



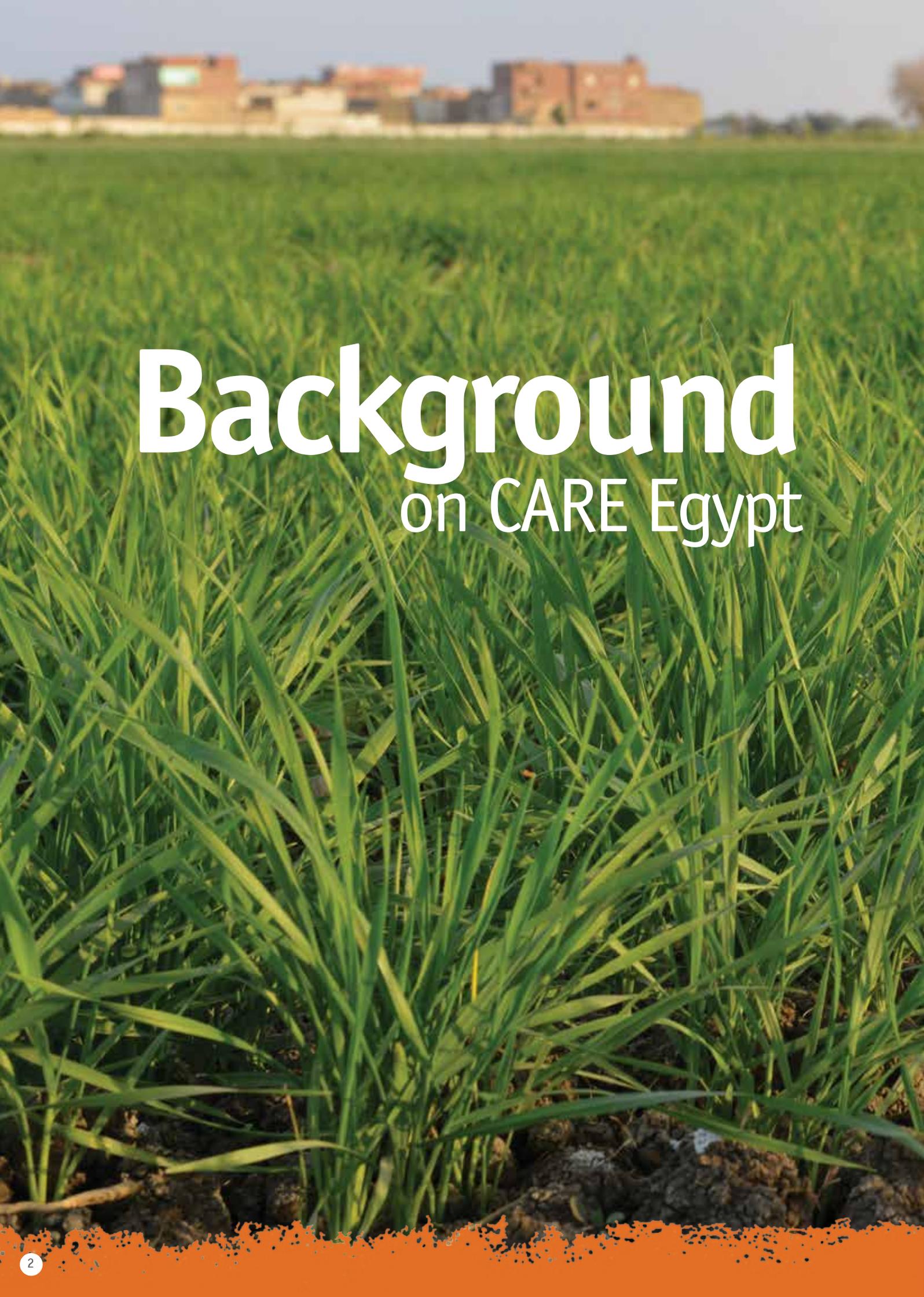
CARE EGYPT'S
Legacy 2005-2015



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Background

on CARE Egypt

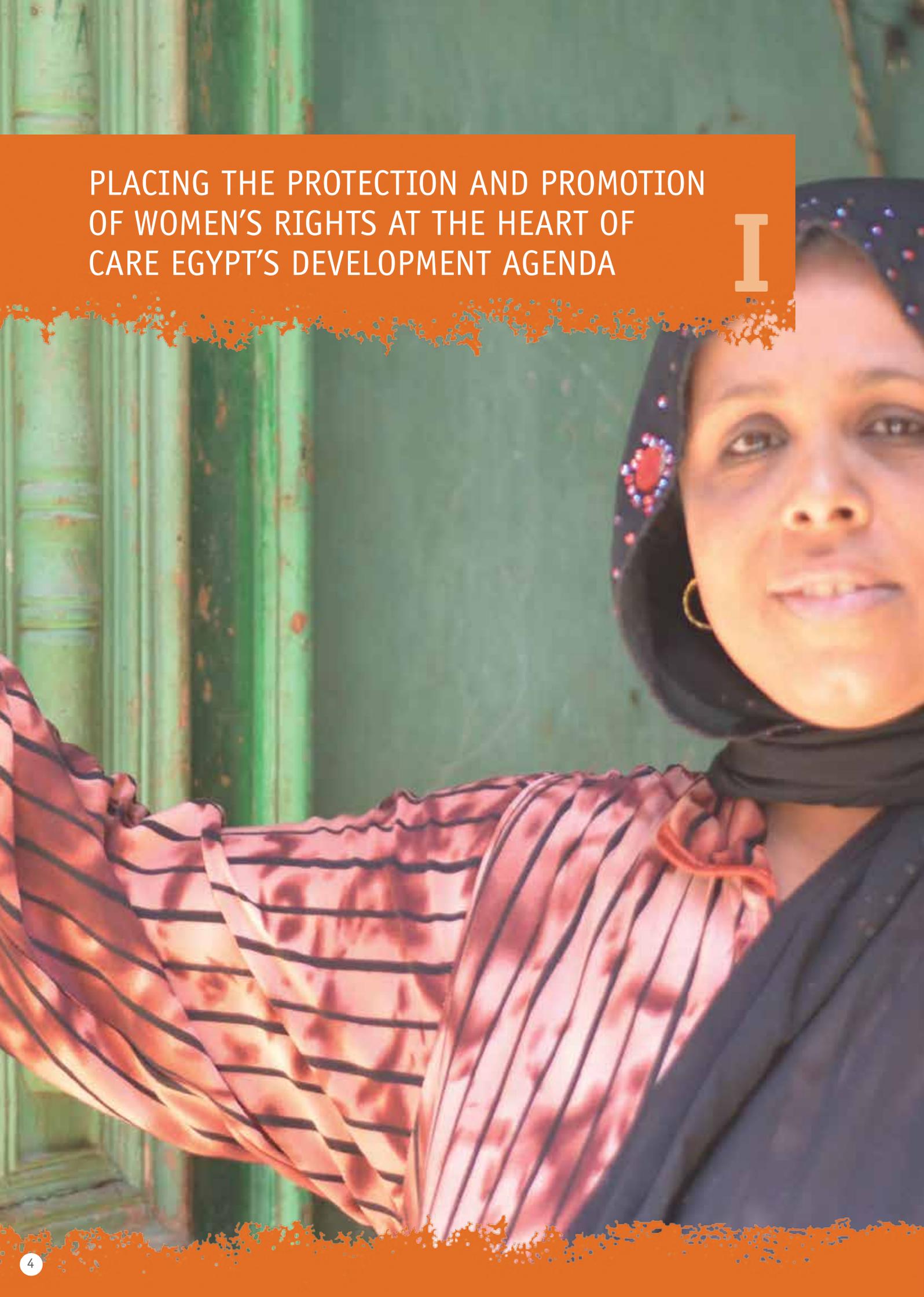


CARE has had a longstanding presence in Egypt, starting in 1954 with a nationwide school-feeding program. Following a hiatus in operations due to the 1967 war, CARE returned to Egypt in 1974, and has since managed a diverse set of development projects. Since 1986, CARE Egypt has expanded its activities to comprise a wide range of projects in more diversified areas, and has shifted away from direct service delivery towards more sustainable methods aimed at building the capacities of people and local institutions to solve their own problems.

Today CARE Egypt works to promote more effective and equitable natural resources management, to enhance rural livelihoods, quality education and girls leadership, effective governance and civic engagement and equitable social protection for vulnerable groups. CARE Egypt works with beneficiaries, civil society organizations and government, and the increasingly socially aware private sector.

As such, CARE's programming in Egypt focuses on three predominant impact groups, namely—girls, women, youth, small holder farmers and displaced populations. The vulnerability, marginalization and poverty these three groups experience are substantial. CARE recognizes that if their rights are enhanced and protected, Egypt and the entire Middle East region will become more tolerant, democratic and secure.

CARE Egypt's work has traditionally focused primarily on Upper Egypt, where it works closely through a rights-based approach with the poor and marginalized, civil society, and government institutions to improve livelihoods on a sustainable basis. However, with greater recognition of the peri-urban and urban nature of poverty in Egypt, as well as the potential to engage at national and regional levels, CARE Egypt is today recognized as a regional player with robust regional programming reach that extends throughout the Middle East and North Africa.



PLACING THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION
OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT THE HEART OF
CARE EGYPT'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

I

Today, Egypt ranks globally amongst the least developed countries in terms of women's participation in economic and political spheres. According to the 2014 World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report¹, Egypt ranks 131 out of 142 countries in terms of economic participation and opportunity for women and ranked 134th in terms of political participation, making it one of the ten least performing countries globally in this regard. The 2013 Human Development Report reveals a 23.7% labor force participation amongst females whereas it reaches 74.3% amongst males in Egypt.

CARE's long-standing experience in working with women in rural Upper Egypt, in governorates such as Beni Suef, Minya, Assiut and Sohag, also reveals that opportunities for women to be economically independent remain restricted. Women continue to engage in lower paying jobs than men. They are often sidelined from decision making on financial matters. Social customs, traditions, and historically poor policies towards women's education and market engagement skills, have not allowed women to realize their full economic potential. CARE Egypt's programming initiatives help women to change their life conditions through earning of income, help women to enjoy a more positive social standing, through engagement in savings and solidarity groups, as well as allows for a favorable economic environment for women, through linking women with major market actors.

Women and Political Participation in Egypt and Tunisia

Average representation of women in Arab parliaments is about 13%;

Tunisia is the first country in the MENA region to stipulate equal representation for women on electoral lists, with 27% female representation in parliament, and ranking in top 25% in world, but with only 2 women among its 22 ministers

In Egypt post 2011, the Electoral law abolished the quota system for women. The percentage of women in the last parliament was one of lowest globally at just 2%. Egypt has only 3 women among 34 ministers.

Source: Arab Spring or Arab Autumn, Women and Political Participation in the Uprisings and beyond: Implications for Donor Policy, CARE 2014

¹ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR14/GGGR_CompleteReport_2014.pdf



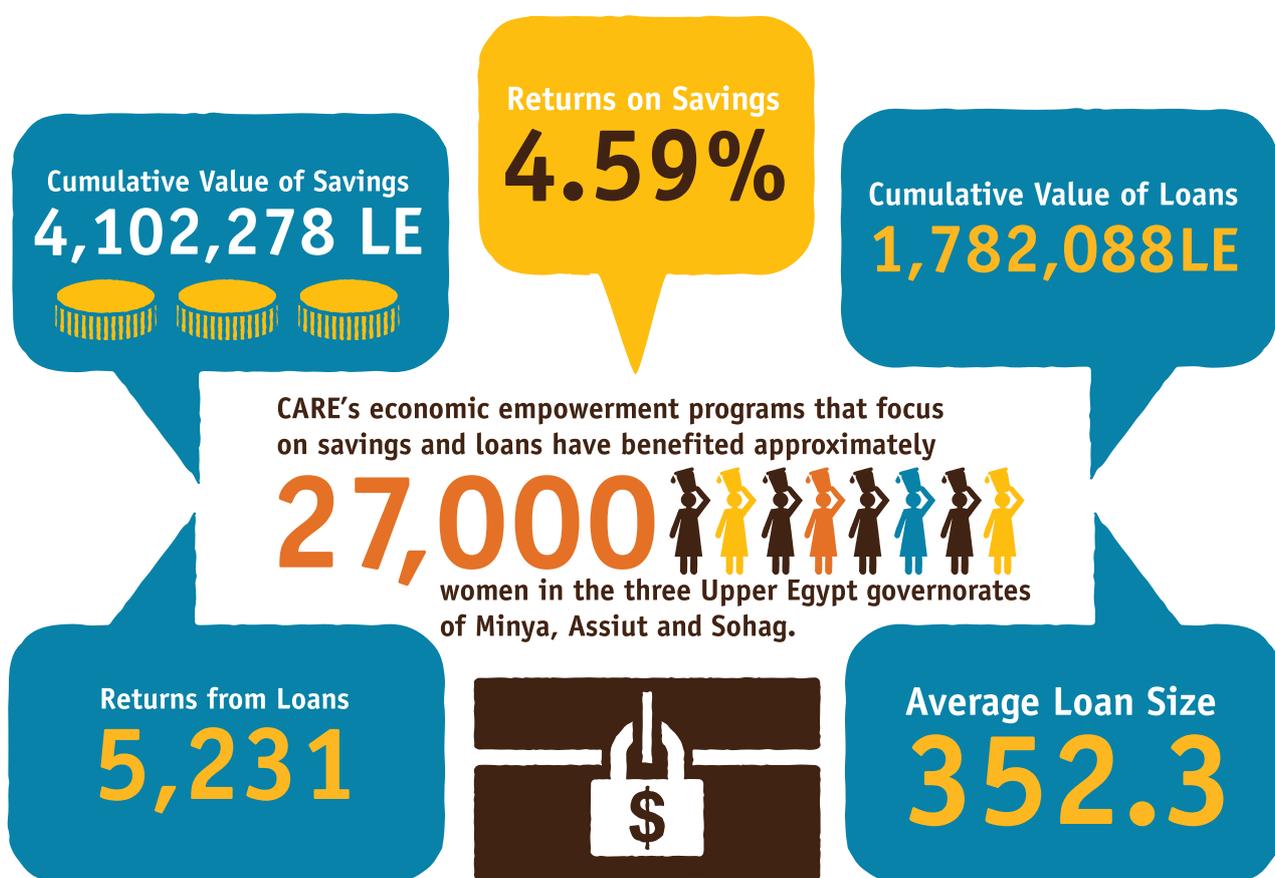
Village Savings and Loans

Village Savings and Loans (VSLA) programming has shown that the poor, especially women can save, and that they are willing to come together, as self-selected and self-managed groups, to do just that.

Women participating in CARE's VSLA programs are provided with the financial and non-financial training required for them to enter into financial activity. These trainings include understanding the VSLA model, financial literacy and management of financial resources, conducting project feasibility studies, managing income generating activities, monitoring their financial performance and making appropriate financial investments as well as social empowerment training.

