

**The Coptic Orthodox Church**  
Bishopric of Public,  
Ecumenical and  
Social Services(BLESS)



# Protecting Earth is our Responsibility

Annual Report

**2022**

Issued 2023



## The Coptic Orthodox Church's Statement on the Protection of the Environment



«The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.» (Genesis 2:15)

The Coptic Orthodox Church endorses the principles and values pertaining to the protection of the environment, believing that humanity is accountable to God for the stewardship of His creation. The Bible describes God's creation as "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." (Genesis 1:31). God entrusted humans with the abundance of the land as Psalmist says, "The heavens belong to the LORD, but he has given the earth to all humanity" (Psalm 115:16).

In view of the Coptic Church's responsibility to address global and societal challenges, the Church endorses and values Egypt's national strategy to address the repercussions of climate change and the efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals and improve the quality of life for all Egyptians. The Church affirms its role as an active national partner in building values about the importance of engaging in efforts to protect the environment, volunteering, and the adoption of sustainable production and consumption patterns.

This affirmation is a continuation of the commitment of the Coptic Church to develop initiatives aimed at protecting the environment and supporting the resilience of communities facing the repercussions of climate change. To this effect, the Bishopric of public, Social and Ecumenical Services (BLESS), the development arm of the Church, continues to collaborate with different governmental and non-governmental partners to support environmental initiatives in local communities.

**HG Bishop Yolious**

The Bishop and Director of  
the Bishopric of Public,  
Ecumenical and Social Services

**HH Pope Tawadros II**

Pope of Alexandria  
and Patriarch of the See  
of St Mark

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## Message from His Holiness Pope Tawadros II

**Earth is our great mother and home and is a divine gift to all living beings.**

We have learned from our Church to protect, preserve, and love Earth as it is the beautiful nature that God created. At the pinnacle of creation, God created the human as a ruler to take care of, and protect this nature and all its essences including plants, animals, climate, water, air, sun and light.

The protection of the environment is one of the key areas of focus of the Bishopric of Social and Public Services under the stewardship of Bishop Yolios, who leads the organization with a great team of dedicated servants.

Greetings and God bless you all.

*Tawadros II*  
*2023-7-4*



**His Holiness and Beatitude**

*Pope Tawadros II*

**Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the  
Apostolic See of St. Mark the Evangelist**

**“Then God said, ‘Let the earth put forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit trees that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so.” (Gen. 1:11)**

In this critical juncture, the world agrees on the necessity of protecting Earth as it is God’s gift to us and to the beings dwelling on it.

The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt, with its developmental arm the Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services (BLESS), has a responsibility towards protecting the environment in Egypt. With a strong and active hand, and an enlightened thought towards the beautiful environment that God gave us, we work together to protect Earth.

We are committed to protect our country and the world from the negative impact of climate change and to work together to achieve the sustainable developmental goals.

The servants of BLESS deliver programmatic activities in various contexts which are orchestrated together towards protecting the environment.

God bless every work for the glory of his name. We pray for the prosperity and growth of our beloved country Egypt



## **Letter of His Grace Bishop Yolios**



**His Grace**  
*Bishop Yolios*  
**The Bishop of BLESS**

In Greek, the word "Environment" is "Ecology". The first syllable of Eco means "house." The environment is our home in which humans live, however, humans are not the owner of the home as God creates and owns nature., and not the owner of it because God creates and owns nature.

**"The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof"**

In Genesis, God authorized humans to take care of the environment. However, humans fell and mismanaged the affairs of the earth, and their relationship with the surrounding environment was destroyed. As a result, the environment revolted against humans, resulting in the so-called environmental imbalance, and after the Lord Christ redeemed us, He gave us the possibility of a new life.

Therefore, we were asked for "environmental repentance" which is the only way to make a person reconsider his behavior towards the environment.

Thank God, BLESS exerts its efforts in 2022 in the environmental field as below,

1. Pope Tawadros II launched a document expressing the Coptic Orthodox Church's position towards environmental protection.
2. Coptic Orthodox Church signed a protocol with the Ministry of Environment that aims to preserve the environment.
3. BLESS participated in COP27 in November 2022 presenting BLESS activities for the protection of the environment.
4. Implementing several projects, initiatives, and awareness campaigns related to the environment in 2022.

I am honored to be a member of the BLESS team led by His Holiness Pope Tawadros II and His Grace Bishop Yolios – with the participation of the distinguished and creative servants.

د. فائز أبو عمرو

## Letter of Father Rafael Tharwat



Father

Rafael Tharwat

نائب أسقف الخدمات

## Who we are

The Bishopric of Public Ecumenical and Social Services (BLESS) is the developmental arm of the Coptic Orthodox Church, serving in Egypt since 1962. It is constantly looking to provide sustainable development by uplifting the poor and the marginalized, investing in their potential, and empowering them to uplift their community in all aspects - intellectually, socially, and economically. BLESS wishes to create a better life for everyone, irrespective of race, religion or sex, as humans are our purpose.

### **BLESS services everywhere**

BLESS expanded its presence all over Egypt, extending from Aswan to Alexandria. During the past 60 years BLESS served:



## Our Vision

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



## Our 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.



## 60th Anniversary Celebration of Love & Service



On September 30, 2022, the Coptic Orthodox Church celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Bishopric of Public, Social and Ecumenical Services. The celebration was under the auspices of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the Holy See of St. Mark, and His Grace Bishop Yolios, Bishop of Public and Social Services, and in the presence of Eng. Hani Azar, Advisor to the President of the Republic, and Minister of Local Development, Minister of Immigration, Minister of Social Solidarity, Deputy of Al-Azhar Grand Imam, members of the Holy Synod, members of the House of Representatives, heads of national councils, priests and servants of the bishopric.



His Holiness Pope Tawadros II began the celebration with prayer, followed by the national anthem, and then the display of the most important achievements of the bishopric during its 60 years of serving the development of Egyptian society. An impressive artistic show was exhibited, combining with church prayers, live performances, documentaries about the bishopric service and hymns specially prepared for the celebration.



His Holiness Pope Tawadros II made a congratulatory speech on the 60th anniversary celebration of the bishopric of services. He mentioned that Bishop Samuel began his service in the bishopric in 1962 by planting a seed through the Spirit of God, and it continues to grow with water, air, sun, care, and patience. Over the years, the bishopric began to broaden its field of service to Egyptian society and now it had nearly 500 employees and more than 1,200 volunteers throughout the Republic. After the martyrdom of the faithful Bishop Samuel, four venerable bishops served the bishopric, and they are the late Bishop Athanasius, the Bishop of Beni Suef, and Bishop Serapion, the current bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles in America, and Bishop Yoannis, the Bishop of Assiut, and currently Bishop Yolios, the current Bishop of the Bishopric of Services.



His Grace Bishop Yolios made a word of thanks and appreciation to the servants' team of the bishopric, and mentioned that His Holiness the Pope titled the celebration "60 years of love and service". Love is the language that every person understands and through which we enter into eternal life. Service in the bishopric of services is the washing feet from ignorance, poverty, disease, and dependence, and to help people stand and walk on his feet.

## Events preceding the celebration



On September 29, 2022, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II performed the prayers of the Divine Liturgy, from the Greater St. Mark's Cathedral in Abbasiya, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Bishopric of Public and Social Services, in the presence of bishops, priests, and public figures.



His Holiness the Pope honored a number of bishops and priests who served the bishopric during the sixty-year period and still give their love through service.

**On Thursday evening, Bishop Yolios invited the partner organizations and some of the servants of the bishopric to a dinner meeting in the Church of the Virgin Mary in Qasriyat Al-Rayhan in Old Cairo.**



**Among the activities of the sixtieth celebration, Bishop Yolios held a meeting with the Partner organizations and supporters of the Bishopric of Services at the Papal Headquarters on Wednesday, September 28, 2022. In this meeting, the director of each program presented their activities and developmental interventions in targeted communities.**



**His Holiness the Pope welcomed the attendees and gave a speech on the importance of service. He expressed his appreciation for the role of partner organizations and valued the societal role played by the Bishopric of Public and Social Services. The development partners also made field visits to a number of villages and slums during the days preceding the celebration. They felt the developmental impact of the services provided by the Bishopric of Services in these places.**

# BLESS as an Effective Partner in Development in 2022



## A Cooperation protocol with Ministry of Environment

A protocol was signed in June 2022 by His Holiness Pope Tawadros II and Dr. Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, in the presence of His Grace Bishop Yolios, to enhance the action in the field of environmental issues and promote a general culture of the society that translates into positive behaviors towards the environment and its natural resources in order to protect the environment and achieve sustainable development. The Coptic Orthodox Church launched a document expressing its position towards environmental protection.



## BLESS's participation in COP27



BLESS participated in COP27 in November 2022 and conducted two sessions by Mrs. Roneh Shafik, the Environmental Development program manager, who presented BLESS's activities for the protection of the environment along with the activities of the project "Resilient Productive Communities" implemented by the BLESS sister organization, the Coptic Association for Social Care (CASC), and is funded by the European Union.

## The National Project for Development of the Egyptian Family



In February 28, 2022, His Grace Bishop Yolios, the Bishop of Public, Social and Ecumenical Services participated in the ceremony of launching the National Project for Development of the Egyptian Family in the Administrative Capital city, in the presence of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. The bishop stated that the Coptic Church focuses on the families through premarital courses and carrying out medical examinations before marriage.

## Third Logos Forum



BLESS reviewed its developmental interventions for communities at the Third Logos Forum for Coptic Youth with the motto “Back to Roots”, which was held by the Coptic Orthodox Church from August 20 to 27, 2022, in the presence of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II and Minister Suha Gendi, Minister of State for Immigration and Egyptians Abroad Affairs, and the participation of 200 youth from 35 dioceses from all over the world.

