

Coptic Orthodox Church

Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services



YOU
ARE
THE LIGHT
OF THE
WORLD

Matthew 5:14



Annual Report
2019
Issued 2020



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Message



from His Holiness Pope Tawadros

It's my pleasure to introduce the Annual Activity Report for the year 2019 by the Bishopric of Public Ecumenical and Social Services (BLESS) of the Coptic Orthodox Church (COC) in Egypt. For many decades, BLESS performed as an essential platform for service delivery within the COC. This important role was demonstrated at the levels of sustainable development and at the level of social welfare directed to combat poverty and destitution. This role was particularly evident during emergency situations that affected underprivileged areas; in need of development and social care. I would like to thank the staff and servants of BLESS who performed under the guidance of His Grace BLESS Director, Bishop Yolios the General Bishop, and BLESS Executive Director. I would, also, like to thank all international and local partners for working together to provide an integrated service with the authentic Christian spirit as expressed by St. Paul «Faith Working through Love»

My sincere greetings and love,

Pope Tawadros II

June 2020



from Bishop Yolios

Bishop of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services

“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose”. Philippians 2:13
God is the Beneficent. With His Holy Spirit, He shifts the will and the heart. He gives the ability and talents for work and implementation. God's good purpose is fulfilled in people; His creation and the work of His hand. His good purpose is in their salvation, joy, strength, empowerment, peace and their success. So, let's rejoice and thank God for His work done by a great staff; a staff moved and led by Him in BLESS, a team whose fruits and impact are evident and deep in our beloved country Egypt. This multi-talented and multi- aged team works together and gives a harmonious melody, leading to the rejoice of our communities from Aswan till Alexandria. May God Bless you all and compensate you for your efforts.

I would like to thank all our service partners and to many more years of cooperation and love. May God compensate you all.

Letter



Statement

of Executive Director

Inspired by Jesus statement, and guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, BLESS has laid a strong focus on emphasizing a lasting community empowerment process. Despite BLESS reputable performance in supporting the underprivileged communities, yet the organization is engrossed by institutionalizing its community development work to become a genuine and integral part of the served people day-to-day practice.

By all means, 2019 was a distinguished year for the community development service of BLESS. During the course of the year, BLESS has undergone three major types of assessment; technical, administrative and financial reviews. These three assessments were strictly focused on upgrading its systems to best serve the target beneficiaries and highlighted the distinguishing performance of BLESS's field, technical and financial staff, who provide local communities with services made with love and excellency.

2019 witnessed the completion of the shift in using a fully automated financial system replacing the traditional manual system. Thanks Lord, this switch was gradual, smooth and very helpful for the technical and field staff to better control their budget execution process.

This year was an important landmark in the application and institutionalization of a group of Standard Operating Systems (SOP). More operating systems are to be created and adopted to standardize BLESS performance. The upcoming phase will ensure more efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition, BLESS is intensifying working with community volunteers to secure a well-adopted knowhow of the process of community empowerment. Our community empowerment and sustainability team will be engaged with phased-out communities for two years after BLESS has completed its planned interventions. During the post-exit period, our field staff will mentor and coach the community to continue its autonomous performance.

Through this issue I send my appreciation and gratitude for all development champions, volunteers, staff, and partners who made 2019 achievements possible.

Hani Riad,
BLESS Executive Director

BLESS at a glance



Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services

BLESS, over decades, has established itself, as an organization committed towards investing in Egyptian people potentials, to reach human dignity through communal participation, inspired by the ancient Egyptian civilization, linking the present to future.

Who are we?

The Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services (BLESS) was established in 1962 to serve as the arm of the Coptic Orthodox Church (COC) in the field of Social Development. BLESS has a leading role in the diaconal and ecumenical services for the poor, underprivileged and marginalized communities throughout Egypt. BLESS also works in harmony with all the other Coptic Orthodox Church organizations and in full coordination with all Archbishops and Bishops in dioceses to offer social care and development services for the served communities.



BLESS Vision

A community capable of investing its potential, accepting diversity, respecting differences, and living with human dignity

BLESS Mission

Awakening the social-awareness of individuals to liberate society from the bondage of poverty, ignorance, and illness. Emphasizing human values, reinforcing the Egyptian identity, and leading the change through communal participation. BLESS will lead the change through field interventions, and the support of forming local entities

BLESS Guiding Values

- Our love for God inspires us to love all human beings and respect their dignity,
- Transparency and accountability,
- Encouraging and supporting the spirit of creativity, volunteer work and charity,
- Respecting human beings regardless of religion, sex, age, or race,
- Re-affirming the spirit of responsibility and commitment,
- Providing quality and sustainable services and
- Focusing on compiling and utilizing available local resources.

How do we endeavor sustainable development?

BLESS strives to support underprivileged and marginalized communities through applying two main types of interventions:

A. Short-term interventions:

They are demonstrated in AGAPE Program, in which BLESS offers immediate relief assistance and philanthropic support to the needy people, from Greater Cairo Dioceses and other Dioceses. The program uses an application, that depends on a central database authorized by ID number, as a mean of identification.

B. Long-term interventions:

They are led by the Integrated Community Development Program(ICDP), which aims to serve poor and marginalized communities, in order for these communities to reach self-independence. BLESS supports 40-45 targeted communities through wide range of components and interventions implemented by local trained field practitioners. Starting from day one, BLESS focuses on sustainability by creating local trained cadres, capable of addressing community needs, as well as building networks with other GOs and NGOs. Hence, BLESS is able to lead local initiatives in collaboration with the accessible active local or regional entities. BLESS usually continues in a community through a period that ranges between 4-5 years. During this period, BLESS provides communities with the required knowledge and skills to empower a group of natural community leaders or new formed entities in communities. BLESS also mobilizes human resources and benefits from their experiences in the targeted communities order to enable them to have their own alternatives.

The two departments work in a close harmony and they complement each other. While AGAPE Program is mainly concerned with assisting underprivileged families, providing the basic needs of food, shelter, health care, BLESS community development sector is focused on investing and developing knowledge and skills of human beings, leading to the creation of sustainable community empowerment.

BLESS Governing Body

As BLESS being a part of the mother church, His Holiness Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark is considered the highest authority which directs and manages BLESS. His Holiness organizes BLESS services through setting strategies and providing policies, values and leadership to all staff there in the directions and pillars of service.

BLESS has a seven-member advisory board which advises the Bishop and the Executive Director on various topics. This Advisory Committee is a supporting tool and a source of experience, which BLESS needs in order to execute its services. It is also chaired by the Bishop of BLESS. All the Committee members are volunteers for the church's service and all its decisions are advisory. The Advisory Committee members also have extensive experience working with faith-based organizations, civil society, international organizations, donors and private companies. The Committee is headed by BLESS's Bishop and involves experts in the following, BLESS advisory committee

Fr. Rafael Tharwat *Communication and training Consultan*

Dr. Magdy El Sanady *Community Development Consultant*

Mr. Aziz Maher *Financial Consultant*

Ms. Audett Hana *Human Resource Consultant*

Mr. Kareem Morgan *Legal Consultant*

Eng. Rafik El Tokhy *Human Resources Consultant*

Dr. Magdi Basta *Charity and Social Support Consultant*

The Bishop is regarded as the director of BLESS. The authorization of his Eminence to all internal administrative decisions, plans and budgets are considered enforceable and final.

The two directors of BLESS's cardinal units are assigned by a nomination from the Bishop and by an authorization from His Holiness Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the Holy See of St. Mark. They are responsible for BLESS's service planning, organizing work and executing the required tasks, in addition to monitoring, adjusting plans and budgets. They also form temporary or permanent committees to study and manage some of what BLESS aspires to achieve.

The Executive Committee:

This Committee is the platform through and by which coordination is conducted to perform all BLESS's tasks. Its purpose is to keep all the cardinal units informed, and in permanent participation to execute all the required tasks and overcome the obstacles faced by BLESS.

BLESS Executive Committee consists of servants in the following positions



**His Holiness Pope
Tawadros II**
President



**BLESS's Director,
His Grace
Bishop Yolios**
as Vice-President



Dr. Hani Samir,
Executive Director of
the Integrated Community
Development Program



Dr. Magdy Basta,
Director of AGAPE
Program



Mr. Joseph Gamal,
Financial Manager



Mrs. Safinaz Kamal,
Planning, Monitoring and
Evaluation Manager



Mrs. Hanan Makram
Program Development
Advisor



Mrs. Suzan Youssef,
Finance and Budget Senior
Specialist



Mrs. Evelin Erian,
Program Development
Advisor



Mr. Ayman Karam,
Human Resources
Component Manager



Dr. Amgad Angly,
Field Manager

2019

BLESS is growing with confidence,

42
communities

172,494
beneficiaries

29,632
community partners



Stakeholders contribution in implemented activities

This year, BLESS was able to touch 172,494 people lives, of whom 17% were community partners (non-Christians), as well as operating its interventions in cooperation with GOs and NGOs, by executing 42% of ICDP activities in 42 communities.

The Committee of Development Partners in COC:

Being in the heart of the COC, the development department was assigned to carry out the responsibility of coordinating between the COC's charity and community development associations, to ensure full harmony and collaboration with the civil society and the state's institutions. Such coordination started in 2018 with 6 authorities (BLESS - the Social Care Secretariat at the Papal Headquarters – Anba Abraam service in St. Mark Church in Heliopolis – Al Raay and Om Al Nor service, Anba Abraam service in Canada and Anba Abraam service (to Those Who Have No One to Remember Them). His Holiness Pope Tawadros supports the committee's activities himself. His Holiness also recommended expanding the circle of participation from other partners to maximize community benefit.

Management by result approach, created rich opportunity for learning, reflection and suggesting corrective actions, through building more integral interventions, to maximize resources and community benefits.

In collaboration with Diakonia, BLESS was able to conduct an organizational assessment, which highlighted the importance of BLESS role in the Egyptian society.

ICDP midterm review was done with COPTICAD Institute, to analyze and review the progress of the "Integrated Community Development Program" ICDP, in the targeted communities, during the period from 2018 to mid-2019.

Monitoring system progress, updating the monitoring digital system to monitor progress towards result indicators and implementation, to be more effective for users (field staff and components staff).

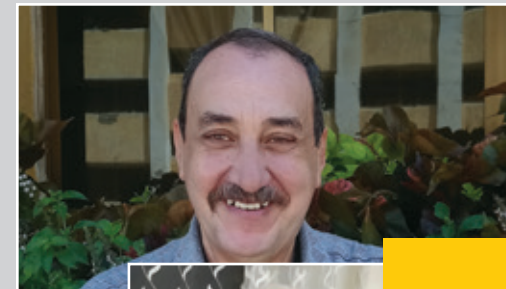
SALEMO Project, came into execution phase during 2019, with emphasis to build strategic partnerships and ensure common understanding, with the "Ministry of Islamic Endowments (AWKAF)". SALEMO also focused on building the capacity of three local CBO's partners in the targeted communities.

Resilient Productive Communities (RPC), The Coptic Association of Social Care (CASC) is a sister organization of The Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services (BLESS). CASC will cooperate with the Arab Office for Youth and Environment (AOYE) in implementing a new project which is considered as a serious trial for improving environmental status and maximizing the benefit of available environmental resources in 3 targeted communities.

BLESS Champions

Mr. George Naguib

Joined BLESS's service as a volunteer student in 1977. He participated in BLESS diaconal service in 1979, then Community Development Program, supervised Women's Development Centers and Childhood Unit in Delta and Lower Egypt region, charged with Beheira Diocese secretary and finally the coordination of the same region. Mr. George witnessed all BLESS stages of service, starting with his Eminence Bishop Samuel, BLESS founder and director, till his Eminence Bishop Yolios. He is considered as a historian of BLESS's service, and the GOD father of the developmental service in Delta and Lower Egypt region, taking into account his good relationships with archbishops, bishops, priests and also with GOs and NGOs. Mr. George proceeds his journey of giving in BLESS by organizing Saint Verina Conference House service.



Mr. Gergis Zaki

He joined BLESS's service in 1987 as Tahta and Johaina Diocese secretary, then a technical supervisor of Rural Development Component in Upper Egypt region. Later, he held the responsibility of coordinating the region and worked on organizing developmental service on the administrative and technical levels. Being an agricultural engineer, he always has a passionate heart to develop the agricultural performance and improve farmers' conditions in the region. After retirement, Mr. Gergis continues his journey of giving in BLESS as a technical supervisor of the Rural Developmental Component in Upper Egypt region.

Mrs. Suzan Eleya

joined BLESS in 1985 to serve in Women's Development Center, then as supervisor of Women's Development Centers in downtown Cairo, served at Batn Al- Baqara area in Ezbet Khair Allah. After her retirement, she was assigned as a coordinator for Beni Suef and North Minya region. Mrs. Suzan considered a milestone in organizing and documenting development service in the region. She has warm heart aims at offering service to all without discrimination based on face color or religion, and strong will. She isn't bounded by a place, or the availability of means of transportation or any harsh weather conditions to continue her service and mission. We are waiting for her to proceed service in BLESS after her recovery.



Mrs. Hala Zaki

Joined BLESS in 1987 as an accountant. She was characterized by efficiency and accuracy, which qualified her to become a deputy financial manager in 2000, then BLESS's financial manager in 2011. She has a great understanding of BLESS's work nature as a non-profit organization. She aimed to facilitate and control financial procedures to ease communal service. Mrs. Hala has two contradictory characteristics traits; social intelligence and cleverness in leading members of finance management with firm, confident, quiet discipline.