Complementary to the financial aspect of the VSLA programs, is the ability of women to engage in the management of relationships, to maneuver within the dynamics of a social group, and to build the solidarity needed for women to bravely engage in economic activity. As groups increase in size and scope, so does the size and diversity of the investments that women are making. Women quickly become leaders of these groups, managing the fund, making credit related decisions and ensuring that all group members are able to live up to the collective contract into which they have entered.

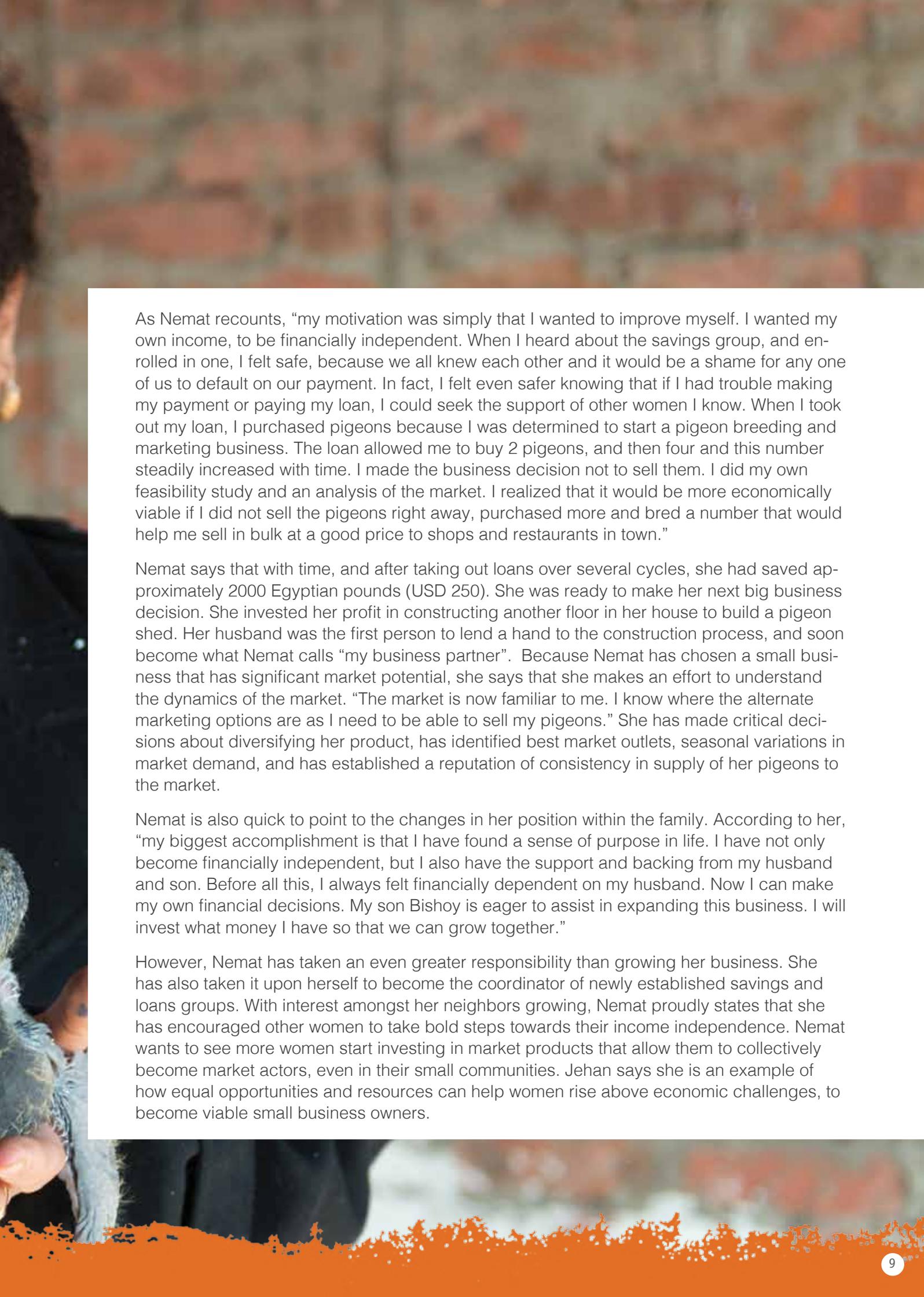
CARE Egypt places importance on analyzing the impact of its economic empowerment work on women. An end line survey conducted by CARE to gauge members benefit from village savings and loans programs in Minya and Sohag governorates found that majority of women that participated reported improvements in their revenue, food security, access to better health and the education of their children. In addition, households have also gained much more asset than they had at the start of the program. Furthermore, the end line survey indicate a shift in the pattern of loan utilization from less productive to more productive use of loans, where the majority of loans were initially taken out to spend on basic household needs and purchasing of household assets, but with a gradual shift in loan utilization for income generating activities, and the establishment of small businesses.



As this program grows, the aim is to ensure that more specialized vocational training for women is directly linked to the businesses that they establish. Additionally, the program sees future value in creating an informal solidarity network amongst the VSLA groups in the different communities, in order to think and act collectively on expanding their business ideas.

In the future, forging such strong linkages between women's savings and loans groups, may be the key to advocating for changes in current legislation to allow such groups to engage with banks in opening bank accounts for women and even in providing the collateral needed for individual or group projects. The program is also investigating the different options that allow banks in Egypt to alter their service products and to make available pro-poor financial services.





As Nemat recounts, “my motivation was simply that I wanted to improve myself. I wanted my own income, to be financially independent. When I heard about the savings group, and enrolled in one, I felt safe, because we all knew each other and it would be a shame for any one of us to default on our payment. In fact, I felt even safer knowing that if I had trouble making my payment or paying my loan, I could seek the support of other women I know. When I took out my loan, I purchased pigeons because I was determined to start a pigeon breeding and marketing business. The loan allowed me to buy 2 pigeons, and then four and this number steadily increased with time. I made the business decision not to sell them. I did my own feasibility study and an analysis of the market. I realized that it would be more economically viable if I did not sell the pigeons right away, purchased more and bred a number that would help me sell in bulk at a good price to shops and restaurants in town.”

Nemat says that with time, and after taking out loans over several cycles, she had saved approximately 2000 Egyptian pounds (USD 250). She was ready to make her next big business decision. She invested her profit in constructing another floor in her house to build a pigeon shed. Her husband was the first person to lend a hand to the construction process, and soon become what Nemat calls “my business partner”. Because Nemat has chosen a small business that has significant market potential, she says that she makes an effort to understand the dynamics of the market. “The market is now familiar to me. I know where the alternate marketing options are as I need to be able to sell my pigeons.” She has made critical decisions about diversifying her product, has identified best market outlets, seasonal variations in market demand, and has established a reputation of consistency in supply of her pigeons to the market.

Nemat is also quick to point to the changes in her position within the family. According to her, “my biggest accomplishment is that I have found a sense of purpose in life. I have not only become financially independent, but I also have the support and backing from my husband and son. Before all this, I always felt financially dependent on my husband. Now I can make my own financial decisions. My son Bishoy is eager to assist in expanding this business. I will invest what money I have so that we can grow together.”

However, Nemat has taken an even greater responsibility than growing her business. She has also taken it upon herself to become the coordinator of newly established savings and loans groups. With interest amongst her neighbors growing, Nemat proudly states that she has encouraged other women to take bold steps towards their income independence. Nemat wants to see more women start investing in market products that allow them to collectively become market actors, even in their small communities. Jehan says she is an example of how equal opportunities and resources can help women rise above economic challenges, to become viable small business owners.

A. Expanding Avenues for The Participation of Women in Policy Spheres

Women's political participation scores lowest at a global scale among all indicators of women's empowerment and especially low in countries in MENA. Barriers to women's political participation include the prevalence of the 'masculine model' in political life and of elected government bodies, lack of party support, including limited financial support for women candidates, limited access to political networks, and the more stringent standards and qualifications applied to women and lack of access to well-developed education and training systems for women's political leadership in general.

A Joint Vision of Women's Role in Politics

One of CARE Egypt's programming principles has rested on its strong partnerships with civil society organizations at local, national and regional levels. The Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) is a Tunisian NGO that focuses on empowering Arab women to fully exercise their human rights, through generating knowledge in order to produce a base of evidence to enhance the capacity of Arab institutions in promoting and advocating for gender equality and the promotion of women to decision making positions.

Building The Capacity of NGOs to Support The Voice of Women

Both CARE and CAWTAR, recognized the importance of ensuring that women's' voices were not drowned out and therefore a central pillar of this partnership has rested on building the capacity of new and existing NGOs to increase the role and voice of women in the sphere of democratization. In 2012, Tunisia had an emerging civil society movement while in Egypt, both CSO and women's rights organizations had played important roles in keeping human rights and women's rights on the political agenda. One of the biggest challenges however, in such a fast-evolving operating context, was that both countries had witnessed substantial constitutional challenges and a changing CS environment. It was therefore imperative to capitalize on this opportunity to ensure that Tunisian and Egyptian CSOs were part of the on-going dialogue and debate around advancements and lapses in the women's rights agenda of both countries. Capacity building, learning exchange in country and between countries, mainstreaming gender, and policy analysis and advocacy have therefore taken center stage in this partnership.

This regional project is one that continues to demonstrate CARE's role as a facilitator of dialogue around important rights issues. Regular capacity building conferences and exchange visits meant that approximately 40 partners were afforded the space to exchange experience, and to demonstrate national and regional level advocacy in action. The uniqueness of this partnership is that it brings together partners from remote areas of Egypt and Tunisia, who have for too long been excluded from key policy discussions, as well as national and regional actors, to influence policies impacting on women's rights.

Women and The Constitutional Development Processes in Egypt and Tunisia

Working together within and across countries, NGOs were asked to research priority issues related to women's rights post Arab-Spring. As a result, local partner organizations in both countries identified the Constitutional Development Process (in Egypt and Tunisia) and the revision of the NGO law (in Egypt) as key opportunities for engagement and influencing. Together, they were given an opportunity to exchange learning, through study tours and joint conferences, as well as to co-implement projects that lent to the issue of women's rights in nation building processes. In

Egypt, five projects were designed, funded and implemented, to address the priority issues of the political participation of women, respect for Human Rights Conventions and curb the growing problem of sexual and gender based violence.

In working together, both CAWTAR and CARE tackled some of the sensitive but important issues related to women's rights and religious discourse. CARE and CAWTAR recognized that one of the biggest challenges was to talk about women's rights at a time when the religious and conservative forces were gaining ground in both countries. In Tunisia, partner CS organizations felt that their best approach would be resistance to the infringement of religious edicts onto women's rights, whereas CS organizations in Egypt, felt that given the strong conservative views related to women's rights, it was important to preserve the gains that had been made in the past.

Standing In Solidarity with Women: CARE and CAWTAR Lead Important Discussions on The Role and Rights of Women in National Constitutional Development Processes

In February 2013, CARE Egypt in Partnership with CAWTAR, organized a two day round table discussion with members of Tunisian and Egyptian media, members of human rights organizations and local civil society partners from both countries. This roundtable discussion was intended as a space for dialogue around the issue of the role and rights of women in the development and in the articles Constitution of both nations. CARE Egypt sees one of its main roles as an opening up space and facilitating a dialogue to enable greater voice and engagement in influencing the agenda on women's rights in Egypt and throughout the Middle East region.

In order to provide robust policy discussions, expert opinions were solicited and participants of this meeting reflected on the Constitutions that existed prior to the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. Therefore, in attendance of the meeting were high profile speakers such as Dr. Tehany El Gebaly the Deputy Head of the Constitutional Court in Egypt and Dr. Gaber Nassar who is a constitutional expert in Egypt in addition to Tunisian experts such as Waheed Al Fershysy and Yosra Fraoues.

The timing for this round table discussion was especially pertinent, since both countries were in the midst of reviewing and revising their national constitutions. It was therefore important to ensure that learning was exchanged between CSO from both countries, and how each was tackling the issue of informing the constitutional development process from a gender justice lens. The discussions focused on two main issues: The role of women in informing the Constitutional development process as well as safeguarding the rights of women within the articles of the new Constitutions for both countries.

During the second day of discussions, activists from Tunisia and Egypt presented their efforts in advocating for women's rights at the same time as policy makers were drafting the new Constitutions. It was an opportunity to exchange different experiences in both Tunisia and Egypt with regards to advocating for the protection of women's rights and the role of civil society in doing so.

Participants also analyzed the process by which the voices of civil society, including women's rights organizations and activists, were being included in the policy level discussions. Many challenges were raised, both related to process of inclusion in policy debates as well as the inclusion of concepts of equality and justice within the articles of their respective Constitutions. These formed the basis upon which participants developed their policy level recommendations, including the importance of advocating with the Tunisian and Egyptian governments on protecting Women's rights in addition to the need that civil society organizations to be welcome actors in this critical policy making space.

B. Upholding The Right of Girls and Women to Live Free From Violence

Central to issues of equality and empowerment of women in the Middle East region, and especially in Egypt is the issue of widespread violence against girls and women that is currently deemed a widespread social phenomenon. This violence takes on varied forms, including female genital cutting, with a prevalence rate of 92% as recorded in Egypt's 2014 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). With regards to domestic violence, approximately 47% of married, divorced, separated or widowed women reported some form of physical domestic violence in the Egypt's 2008 DHS.

CARE sees issues of domestic and public abuse against women in Egypt as a growing development concern because of the prevalence of this phenomenon on a national scale. Violence, experienced largely by women in rural communities in Upper Egypt, has been a central programming concern that CARE Egypt strives to address throughout its gender equality and women's empowerment programs. As early as 2008, CARE launched a complementary set of program initiatives such as Freedom from Violence, Safe Cities, WESAL and Inheritance Rights, all seeking to curb the rise and spread of violence experienced by women and girls in both the domestic and public spheres.

Young Men: Essential Catalysts for The Advancement of Women's rights.

At the start of this work, CARE Egypt focused its attentions on working with women on women's rights issues. Over the course of several years, working with women revealed that women-centered interventions, while successful in spreading awareness about rights amongst women, were also constrained in their ability to transfer this knowledge of societal norms, attitudes and practices amongst men within their families and communities. As programs progressed and lessons were learnt, CARE has recognized that in order to curtail the rise and spread of this ever-growing social phenomena, it was critical that issues of personal and physical safety for women were taken seriously by men.

WESAL, a three year regional project has sought to bring about change in the attitudes and behaviors of men towards particular women's rights issues, ranging from inheritance rights, domestic violence, and harassment in public spaces.

The WESAL project achieves this through the innovative approach of engaging men through interactive community theatre to spread knowledge, model change and advocate for the rights of women. The training that the theatre troupe go through focuses on psychosocial aspects, addressing misconceptions around masculinity, dealing with cultural pressures, ways to recognize and addressing sexual and gender based violence and relaying these messages through non-traditional means.

Mobilizing young men to engage on issues related to women's rights has been a long journey, starting with their involvement in training to discuss their own perceptions of violence against men and women, followed by their involvement in writing up stories and scripts that reflect some of the forms of violence that they know are common in their own communities. The stories and scripts that they developed attempt to capture rights violations that they feel are relevant and that need to be discussed with a wider community audience. The community theatre production became the opportunity for young men to enact some of the scenarios of gender based violence that take place within and outside the home, while engaging the audience in dialogue around change. This platform, implemented in streets and open community spaces, was new to young men in rural communities

in Egypt, but was deemed the most effective venue for young men to “break the walls of silence, to share their stories and to find their purpose and their voice for expression of social ills that impacted them and their communities at large”.