## UNESCO and Adult Education

BLESS participation in “Global Curriculum for Adult Education” training, organized by UNESCO from February 26 to March 2, 2022.



## Celebration of National Population Strategy with UNFPA

In December 2022, BLESS participated in UNFPA's celebration of the achievements of the European Union's support in Egypt's National Population Strategy.



## UNICEF and Djibouti delegation



BLESS organized a meeting with UNICEF delegation of Djibouti to exchange experience about interventions of combating violence against children.





**Collaboration with the Ministry of Social Solidarity “Wa’ie” initiative**



On March 31, 2022, The Coptic Orthodox Church through BLESS participates in the “Wa’ie” initiative in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Solidarity which aims to raise awareness of religious leaders about 11 critical issues faced in Egypt

## Cooperation with the Ministry of Manpower

76 beneficiaries were trained in different vocational skills capitalizing on the signed agreement of cooperation between BLESS and the Ministry of Manpower in July 2021



## Haya Karima initiative

BLESS participated in developing 19 villages targeted by Haya Karima as a part of the protocol signed in November 2021 with the Foundation, represented by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.



## **Coptic Association for Social Care (CASC)**

The Coptic Association for Social Care (CASC) is the sister organization of BLESS. It was registered under 184 on March 1, 1990 with the Government of Egypt so that it plays its role as a regular Civil Society Organization. Moreover, CASC enjoys the status of being an Egyptian central civil society organization that can freely access communities all over Egypt.

CASC is currently active in the following areas:

- Resilient Productive Communities project is funded by European Union
- Rise up & Walk Center



## Resilient Productive Communities Project



The project is funded by European Union. It was implemented in steady steps by a team of CASC and the Arab Office for Youth and Environment. In cooperation with two affiliated entities Misr El Erada in Cairo and El Ekhlas in Bani Suief.

12 training workshops on capacity building for 142 trainees for 24 days. These workshops covered proposal writing; monitoring and evaluation; and advocacy. The project empowered civil society organizations to adopt positive environmental attitudes and behaviors, with 3 local community teams formed and 3 community governorate committees. These committees include 61 members in local community teams.



Local community teams were trained on various methods of data collection, communication, baseline questionnaire, electronic questionnaire, and data analysis for 23 trainees for a period of 3 days. Using this questionnaire to define the targeted beneficiaries of the activities: installing LED energy bulbs, installing LED street lamps, biogas, and awareness issues should be raised.

Adopting and promoting of low-cost renewable energy technology, with a strong focus on energy rationalization and consumption in target societies through:

- Reducing the energy consumption of households by installing 5,005 LED energy bulbs for 1,001 households.
- The project installed 540 LED street lamps in 34 main streets and 80 sub-streets; 125 in Galila, 125 in Ezab El Fant and 290 street lamps in Moasaset El Zakaah. We estimate a total of 18,913 beneficiaries from this activity (3,237 men, 3,433 women and 12,243 children)

Increase community resilience towards adapting to the consequences of climate change and its effects.

- The project planted 530 fruitful olive trees in the targeted communities. composed of 97 trees in Galila, 103 trees in Ezab El Fant and 330 trees in Moasaset El Zakaah with a total of 3,382 beneficiaries (751 men, 784 women and 1,847 children).
- 9 public meetings were implemented, attended by 798 beneficiaries through organizing 48 meetings for the local community teams.
- Six environmental days were completed, with 2 environmental days for each targeted community, for 1,035 which presented various activities like recycling, interactive environmental theater, environmental cleaning campaigns, solar energy applications, paints, environmental agriculture, and the effects of climate change.



## Rise Up & Walk Center

provides service for people with disabilities. The program has a unit for each type of disability and provides a plan for the beneficiaries.

In 1994, BLESS provided trainings on how to deal with People with Disabilities, and in 2003, a project was established to provide the service in all villages. In 2016, The Rise Up and Walk center was established to ensure the integration of people with disabilities in the community.

## Key Achievements of 2022

In 2022, "Rise up and Walk Center" provided its services to 898 People with Disabilities through:

Creating a sense of independence for the visually impaired beneficiaries through navigation training for 27 beneficiaries and providing white canes to 100 beneficiaries.



Skilling 47 People with Disabilities by training them in embroidery, sewing, and perfume making through 7 vocational trainings which helps improving their motor skills.

Improving the speech and behavior skills of 107 children through 2,807 speech and skills development sessions. 38 trained cadres are able to deal with People with Disabilities, the Center provided them with training on the principles of dealing with People with Disabilities, speech methods, and Sign Language.



Signing a protocol with The Veteran and War Victims Association facilitated providing 40 beneficiaries with prostheses.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



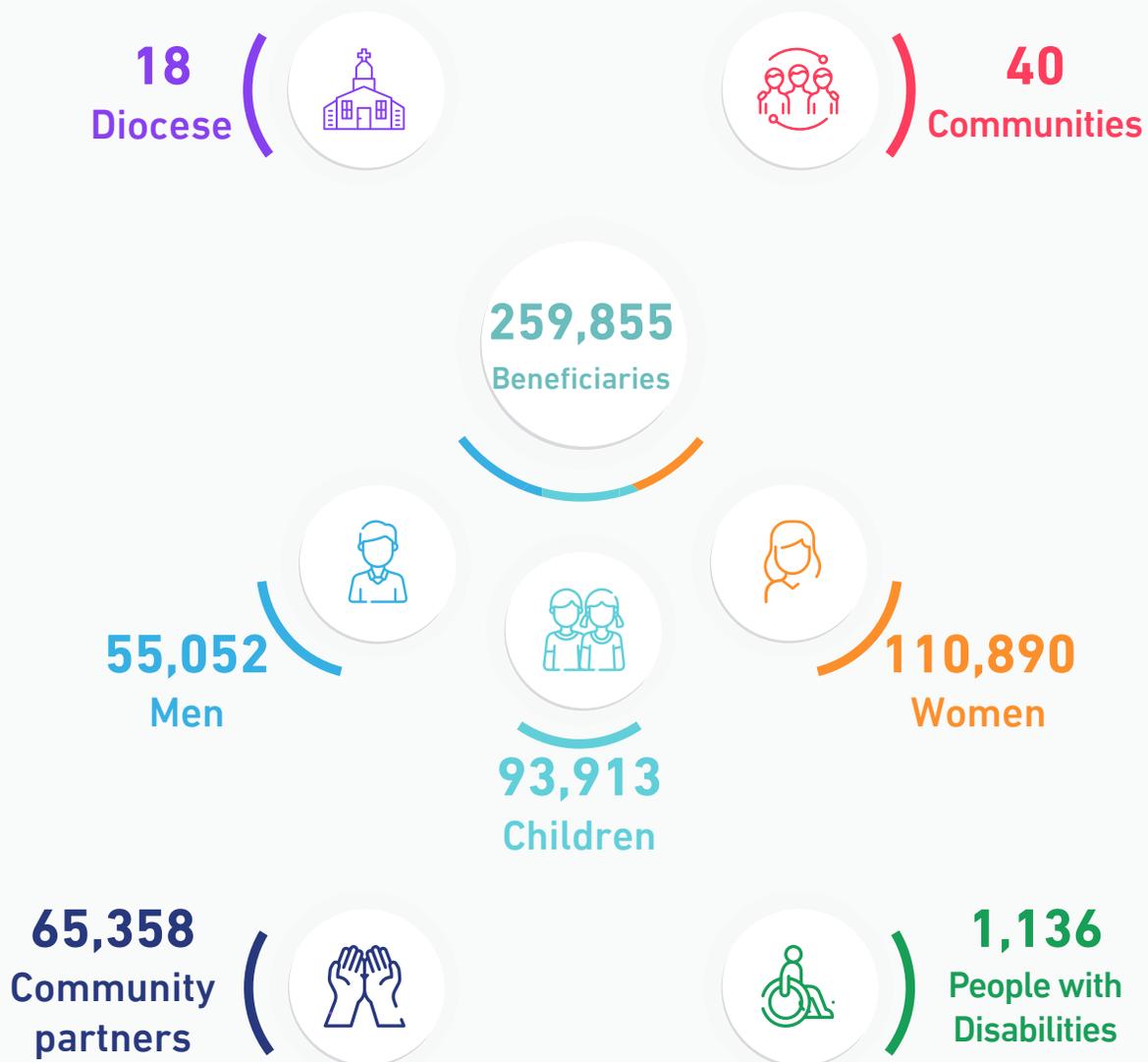
### Success Story: Way of connection

Marina Fahmy is an 8-year-old who came to the Center to improve her speech skills, as people had trouble understanding her when she spoke and her school teachers found it difficult to communicate with her. When Marina came to the center, she was provided with speech assessments and language tests which determined that she had linguistic developmental delay and speech disorders including stuttering and articulation errors.

Subsequently, the program developed a rehabilitation plan for her after detecting her speech problems. After 6 months of undergoing her rehabilitation plan, Marina's speech skills started to improve, and she is now better at articulating sounds, speaking clearly, and people no longer find it difficult to understand or communicate with her.



# The Integrated Community Development Program in 2022



BLESS' participation in COP27 highlighted the responsibility of combating climate change by ensuring the inclusion of environmental actions in ICDP programs.



# Environmental Development Program

The program was established as a part of the Health Care program in July 1996. It began operating in 15 communities in 2018 as a separate program. The Environmental Development Program aims to improve environmental knowledge and practices.

## Key Achievements in 2022

The program aims to preserve natural resources, rationalize consumption, and work to change human behavior for the better of the environment. The program also aims to improve the environmental situation economically and deepen environmental knowledge in the targeted communities.

