into a full-fledged quasi-public N8 Corridor Redevelopment Authority with a board of directors.

Msunduzi

- Outlined the city's economic development status, potential, and needs.
- Laid out short-term and long-term goals.
- Created an action plan that would lead to a strategic plan to increase investment in the city.
- Reached agreement on a district-wide economic development strategy, appointed a consultant, and established a project team to undertake the development of the city's strategic plan.

Strengthening the Capacity of the Kabul Municipality

- ▶ **Infrastructure Management**
- ▶ **Solid Waste Management**

After more than a quarter century of continuous conflict that began with the invasion by the Soviet Union in 1979, the provincial and municipal bureaucracy throughout Afghanistan has succeeded in overcoming a number of obstacles. With the Taliban warlords removed from power, in October 2004, Afghanistan held its first democratic elections in two decades. As in many countries that have experienced years of conflict and oppression, however, the task of adapting to newfound freedom and rebuilding has proven to be overwhelming for Afghanistan.

Kabul, the capital, is the largest city of Afghanistan, with an estimated population of 4 million. It is an economic and cultural center located strategically along Kabul River near the Khyber Pass, an important pass in the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Kabul's population grew from about 1 million to 4 million between 2001 and 2004, and the city's infrastructure programs were unequipped to handle the needs of its growing population. Its roads were deteriorating, contributing to congestion on the already crowded streets. Open channels along the streets served as the only means of drainage for the trash and water discharged by homes and businesses. Trash removal and disposal were among the many difficulties faced by city officials, as Kabul lacked the proper equipment to support an effective waste management program.

Program Objectives

To address these challenges, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding to ICMA to help solve infrastructure problems in Afghanistan, starting in Kabul, and to put in place sustainable programs that can be continued by the municipality and replicated elsewhere in the country. Under the CityLinks Partnership Program, ICMA provided a pilot program of technical assistance to District 4 in the Kabul municipality from September 2004 to June 2007.

Encouraged by the program's early success, USAID added funding to improve sustainability by training additional municipal staff and strengthening its cadre of engineering technicians. This was especially important because the technicians often receive inadequate training for the tasks that they are required to complete. During the final phases of the project, ICMA provided training that allowed participating Afghans to put their training to practice as team leaders.

Afghanistan partner city: Kabul.

Population of Kabul: Four million.

U.S. partners: Vancouver, Washington, and Kettering, Ohio (each provided a pro-bono consultant who worked in 2005 and 2006).

Program dates: September 2004 to June 2007.

Key program issues in Kabul: Kabul's infrastructure and municipal programs were unequipped to handle the needs of the city's large, growing post-conflict population.



Trash removal was one of the small infrastructure projects the CityLinks program initiated to improve the quality of life in Kabul.

Program Activities

With the overall goal of strengthening the capacity of the city to provide essential services, the program provided technical assistance and training in the areas of trash collection, ditch cleaning, street repair, park renovation and rehabilitation, and street-side “greening.” ICMA established two project offices in Kabul—in the sanitation and greenery departments—to provide technical assistance and guidance to municipal staff. To help ensure sustainability of improvements, the program focused attention on interdepartmental coordination and capacity building for both city administrators and laborers.

Trash Collection

From 1989 to 2004, Kabul had no systematic trash collection, as it lacked the human resources, equipment, and management capacity to develop any kind of routing system. Crews were sent out each day to an indeterminate area to simply “pick up trash,” but with no system or tracking little was accomplished. In some areas, trash went uncollected for weeks and accumulated on the streets, in roadside ditches, and at unofficial dumpsites throughout the city, becoming a public health concern.

The municipal government asked ICMA to help address its trash collection needs. A neighborhood in the city’s District 4 was selected as the location for the pilot project because of its integrated Sunni and Shia population. The neighborhood had a large influx of Afghans who had recently returned after years abroad

in Pakistan, Iran, and other neighboring countries, and the resulting population boom had overwhelmed the system’s capacity to serve the neighborhood.

ICMA began by renting three dump trucks and hiring 15 local laborers to carry out the trash collection activities. During the first year, 90 illegal dumpsites were cleaned up, and 8,880 cubic meters of garbage were removed and disposed of in the city’s landfill.

After arranging for contract workers to locate and remove existing trash piles, an ICMA team developed a trash routing system for the neighborhood’s 3,000 homes. ICMA purchased wheelbarrows, shovels, pitchforks, and pickaxes and trained more than 100 city workers in solid waste management. They were joined by dozens of temporary workers who were organized in 11-member crews that included a truck driver and two other men. These crews went door-to-door with a wheelbarrow to collect garbage. Other workers were assigned to ditch-cleaning crews.

The pilot trash collection project allowed Kabul municipal officials and district residents to learn about the elements and functions of a solid waste management system.

This was the first time door-to-door trash collection had been available in Kabul—or in any area of Afghanistan—so educating residents was essential. As the dumpsites were cleared, ICMA’s resident practitioners and municipal staff talked to resi-

dents to explain how the new trash collection system would work and to request their participation. Staff explained that household trash would be picked up once a week, according to a set schedule.

Gradually, residents began to understand what was expected of them and to cooperate with the program, putting trash in plastic bags or a suitable container and setting it outside their door on their designated day. Residents also were taught to segregate biodegradable and recyclable trash, allowing biodegradable waste to be composted, thus reducing the volume of waste disposed of in the municipal landfill.

As part of its efforts to improve on the program, ICMA conducted a door-to-door survey to document the community's awareness of the trash collection activities and determine their willingness to continue and manage the program. Responses indicated that most residents were familiar with the collection program, and the majority indicated that they would be willing to pay for privatized trash collection.

The trash collection methodology will allow Kabul to continue to provide services that eliminate the risk of improper dumping. Educating citizens in proper waste segregation will minimize the amount of waste going to the city's landfill and encourage an environmentally friendly approach to waste management. The pilot program was conceived of as a training model, but due to its success, plans are in place to implement waste col-

lection throughout Kabul. Already, ICMA has replicated the project in the Afghan city of Khost, where it has proven to be as successful as it has been in Kabul.

Drainage Ditch Clearing

Because of inadequate collection, trash had been dumped in open ditches along the streets and was clogging drains so that water collected on Kabul's streets and sidewalks during periods of heavy rain or snow. During dry periods, the ditches captured the effluent from latrines and septic tanks, creating a disease- and mosquito-producing environment that compromised the health of citizens. Clearing the ditches was critical to the health and safety of the city's residents.

The ditch clearing was planned in conjunction with trash collection. Clearing the ditches required workers

Workers in Kabul were employed to clean street-side drainage ditches of debris and sewage to improve the flow of water and remove a public health hazard.



"[Before the ICMA neighborhood greening work], this area was a huge problem for us. Now, students can get to school easily, even on rainy days."

**Shafiqah Ahmadi Wardak, principal,
Maleqa Soraiia School**

to remove trash, debris, and sediment while keeping the sidewalks and roads clean so that there would be no disruption of pedestrian or vehicular traffic. The waste was then transported to the municipal landfill. Iron mesh was installed atop some ditches in commercial areas to facilitate ongoing maintenance and to ensure the safety of pedestrians. After the debris was removed, a routine maintenance schedule was put in place. The ditch-clearing cycle takes two weeks to complete. In March 2007, the ICMA team extended the ditch-clearing project to include all of District 4.

Parks, Recreation, and Greening

After years of neglect, many of Kabul's once-lush green spaces and parks were in poor condition. Park Shar-i-Naw, located in the heart of Kabul, for example, was once a popular destination for families with young children but had fallen into disrepair. With its greenery gone and much of the area filled with trash, it had become an eyesore. ICMA took on the challenging task of restoring Park Shar-i-Naw in conjunction with the Kabul mayor's office and undertook related projects as well, including neighborhood greening and the construction of a safety park for children.

Renovation of Park Shar-i-Naw

The main objective in the renovation of Park Shar-i-Naw was to create a comfortable, green environment for the citizens of Kabul to come with their families to relax and play. With the assistance of a pro bono landscape architect from the partner

city of Kettering, Ohio, the park was redesigned and renovated with new pavement, walkways, and landscaping. The design incorporated good drainage and easy maintenance.

The renovation itself involved clearing trash and debris from the park area; restoring the park's electrical system; repairing and installing light fixtures; building the new pathways, gates, and other elements of the plan; and planting greenery.

ICMA hired workers and provided on-the-job training to ensure the viability and sustainability of the project. ICMA also worked with citizens, providing tips and advice on the ongoing use and maintenance of the park. Recognizing that the appeal of the park would require ongoing trash collection and removal, the team provided daily trash collection services.

On November 7, 2006, the mayor of Kabul and USAID inaugurated the park. Since its completion, many residents have voiced their gratitude and appreciation to the Kabul municipality.

Neighborhood Greening

For more than 30 years, a vacant expanse stretched for more than a mile between the Maleqa Soraiia School for Girls and the Abo-Baker-e Sedique Mosque in the Wazir Abad section of District 4. The property had initially been allocated as a green area, with plans for a playground. The Kabul municipality did not have sufficient funds for construction, however, and the area had become a dumping site for trash and raw

sewage. A potholed maze of rusted metal and broken glass, the area was dangerous and frequently impassable.

ICMA's Kabul staff identified the rehabilitation and greening of this property as a priority. With the help of an engineer from the partner city of Vancouver, Washington, a new design was created and implemented. The team worked on solutions that included ditches to drain the raw sewage away from the homes in the neighborhood, a landscaped pedestrian mall and play area, paved walkways, gates to keep out motor vehicles, and other features that transformed the site.

To ensure sustainability and ongoing commitment to a clean and usable park, the ICMA Kabul team sought to involve residents. On September 20, 2007—the eve of the International Day of Peace—the newly created park was dedicated as the Kabul Peace Park. Roshan (a cell phone company) agreed to partner with the municipality by committing six maintenance workers for upkeep over the following year. This was one of the first such public-private partnerships in Afghanistan. The ICMA Kabul team believes that this highly successful and cost-effective project can serve as a model for replication in other Kabul neighborhoods, as well as in Afghanistan's other provinces.