One of the cornerstones of this work was in recognizing the pressures and forms of violence that young men themselves face. As a first step, it was important to ensure that the community theater helped them to embark on a process of “personal and inner healing”, because often societal pressures imposed by customs and norms on men are seldom acknowledged. The success of this nontraditional approach to engaging men through interactive theatre has demonstrated the importance of tapping into the creative energy of young men and the creative ways they can become true advocates of gender justice.

“One of the important changes that has been brought about by the WESAL project has been the self-realization amongst male members of the theatre troupe, that they are the key to changing the traditional norms engrained in their communities.”

Martin

“Today we feel confident, courageous and responsible for advancing the rights of women. We ourselves have changed towards our families and our societies. But when we started, some of us were the biggest oppressors within our own families. We all had our personal notions of what it is to ‘be a man’ in our society, and so the journey to change was also not easy for us. We all felt that the status of women in our communities was acceptable. Why change? Surely my house is not on fire! We did not want to change the things we personally did not see were broken.

Engaging as men in the WESAL project meant that in order to convince others of the rights of women, we had to be convinced ourselves. So, our journey started with dialogue, expression of personal pain that we as men endure, awareness raising on women’s rights and then training on community theatre. We were just getting started, and we realized that what we could say in the interactive theater, we also had to say with equal conviction inside our homes and to our fathers.

When we first started conducting community interactive theatre performances, male members of our community rejected our messages and we faced a lot of criticism that we were acting out scenes of violence. Some criticized, while other derided us. This is a difficult situation to be in as a man in our communities, but it did not deter us. Gradually, we all felt that we had the tools to help women “reclaim the space and the power to reclaim her rights. But we also realize that gender equality can only be achieved if men and boys participate in transforming the unequal power relations that exist at the personal and societal levels.

In our interactive theatre events, therefore we ensure that we have two messages. The first is directed to women, to empower women to speak up on rights violations, and to demonstrate that women have the power to reclaim their rights. The second message is directed to men, and reinforces messages around the false notions of masculinity in our society. We feel that today, our most pressing objective is to work with men and boys to become advocates for gender equality.” Martin

C. Guaranteeing The Protection of Refugee Populations in Egypt

Egypt is today in the midst of countries facing volatile political and security situations. While the country itself has been witnessing political unrest in the past few years, with difficult economic and security conditions, a surge of refugees fleeing Syria has created humanitarian challenges in a unique non-camp urban refugee environment. As a result, CARE Egypt, working closely with the Egyptian government, UNHCR and several non-governmental humanitarian agencies, has, since 2014, been helping to create conditions for the thousands of refugees that are seeking a life of safety and dignity in Egypt.

In 2013, Egypt launched the Syrian Response Program, which aims to enhance the protection mechanisms and coping strategies of Syrians residing in Egypt today. With approximately 135, 000 registered refugees², CARE is now one of the main INGO actors responding to the dire needs of this vulnerable population. CARE Egypt's Syria Response Program is integral to the overarching regional Syria response program implemented throughout the region.

According to the program, after several months of working with Syrian children and families, in 2014, some 25 cases of child abuse had already been identified.

Innovative Solutions to Addressing Vulnerability Faced by Women

Working with Syrian women and girls is a pillar of CARE's current work in Egypt because Syrian women are facing substantial vulnerabilities. Syrian women especially have unique at-risk status, with many having arrived in Egypt without their husbands or other male members of their families, are confronted with an inability to work, experience tensions with members of the host communities, face constraints in protecting their children within and outside schools, and have restricted protections under Egyptian Law.

The Syrian Prevention and Response Program seeks to change the attitude of men and women alike towards sexual and gender based violence, by exposing harmful attitudes and prevalent violent practices. Some of the issues that surfaced included early marriage, economic exploitation, as well as domestic violence which is increasingly becoming acceptable amongst Syrian women who understand the pressures that their spouses have had to endure since escaping Syria. The program has therefore sought to shift attitudes related to practices such as domestic violence and early marriage, by making men and women from the Syrian community the voice for such community-led change.

Innovative Tools to Discuss Violence

The innovative tools CARE has developed or has adopted include community interactive theater, therapy through arts and sports, awareness sessions on sexual and gender based violence, from medical and legal perspectives. Art therapy revolves around the human need for expression, treatment and change using the arts, specifically to those who suffer from psychological or physical abuse. The Art Therapy training sessions that are conducted by CARE take place through a series of different workshops; writing, drawing, expression of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) issues, playing with clay, graffiti and printing, puppet theater, story-telling, theatre and change through pictures. Innovative tools such as community interactive theater, and therapy through sports, are also used so that refugees can express their pent up emotions, surface their concerns and acknowledge the experience of loss and pain that they have experienced.

² <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=8>



In 2014 alone,
the program was able to reach

6,295

Syrian men, women and children



CARE identified

147

cases of violence
and abuse

64

cases sought
out individual
support

A Journey From Isolation to Integration: The Impact of Art Therapy on The Life of a Syrian Refugee Family in Egypt

“We escaped war in our homeland, but I brought this war with me to my new home in Egypt.” Sameer Tawil reflects on how an external war that has ravaged his homeland for five years ignited a personal conflict that he unconsciously waged against his own small family. As a celebrated journalist in the Syrian National Media, Sameer remembers a peaceful time when his family enjoyed the abundance of life in Aleppo. Fleeing to an uncertain future, Sameer admits. “Egypt was difficult to come to. I was under a lot of pressure to maintain the life and dignity that we had enjoyed in Syria. But I was a victim of violence and in turn, I become violent towards my family”.

Sameer admits that his journey to integrate into life in Egypt was no less difficult than his journey to flee Syria. “We came and did not know anyone. We sought refuge in rural Upper Egypt, and this isolated life created even more pressures for me and my family. We did everything we can to hide behind a veil of concealment. Stories of conflict with the local community made us even more secluded and lonely.” Moving to 6th October City was the first step in the family’s journey from isolation to integration. CARE, alongside Partner NGOs including FARD and Syria el Ghad, presented a ray of hope. “I needed to let the pain out. I needed to feel purposeful and hopeful again. I needed to restore my humanity so that I could be the kind of husband and father that I was.”

Having heard from his wife Deema about the different events that CARE and partners were conducting, Sameer admits to be skeptical of its impact on him. “I attended one of the art and music therapy sessions and enjoyed it but when I went home, I had a total breakdown. It was the first time I was exposed to people talking about violence, and abuse. I did not want to express my pain in front of my family, but participating in the art and music therapy sessions was like taking medication. It helped me realize my violence was having negative psychological and physical consequences on us all. When I let it all out, I realized that my pain was not unique. I realized that there were many people also needing to externalize their trauma. I knew I had a role to play in helping myself, my small family and my Syrian friends.”

Sameer states that the art and music therapy training organized by CARE helped him to find his purpose again. He soon took to writing again, and this presented yet another way to express his personal aspirations. Sameer’s wife Deema is pleased at the gradual change in her husband. “Sameer started to be more social, more engaged as a leader amongst the Syrian refugee community. Most important of all, was that the violence and conflict that we had brought with us into the family was gradually subsiding. We are no longer violent towards each other and I personally stopped being violent towards my own sons.” Keen to attend additional training, Sameer and Deema started attending interactive theatre trainings, which added to their insights into issues of violence against women and abuse.

Today, Sameer has an important leadership role amongst youth leaders spreading the knowledge on how to curb violence. Sameer knows well that he has an important role to play in helping other Syrian families to integrate into Egyptian society. “Just as CARE felt our pain, I also need to feel the pain of others like me. I have become whole again through the art and music therapy. I am no longer consumed by returning to Syria. I have a contribution to make to help others make the same journey as my family, from isolation, pain and violence, to integration and a dignified life in our new home in Egypt.”





PROMOTING CITIZEN LEADERSHIP AND
VOICE FOR IMPROVED SERVICE QUALITY
IN EDUCATION

II



92%
of children
in Egypt

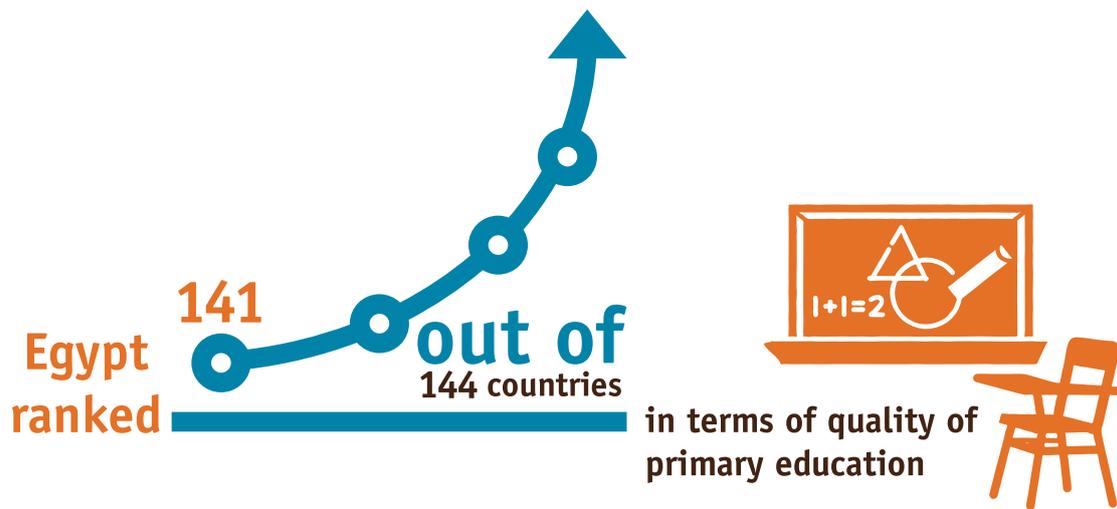


are
educated in



**public
schools**

Given CARE Egypt's longstanding experience in education programming, starting in 2002 with a small Community Action in Support of Education Project (CASE) and in 2005 with the New Schools Program (NSP), CARE believes that it is incumbent upon it to work collectively in support of Ministry of Education (MoE) efforts in order to enhance education standards in Egypt. CARE's role in this regard is one that promotes the development and implementation of innovative models of education programming that can be replicated at the national level. These viable models of education programming have afforded CARE the credibility to play a more proactive role in recent years in policy level research and advocacy, to improve enrollment, better utilize existing resources, improve quality of teaching and increase CSO-Government collaboration in provision of quality education.



of Egypt's GDP is dedicated to education

A. Addressing One of Egypt's Premier Development Challenges: School Based Illiteracy

Official MoE data revealed that just over 30% of public primary school students did not know how to read and write based on an assessment conducted in 2009. In 2013, CARE Egypt complemented the Ministry's findings with an in-depth research in Minya and Beni Suf governorates, where CARE has had extensive presence and engagement around education programming. The objective of the research was to assess basic standards of literacy and numeracy skills amongst children in public primary schools. The results of the CARE-led study revealed that levels of illiteracy amongst primary school students were, in fact much higher with the majority of students reaching 6th grade without the ability to read and write.

CARE Egypt's implementation of the officially endorsed Early Grade Readability Assessment (EGRA), an international tool, used to measure readability and writing, was implemented in 20 schools in Minya and Beni Suf, selected by the Education Directorates because of their poor education rankings. CARE's results revealed that up to 85% of children were between the first and second percentile of students that were unable to meet standards of reading and writing across all primary schooling stages. Additionally, up to 50% of students reaching 6th grade level were unable to read and write. It is for this reason that CARE Egypt has focused its recent education programming on advancing readability and quality of education services in public schools.

The Change That CARE Seeks

The Early Grade Literacy in Egypt (EAGLE) project, currently being implemented in 20 schools, seeks to support 4,000 students in Minya and Beni Suef to advance their reading and writing skills, and to ensure that they are equipped to enter primary school at a standard that does not put them at risk of dropping out. In addition to reading and writing, the project aims to provide students with an opportunity to build character, to afford life-skills, and to engage in extra-curricular activities. One of CARE's roles is to mobilize the education constituency at the community level such as parents, school administrators, teachers and School Boards of Trustees in supporting simple solutions to reading and writing. One of these solutions is to work closely with the Arabic Language teachers in the targeted schools, providing the teachers with training on the Improving Readability's Methodology and Curriculum, equipping them to deliver the material and harnessing their skills to engage students with learning difficulties.

One of the more ambitious aims that CARE has is to promote replicability of this model, and to advocate for the use of the improving readability curriculum throughout Egypt. The MoE has made the early grade readability prevention and rehabilitation curriculum applicable from grades 1 to 3 through its inclusion in the Arabic language formal curriculum. Additionally, Arabic language teachers are being trained to use the new curriculum, integrated with the Ministry's Arabic language curriculum. Working closely with the Readability Unit in the Ministry of Education, CARE's policy efforts now aim to secure a national-level endorsement for the application of the curriculum for 4th to 6th primary school stages.



CARE Partnership with The Ministry of Education's Readability Unit at The Governorate Level

“Our partnership with CARE Egypt over the course of the last two years has yielded very important gains, for the Readability Unit at Central and District level, but more importantly for the students in our schools. One of the big challenges we are facing is that the formal statistics that shared nationwide do not accurately reflect the troubling state that exists today, with students inside school being unable to read and write. CARE has helped us, through its research in several governorates to present alternative data on the reading and writing standards amongst a sample of school students. CARE has showed us how to use scientific rigor in our assessments, using tools approved by the MoE, such as the Early Grade Assessment tool, can help us in determining the extent of this growing problem. CARE's study found that up to 85% of children were between categories A and B, which reflect very weak or weak standards of reading and writing amongst students that were part of the CARE study. However, these results validate the findings of our own studies at sub-district and district level.

Our contribution to the partnership was to facilitate CARE's access to public schools, to allow teachers time off for training on the Assessment and the curriculum, as well as to support the follow-up. In return, we have learnt from the CARE how to really give attention to each school, how to do in-depth follow up with school management, and we are now keen to transfer this model of work to others. CARE's is supporting our efforts to 'close the tap' on the problem of school based illiteracy.

The MoE has now endorsed the EGRA tool and curriculum nationwide for 1st-3rd grade of primary schools. But what CARE is contributing is making sure that all those students who have already entered into advanced primary grades, i.e. 4th-6th grade, are not forgotten. CARE is preparing these students for preparatory schooling. Not doing so, runs the risk that many students, especially girls, drop out of because they are not equipped with reading and writing skills.

What CARE has done is to show us the model of how to deepen our engagement with schools, and how as a Readability Unit at the Governorate level, we can transfer this model of work to other sub-districts where we know there is a significant problem of meeting basic reading and writing standards. CARE has demonstrated how resources can best be put to use, we will be seeking support from CARE and other organizations, to help us advocate for increased resource commitments to readability efforts nationwide.”