1) The environmental development program launched 26 cleaning and planting tree campaigns in order to expand the green area in the target communities and improve public health:

Planting 1,395 trees in 12 communities, 34,407 beneficiaries of the campaigns to keep the environmental balance and its importance in purifying the air and combating pollution sources.



Removing municipal wastes in 14 communities, for example, removing 148 tons of waste in El Zoe'r village, which led to a rise in environmental awareness of residents and 40,917 campaign beneficiaries.



2) Due to the rising cost of electricity and the program's eagerness to save resources (electricity, water, and natural gas), the program presented:

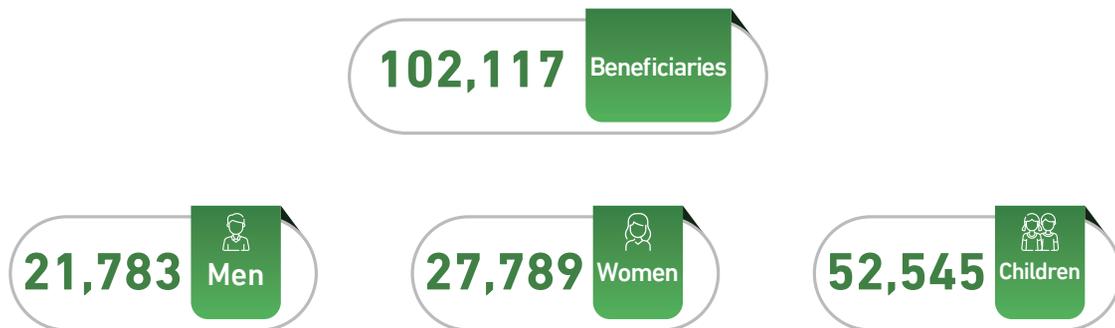
28 rationalizing consumption workshops which discussed how to reduce electricity consumption such as unplugging appliances when unused, switching off lights when unused, and boiling water only for making hot drinks.

Installing 2,864 LED lighting bulbs for 3, 3,757 beneficiaries, which led to a decrease in electricity consumption by approximately 35%, and a decrease in financial expenses accordingly.



551 women were educated on how to control their consumption of food, water, and natural gas, for example; learning how to fix the water faucet to save water and taking food out of the fridge an hour before heating it.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



El Zoe'r is a small village in Minya Governorate. It is a very undeserved-village and residents tend to benefit from the governmental services from the mother village, Delga. The residents in El Zoe'r were suffering from piles of waste and the village canal banks were filled with garbage waste.

The environmental development program and the community empowerment & sustainability program cooperated and organized a cleaning campaign integrated with the local council in Delga and the residents of El Zo'er village. In addition, BLESS established a waste management committee to discuss the problem of waste management fines, garbage compilation in the entirety of El Zoe'r village, and made several initiatives to overcome this problem. Finally, the committee and the residents succeeded to remove 148 Tons of waste from the streets.

In order to encourage the village's residents to sustain a clean environment, the program launched an increasing environmental awareness campaign to prompt the residents not to throw garbage in their drain or the street and to how to dispose of it safely for all. Furthermore, BLESS also raises environmental awareness for children by providing an environmental carnival for children to educate them on how to reuse different materials and optimize the benefits of their surroundings. Bless also conducts an educational environmental trip to the water station for children to learn about refining and filtering water.

**BLESS participated in COP27 and presented its activities in two sessions for the protection of the environment along with the activities of the project "Resilient Productive Communities" implemented by its sister organization, the Coptic Association for Social Care (CASC) funded by European Union**

The BLESS Team intervention addressed the following issues:

Focusing on the negative impacts of climate change within urban and agricultural areas, while defining some unsustainable practices of local communities within these areas.

The economic, social, and environmental impact of rationalizing energy consumption at the family and community levels.

The role of the project in assisting the needed target groups and families to enable them to manage energy properly.

The meeting shed light on some of the successful experiences that the project contributed to enable local communities and religious institutions to use guided lighting systems and renewable energy.

Focusing on the importance of raising awareness of positive behaviors that contribute to the rationalization of energy use.

The role of the project is to spread sustainable energy models within the Egyptian countryside. Such as solar energy models to operate water-lifting machines, and biogas models, which contribute significantly to providing alternative sources of energy that can be used for cooking, lighting, and heating purposes. In addition to producing a high-quality organic fertilizer that does not pollute the environment and has no risk of using it in agriculture and in fertilizing all crops.

Spreading the aim of the project within other rural communities, and the importance of continuing and increasing the implementation of the models in the communities.



## The Economic Development program

The Economic Development program started in 1962 and aims to improve economic and living standards for women and youth, by establishing about 10 vocational centers including a mobile center and handcrafts skills for women and young girls. The program provided employment services in 1986.



### Key Achievements of 2022

347 men and women were provided with a stable source of income, and 581 men and women improved their income by 30% through carrying out the following:

- 368 microeconomic projects
- 43 vocational trainings attended by 426 men and women
- 28 Technical trainings attended by 689 men and women
- 6 The recruitment unit training attended by 63 men and women.



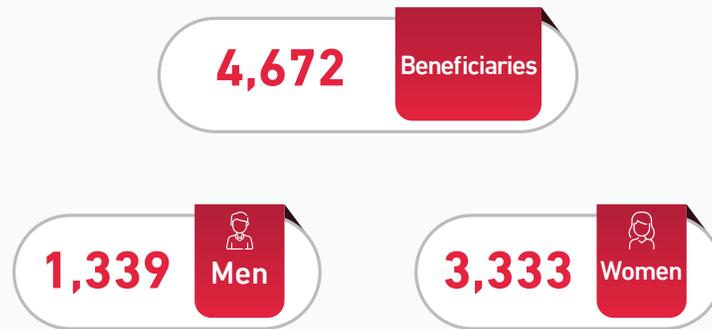
Establishing “I Can” Vocational Training Center, which provided training to 137 beneficiaries. The beneficiaries received 13 training courses on hairdressing, sewing, mobile maintenance, refrigeration and air conditioning courses.



Through collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower, 76 beneficiaries were trained in different vocational skills (tailoring and household electric wiring). The successful trainees received official certificates and top achieving trainees received grants in the form of tools to start their own business.

Engaging women in Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in Bani Khaled as a result of networking with the National Council of Women, 387 women were trained on how to save money and carry out their own projects, and 1000 women were encouraged to apply for saving visas.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



## Success story: Perseverance



Amira Shawky is a single mother of two children in school age and lives in Awlad Gharieb village, in the Sohag governorate in Upper Egypt. She had very limited income through sewing activities using a sewing machine.

Amira joined the vocational training program to learn professional sewing and develop her skills. The program offered her training in business management as well. She later on applied for a loan from BLESS to buy the materials to grow her business. The business thrived and Amira's income increased by 30% which helped in supporting her children and their education.



## The Rural Development program

The program began its service in 1962 in the reign of the late Bishop Samuel. The program aims to economically support farmers and owners of small agricultural lands, and empower rural women through increasing agricultural reproduction.

### Key achievements of 2022

Increasing agricultural productivity by 14.7 % in targeted communities through the technical support submitted by implementing 39 Agricultural awareness seminars, 33 Field visits and 6 Pilot fields.



The program participated in the National Wheat Campaign and provided modern, disease-resistant wheat seeds to about 500 farmers in an effort to end the national wheat crisis. The provided wheat specifications saved more than 20% of irrigation water.

70 rural women were able to carry out their own projects such as poultry farming, livestock breeding and sheep breeding projects, which improved their standard of living.



The program provided technical assistance, improved seeds from the Agricultural Research Centre, and the necessary authorized fertilizer for the fertilization process to 31 women who worked in the agricultural field, particularly wheat planting.

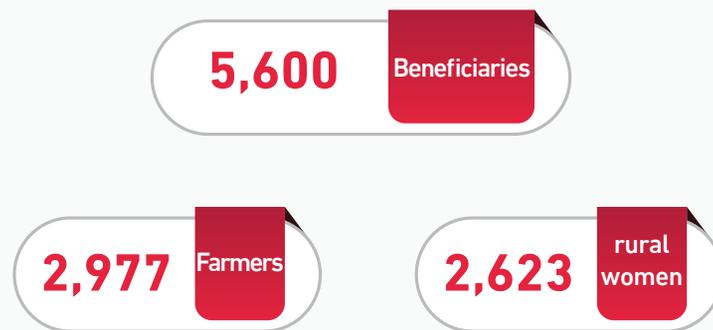
Preserving livestock in collaboration with veterinary units by holding seven vaccination campaigns in 10 active communities and 6 exist communities: 5,879 cattle, 3,362 sheep, and 351 goats were vaccinated, and 386 livestock were treated, which decreased the animal mortality rate.



743 beneficiaries were directed to attend the food industries seminars in order to make affordable types of processed food as jams, tuna, butter, cheese, yoghurt, pickled vegetables, tahini, and pizza.

the program implemented five compost models for 112 farmers. In addition to that, 156 farmers applied compost techniques by themselves in order to save the high prices of buying the fertilizers and to protect the environment.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



Maize is one of the most strategic crops in Egypt. During the field visits from one of the BLESS staff members, which was also during the planting season of maize, it was made known that the crops were infested with Fall Armyworm infestation.

The BLESS staff member made multiple following field visits in order to count and identify the infected lands in the villages of El-Zoe'r and Bani Khaled. Accordingly, the Rural Development Program guided farmers to use different kind of pesticides in order to remove of the infestation. As a result, the land productivity was preserved.

## Primary Health Care Program

Health care program started in 1962 providing mobile services for informal and rural communities including primary health awareness sessions focusing on human health and adopted healthy behaviors and practices. In 1985, The program built the capacity of local health cadres and established medical clinics.



### Key achievements of 2022

The PHC program aims to contribute to eliminating children's malnutrition through nutritional classes, medical testes, and weekly healthy food for 447 children.