Safety Park

In a February 2006 study tour to India, staff from Kabul visited a safety park in Ahmedabad. Here, parents and children learned about traffic regulations as they enjoyed

the park. Pedestrian traffic fatalities are a leading cause of death among children in Afghanistan; with few alternatives, they spend much of their time playing or begging in the streets, making them prime targets for motor vehicles, which often are operated by inexperienced drivers. In addition to having no safe place to play, many children did not understand or appreciate traffic dangers. A safety park could address these problems and would be the first of its kind in Afghanistan.

As its name suggests, the safety park is designed to build awareness of traffic issues. It has a "road" that replicates a highway, complete with traffic signs. Riding small, pedal-powered cars, children can learn what the roadway looks like from a driver's perspective.

ICMA worked with the municipal greenery department to design and build a prototype safety park in the northern area of Park Shari-Naw, employing a work crew of 20 Afghans. To build the park, the team cleared the space, constructed a guardroom and storage area for equipment, developed an irrigation system, repaired the electrical system, constructed bicycle paths, installed playground equipment and traffic signs for the children, and landscaped the area.

To ensure the sustainability and transferability of the safety park, ICMA provided onsite training for municipal greenery department staff. Working together, ICMA and city officials found a small cell phone company,

"I hope this [safety park] process can provide a model for everyone in Kabul, and that we will be able to work in all areas of the city in the future to build more projects like this one."

Rohullah Aman, mayor, Kabul

Areeba, that agreed to take over future upkeep of the park. Areeba assumed responsibility for maintenance, irrigation, planting flowers, and protection of the child-sized cars for one year. The company also hired three employees to maintain and manage the park, announced that it would add benches and lights, and sought additional opportunities to work with the city. This was another example of a public-private partnership, representing a sustainable way to provide park maintenance.

Street and Traffic Improvements

During the Soviet era, most of Kabul's streets were paved with asphalt. Over the years, however, war and neglect took a toll. Potholes made traveling on Kabul's streets difficult, and some streets had deteriorated so completely that they were impassable. Traffic problems were heightened by an increase in the number of drivers as Afghan refugees returned to the country. In addition, signage was either nonexistent or inconsistent, and painted street markings, signal lights, and traffic-regulating barriers were rare. As a result, traffic congestion and accidents are serious problems in the city. To address these issues, the ICMA Kabul team focused attention on two main areas: (1) street markings and traffic signage and (2) street rehabilitation.

Street Marking and Traffic Signage

The ICMA team implemented a plan for a system of uniformly accepted, internationally recognized marking of the paved streets in District 4. Trained engineers and technicians assessed

the need for traffic markings, barriers, and signs throughout the district. Based on that detailed assessment, plans were developed and then approved by the municipality. The plan included marking pedestrian crosswalks and school crossings and installing traffic signs. To implement the plan, the team worked with district streets supervisors and the public works and streets departments.

In collaboration with a local street sign company, ICMA Kabul personnel produced reflective street signs for some major thoroughfares and installed traffic signs and speed humps in numerous locations to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety. At each stage ICMA worked with municipal staff to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills. Frequent inspections were undertaken to ensure that the designs and suppliers resulted in durable, appropriate markings and signs.

Kabul residents viewed the markings and signs positively. This was an easily replicated way to improve traffic flow and to reduce the number of accidents and deaths.

Street Rehabilitation

ICMA also undertook an extensive street paving and repair effort, giving priority to residential streets that connect with or provide access to mosques, schools, community centers, major market areas, and other key areas of the community. The team had to consider several important elements, including the fact that roads would be used not only by

cars, but also by bicycles and pedestrians, including children on their way to school or worship.

To help determine what method would be best suited for Kabul's roads, the municipality asked ICMA to rehabilitate four streets using a different method for each. Several criteria—including cost, sustainability, maintenance needs, and viability—were used to identify the method that was best suited for Kabul's needs. That analysis led to the conclusion that cobblestone roads would be best for some of Kabul's residential streets that had low traffic volume. Rebuilding the roads with cobblestone had the additional benefit of providing employment for a significant number of workers and teaching them a valuable skill that could be used in other projects.

Once plans were developed, ICMA coordinated the project with municipal and district departments. Staff notified residents in advance, solicited input on project designs and timing, and implemented the rehabilitation as expeditiously as possible to minimize disruption to neighborhoods.

Residents showed their support for the street paving and road maintenance programs by flooding the office with requests for street improvements in other areas. Not only does the program enhance safety and speed the flow of traffic; it also reduces the wear and tear on the vehicles using the roads.

Capacity Building

One of the major components of the ICMA Afghanistan CityLinks program was to build the capacity of local Afghans. Only by building the capacity of the local government will real change take place. To accomplish this objective, ICMA Kabul worked hand-in-hand with municipal staff and laborers throughout each project. In addition to providing onsite training, ICMA organized regular training classes for the project's technical staff. Training programs focused on broad and transferable skills, including computer skills, planning, mapping, and engineering software.

Results

Overall, ICMA's program in Kabul achieved significant results:

- Traffic markings and signs improved vehicular and pedestrian safety.
- The ICMA team rehabilitated 1.76 kilometers of streets, repaired 2.6 kilometers of potholes, and paved 300 meters of non-cobblestone streets.
- Successful programs were replicated elsewhere in the city and the country.
- More than 200 major dumpsites were cleaned up; nearly 174,000 cubic meters of garbage were removed; and 150 kilometers of ditches were cleared of debris.
- Weekly door-to-door trash collection was implemented for 3,600 households.
- More than 200 sanitation workers were trained.
- Park Shar-i-Naw was restored from its neglected condition to a family-friendly green space that incorporated a "safety park" area where children could learn about traffic rules.
- Other rundown areas were transformed with new paving, drainage, and landscaping.

Afghanistan Municipal Strengthening Program

Afghanistan partner cities:

Khost (Khost province), Tirin Kot (Uruzgan Province), Qalat (Zabul Province), Bazarak (Panjshir Province), Charikar (Parwan Province), Sharana (Paktika Province), and Jalalabad (Nangarhar Province).

Populations of the Afghanistan cities:

Khost, 12,000; Tirin Kot, 5,500; Qalat, 9,900; Bazarak, 9,400; Charikar, 45,200; Sharana, 13,000; Jalalabad, 168,600.

Program dates: May 2007 to November 2010.

U.S. partner cities: None thus far.

Key program issues in

Afghanistan: The limited capacity of local governments results in a lack of services for the municipalities' residents.

- ▶ **Solid Waste Management**
- ▶ **Road Construction and Rehabilitation**
- ▶ **Water Management**
- ▶ **Electricity Supply**
- ▶ **Job Creation**

Following up on the successful program that ICMA carried out in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, in 2004-2007, the Afghanistan Mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) granted ICMA a contract in May 2007 for the Afghanistan Municipal Strengthening Program (AMSP).

Program Objectives

The new program initially focused on strengthening the municipal governments in six provincial capitals: Tirin Kot (Uruzgan province), Qalat (Zabul), Khost (Khost), Bazarak (Panjshir), Charikar (Parwan), and Sharana (Paktika).

The AMSP provides technical assistance and training to city administrators and to laborers in each city in the areas of sanitation management, road rehabilitation, water management, electricity supply, park rehabilitation, and street-side "greening"—that is, planting bushes along roadways in barren sections of the city. Small infrastructure improvements have been initiated, and work will be supplemented with a temporary worker/training program that especially targets youth. Young people will also be the key audience for special recreation programs and community events to build their connections to the areas in which they live.

Program Activities

The program is being carried out with a series of activities undertaken in partnership with the capital cities, and one of the critical strengths of the AMSP has been the level of cooperation and the degree of commitment demonstrated by the partner municipalities. Prior to providing services, the AMSP and each municipality entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that delineated the responsibilities and resource commitments of both parties. The efforts of each municipality have been significant and have extended the capabilities of the resources available to them. Here is a menu of typical ways in which municipalities contribute to the joint effort:

- Provide office space (and in some municipalities, staff residences) for AMSP staff in the municipal building or buildings owned by the municipality
- Provide trucks and laborers

- Share expenses for the maintenance of trucks and equipment (except for fuel)
- Provide for the security and storage of the trucks and equipment
- Facilitate the hiring of short-term day laborers from the local community
- Participate in determining locations for dumping solid waste
- Promote projects within the theme of “Our City is Our Home.”

Another critical component of the program will be city-to-city partnerships that link experienced U.S. local government officials with Afghan counterparts. Central to these partnerships are peer-to-peer exchanges, through which Afghan leaders can ask questions and get much-needed training and technical assistance in specific areas of municipal management. In addition to these city-to-city partnerships, the AMSP will provide training and technical assistance to develop the human capital within Afghanistan and encourage the development of alliances within and beyond the country.

In order to begin rapid implementation, the AMSP approached each municipality with trained AMSP staff to be embedded into the mayor’s office and a plan featuring a pre-determined set of activities that could (1) be started quickly; (2) generate short-term employment; and (3) improve the municipality’s image to its citizens through enhanced public services.

The mobilization of the AMSP offered a discrete set of activities geared to quickly and visibly improve public services within the municipality. In 2008 and 2009, the AMSP will feature a menu of activities such as these:

- Solid waste management
- Cleaning street and roadside culverts and drainage ditches
- Paving streets with cobblestones
- Restoring and expanding the water supply system
- Rehabilitating and expanding the electrical system.

The lack of trained and competent municipal staff proved to be a constant in all municipalities. Accordingly, as part of the MOU process, the mayor worked with the AMSP staff to identify areas in which AMSP staff members would augment the existing municipal staff. These AMSP employees work in the municipal facilities not only to implement



Near Bazarak, the capital of Panjshir province, the CityLinks team eliminated a significant roadway hazard by building this safety wall at a dangerous curve along an important transportation route.

Workers in Tirin Kot excavate to identify damaged and broken components of the water supply system; providing safe drinking water is a nationwide challenge.





Workers in Jalalabad make improvements in a ditch that is part of the city's sewage system.

the desired activities, but to serve as “change agents” with the municipal staff. A typical AMSP augmentation team in a municipality might include the following positions/functions:

- Provincial coordinator
- Senior engineer
- Site engineer
- City manager
- Finance/administration assistant.

While the initial focus of the AMSP program was on highly visible and tangible results, the program will move beyond quick-impact projects and will start to address sustainability. The AMSP will soon broaden its platform of “municipal strengthening” through a series of iterative training sessions and technical assistance designed to enable the municipal leaders and their staff to take on the challenges of stabilization and ultimately growth in the areas of public services and the municipal economy.