Bless youth meeting with
his Holiness Pope Tawadros II

Our contributions, nationally and regionally in 2019



Core group meeting in the presence and blessing of his Holiness Pope Tawadros II
at Logos Conference Center - Wadi Al Natroun



Bishop Yolios meeting with Sheikh Jaber Taya / Deputy Minister of Islamic Endowment
to discuss aspects of cooperation in Salemo project




Dr. Venees Kamel, Former Minister of Scientific Research, in a graduation
ceremony of girls in "Training for Employment" Project

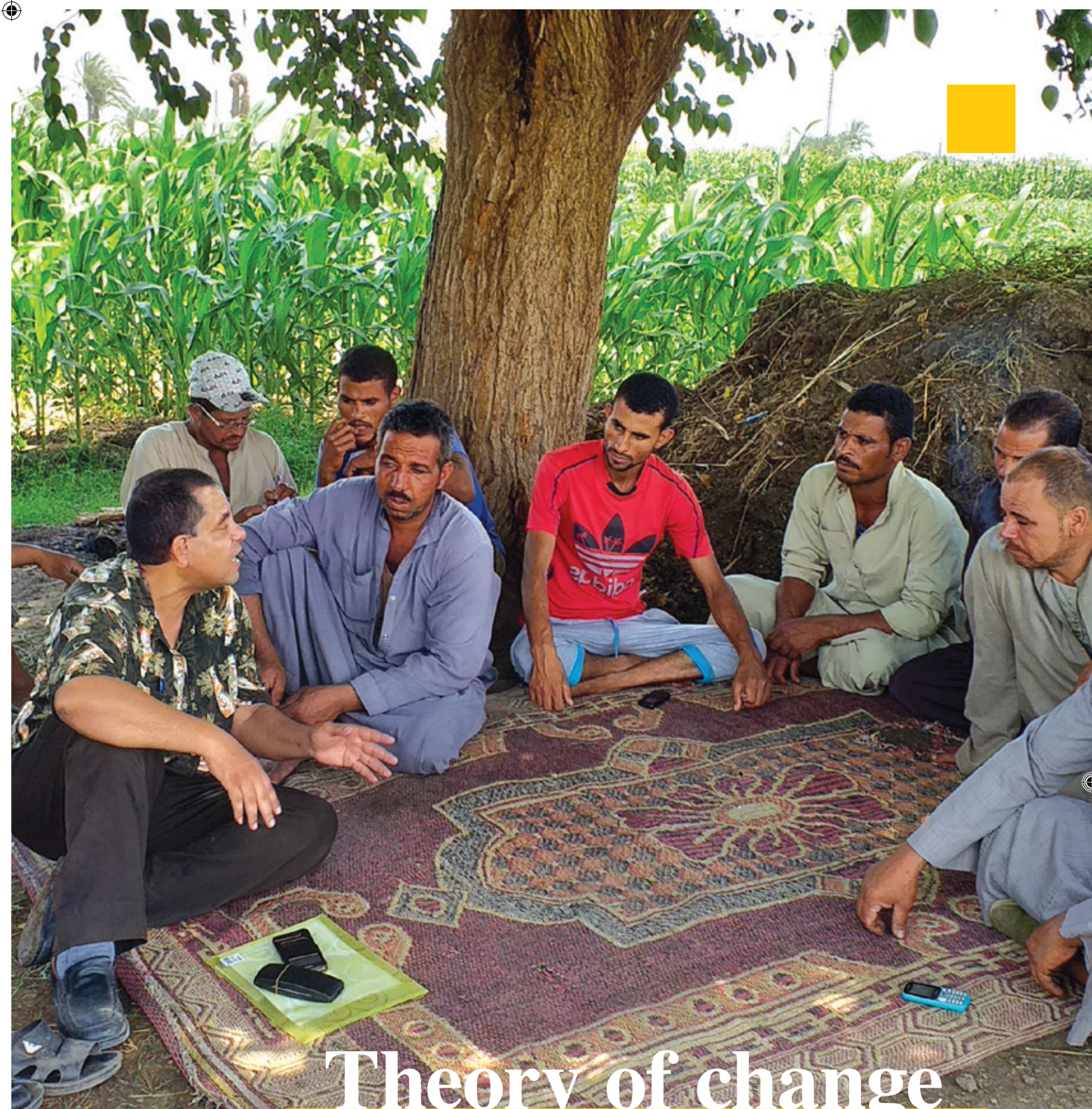
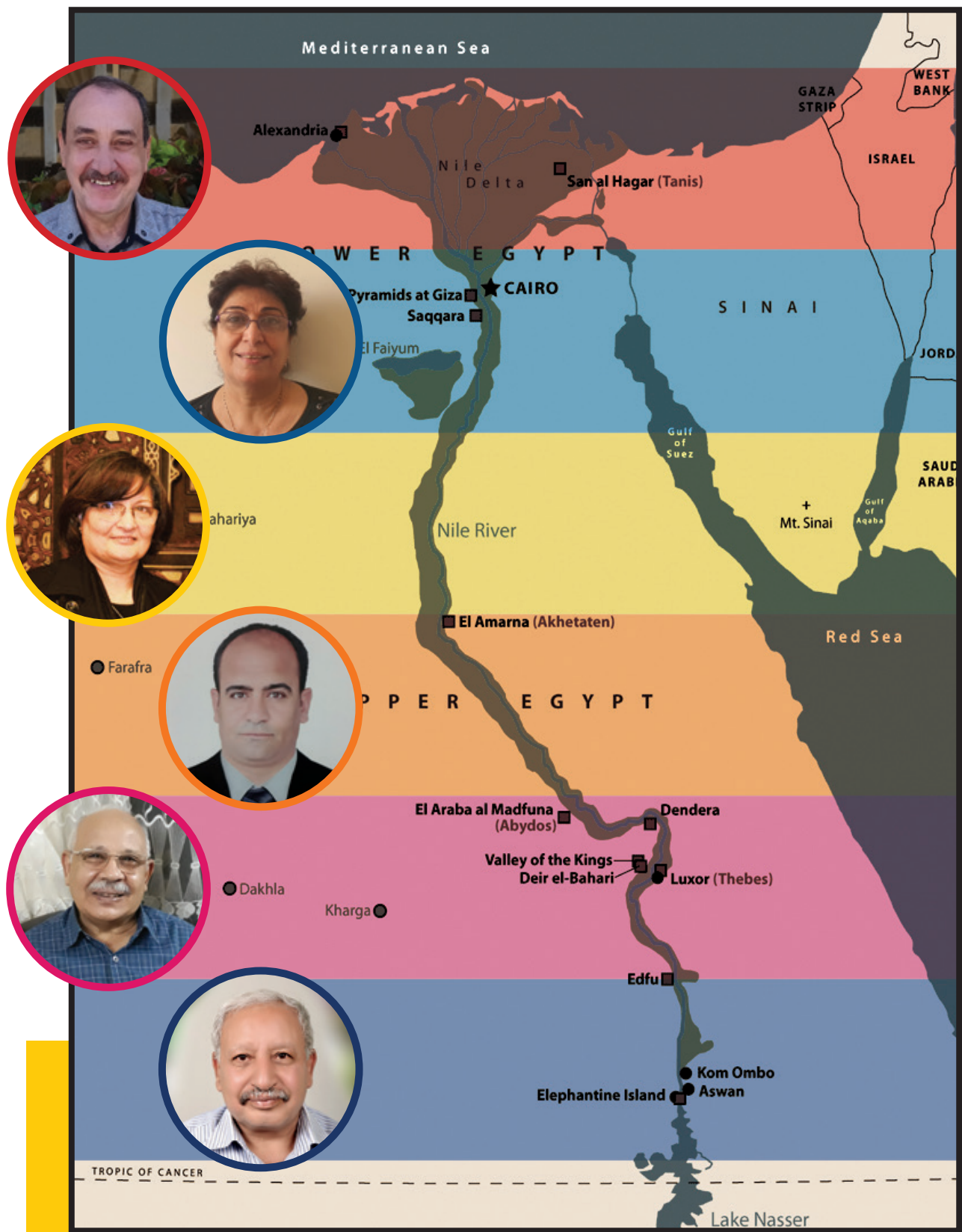


The visit of Norwegian Ambassador, «Lene Lind,» to follow up the project
«Improving the Quality of Life for Women and Girls» in Al-Warraq Region



BLESS Assign Protocol Ceremony between BLESS
and Adult Education Authority

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Reda Aziz coordinator of Middle Upper Egypt. |  George Naguib coordinator of Delta & Lower Egypt. |
|  Gergis Zaki coordinator of South Upper Egypt. |  Hanna Kamal coordinator of Greater Cairo. |
|  Adel Samy coordinator of Upper Egypt. |  Suzan Ellya coordinator of North Upper Egypt. |



Theory of change

Striving to become a beacon in the field of sustainable development, BLESS always searches for achieving the UN sustainable Development Goals and Egypt's vision 2030. Therefore, we adopt the Integrated Community Development Program (ICDP) approach, which is based on improving the potentials of volunteers and beneficiaries to become agents of change in their own communities. Besides, BLESS believes in the importance of forming strong bonds with various GOs and NGOs. Thus, it exerts all the efforts to create a solid base of networks and connections on the local, regional and international levels. Our goals can be highlighted in: emphasizing equality between all genders, ending poverty and hunger as well as supporting participation in communities.

Primary Health Care



Dr. Haidy Sobhy

55,774

beneficiaries
in 42 com-
munities

68%

of the infect-
ed people got
treatment after
campaigns

42,797

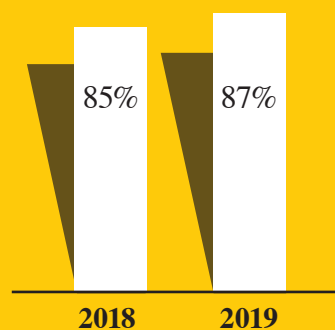
beneficiar-
ies benefited
from the
campaigns

Major achievements in 2019:

Voices of youth saying “No”, one of the documents required before marriage is the medical examination of the bride and groom, the young girls become aware of the importance of such early investigation. So that now they refuse to take the sealed document unless they receive the medical examination.

Breaking into taboos, as women, especially in Upper Egypt were reluctant to participate in early cervical tumors investigations campaigns according to old traditions (they can't visit doctors except for delivery or pregnancy issues). That lack of awareness is about to be cracked with the condensed awareness sessions implemented during campaigns.

Annual checkup, women are now keeping their annual follow-up appointments, in government health units after raising awareness in classes and home visits.



Beneficiaries who adopted middle stand-
ard of healthy practices



Egypt's vision2030:
“All Egyptians enjoy
a healthy, safe, and secure life.”



“

(we have now a backbone) “At first, I was afraid to do medical tests like the rest of the village, because of being scared to get diagnosed with diseases which I can't handle psychologically or financially. But now I have discovered that there is a possibility of healing and treatment at the government's expense”.

One of the ladies in Habisha village.

”



You may be sent to jail....

We get used to serve remote villages. But, El-Gharira village gives us another meaning for remote, it's a village in the middle of nowhere in Esna governorate, the main road in the desert, if you call it so, surrounded by barren hills, the weather in winter is around 30 degrees, the whole neighborhood are one flat white cracked bricks buildings covered by Straw trellis, with no services at all. People are dealing with nature to survive.

In the middle of that desert hot weather, the seeds of development started to bloom. Mrs. M is a middle aged women, one of the fighter women in El-Gharira. She told us about her story which summaries the story of development at that village.

"My daughter was the first in the village to go to Cairo to be trained as a field worker. By that time no one wanted to send his/her daughter. Although she got married soon after, she encouraged me to attend health awareness sessions. I learned a lot, but the most lesson I have learned was FGM. I never thought it was harmful for girls, so I had my three elder daughters subjected to FGM, but I will never do it for the younger one. In early May I decided to circumcise my son. The doctor came to my house, he told me: "You have a daughter, let's circumcise her as her elder sisters". I refused by telling everything I learned about FGM dangers, but he also reminded me about the tradition. The more I insist, the more he calls: "you are useless mental retarded women. By then I told him that I'll report him to the authority and send him to jail. The doctor became afraid and went away without muttering a word. I learned that practice is against the law. From that time, I started to raise awareness of other women in the village, as they all are my clients in my hair dresser shop, which I started earlier in my house, with loan from BLESS to support my family". We cannot forget Mrs. M. the woman with smile and sense of humor that is challenging the whole desert together.



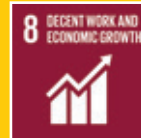
Bahgat Refaat

Healthcare volunteer in Al Hager Village: A student at the Higher Institute of Nursing. He trained 10 individuals of his community on first aid in cooperation with the health unit. He also led an initiative to limit the spread of Coronavirus with local contribution from each family

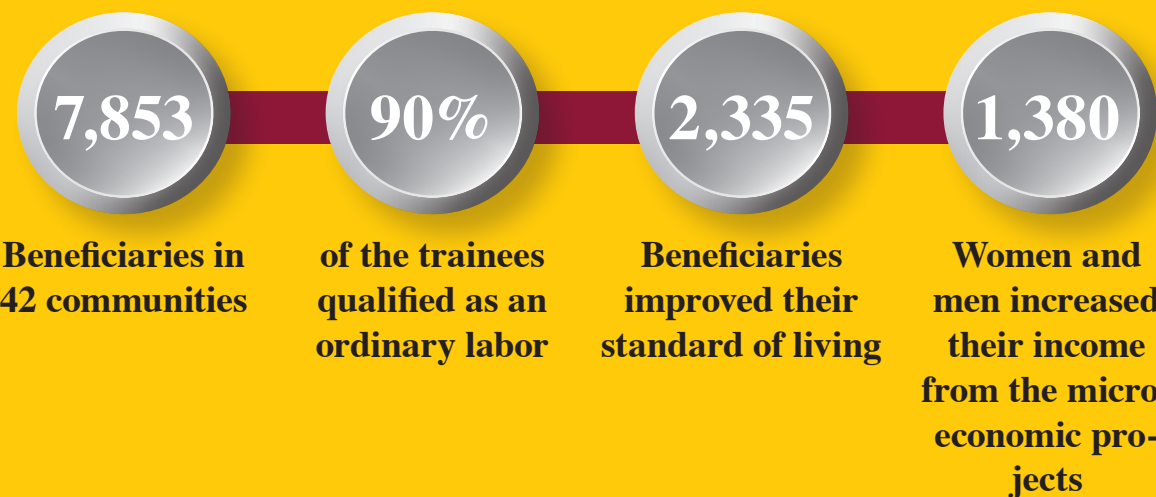
Our
Dream

Egyptian communities have sufficiently equipped medical units with qualified doctors serving the citizens in the poor and marginalized communities

Economic Development



Mrs. Mona Fathy



Major achievements in 2019:

From taking to gaining, changing the mindset of people who used to take subsidies from charitable organizations. Now, 545 beneficiaries generate their own income.