The program held 42 mobile clinics serving 4,384 beneficiaries who find it difficult to check up on and ensure their health in various medical fields such as gynecology, pediatrics, and dermatology.

The program conducts 21 thyroid-detection campaigns to assist 1,123 beneficiaries to learn about the disease, receive treatment, and the lab exam.

1,203 beneficiaries received medical examinations through the blindness campaigns, and 392 received eyeglasses.

17 Pregnancy courses were attended by 856 women, who received medical tests, monthly medical follows up until delivery under medical supervision, weakly healthy meals. IN addition, raising awareness sessions were conducted about pregnancy warning signs and positive parental knowledge.

30 Family planning classes where 1,482 women learned about the importance of using and follow-up the family planning methods.

BLESS programmatic activities conducted in collaboration with UNICEF and UNFPA to spread awareness of family planning. This enabled the PHC program to reach various target groups (men, women, female and male youth and children)

Utilize BLESS declarations against FGM, violence against women, and family planning to contribute to raising the awareness of beneficiaries in communities targeted by ICDP.

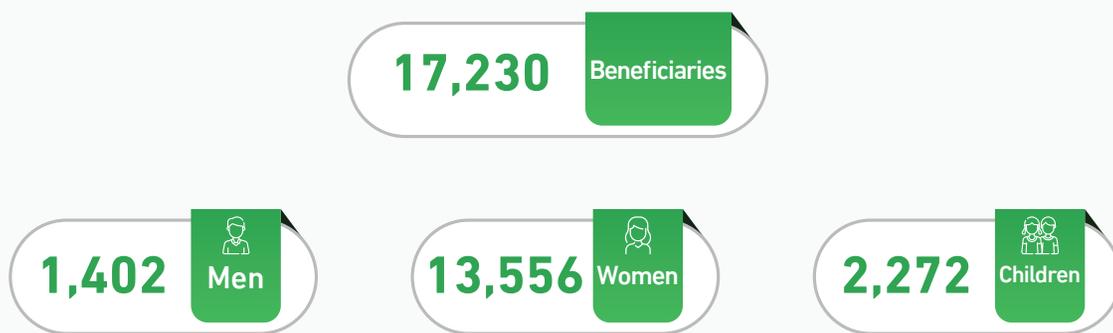


Networking with 19 health care units and 20 laboratories, in order to facilitate receiving sustainable affordable services such as pregnancy care, family planning services, raising awareness seminars, laboratory services, and vaccination.

In coordination with an environmental development program,

- 26 recycling classes were orchestrated where 540 beneficiaries learned how to recycle paper and fabrics, how to rationalize food consumption, and the environmental issues associated with making soap from oil.
- 25 rationalizing workshops were conducted with 487 beneficiaries. They were taught how to rationalize their use of water and how to fix some plumbing issues at home.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



## Success story: “I can see the light of the world”

Laila Attia Suleiman, 74, lives in Sakina, Alexandria Governorate. Laila’s vision was severely impaired, making it difficult for her to move around and perform daily tasks, and frequently asked for helping hands from her children.



As a result, she decided to take part in the Primary Health Care Program’s combatting blindness campaign, which was announced by the field workers. She had a medical examination, and it was discovered that there was water that had been fossilized in her eye for six years, and she needed to have an operation before it turned blue. Field workers assisted her and drove her to the hospital where the operation was performed. “I can see the light of the world,” she said after recovering. “I was the first person imprisoned.” Following the operation, she was able to complete her education by attending literacy classes and passing the exams. She could easily read and write with ease, go about her daily activities without assistance, and walk down the street by herself.





## Combating Violence and harmful practices project in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The project focuses on female genital mutilation and early marriage from 2020 to 2023 and its effects are to enable more girls and women to achieve their full development and to create a supportive environment for them to enjoy their human and legal rights. The project targets 25 communities in Cairo, El-Minya, Asyut, Qena, and Aswan governorates. It was integrated with the Primary Health Component interventions, to spread health awareness in 10 Cairo informal communities.

### The main activities were the following

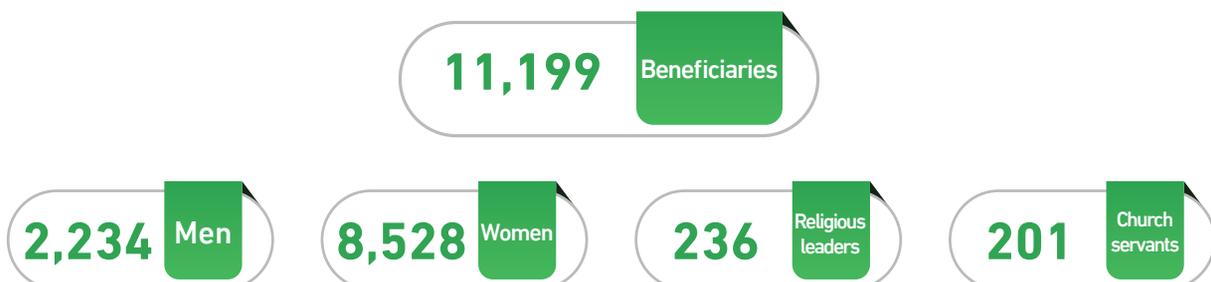
**Community-based campaigns:** launching to “Stop Violence against Women” for women that address domestic violence, FGM, Sexual harassment, and Early marriage.

**Psychosocial sessions:** providing psychosocial support through “Listening and Counseling” by external consultants to women who are currently suffering from violence. Women and girls were supported psychologically by discussing their suffering and trying to find solutions by attending group or individual sessions.

**Education clubs for adolescents (male and female):** At the clubs, participants will be educated on how to defend themselves and raise their awareness about the risks of GBV, HPs, FGM, and Early Marriage through; sports, Arts...etc. about the risks of GBV and FGM.

**Training and providing education sessions for religious leaders:** providing the RLs with full knowledge about GBV, HPs, FGM, and Early Marriage to empower them to disseminate the message to the targeted groups.

### Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



# Addressing population growth and family planning Issues project

in cooperation with the “UNFPA”

The project aims to build the capacity of religious leaders to identify the most important population issues, spread equality between men and women, reject violence against women, and change concepts related to family planning.

## The main activities were:

Capacity building training of trainers for 299 religious leaders and they acquire training skills that allow them to transfer training to others.

Religious Leaders carried out forty-seven cascaded workshops attended by 2,033 religious leaders in El Sharkya, Bani Suief, Beheira & Qena.



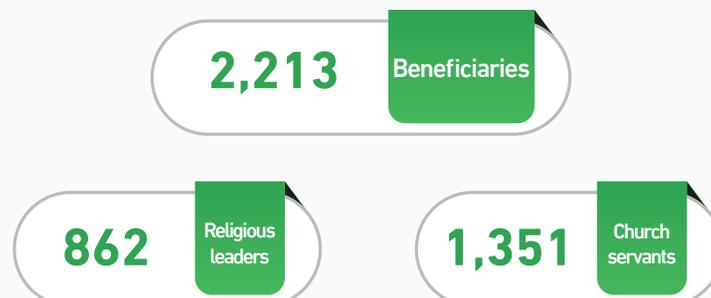
Disseminated three public declarations on combating family planning, FGM, and violence against Women in 145 churches that were seen by 71,428 beneficiaries.

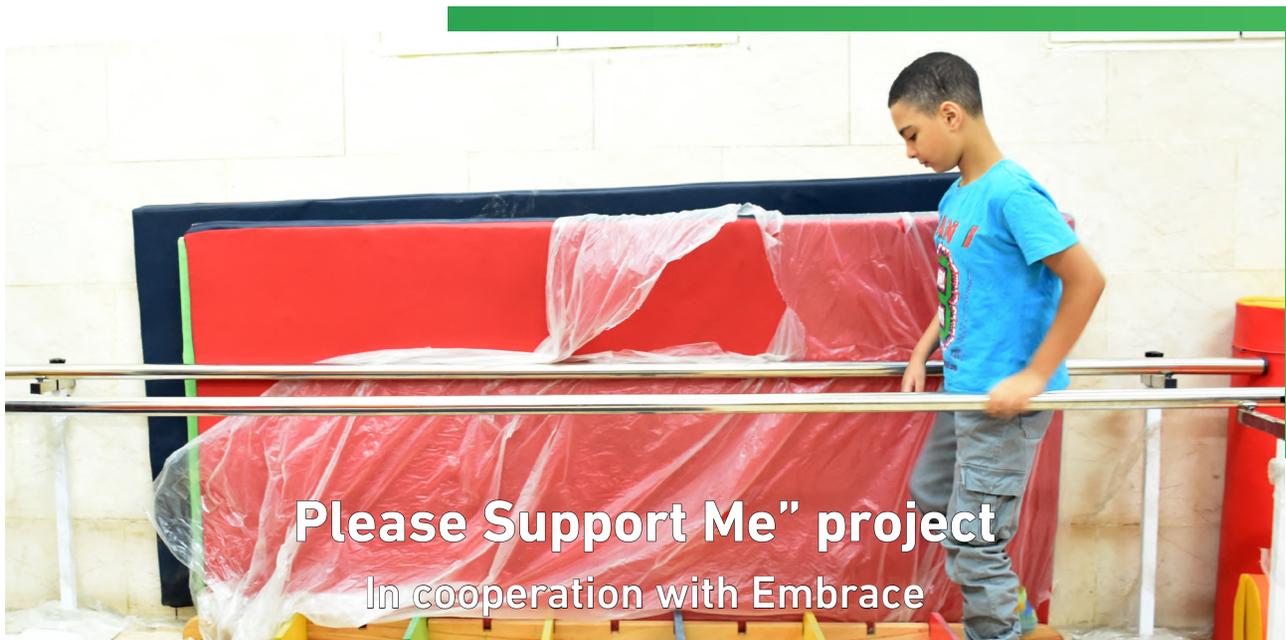
Printing and distributing 150 copies of the counseling guide on Family planning.