While addressing the needs of the leaders in the partner municipalities, ICMA will also launch an aggressive awareness program for local youth. The growth and development of the local youth, through an understanding of the principles of good governance, will be based on the same topics and content as the training and technical assistance being provided to current municipal leaders. It will be customized, however, to make it age appropriate. The AMSP will use a model similar to that of the internationally recognized “Junior Achievement Worldwide Programs,”

which employs hands-on experiences to help young people understand the economics of life. Through a similar approach, the “Afghanistan Youth in Government” program promises to make a critical contribution to a new and better prepared generation of Afghan leaders.

To set the stage for quick, high-impact activities, ICMA established a presence by opening operational field offices in all six provincial capitals within the first five months of the project. By the end of 2007, ICMA was fully staffed in each provincial office as well as in Kabul, where ICMA staff operate a management center for all of the AMSP activities around the country. The Kabul staff members coordinate and oversee the activities that take place in the provinces and train ICMA employees in the provinces.

To have an immediate impact and build credibility for city officials in the provincial capitals, ICMA has typically worked first on trash collection and the construction of cobblestone streets. For example, street construction has been started in Tirin Kot and elsewhere, and ditch cleaning is underway in Khost. These activities have a high profile, can employ many citizens, and provide a foundation on which ICMA and the municipalities can prepare for the more challenging areas of water and electricity supply. In addition to trash collection and street construction, ICMA has worked on ditch cleaning, street rehabilitation, water supply, electricity supply, and creating temporary jobs.

Though the security situation in some provinces posed a challenge to getting activities underway, ICMA was able to overcome the difficulties through a solid partnership with the cities' mayors and the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs)—military missions that provide security and support to the provincial capitals in Afghanistan.

In 2008, ICMA built on the momentum of the project's first six months. ICMA continues to work closely with the mayors in each of the provincial capitals to ensure that they understand and support the ICMA efforts. ICMA has also started new efforts in water management, electricity supply, youth activities, and capacity building for municipal staff, in all the capitals. Given the early program successes in Tirin Kot and Qalat, ICMA will conduct assessments to determine possible future activities in other areas of southern Afghanistan.

On the basis of ICMA's successful completion of the AMSP start-

up activities, USAID amended the project's scope of work, asking ICMA to expand into the city of Jalalabad, the capital of a seventh province, Nangarhar. This is noteworthy given that the original USAID award covered only five provinces, and in six months this has been extended to seven. ICMA hopes to build on the momentum and continue expanding into additional provinces in 2008.

Results

- Fully operational field offices have been established in seven provinces.
- Solid waste management and road rehabilitation programs have been implemented in all seven provinces.
- AMSP staff embedded in mayors' offices have begun capacity building training for municipal staff.
- USAID has provided funding to expand the program into five additional provinces.

Cuddalore and Nagapattinam, India— Port Orange, Palm Bay, and Oldsmar, Florida

India partner cities: Cuddalore and Nagapattinam (municipalities located in southern India in the state of Tamil Nadu).

Populations of the Indian cities (approximate): Cuddalore, 159,000; Nagapattinam, 93,000.

U.S. partners: Palm Bay, Port Orange, and Oldsmar, Florida.

Program dates: April 2005 to September 2007.

Key program issues in India: The tsunami of December 2004 demonstrated the need to prepare for and mitigate future disasters along the southern Indian coastline and to build the capacity of local governments to increase the generation of revenue so that they can provide basic and reliable services to their citizens.

- ▶ **Disaster Preparedness, Management, Mitigation, and Emergency Response**
- ▶ **Coastal Restoration and Park Development**
- ▶ **Financial Management**
- ▶ **Improved Citizen Access to Services**
- ▶ **Model Street Development**

On December 26, 2004, the Indian coastline experienced the most devastating tsunami in recorded history. Almost all the countries situated around the Bay of Bengal were affected. Nearly 80 percent of deaths along India's southern coast were centered in the state of Tamil Nadu, which also incurred approximately two-thirds of the property damage. Within Tamil Nadu, the cities of Nagapattinam and Cuddalore suffered much of the worst damage and loss of life.

In response to the tsunami, in April 2005, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded the CityLinks Post Tsunami Recovery Program in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam to ICMA.

Program Objectives

The primary objective of the program was to provide disaster management assistance and guidance on the improvement service delivery to citizens of the two cities. A key component was the CityLinks Partnership between Cuddalore and Nagapattinam and Palm Bay, Oldsmar, and Port Orange, Florida. Like Tamil Nadu, Florida continually prepares for natural disasters that include unrelenting hurricanes throughout the state. Local and regional government officials from cities like Palm Bay, Oldsmar, and Port Orange not only have first-hand disaster response experience, but also provide models of good service delivery to citizens.

Program Activities

To capitalize on the knowledge and expertise of Florida city officials, ICMA facilitated a working partnership between the three Florida cities and Cuddalore and Nagapattinam. The partnership worked to help prepare for and mitigate future disasters along the southern Indian coastline, as well as to build the capacity of both governments to provide basic services to their citizens. A CityLinks team was formed, composed of ICMA staff, officials from the three Florida cities, and representatives from the Urban Management Centre (UMC), an organization based in the Indian city of Ahmedabad that works in collaboration with ICMA to professional-

ize urban management in India. The team provided pro-bono, hands-on technical assistance, capacity building training, and focused exchanges, complemented by small and targeted project assistance funding for disaster preparedness, computer-aided design (CAD) mapping, park/playground development, water delivery, flood mitigation, model street development, and financial management. The partnership and program led to lasting relationships and tangible results that will continue to improve the quality of life for the citizens of both cities.

Disaster Preparedness, Management, Mitigation, and Emergency Response

Mapping

The CityLinks Team created computer-aided design (CAD) base maps for both cities with detailed data layers of all relevant geographic features, public infrastructure systems and facilities, land uses, and relevant building structures. The cities are now better equipped to evacuate during emergencies, are able to respond to vulnerable populations more quickly, and are prepared to plan, prepare for, and develop infrastructure based on current municipal information and citizen needs. The CAD maps were also used throughout the CityLinks program by the project team and by Cuddalore and Nagapattinam for planning and implementation purposes.

Flood Mitigation

The CAD maps were particularly beneficial in efforts to decrease seasonal flooding. Once the land features had

been mapped, the CityLinks team identified low-lying areas and drainage problems and provided written recommendations in a report entitled *8 Ideas that Work* to these communities and to self-help groups on ways to combat flooding. The team removed the silt from drains to allow for a freer flow of water during monsoon seasons, including over 750 running meters of drainage in Cuddalore. By cleaning the drains, which had historically been clogged with trash, debris and snakes, the cities mitigated the effects of monsoons.

In addition, the CityLinks team hired a local Indian firm to survey both cities to determine and provide recommendations for the best way to tangibly mitigate seasonal flooding. The team then worked closely with local communities and municipal officials in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam to design responsive flood mitigation projects. As a result, working designs were developed for both cities, and

"I am deeply grateful for the educational and cultural opportunities provided to me as a participant in the CityLinks Post Tsunami Recovery Program."

Roger Smith, public utilities director, Port Orange, Florida

Ponds being interconnected in Nagapattinam to mitigate flooding.





The final design of the playground in Nagapattinam was based in part on drawings that schoolchildren made of an "ideal" play space.

a flood mitigation pilot project was completed in Nagapattinam. Ponds and water bodies were cleaned and linked together through the widening of seven ponds to allow for a free flow of water during storm surges and to provide a natural system for draining water that accumulated as a result of inclement weather.

Coastal Restoration and Park Development

During the December 2004 tsunami, parks in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam were destroyed. To revitalize these community spaces, the CityLinks team built two neighborhood playgrounds, soliciting the involvement of over 300 schoolchildren, ages 8 to 12, their parents, teachers, and members of the community. These schoolchildren drew pictures of their ideal parks, which formed the basis for the final designs that were approved by both communities during stakeholder meetings. The playgrounds

were built by hand within five days at each site with approximately 4,000 hours of labor donated by citizens. In-kind contributions were donated by citizens, the government, and ICMA and through public-private partnerships. In addition to the playground, the CityLinks team designed and constructed two parks, allowing for increased urban greenery and improved gathering spaces for the tsunami-affected communities.

Financial Management

To strengthen the capacity of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam in the area of financial management, the CityLinks team worked with the cities to increase their own-source revenue generation. The team helped identify more than \$800,000 in uncollected back taxes and as a result, more than \$500,000 was collected by both cities. The increase in revenue was successful because the CityLinks team worked hand-in-hand with local government and finance specialists to strengthen their financial skills and institutional capacity. By the close of the project, both cities had updated their financial records, identified outstanding tax payments owed to them, and improved the tax collection process. The increase in revenues has allowed Cuddalore and Nagapattinam to pay for and provide better services to citizens.

Improved Citizen Access to Services

Public service delivery was addressed through the improvement of the municipal water supply and by encouraging citizens to become more

Park construction on Silver Beach in Cuddalore.



knowledgeable about water services. The CityLinks team surveyed citizen needs and opinions, tested the water, and reviewed improvement options, then installed chlorinators and pressure gauges. Chlorination—a low-cost, sustainable, and effective way to treat water—is a proven means for decreasing disease among citizens. Pressure gauges allow the city to determine when the flow of water has been interrupted, so that they can ensure that citizens receive regular water service. The installation of chlorinators and pressure gauges increased access to pure drinking water for over 65,000 beneficiaries and showed concrete efforts by Cuddalore and Nagapattinam to address both concerns.

Once the chlorinators were installed, the CityLinks team, in partnership with the cities, implemented a public relations campaign to encourage citizens to hook up to the municipal water supply and to pay for household water connections. Citizens had previously refused to hook up to the water system because they were wary of the water quality and questioned the regularity with which water was being provided. The campaign publicized the improvements in service delivery through a video shown on government television stations, an audio/street campaign, and distribution of leaflets.

By the end of September 2007, 670 applications for water connections had been distributed in Nagapattinam, and approximately 365 applications had been filed by citizens to request water connections.

In Cuddalore, approximately 1,200 applications had been distributed, and 980 applications had been filed. The filing of applications to hook up to the municipal water supply shows a significant change in citizens' perceptions of water quality, as well as their interest in supporting the municipal water system. By successfully hooking citizens up to the municipal water systems, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam have the capacity to increase revenues by at least \$150,000 per year.