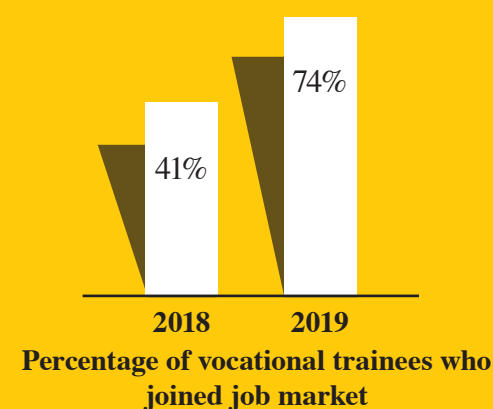
Real investment, investing in human beings and supporting them to be entrepreneurs in their communities through loans.

Community Prosper, creating community economic movement, also reviving competitive market inside the local communities.

Additional Meaning for life, empowering beneficiaries (especially women) which reflect on many life aspects as their social and cultural standards.

Sustaining the Success, the component witnessed sustainable development in exit communities (30 villages as a sample) as there are still 619 ongoing microeconomic projects from the repaid loans.

Green jobs, beneficiaries were very intelligent in applying what they learnt in recycling classes (Environmental development component) and selling these products to be profitable for them



Egypt's vision 2030:
The Egyptian is generating
decent and productive jobs"



"I used to sew since I was a young girl, however I didn't imagine that this talent will generate income for me".
one of the beneficiaries in Alexandria Slums





Capsule of success....

I am Mr. M.R, I am 28 years old, living in El Zawatna village in Sohag. I am the only responsible for my family. As many of the youth in our village I dreamt of travelling abroad to earn more and guarantee better life for me and my family. I have no time to waste, I spent all the money I had and borrowed more money from relatives and friends in taking visa for travelling abroad. After having many debts, I managed to travel to Kuwait, after arrival there, I discovered that there is something wrong in my papers, they refused my entry and I was obligated to return back home. This moment was the worst ever, Am I in reality or nightmare!! Have I really lost all my money (120,000 L.E)!! How shall I will repay what I have borrowed!! What I will tell to my family!! Life blackened in my eyes and I was depressed. I returned back. Locked myself in the house desperately. My friends insisted that I have to go out of home and start again regardless the loss. I was invited to attend one of economic component's seminars where I knew that there are loans to startup microeconomic project. In my deep mind I was hesitant, reluctant and afraid of loss. I went to the fieldworker and told her that I want to apply for a loan but please keep it secret because I am ashamed of myself. After making the procedures of loans. I bought 500 hens as I had experience in poultry bringing up and marketing. I turned all the energy inside me to a motive for work and success. During managing the project and calculating my expenditures and revenues. I found that I am achieving success and making good profits. My project is improving, I am successful, I was able to do it. Now, I have a big farm for hens, I opened a small shop to provide veterinary treatment for hens and give advices for other farmers regarding poultry upbringing. I supported other youth to work with me so that we can maximize our productivity. And I always give them this capsule of success: "Bright brain+ determination+ planning+ small loan= successful project"

Redany Basta Gad

Economic development volunteer in Al- Zawatna village His main objective is to help youth in finding job opportunities and improve their economic status. He provides them with his experience in managing projects and follows up their progress



Our
Dream

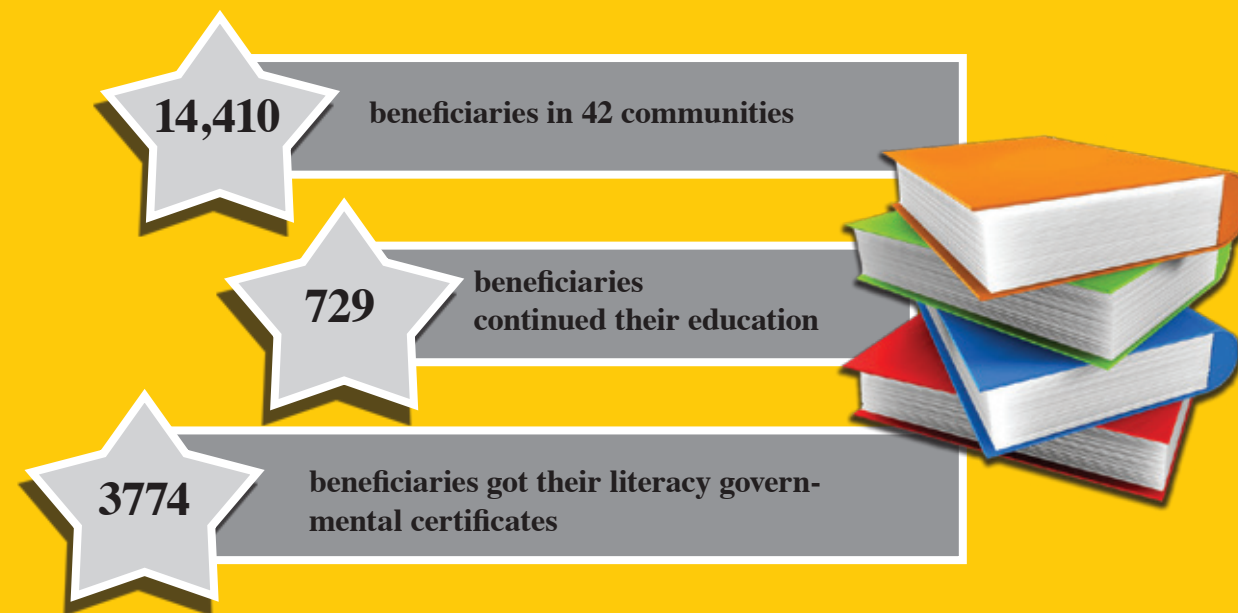
A job opportunity for every man and woman, especially in Upper Egypt.



Adult Education



Mrs. Amaal Halim



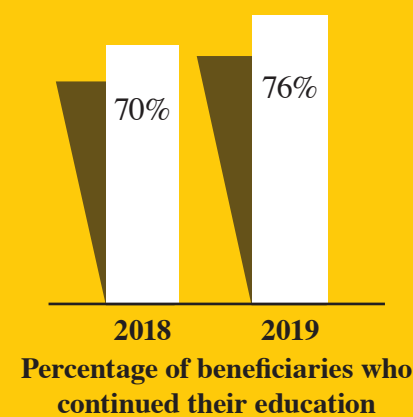
Major achievements in 2019:

Generating the sense of broadness and self-esteem, in the educated adults to become agents for change in the community.

Changing the perspective of young women towards marriage and selection of their future husbands, as well as increasing the family dialogue.

Empowering adult educated beneficiaries, to get job opportunities and have their own projects.

Fostering educated beneficiaries, to contact effectively with the community surroundings (different GO's services, banks, and local markets) as conscious citizens.



7th pillar of Egypt's vision 2030:
Provide education and training for all
in high quality without discrimination.



“

“I used to feel that my mind is a dark room of stubborn thoughts, now I feel it becomes bright”
one of the ladies in Awlad Yehia village

”



“A good chance doesn’t come twice”

Walking proudly while holding her “Golden framed certificate”, the middle aged married lady, showed us the true meaning of the quote “a good chance doesn’t come twice”. Fawzia is an Egyptian woman who lives in El-Habaysha village and unfortunately didn’t get the chance to receive proper education, due to being the eldest daughter who had to help her mother with housework. Surprisingly, all her siblings are educated except her. Therefore, when she heard about BLESS literacy classes, she didn’t think twice to join them. Asking her about the motivation to learn, she answered comfortably and confidently: “I can help my children to have what I couldn’t get”. They can see me now reading, signing documents and visiting my relatives in Cairo by myself. In the past, I used to fear getting lost in strange places. But now I can.” As she continued her speech, Fawzia told us that she is now able to read the Holy Bible and assist her kids with study. But what has led us to become extremely astonished was Fawzia’s next words: “You know? I regularly visit a nutritionist in the central town by myself” “Actually I lost 12 kilograms, I was getting a medical checkup and figured out that I had extra fat over liver. So, I decided to lose weight to have better health”. She ended her words by telling us how she used to speak recklessly and without caring about others, but now she speaks respectfully. Fawzia is a great role model for her children and us, a woman who sticks to the second chance, able to learn in each moment of her life, about herself and society



Nariman Fouad Khalil

Adult Education volunteer in Zareib Ezbet Al-Nakhl area

She is talented in attracting students to learn. She helped 45 male and female students to enroll in preparatory and secondary education. She currently serves students with learning difficulties in mastering reading skills.

Developing the desire for continuing education and broadening the concept of education to include what is beyond the certificate for beneficiaries.



Mrs. Aml Fouad

Major achievements in 2019:

Computer courses, are the real success the component achieved this year. There is a real progress in the computer skills that children gained during this year. 147 children from different communities were able to surf internet, make researches in different topics.

The students’ level of education, was raised through joining tutoring classes. Students started to love writing, reading and calculating after learning with easy and creative ways. Support educational initiatives, support classes fostered education offered for children in Upper Egypt and slum communities, initiatives were implemented in some communities to support students without BLESS contribution but under its supervision.

Improving the Standard of Education

6,481

beneficiaries in 15 communities

4,247

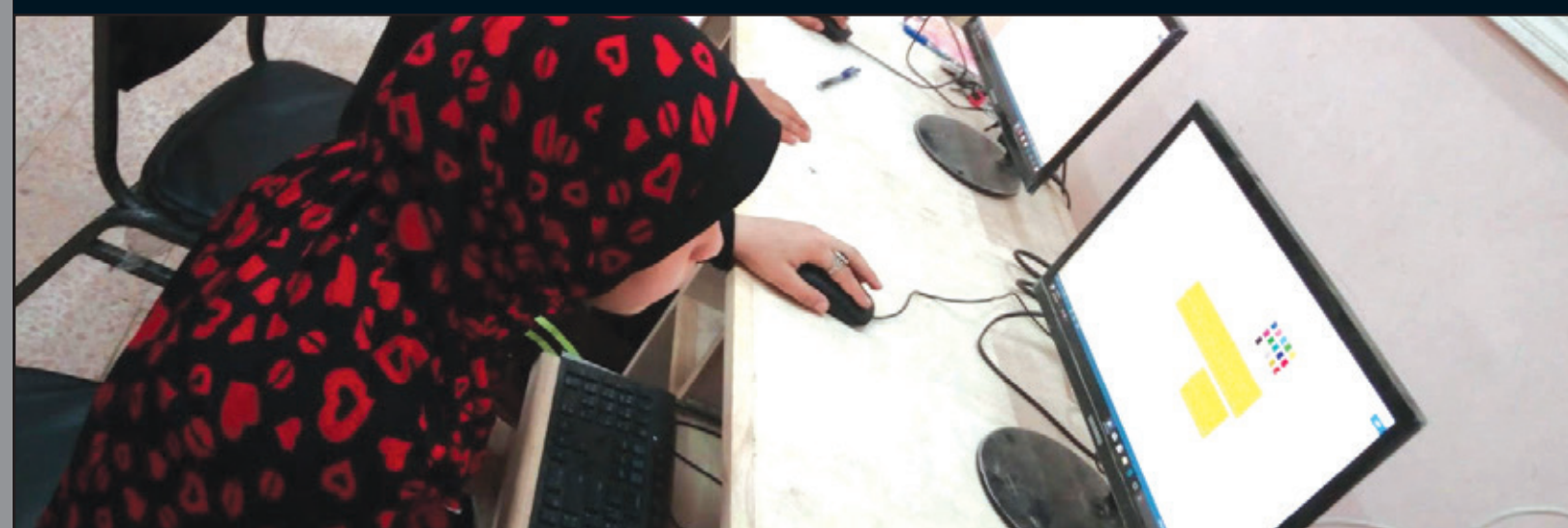
students enrolled in the support and tutoring classes

248

trained local cadres (teachers of support and tutoring classes

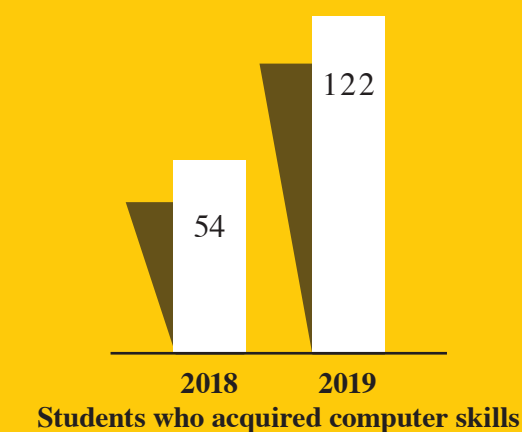
156

researches and presentations made by 277 students as a result of the implemented activities



Egypt’s vision 2030:

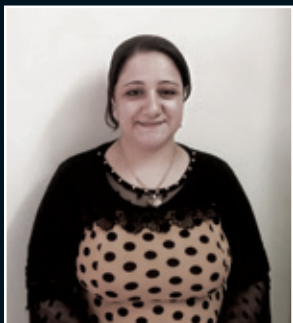
Empowering the learner with the requirements and skills of the twenty-first century





“I want you to hear, excel and live”

Getting informed that your child can't hear, can turn a parent's world upside down. Philomena is a deaf born girl. Her family believed that early intervention can contribute in her progress. So they took decision of conducting cochlear implant surgery when she was 2 years old. They were told by her doctor that she will start talking after at least two years. So, while applying for school, she was not able to talk properly or even hold the pencil to write. Her mother did not give up; she began to support her just as Edison's mother who was believing in her son regardless any circumstances. When Philomena's mother was informed about BLESS support classes, she did not hesitate to enroll her. At first, Philomena faced difficulty in keeping up with her teachers and colleagues. Few months later, Philomena proved that disability is not a burden towards progress. She excels her colleagues in same conditions. Now, she can interact with the surrounding environment, memorize Arabic and English letters, can form Arabic and English words in addition to formulating simple mathematical calculations. The combination of early intervention and the tremendous support of Philomena's mother and BLESS has allowed her to move a further step towards her cure and to learn without burdens.

