

MIFAM

Local Government Support System

ISRAEL

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MIFAM (= tempo, heartbeat)

quick overview

- *This is an institutional set up with 8 regional centers, established to organize capacity building services for municipalities.*
- *It falls under the umbrella of the Ministry of Interior / Local Government*
- *It helps municipalities articulate their needs, involve consultants, and ensure the interventions achieve the intended results and organizational development outcomes with the municipality's strategic framework*
- *MIFAM strives to empower the municipalities while playing its role as broker, facilitator and enabler, and in the process serves as "a warehouse" of knowledge and experience*

A brief history

- *Established (1970s???) by the ministry of interior with the aim to promote professionalism and human capital in LAs, as a fundamental component for **modernizing** municipal systems*
 - *Focus on providing **technical** training*
 - *Target population – **technical staff** (assistant teachers, maintenance staff, secretaries/administrative staff....)*
 - *~20 MIFAMs, each serving ~5-10 mainly **urban** municipalities*
 - *Each MIFAM was financed by the Ministry of Interior through a host municipality (like a “department” within the municipality, therefore the host municipality was the main beneficiary...)*

A brief history

(some of the) changes in local arena	Implications	MIFAMs' response
Mayors directly elected	Accountability, need to "deliver"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OD services (organizational structure + working patterns + personal support//coaching) • Quality management tools • Services to rural LAs • Training and capacity building for policy makers and executives • Developing strategic capacities • New techniques for participation • Partnerships
Privatization and decentralization	New responsibilities, need to increase local tax base and available local resources Multi-actors' arena	
Residents' expectations	Participation Residents as clients	
Changes in rural sector (collapse of cooperatives, non agric activities and residents, "suburbanization", protect open spaces...)	Increased importance of rural municipalities and new roles and responsibilities	
Introduction of MSPUs	Strategic planning and management	

Main shifts in MIFAM system

- *Number of MIFAMs reduced to 8*
- *Most MIFAMs directors were replaced (young and “strategic oriented” instead of old and “training oriented”)*
- *Rural municipalities included*
- *Comprehensive approach (interventions within a strategic framework) instead of “technical”*
- *Bring knowledge instead of money*
- *Target policy makers and executives instead of technical staff*
- *Advocate for LAs and not just implement ministry’s policies*

Current organizational Set-Up

- *A partnership between Ministry of Interior and local authorities*
- *A network of 8 regional centers. Each MIFAM*
 - *Provides training and capacity building in its region*
 - *Expertise in specific key areas and responsible to coordinate and promote it for the benefit of the entire municipal network (such as strategic planning, education, coaching, municipal financing....)*
- *Each MIFAM – 1-2 professionals + 1-2 administrative staff*
 - *Outsourcing professionals//consultants for each specific task*
- *Financed by the Ministry of Interior through a host municipality but provides services to other municipalities in the region*
- *Acts more as an advocate for local government than as an arm of the ministry*

Fields of activity

- *Within an integrated framework:*
 - *Training and coaching (mayors//HoDs)*
 - *OD - Organizational Development*
 - *Strategic planning and strategic management capacities*
 - *Partnerships and knowledge management*
 - *Manuals for LAs*

Key principles

- *Each MIFAM highlights different aspects and working patterns – according to regional characteristics and the director’s concept and background; but all share the following key principles:*
 - *Intimate knowledge of the specific LA*
 - *Comprehensive approach and LA’s ownership*
 - *Pooling of knowledge and resources*
 - *Financial contribution of MIFAM is very low*

Intimate relations with LA and very good knowledge of the arena

- *Formal and informal meetings with LAs – mayor, councilors, HoDs, residents, partners' consultants... - on an on going basis*
 - *Good knowledge of agenda (formal and hidden), balance of power, strengths and weaknesses....*
 - *Building credibility*
- *Close relations with the ministry of interior and other relevant ministries, institutions and organizations*
 - *Understanding policies, identifying future trends, new agendas....*
 - *Basis for building partnerships*
- *Networking with other MIFAMs*
 - *Sharing experience, learning from good practice as well as from mistakes....*
- *National and international professional trainings/conferences*
 - *Acquiring new tools, learning from experience*

The MIFAM as a Broker, facilitator and enabler

– As a broker

- Helping LA to articulate its needs – “what they really want//need”*
- Linking LA to consultants and partners*