Model Street Development

During an exchange visit to Florida, Indian representatives were intrigued by the well-planned streets and sidewalks that were built to accommodate citizen, business, and municipal needs. In an effort to recreate these spaces, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam requested that the CityLinks team design and facilitate the construction of a model street in each city. In response, the CityLinks program implemented stakeholder meetings, designed model street sections, identified funding/financial structuring opportunities, and advocated with municipal and state governments to provide funding for model street development initiatives. The team developed concept papers and proposals and submitted them for funding from the state government of Tamil Nadu. As the program ended, the proposals were pending approval.

Results

The CityLinks program in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam was a success because it remained a dynamic

"The model street project introduced an approach for soliciting stakeholder participation in the community development process. Once constructed, these streets will stand as a testament to the power of ordinary citizens and business owners to shape the future of their communities."

Donna Steinebach, assistant to the city manager, Port Orange, Florida

partnership that responded to municipal needs; it was demand driven; and it improved the quality of life for citizens. Although the program officially ended on September 30, 2007, the partnership fostered lasting international relationships between local government professionals in Florida and India that will continue for years to come. The program achieved the following results:

- Created working CAD base maps for both cities with detailed data layers of all relevant geographic features, public infrastructure systems and facilities, land uses, and building structures.
- Removed silt from drains to allow for a freer flow of water during monsoon seasons, including over 750 running meters of drainage in Cuddalore.
- Widened, cleaned, and connected seven ponds to improve drainage and reduce flooding.
- Built two neighborhood playgrounds with labor donated by schoolchildren, their parents, teachers, and members of the community.
- Designed and constructed two parks, allowing for increased urban greenery and improved gathering spaces for the tsunami-affected communities.
- Identified more than \$800,000 in uncollected back taxes and collected more than \$500,000 in actual revenues for both cities.
- Installed chlorinators and pressure gauges to provide access to pure drinking water for more than 65,000 beneficiaries.

Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, and Phuket, Thailand—Portland, Oregon

- ▶ **Redevelopment Projects**
- ▶ **Environmental Management**
- ▶ **Financial Management**
- ▶ **Citizen Participation**

The United States-Asia Environmental Partnership (USAEP) awarded ICMA the CityLinks Associate Award in Thailand to strengthen municipal management, improve public service delivery, and encourage democratic participation by citizens in a consortium of cities—Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, and Phuket—in partnership with Portland, Oregon. The award was in direct response to the former Resource Cities partnership between Portland and Rayong, Thailand, which concluded in December 2002 and allowed the city of Rayong to better respond to the challenges of decentralization through improved financial management and increased citizen participation.

Through the CityLinks program, Portland shared practical knowledge and techniques with the consortium cities in order to improve redevelopment opportunities and environmental management through sound financial policies. As the program progressed, citizen participation and outreach became an increasingly important component. A smaller component includes developing and sustaining a relationship between the finance officers' association in Thailand and the U.S.-based Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

Program Objectives and Activities

The partnership between Portland and the cities of Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, and Phuket grew from the need to foster and improve environmental management. The cities agreed to act as a consortium to implement improvements in their downtown areas and to provide sustainable environmental protection through the implementation of prudent financial management.

The CityLinks program concluded with a symposium highlighting lessons learned and accomplishments achieved in the three cities since the program began in 2003. The symposium was attended by 160 participants who included representatives from 42 Thai municipalities, the Thailand Municipal League, and representatives from the city of Portland, ICMA, and USAEP. The symposium provided opportunities for the three participant cities, along with neighboring municipalities and officials, to

Thailand partner cities: Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, and Phuket.

Populations of the Thai cities (approximate): Chiang Mai, 170,000; Khon Kaen, 150,000; Phuket, 76,000.

U.S. partner: Portland, Oregon.

Program dates: September 2003 to September 2005.

Key program issues in Thailand: A consortium of Thai cities perceived a need to improve environmental management through sound financial policies, undertake municipal redevelopment projects, and foster citizen participation in decisions affecting local services.



CityLinks partners worked with Thai officials on redevelopment projects in three cities.

discuss lessons learned, challenges and benefits, public participation policy, and the role of local government organizations throughout all of the project areas.

Chiang Mai

Redevelopment Project

The objective of redevelopment in Chiang Mai was to beautify the Mae Ping River. At this stage, Chiang Mai held several public meetings to discuss public sentiment and expectations. The activity did not progress as far as originally hoped, but did provide a good opportunity for the municipality to grow more confident in the citizen participation approach. Unfortunately, the funding for this activity did not materialize so progress was difficult.

Environmental Management

Chiang Mai wanted to begin to charge a small number of users for sewer service. A public meeting was held to discuss the fee concept and the benefits of the principle that a polluter should pay. There was an initial discussion of the need to set rates based on the volume and strength of sewage. The city agreed that department stores and hotels would be the first target customers.

Khon Kaen

Redevelopment Project

The objective of redevelopment in Khon Kaen was to improve the commercial viability of the Rama District to ultimately enhance tourism. The city held multiple public

meetings to discuss the project and its benefit with the community. In addition, Khon Kaen officials met with the Department of Treasury to discuss opportunities for increased economic growth and enhanced tourism. Construction plans were developed with significant community involvement and input, but only one contractor provided a bid. The city planned to rebid in the near future. From this activity, Khon Kaen learned that public meetings could take many forms depending on the topic and target audience.

Environmental Management

The goal was to begin charging some users for sewer service by the end of the program. Several meetings were held to discuss the principles of sewer rate making, and an initial target was identified. The sessions were held by either the mayor or deputy mayor and individual stakeholders. The city obtained commitments from the stakeholders for an initial portion to be charged, and the expectation was that the city would soon begin to charge hotels and large department stores. The municipality identified 70 hotels and businesses that had agreed to pay a determined fee for municipal services, developed a phase-in strategy, and discussed rate worksheets and reports with the hotel group. Khon Kaen originally planned to begin charges in summer 2005 but was delayed. The staff learned that a fee system involves not only who and how to charge, but also the preparation of bills, collection of fees, and enforcement.

Phuket

Redevelopment Project

The goal of redevelopment in Phuket was to beautify and increase the flow capacity of the Klong Bang Yai Canal and install public access points. Accomplishments included the dredging of the lower section of the canal to improve flow, the construction of a new park with features that encouraged community gathering, and multiple public meetings to discuss the project and to encourage the exchange of information and ideas. The activity slowed following the destruction caused by the tsunami of December 2004.

Environmental Management

The goal was to begin charging fees for sewer service by the project's end. The city of Phuket held an initial meeting to discuss the need to charge fees, and there was general consensus that those who contribute more or higher-strength waste should pay higher fees. Following the tsunami, activity slowed, although there was continued interest in pursuing a fee system in the future. As a result of the partnership and consortium, the municipality of Khon Kaen requested assistance in creating a toolkit to help local government officials throughout Thailand implement the public participation process. Khon Kaen's desire to become a national leader in citizen participation and outreach led to additional funding and assistance from USAEP in the form of a Quick Response Grant to fund the creation of a manual or toolkit and to provide training of trainers for Khon Kaen staff and additional staff identified

by Chiang Mai and Phuket. The manuals and resource materials were adapted, revised, translated into Thai, and presented at the best practices symposium.

A public participation session attracted attendees from the three partner cities, 38 people from 16 Thai municipalities, staff identified as "trainers of trainers," and representatives from the city of Portland, ICMA, and USAEP. The city of Khon Kaen served as overall coordinator for the training session, which was developed by the three cities and included examples from their CityLinks partnership experience. The event included mock training sessions highlighting the different techniques or methods used to engage the community, such as lecture, demonstrations, group discussions, and role play exercises. The session also provided a citizen participation manual that was well received by the participating municipalities, and copies were made available on the USAEP and ICMA Web sites.

Emergency Management Training

In response to the devastation caused by the tsunami, the city of Phuket requested additional assistance to better prepare for future tsunamis. Training was provided in Phuket for 161 attendees from the city, including the Phuket Provincial Administrative Office and subdistrict administrative office, NGOs, representatives from Rajabhat University, community disaster volunteers, and the municipality of Patong. The two-day session was designed to help the community become self-sufficient and to help

Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, and Phuket agreed to act as a consortium to implement improvements in their downtown areas and to provide sustainable environmental protection through the adoption of sound financial policies.

With help from their CityLinks partners, the Thai cities developed techniques for citizen participation and involvement through public meetings and other opportunities for input into decision making.

local authorities restore infrastructure and services should another disaster strike. Topics covered included disaster awareness and planning before, during, and after such an event; the impact of potential disasters on transportation, utilities, water and sewer systems, and structures; critical response operations such as damage assessments, command posts, field operations, public safety, and medical surge operations; and critical repair operations to assist displaced communities; debris removal; and infrastructure repair.

Support for the Local Financial Association

One component of the Thailand program was a partnership between the U.S.-based Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and finance officers in Thailand. It was hoped that GFOA would be able to provide training and technical assistance to the Thai Finance Officers Association and to assist with accreditation. Unfortunately, national laws were implemented that made results difficult to achieve. It was hoped that the relationship between the two associations would continue beyond the program's end in September 2005.

Results

- A consortium of Thai cities was created to address common issues.
- Sustainable environmental management was improved through the implementation of prudent financial management. This objective was difficult, but the consortium cities held initial forums to discuss the need for and benefits of a fee-for-service system. In addition, the cities learned how to develop a rate structure that can ultimately help the cities develop a fee system.
- With assistance from Portland, the cities developed a manual or citizen participation toolkit that provided information about the techniques and processes involved in ensuring that the community is engaged and knowledgeable about the municipalities' administration and programs. These techniques were used to gain support within the communities for redevelopment and environmental management discussions.
- Training was provided to assist Phuket and other municipalities affected by the tsunami so that they can better prepare for and respond to future environmental challenges.

Tirana, Albania—Catawba County, North Carolina

- ▶ **Municipal Assets Management**
- ▶ **Business Licensing and Permitting**
- ▶ **Solid Waste Management**

The partnership between the city of Tirana, Albania, and Catawba County, North Carolina, began in 2002 during a critical period for reforms inaugurated by the new mayor of Tirana, Edi Rama. During the previous decade of transition, the nation's local government system had suffered corruption and mismanagement. In addition, the neglected public infrastructure was crumbling under a wave of migration from the north and ever-increasing urban expansion, especially in the city of Tirana.