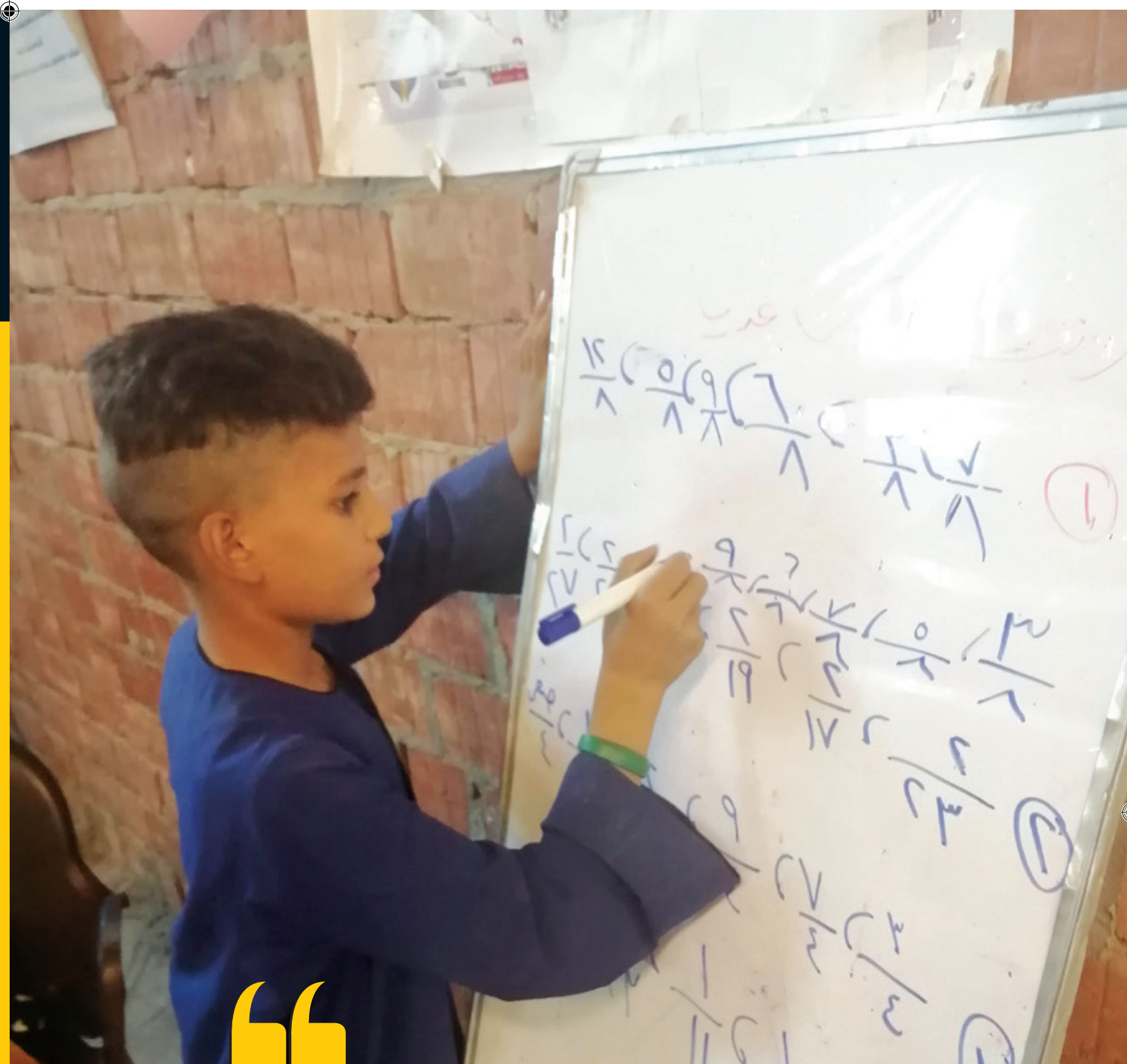


Martha Naseem Rizk-Alah

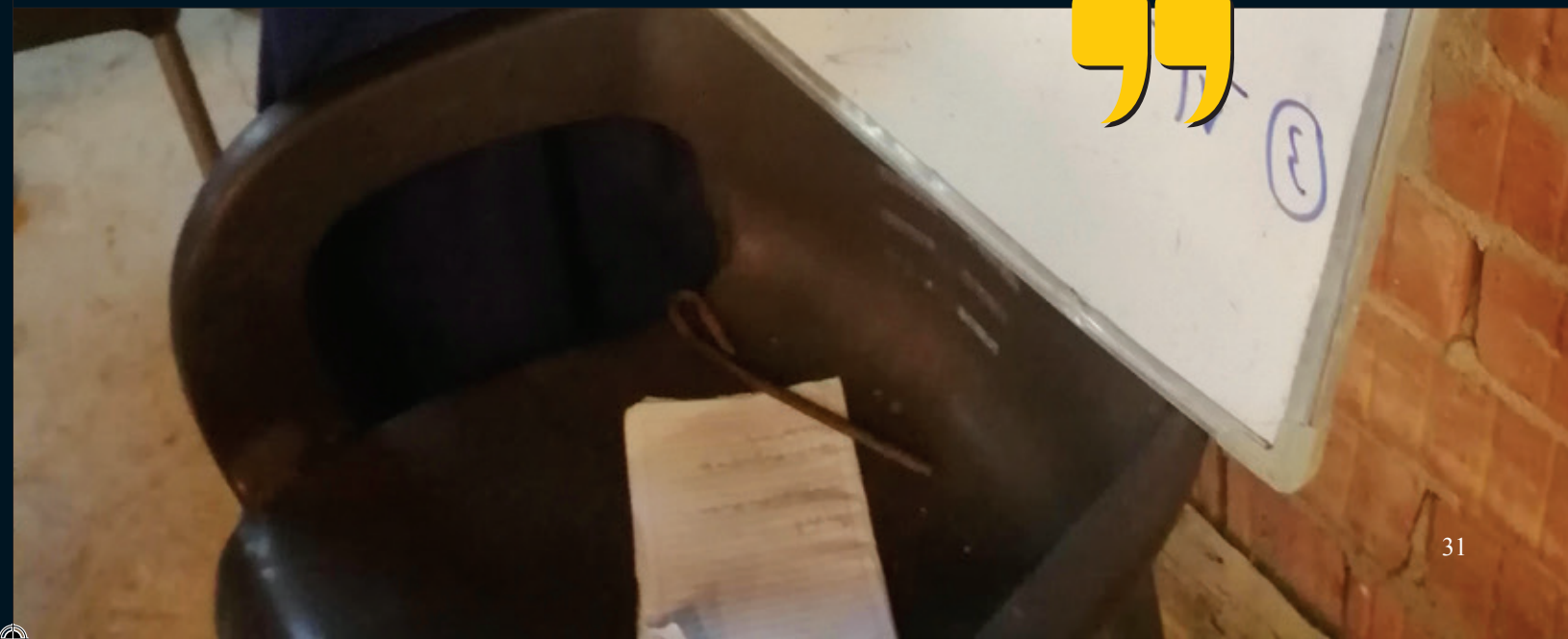
Improving the Standard of Education volunteer in Boshra village
She adopts the cause of child education. She daily supervises and notices the progress of students in all subjects, as well as executing the quality criteria of each component.



Greater spread of libraries and computer labs in Egyptian communities, especially in villages with poor access to the Internet.



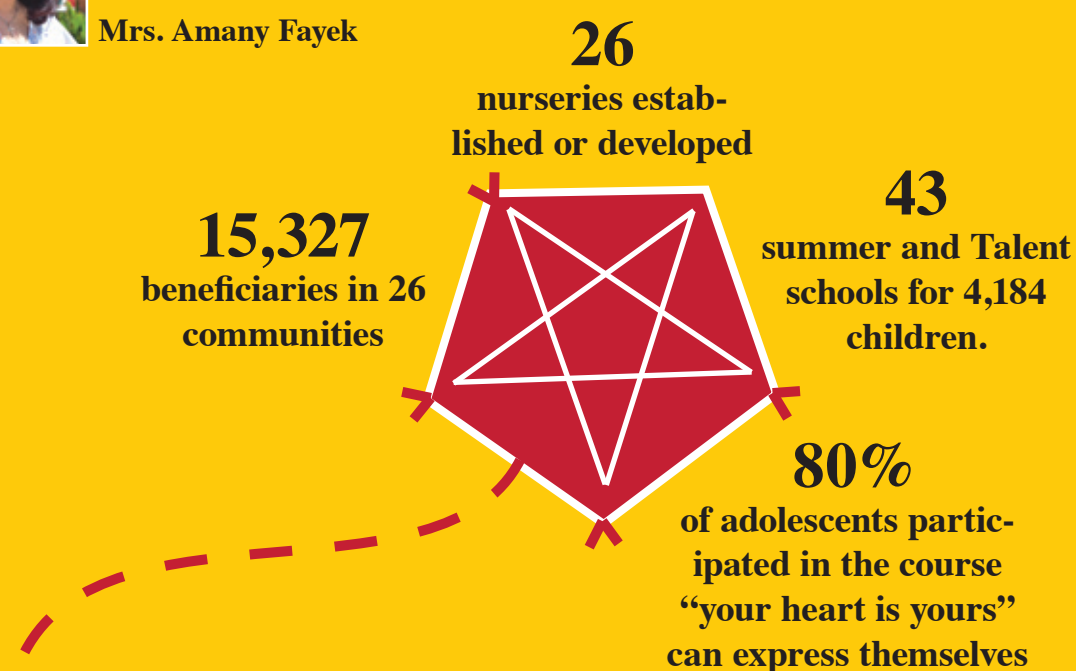
Our children were waiting for summer days to learn and play in the tutoring classes.”
one of the parents



Unleashing the Potentials of the New Generation



Mrs. Amany Fayek



Major achievements in 2019:

Talent school "the kite"; has two wings to fly towards civilized future

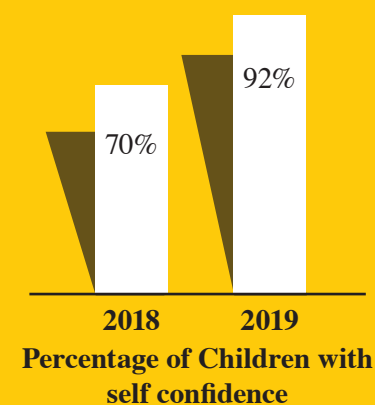
1- First wing, is accepting diversities; Children's mindset became more open to interact and play in teams regardless any differences.

2 - Second wing, is discovering children's talents; children surfing internet, made inventions using cartoons, sang, acted, drew and recited poems.

Nurseries are not only for learning alphabetical letters and numbers. They deliver other practical lessons in child's life such as: commitment, respect rules and timing since day one. Also develop children cognitive skills, to live rich childhood.

- The component succeeded in adopting sustainable strategy with gradual withdrawal, for the 14 talent schools that were activated in 2018.

- "Your heart is yours" course is implemented for the first time in Upper Egypt regions, after achieving success in Cairo Slums 2018. Such success can be witnessed in the number of adolescents who tried to change their attitudes and saved the course's messages on their phones and rooms' walls.



Egypt's vision 2030:
Enabling citizens to access knowledge, building their capacity to interact with modern developments"



“

"I always seek to satisfy children through « play boost» to get rid of depression resulted from isolation".

A nursery supervisor in Ezbet Al-Nakhl.

”



Youth Development

Major achievements in 2019:

- Agents of change; with the cooperation of community empowerment and sustainability, 98 initiatives were led and implemented by youth's hands in the targeted communities, aiming for better future for their communities in particular and Egypt in general.
- In cooperation with the Bishopric of Youth, representatives from ICDP villages and participated in "Creativity light" festival that is organized by and for youth to invest talents through acting, singing and leading.
- Raising youth voices and issues through developing artistic and creative awareness among them within art workshops about theatre, music, literature, graphic, directing and handicrafts.
- Creating young leaders capable of influencing other youth, have effective role and lead the change in their communities within a course of leadership about how to lead a group, be an effective leader and develop proactive and positive spirit among the group.

145
Active youth
in their
communities.

697
volunteers
benefited from
specialized
Technical
trainings

1,851
Total
number of
beneficiaries

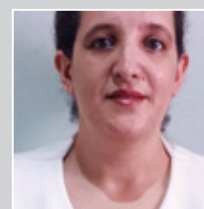


"David the mighty..."

Two hours from Assiut Station across along with the old eastern road, across the villages and fields cemeteries, faced by Assiut mountain, which embrace El-Habaysha village. The village church a cement walls and roof under construction but clean organized, all community members enter it with reverence. The main aim of our team to find examples of success walking on the ground. We meet almost all committee members talk about their success, until we met Ms. Marian the talent School facilitator and asked her what change is made by that course, at once answered meet David, a boy no one can be safe from his hand or tongue, he surprised us all by all the massive talent we discovered.

David, about 11 years old thin boy, stable as a mountain. Asking him friendly about what if one of the children hits or beat you?" Nobody can beat me" interrupted David, yes I'm changed, I'm no longer feel easily anger as used to be, as I used to hit, annoy, insult my colleagues in the school, neighborhood, even grownup men and teachers, but still nobody can beat or hurt me, if annoying action happened, I'll warn him or her twice explain what bothering me but I can defend myself. What makes that change, the talent school, it wasn't easy to agree to join, my mother tried to convince me, as her last hope to become different, she used to make that tries from now and then, like join me in clergy to encourage me to be good church boy, but I used to runaway to play with my gang in the street. That time when she told me about the talent school, I said to myself I'll go once and runaway, but I didn't. The teachers respect me, asked me to design a house dog for creative show, they involve me to act in David play as king David k I made the crown, sword, and the gown by myself with Cartoon. They taught me a song about how valuable am I, and how to make borders, and control my angry, all that with soft, kind, firm way. I can't run away and I changed.

