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USAID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT SUCCESS STORY

"As they say in the south: 'USAID has got our backs!'"

In October 2015, approximately 300 households were damaged by unprecedented amounts of rainfall and flooding in the Al Hai Al Gharbi neighborhood in Al Hassa, Tafileh. Community members faced a potential disaster. As the Al Hassa Mayor, Ibraheem Abu-Jfain, said: "Despite our regular checks of the weather forecast and emergency preparations, the floods were beyond our expectations. We haven't had such floods since the 1960s, and perhaps never witnessed such floods in this area's history. Al-Hay Al-Gharbi – with about 300 houses -- was the most devastated by the rainfall. All of the houses were damaged. The infrastructure in the Al Hassa and Jurf Al Daraweesh districts was also damaged." However, due to a recent in-kind grant from the USAID Community Engagement Program (CEP) to the community,

the Al Hassa municipality was able to mitigate the damage done by the flooding.

The in-kind grant was designed in coordination with the community, the municipality and the USAID CEP-formed volunteer Community Enhancement Team (CET). Entitled the "Al Hassa Enhancing Infrastructure Services Project", its main goals were to strengthen cohesion in the local community by improving access to municipal services and creating public spaces for positive youth engagement. Planned interventions included provision of new equipment and training to municipality staff on use and daily maintenance of equipment, paving of new streets and connecting houses with the roads network, as well as establishing two soccer fields and expanding sewage maintenance services.



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Over the course of the summer, USAID CEP delivered the requested equipment which included a sewage tanker truck, road grader, water tanker truck, dump truck, and backhoe loader. Unbeknownst to all, a few months later this equipment would play a vital role in the municipality's ability to respond quickly and effectively to the October flooding!

“We received the equipment at the right time and we used all of it to help our citizens,” said Abu-Jfain. “We used the sewage tanker to manage the cesspools flooded by rainfall and to pump the water out of houses and places flooded by water. Then, we paved the ground using the grader, and provided all houses in Al Hai Al Gharbi with water for four straight days using the water tanker, because the fresh water pipe feeding the area was cut due to the floods. As for the dump truck and the backhoe loader, the municipality used them to move the rubble and stones to pave the streets damaged by the floods. We also used them to clear swamps formed around residences. After pumping the water out of the houses, the municipality provided clean water to the households to clean their houses and their possessions.”

Abu Jfain stressed that if this flood had happened prior to the delivery of the equipment, the municipality's inability to respond would have caused an uproar among the citizens against the municipality and the government. “We worked five days straight – day and night -- to return the situation back to normal. On behalf of the Al Hassa municipality, allow me to extend our deepest gratitude to the USAID Community Engagement Project for all the support it offered.”

Abu Jfain pauses for a bit. “As we say in the south: USAID has our backs,” he says with a smile.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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