Giving Young Students The Skills and The Environment to Glow

Shouk, Amany, Nada, Rahma, Yousr, and Asmaa, are but a few of the young students in 4th primary at the El Shahid Mohamed Abbas Primary School in Nasser District in Beni Suef, and they have every reason to celebrate their accomplishments at the end of this school year. The school was selected as one of 20 schools within CARE Egypt's EAGLE Project, with the aim of enhancing the readability skills of school students at primary school level. While post assessment results of their reading and writing ability show significant improvements in their literacy standards, the young girls are more eager to share how the program has had a positive impact on their lives.

Nada is the first to admit the reluctance she felt about being part of the program, but this was a sentiment shared by all her friends. "When we were first selected for the program, we felt worried and upset. In the school yard, they kept saying that this is a special class for weak and unintelligent students. We were so upset that some of us asked our fathers to talk to the school headmaster, because we really did not want to be part of this special program."

However, Amany proudly says that they slowly started to consider themselves lucky. Their beloved teacher, Ms. Shahira, shares the philosophy behind her work with these 4th grade primary students. "When we empower children with basic skills and knowledge, the change is significant. When we worked with students properly, they prove to us that they can do more than what we would ever expected, and when we give them the environment to glow, they glow". Ms. Shahira is one of the many Arabic teachers that received training on the EGRA curriculum in order to work with more than 147 students in the school.

Rahma attributes the learning that she has gained to her teacher, who Rahma says, patiently walked them through a path of reading and writing by using a different teaching technique than the students were accustomed to. This technique is based on sound and shape of the Arabic letter, which relies on specific auditory rules for pronunciation, rhythm and sectioning of Arabic words. But Ms. Shahira's teaching style was also unique to the young students of the program who found her active learning techniques to be more interesting than they had ever experienced.

Asmaa chose to recite a section of the Quran, and insists on demonstrating to all her classmates and visitors to her school that this reading technique has helped her read, pronounce and give the right intonation to the words she is reading. "I now feel very proud when someone asks me to read the Quran. I even help my father and my siblings in their reading because I can recognize when they make a mistake."

Reflecting back on a time when they were teased by their other classmates, all of them say that they now feel very fortunate to have been selected. Nada says that "now all my friends wish they had joined. The program was very strict in enrollment so my friends were feeling sad that they could not benefit like we did." Rahma in turn also speaks to how this program has helped her to show her special talents. "The program included a special exhibition at the end of the school year. All of us were asked to exhibit our year books but also produce something for the exhibition." As rightly said by the School Headmaster, Mr. Ali, this exhibition is a testament of the progress young girls like Nada, Rahma, Amany and Asma have made. It is also evidence of how quality education is easily rendered possible with the right training, and the curriculum, and above all the skilled teachers to make a difference in the lives of our young girls.

The challenge however, remains. Addressing the structural inequalities in education is a long-standing commitment for CARE. Amany faces such circumstances, with her family intending to take her out of school because they are no longer able to meet the financial costs of her education. It is these persistent inequalities that are resulting in many high-achieving young girls in Egypt dropping out of primary school.

B. Strengthening Student Unions as a Platform for Voice and Leadership

The central ethos of CARE Egypt's work on education is that students have an important leadership role and voice in matters relating to the quality of their education. In order to achieve this, CARE has invested years of work, encouraging the engagement of students in school management through Student Union activities, supporting their participation in the development of school improvement plans and ensuring their involvement in advocating with school Boards of Trustees for the betterment of education services and standards. CARE Egypt's Child Participation Project aimed to increase child participation in all avenues afforded to students to voice their interests and concerns in 36 schools in Minya and Beni Suef.

The Student Union's project's baseline study revealed that children were not fully aware of their rights as students, or what the exact roles and responsibilities of the Student Union were. Additionally, school administration bodies and teachers were often reluctant to support the philosophy and practice of children's rights to advocate for change. There was also a noticeable exclusion of children in the development of school improvement plans, and weak avenues for student representation, especially within the student unions. The timing of the project was therefore ideal, given the emphasis being placed by the MoE on quality education, and the interest of schools in achieving accreditation standards set by the Quality Assurance Unit of the MoE.

“ By engaging in student unions, we were encouraged to be effective change agents in our school and communities. If we want to be a country that respects democracy and democratically elected institutions, we have to demonstrate this in the smallest common unit, which for us, is our school. ”

Rana Safwat, Head of Student Union

Student Unions as a Platform for Voice and Leadership

The engagement of students in such leadership roles within schools also resulted in their increased sense of responsibility for community improvement. Through community service initiatives, several of the Student Unions initiated community improvement projects such as garbage collection, tree planting, and fixing of the labs in schools. Expanding their participation from the sphere of the school, to the sphere of community, has given school children both the space to enforce their rights as well as to demonstrate their responsibilities towards their communities. This has resulted in greater awareness and acceptance amongst Boards of Trustees of the role that students play in helping BOTs hold schools accountable for the quality of education provided.

Ripple Effects of Female Leadership on Schools and Communities

Through training, awareness raising and practical activity, the Child Participation Project has also invested in encouraging young boys to support girls' leadership potential inside and outside the school community. Through practical activities, the young male students were encouraged to develop collaborative initiatives with their female colleagues, many of which reflected the growing support from their male peers. This was well manifested in the Student Union voting outcomes in all the schools, with several young girls being elected to head the school's Student Union bodies.

Influencing Policy Discussions

The work of Student Unions until 2013 was governed by Ministerial Decree #203. The work with Students Unions, and the school social workers on the establishment and management of Student Unions, provided the school students with the credibility to speak of the changes that they wanted to see in this decree. Several representatives from the Student Unions met to formulate their ideas and share them with the National level student union, comprising of students in secondary school.

The timeliness of these discussions amongst student union members, meant that the students were able to inform on-going policy discussion about the need to alter the Ministerial Decree. Today, the new Decree (#62) has taken into consideration some of the recommendations made by the schools that CARE has been working with through this project.

Students of 8 schools were concerned with protection issues inside their schools and went about developing what they felt was a comprehensive school policy that tackles protection of students in schools. This also came at an opportune moment, as a Ministerial Decree “Behavioral Principles in Schools” was being discussed. CARE has shared the protection mechanisms developed by the students, representing the eight schools, with UNICEF, who in turn shared it at the highest levels in the Ministry of Education.

C. Enhancing Boards of Trustees as The Voice of Communities in Improving Education Service Quality

CARE believes that Board of Trustees (BOTs) are an important vehicle for raising community awareness about educational quality, increasing support for educational improvement activities, strengthening working relationships between communities, government and school officials, and enhancing a sense of community ownership of the educational process.

“ There is a level of transparency regarding the school budget that is new to us. It was really the first time for us to hear about the school budget, its expenditures and its achievements. ”

*BOT Member, El Shaarawy
Primary School, Beni Suef.*

Exercising Citizen Rights and Upholding Democratic Values

The New Schools Program (2005-2009), is one of CARE Egypt's flagship education programs, implemented with close collaboration with 98 communities in Fayoum, Beni Suef, Minya, Assiut and Sohag Governorates. Close community participation has meant that CARE had to engage a diverse range of community actors, including education Directorates, School Management, School BOTs, community leaders, youth and students.

The role of the BOTs in galvanizing community members to participate and define common needs around education, voicing community concerns and in promoting innovative solutions to education challenges cannot be denied. During the early phases of the Program, CARE provided BOTs with extensive training of issues such as planning for a General Assembly, Roles and Responsibilities, Good Governance Planning, Resource Mobilization, Community Participation, and Advocacy, all of which they consider a 'key ingredient' in their ability to put the skills gained into practice.

This effectiveness of CARE's trainings on the BOTs' performance is evident in the practice that the BOT has sustained over the course of the last five years in contributing collectively to carrying out school self-assessments (SSAs) and in developing school improvement plans (SIPs). SIPs are annual plans that reflect some of the gaps in education quality, school infrastructure or school environment that require concerted attention and joint action for the benefit of the school. Developed by the Education Committees within BOTs, the school improvement plans are a means to ensure that communities take the leadership role in addressing the identified gaps. All the BOTs acknowledge the value of the annual assessments and SIPs in establishing the common yardstick by which community members can evaluate their commitment towards achieving progress.

As an example, one of the most common education gaps faced in rural Upper Egypt is related to shortage in the availability of teachers. This is severely compromised quality of education and as



such, NSP Boards of Trustees have included in their School Improvement Plans the close collaboration with the Education Directorate to ensure that the problem of teacher shortage is addressed. Where this has been the case, NSP BOTs have been able to hire teachers, and pay them from the BOT Fund. BOTs working in the NSP have successfully coordinated with all Education Directorates, to guarantee that teachers who are hired from outside the formal education teacher's pool, are also subject to school management oversight as well as BOT follow up on his/her performance.

Other successes of BOTs include:

Resource Mobilization Abilities:

In one case, BOT members encouraged community members to commit the land that was required for the construction of a school. In the case of St George primary school in, Minya, the cost of the land was estimated at 240,000 LE. The community was able to raise 140,000 LE to cover the costs of the land. Recognizing their funding shortfall, BOT members wrote a petition to the Governor, who agreed to cover the funding gaps, with a 100,000 LE financial contribution from the Education Directorate's Fund.

Impact on Policy

This influential role was evident in Beni Suef, where temporary schools were established until the construction of the NSP schools. Mohamed Saleh, Kom El Raml, El Fant, and several other schools in Beni Suef, were able to provide the space for the establishment of the temporary primary schools. Once the space was provided, the BOTs of these schools were able to convince the Education Directorate in Beni Suef governorate to make available the required number of primary school teachers to teach and manage the temporary schools until the NSP preparatory schools were built. According to Elham Zakaria, NSP Community Mobilization Specialist in CARE, "most BOTs are concerned with making sure that the students did not miss the school year, or drop out. This has helped us ensure that the young girls were not taken out of schools and that a smooth transition could be guaranteed to preparatory schooling."

Impact on Parents and School Students

BOTs have been instrumental in encouraging the participation of students in Student Unions in some of the NSP schools. Students attending El Sheikh Shebeka primary school, which initially faced a lot of resistance from community leaders, admit that their "parents' perceptions have changed. "When our parents make a contribution to the school, we know that they are doing so because they are now convinced, because they trust the school, because they are informed of what is happening and because they see how this change is helping us as students."

D. Promoting Accountability Through Research and Education Policy Reform

Learning and research is an integral part of CARE Egypt's good programming practice, and has, over the years, helped CARE to reflect on its experience in implementing programs of broad scope. From an accountability perspective, CARE strives to learn from and share some of its programming models. The Beyond Basics Research Project, funded by the Mosakowski Family Foundation, aims to assess learning quality and learning outcomes that have resulted from four years of community-based education programming through the USAID funded NSP. Five years after the handing over of infrastructure of 189 multi-grade community schools to the Egyptian MoE, CARE was keen on assessing the program model so as to inform future policy level action related to Community-Based Education Policy Reform in Egypt.

Policy Papers and Policy Influencing

One of the main outputs of the Beyond Basics Project has been to learn from NSP so as to inform the development of policy briefs to inform five main issue areas of Community-Based Education Reform:

1. Enrollment Policies and the Criteria for Establishment of Community Schools;
2. Redirection of Financial Resources and Spending in Support of Community Education;
3. Mechanisms for Partnership between CS and the MoE in Support of Community Education;
4. Mechanisms for Sustainability and the Transition from Community Schools to Public Education Schools;
5. Enhancing Vocational Training and Achieving best Results from Community Education.

A Unique Model of Partnership with The Ministry of Education's Community Education Unit

The five policy briefs were developed in full partnership with officials of the MOE Community Education Unit. Since then, round table discussions have been held and constructive dialogue has resulted in further input being provided by the Community Education Unit, on some important lessons and recommendations arising from these policy briefs. As a result, CARE Egypt has advocated for a single Ministerial Decree that would better organize community education efforts, paying attention to quality, appropriate monitoring and adequate resourcing of such efforts.

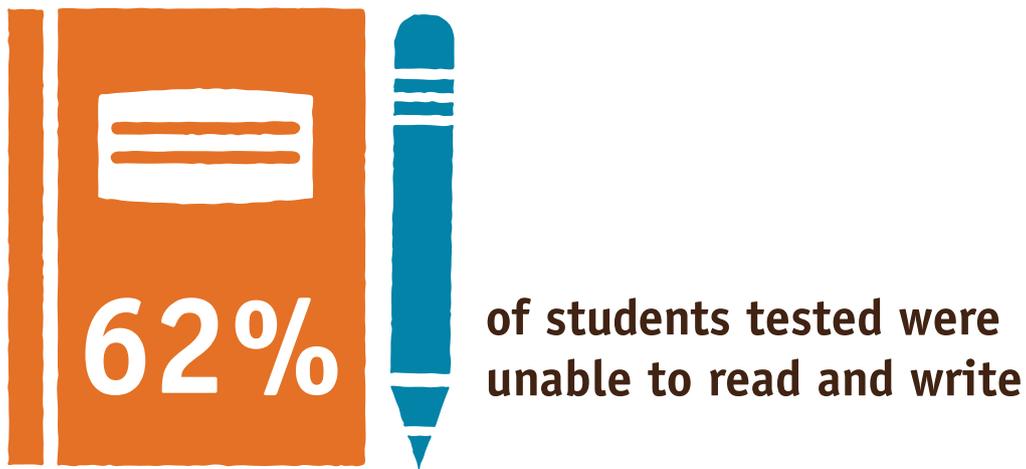
CARE's Role Promoting Accountability through Research, Learning and Action

- Research shows that INGO programming in education has scope to be enhanced and this is a crucial aspect of INGO accountability;
- One of CARE roles is opening up the space for and engaging in policy dialogue with policy makers, using robust evidence;
- Through such research, CARE ensures that project beneficiaries have a voice in influencing change at the highest level of education policy;
- Models of development practice in education must be used to influence funding and existing policies for the advancement of education standards.

“ We now feel like a mini-democracy. We have elected this BOT, they tell us their progress in General Assembly meetings and we share our concerns with them. We have been involved in developing the SIPs plans. As such, we also monitor progress, constraints, and budget expenditures and practice our accountability role. ”

Parent of a student in Yousef Sedky School

An additional effort has been made to analyze all the existing laws governing community education. Such an analysis has also scrutinized the laws that require updating, since several laws governing community education were developed as early as 1993 and have not since changed. The purpose of this work will be to develop a draft Ministerial Decree to present to the Minister of Education. Such a draft Ministerial Decree will build on the analysis conducted by CARE of all previous policies and proposes updates to the current policies governing community education. National level influence is central to the effort that CARE has made in conducting research, providing evidence of successful models, learning from mistakes and making sound programming and policy recommendations. Accountability through learning and action is a principle and a practice that CARE upholds in its current and future programs.