We can't say a ward, valuable each effort from Unleashing Generations team effort to train talent school's facilitator, consider each facilitator who has that impact in each child, faith of mother's praying and trials for her children to become better. We all feel blessed to meet such wonderful young boy "The Mighty David".



Hanan Gaber

Unleashing the Potentials of New Generations volunteer in AL Berba village
She led an initiative of restoring and renovating the nursery, in addition to constructing new safe classes with the help of children's contribution. She took care of parents' meeting and worked on improving the children's second language to raise their educational level

Our **Dream**

All children can live a rich childhood, with love and care.



"The creators"

In the village (Galila), the situation of the youth is like the rest of the villages. Young people leave their families to find better job opportunities and reach higher standards of living. But what happened in Galila was different. Youth there decided to attend the Youth Bishopric Conference for Arts and Creativity, taking into consideration that they had to travel to Cairo to attend it.

Though they used to abandon their villages for other purposes, this time they went out to learn and know new things that help them serve their community. Indeed, they learned many new skills from the workshops held there such as: how to make theatrical makeup, especially burns and wounds, as well as directing, photography and engineering innovations. Once they returned again to Galila, they applied everything they have learned and presented it in street shows. They also established a theater team in the church to serve all the community members and teach them how to express their opinions and dreams through art. Indeed, the creators arrived with a lot of art and innovation to help others. This is the kind of youth BLESS strives for achieving; aware, cooperative youth who are capable of finding creative ways to support their communities and accomplishing benefits for others.



Egypt's vision 2030:

"Enabling citizens to access knowledge, building their capacity to interact with modern developments, giving them the wisdom of freedom of choice and of cultural creativity".

Our **Dream**

The youth are able to lead and implement initiatives, with a vision of better future

Community Peace Building



Miss. Gehan Ezzak



Mrs. Ebtesam Al-Sageieh

8,704

beneficiaries
in 13
communities

936

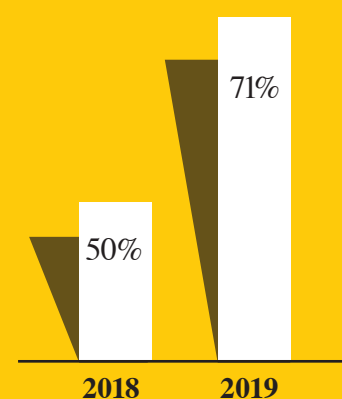
students
are aware
of peaceful
livelihood
principles

510

women who
can deal
positively with
the upbringing
issues in their
families

Major achievements in 2019:

- Recognizing the difference, developing targeted women awareness and skills, to adopt many peaceful strategies to overcome domestic verbal and physical violence, as well as men and women became aware of the Psychological differences between each other.
- No violence, reducing the rate and level of violence against children.
- Creating unity, and common ground between Muslim and Christian religious leaders, against women and children violence, through discussion and mutual respect for each side ethnic background.
- Economic women empowerment, in cooperation with Environment component and Economic component, participants in "women's club" applied what they learnt during recycling classes, and 25 of them started up their microfinance recycling projects.
- Women started to decide how many children they will deliver commensurate with their life conditions.



Percentage of women who can deal positively
with the upbringing issues in their families



5th pillar of Egypt's vision 2030:
"A society that provides protection, and support
to marginalized and vulnerable groups".



“

"Listening and controlling anger are the solutions
for many family disputes".
Various beneficiaries after attending positive
parental classes.

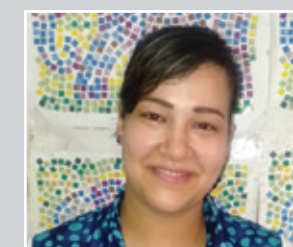
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Saying “No” is power.

Mrs. M.N is a 28 married woman residing in a small house with her husband's family including in laws, in El-Yasmeen village, Beni-suef governorate. Unlike most women at her age, she is not happy in her marital life. All the time is wasted in quarrels and fighting with her in laws, to the extent that they may hit her. She feels threatened; describing her life: “I do not feel safe”. Mrs. M.N though that being independent that will bring her safety. So, she tried to open a microeconomic project at home but, her in laws refused telling her that it is not your house to do such business. She did not give up, established her project and started to improve her family's economic standard. After deep thinking, Mrs. M.N found that independence is not the only solution. However, uniting and caring for her family wisely is the further mile that she must go for. Hence, she joined women's club and started applying what she learnt there. Mrs. M.N became strong and calm enough to control her anger especially after noticing her child suffering from Enuresis (bed-wetting). She asked experts in women's club and was advised her, to observe the relation between fighting with her husband and this incident. Indeed, her child was psychologically affected by these fights as fear expressions appeared on his face and body. Motherhood urged her to provide safe environment for her children. Starting from this point, she was empowered to say no for fights in front of her children, say no for escalating small issues. Saying no for instability, hatred and moodiness, protected her family from worse consequences. Mrs. M.N is persistent in restoring dignity, putting healthy limits with her in laws, experiencing better life with her husband and taking decision in providing safe environment for her children. She is smart to do a positive action not a negative reaction towards the violence she exposed to.



Sarah Ghaly

Community Peace Building volunteer in AL Marg village
She believes in the role of Peace Building Component in community. She leads the upbringing family class by applying creative simple methods. She is special in forming good relationships with women and is familiar with their needs and problems

Our Dream

NO more stereotyping to RH, GBV and sexual topics

“SALEMO” Project



Mrs. Evelyn Botros



986

children
participating
in the SALEMO
campaigns

3

SALEMO
community
committees have
been formed in
three
governorates

286

participants
discussed 10
Egyptian movies

Major achievements in 2019:

- SALEMO project resonates in the ears of officials in Egypt after the success of its activities. The governor of Kalyobia asserted the importance of empowering the communities, supporting its capabilities and highlighting the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.
- The project completed its initial phase, by building strong relations with both strategic and local partners in order to have a greater effect on the communities, to accept diversity and peaceful coexistence.
- SALEMO project has signed partnership agreements with three local NGOs in three governorates (Cairo- Kalyobia- Assiut) attended by 21 participants.
- The first draft of the training package, the project sought reviews and opinions from various stakeholders with emphasis to religious leaders and representatives from AWKAF and from the churches leaders.



5th pillar of Egypt's vision 2030:

“A society that provides protection, and support to marginalized and vulnerable groups”.



“

“Cooperation in an initiative like SALEMO is significant, as it supports interfaith harmony and opposing hatred and extremism”.

Sheik Gabir Taie, First Undersecretary of AWKAF

”



“What a person sows will reap”

Changing mindset thoughts is not easy, especially when they are caused by wrong inherited customs, cultures and traditions. There are many challenges and obstacles that can hinder the achievement of your attempts to persuade the other. However, these obstacles can only be overcome with motivation, perseverance, cooperation and hard work, and you should be believing in what you have learned to the other. But it's different when you deal with children, they learn the art of dealing and accepting other people by imitating their parents and teachers. And that's actually happened when, girls suddenly started to refuse joining the boys' groups and vice versa. While the 2nd children campaign was being implemented. When asking them about such attitude and about their refusal to join mixed groups, the answer was really shocking! To our surprise, the girls explained their opinion explicitly. They replied: “Boys always behave disrespectfully. Their actions are disgusting and they curse all the time. That's why we disagree to join them in any activities.” On the other hand, boys were asked the same question and their answer was as follows: “We don't like girls' gatherings. They have their own talks and their behavior is always girly. So, we should be separated, boys in a group and girls in another one.” As one can conclude from that story, it seems that wrong cultures and traditions are rooted in the minds of young children. They were brought up to stereotype and discriminate each other. Unfortunately, both genders didn't receive the slightest level of education regarding means of treating others with respect, courtesy and honor. For this particular reason, the role of the campaign's team emerged. They began negotiating with boys and girls along with convincing them that there isn't difference between boys and girls. In addition, they held discussions with them related to sharing fun together and spending some quality time with each other without any hatred or racism against certain gender. Indeed, the team succeeded in showing those kids a role model to follow as the volunteer group involved men and women to assert such idea. Luckily, the situation has changed and the team began to reap what they sowed.



Our
Dream

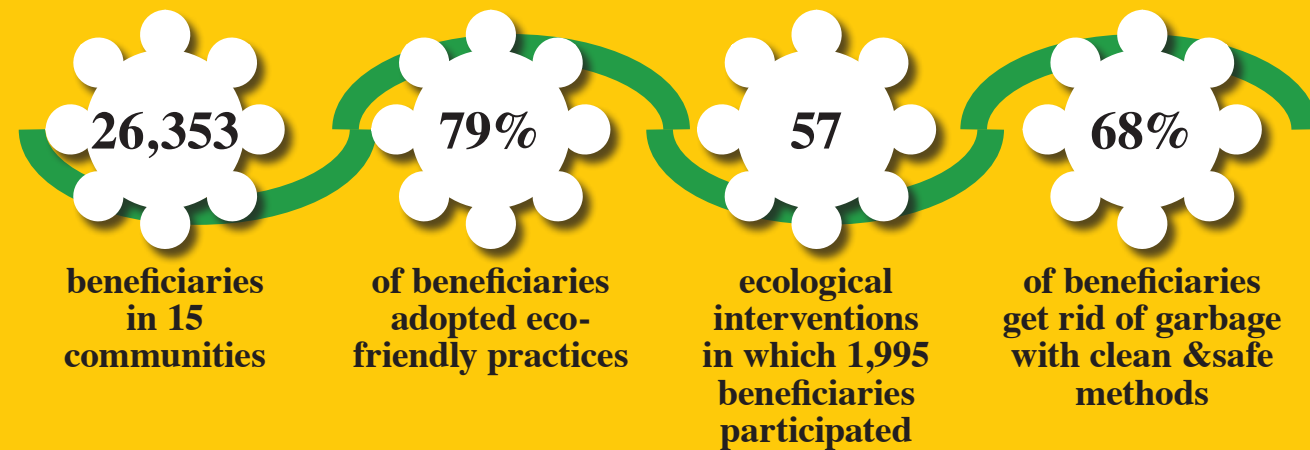
That our first choice is always peace because we believe that peace is the way.



Environmental Development

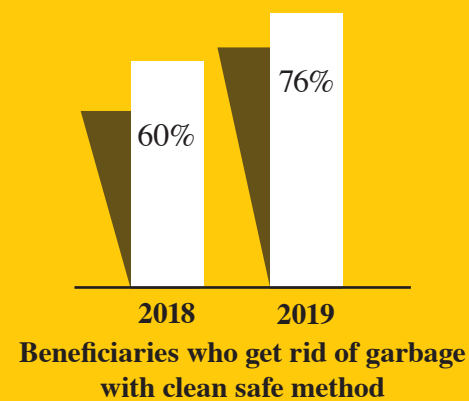


Mrs. Reneh Shafik



Major achievements in 2019:

- Due to rationalizing consumption and awareness seminars about water scarcity, people began to apply what they had learnt and fix their taps to save water.
- Adoption of new practices such as: replacing the habit of baking “Shamsi bread” on materials made from animal wastes into healthy ones.
- Increase of knowledge regarding importance of saving energy, like unplugging electrical devices for some hours and taking part in “Earth Hour” initiatives to reduce electricity consumption.
- Cleaning one canal and a two-meter bank in slums of Cairo and North Upper Egypt regions
- Reviving the essentiality of bringing garbage trucks’ in villages, as people used to pile domestic wastes in front of their houses.



Egypt's vision 2030:

Increasing the current value percentage of hazardous wastes, safely disposed from 7 to %30, and decreasing the ratio of total water consumption from %100 to %80.



“I learnt the importance of separating wastes and selling them in Kilograms like plastic and glass. I also learnt how to make nutritional products like cheese and jam”.

One of the women in Al- Shanayna village





“Together we stand”

Feeling disgusted by its ugly view full of garbage piles, being frightened of reaching it and risking one’s life to cross it; this is how people in Galila village used to face every single day while trying to go to the near villages to do their daily routines. In fact, they had to put their children’s life at stake to accompany them to school. “A lot of accidents happen to our kids as the road is like a high way and has only one direction”. Expressed by Galila people who didn’t know how to protect their families or solve the problem. As a consequence, environmental development component started to implement trainings and seminars regarding changing the village to become eco-friendly as well as getting rid of wastes using safe techniques. Since then, development committee members thought of solving the village problems by themselves. They believed in the concept of “united we stand.... divided we fall”. So, they all decided to meet the local council representatives to discuss the issue. After the meeting, people were told that the Glader can’t be used except in governorates only. Some could think that the story ended here and that Galila raised the while flag. It is easy to lose hope and surrender to reality, but this is not the case with North Upper Egypt region. With persistence and efforts, the committee members succeeded in convincing the council. Indeed, the street was not only paved, but also extended from 3 to 6 meters to include two directions. This definitely led to ease traffic and time saving. Galila people didn’t stop there, they also were able to persuade the council to place industrial speed bumps to prevent accidents. This is the story of persistence and determination; a story of people who managed to prove how team work could contribute in changing the situation in their own favor and that nothing is impossible. Due to their efforts, Galila now enjoys a safe clean road, with few numbers of accidents.