The Coptic Orthodox Church issued three declarations, all of which were signed by H.H. Pope Tawadros II, to affirm the Church’s position on family planning, to strongly condemn female genital mutilation (FGM) and to affirm a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of violence against women. By cooperating with the United Nations Population Fund and the European Union in the framework of a project to promote Egypt’s national population strategy.



## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022





## Please Support Me" project

In cooperation with Embrace

The project started in 2022 aiming at improving the lives of children with autism through working with the children, their families and the community.

### Key achievements of 2022

Special healthy food was provided for 37 autistic children (oatmeal, corn flour, almond milk) 1,475 sensory, linguistic and behavioral sessions were held for 53 autistic children to improve their linguistic, behavioral, sensory skills. The sessions were held by 3 specialists; each session is implemented 60-70 times monthly.

394 Physical therapy sessions were provided for 10 autistic children to help improve their health and motor skills.

4 Medical diagnoses for 29 autistic children, every three months by a neurologist consultant.



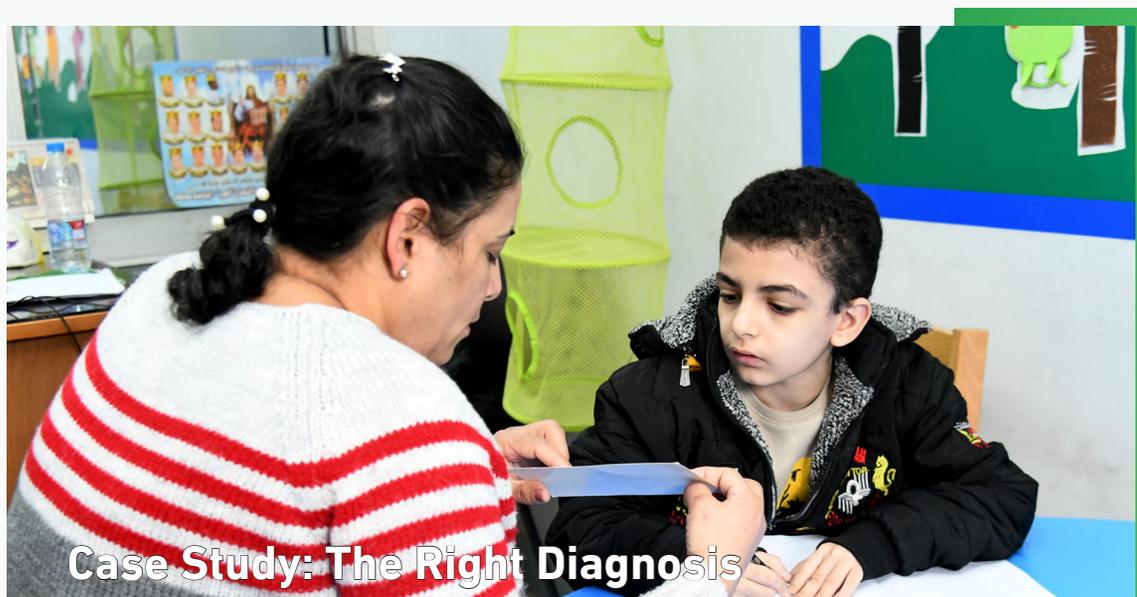
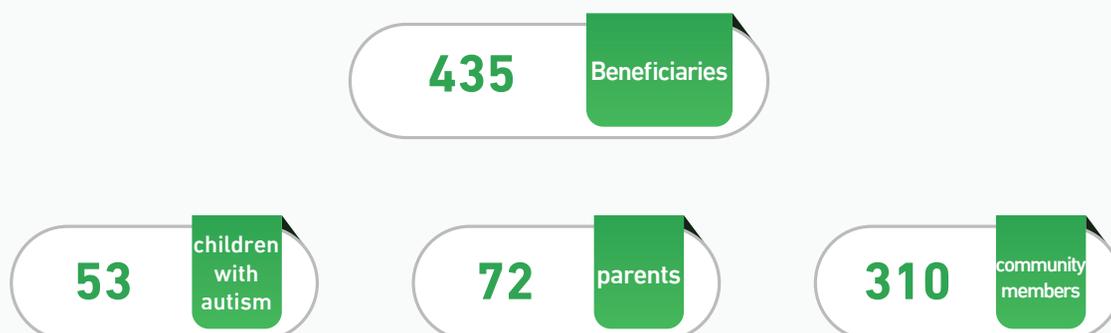
Building the capacity of 208 nursery facilitators and raising awareness about the early detection of children' problems and autistic children' characteristics that hinders their integration into the educational stages, through 2 training workshops.

Raising awareness of 66 beneficiaries about people with autism and their rights through The World Autism Awareness Day, with the presence of organizations, doctors and specialists working in the field of autism.



9 Monthly Events for 63 parents, presenting topics about behavioral and nutrition issues for children, child protection from harassment, psychological support.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



### Case Study: The Right Diagnosis

Michael Rafaat is an 11-year-old boy with autism. Michael's family faced the issue that he was initially misdiagnosed, and when his family came to the Rise Up and Walk center, he had received the correct diagnosis. He used to avoid communication and had learning difficulties, he also used to feel overwhelmed about being treated differently. So the center provided him with the linguistic and behavioural sessions, and the center was keen on the presence of the boy and his family in all the activities.

After the consistent support, he is now able to communicate with people and feels more included. In the trip to the circus, children were asked if they would like to participate playing with the clown and imitate his gestures. 3 children participated, however Michael was the only one who imitated and interacted with the clown.

Michael's parents understood his characteristics better since he received the correct diagnosis. The mother welcomed the idea of spreading awareness in the community about autistic people through the story of her child in this case study. His family hopes that he will become more independent and self-reliant in the future.



# Best life center for Mental Health and Addiction Treatment

was established in 1980 by Pope Shenouda III, under the leadership of His Grace Bishop Serapion, the Bishop of BLESS at that time



## Achievements in 2022

### Preventive Department

#### Training and awareness unit

The unit aims to raise awareness about addiction risks, mental health, and cadres training for serving. The unit organize 298 awareness sessions for 16,500 beneficiaries. Besides, 30 trainings for 2,500 specialized servants in combatting addiction in 28 dioceses in cooperation with different governmental and ecclesial institutions such as the Drug Control Fund, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (unodc), and family counseling institute.

## **Volunteering Unit**

It attracts and trains volunteers on how to deal with addiction cases in 19 dioceses on. In collaboration with church servants, the center organized 31 training and workshops for 3,675 volunteers to qualify them for early addiction detection, how to deal with the addicts, the rights of addicts, and most importantly maintaining strict confidentiality.

## **Social Media and documentation**

The center manages a page to raise awareness about the dangers of addiction and the center's services, which has received 72,100 views and 1,340 participations from youth groups.

## **Research Unit**

The unit focuses on conducting research on various types of addiction and other related topics. The center did 44 researches on Holotropic Breath Work, Digital Drugs, Binaural Beats, and different types of personality disorders such as Fear of missing out (FOMO), Borderline Personality Disorder (DPD), Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), suicidal Ideation, Body Dysmorphic Disorder.

## **Marketing Unit**

It aims to raise awareness of the dangers of addiction by displaying and selling the Center's publications that are available in mobile libraries as well as public and church libraries in 14 dioceses.

## **Therapeutic Departments:**

### **External Clinic**

Providing psychological support for 529 recovering addicts and 401 individual sessions. In addition, 7,320 medical tests and examinations for new cases in order to keep track of the recoveree and ensure that the patient does not relapse. The center also provides 2,186 individual sessions and 43 family meetings

### **Behavior Modification supports addicts, children, and mental disorders**

through behavioral modification groups and interactive activities such as music, drawing, competitions, and celebration. The center Supports 40 addicts' children and 60 children with mental disorders.

### **Rehabilitation house in Wadi El Natrun**

The house provides a medical program for 74 beneficiaries who want to recover from taking drugs to rehabilitate them for a new life free from addiction to find work, settle, and become self-sufficient.

### **Hotline services and monitoring**

This service aims to respond quickly to addiction and mental illness emergencies. The center assisted 214 beneficiaries, through the hotline is 22626168.



## Housing Improvement Program

In 2018, The Housing Improvement Program was established after being separated from the Primary Health Care program. The program aims to improve the standard of living and creating a safe and adequate place of living.



### Key achievements of 2022:

Preventing waterborne diseases and meeting the needs of safe drinking water:

- Providing water filters for 57 families to 5 villages which lacked access to safe drinking water, and were full of cases of waterborne diseases.
- The Water Company provided discounts to water meters for 19 families in Delta region through networking.

The program carried out housing improvement activities to 164 houses and provided furniture to 161 houses. In addition, the program provided services for housing emergencies: 18 families with housing improvement in 9 villages and 11 families with furniture in 6 villages.



As a result of the cooperation with Virgin Mary Church, Madinaty, Cairo, the program reached out to 36 more families in Zawiyet Alsultan and Bani Saeid villages:

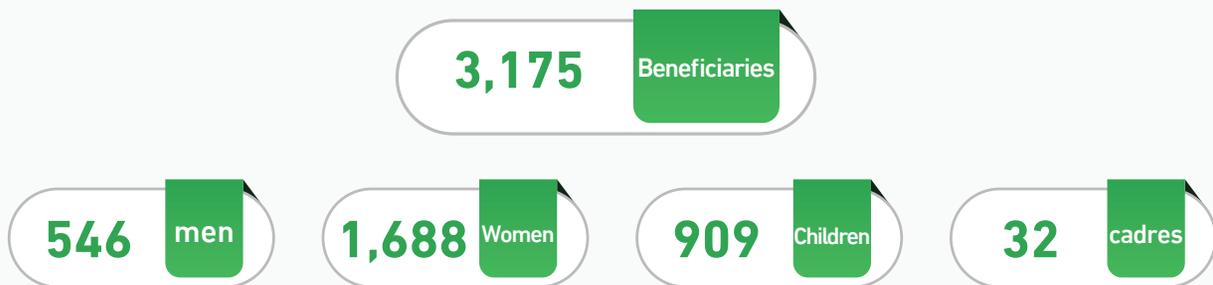
The Church contributed with (462,530 EGP) and the beneficiaries contributed with (144,046 EGP) to restore houses for 34 families, and provide furniture for 2 families.