USAID provided funding for the partnership between Tirana and Catawba County, first under the Resource Cities Program and later under CityLinks, to help the city address these formidable management challenges.

Program Objectives

Tirana sought to improve management and service delivery in infrastructure and asset management; licensing and permitting processes (backed up by building code enforcement); and a number of issues related to solid waste collection and disposal. Although the level of litter in Tirana's center had been reduced significantly by a metal waste container pilot project, there were still waste spillovers due to an ineffective cycle of trash collection, and the city needed to take additional steps to reduce unsightly waste spillages in its downtown. Furthermore, the city had not implemented environmentally sound practices to deal with industrial waste, a by-product of the new construction that accompanied the city's rapid growth.

Catawba County, with its publicly recognized and well-managed department of public works, was able to assist Tirana with infrastructure management and municipal code enforcement issues. Catawba County officials also worked with officials in Tirana to balance municipal budgeting and revenue generation with capital infrastructure development. In addition, the officials worked together to improve citizen participation and ensure a transparent decision-making process. The partnership achieved impressive results during its first phase (2002-2004), but challenges remained, particularly in the area of solid waste collection and disposal.

Albania partner city: Tirana.

Population of Tirana: about 586,000 as of December 2005 (according to an estimate made by Tirana municipal officials).

U.S. partner: Catawba County, North Carolina.

Albanian local partner organization: Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA).

Program dates: February 2002-May 2004; September 2005-September 2007.

Key program issues in Tirana: In-migration and urban expansion were putting increasing pressure on the city's public infrastructure and solid waste services. At the same time, the city was implementing reforms after emerging from a period of corruption and mismanagement.

“We’re hoping that our efforts will result in clean streets for Tirana, by improving municipal waste management and citizen awareness.”

Barry Edwards, director of utilities and engineering, Catawba County

Program Activities

Municipal Assets Management

Changes in Albania’s laws made possible the transfer to the municipality of Tirana the administration of 25 formerly state-owned enterprises with assets such as land, buildings, and equipment. Most of these enterprises were related to heavy industry. Tirana had a mandate from the national government to manage the funds attached to these assets for upkeep or operations. The partnership introduced a system to accurately evaluate the municipal enterprises so that Tirana could make informed decisions about the future of each of the newly acquired enterprises. This project prepared Tirana for successful municipal ownership by establishing a master inventory database as a tool for analyzing the profitability of each enterprise and preparing a master plan for the restructuring of its assets.

Business Licensing

The transition from a centralized economy to one that encourages local approaches to economic development created a need for local authorities to support businesses and improve services to them. To improve Tirana’s business permitting process and oversight, the partners designed a license program that not only gave the local government a new revenue source but also increased its control over business activities by using higher fees and taxation to discourage enterprises that lessen the health or safety of the community.

Central to the program was the concept of a “one-stop shop” where

businesses could pay for all municipal services, licenses, taxes, and fees. A database with up-to-date information on businesses and their activities was designed to enable the city to generate records of all receivable taxes and fees and pursue delinquent businesses. Connecting this database to various city departments promised to increase the city’s capacity to plan and collect its revenues.

Permitting

Evaluation of Tirana’s existing building code enforcement and compliance system revealed a problematic and fractured policy structure. The municipality and three national layers involved in building permitting communicated poorly and seldom if ever shared data. To remedy the situation, Catawba County provided Tirana with tools and technical advice to help the city develop and implement a transparent process for legalizing existing illegal buildings, issuing future building construction permits, and implementing an integrated building code development and compliance system that ensured public safety and minimized corruption. The partnership also formed a task force charged with creating an enabling environment for application of the policy tools developed through this partnership. Utilizing these tools was expected to help Tirana reduce the corruption that leads to the construction of illegal and unsafe buildings. At the national level, the tools could create a sound foundation for a new building codes compliance system based on a partnership between national and local governments and private agencies.

Solid Waste Management

Tirana's system of solid waste management was beset by problems in both collection and disposal. The contractors that were providing cleaning and waste disposal services were running costly and inefficient operations. Moreover, insufficient equipment and obsolete operations had turned the municipal landfill into a serious environmental concern.

With assistance from Catawba County, Tirana implemented a pilot program for solid waste collection, using containers designed specifically for Tirana's needs. Metal solid waste container units—heavy, secure, and lockable—were installed at specially calculated distances from each other across the city center and provide collection flexibility for multiple waste and recycling streams. The containers, suitable for painting or decoration, can be used as advertising billboards to stimulate municipal revenues and pay development costs or to disseminate public information.

To address waste disposal problems, the partners developed a strategic plan for the old Tirana landfill and for a new one to be built midway between Tirana and Dures, the second largest Albanian city. They also developed a plan to improve the management of the current landfill and extend its life. With the help of a grant and a loan from the Italian government, Tirana implemented many of the plan's recommendations, such as covering and cleaning the landfill, reconstructing the roadway leading to it, and reducing the amount of con-

taminated fluids that pollute underground waters and the air.

Solid Waste Collection and Recycling

Priorities for the second phase of the partnership were solid waste collection and the introduction of a pilot recycling program in Tirana. To begin the process, Catawba County worked with Tirana officials to assess the current state of Tirana's solid waste collection management and infrastructure, including regulations, contracts with waste collection contractors, and tariffs. New waste collection system areas, based on area and street distances, were designated. The city was divided into four waste collection zones. The associated waste collection contracts with private contractors were also assessed by the officials, who considered such factors as the waste stream, collection points, and number and size of containers.

Tirana, with assistance from Catawba County officials, then determined the city's waste management and waste collection points citywide and recorded the collection points in a geographic information system (GIS). The waste generation rates of collection points were observed and assessed. City "hot teams" and contractor representatives were dispatched for street and bin inspections three times a day in their respective zones.

Next, Tirana and Catawba County developed a street cleanliness program and scale. The program included street-cleaning zone

"Clean-up Day and the recycling programs it's launching are models that could be replicated in other neighborhoods, as well as elsewhere in Albania."

**Auron Pasha, executive director,
Institute for Development
Research and Alternatives**



A poster for the Clean-up and Pilot Recycling Day event.

The poster art exhibition for the Clean-up and Pilot Recycling Day event.



development issues and review of the private contractors' 2007 contracts with the city. It was based on New York City's Scorecard Program, which was managed by the mayor's office, to monitor street cleanliness and citizens' awareness about the issues.

To kick off the street cleanliness program and initiate the recycling initiative, Tirana officials selected a pilot zone. Known as the "Television Block" neighborhood, the selected zone had a broad base of waste generators that included residential buildings of various size, villas, differing business types, educational institutions, and several embassies.

A volunteer task force was created to lead the efforts within the Television Block. This volunteer task force included city staff, government officials from the health department, a national ministry-level representative, staff from the Environmental Center for Development Education and

Networking (EDEN), private contractors, university students, a paper mill representative, and a paper recycler representative. City officials gave the task force volunteers an overview of the city's solid waste challenges and introduced the city's plans for a pilot recycling program. In addition, the task force volunteers shared their concerns, needs, and ideas regarding the city's overall solid waste management program.

An early responsibility of the volunteer task force was a door-to-door outreach campaign within the Television Block. Volunteers administered a questionnaire that sought to determine the rate at which the city's household waste was disposed and the volume of recyclable plastics, paper, and aluminum and to assess citizens' attitudes toward separation of household waste at the source. This effort was significant because Tirana had gone from zero participation to formation of a volunteer task force.

Clean-up and Recycling Day

To highlight progress and kick off the city's pilot recycling program, a Clean-up and Recycling Day event was held in May 2007 in the Television Block neighborhood. Approximately 30 volunteers from the city, Catawba County, the Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA), EDEN, the Red Cross, local universities, and ICMA gathered to participate in the event.

Four cleaning and recycling teams worked with shovels, brooms, and scrapers to clean and pick up recy-

clables; then new recycling bins were distributed, the streets were washed and sanitized, and the teams distributed brochures to citizens on the street and leaflets to businesses. The materials were created by city officials and can be used for future recycling programs the city implements. In conjunction with the four teams, city officials worked with the solid waste and recycling contractors; conducted interviews with the media; interacted with the surrounding neighborhood businesses and residents; and prepared for the mayor's arrival at the event.

Other activities that occurred during and after the Clean-up Day included:

- A competition among art school students to design a poster with the theme “I Recycle for Tirana’s Future”
- Development of media campaign products for the event: posters; brochures for the public; leaflets for businesses participating in the recycling campaign; public television announcements; and a children’s coloring and game book
- Post-event activities focusing on environmental topics
- Plans for replication of the event in other pilot areas
- Development of a Recycling Handbook as a resource and tangible tool for the city.

Construction and Demolition Waste Management

Waste generated by the demolition and construction of buildings had been identified as a major issue in

Tirana. As a first step, Tirana and Catawba County officials conducted assessments of the construction and demolition (C&D) waste generated by the city, C&D waste disposal at the Sharra Landfill, and illegal C&D dump sites in and around the city. They also collected the European Union’s C&D waste statistical data in order to have an internationally recognized standard against which to compare the assessment data.

Catawba County officials then drafted a waste stream analysis and C&D waste management concept paper as a foundation for the development of a program for Tirana. In developing the concept paper, the team sought input from the city’s financial and legal departments, the building community, and the national Ministries of Policy and Planning for Public Works, Urban Planning, and Environment.

The Sharra Landfill in 2005 (right) and in 2007 (below).



The program proposed in the draft was generally accepted, but ministry officials expressed several concerns, requesting a study to determine the financial feasibility of a C&D facility and a “management and control” study to determine the best operational course for proceeding with such a facility. Catawba County officials also explored the feasibility of a bidding provision that would require recycled material in new construction, but they learned that regulatory and legal action would be needed.

As a next step, the Catawba County officials met with representatives from the same ministries to discuss models that Tirana could use. The model they recommended for Tirana was a DBOT (Design, Build, Operate, and Transfer) facility. With a DBOT, financing of the C&D waste management facility would be provided by the private sector entity that would then design, build, own, and later transfer ownership to the city at an agreed-upon time.