Saber Samy

Environmental Development volunteer in Awlad Yehia village
He is a frequent client at the local council. He always calls the council to implement environmental campaigns and offering services for beneficiaries. He is special in forming networks with GOs. He motivates youth to participate in their community development

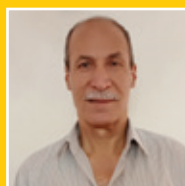


Our Dream

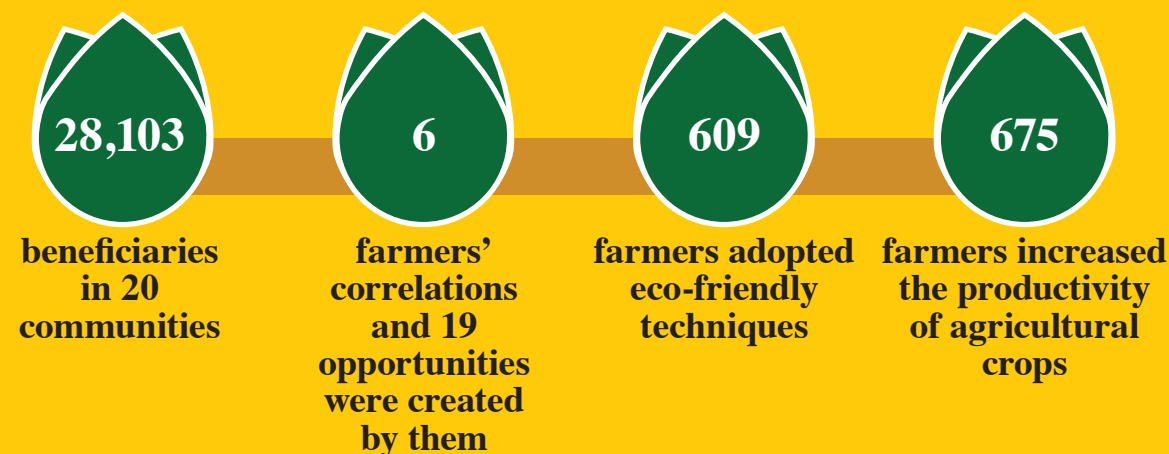
An Egyptian citizen who enjoys a clean environment and values natural resources



Rural Development

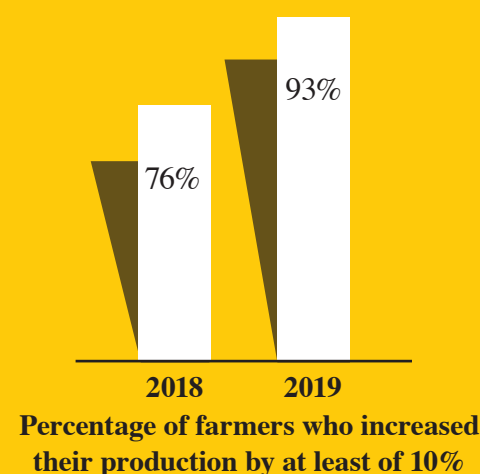


Eng. Nan Nakla



Major achievements in 2019:

- Farmers' correlations in 2019 witnessed the first sparkle of unity and taking collective actions such as:
 - Adopting a mini- model of contract marketing
 - Using Agri-technology such as seed drillers to save farmers' time and effort
 - seeking knowledge by communicating with agricultural consultants
- Disappearance of animal wastes due to applying compost models
- Inventing irrigation machines used by natural gas, instead of diesel
- Recycling the remains of maize crops into animals feed
- Crop diversification and grafting new kinds of trees and crops, such as Moringa trees and new kinds of Mangoes
- Reclamation of heath piece of land; 30 acres of saline soils.

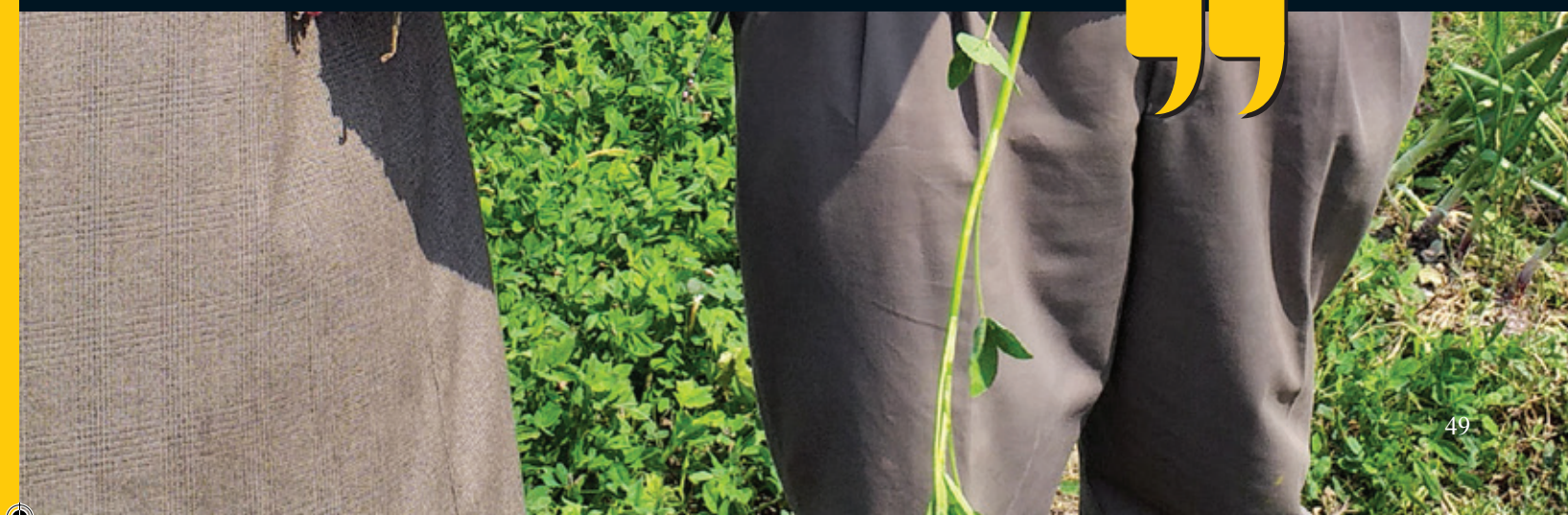


Egypt's vision 2030:
 “ensure the developmental value of knowledge and innovation.....to face challenges and meet national objectives”.



“After attending seminars and applying what I have learnt, the productivity of my potatoes' crop increased from 15 to 22 ardebs”.

One of the beneficiaries in Samsoum village





“The great master”

“Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.” Said by Bernard Shaw, the famous playwright and political activist. This is the concept in which the great master, protagonist of our story, believed. Shokrallah, is a farmer from Al-Yasmine village, who used to burn the residue of crops in “The Prince” farm where he worked. He also used to buy compost for 30,000 L.E every year, which cost him a lot of money. After BLESS’s intervention, the master, as called by the village’s people, enrolled in activities implemented by the rural development component. He learned how to change plant wastes into organic materials to be used as fertilizers for the land. Unlike other beneficiaries who could like the idea but don’t apply it, Shokrallah decided to continue attending trainings to know more about new agricultural techniques. He has his mind set not to follow the negative widespread methods in the village only, but also to teach farmers what he had learnt. Thus, he succeeded in implementing 2 piles of compost in Dr. Nashed Gergis’s farm after conveying his experience to farmers there. Progress didn’t stop at this point. What causes surprise is the following: three counselors “A. I., H. I. and M. I.”, who own a one hundred-acre farm in Teeba village, asked Shokrallah to benefit from his experiences in doing compost. So he managed to compost 7 acres of anise’s residues, which led to the environments’ protection from emission of toxic gases and money saving. It’s clear that true change comes from changing way of thinking in the first place. This is how the true master followed in the footsteps of his trainers to achieve true progress. He actually embodied the true meaning of the word “master” as he spread knowledge and raised awareness in the whole village. Now Al-Yasmine enjoys a clean environment, because of Shokrallah and other farmers’ efforts who transformed the negative results of burning crops into something positive. Due to the transformation in their economic status, Al-Yasmine farmers have now a better life.



Osama Fayek

Component volunteer in Shanaina – Village at Assiut Governorate:

He is a distinguished farmer and the head of farmer’s correlation in the village. He works on achieving peoples’ benefits from the national campaigns for vaccination. He adopts modern agricultural mechanisms and empowers women to have their own projects

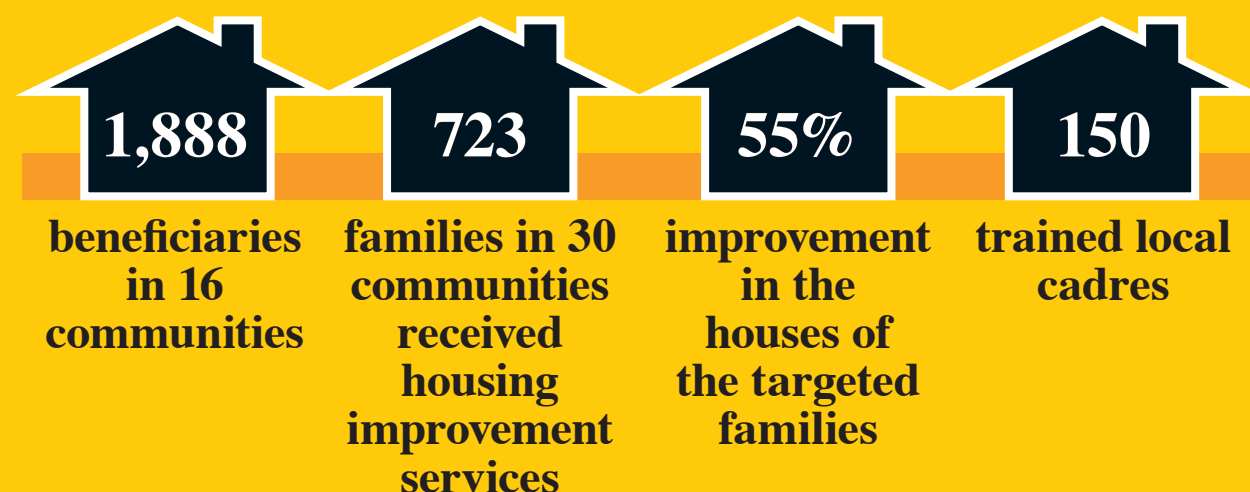


Maximize farmer’s profits through, building partnerships with exporters and associations

Housing Improvement and Relief

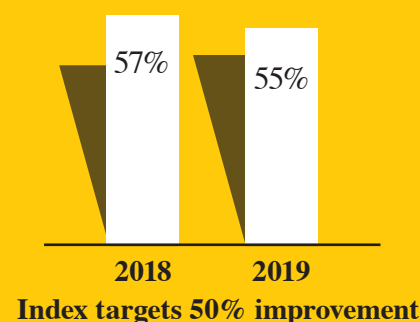


Mrs. Jakleen Abd EL Maseh



Major achievements in 2019:

- Feeling dignity, the most joyful moment while seeing beneficiaries happy with the basic humanitarian stranded of life, portable water, reasonable celling, became a motivation of hope for better life.
- Overcoming ecological barriers, discussions were held between regional civil engineer's consultants, and beneficiaries to apply the most effective economic methods to deal with variable environment for each region.
- Offering job opportunities, local cadres mobilized village human resources, as they provide job opportunities for unemployed skilled young people, so the benefit included both, the house owner and the workers.
- The Red Crescent clubs' membership, as Relief Component staff managed to network with the Red Crescent to nominate some BLESS volunteers, so that they could join the organization, to be provided with life insurance during participation in any Relief activities.
- Handling crises, as Relief Component implemented an "addressing different crises" workshop, through applying simulation system to train local cadres, in cooperation with the Red Crescent in Minya and Cairo.



10th pillar of Egypt's vision 2030:
"Eliminate informal settlements and insecure areas"



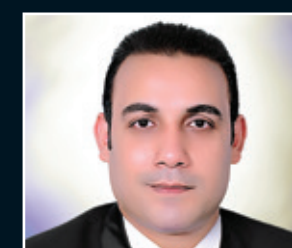
"We learned how to save money to contribute in improving our houses"
One of the beneficiaries in Samsoum village





“Back to water.. Back to life”

Imagine waking up one day, going to bathroom to wash your face but no water?! Searching for the least amount of water but all attempts are useless? This is indeed what happened to one of the blocks in Sakina community, slums of Alexandria region. Water was cut off from 5 families for 15 days, due to the owner’s violation of the law and providing the block with water without installing meters. This resulted in filing suits against everyone in the block including the owner himself. To avoid problems, he managed to evade the law causing a lot of trouble to residents. “we had to go to our neighbors to get the needed amount of water for drinking and eating only.” Things also got worse as some neighbors refused to lend them water, causing lack of residents’ personal hygiene and spread of bacteria. They tried their best to search for a solution, but all in vain. Luckily, they were able to get in contact with BLESS’s servants to discuss the issue and prevent all these negative consequences resulted from water outage. So, a reconciliation was reached and a water meter was installed for each family with a total cost of 70,000 L.E, as a result of residents’ and the church’s contribution. Now, Sakina residents don’t have to beg for water or face any legal problems. They aren’t forced to knock at their neighbors’ doors asking for water. Due to their determination to end this issue, they were able to get free clean water at their own apartments and enjoy the blessing of having water as the source of life.



Ehab Kamal

Housing Improvement volunteer in Al Shanaina village: He is a persistent volunteer. He is keen on attending the Component’s trainings. He scrutinizes the selection of beneficiaries according to the component’s criteria. He follows up the families’ improvement and networks with local authorities to facilitate the housing repairs for the beneficiaries.

Our
Dream

That the poor and marginalized people have healthy and safe houses which are suitable for human use.

“Rise Up and Walk” Center



Mr. Bassem George

523

beneficiaries

73%

developed
children
with mild
disability

75

blind girls and
women are capa-
ble of managing
their lives

134

disabled
beneficiar-
ies received
compensatory
devices

Major achievements in 2019:

- Transforming 25 issues of “El Keraza Magazine” into MP3 audio files throughout the year to facilitate daily routines of disabled.
- Improving blind girls’ educational skills through giving them English language courses and printing 3 textbooks in Braille.
- Supporting facilitators to control children’s behaviors and handle problems wisely.
- Developing the management techniques of disability centers and CBOs through conducting a “management techniques and approaches” training by the component’s specialists for beneficiaries.
- Enhancing the skills of practitioners to implement activities professionally through carrying out a specialized training for 23 servants of the component, from different churches.
- Increasing connection between family members as well as exchanging experiences about the right methods to deal with disabled children by carrying out trips and social activities along with providing parents with lectures.



