Strengthening Capacity of Eyl District in Puntland to Deliver Services to Citizens

Eyl District is situated on the Puntland coast with an estimated population of 130,000, over 220 kilometers from the Puntland state capital, Garowe. In 2012, Eyl District Council was not functioning and was not able to deliver services, leaving residents feeling hopeless about the future. There was no common vision for the delivery of development in the district; residents felt excluded and unable to contribute or influence decisions that affected their lives. The residents of Eyl were known for their involvement in sea-piracy, largely due to their impoverished circumstances.

In 2013, JPLG/UNDP collaborated with the Eyl community to mobilize and revive the Eyl District Council. This was achieved through JPLG/UNDP support to the local government to draw up a District Development Framework, providing a five year development vision for the district. This is a component of the Public Planning & Expenditure Management Training, which strengthens the capacity of Eyl District Council and local government staff, to produce an Annual Work Plan and Budget, providing a framework for the delivery of services in the district.

Eyl District Planning Officer, Abdinasir Yasin Ali: “The District Development Framework enabled organizations and line ministries in Garowe to work with the Eyl District Council to deliver prioritized services, which has led to the rehabilitation of vital community infrastructure. It has increased the confidence of local government staff to carry out their work and helped boost morale in the community.”

Representatives from the District Council and District Administration staff worked to produce the District Development Framework, over four months, supported by JPLG/UNDP. The basis of the document was a social and economic situation analysis (which previously did not exist) combined with input from community consultations in twenty (out of twenty seven) Eyl villages. This
produced consolidated, accurate and balanced information from stakeholders on important challenges, needs and long term priorities in each village for social and economic development and infrastructure. Through this process, priority interventions were determined by the District Council in health, education, water and sanitation and roads.

Health service provision in Eyl District is extremely poor with a very limited number of qualified doctors, nurses and midwives. The main diseases include malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea, with significant impact on child mortality. In the past, a sick (or pregnant) person had to travel to Garowe Hospital but this was difficult because of the lengthy journey and the bumpy roads.

Since 2013, the District Development Framework has prioritized 39 projects including the rehabilitation of the Eyl Hospital by the Italian Government. The construction of Dhagnale Health Post was another priority. JPLG collaborated with the Ministry of Health, who provided medicines, and the District Administration, who painted the facility, to build three medical rooms, two toilets and the fence (to keep animals out) to serve a population of 9,700 people (both settled and nomadic).

Momo Rahmo visited the Dhagnale Health Post with her young son who had a high fever in early 2015. She said: 
*The new Health Post is encouraging women and children to get medical treatment which is saving lives. Staff at the Dhagnale Health Post are being paid and are skilled. I have peace of mind. I am grateful to the District Administration for supporting the construction of a new Health Post.*

Mayor of Eyl, Muse Osman Yusuf: *“We will share the District Development Framework with partners (other organizations and NGOs) so they know the priorities and so there is no overlap and to ensure coordination.”*

This improved planning and organization in the district is encouraging other organizations to work in the rural area. Before 2013, the road that connects Eyl District to the state capital (Garowe) and Puntland’s largest sea port (Bosasso), was in a very poor state which affected the economy because of poor access to the district which affected business and trade. Public transport was limited and it took a long time over rough roads to travel a short distance which often caused vehicle damage. The rehabilitation of the Road was prioritized. Eyl Planning Officer, Abdinasir Yasin Ali:

*The Road is 37km long. Before the rehabilitation of this road it was rough and was difficult to travel. 29km have been rehabilitated by an International organization (DAI/TIS) in 2013/2014 and the remaining 8km by the JPLG program. Prior to rehabilitation, the road from Eyl town to Bosasso took over forty hours - it now takes eighteen. The rehabilitated road serves all residents in the district and has improved connections between different groups living in the area.”*
Nurta Ahmed Musse has lived in Eyl town for fifteen years, she has a small business and trained as a tailor making clothes. She has seven children. She said: “I use to travel to Bosasso to sell my clothes but the road was so bad – I stopped this business. The road was too unpleasant. Now the road has been rehabilitated, I have resumed my business and I travel to Bosasso twice a month. I appreciate that the local government facilitated the rehabilitation of the road and the international organizations who have improved the road. The community is also making a contribution to the upkeep of the road. It feels good to participate in making our district a better place to live.”

The production of the District Development Framework has enabled the Eyl District Administration to become a stronger actor in the community’s development process and has improved confidence in the district administration.

By the end of 2018, the District Development Framework seeks to facilitate an increase (from 40 to 65 per cent) of the district population who have adequate health care facilities with basic qualified staff and enough medical supplies - and reduce the number of hours to reach a clinic from six hours to five. By 2018, it seeks to rehabilitate road infrastructure so that 40 per cent of Eyl residents have access to improved roads through the rehabilitation of 80 kilometres of road (16 kilometres a year).

With the generous support of the European Commission, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and UK Aid, JPLG works closely with local counterparts in promoting improvements in the ability of local governments to provide equitable services to communities. In 2015, JPLG/UNDP continues to strengthen district capacity, including the provision of Public Planning and Expenditure Training and technical support, in support of improved public service delivery to citizens in seven districts in Puntland - Gardo, Bosaso, Eyl, Jariiban, Banderbeyla, Garowe, Galkayo. JPLG/UNDP support to the Puntland government helps them create policies, regulations, manuals and guidelines. The momentum towards improved systems and processes is encouraging the rehabilitation of vital community infrastructure, creating economic opportunity and strengthening livelihoods.