The meetings with the ministry representatives also included discussions of each ministry’s role in the selection of a new landfill site and in the building of a C&D waste facility. The ministries’ involvement

varied depending on the location of the site, the number of local governments involved, and the size of the site. They appeared eager to support Tirana in its efforts and also to develop countrywide policies and standards for these kinds of processes.

Catawba County officials also briefed the director and staff of the Tirana Building Association on the city’s plans for a future C&D waste facility and the ministry representatives’ cooperation.

Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)

Meetings were held in 2006 and early 2007 with the Sharra Landfill engineers, from the T.E.I. Group in Milan, Italy, to develop plans for a materials recovery facility (MRF) at the Sharra Landfill and/or a possible future landfill site. The proposed Tirana MRF would remove recyclables from the waste stream before the waste is transported to a remote disposal site.

Results

The Tirana–Catawba County partnership achieved the following results:

- Analyzed and revamped the city of Tirana’s solid waste collection system

- Improved the environmental conditions, maintenance, and life extension of the Sharra Landfill through better operations
- Improved the management of the city’s infrastructure assets
- Created a model practice for more cost-effective contracting with the private sector for waste collection services
- Developed a model pilot waste container program
- Developed citizen surveys to evaluate the solid waste system and determine how citizens felt about participating in a pilot recycling program
- Introduced a pilot recycling program with a neighborhood event and public awareness campaign
- Developed “how to’s” for solid waste management, construction and demolition management, landfill management, and a materials recovery facility (MRF) and transfer station
- Produced a Recycling Handbook for local government officials and youth.

Bulgaria CityLinks Program

- ▶ **Local Economic Development**
- ▶ **Infrastructure Management**
- ▶ **Waste Management**

Recognizing the challenges facing local government in Bulgaria, in 1997 the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) charged ICMA with helping Bulgaria find sustainable local solutions to problems accompanying the country's unsteady march toward democracy and decentralization. In partnership with the Bulgarian Foundation for Local Government Reform (FLGR), ICMA's Bulgarian Technical Twinning Program was created. Through ICMA and FLGR, USAID initiated a pilot partnership program between U.S. cities and Bulgarian municipalities that included five phases, starting in 1997.

The CityLinks program in Bulgaria celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2007, and in that year the program had significant achievements in its three program areas: local economic development, infrastructure management, and waste management. Also in 2007, USAID granted a seven-month extension for the program, for September 2007 through February 2008, to bridge the period of local elections and to help FLGR establish or reestablish relationships with newly elected local governments.

Phase V of the program, August 2004 through February 2008, was designed to build on components from the earlier phases that had been most successful and that had made the greatest impact on the development of Bulgarian municipalities. It also set the stage for continuing changes in the way Bulgarian municipalities are managed and serve their citizens. As a very successful model for creation of partnerships between Bulgarian and U.S. cities, the program further fostered the exchange, upgrading, and wide dissemination of experience, know-how, and effective local government practices.

Program Objectives

The goals of the program were (1) to strengthen the capacity of Bulgarian local governments to develop and apply new approaches and methodologies for solving their current problems and (2) to enhance the capabilities of Bulgarian local governments to facilitate economic growth.

Program Activities

Program activities focused on three areas: local economic development and marketing, replication of infrastructure management practices, and replication of a pilot composting program.

Bulgaria partner communities: more than 50 municipalities throughout Bulgaria, working with CityLinks on local economic development, infrastructure management, and/or waste management.

Populations of Bulgaria and participating municipalities: for Bulgaria overall, 7,640,000 (2008 estimate); the Bulgarian CityLinks municipalities range in population from 10,000 to 350,000.

U.S. partners: village of Johnstown, Ohio; San Bernardino County (California) Economic Development Agency; and seven U.S. cities: Charlottesville, Virginia; Auburn, Alabama; Winchester, Virginia; Kettering, Ohio; West Carrollton, Ohio; Golden, Colorado; and West Bend, Wisconsin.

Bulgarian local partner organization: Foundation for Local Government Reform (FLGR).

Program dates: August 2004 to February 2008.

Key program issues in Bulgaria: As Bulgaria made the transition to democracy and decentralization, local economic development became a high priority for cities; infrastructure management and waste management soon emerged as additional areas where U.S. partners could share best practices.



Bulgarian local economic development training participants with their counterparts from Auburn, Alabama.

Replication of best practices was an important component during Phase V, in which an increasing number of practices developed in the United States and piloted in Bulgarian municipalities were introduced throughout the country with the assistance of Bulgarian professionals. As the CityLinks program developed from phase to phase, it also evolved, with the traditional city-to-city partnerships giving way in Phase V to new partnership models based on networking. The exchange of experience and best practices continued with the assistance of experts from Auburn, Alabama; Charlottesville, Virginia; Golden, Colorado; West Bend, Wisconsin; Kettering, West Carrollton, and Johnstown, Ohio; and San Bernardino, California.

Local Economic Development

Consortium for Local Economic Development

Local economic development (LED) was a major priority for the CityLinks program in Bulgaria during the program's 2002–2004 phase. Over that period, substantial resources were used to enhance and strengthen the LED capacities of Bulgarian municipalities by establishing a consortium with U.S. cities and by implementing a large-scale economic development and marketing program. Uniting the joint efforts of Bulgarian and U.S. cities resulted in the creation of the Bulgarian Local Economic Development Partnership (BLEDP), a broad network of leading Bulgarian municipalities and economic development specialists. BLEDP provided its Bulgarian participants with strengthened capacities to offer professional services to businesses and to lead proactive economic development programs.

To build on the success of the previous phase, the fifth and final program phase involved the expansion and further development of the consortium through the institutionalization of LED technical assistance, marketing, training, and the certification of Bulgarian municipalities as “ready for business.” Those activities allowed the municipalities to continue to be successful in their LED efforts following USAID “graduation,” that is, when FLGR is self-sustaining and no longer receives funds from USAID. As an example of institutionalization, FLGR assumed responsibility for the certification program.

The Bulgarian Local Economic Development Partnership exhibited at a trade fair in Poland under the sponsorship of the Foundation for Local Government Reform in 2005.



CityLinks activities in Bulgaria sought to help the BLEDP network accomplish the following:

- Become more effective in bringing economic development to its municipalities
- Increase awareness of the importance of local economic development among municipalities
- Implement certification “with excellence”—an advanced level of the certification program
- Develop the BLEDP network into a strong platform to attract private investment to Bulgarian municipalities, thus creating new job opportunities
- Institutionalize technical assistance and LED efforts to allow sustainability after USAID graduation.

Local Economic Development Conferences

In November 2006 FLGR held its first annual LED conference, “Businesses and Municipalities: Partners for Economic Development” in Sofia. More than 200 participants heard sessions on mobilizing business involvement in municipal investment and business environment improvement policies; municipalities as suppliers of needs-based administrative services to businesses; intermunicipal cooperation; European Union guidelines for successful public-private partnerships; and other topics.

In February 2008 FLGR organized a second national conference, which encouraged dialogue among stakeholders and assisted Bulgarian local,

regional, and central governments and their civic partners with building public consensus on important development issues. This conference brought together more than 180 participants, including the USAID Mission representatives from Sofia and Macedonia; Bulgarian mayors, municipal council chairs, deputy mayors, and city officials and experts from 48 Bulgarian municipalities; four Bulgarian regional governors; representatives from seven Bulgarian national ministries and two agencies; representatives from Bulgaria-based businesses, universities, and NGOs; and representatives from the Italian Chamber of Commerce, the Institute for Economic Modeling and Development Strategies in Ireland, the Association for German Technical Collaboration (GTZ), and the Bulgaria-based foreign missions of Ireland, Norway, and France.

The keynote presentation provided an analysis of Bulgaria’s competitiveness in the globalizing world. Other topics addressed by conference presenters included the importance of having a common vision and strategy at the national, regional, and municipal levels; mutual trust and cooperation among the different levels of government; and effective utilization of EU funds for regional projects.

Waste Management

In the 2002–2004 phase of the CityLinks program, the successful implementation of a pilot composting program increased the interest in waste management among other Bulgarian communities.

“We worked diligently to transfer our [local economic development] techniques and knowledge to enable our partner cities to fully understand the method of recruiting and retaining business and industry to their municipalities. This training effort gave us the opportunity to visit throughout Bulgaria and see municipalities we would not normally get the chance to visit. The effort on behalf of Auburn was tremendous. We sent 14 staff people at various times to do work or training in teams with our counterparts. The experience for them was wonderful.”

Phillip Dunlap, Economic Development Director, Auburn, Alabama

“The project began with 14 municipalities in the spring of 2003. The municipal leaders of these municipalities had the vision to realize the need for the collection of current information and its analysis, the maintenance of databases on the local business environment, and specialists trained in recruiting investments to the municipalities. The start was difficult. Following our participation in several trade shows and as a result of an aggressive marketing policy, the efforts started to produce results.”

Zlatko Zhivkov, Mayor, Montana, Bulgaria

The municipalities of Boliarovo and Tundja (both in Yambol province), two of the original participating cities during the 2002–2004 phase, increased their capacity in solid waste management. The two were also committed to improving their efforts through further expansion of the composting program and to sharing their knowledge and experience with Bulgarian municipalities interested in replicating the composting activities. In 2004–2007, 15 additional municipalities built on and utilized the expertise of Boliarovo and Tundja, with the aim of ensuring sustainability beyond the end of the CityLinks program.

Overall, 19 municipalities introduced a pilot composting program, established one or more composting sites, conducted a public education campaign to inform citizens of the benefits of composting, and

generated compost for use mostly in farming. Each site was equipped with containers for solid waste, and municipal officials and ecologists organized the regular turning of the piles with machinery. A local Bulgarian nongovernmental organization, the Bulgarian Association of Municipal Environmental Experts (BAMEE), as well as the Ministry of the Environment, worked with the municipalities through the program to expand the efforts and improve overall solid waste management practices in the country. The program was supported by U.S. training that is now delivered by Bulgarian trainers.

Infrastructure Management

Many Bulgarian municipalities have faced the challenges of both maintaining old urban infrastructure and developing new systems. In November 2000, an infrastructure management partnership that focused on developing asset and financial management plans for the public infrastructure was established between the municipality of Veliko Turnovo (Veliko Turnovo province), and the city of Golden, Colorado. The partnership was successfully replicated in the six districts of the city of Plovdiv. These projects increased the capacity of both Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv to prepare for and manage long-term infrastructure needs.