Egypt’s vision 2030:
Integrating slightly disabled
students in schools.



“I learned how to dress, eat, talk, work using my hands and make friends”.

One of the blind beneficiaries



“Sight to my eyes...vision to my future”

“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision”. Said by one of the greatest American authors “Helen Keller”, who was blind and deaf as well. This means that the real disability is not in blindness, but in lack of vision and education. However, some could suffer from both and one of these persons is “E. A.” who didn’t have the ability to see or receive proper education. “I am 29 years old and I live with my parents. They always know how to take good care of me, but because of being poor and illiterate, they didn’t allow me to study or go to school.” However, she was able to learn numbers and memorize a lot of information due to support received from church servants. Thus, things started to get better and luck began to smile at her. Ms. Mary, the church servant, encouraged E. to enroll in the blind care project. Since then, E. was motivated to attend education classes, learn crafts making and even live with other people. “I learned how to dress, eat, talk, work using my hands and make friends”. On the other side, something had a great impact on E., which fostered her a lot during her success path. E. decided not to get satisfied only with education, but to search for more. Her internal motivation induced her to plan a vision for herself. So, she managed to do a small business at home. “I started to do perfume bottles to sell them for others in the village, to make my own money”. That’s how E. was able to become an educated, independent lady rather than being a burden on society because of her disability. She took the hard decision of not giving up to achieve a bright future for herself and people around her. E. managed to get something better than sight to her eyes. She was able to change her life, with the help of BLESS staff, into a complete new colorful one.

Our
Dream

Persons with disabilities and their families
are aware of their rights and how to claim
them and who provide services to them all
over Egypt



“Better Life” Center

for Combating Addiction



Dr. Nahed Faheem



1,825

surviving
from addiction

1,920

families who
adopt with their
addicted rela-
tives

3,700

beneficiaries
receive service
from Better
Life Center

Major achievements in 2019:

- Organizing (3) sports events for psychological health of the recovered.
- Use of social media platforms to reach the largest number of target people with aim to raise awareness either directly or indirectly on a daily basis.
- Developing a unit for modifying the behavior of (40) addict's children through 210 individual sessions for children and 200 individual sessions for children's families.
- Providing services through Better Life Center for (5760) addicted beneficiaries and (497) beneficiaries recovered from addiction.
- Unusual efforts in preparing and working on obtaining licenses from the state to establish a convalescence for mental health and addiction in the Nasr City building.



Our
Dream

“Recovery is an acceptance that your life is in shambles and you have to change”. Jamie Lee Curtis American author, and activist



Egypt's vision 2030:

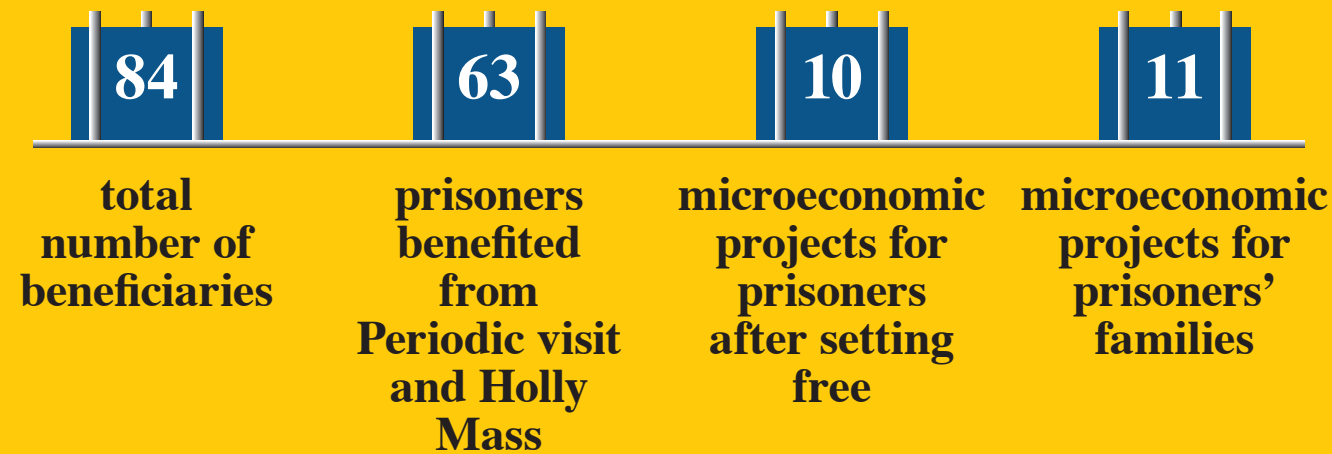
“Attention to providing high quality preventive and curative services available to all able and unable Egyptians.”.



Prisoners Care



Miss Azza Soliman



Major achievements in 2019:

- Providing Second chance, it's not easy for former prisoners to find job opportunity, for his/her historical background, as well as having loan, which create a closed cycle end up with returning to prison, for a former prisoner the component offered a living opportunity not just a loan.
- Life can be continued, for the prisoner's families, usually they have a lot of debts., can't afford the lawyers' fees, and in most cases can't afford the prisoners visit requirements (transportation, some food for prisoner, and some personal stuff for prisoner), that in addition of the basic living requirements (food- education- house rent). The small loan made a different to alleviate prisoner family's suffering.

"The trap..."

Nearly two years ago, Mr. M.E was thinking about burdens of responsibility. He is a 29 - year-old married man with two children. M.E was working 16 hours/day (8 hours of them driving a toktok car and the other 8 hours working in a pharmacy) and yet, his expenses is greater than revenues. One day, M.E met an old friend and told him about how life is hard, unstable and insecure due to difficulty of earning money. whilst, his friend informed him that he bought a toktok car now and can afford living expenses. M.E was excited to know the secret behind this sudden wealth. His friend added that he works as a courier in a pharmacy, delivering certain medicines to certain clients. M.E lost his mind and said: "What!! You are working in DRUGS!", his friend replied peacefully: "It called medicines!!". His friend beautified the truth saying: "You'll earn a lot of money, sometimes you have to make some risk for your family, you will just invest your time smartly, neither the owner of the pharmacy nor police will doubt you". Then he left him alone to think carefully. For almost three days, M.E was not able to sleep feeling guilty that he is not providing better life for his family, there was a painful conflict inside him between circumstances and this tempting offer. After deep thinking, he pulled himself together, rang on his friend: "I accept your offer". Despite his good intentions, he fell in a trap. After only four days working in that field, M.E lived a nightmare. He was arrested and got 3-year sentence. Fortunately, M.E was released from prison because of good conduct after half of the period (February 2019). He has always been remorseful for the mistakes that he has made in the past, but he does not let his past define who he is today. He searched for a genuine way to restart his life. When he listened about loans provided by BLESS, he applied for one, learnt how to make feasibility studies, got the loan and bought the toktok car that he dreamt for. M.E started earning from 7 to 9 thousands Egyptian pounds/month. He learnt that twisted ways are the worst and he can chase for his dream till accomplishing it.



"I felt my humanity when I was greeted with all the respect and appreciation by the program staff at BLESS."
A newly released prisoner.



Churches and NGOs that serve the families of prisoners adopt the development service, not just charitable services.



5th pillar of Egypt's vision 2030:
Building a just, accommodating society characterized by equality in rights and, and is based in parallel on supporting marginalized society segments.

Human Resources Development

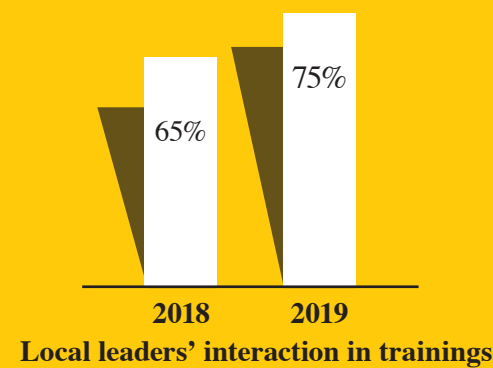


Mr. Ayman Karam



Major achievements in 2019:

- Adopting developmental techniques, the component held an annual conference, targeting priests and clergy, which succeeded to widen local church target groups to include (Christian and unchristian whenever possible) as well as making community studies and participatory planning process before interventions.
- Iron fieldworkers; fieldworkers proved their efficiency and persistence in facing obstacles. (Some opened their houses for implementing the activities and female fieldworkers broke taboos preventing women to go outside the village to attend trainings).
- Best montage prize, documentation is very important element in development process; therefore, three of BLESS staff participated in movie making course. One of BLESS staff won the best montage prize after presenting his documentary movie.



7th pillar of Egypt's vision 2030:
"Providing the necessary skills to trainees to think creatively, and empower them technically and technologically"



"After spending a whole month training in BLESS, I became the leader of the change process in my village, and that didn't happen without applying everything I learned about development".
A new trainee





“From the womb of pain to heal others...”

“One who suffered is able to support whom are suffering”; Mariam is a newly joined fieldworker to BLESS staff who is living in Bani Khaled village in El- Minya governorate. Mariam is brought up in a medium level family in Upper Egypt that adheres to conservative customs, traditions and limiting the role of girls in social life. Mariam’s mother is infected by kidney failure (ESRD) so Mariam spends most of her time serving her ill mother and accompanies her while taking treatment. In addition to that, she was helping disabled people in her village. These timings taught Mariam how to feel and respect people’s pain, she considers this circumstances as blessing. One day, BLESS recommended Bani Khaled to be served in ICDP. Mariam was notified and wished to join BLESS. However, she was worried about not giving her mother all her time. The priest advised her to go and support hundreds of people, her mother also motivated her to go for supporting others and enhance her career. Mariam applied for the job and got accepted. Despite her love and sacrifices in serving others, she lacks confidence in herself and could not express her thoughts and feelings easily. After attending the basic training, she became able to make presentations in front of many audience including senior staff. Her ambition, passion and concentrating in BLESS training enabled her to develop her skills. BLESS trainers testified that Mariam’s soft skills and technical knowledge were improved during the training and all of them were impressed by her while presenting an initiative for eliminating early marriage; the matter which affects her life and the lives of girls in her village. She was presenting with encouragement and confidence. She returned back to her village started to plant developmental grains, water them with persistence and is waiting for harvesting

Our Dream Development technique reaches all the agents of change in the Coptic Orthodox Church

Community Empowerment and Sustainable Development

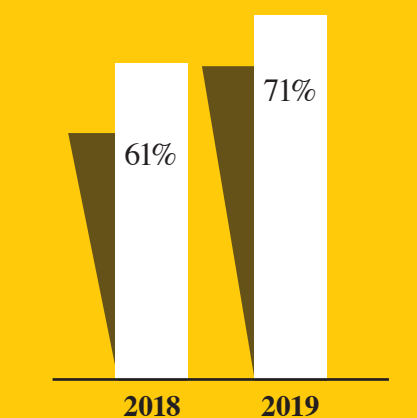


Miss Mariam Marzok



Major achievements in 2019:

- Creating changing agent; the component along with the field workers planted the passion of community volunteerism.
- Building local community-based initiatives, through strong teamwork trained local committees. (28 local initiatives implemented under the supervision of the component and 70 under the leadership of the local committee members).
- Building Regional Entities Capacity, to carry out local committees after BLESS phasing out. By create strong relations with Exit committees and facilitate the interaction with GO's and NGO's.



Percentage of communities that adopted initiatives



Egypt's vision 2030:
"Developing the communication mechanisms between the government and citizens".



"We got the privileges of learn our rights and how to ask for it".
People of the Upper Egypt region





“Source of light”

“It was like the pool of Bethesda’s paralyzed man”. This was the situation in Al- Hallaqi; one of the villages which considered as a challenge for BLESS because of the unsuccessful experience of its intervention in the neighboring villages. Al- Hallaqi, is a poor village in Middle Upper Egypt region, where there isn’t any true leader who has the ability to change this social stagnation. The village was a repellent source for youth who resorted to internal migration to get jobs. This caused many problems, especially for women and children who didn’t have the chance to enjoy some quality time with their fathers. The most common type of agriculture was seasonal and practiced by old people only. Al- Hallaqi also used to suffer from FGM and minors’ marriage. The majority of families were living in very poor conditions and used to depend on the church’s subsidies. Out of this darkness, a source of light emerged. Father Mikhaeel Thabet was a true believer of comprehensive development. He wasn’t satisfied with what Al- Hallaqi was going through. That’s why his enthusiasm and determination motivated him to form leaders of the people’s village and networks with important organizations. He managed to reach an agreement with Catholic and Protestant priests about disapproving any minor marriage cases and reporting any violation. This resulted in the decrease of minor marriage’s numbers. His emphasis on the disadvantages resulted from FGM during holy masses and rites of baptism, led to the disappearance of this hideous habit. Another achievement was encouraging discussions between spouses, after opening an entertaining club in the church. “There were about 70 poor families who depended on the church to receive money, but now reduced to 20 only through generating microeconomic projects” as spoken by Father Mikhaeel. He succeeded in spreading awareness regarding importance of equality between sons and daughters in bequeathing lands. By changing the type of agriculture from seasonal into annual, he managed to solve the problem of youth’s internal migration. So, instead of planting crops that don’t need continuous care like wheat, he convinced farmers to plant crops which require daily watering such as vegetables. This contributed in offering job opportunities to sell harvest in Tema and Nagaa Hammadi regions. Father Mikhaeel ends his speech by saying: “I wish there were an association in Al-Hallaqi to become a source of fund and a development office to spread the idea of development to all the near villages.” This is the kind of local cadres BLESS aspires for reaching through the component’s trainings; a cadre who could be a symbol of sustainable development and a source of light to others.



Mahrous Soliman

Community Empowerment and Sustainable Development volunteer in AL Mamaria Village: He is a multi-relation person; he established relationships with the village council and was able to solve the water issue. He takes care of students’ enrollment in schools. He believes in volunteering and encourages youth to volunteer and serve the community.