Building networks with the local councils facilitated the approval of building concrete ceiling and providing permissions for the water connections.

The coordination with the Environmental Development program and The Primary Health program led to raising awareness for 1,111 beneficiaries about health attitudes, importance of cleanliness and rational consumption of water and electricity through Life is Good public meeting.



## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



## Some of the program interventions in 2022



Mikhael Samir is a 35-old man with a functional disability. He lives with his wife and three children in a two bedroom and one-bathroom home. Mikhael's house lacked access to piped drinking water and his family, only water sources was accessing groundwater or by carrying water from their neighbors' homes.

After field visits from BLESS staff members, Mikhael's wife stated that "the most important thing to me is access to clean water". The program provided the family with water connections and renovations for one bedroom and their bathroom. Mikhael's family now have access to safe and clean drinking water in their home. Mikhael's wife said "Thanks to BLESS, now we have safe drinking water."





## Emergency Relief Program

In 2018, The Emergency Relief Program was established to provide rapid intervention to assist victims of disasters and raise awareness about emergency preparedness.

## Key achievements of 2022



The program built networks with The Egyptian Red Crescent in Luxor, El-Minya, Sohag, and Beni Suef governorates and carried out simulation trainings in 18 villages.



- The training aims to raise awareness about actions that need to be taken when in the face of disasters and emergencies and the methods of managing them. These methods include first aid, fire drills, tent raising, and principles of psychosocial support for disaster victims.
- Rescue teams of 81 people were formed in 18 villages from the trained groups of scouts, volunteers and field workers.
- One emergency drill was held in Beni Suef with the presence of the Governor and the Deputy Governor. 4 volunteers received volunteer certificates from The Egyptian Red Crescent which will allow them to participate in emergency support.



Public meetings were held for 1,743 beneficiaries that trained them on how to handle home emergencies and first aid. In addition to raising awareness of emergency procedures through awareness films about civil protection.

Basic training for 37 field workers and volunteers: training the cadres about the principles of the emergency leader, fire drill, and psychosocial support. The cadres formed a committee to choose other volunteers.



## Adult Education program

The adult education program began as part of the Women's Development Centers in 1962, aiming at developing women in spiritual and cultural aspects. It was incorporated as a separate program operating on a national basis from 1986 by Bishop Serapion.



### Key achievements of 2022:

4,918 beneficiaries gained knowledge about the importance of education through attending 153 public meetings which aimed to raise awareness of the importance of education for the illiterates and local leaders in the targeted villages.

The program presented 131 Literacy classes attended by 1,792 beneficiaries aimed at enhancing the reading, writing, and mathematical skills of the targeted groups, and understanding in interactive ways that support their cognitive abilities and specific experiences.

1,256 learners obtained official certificates nationally in 2022 from Egyptian General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education.



The program implemented 40 continuing education classes aimed to support learners to continue the education process after graduating from literacy classes and to increase the skills acquired during the course. The result was 491 adult education learners continued their self-education knowing that, 20 of them obtained a university education and 151 of them obtained industrial secondary schools.

Holding 20 computer courses for 201 beneficiaries aimed to provide adult learners who benefit from the program's courses with computer skills for openness, self-reliance, and opening horizons for social and cultural communication by means of modern technology.

19 libraries established in different communities aimed to build cultural awareness and provide means to continue education to reduce the rate of regression to illiteracy, for the beneficiaries of learners and graduates of literacy courses.



The Environmental Development Program has provided rationalization of consumption and recycling workshops in the literacy classes, continuing, and introductory courses provided by Adult education program in 12 villages. 100 adult learners in the courses and 60 facilitators obtained the recycling course.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022

11,687

Beneficiaries

1,820



Men

9,867



Women



Success Story: My dream

Mrs. Sohair Gerges is a married housewife and mother of two children. She currently lives in Cairo after moving there from her birthplace in the Sohag governorate in Upper Egypt. In her youth, Sohair had taken some literacy classes however her elder brother opposed she continues her education, furthermore, she was taken out of school and was no longer able to read and write.

Mrs. Sohair attended a public meeting conducted by BLESS about the importance of education and decided that she will participate in literacy classes.

Mrs. Sohair now obtains her official certificate and is incredibly happy that she can now follow up with her children. She later on, worked very well as a secretary and increased her family's income.



Success Story: I want to continue my education

Mrs. N. A. is a housewife and mother of two children who live in Awlad Gharieb village, in Sohag government. She was illiterate and this caused her to face many difficulties in her life such as not being able to follow up with her children's studies or being able to read medical prescriptions.

Mrs. N attended a public meeting conducted by BLESS to discuss the importance of education and decided to participate in literacy classes that were held in her village.

She is now able to read and write and is happy that she can follow up with her children. Mrs. N also said, "I want to continue my education".





## Improving the Standard of Education Program

Improving the Standard of Education Program started during the service years of His Grace Bishop Yolios in 2018, responding to the increasing need to elevate children' academic skills, specifically in reading, writing, and basic mathematics.

### Key Achievements of 2022

The program activities improved 559 children' reading and writing skills by implementing 17 Letters of Light (tutoring classes) and 1,370 children' academic level by implementing 26 Life Tree (study support classes).

Providing 203 children with healthy nutritious meals in five villages, the meal consists of fruits, rice chicken or meat.



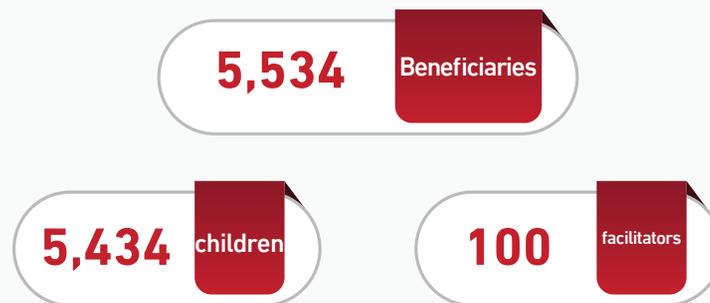
Through holding 14 computer courses; 349 children acquired computer skills in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint with excellency to cope with the demands of the times and help students with their education.



7 exit villages since 2021 are sustained, carrying out the program activities; "Letters of Light" and "Life Tree". The program provided post-exit activities, as 72 local cadres received advanced training, technical support sessions, and follow-up visits.

Raising environmental awareness to 620 children from the life tree courses in 10 villages in addition to holding a seminar on recycling of wastes in coordination with the Environmental Development program.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



## Success Story: Sky is the limit



Menna Mohamed lives in Al Zawatna village and is in second preparatory. Like other students, Menna needed help with her studies as her school classes are often crowded and she receives little support from her teachers.

When Menna heard about the BLESS “Life Tree” courses (study support classes), she joined with the goal to improve her educational level. After consistent attendance, her academic level improved and scored higher grades at school. Furthermore, Menna ranked second in her class and has stated that she dreams about being a flight attendant.



# Unleashing the Potentials of the New Generation Program

The program started in Bishop Samuel's service years in 1962, by "The Childhood Service Centers", which aims to build the capacity of nurseries' cadres, and establishing nurseries in informal and rural communities.



## Key achievements of 2022

2,860 children of 17 summer schools are able to utilize their talents and participate in sports: karate, swimming, and football.



Enhancing 1,492 children's health:

- 515 children benefited from medical tests and 492 children from medical examinations for the early detection of diseases, such as malnutrition and anemia.
- Providing healthy meals for 465 children
- Nutrition awareness sessions for the mothers to learn how to make healthy meals with local affordable elements, especially for animatic children.
- 20 children received the medical care of an ophthalmologist, with the detection of amblyopia (lazy eye); they were directed to hospitals.



596 children in 10 talent schools gained self-confidence and are able to express themselves in an inclusive environment. 154 children of the activity held four initiatives in 4 villages, such as the "media addiction initiative".

Enhancing the creativity of 500 young people through art and creativity conference activities, such as music, art, and poetry.

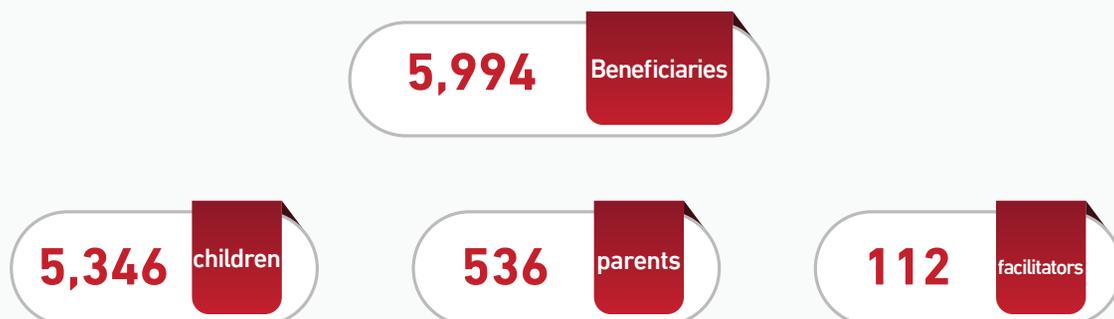
1,059 nursery children are more self-reliable; the children became independent in their self-care by following methods, such as the Montessori method in 21 nurseries.