– As a facilitator

- Guiding (also “behind the screen”) all actors while ensuring the process achieves its objectives within the comprehensive framework*

– As an enabler

- Helping mayor and others understand risks and benefits of the process to get political support and leadership*
- Creating “supportive environment” to make the “right” decision// select the “right” process*
- Creating platforms for partnerships (internal//external) and for resources mobilization*
- Advocate for required changes in legal and administrative frameworks*

A case: Introducing and structuring MSPU into a rural municipality

- *HoD approach MIFAM frustrated from municipality's unwillingness to address identified challenges, asking for financial support to contract a consultant for a strategic planning process*
- *Through discussions with internal and external stakeholders, and based on experience from other rural municipalities, MIFAM realizes that a strategic planning process would not provide the desired results (lack of cooperation among departments and other stakeholders, poor capacities in some departments, departments overloaded and dealing with “urgent” while neglecting the “important”, local assets are not utilized...) and a structural change is required for the municipality to address the challenges*

Introducing and structuring MSPU into a rural municipality

- *Through personal meetings, emphasizing strategic and political negative impact of **not** addressing the challenges, visit to another rural municipality, and organizing a meeting between the mayor and another experienced mayor, the MIFAM helps the mayor and HoDs to realize this as well*
- *Main options identified:*
 - *Establishment of MSPU to help municipality address strategic challenges through “learning by doing” and develop capacities from within*
 - *Extensive training and capacity building program*
 - *Consultancy and coaching to HoDs*

Introducing and structuring MSPU into a rural municipality

- *Establishment of MSPU*
- *HoD originally approached MIFAM to process champion and future MSPU director*
- *MIFAM helps municipality develop ToR for consultants, selection criteria and steering committee*
- *MIFAM select consultants with good track record, each with different personal strengths and professional background. Consultants meet with mayor and champion, selected consultant approved by steering committee*
- *Consultant develops a detailed planning process after meetings with different stakeholders and discussions with MIFAM and champion*
- *Implementation – establishment of MSPU (mission, focus areas tools, preliminary work program, “capacity demonstration projects”, location within the organization, working patterns with stakeholders, logistics, budget etc.) through consultations and discussions with stakeholders*

Introducing and structuring MSPU into a rural municipality

- *During the intervention (establishment process) MIFAM constantly with hands on to ensure that*
 - *Various options examined, (organizational location – under mayor or general director, capacity demonstration project – economic development or community development)*
 - *Different implications considered (community development is high priority but will threaten HoD, no champion for economic development but will generate political and community support and relatively easy to mobilize funds from ministries and NGOs ...)*
- *In the process – MIFAM’s professional reputation enables financial support from ministries of agriculture and of social services (community development department)*
- *Consultant + MIFAM + MSPU director – decision not to promote a strategic plan but focus on 3 strategic projects to enable departments to be involved and directly benefit from MSPU*

Introducing and structuring MSPU into a rural municipality

- *After implementation MIFAM discuss process with consultants and municipality*
- *MIFAM positively respond to municipality's request for the consultant to support first phases of MSPU's work*
- *MIFAM professionally involved (but not financially) in "demonstrative projects", link municipality with NGOs with relevant knowledge and experience and with ministries for funding*

Lessons

- [-] Good knowledge of the client//partner, on-going dialogue, comprehensive approach, flexibility, partnerships and sharing knowledge and experience contribute to good results*
- [-] The requirement for the LA to initiate and own the process contribute to good results but leaves some LAs out. Also with only 1-2 professionals in the MIFAM, not all municipalities are benefitted*
- [-] Process is highly influenced by MIFAM director's background and personality*
- [-] Works well in the Israeli arena that is very informal, flexible and innovation oriented. Adaptations to other arenas are probably required*

Dilemmas//questions

- *MIFAM works with municipalities that takes responsibility and are professionally oriented. Others that are more politically oriented take other channels. Through these channels they can mobilize funding but the projects are not sustainable and from our experience they lag behind.*
 - *what strategies are effective in harnessing municipalities to a “professional” and sustainable process? From our experience:*
 - *Horizontal cooperation, specifically between mayors is very effective*
 - *Competitive calls for proposals by ministries conditioning funding in quality processes and sustainability of action // project is also effective*
- *Is it possible to create that level of intimacy characterizes the MIFAM and LAs in its region, between international training organizations and their clients//partners ?*

Thank you

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