The curriculum was implemented for

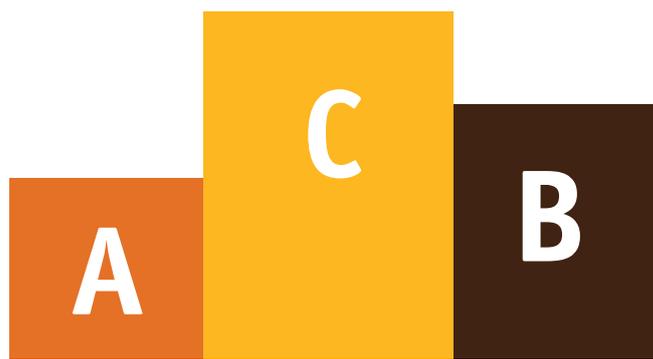


for these students

100%
of the selected
students for the
readability curriculum
could not read or write



32%
remained in
level A by
the mid-line
assessment,



once again
reduced to **25%**
in the final assessment.

MAKING MARKETS WORK FOR POOR FARMERS,
ESPECIALLY WOMEN IN THE AGRICULTURE
AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR

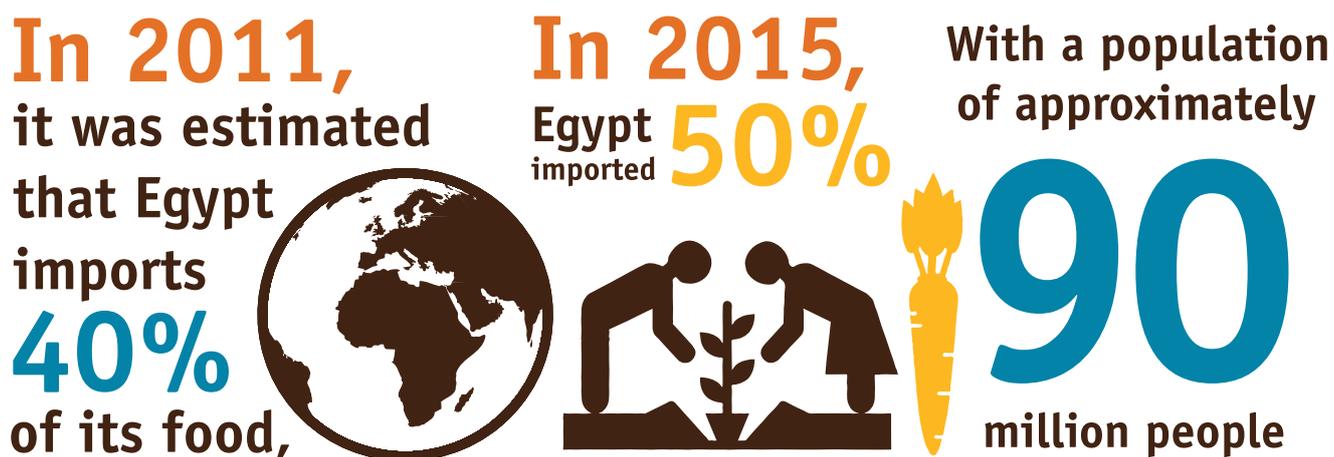
III





A. Evolving CARE's Work to Promote Food Security and Make Markets Work for The Poor

CARE Egypt's focus on Livelihoods and Food Security has extended over two decades, with a strong recognition that food security represents one of Egypt's greatest challenges that requires concerted government, private sector and civil society action.



CARE Egypt has therefore maintained its longstanding commitment of working closely with small holder farmers in Upper Egypt governorates to increase quality, quantity and marketability of strategic produce. Over the course of 20 years, CARE's approach to livelihood and food security has evolved, to focus on three core areas of work, namely linking and information sharing, collective organizing and joint production and marketing.

B. Building Reciprocal Relationship of Benefit Between Egypt's Small Farmers and The Global Market: The El Shams Project

In line with CARE's overarching objective of making markets work for the poor, the El Shams Project aimed at integrating small land-holding farmers in Upper Egypt into high-value horticultural export markets. The El Shams Project is CARE Egypt's flagship project in the area of food and livelihood security, taking on the key approaches of linking approximately 30,000 small holder farmers through information on markets and new technologies, supporting collective organizing through agricultural associations, encouraging product selection based on consumer preference and market needs, and promoting joint production and marketing through linkages with private sector actors. CARE's work in this regard has been in line with Egypt's 2030 Agriculture Strategy of focusing on those small holder farmers, the most critical actors today to Egypt's food security in the future.

The El Shams project established more than 100 community development associations, to organize small holder farmers towards joint production-based farming approaches, as well

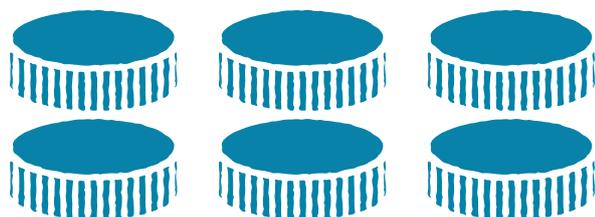


as connecting them to national, regional and global markets. In doing so, El Shams was able to move farmers from individual farming practices producing small amounts and taking up a small space in the markets, towards collective farming of a single product such as tomatoes or green beans and working together as a critical mass to take on a bigger marketing space. Over the course of the four years that small holder farmers worked together in the project, they were able to supply 80% of their produce to the international market, and 20% to the international market.

The Agreform Project, launched in 1997, aimed at increasing small land-holding farmers' income through accessing export opportunities. The project provided technical assistance on agriculture operations and post-harvest training in order to maintain product quality and reduce loss. Agricultural laborers and governmental extension workers were also provided with training. The project established 22 marketing committees, trained in business management, signing contracts in advance with buyers, identifying market demand, and understanding consumers' preference through linking farmers with exporters, traders, and processors. Agreform also organized small land-holding farmers in groups and established 22 Farmers' Associations (FAs) in the three governorates. Farmers Associations helped facilitate the contracting process between the buyers and the farmers in return for a commission that helps sustain the FAs.

Small land plots of
<1 feddan
make up
43% 
of agricultural land
available in Egypt,

with an average return of
1,000 EGP
per feddan/per season.



El Shams Project
(2003-2008)

Farming Associations
Established **109**

Association
membership
12,500
farmers

Forward Export
Contracts Secured
with 204 different
buyers **883**

The El Shams project established more than

100 
community development associations

Land Cultivated
26,000
Feddans.

High value produce
marketed through (export,
food processing and local
market) **120,440 MTs**

International Market
Exports in EGP
75M (LE)

Combined Market
Profit **165M LE**
(30% increase from target)

Income generated per
farmer (Life or Project)
13,096 LE

Percentage increase
in the FA members'
income **310%**

Institutional Strengthening of Farmer Associations

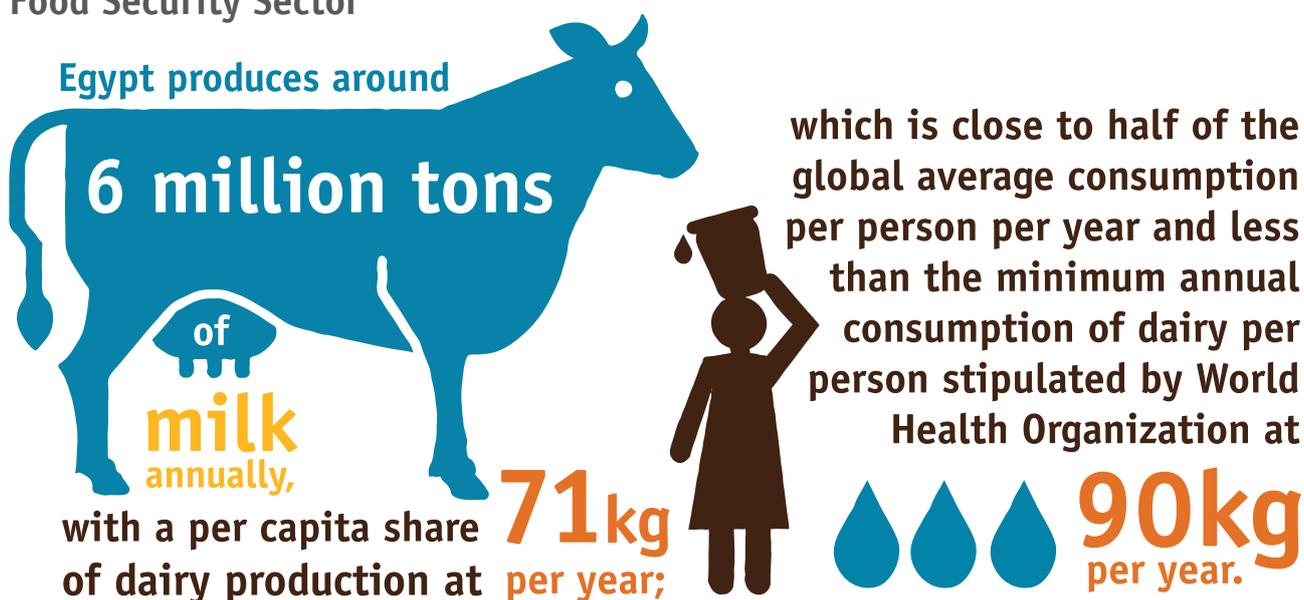
A central pillar of CARE's work with small holder farmers is building the capacity of Farmer Associations (FAs) to represent the interests and meet the needs of this important constituency. CARE has trained FAs to operate on a demand-driven approach and secure forward contracts with buyers before their members start growing high-value crops. The capacity building that CARE has provided throughout the project aimed at preparing FAs to play the key role of a business actor at the community level, negotiating and contracting in advance on behalf of a group of farmers, who would commit to producing agreed upon product in specific quantities and of international quality. CARE's hands-on support to joint contracting and marketing was important because small farmers were keen on sharing the lessons from joint farming and marketing on a wider scale. As Farmer Associations continued to provide contracting and marketing service to farmers, farmers in turn provided the needed percentage of operational costs required for the FAs to continue representing farmer interests.

Making Farmers Responsive to Market Dynamics

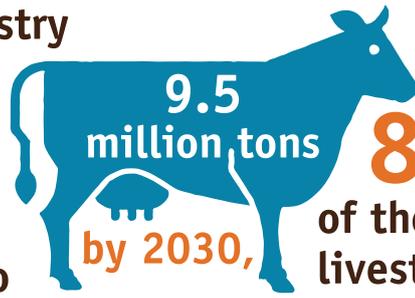
El Shams project has therefore worked to address some of the barriers that small holder farmers have faced in engaging and making markets responsive. These responses include, understanding the value chain associated with strategic products, and challenging some of the actors across the value chain that do not add service or benefit to small farmers. Removing such obstacles has come hand in hand with increased awareness of regional and global market needs, and strengthened organizing to produce a critical supply of strategic products. To meet this aim, CARE trained more than 23,802 farmers in export production and appropriate post-harvest handling techniques for high value horticulture. Because El Shams was focused on the European and Gulf Markets, production standards rose significantly to meet the commitments made by buyers. In 2006, CARE was able for the first time to help small farmers enter into regional and international markets and approximately, 37,406 metric tons (MTs) were exported to the EU, North America and Gulf countries worth LE 78.343 million Egyptian pounds.

C. Balancing between Business Profit and Social Benefit: A Danone and CARE Partnership

The Contribution that Small Producers make to Egypt's Livelihoods and Food Security Sector



The Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR) plans to increase annual milk production to



produced largely by the small farmers who own

80% of the dairy producing livestock in Egypt.



of project implementation, the MCCs that have been established by the project have gone from providing

200 KG of healthy, high quality



milk to an average of



5 tons daily,

thus exceeding the project's original target of 3 tons per day per MCC.

As a result of the evolution of CARE's engagement with the private sector, today CARE has forged key partnerships that are based on strategic interest in increasing Egypt's supply of strategic products. In 2012, CARE Egypt established the first of its kind partnership with the global Dairy production giant, Danone international.

A Danone and CARE Pilot to Improve Quality and Quantity of Milk Production

Small-holding milk producers suffer poor awareness of proper procedures to increase both quality and quantity of the milk produced. As a result, small-holders suffer reduced income from their milk as they are monopolized by milk collectors who are mainly controlled by wholesale traders. Analysis of the dairy value chain conducted by CARE Egypt shows reduced milk productivity and quality, price fixing by wholesale traders, and imbalance in the profits gained by the different contributors in the dairy value chain.

To address these problems, DANONE and CARE in Egypt initiated a pilot project, with the aim of improving both the quality and quantity of milk production, in cooperation with the Agricultural Cooperative in Halabeya, in Beni Suef governorate and the Ashrat Aalaf Cooperative affiliated to West Nubareya Reclamation project. Through this project, the partners agreed to develop the dairy value chains with high socio-economic gains for the local communities, especially for women, while developing quality standards in dairy production in Egypt. As an entry point, it was deemed critical to work with farmer cooperatives, to build their capacity, and to enable them to make profit in return for social services that would be offered to small producers in their communities. Providing specialized support to small holders, would result in increased quality and quantity of milk production, promote quality animal health and veterinarian services for small producers, and would ultimately facilitate fair profit distribution among milk value chain participants, especially for women.



Understanding The Value Chain of Milk Production in Egypt

CARE initiated this project based on a robust analysis of the key elements of the dairy value chain with regard to challenges and opportunities. Some of these challenges included high cost for inputs, limited veterinary services and breed improvement options, unjust manipulation of market prices by multiple actors in the supply chain, and a general lack of understanding of market actors, including laws that govern the main market players. One of the biggest challenges was that the milk wholesaler and not the milk producer has been the biggest beneficiary of milk production processes. It is the wholesaler who determines the price and monopolizes the sector in the region.

However, there were also opportunities to be capitalized on, especially building the capacity of existing cooperatives to become viable rural economic units; giving farmers access to quality services such as feeding, breeding and animal health services on a fee for service basis. Well governed

cooperatives in turn would make use of volume discounts and bargaining power amongst private sector actors interested in their quality product. Another opportunity afforded was the pilot initiative of establishing milk collection centers, to replace the wholesale traders. This would help redistribute profits in a fair way.

Institutional Capacity, Governance and Enabling Environment

While the project has focused on working with small dairy producers, central to this effort has been to improve the institutional capacity and governance structures of the Agriculture Cooperatives. One of the central pillars of this project has been on developing local farmer cooperatives as the nucleus between the farmers and high value markets. Doing so entailed a review of the existing laws that govern agricultural cooperatives and identifying opportunities to work within their parameters. It also included training on applying good governance principles to the work of cooperatives with small dairy producers, such as on ensuring efficiency in resource use, and transparency in milk pricing, and investment of revenues for business growth. The Cooperatives were also supported by CARE to develop strong understanding and build strategic partners with the private sector.

Once Milk Collection Centers were established, the Agriculture Cooperative was trained on managing the centers, primarily to maintain quality and consistent supply of milk. This required that dairy farmers and cooperative members work together to run the Centers using sound economic bases. Awareness-raising amongst farmers on the importance of animal feed, care, and improvement of breed meant that milk production, would immediately yield the quality and quantity commitments made as part of their partnership with Danone, while also assuring consistent returns back into the local business.