Aligning with the country's initiative "Go Green", the nursery children participated in 9 initiatives in 9 villages. The initiatives ensured the children's participation in planting, and provided them knowledge about water rationalization, and clean environment.

17 summer schools developed a curriculum about environmental awareness for 2,860 children in coordination with The Environmental Development program.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



## Success Story: The Young Champion

Youanna Ezzat is a four-year-old from Ezzbet ElNakhl in Cairo. She attended BLESS's summer school activity where part of the curriculum encourages child participation in sports. Youanna participated and trained in gymnastics in a training offered in the church and was coached by a trainer.

As Youanna showed great commitment, her trainer suggested that she should continue her training in his center with the materials that matched and enhances her physical level. Eventually, Youanna was qualified for the Gymnastics Championship for boys and girls under the age of six, she won first place and has since been qualified for another competition.

# Peace – Love & Tolerance project

in cooperation with the UNICEF

## The project aims at

More vulnerable children, adolescents, and youth experience improved learning and youth experience and are increasingly protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Improved knowledge, attitudes and practices in children's rights protection related behaviors for religious leaders.

Improved knowledge, attitudes and practices of parents, community members and Youth of Faith Volunteers (Sunday School Servants) on positive parenting behaviours through community dialogue sessions based on viewing clubs using the Peace, Love and Tolerance Docu-drama.

## The geographical coverage of the project is

Cairo, Assiut, Qena, Suhag & Aswan.

## The main activities were

“Psychodrama” sessions: through 12 films addressing violence against children, 14,946 parents changed the way they think about these issues. In each session, 3 films are viewed from the problems which face the village. Such as: combatting violence against children, child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM).

Capacity Building:

“ToT” Training: Training the 335 religious leaders on methods for training other trainers on combating violence against children which improved their knowledge and skills.

“Cascading Workshops”: The graduate religious leaders delivered the knowledge acquired from the “ToT” to 742 church servants, using interactive methods.

“Social Media”: Spreading the message of the project widely as possible (4,155,362 reach) by presenting messages concerned with combating violence against children through psychodrama films and pictures.



**Total number of beneficiaries in 2022**

**19,569**

Beneficiaries

**18,492**

parents

**742**

church servants

**335**

religious leaders

## **Addressing Nutrition Challenges Among Children project** **in cooperation with “Hope” Foundation**

The global food crisis has directly affected food affordability in Egypt.

The project will target children in daycare facilities served as part of the ICDP program in the program’s active villages. “BLESS” will provide nutritious food items to 161 families in three villages

The project will provide monthly vouchers for the targeted families to choose their food items from a set menu of options.

### **The intervention of the project in 2022:**

240 children have made medical tests (CBC) in six villages by the local contribution of the families and the church; the tests were held in the health unit.



# Community Empowerment and Sustainability Program

The program was established in 2015. It aims to build capacities in targeted communities to ensure sustainability.



## Key achievements of 2022

Implementing 14 volunteer recruitment campaigns led to attract 163 new volunteers to voluntary work.

9 exit communities and 3 associations built their capacity as the program organized a strategic planning workshop, which was attended by 94 volunteers who are able to use SWOT analysis technique, identify their communities' needs, recognize opportunities, and design a plan to meet these needs.



11 communities connected to the "Hayat Karima" initiative services by raising awareness about the initiative services, such as; installing street lighting poles, installing pure water lines, renovating health units, and installing sewage.

Implementing 36 initiatives to solve communities' problems and participating in national initiatives such as "Go-green" initiative which aims to raise environmental awareness, and "providing basic needs": water by delivering potable water to marginalized communities.

## Total number of beneficiaries in 2022



## Success story: A step for a new life

El-Marg El-Sherkia is an informal community in Cairo, which had six street that did not receive portable water continuously. The residents use to store water in plastic tanks during water outage periods, which have caused health problems in addition to the extra effort needed to complete the task.

The BLESS team have helped the community with communicating with the local council of El-Marg El- Sherkia and act on the problem. The local committee members gathered 25EGP contributions from each family, for a total amount of 10,000EGP, for diffing works. Through this project, a new potable water line was connected, which was 8 inches in diameter, contrary to the previous 1.5 inches, in order to serve these six streets benefiting 400 families.



## “Go Green” initiative

Raising environmental awareness for 331 people of the families and children served of Improving the Standard of Education, and Unleashing the Potentials of the New Generation programs in Al Salamia, Alzawatna, Hay Alsalam and Awlad Gharib villages in South Upper Egypt. For practicality, the beneficiaries visited agricultural lands and learned how to grow plants at home.



## Human Resources Development program

The program was originally named the Girls Development Institute and was renamed by His Grace Bishop Serapion to the Coptic Center for Human Resources Development in 1992. In 2018, the program strategy was developed to be Human Resources Development program during the reign His Grace Bishop Yolios.



### Key achievements of 2022:

Building the capacity of 45 fieldworkers in new targeted communities through basic training by providing them with skills and knowledge such as computer skills, developing their life skills and leadership personality of the fieldworkers.

Developing the skills of 498 BLESS' employees, by providing them with advanced English courses, computer courses and e-mail writing skills courses which develop the technical skills of the program managers and staff.

Improving the managerial skills of the Human resource employees and program managers through implementing specialized courses, which resulted in developing the evaluating system for BLESS' employees.

Building capacity of 30 volunteers and the field workers of the exit communities of 2022 in developing their strategic plan after exit in order to guarantee the sustainability of the developmental work.



## Success story: Beautiful melody

Eman Nasr, a 28-year-old lady, lives in Qena Governorate. When BLESS started its interventions in the community, she volunteered to teach 43 primary students the computer skills.

She said, “I didn’t know anything about computer skills before, but I studied via the Internet and developed myself”. Even when she has an accident and was injured, she insisted to continue the course with the children. The community priest nominated her to be one of BLESS field workers team, for being an active community member. Eman joined the basic training held by the Human resources program. During training, Eman showed a spirit of perseverance, a love of learning, and self-development. The training gave her the chance to develop her computer skills, and invest her supportive personality by teaching computer skills to her field worker colleagues. By the end of the training, Eman formed a team to produce the training documentary film. BLESS rewarded her efforts with a laptop.





**Bishop Youakim**  
Asna and Armant  
El-Adayma, El-kaiman,  
Hager Arment



**Bishop Biemen**  
Quos and Naqada  
El-Maadi



**Bishop Esehak**  
Tama  
Hai El-Salam



**Bishop Merkorus**  
Jarja  
El-Zawatna



**Bishop Bakhoum**  
Sohag  
Awlad Gharieb



**Bishop Takla**  
Nag Hammadi  
El-Salamia



**Bishop Philobater**  
Abu Qurqas  
Bani Saeed



**Bishop Demetrius**  
Mallawi  
Hamdi, Bani Khaled



**Bishop Aghabios**  
Deir Mawas  
El-Zo'er



**Bishop Georgeos**  
Matai  
Hawara, Menkerios



**Bishop Stephanos**  
Baba and El-fashn  
Melk El-Said, Ezbet  
Boshera, Ezbet Galiela



**Bishop Fam**  
El-Minya  
Zawiet El-Sultan



**Bishop Maximous**  
Cairo  
Hod Galal



**Bishop Nofer**  
Shbin El-Qanater  
Manshiet El-Gabal El-  
Asfer, El-Khosos, El-Marg  
El-Sharkia



**Bishop Domadius**  
6 October  
Ezbet Kheiza



**Metropolitan Pakhomious**  
El-Amriya  
Abdel Qader Bahri



**Bishop Makar**  
El-Sharqia  
El-Saidia



**Bishop Pavly**  
Alexandria  
El-Zwaida, El-  
Maraghw & Kharwa'a,  
Sekina



Harat  
Zuwayyah  
(Oasis)

Al-Jawf  
الجوف

At Tallab  
الطلاب



**BLESS Communities**

**Egypt**

## Tales from Our Villages

### Hod El-Mabkhra

The district is located in Marg-El-Garbia, and in the border between El-Marg and Qalyubia districts, and has no church. The most common problem was the accumulation of garbage piles in the region and burning them, which led to the infection of a large number of inhabitants with eye diseases, chest allergies and skin diseases, and the appearance of black clouds throughout the region. The developmental committee and fieldworkers discussed this problem with the head of El-Marg district, the head of El-Qalyubia district, local leaders, shop owners, Christian and Muslim clerics and Non-Governmental organization "Foolk Noah". As a result, the Environmental Development program launched cleaning campaign in coordination with the previously mentioned-entities and dealt with a garbage collector to collect the garbage regularly 3 times a week. One of the most important changes that took place, was the transformation of the rubbish dump in the area after the campaign into a microbus stop and a road for people to cross. The inhabitants became living in clean environment without diseases infection.