Based on the improved capacity in Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv, the replication of infrastructure management best practices was expanded to eight other Bulgarian municipalities between 2004 and 2007. The three-year effort built on and utilized the

Joe Roller (right), pro bono landscape architect from the partner city of Kettering, Ohio, provided technical assistance to several Bulgarian municipalities.



expertise of Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv to help ensure sustainability of these best practices in the future.

In addition, Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv developed a new project in the field of infrastructure management related to bridge maintenance. The new activities included a comprehensive assessment of ten bridges in the two cities and the development of a financial plan for their maintenance and replacement. These efforts built on best practices in the United States, as applied to the Bulgarian environment. In this way, there was an expansion in the exchange of infrastructure management expertise, which, in previous rounds of the program implementation, had been identified as a key area for needed cooperation.

Best Practices Symposium

In June 2007, a Best Practices Symposium, “Get Ready for Business,” was held in Varna, Bulgaria. The symposium was dedicated to 10 years of Bulgarian–American Partnership as well as the results and projects achieved under the final phase of the program.

The symposium attracted 120 people, including representatives from more than 50 municipalities (mayors, chairs of municipal councils, municipal experts), regional governments; nongovernmental organizations, and the business sector. The symposium provided an excellent opportunity for participants to share their experiences and knowledge about how to support local and foreign companies; create new jobs; market the municipality as

a business and tourist destination; prepare for and acquire certification as “ready for business”; replicate successful models for infrastructure management; and replicate programs for source separation, composting, and improvement of waste management in rural areas.

Results

Overall, the CityLinks program increased the capacity of Bulgarian municipalities to directly support local economic development, prepare for and manage long-term infrastructure needs, and manage waste services. Key achievements included the following:

- Replication of best practices in multiple jurisdictions, and the sharing of experiences through a Best Practices Symposium, increased the impact of improvements implemented in the course of the program.
- In the last three years of the program, 25 new LED projects were implemented that resulted in 2,500 new jobs; 120 million Euros were invested in new business projects; and 20 million Euros were invested in expansion of existing businesses.
- The position of a local economic development specialist was created in 39 municipalities; offices dedicated economic development were established in many of them; 17 business advisory boards were established; and more than 100 LED professionals from participating municipalities were trained.

- An economic development strategy and marketing materials were developed for all participating municipalities, and a marketing Web site was launched to handle inquiries and coordinate visits with potential investors.
- 33 municipalities were certified as “ready for business” and began applying a professional approach to economic development.
- 19 jurisdictions successfully replicated a pilot composting program, supported by training, public education, and acquisition of composting sites and equipment.
- The replication of an infrastructure management model from Golden, Colorado, was extended to 8 new Bulgarian municipalities, resulting in the development of asset and financial management plans for street maintenance and repair.
- 9 municipalities adopted an optimized street and road maintenance model.

Alaska—Russian Far East Partnership Program

Russian Far East partner

communities: Bolshoy Kamen, Dolinsk, Bikin, Ussuriysk, Nevelsk, Luchegorsk, Arsenyev, and Vyazemsky.

Populations of the Russian

communities: Bolshoy Kamen, 38,394, according to 2002 census; Dolinsk, 12,555; Bikin, 19,641; Ussuriysk, 157,759; Nevelsk, 18,639; Luchegorsk, 22,365; Arsenyev, 62,896; Vyazemsky (town), 15,760.

U.S. partners: Alaskan cities of Wasilla, Anchorage, Kenai, Skagway, and Juneau, as well as the Juneau Economic Development Council, Skagway Development Corporation, and Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District.

Program dates: September 2005 to September 2007.

Key program issues in Russia: Russia's Federal Law # 131, which was passed in October 2003, gives local governments new authorities and responsibilities, but local governments are struggling to implement it, due to the communities' lack of revenue and know-how.

► **Local Economic Development**

In the Russian Far East (RFE), the easternmost federal district of the Russian Federation, the standard of living lags behind the rest of the country despite (and in part because of) the area's natural resources. Natural resource development has overshadowed the development of a more diversified economy, distances are vast, and the climate harsh; thus the RFE's infrastructure is poor, and energy and transportation costs are extraordinarily high.

Many small, isolated communities in the RFE struggle to maintain basic services such as health care, heat, and electricity. Outdated or underdeveloped infrastructure paralyzes communities as they pursue sustainable economic opportunities, but businesses are not willing to locate in a community or region that lacks adequate public services. Operating under new laws that are rarely fully understood or enforced, local governments in the RFE are ready to embrace economic growth, but implementation remains a problem.

Cities in the RFE, unsure of their role in local economic development, have been stifled by years of centralized planning and regulation, an inability to promote competition, and isolation from the rest of the world. Despite such challenges, cities have begun to open their doors to tourism, encourage homegrown entrepreneurship, and carry out vigorous marketing campaigns to attract and expand investment to bring needed revenues and improve citizens' lives.

The CityLinks partnerships in the two-year Alaska-Russian Far East (RFE) Partnership Program involved the Alaskan cities of Anchorage, Kenai, Juneau, Skagway, and Wasilla and eight Russian communities in Primorsky Krai (territory), Khabarovsk Krai, and on the island of Sakhalin, which is part of Sakhalin Oblast (province): Nevelsk, Dolinsk, Bikin, Luchegorsk, Vyazemsky, Arsenyev, Ussuriysk, and Bolshoy Kamen.

Collaborating with ICMA on the program were two Russian institutions: the Counterpart Enterprise Fund (CEF) in the city of Khabarovsk, Khabarovsk Krai, and the Institute of Urban Economics (IUE) in Moscow. The local RFE partner, CEF, worked on the ground, helping ICMA implement the program, and IUE provided additional resources, especially sharing best practices from other Russian cities, which was key to the sustainability goals for the program.

Program Objectives

The objective of the CityLinks Alaska-RFE program was to provide RFE communities with the tools they needed to implement successful local economic development programs. To help achieve that objective, the program provided access to hands-on technical assistance, training, and focused exchanges with the cities' Alaskan partner cities in order to give RFE community leaders the opportunity to learn about municipal management and economic development strategies from local government colleagues who have practical, on-the-ground knowledge.

The program, which began in 2005, focused on sustainable community and economic development, with each of the partnerships undertaking a project specific to the needs of the Russian city and the expertise of the Alaskan partner city.

Program Activities

The CityLinks RFE program entailed two rounds of implementation. Throughout the program, eight partnerships participated in several exchange visits, from Russia to Alaska and from Alaska to Russia. Some of the projects were assisted by IUE, and the successful pilot municipalities from the first round of implementation were encouraged to mentor new municipalities. Mentorships and the sharing of resources played an important role in ensuring sustainability as skills were transferred from U.S. municipal officials to their Russian counterparts.

Bolshoy Kamen-Kenai

Bolshoy Kamen, Primorsky Krai, recognized the need to become self-sustaining to prepare for the day when it ceases to have the central government subsidies that come with its "closed city" status. The city identified the need for a business incubator to help achieve that goal. With the assistance of ICMA personnel and economic development staff from Kenai, Alaska, the partners from the Bolshoy Kamen city government and the Bolshoy Kamen Institute of Economics and Technology drafted a proposal to have the business incubator developed on a municipally owned site. ICMA and Kenai staff participants provided guidance and assistance throughout the development of the incubator, including training and technical advice on site selection, establishment of regulations and guidelines, and defining the role of stakeholders and the resources that they could provide. Bolshoy Kamen secured about \$15,500 in funding from the city administration to have the new facility renovated and equipped.

This incubator will leverage the already active business plan training at the Institute of Economics and Technology. The incubator will provide assistance and training to potential new businesses in the areas of marketing, accounting, permitting, and management. It will allow businesses without access to credit to establish themselves at minimal cost, as the institute and the city will provide basic services and building space as well as training and support.



Staff from Bolshoy Kamen explain their municipal budget to partners from Kenai, Alaska.

“This has been an exciting, educational, and dynamic relationship for everyone involved. As a result of this partnering experience, mutual understanding is growing both in Alaska and the Russian Far East. Such interaction is necessary to promote world peace and economic development.”

**Kevin Ritchie, former director,
Alaska Municipal League**

Staff from the city of Anchorage, Alaska, speak to visitors from Dolinsk about Anchorage’s landfill operations to provide an overview of how the city’s operations all contribute to economic development.



The incubator is slated to open in 2008, with the aim of increasing the number of self-sustaining businesses in Bolshoy Kamen. That, in turn, is expected to lead to more jobs in the community, more tax revenues for the city government, and a decreased dependence on current local factories and central government subsidies.

Bikin-Juneau

To foster economic diversification, the city administration of Bikin, Khabarovsk Krai, proposed reopening a brick manufacturing plant that had ceased operations in the early 1990s. Experts from the Juneau (Alaska) Economic Development Council (JEDC) provided training and mentoring in the preparation and use of a business plan and a marketing strategy and assisted in designing Bikin’s package of development incentives to help attract investments in a start-up company.

In 2007, with JEDC assistance, the municipal economic development department of Bikin completed the brick-factory business plan and started to design promotional materials and market their business idea to potential investors. By the end of the program, municipal officials had met with several potential investors and entrepreneurs, including owners of another privately owned brick plant. The economic development skills acquired during the process will serve the community in the future, and the economic development specialists will continue to look for new market opportunities to involve small businesses in the processing of agricultural and non-timber forest products, in construction, and in other producing/manufacturing industries.

Dolinsk-Anchorage

To increase private investment and sustain local businesses, officials in Dolinsk, Sakhalin Oblast, decided that the creation of an industrial park/economic development area would increase the demand for Dolinsk property and attract new developers and investors to the city. Alaskan partners, ICMA experts, and the IUE helped formalize a business park concept, providing support on physical site plan recommendations, identifying the business park site, and developing performance indicators to evaluate successful implementation of the project. Dolinsk began to sell municipal land, a relatively new activity for the local government. The Dolinsk-Anchorage partners obtained and studied several classic planning examples from the United States as well as successful

Russian experiences on business parks. Dolinsk officials started work on legal registration of the park, identifying tenants, and organizing a public relations campaign to promote the advantages of doing business in Dolinsk.