Overcoming The Challenges of Small Holder Engagement with High Value Market Actors

In order to help MCCs further their business growth, CARE has placed emphasis on two key aspects of dairy production; namely consistency and quality of product. The geographical location of the MCCs has been critical to ensure that they are close in proximity to high milk production areas, and areas with high potential to ensure availability of sufficient milk volumes as well as accessible to both producers (farmers) and shipment vehicles. Close proximity means that economically viable milk amounts are being provided to the MCC, which allows for better negotiation on price, as well as

guarantees greater profit for both the small producers and the Agriculture Cooperative. Most importantly however, are the quality standards that are applied. By following milk quality guidelines and standards and conducting the necessary milk analysis, acceptance rates by the factory increase as do revenues to the MCC and profits to the farmers.

A Viable Model of a Social Enterprise



CARE believes that developing such a dairy model has great potential to be expanded and developed further by the MoALR to meet its 2030 strategic goals. It is a model that balances between business profit and social benefit. Expressed interest has already begun to yield important returns, with the Egyptian Social Fund for Development, the International Labor Organization, and UN agencies, seeking to replicate this model in Egypt. As such, a strategic partnership between the private sector, CS and government is one that agriculture cooperatives should be able to benefit from and in turn, benefit the largest segment of society supporting Egypt's' food and livelihood security.

Location	Month	# of farmers	Total Amt of Milk Produced	Total Amt delivered to Danone	Total Revenue	Total Operation Cost	Profit (LE)
Beni Suef	March	77	113,480	99,730	307,730	280,872	26,858
	April	95	167,197	165,905	471,175	426,119	45,056
	May	95	207,874	201,514	574,142	533,419	40,723
	June	77	182,643	179,450	502,460	472,513	29,947
Sub-Total			770,994	730,159	2,128,046	1,968,407	159,839
Nubariya	March	80	58,240	58,240	134,992	118,450	16,542
	April	40	52,100	52,000	148,791	127,225	21,566
	May	33	44,530	44,430	150,898	109,942	40,956
	June	33	54,570	54,570	152,796	127,740	25,056
Sub-Total			330,886	224,540	898,352	795,306	103,046
Totals			1,101,880	954,699	3,026,398	2,763,713	

The Collective Power of Women in The Dairy Industry

CARE in Egypt has developed a vision of working with existing, yet often floundering Agricultural Cooperatives to achieve business level standards of operations, management, and specialized support to dairy milk producers in locations where dairy production has been known to thrive in Egypt. CARE's unique role in promoting dairy production has been in analyzing the value chain associated with milk production, in understanding how market dynamics impact on all the actors in this value chain, and ensuring that those small farmers at the extreme end of the value chain are provided with the technical know-how required to run a locally-owned and maintained dairy production business. This is particularly important because most dairy producers are women.

Om Mohamed, Abeer, Noura and Waneesa have for the last three years been active members of CARE's Supporting and Empowering Small Milk Producers (SEMP) project, providing daily supplies of quality milk to one of the largest global market actors supplying dairy products to the Egyptian market.

In 10 short months, the MCC went 200 KG of milk to approximately 5 tons daily, all provided by the women in Halabiya.

Om Mohamed, recounts their story. "At first, we were at the mercy of the milk trader. He would come to the house, sometimes without any consistency in his visits, to take our milk from us at a price that he decided that very day, and without really weighing our milk production properly. All of us felt that we were being shortchanged for our milk, but because we were not keen on leaving our houses, this was the best arrangement for us. When we heard about the MCC being established in our village, things changed. We were a bit upset that our milk would be put under scrutiny. Gradually, we started to understand the little things such as animal feeding and care, storing of milk and other things to guarantee quality."

This gradual relationship of trust amongst the women was a result of additional investments made by CARE to ensure that the MCC has the specialized staff to provide advice to women on a daily basis as well as test all the milk that was coming to the Center in the early hours of the morning. The milk collection center is a collection, quality assessment, preservation point for the milk, but is a central point where women can get training and services offered by the Halabiya Agricultural Cooperative. Specialized information provision, connecting women with local information providers, and veterinary and other animal care services, have been the most critical factors for the MCCs early success in the dairy business.

The Agriculture Cooperative is the main partner with Danone, agreeing at regular intervals throughout the year to set prices for the milk. The result of this negotiation process is advertised on the door of the milk collection center for everyone to see. As Om Mohamed states, "I now understand that these prices change, because the market changes, but at least I know that I am getting the best price for my milk because the MCC has negotiated on all our behalf with Danone. This is a business. Just as Danone needs to make a fair profit, so does the Cooperative and the same for us."

Nora, who is one of the MCC quality specialists, describes how profits are calculated and used. "Each woman has a daily card, where we document the supply that she has provided to the center at the advertised rate. Women are also required to pay a set monthly fee for services provided by the cooperative. This way, each woman knows exactly what her daily income is. At the end of the month, women are provided this amount of money, which many consider an excellent savings mechanism. At a 2.9 Egyptian Pound sale per kilo of milk, some women are able to sell up to 10 kilos of milk per day. Calculated by the 250 lactation days per year, women selling dairy milk in Halabiya in such quantities are able to make a profit of approximately 700 Egyptian Pounds (\$100) over the course of 12 months.

Abeer states that women are happy with this arrangement. “They know that a percentage of their profit (10-15%) is taken by the Cooperative so that they can benefit from the technical advice and 50% reduction in costs of veterinary services when they need it. The technical services that they provide include maintaining the quality of our livestock, artificial insemination, feeding etc.” With these profits, the Agriculture Cooperative of Halabiya has found that it can expand its outreach, and therefore recently purchased the needed/equipped vehicle to transport the milk to the Danone Factory. As the dairy business in Habaliya grows, CARE maintains its special focus on promoting women’s economic empowerment through the approach of making markets work for the most vulnerable. Through such models, CARE works to ensure that women small dairy producers are provided with the opportunity, the skills and the decision-making authority that allow them to be critical market actors.

D. Improving Women’s Economic Opportunity Through The Development of Egypt’s Aquaculture Sector

The Improving Employment and Income through Development of Egypt’s Aquaculture Sector (IE-IDEAS) project has been working with women small fish retailers in the Fayoum, Minya, Sharkeya, Beheira, Kafr el Sheikh Governorates, starting with an analysis of the fish production and marketing value chain. At a national level, analysis shows that women small fish retailers are the ‘weakest link’ in this value chain, possessing neither the assets, nor the networks to be influential players in this important food market.



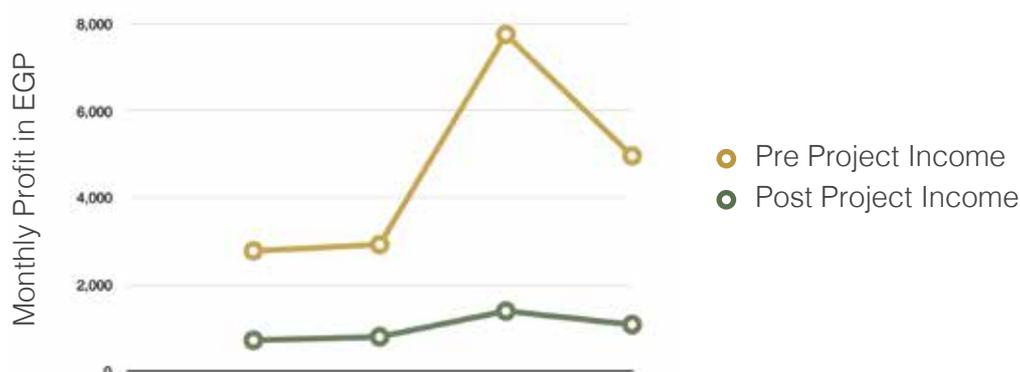
In Egypt, the highest percentage agriculture, livestock, dairy and fisheries activities are domains of work where women occupy significant space. Their involvement is informal in nature, and as a result a significant segment of Egypt's population is a 'hidden' labor force, working without the necessary support, skills or protections against abuse from other players in this market, to which they are entitled. Women fish retailers are considered a hidden category of the poor, because they are often from very poor fishing households, work under often difficult conditions, with limited skills and equipment to manage the unpredictability of markets. The project seeks to level the playing field for 1,275 women fish retailers, with a focus on enhancing their livelihood security by increasing their assets, strengthening their negotiating power and ensuring protections of fish retailers as afforded by the existing Union.

Strengthening The Collective Negotiating Power of Women Fish Retailers

Despite the close knit nature of the communities from which fish retailers hail, many of them traditionally work as competitors rather than as collaborators in this market. CARE's has worked to build a sense of collective identity and benefit amongst the women, in order to recognize the power and strength they bring as a cohesive group to this market. Women fish retailers from each of the governorates were invited to meetings in which they expressed the challenges that they faced in this market, as well as some of their future interest. Based on this, women fish retailers agreed to establishing an informal committee to represent their interests. CARE developed a capacity building plan for this informal committee to provide them with the skills to work together and represent other women fish retailers. Using innovative techniques, such as a community interactive theatre, women were invited to role play and engage in skits that demonstrated their strength as a collective.

As a result, today women fish retailers are organizing their purchasing and marketing activities collectively. Whereas before they would be at the mercy of the trader, today, they are able to organize together and bargain for best prices possible. The level of solidarity amongst the women fish retailers has reached a point where they are "co-sharing some of the risks involved". These risks revolve around loss of business due to poor transportation, storage or seasonal variations in the marketing of their goods. Project data reveals that women have been able to increase their income four-fold, in addition to improving their protections by working in solidarity with each other. Whereas the average income for women fish retailers prior to the project was 1,000 Pounds per month, today the approximate potential income across governorates has reached 4,500 pounds per month.

Women Fish Retailers	Governorate			
	Minya	Fayoum	Kafr El Skeikh	Sharkya
Income Before project interventions	720	800	1392	1080
Income in EGP After all project interventions	2776	2920	7752	4960
Average Income (pre)	998			
Average Income (post)	4602			



Protections Through Increased Organizing and Representation of Women Fish Retailers

CARE approach has been in working closely with the community association and fish retailers with the common good in mind. CARE supported the establishment of a marketplace for women in Fayoum. Instead of being lined on the streets, women fish retailers wanted a safe space to sell their goods. The community association helped them to identify the place, and approached the local unit to dedicate the land. A private sector company was approached to offer the labor and construction material to build a shaded, and hygienic market.

“ Women were involved in the community assets mapping, and during the community public hearing, most of the women were the ones impacted by the education problem. Because there were such restricted spaces in the existing schools, girls were the ones most impacted by these restrictions. And parents don't send girls far away to other schools. ”

Hussein, Rayayna Youth Leader

As the community association and the women's committee grew in strength, CARE worked with the association to advocate for greater representation and protections of women fish retailers with the Fishermen's Union. Traditionally, women would not be voted for a largely male-dominated structures such as the Union, but the strength and credibility the fish retailers, resulted in strong women's representation in both the Union's General Assembly as well as members of the Board. This membership in the Union is now giving voice to women fish retailers through an official elected representative, is facilitating health and social insurance protections to all women fish retailers.



CARE's vision for the near future is to establish a wider economic empowerment platform/ that equips women, working in different agriculture, aquaculture, dairy and livestock products, with the technical know-how of how markets work, provides women with the asset base, and links particular products that women are producing to local, national and regional markets. .

Women Fish Retailers: Standing in Solidarity for Their Economic Rights

Aida is one of 350 fish retailers in the vibrant, yet grueling fish market of Shakshouk, Aida says that “in the beginning, I was skeptical, not really convinced that this project would help us get off the streets, provide us with supplies for our business and even establish a market that we could call our own. When the association asked us to join trainings, I felt that they were serious. These theatre training helped me to think about other women fish retailers in a different way. The theatre reminded us that standing together and supporting each other makes us more powerful than when we stand alone.”

CARE’s first step was to understanding the concerns and dreams of women fish retailers. Affaf admits that her biggest concern was being protected from harassment. “I don’t mind losing money to the market, because that is the nature of the business. But my dignity was trampled on every day by people who refused us transport or refused to have us sell on their streets. Now I and all the 350 women who sell fish here have a street vendors card that protects us from such annoyances.” To secure the place for the market, the Community Association in Shakshouk took it upon themselves to write a formal petition to the Head of the Local Unit, to alter the transportation routes and increase traffic flow to the market.

Sabah, another enthusiastic fish retailer speaks of the solidarity that exists amongst the retailers today. “The competitiveness that existed amongst us is now over. Each one of us used to try to take the best fish first, some of us not even knowing what the best prices were, and others borrowing from the trader at unreasonable prices. Today, we are working hand in hand, buying in bulk, negotiating best prices together, and sharing the risk that each of us faces every day in this market.” Sabah adds that what has really made a difference to them is that they are now able to manage their losses and diversify their income base. “The iceboxes that the project provided were a simple solution for me. I no longer had to sell my fish at a loss at the end of the day or to throw it away. The icebox has helped me properly store my fish for much longer than before. My clients know where they can find me and that my fish is fresh.”

Affaf is more eager to talk about the innovative ways the fish retailers have diversified their incomes. “Some of us have grown our market activity by buying grills to prepare ready-made fish, and sell it for a little more profit. Some of us were also provided with tricycles that we use to lessen the transportation burden and also for income generating during the day. We share the profits from that too. This is not just about how much money I make, but how I am helping to support other women.”

Heba has another perspective on the change that has taken place in the lives of fish retailers since they started engaging in this project. Heba was recently nominated and elected to be the representative of the women fish retailers in the Fishermen’s Union. “As a group, and as paying members in the Union, we are now claiming our rights. I often hear these women say that it is their right to be protected by the Union. It is their right to enjoy certain protections, such as health insurance, to the same social subsidies that others enjoy, and to have social insurance like everyone else”. Through the Union, women fish retailers have taken collective organizing one step further to ensure the protections of all women working in this field. Their voices are now being heard and are now encouraging others to join.

E. Influencing Policy in Partnership with Egypt's Cooperative Union of Water Resources

Egyptian aquaculture is an important component of national food supply in Egypt and makes a significant contribution to incomes, employment creation and food security of the country. Meeting the growing demand for fish, and making it accessible, especially for people of lower incomes, is a key aspect of Egypt's Agriculture and Natural Resources Strategy that CARE Egypt has worked towards. In order to meet the targets set for the next 10 years, of producing approximately 1.5 million tonnes, CARE has embarked on an innovative partnership with the Egyptian Cooperative Union of Egyptian Water Resources (Aquatic Union) to support two key elements of aquaculture production, namely building farmer technical capacity in fish farming, and enhancing the institutional capacity of the leading national level Union representing the interests of fish farmers and fishermen. By expanding productivity and employment potential in this sector, CARE and partners seek to achieve significant impact on the incomes and food security of 50,000 households.

Expanding Egypt's Fish Farming Potential

Mr. Mohamed EL Fekky, Chairman of the Aquatic Union states that "this partnership focuses on one of the most critical food security sectors in Egypt. Through it, CARE has continued to press for the rights of the most vulnerable populations working in aquaculture sector, with the aim of raising concerns of this vulnerable group amongst regulatory and policy bodies." Mr. Awad, Deputy Head of the Union acknowledges that existing national level institutions representing the interests of fish farmers, have not received adequate resources and attention to capitalize on Egypt's fish farming potential.