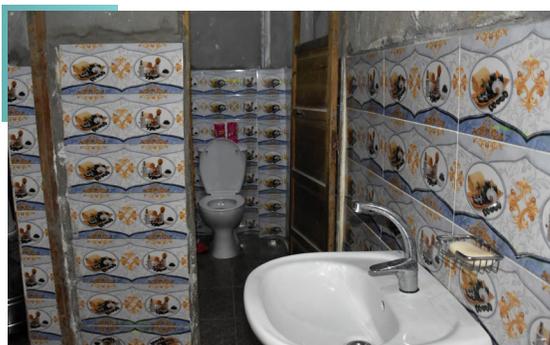
## Al-zawayda

In Alexandria governorate, Alzawaida village, BLESS wanted expand the outreach to help change lives. The best way to do so, was by training cadres to raise awareness of the people in the village about benefitting from the governmental services. To tackle the needs of the village, the cadres networked with hospitals and health units, agencies, and ministries. As everyone in the village has the right to learn and earn, a lot of people launched microeconomic projects, others of whom wanted to launch economic projects and small business owners attended technical trainings. It doesn't stop here, it was essential for people to learn through vocational training a skills-based career in the mobile vehicles, such as; sewing, electricity and plumbing to be used as a source of living through networking with the Ministry of Manpower. On an educational level, illiteracy was widely existent but the people in the village had the will to learn and their determination eventually led them to acquire official certificates. For youth, there was a main focus on educating students on the topics they are missing, and in turn this enhanced their education level. For future builders, nurseries were developed and facilitators trained to become more efficient while teaching children through the Montessori methods which allows children to be more independent. For a better environment, the workshops, classes, and networking with the local council led to weekly removal of waste slums in streets, and implementing one planting tree campaign with the Environmental Affairs Agency. In collaboration with Almontazah district, external lighting of the dark streets was held. This is how the village have changed, we make changes in the present to build the future.



## Zawiyet Al-sultan

Imagine living in cemeteries, or going to pray in a church there. This might sound unreal, it wouldn't even make sense, not until you know it's true. In Upper Egypt, Minya governorate, in Zawiyet Alsultan village, adequate living conditions didn't exist as people used to live in homes and attend church inside cemeteries. Later on, Bishop Makarios of Bishop Arsanious church created a solution to help the people move outside the cemeteries. The Bishop communicated with the diocese and decided to buy and build homes and move the church outside the cemeteries. The houses were made of bricks with no access to electricity, water, bathroom, or kitchen. But it always gets better, BLESS continued what the Bishop has started and turned 69 houses into a safe place by providing houses with furniture and restoring bathrooms, and kitchens, and providing a source of life through internal water connections and installing electricity works. Lighting campaigns were launched to help guide through the village at night, in addition to planting campaigns for a better environment. The village now has adequate homes and a safer environment. The bright side was always around the corner, with continued efforts, families' lives have changed.



## Bani Khaled Village

The village is located in El Minya governorate. The needs assessment study of the village showed the presence of many negative habits inherited from most aspects of life and the residents ignored different of the governmental services of the village. BLESS started working in the village in 2019 and targeted all segments of society to benefit from its activities. BLESS' programs and activities have contributed to changing inherited negative habits and raising awareness. The health program contributed to raising health awareness for those who suffer from malnutrition, providing mobile clinics, and implementing campaigns for the early detection of diseases. The economic development program contributed to raising the economic level of many low-income families through the implementation of vocational training for many professions required in society.

In the beginning stages of the project, it became known that many of the residents in the village were illiterate. The adult education program provided literacy classes through motivational activities such as parties, trips, and support adult learners to issue literacy certificates in cooperation with the Adult Education Authority. The most active program in the village is the Rural Development program, which has contributed to developing the lives of farmers through awareness seminars, field visits, and pilot fields. The housing improvement program contributes to improving the housing status of a large number of targeted families' to provide a healthy and secure environment, by providing their needs for home furnishings or renovating an appropriate number of rooms according to the needs of each family and based on the program's criteria. The environmental development program corrected many negative ideas and habits towards the environment, by implementing cleaning campaigns and raising awareness to reduce energy consumption and recycle.

BLESS also presented some activities for improving the standard of education and unleashing the potential of the new generation programs. The empowerment and sustainability program cultivated the spirit of volunteerism and urged cadres to undertake the issues revolving around their society and find solutions. An effective development team was formed to manage the development process of their own administrative, technical, and financial system for which they will be in charge of continuing and leading the developmental process after the exit of BLESS.



## Awlad Gharib

Awlad Gharib village is 10 km away from Sohag Governorate, and very close to Sohag University. It is characterized by a positive relationship between Christians and Muslims. BLESS made achievements through its interventions and by an active team of volunteers who have the ability and desire to develop their village. In addition, coordination was made with governmental and non-governmental organizations in the village. In coordination with the village local council, the environmental program implemented cleaning campaigns, lighting campaigns, planting campaigns, environmental festivals for children, and classes for rationalizing consumption and recycling. In cooperation with the village health unit, the health care program implemented health awareness seminars and courses which led to changing harmful habits such as early marriage, female circumcision and wrong first aid habits. Also, Mobile clinics and health campaigns helped to detect and treat eye diseases, breast cancer, and Hepatitis C. In the education field, activities have been implemented for students within schools and youth centers. Letters of Light (tutoring classes) and Life Tree (study support classes) were implemented for two years in the village, benefiting many low-level students who got good grades by the end of the year.



## El Kyman village

El Kyman is a village in Luxor governorate. 70% of its residents work in the agricultural field. 50% of its buildings are deteriorating and its furniture is unusable. BLESS started working in the village in 2020, which led to a clear and tangible change in the village through:

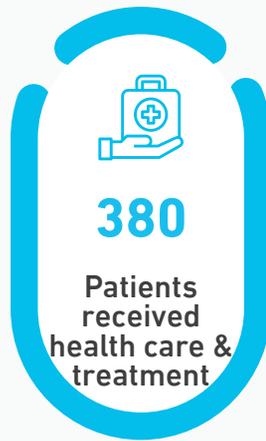
BLESS supported 30 restoration cases and 30 furniture cases, and provide healthy housing to the targeted families as most of the houses don't have a ceiling. BLESS helped in the work of more than 70 economic projects to meet the economic needs of families and raise the standard of living. Open 2 Letters of Light courses and Tree of Life courses, which improved the level of education. At the level of the agricultural field, through agricultural guidance BLESS presented 4 field visits and 2 vaccination campaigns for livestock. The environmental development program provides one cleaning campaign, one tree planting campaign (in the streets of the village), install LED bulbs that save electric energy, raise awareness about environmental resources and practices, as well as conducting environmental carnivals for children who learned how to reuse their surrounding materials. All of these interventions were accomplished due to the formation of successful teamwork of the village volunteers. Mrs. Tahany Raga'ay, who is the volunteer dynamo, highlighted the village's change and supported the interventions and encouraged people to work together to solve the village's issues.



# The Aghapy Program

The program established in the reign of Bishop Serapion in 1985. It provided monthly aid to the neediest families, as well as aid for illness, marriage, and housing.

## Total number of aids



## Key achievements of 2022

Aghapy Program offers love for all through many aspects of services, as the program has contributed to helping 2,312 girls who are about to get married.

Based on the nomination of churches of the dioceses for their affiliated medical cases that need surgery, Aghapy program provides a financial contribution in addition to the contribution of the churches to perform operations by consultants and specialists in hospitals such as Farid Habib in El Obour, St.Mina in Tahouna, Virgin Mary in Ard El Golf, Virgin Mary in Zeitoun, El-watany Eye center, Dar El Ayoun in Dokki. The program contributed to the performance of 43 heart surgeries, 101 orthopedic operations, 113 eye operations, 237 multiple surgeries.

The servants continue to follow up on everyone who has undergone surgery until they have fully recovered, and the value of the treatment is sent monthly to each patient in their homes.

- The program provided treatment for 29 patients with rheumatoid
- Aghapy also provided treatment for 99 cancer patients, the program contributed to their treatment for a period of 6 months.
- The program helped 252 addiction cases by contributing to the expenses of their enrollment in addiction treatment centers.
- 2,103 emergency cases assisted by the program, including the restoration of old houses for widows and elderly women.

### **The Midnight prayer**

**“Our Lord, remember those who have no one to remind them”**

Mr B.R is a 59-year-old man who has been struggling with mental illness for about 38 years. He has lived alone, has no living relatives, and has no source of income (he is not eligible for pension as he has not reached the retirement age). The Aghapy program takes care of Mr. B.R healthily and socially as well as providing him with all of his required needs. He had a herniated disc which led to rapid deterioration of his health. He underwent an operation and was followed up by a doctor until he was fully recovered to return home. An approval was obtained for his treatment and the state covered part of his expenses and the Aghapy program covered the rest of the costs and all expenses until he reached full recovery.

## International Partners



## National Partners





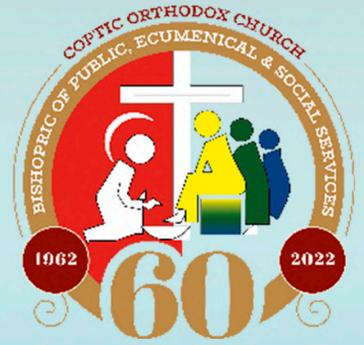


## BLEES Community Development Program Expenses in 2022

Expenses	Cost (EGP)
Education program	4,202,233
Health Care program	2,689,913
Economic Development program	6,258,692
Rural Development program	1,532,397
Rise up and walk Program	2,101,612
Competing drugs addiction program	3,283,140
Sustainable development program	1,130,186
Human Resources Development program	1,399,452
Social Research and Community Study program	351,395
Unleashing the potential of emerging generations program	2,710,157
Housing Improvement program	6,549,673
Emergency program	165,839
Environmental Development program	1,951,030
Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	491,988
Administrative Cost	12,058,373
Reinforcing Youth capacity	1,138,814
Coordination and operation office	184,862
Combating harmful practices and gender ( Norwegian embassy )	4,633,686
"Addressing population growth and family planning Issues" project (UNFPA)	1,278,454
Islamic and Christian documents on protecting children from violence and harmful practices (UNICEF)	1,779,795
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,891,692</b>

## Expenses of The Aghapy Program in 2022

Expenses	Cost (EGP)
Marriage Support	10,482,041
Treatment support	14,365,289
Healthcare Support	4,611,755
Disaster victims	1,856,248
Emergency Support	2,219,791
Education Support	203,830
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,738,954</b>



"Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit trees that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth'; and it was so." (Gen. 1:11)

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