Ussuriysk-Wasilla

Partnered with the city of Wasilla, Alaska, the community of Ussuriysk, Primorsky Krai, was seeking to enhance the relationship between the municipality and its small and medium enterprises. The Ussuriysk and Wasilla partners also collaborated on the development of an improved tourism industry as a component of the local Ussuriysk economy.

In 2007, working with Wasilla staff and the IUE, Ussuriysk completed the creation of a business advisory council in the city and introduced a one-window approach to streamlining the issuance of land use permits and building permits for start-ups and existing businesses. Ussuriysk's local museum provided a world map for visitors to mark their home locations, allowing staff to track where the visitors were coming from. An inventory of existing tourism-related business was conducted, and the city Web site was updated with foreign language tools.

Arsenyev-Wasilla

In late 2006, the city of Arsenyev, Primorsky Krai, was paired with Wasilla, Alaska, to collaborate on an economic development project to increase employment opportunities in the RFE city and capitalize on its

assets. Staff from Arsenyev expressed an interest in developing tourism opportunities within their community and creating a "one-stop permitting office" for all tourism-related permits. Wasilla staff shared the experiences of the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Valley Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB) with their Arsenyev counterparts. The Alaska partners also helped Arsenyev develop a scheme for a fund to help market the city's tourist attractions and establish a pilot program for a one-stop permitting office for tourism enterprises, which would enable entrepreneurs to more easily and efficiently open new businesses.

An active tourism advisory board had been working with the Arsenyev municipal administration to support the tourism industry, but the board was looking for ways to fund additional programs. If the tourism board could implement a "bed tax" that would be paid by visitors and collected by all the hotels in the area, that would generate revenue for general tourism projects such as the production of publicity materials.

The administration of Arsenyev changed while the program was underway, and the new administration decided to eliminate the department that oversees tourism activity. However, the new officials did pass a resolution allowing proposals from organizations to form a tourism bureau like the Mat-Su CVB, which was a significant step toward tourism development in Arsenyev.



Officials from Wasilla and Arsenyev review Arsenyev's tourism promotion materials.

“Success can be measured in many different ways, and I feel strongly that Vyazemsky and Skagway succeeded in all aspects of our partnership. The dedicated staff in Vyazemsky expanded the boundaries of their knowledge, which gave them the skills to improve the quality of life for their citizens.”

**Michael Catsi, executive director,
Skagway Development Corporation**

Vyazemsky-Skagway

Officials in Vyazemsky District, Khabarovsk Krai, asked for assistance in developing a business plan that could be presented to regional officials and then tendered publicly to locate and select a developer and other interested investors to restart and operate a vegetable processing plant. There appeared to be a broad-based stakeholder desire to resurrect earlier processing capabilities as a means of increasing agricultural production in the district’s underutilized fields. In 2007, officials from Skagway, Alaska, helped develop a questionnaire that would allow Vyazemsky to conduct a business survey and analyze available market niches to attract new companies. A potential site for a new processing plant was identified, and the new business idea was presented to citizens and the business community through the mass media and roundtable sessions.

Due to its natural and cultural amenities, Vyazemsky District also has the potential to develop a tourism and leisure audience. Because the district does not have a tourism marketing function, it sought assistance through the CityLinks program to develop a professional brand marketing campaign. In 2007, Skagway participants introduced brand marketing and marketing plan concepts to Vyazemsky to give their RFE counterparts a direction in which to move with tourism, agricultural production, and enhancing the existing amenities in the district.

Nevelsk-Anchorage

The city of Nevelsk, Sakhalin Oblast, and its surrounding area possess plentiful natural, material, and recreational resources, but it lacks a developed tourism sector. That was identified as a main challenge for the community, and the city of Anchorage, Alaska, was paired with Nevelsk to work on tourism enhancement. Anchorage helped Nevelsk create a tourism-based business plan to guide the municipality and its entrepreneur community in a common direction. In order to identify and implement project goals and provide administrative and technical support, the Nevelsk municipality established the Nevelsk Tourism Working Group to bring together government, tourism-concerned businesses, and active citizens’ groups. IUE experts conducted a survey to assess public opinion and the territory’s attractiveness and potential for tourism development. The study results indicated general support in the community for the tourism development strategy as a means of facilitating business and infrastructure development, increasing budget revenues, creating new jobs, and attracting the attention of investors. The survey was complemented by a seminar organized by IUE in Nevelsk to identify pilot projects to serve as basis for the city’s future marketing program.

During the course of the program in Nevelsk, several private tourist lodging options were established. The city government also leased out its first section of beach for a private tourism venture and started constructing

a beach promenade. A local business reached agreement with a travel agency in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk—which is the largest city on the island of Sakhalin, and about 204 kilometers (127 miles) from Nevelsk—to sell air tickets in Nevelsk, a first for the city. The city started an ambitious program to remove dilapidated buildings and to paint other buildings in bright colors. A Nevelsk tourism brochure was produced and printed for distribution. The city sponsored a contest for Nevelsk’s children to design a prototype for souvenirs to be sold in local businesses, and flowers were planted all over town—an idea borrowed from Anchorage.

Luchegorsk-Juneau

Luchegorsk, Primorsky Krai, has a viable business community but has been challenged by the lack of a structure for the municipality to support local businesses. The city of Juneau assisted Luchegorsk in setting up an operational economic development structure to facilitate good relations with the business community, with an overall goal of making the city more attractive for investment and job creation. Partners from Juneau provided Luchegorsk with templates of the bylaws and the organization chart of the Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC) and gave Luchegorsk staff an opportunity to study examples of successful infrastructure project implementation. As a result, the newly formed Business Development League in Luchegorsk and the municipal economic development department decided to combine efforts in order to sustain a support center for small

and medium enterprises (SMEs), and they will continue looking for corporate funding to set up a loan fund for entrepreneurs and small businesses to access.

In addition, the city decided to hire a specialist to facilitate communications between the municipality and the local business sector. By the end of the program the structure and functions of the SME support center had been established. Based on the model provided by Juneau, Luchegorsk planned to continue to deliver business training for entrepreneurs, working in cooperation with a local technical college and with the American-Russian Center in Vladivostok.

On the tourism side, Luchegorsk boasts a number of potential tourism activities and facilities but has lacked an implementation plan to market the city. Juneau helped Luchegorsk assess its tourism potential and plan for sustainable tourism by developing brochures and a “model tour” to help raise the city’s visibility and promote already available resources and products. Juneau and Luchegorsk agreed to continue informational exchanges involving schools in the two cities, possible formalization of a sister cities relationship, and foundation of a Rotary Club branch in Luchegorsk.

Program Culmination

The culmination of the CityLinks Alaska-Russian Far East Partnership Program was a best practices symposium in August 2007 in the city of Vladivostok, Russia, where each partnership project showcased its

“People in Luchegorsk are well educated and highly motivated. Their efforts to expand their local economy will be successful if they continue to work together openly to identify and overcome barriers, take advantage of opportunities, and support each other’s efforts.”

**Kevin Ritchie, former director,
Alaska Municipal League**

methods, tools, and results. The symposium included presentations of case studies by the partners as well as work sessions to further the transfer of knowledge and practices to interested communities. Several organizations that are based in the RFE and that provide technical assistance with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) also gave presentations, which could lead to continued support and involvement for the RFE cities. In addition, the IUE led in-depth training on strategic planning at the municipal level.

By the end of the program, eight core partnerships had been established. The RFE cities had made significant progress on their projects and had identified the next steps needed to sustain partnerships results. These future activities are expected to include forming strategic public-private partnerships, disseminating best practices to new municipalities, and creating intermunicipal and regional clusters of local government professionals who will collaborate on promoting economic development.

Each partnership identified replicable models for specific issues and potential challenges for RFE communities. This information was showcased at the best practices symposium, and know-how was also transferred to other cities through mentorships, roundtable discussions, and other information dissemination activities. The program helped increase inter-regional cooperation and knowledge transfer at the municipal level and helped local governments develop

transparent mechanisms to foster broad community involvement and to mobilize private-sector resources, which will further their development and partnership goals and support new initiatives.

Results

- Over 150 municipal officials in the RFE were trained in basic principles of effective municipal economic development, community action planning, business development, and creative city marketing.
- A virtual reference library of more than 100 project documents was created to be shared with any community that might be interested in replicating the successful models.
- A business incubator was established in Bolshoy Kamen to support entrepreneurs.
- In Bikin, a business plan for a brick factory was developed and the city started to design promotional materials and market their idea to potential investors.
- A business park concept was formalized in Dolinsk, including physical site plan recommendations, site identification, and performance indicators to evaluate successful implementation of the project.
- The city of Ussuriysk created a business advisory council, streamlined the issuance of land use permits, and took steps to increase tourism.

- The city of Arsenyev passed a resolution allowing proposals from organizations to form a tourism bureau like the Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) in Alaska, which was a significant step toward tourism development in Arsenyev.
- Vyazemsky took steps to restart an existing plant by conducting a business survey, identifying a site, publicizing the idea to citizens and businesses, and adopting brand marketing concepts.
- The city of Nevelsk created a tourism-based business plan, established a tourism working group, and supported specific tourism-related initiatives, including the identification of several private tourist lodging options and steps toward beachfront development.
- Luchegorsk established an operational economic development structure to facilitate good relations with the business community, with an overall goal of making the city more attractive for investment and job creation.

In early 2008, USAID approved funding under the U.S.-RFE Municipal Partnership Program for further work on the Ussuriysk-Wasilla, Bolshoy Kamen-Kenai, and Nevelsk-Anchorage partnerships, based on the recommendation of the Foundation for Russian American Economic Cooperation.

ICMA: Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

ICMA (the International City/County Management Association) is the premier local government leadership and management organization. Its mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advancing the professional management of local government. ICMA has been doing this since 1914 by providing technical and management assistance, training, and information resources to its members and the local government community. In 1989, with its first USAID grant, ICMA began working worldwide. Since then it has successfully designed, implemented, and evaluated hundreds of international projects, establishing a solid reputation for its practical, hands-on approach to meeting global challenges.

To learn more about ICMA International, please visit <http://icma.org/international> or send an e-mail to international@icma.org.



CityLinks

Global challenges, local solutions

2003-2008

The mission of ICMA is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide.

ICMA
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20002-4201
Telephone: 202-289-4262
Fax: 202-962-3500
icma.org



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