Recognizing the potential for this sector to thrive, CARE has helped to build a stronger understanding the challenges faced by the fish farmers in Fayoum, Minya, Kafr el Sheikh, Beheria and Sharkeya by analyzing some of the greatest challenges and needs of fish farmers and developing a common vision of how best to engage in influencing policies that affect fish farmers. As the partnership developed, CARE committed to building the institutional capacity of Union, in operational aspects but also in providing support members of 10 fish farming associations with technical know-how in fish farming techniques. Institutional assistance included setting up the required training center, installing a data base system to capture key information on fish farming, training for technical specialists, manuals and resource materials development and financial technical assistance. In turn, the Aquatic Union was entrusted with providing specialist training to the local associations on fish farming techniques and comprehensive fish farming.

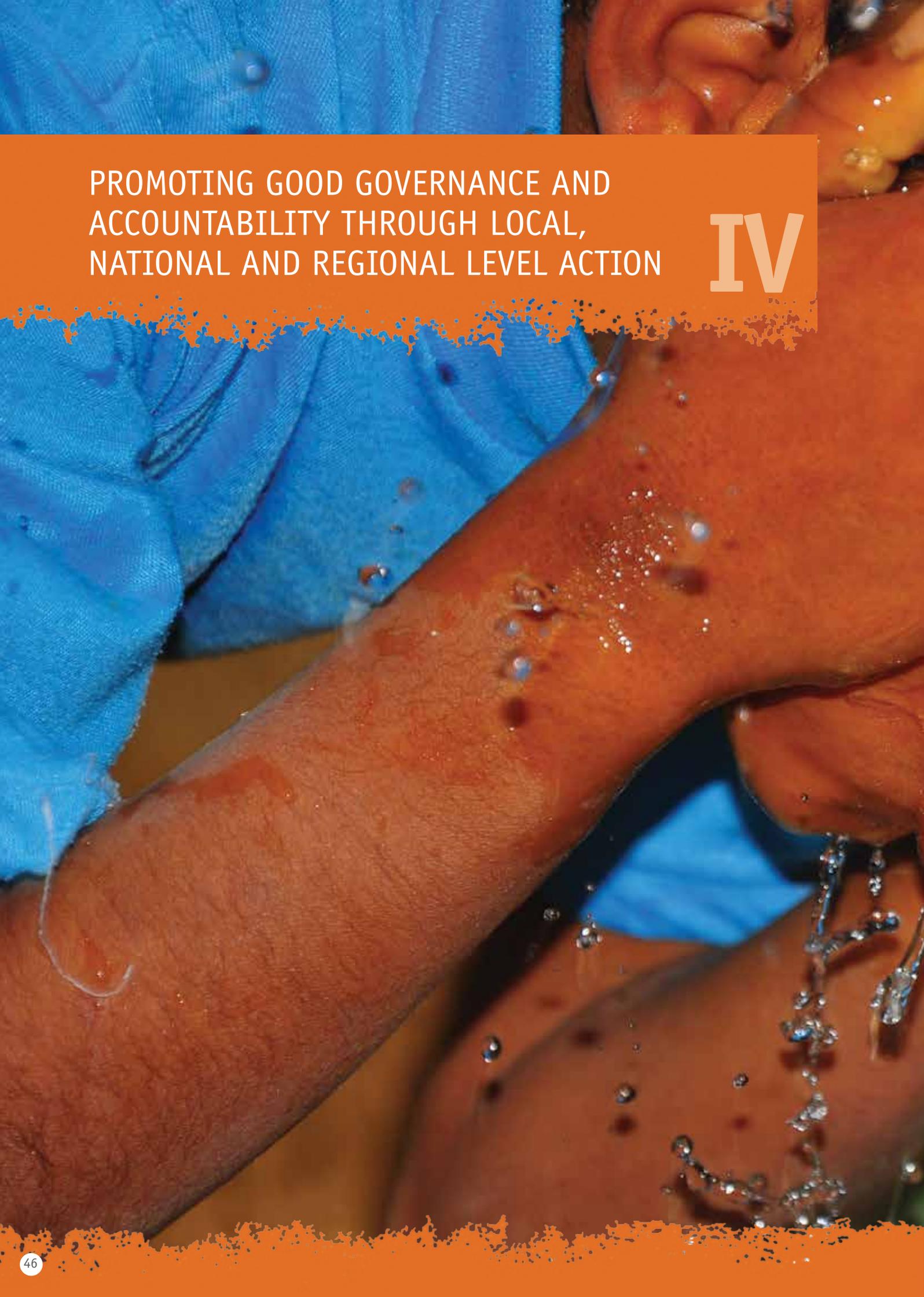


A Partnership That Yields Innovations

Technical specialists from the Aquatic Union point to the interesting work undertaken within this partnership to promote an integrated system between aquaculture and agriculture. Agriculture farmers are encouraged to set up fish farms, and use the water from the fish farms on their lands, thus requiring less inputs and using higher quality water. This innovation has been in Minya Governorate, where restrictions are enforced on using agricultural or desert land for fish farming. Despite this, several interested farmers have experimented on their desert land by using their ground water as their water source, and their existing water tanks, as fish farms. This experimentation has yielded great success, as evidenced by 133 recently established farms in Minya alone. Mr. Mohamed, Fish Farming Specialist states that “these models are now being replicated in far off places such as Wadi Natroun and Nubariya.”

Influencing Policy in Partnership with Egypt’s Aquatic Union

In recognition of the credibility and role of the Aquatic Union in representing fish farmers concerns, the Union was invited discuss a new National Law on Water Resources and engage directly with policy makers and share particular concerns voiced by fish farmers. According to Mr. Fekky, “some of the most commonly cited issues of concern for fish farmers in Egypt has been policies that restrict the fish farming to arid land, limit fish farmers rental durations of these lands to only three years, and also restrict fish farming to the use of agriculture waste water. Fish farmers don’t want to invest money in fish farmers that they cannot manage over a longer period of time, and so one of our priorities was to revitalize the law that was issued that dealt with rental durations of fish farms.” As a result of policy efforts, this 25 year land rental policy has been revitalized, and the Union is currently working with policy stakeholders on the implementation mechanisms for this policy to take effect. As outlined by Mr. Fekky, “our work with CARE has been successful in highlighting the positive role that fish farming can play in Egypt’s economy, providing new models for fish farming practice, and advocating for supportive laws. This is the reflection of what a complementary partnership truly means.”



PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND
ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH LOCAL,
NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL ACTION

IV



Empowered Citizens of MENA Make Their Voices Heard

CARE's Good Governance and Civic Engagement Program across the Middle East Region rests on three central, yet inter-related pillars. CARE believes that empowered citizens in MENA can and should make their voices heard in public policy setting and in policy reform. CARE also believes that it is up to citizens of this region to demand accountability and responsiveness from public authorities. In order to do so, CARE's work on promoting good governance and accountability over the course of the last five years has been on building inclusive, consensual and equitable relations between public authorities and citizens.

“Financial figures talk. So we use budget works tools to promote a culture amongst citizens that allows them to track the efficient use of local and national budgets. Tracking expenditures and audits is what gives us evidence of whether or not rights bearers are being afforded their rights.”

Mohamed Mansour, IBP

A. Placing Citizens at the Center of the Good Governance Agenda

CARE's work on social accountability over the course of the last five years, seeks to provide an innovative model at regional level of how to change the terms of the power relationship between citizen and policy actors from one of confrontation to one of partnership and collaboration. This has come through an increase in the level of understanding and consciousness of social accountability in the region as well as through the establishment of a viable regional platform for exchange of experience and contextually appropriate tools. As a result of both, today, there is a marked increase in levels of knowledge, tools and materials, and case studies. Such a platform of dialogue, sharing, collaboration and equitable distribution of power at the micro level could be a model of what is possible and needed at the macro-level in all the countries throughout the MENA region.

The Evolution of CARE and Governance Actors in MENA

CARE's work on governance and social accountability reflects a new way of working, with the country-led management of a region-wide program. The first of its kind regional program for CARE therefore needed to be conceptually relevant to the region, designed based on a contextual understanding of all countries involved and flexible in its implementation. CARE's management role as the Secretariat of the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability, in promoting joint planning, implementation, and peer monitoring of community projects, has provided a model for how the governance platform can be managed in the future. CARE's own evolution has resulted from this regional model, marked by the flexibility and innovation required to develop models of dialogue and collective action that is relevant to all countries in the region.

For partners in the region, representing government, civil society and the media, working through a governance platform at a national level has afforded an opportunity to evolve into an entity that seeks to collectively institutionalize governance and social accountability tools and practice. Now that a common understanding of social accountability has been widely understood and shared, national level actors are seeing to work together in a more institutionalized manner to generate greater citizen engagement in promoting transparency, freedoms of association, and better quality of service. National level platforms have now become registered as national organizations to sustain the effort on promoting social accountability.

The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability – Arab World

Over the last decade, social accountability practices have emerged as a leading force for change in governance practices, particularly around essential issues like service delivery. Now, in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the governance and participation dialogue is on the forefront of approaches to public sector reform. At this critical juncture, civil society and government need a space for this dialogue to take place. ANSA - Arab World formally launched in September 2011, has contributed to fulfilling this need by serving as a platform for multi-stakeholder engagement and to enhance the knowledge of civil society, government, media and the private sector about governance and social accountability. ANSA Arab World joins three other ANSA regional networks in Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, as well as a global ANSA. While their portfolio varies, the ANSAs are linked by their common goal of seeking innovative ways to equip civil society organizations

and ordinary citizens with the skills necessary to play a more active role in holding governments to account.

ANSA network undertakes activities designed to:

- Enhance the knowledge of civil society, government, media and the private sector about governance and social accountability.
- Raise awareness about participatory governance and social accountability is key at both the country and regional level.
- Build capacity of non-government and governmental stakeholders about social accountability focused on partnership
- As a dialogue platform, strengthen networking and the exchange of information and expertise.

The Secretariat of ANSA-Arab World has been hosted and managed by CARE Egypt since 2011 with plans to transfer management and governance responsibility to an ANSA Board of Directors in 2015.

Transferring The Model of Good Governance

The national level platforms are now coming together to represent the social accountability and governance at a national level. A gradual transfer of governance responsibility of a regional level platform has been planned by CARE for 2015. This gradual transition is a way to ensure that principles of governance are translated within the platform, and led by a Board of Trustees comprising of different actors in MENA. Registered today in Lebanon, the Governance Platform in MENA is working to connect different actors, collect and attract new ideas. This new governance platform has been established to increase ownership amongst local, national and regional members to independently seek each other's support through dialogue, experience exchange and collective action. Today, it is a regionally-led and regionally managed Network at the forefront of action on issues of social accountability in the region.

B. Freedom of Association: Practicing The Right of Egyptian Youth Engage with National Level Policy Actors to Inform The Egypt's Draft NGO Law

The recent uprisings witnessed across the Arab world confirm the potential of youth to become agents of change in every aspect of society. Youth participation in governance means that youth have equitable access to and play an active role in making decisions, setting policies, and influencing outcomes on matters relevant to their lives at the local, national and regional levels. Youth are active and contributing members of society now, not just future leaders of tomorrow.

Giving Youth A Voice Through Youth Led Platforms

CARE in Egypt, has recognized that despite their active engagement in bringing about change, there are few adequate platforms for youth engagement in policy dialogues. Some of the existing spaces

for youth engagement, such as student unions, youth centers or local popular council activity, do not provide the appropriate avenues for youth to express issues of concern, as well as attempt to resolve them by engaging with policy actors. CARE has therefore build on its experience in working closely and directly with community activists and organizations to build this engagement from the grassroots level for greater upward accountability.

Youth Empowerment as Integral to Policy Agendas

In order to capitalize on this growing momentum amongst youth, CARE has worked to establish 20 youth platforms in the governorates of Beni Suef, Qena and Luxor, which have served as key channels for expressing youth opinion and voice on various critical public policy issues. These platforms, have been both physical as well as virtual in nature, and have allowed youth to hold open and transparent dialogues with decision makers on both sub-national and national levels on issues of concern that they have identified as requiring youth engagement and action. One of the key successes of the on-line platform is that it has opened up an important space for female youth to be present, active and vocal in determining issues of concern and proposing ways to address them.

Nearly one in five people living in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is between the ages of 15 and 24—the age group defined as “youth.” In 2005, the number of youth in the region reached 95 million and is expected to reach 100 million by 2035.

“Youth in MENA, Demographic Opportunity or Challenge?” Population Reference Bureau.”

Training and networking opportunities have been provided by CARE to youth on how to use social media tools to organize, how to prioritize policy issues of concern, and ways by which to engage with policy actors. One of the important mechanisms for this kind of engagement has been through the development of policy papers and policy recommendations, from a youth perspective. Another important outlet for youth expression has been the establishment of an important on-line/virtual group, organized and managed by youth on Facebook, entitled “Voices of Egypt’s Youth”. Today, this on-line platform brings together some 600 youth from all across Egypt to discuss issues of concern to them.

Youth Informing the Drafting of Egypt’s NGO Law

Collective concerns are analyzed and studied to allow youth to have more robust discussions with policy actors. Through the Participatory Planning, Development and Governance project, youth identified the NGO Law (#84/2002), as one of the most pressing issues requiring their engagement because of their concern that this law could potentially restrict their civic action. To develop their policy positions, youth were invited to review and critique the NGO law, but also communicate with other youth groups who had done the same. This joint critique of the law thus represented a wider constituency of youth from across the governorates of Beni Suef, Qena, and Luxor where the project was being implemented.

Having this policy review in hand, allowed groups of youth to meet with different stakeholder including representatives from different political parties, representatives from the Ministry of Social Solidarity, Members of Parliament, and the organizations such as the Social Contract Center in Egypt. This was a collective opportunity to engage with higher levels of policy making, with some youth led policy recommendations related to the NGO Law in Egypt, being represented at governorate and sometimes central levels. The youth that have partaken in this project have found their policy reviews and policy recommendations to be an effective tool to engage with decision makers, in addition to the meetings that they have taken initiative to organize with the relevant stakeholders at the national level. The result of these youth-led recommendations has been significant interactions with the Senior Advisors at the Ministry of Social Solidarity, who have taken the youth-led review of the Law into consideration during the development of the new draft NGO law.

C. Budget Transparency: Inclusion of Citizens in Promoting Budget Transparency and Accountability in MENA

Over the course of the last ten years, CARE has worked with several strategic partners to support and expand CS-led platforms that enable constituencies to better interact with decision-makers with persuasive arguments and successful reform models. In 2013, CARE Egypt forged a strategic relationship with International Budget Partnership (IBP), which reflects an overall vision of strengthening citizen engagement in aspects of budget transparency across the MENA region.

Budget Transparency: Critical For Good Governance in MENA

National budgets represent an accurate translation of how national governments intend to meet commitments they have made to improve the welfare of their nations. They are a reflection of how priorities are set, and commitments followed up on. Transparency in the way budgets are set, priorities determined, budget utilization is monitored and quality is followed up on, allows space for citizens and rights bearers to address issues of citizen rights to quality service, increases social action and accountability, addresses issues of corruption, but most importantly affords citizens the opportunity to engage in ensuring that resources are used in the more efficient way possible.