Our **Dream**

Supporting cooperative CBOs in the exit villages to foster the idea of sustainability and community empowerment

Community Studies and Research



Dr. Abeer Rashid

Major achievements in 2019:

- Raising awareness of field workers, concerning assessment of communities’ needs, through trainings to use the right tools.
- Providing exit committee with knowledge and skills to use exit criteria tools to assess exiting communities.



875

beneficiaries

18

studies were produced and contributed with 80% to define the developmental intervention

The study is efficient by 63%

to indicate the appropriate program and interventions



Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, Nobel Prize Award winner in Biochemistry



Following Egypt’s vision 2030, BLESS conducts the required studies, to have a background about the villages; in which one it should intervene or exit



Mr. Magdy Basta



298

served individuals
received addiction
recovery aids

100

immigrated families from
Areesh received financial
aidsrecovery aids

1,681

served individuals re-
ceived marriage aids

1,401

served individuals
received therapeutic
aidsrecovery aids

Major achievements in 2019:

- Breaking the barriers of place: Aghapy service didn't search for serving the dioceses it has already supported in 2018, but it also succeeded in offering its aids to new dioceses such as Idfo, Aswan, beba and Elfashn.
- Healing sick hearts: Aghapy, with the help of different churches (such as Saint George Church in Sahel), managed to operate open heart surgeries, in addition to other surgical operations like cochlear, liver and kidney transplants and compensatory devices.
- Code of ethics: Aghapy adopts ethical criteria in service to maintain the data privacy of its served individuals such as: delivering monthly aids by the priest to families at their houses, and delivering marriage aids to dioceses outside Cairo by assigned servants from these dioceses or via postal orders.



Egypt's vision 2030:
"Reducing percentage of population
under poverty line from 4,4 to 2,5%"



"I thank God for His Support for a poor widow
in her living, in her children's education and His
Great Generosity"
Aghapy's official



"Hard work always pays off"

Some people could imagine that difficult circumstances may be an excuse for reluctance to exert efforts, or a justification to ask for financial aid from others and depend on them. Some also could complain from God about the current situation. But this is not the case for the heroine of our story from Kerdasa. The Aghapy service official starts her speech by saying: "F.A. is one of our daughters and holds a Bachelor of Commerce. She belongs to hardworking family; her father is a diligent worker in Orascom Company to be able to earn a living for his children." But the situation is not always rosy, as the official told us that the family suffers from very difficult conditions, because her mother suffers from kidney diseases, which makes her unable to work. Another issue is the family's support for two other sons as the first son is enrolled in military service and the second is still a student in the preparatory stage. Here, the official continues, saying: «This is what led to a major crisis for the eldest daughter, as she was engaged and preparing for the wedding, but she needed financial help to get the bedroom to complete marriage.» Despite the financial aid constantly received by the family from the church on holidays, it was only sufficient for the school fees for her two brothers. But God always rewards hard work with success and opens closed doors to his diligent children. However, things started to get better as the church in the area learned about the family's conditions and that the bedroom cost 18,000 L.E. So, it offered F. A. a financial aid with a value of 2000 L.E and the relatives gave an amount of 6000 L.E. As for the remaining amount, it was supported by the service of the Righteousness Committee with Aghapy. Here, the daughter was thrilled that her dream came true, and the marriage took place in secrecy without her fiancé knowing. It is clear now that hard work always pays off even if results aren't immediate. That's why we find nothing better than the statement of Jesus Christ, to conclude our story, as He tells us in his Gospel: «You are better than many sparrows.»



Serving twice the number of needy people through the
upcoming years especially those living circumstances

The Power of Partnership



Our International Partners



Norwegian Embassy
Cairo



Brot
für die Welt



kerk
in actie



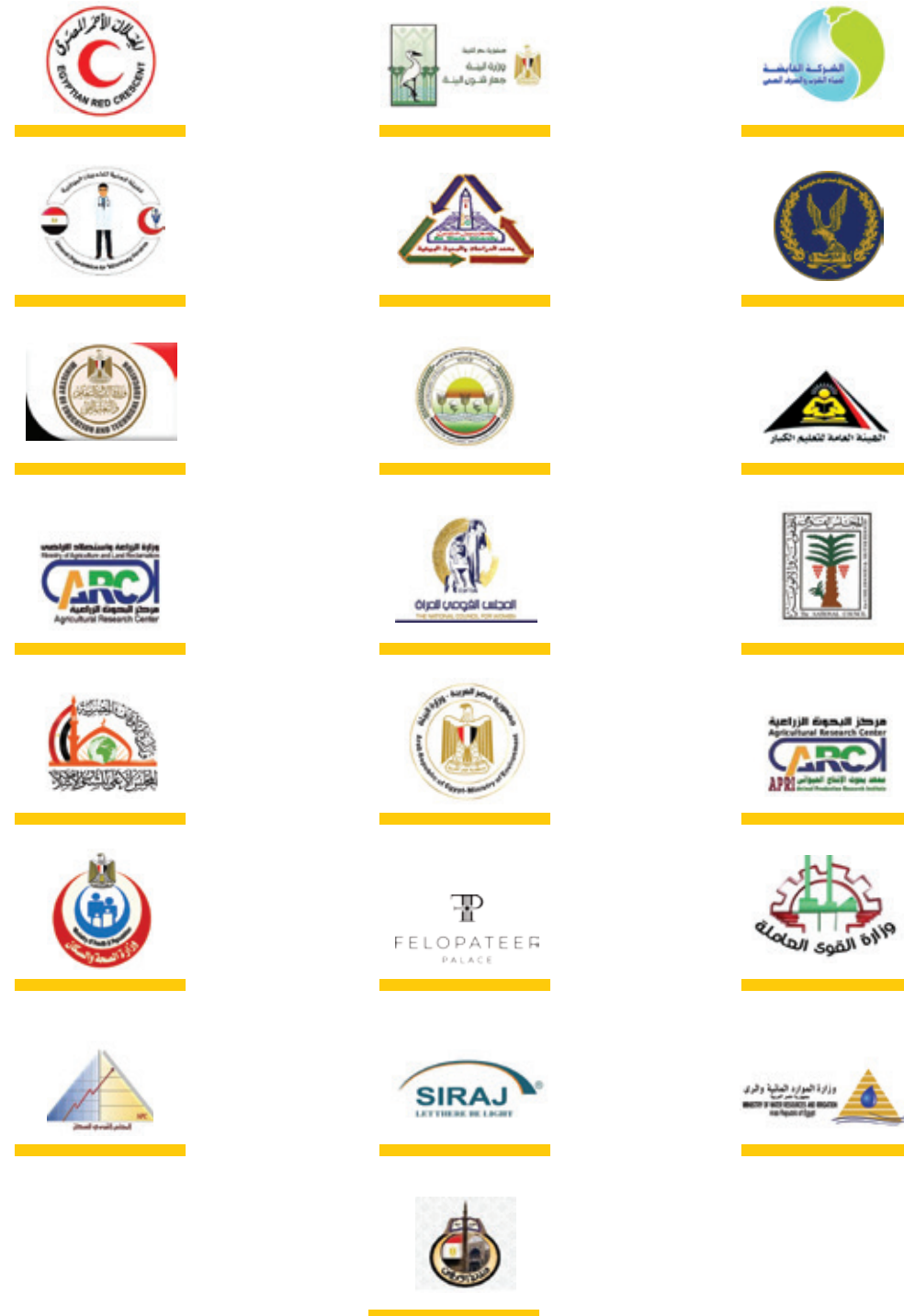
Church of Sweden



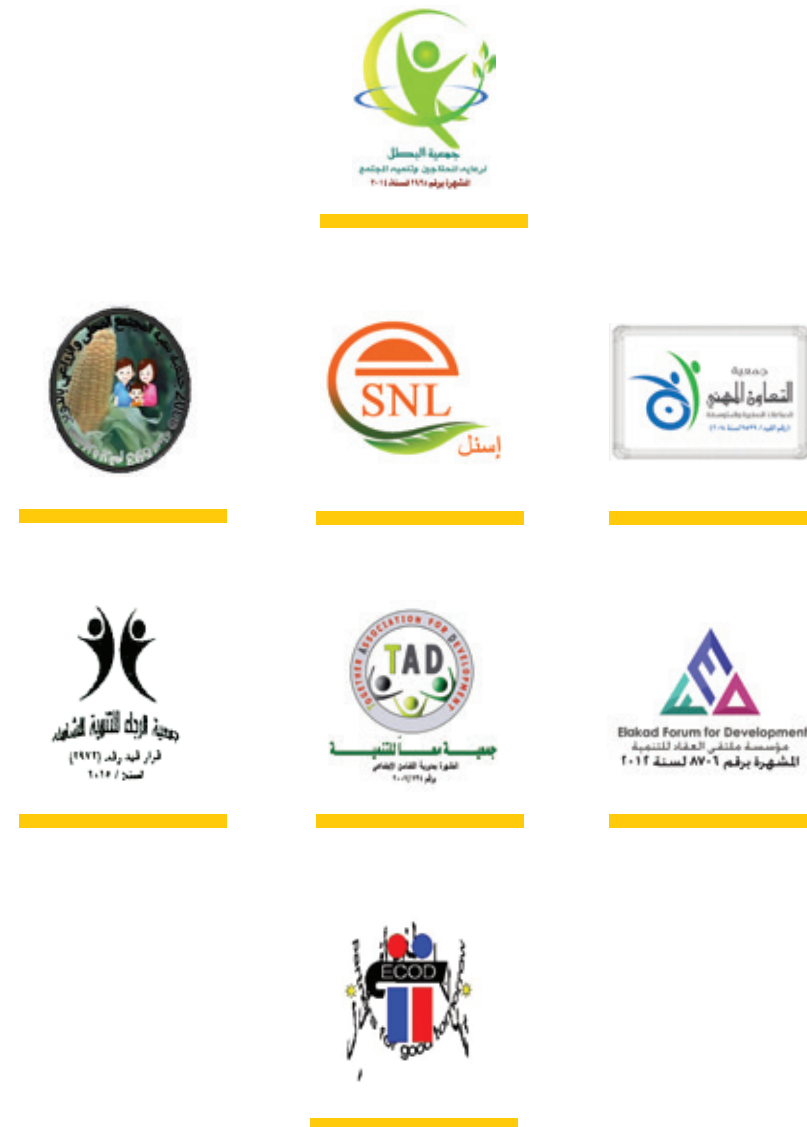
actalliance



Our National Partners



CBOs



Our Strategic Partners:

... *Thank
you*

1- Aswan Diocese

8 communities
2 active

2- Arment and Asna Diocese

3 communities
2 active

3- Luxor Diocese

4 communities
2 active

4- Nag Hamadi Diocese

1 community

5- Kos and Nekada Diocese

2 communities
1 active

6- Sohag Diocese:

4 communities
2 active

7- Al- Baliana Diocese

3 communities

8- Gerga Diocese:

7 communities
2 active

9- Dshena Diocese

2 communities
1 active

10- Akhmim Diocese

6 communities
1 active

11- Manfalot Diocese

1 community

12- Malawie Diocese

6 communities
1 active

13- Tahta Diocese

4 communities

14- Tama Diocese

3 communities
1 active

15- Dayrot Diocese

2 communities

16- Dair Mowas Diocese

3 communities

17- El- Minya & Abo Korkaaes

7 communities
4 active

18- Matai Diocese

4 communities

19- Abu Teig Diocese

2 communities
1 active

20- Abnob Diocese

1 community

21- Asuit Diocese

1 community
1 active

22- Maghagha Diocese

5 communities
1 active

23- Qusaia Diocese

1 community

24- Beni Suef Diocese

3 communities
1 active

25- Beba and Al- Fashen Diocese

8 communities
2 active

26- Ayat Diocese

1 community

27- Al- Saf and Atfih Diocese

1 community

28- Shebeen El-Kanater Diocese

12 communities
4 active

29- Maser Al- Kadima Diocese

2 communities
1 active

30- Maadi Diocese

2 communities

31- Al- Salam City

4 communities
1 active

32- Middle Giza Diocese

2 communities
1 active

33- Shobra Al-Kheima Diocese

2 communities
1 active

34- 6th October Diocese

1 community
1 active

35- Cairo Diocese

8 communities
1 active

36- AL- Behaira Diocese

8 communities
2 active

37- Banha and Kewesna Diocese

3 communities

38- Al- Sharkeia Diocese

1 community

39- Al- Zakazik Diocese

1 community

40- Alexandria Diocese

3 communities
3 active

41- Al- Kalubia Diocese

1 community

42- Shark Al- Sekka Diocese

5 communities

43- Helwan and Maassara Diocese

1 community

44- North Giza Diocese

4 communities

**Number of
Dioceses**

44

**Number of communities
we have worked with**

152

**Number of active
communities**

42



Expenses Statement 2019:

| | | |
|---|------------|---|
| ■ Education Program | 3,773,929 | ■ |
| ■ Primary Health Care Program | 3,116,830 | ■ |
| ■ Community Peace Building Program | 3,143,476 | ■ |
| ■ Economic Development Program | 6,060,978 | ■ |
| ■ Rural Development Program | 1,309,415 | ■ |
| ■ Rise Up and Walk Center | 1,799,958 | ■ |
| ■ Better Life Center for Combatting Addiction | 445,852 | ■ |
| ■ Prisoners Care Program | 248,266 | ■ |
| ■ Community Empowerment and Sustainable Development Program | 703,266 | ■ |
| ■ Human Resources Development Program | 571,525 | ■ |
| ■ Research and Community Study Program | 168,889 | ■ |
| ■ Unleashing the Potentials of New Generations Program | 3,153,221 | ■ |
| ■ Housing Improvement Program | 6,982,730 | ■ |
| ■ Relief Program | 48,600 | ■ |
| ■ Environmental Development Program | 1,353,229 | ■ |
| ■ Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Program | 241,972 | ■ |
| ■ Administrative cost | 13,066,251 | ■ |
| ■ Improving the quality of life for women and children | 4,133,951 | ■ |
| ■ SALEMO Project | 1,542,580 | ■ |
| ■ Aghapy Program | 36,221,969 | ■ |

Grand Total 88,086,887





Annual Report
2019
Coptic Orthodox Church
Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services