



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM IN ALBANIA

# SUCCESS STORY

## Public-Private Partnership is the Key to Improved City Cleanliness in Gramsh

Citizens and business partners work with the Gramsh Municipality to keep their community safe, clean, and beautiful.



*Community volunteers installing new benches during Gramsh Clean-Up Day.*

A key aim of LGPA's work is to help municipalities improve public services and engage local citizens and community stakeholders to work with the Municipality in this effort. In Gramsh, LGPA has targeted improvements to the cleaning service (waste collection/disposal).

For years, the City of Gramsh has struggled to keep the city clean, but a combination of problems has impeded the City's efforts – until now. The Municipality decided that the myriad problems, including a lack of solid waste dumpsters and trash cans, poor quality of cleaning service due to lack of funds, and poor discipline on the part of citizens in disposing of their waste demanded a creative and comprehensive overhaul of the City's approach to keeping the City clean.

In order to make the reforms in service provision sustainable, the City decided to engage citizens and private businesses more closely in developing the improvement plan. With the support of USAID's Local Governance Program in Albania (LGPA), the City conducted a thorough financial and operational review of the Municipal Cleaning Organization. Based on the assessment, a full-cost recovery tariff was calculated, including the needed capital investment to keep the City clean.

To ensure buy-in from the Community on the proposed increase in tariff, a Community Committee was convened to review the assessments and to vote on various options which balanced tariff increases with an improvements in service. The Community Committee voted to increase the tariff by as much as 50%, and a municipal council decision ultimately led to an increase of 25%.

This was not the only step the municipality took to ensure community involvement. With the slogan "*We, the Citizens of Gramsh, Engage Ourselves Today for a Cleaner City Tomorrow*", dozens of citizens, civil society organizations, businesses, and students volunteered to join the Municipality in a city-wide cleanup effort on March 5th, 2010 to jump-start the city's new service improvement action plan.

Partnerships were formed with private businesses, community groups, and schools. High school students cleaned the main roads, school grounds and parks. Peace Corps and community volunteers installed new benches and built over 100 meters of walking paths in three public parks. Forty large waste containers, 120 park benches, 100 smaller bins, and bushes were installed, contributions from the business community, neighborhood groups, and USAID. In addition, the U.S. Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation is contributing \$120,000 to repair outdoor recreational facilities at the city high school.

"It was the first time I've seen so many actors in my city involved in a large event," said Mr. Ymer Kumria, Inspection Supervisor at the Municipal Directorate of Services. "This gave me a sense of hope. At that moment, I understood that with a little effort and the good will of the municipality, businesses and civil society, we can have a clean city. During my inspections, I notice the streets are consistently cleaner and people make an effort now to throw trash in the appropriate place and I feel proud of my city."