The wave of change that has swept through the Middle East region in the last five years, has given voice and power to greater citizen engagement and action in claiming their rights. Long-standing fear amongst CSOs and rights activists in the region to work on budget issues, has been replaced by a sense of obligation on the part of active citizens to better understand how their governments are prioritizing needs and rights. It remains the case that for many CSOs and groups however, engaging on issues of budget transparency is unfamiliar territory, requiring significant analytical skills, and placing them under scrutiny. CARE Egypt's relationship with IBP aims to change CS disengagement from budget transparency discussions, and to equip them with the tools and skills required for citizens to engage in these important accountability channels.

Complementarity within the partnership between CARE and IBP

The starting point of this working partnership was developing a joint understanding of what both partners wanted to achieve together in the region. To do so, CARE and IBP had to discuss the value add of each partner to the joint goal of engaging stakeholders on issues of budget transparency. For CARE, it was important to relay the message to CSOs about the criticality of engagement on issues that impact the social status of citizens. Doing so, required CSOs to be able to read and analyze how budgets developed by policy actors and duty bearers worked to the benefit of those in need. As such, the start of CARE and IBP's partnership relationship moved from discussions about national level budgets to local level budgets. The agreed upon focus was on budget transparency in schools, youth centers, local hospitals and other service outlets that afford citizens their basic rights.

As a partner of choice, CARE entered into this partnership with an understanding of community needs and culture, a history of engaging with grassroots organization and groups, credibility with local government and reach across countries in the Middle East. Likewise, IBP entered into this partnership with their strong reputation of working at national and international levels, and a robust understanding of how budgets are set based on priority, how they are monitored and analyzed, and the best mechanisms to raise concerns to duty bearers if budgets are not appropriately utilized.

The Change CARE and IBP Seek

As CARE and IBP's web of relationships have expanded, so has the opportunity to engage with local actors as well as policy actors such as the Ministry of Finance. In Egypt in particular, this

new opportunity has afforded CARE Egypt, the chance to engage with high level policy makers on other issues tied to other pillars of its governance agenda, namely access to information, freedom of association and public service delivery. Together, CARE and IBP are looking to achieve several key successes. The first is to break the cycle of disengagement amongst CS actors in relation to engaging with duty bearers on local and national budgets. Both partners seek to open the space for transparent and consensual discussions about how budgets can efficiently be analyzed and monitored, as an approach to informing priority actions that impact on the quality of people's lives. While the focus of this partnership has been on local level engagement in budget works, this has been an opportunity to engage more deliberately at the national level, by taking some of the messages and lessons from local level engagement and sharing it with policy actors.

D. Improving Service Delivery: Youth Action for Quality of Education Services in Upper Egypt

Rayayna village is a conservative society in Armant District, Qena Governorate, with strong familial and religious affiliations. As an organization with strong Islamic charitable background and roots, the local Community Development Association (CDA) in Rayayna was at first skeptical of working with international NGOs like CARE and its local partner, 'Muftah el Hayat' (Key of Life). This rejection was also especially pronounced when CARE launched its Partnership Program for Democracy and Governance Project, an initiative aimed at working with youth to support local governance mechanisms. It was an initiative that sought to invest in the youth potential that exists in many remote communities in Upper Egypt.

Alaa, Hussein and Ossama are three youth from Rayayna, who were also skeptical that their voices and opinions would be heard by those in positions of power in their local communities. CARE and its local partner therefore, worked with these young men by transferring some basic development concepts, ranging from good governance and accountability concepts to ways by which understanding the political and legal context of their communities, can help them to engage as active citizens in combatting corruption, supporting development process, and reforming laws.

Rayayna Youth Taking Initiative

Osama describes how they received on the job training by CARE on conducting a community survey on some of the pressing development issues that were plaguing small communities like their own. "Our results revealed that there was an urgent need to address issues of primary education, because of the very poor reading and writing skills amongst students. It was also a priority issue because in Rayayna, there was only one primary school in the entire community and a significantly large numbers of out of school children. This one school has been hosting another school on its premises, which has resulted in approximately 1060 students in one school, and class density of about 45 students per class."

However, these young and dynamic men also realized that one of their biggest challenges was in dealing with the leadership figures within the community associations, who were not accustomed to seeing youth this active and engaged in community affairs. Hussein acknowledges that this was their real challenge, and that the actual barrier was almost a generational one, between the charity driven mind-set of the existing community association and their own rights driven mind-set. For Hussein, theirs was a rights-centered way of working, that relied on vocalizing the rights of citizens to access quality services.

Engaging Communities to Claim their Rights

The approach that these young men took was to advocate for community hearings sessions, during which members of the community could voice their opinions with regards to community priorities, and could also be active in identifying solutions. However, this was resisted by CDA leadership, who had preconceived notions of what needed to be prioritized in Rayayna and had taken actions towards finding a solution, with limited community consultation. These two opposing approaches allowed Alaa, Hussein and Ossama to publicly speak about citizen engagement, citizen responsibility and accountability towards each other. Gradually, they were able to mobilize additional youth voices to speak to the importance of community participation in priority setting. With additional youth advocates, the community needs assessment and a solid understanding of how to conduct community meetings, the youth held their first ever community public hearing at the Nababta Diwan in Rayayna, in the presence of the Undersecretary of Education in Luxor, the Armant Education Director, representatives from the General Authority for Adult Education, the Head of the Local Popular Council in Rayayna, as well as natural leaders, and community members.

The evidence generated by their research and the presence of these high level decision makers afforded the youth of Rayayna to talk with confidence and raise the priority issues that they had identified. Community youth talked freely about overcrowded classrooms, decreased classroom hours, tensions between the students of the two schools as well as differences in the approach to school management. After sharing the extent of the problem, the youth of Rayayna were able to raise the problem of the six year delay by governmental officials in Armant Educational Department in building a new school, as well as ways that community and governmental officials could work together to address the problem of limited schools.

As a result, a joint community and local government decision was arrived at to construct a new school, and not just an annex to the existing primary school building. Alaa states that it was the commitment and perseverance of the youth that resulted in success one year after the community public hearing was held. “We followed up for a whole year with the GAEB and the MoE, and in February 2012, we finally received the required approvals to start the construction of an additional primary school in Rayayna community.” The new school includes 5 new floors, each having 4 new classes. The total of 20 new classrooms means that it will either be able to absorb new students or relieve the existing school of the large number of students at the primary level.

SURVEY RESULTS

The data presented in the below charts is a representation of findings from two surveys conducted by CARE Egypt. The first survey targeted local partners and stakeholders to assess their perception of CARE Egypt's role in the target groups it works in, its values, and the image it has within the field. The second survey targeted direct partners and donors, both domestic and international, to reflect on their partnership with CARE through assessing the organization's transparency, management capacity, and its relationship with beneficiaries and stakeholders. Both surveys relied on convenience sampling.

Project Management Cycle

1. CARE Egypt designs its projects professionally	Strongly Agree	75%	Agree	25%				
2. CARE Egypt plans for its project through a concrete and clear framework	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	50%	N/A	25%		
3. CARE Egypt plans appropriately its startup phase	Agree	50%	N/A	50%				
4. CARE Egypt has strong standards for reporting	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	25%	Disagree	25%	N/A	25%
5. CARE Egypt has strong standards for Monitoring and Evaluation through a well-designed	Agree	75%	N/A	25%				
6. Deadlines and commitments are respected by CARE Egypt	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	25%	N/A	50%		
7. CARE Egypt plans its projects and interventions with sustainability in mind	Agree	75%	N/A	25%				
8. CARE Egypt submits professional evaluation reports	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	75%				
9. CARE Egypt evaluates its projects objectively	Agree	75%	Disagree	25%				
10. CARE Egypt learns from its evaluation and preimplemented projects	Agree	50%	Disagree	25%	N/A	25%		
11. CARE Egypt successfully achieves its targets and outcomes	Agree	50%	Disagree	50%				
12. CARE Egypt projects are aligned with its longterm plans	Agree	50%	Strongly Disagree	50%				
13. CARE Egypt creates replicable successful models	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	50%	Strongly Disagree	25%		
14. CARE Egypt shares information transparently with its partners	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	50%	N/A	25%		

Relationship with Stakeholders

15. Our priorities are well aligned with CARE Egypt's vision	Strongly Agree	75%	Agree	25%				
16. It is easy to plan and coordinate with CARE Egypt	Strongly Agree	50%	N/A	50%				
17. Financial and administrative standards within CARE Egypt are compliant with my organization's standards	Agree	50%	Disagree	25%	N/A	25%		
18. CARE Egypt is capable of identifying CSOs accurately	Agree	50%	Disagree	25%	N/A	25%		
19. CSOs are engaged in a participatory manner in CARE Egypt's interventions	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	50%	Disagree	25%		
20. CARE Egypt engages CSOs in their program/project design	Strongly Agree	50%	Agree	25%	N/A	25%		
21. CARE Egypt is keen to include government entities in their projects	Agree	50%	Disagree	25%	N/A	25%		
22. CARE Egypt is keen to abide by the government's strategy	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	50%	Disagree	25%		
23. CARE Egypt involves media during its project implementation	Strongly Agree	25%	Disagree	25%	N/A	25%	Strongly Disagree	25%
24. CARE Egypt deals with media as a tool of advocacy and awareness, and not just as a means to publish projects' news	Strongly Agree	50%	Agree	25%	N/A	25%		

25. Does CARE Egypt ensure that its partners' visibility is as clear as its own	Agree	50%	N/A	25%	Strongly Disagree	25%
26. CARE's experience has allowed it to have a good understanding of needed	Strongly Agree	50%	Agree	50%		

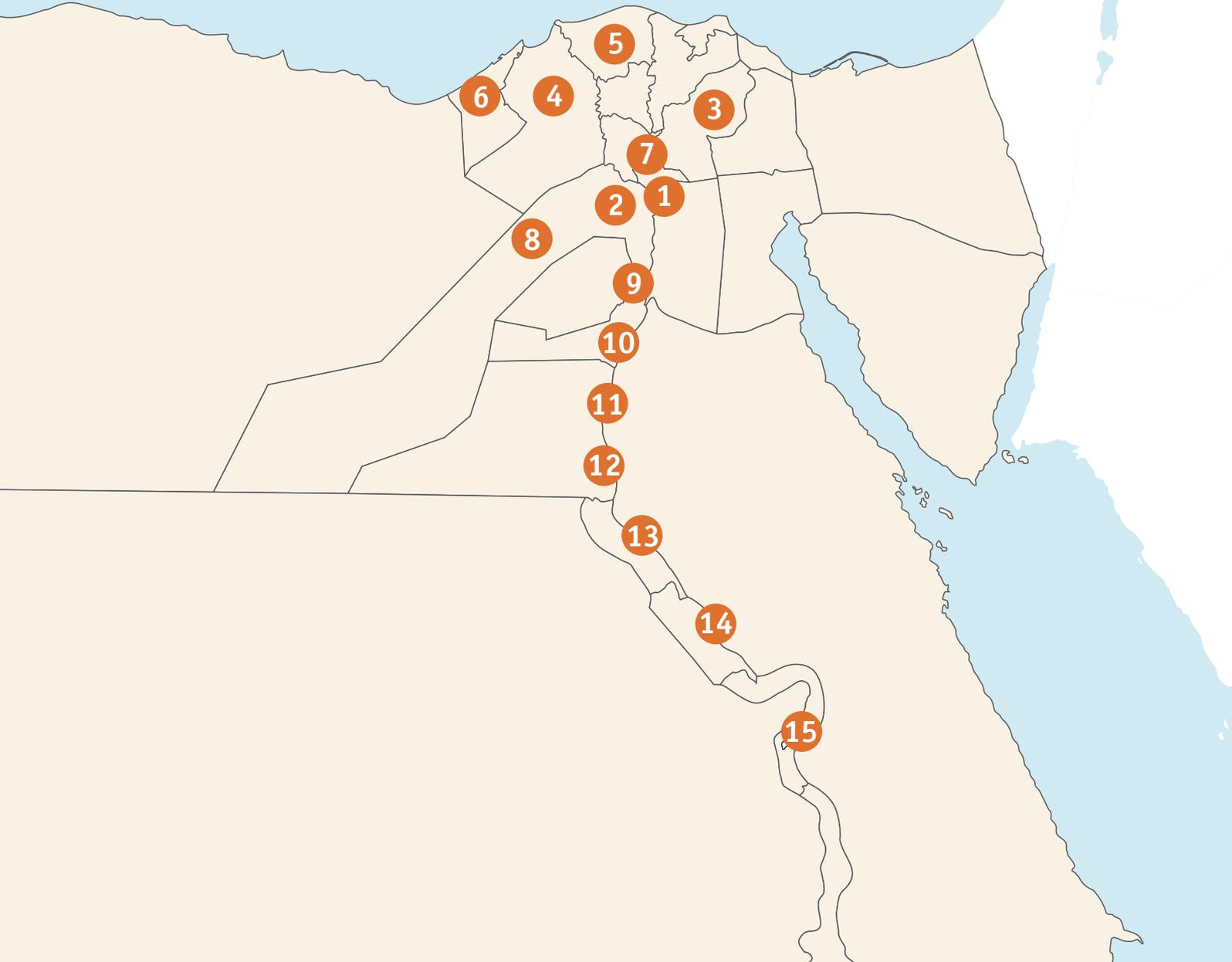
CARE Egypt has strong expertise in the following areas of specialty:

27. Awareness Raising	Strongly Agree	50%	Agree	50%		
28. Capacity Building	Strongly Agree	50%	Agree	25%	N/A	25%
29. Technical Assistance	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	75%		
30. Subgrants	Strongly Agree	25%	Agree	25%	N/A	50%
31. Advocacy Campaigns	Strongly Agree	50%	Agree	50%		

General Questions

32. We would like to continue working with CARE Egypt	Strongly Agree	50%	Agree	50%		
33. There is a potential for growth in our relationship with CARE Egypt	Agree	50%	Disagree	25%	N/A	25%

Map of Total Projects



Governorates Covered by CARE (2005-2015)

- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1. Cairo | 5. Kafr El Sheikh | 9. Beni Suef | 13. Qena |
| 2. Giza | 6. Alexandria | 10. Minya | 14. Luxor |
| 3. Sharqiyya | 7. Qalubiyya | 11. Assiut | 15. Aswan |
| 4. Beheira | 8. Fayoum | 12. Sohag | |

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Tel: (202) 23920653

Beni Suef

24 Fared Street, Mokbel.
Tel. / Fax : (082) 2339941 / 2339942 / 2339943

Minya

3 Adnan Al-Maliki Street, Al Mustaqbal Tower.
Tel. / Fax : (086) 2372446 / 2372447

Assiut

11 El-Khazendar Street, (Previously Adly Yakan), Apt # 4.
Tel. / Fax : (088) 234 9404 / 234 9405

Sohag

18 Makah El-Mokarama Street, 1st Floor, Apt # 3.
Tel. / Fax : (093) 231 2905 / 232 8178 / 231 8923

Qena

Boustan Street, Ali El-Saman House, Houd 10.
Tel. / Fax : (096) 332342 / 327673

Aswan

Seventy neighborhood next to the City Council, Kom Ombo.
Tel. / Fax : (097) 3505250

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