

Anatomies of a Social Movement

Social Production of Habitat
in the Middle East/North Africa (Part I)





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Anatomies of a Social Movement:

Social Production of Habitat in the Middle East/North Africa

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Abbreviations

ASDQ	Association for the Sons of Dhana and al-Qadisiyya
BLACD	Better Life Association for Comprehensive Development
CDS	Center for Development Services
CEOSS	Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
ECDA	Egypt Creativity and Development Association
ECHR	Egyptian Center for Housing Rights
EAA	Environmental Affairs Authority
GTZ	Gesellschaft der Technischen Zusammenarbeit [Technical Cooperation Society]
HC	High Court
HIC	Habitat International Coalition
HLRN	Housing and Land Rights Network
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural F
ILA	Israel Land Administration
JA	Jewish Agency
JNF	Jewish National Fund
km(s)	kilometer(s)
LE	Egyptian pound (monetary unit)
LYDEC	Lyonnaise des Eaux de Casablanca
m ²	square meter(s)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NIS	new Israeli shekel (monetary unit)
NISCVT	National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training
RCUVN	Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages of the Naqab
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNRWA	United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees the Near East
US	United States
WZO	World Zionist Organization

Introduction

Social production of habitat is an international term, most common in Latin America, that refers to the process and product arising from a community collectively determining the conditions of its own living environment. Social production is present when people take the initiative to pose solutions to the shared problems of their material world. Partners in social production can be informal groups or local organizations, and/or other actors external to the community, such as NGOs, donors, private sector enterprises, professional associations, academics or government institutions, or any combination of these. However, at the heart of social production is the people's agency.

In economic terms, social production involves people at the community level relying on themselves and each other to identify, exploit and increase social capital as a developmental asset. The processes and outcomes of social production manifest despite—or because of—a lack of local finance capital concentration. It takes place with the awareness that monetary capital is concentrated elsewhere, which is increasingly the case in our globalizing world.

Therefore, social production processes find community members and partners contributing labor, time, materials and/or money (e.g., through savings schemes) from within the community to build community assets in the form of housing, infrastructure, services, environmental

improvements, or other achievements that redound to the benefit of the local initiators/participants.

Social production of habitat is a process (and product) that identifies, exploits and further develops relationships within the community (social capital). Mobilizing these productive relationships could mean identifying existing collectives of women, men, students, unionized workers, fisherfolk, extended families, coreligionists, professional associations, etc. that could facilitate the process of identifying, exploiting or building social capital used in producing the desired results. The process and outcomes typically bring about social transformation for the better, enabling a greater degree of participation, involving each sector in a community on a more-equitable basis. It finds men, women, youth, children, elderly, handicapped, minorities cooperating in the planning, implementation and maintenance. In a sense, social production is a recipe for sustainable development.

From another perspective, social production means collective action to satisfy human needs and, thus, realize human dignity and fairness as a human *right*. The human rights dimension of social production emerges with an awareness of actual entitlements that the people in the community can claim for themselves and others, and not just a privilege to be granted to some. Essential to social production of habitat, from a human rights perspective, are the obligations of the State that arise from its ratification of international human rights treaties and compatible local law. Human rights include the entitlement of everyone to enjoy a clean living environment, reside in adequate housing, benefit from an equitable distribution and use of land, access sufficient food and water, live with reasonable access to sources of livelihood, be assured of personal security, be protected from forced eviction, participate in decisions affecting one's living space, engage in alternative planning as a means to assert the right to remain and obtain formal recognition and have enough reliable information to achieve all of the above. Greater gender equality features as both a means and an end of social production.

When considering the benefits of social production, many other dimensions come into view, not least of these include the psychological dimension of improved motivation and self-worth that result. Additional to this is the cultural dimension that reclaims the rights of the community to demonstrate its artistic and expressive production. The political dimension involves people demanding that the relevant authorities and powers facilitate—or, at least, not hinder—the participatory decision making and popular actions. Naturally, of course, the right to development (the composite of all individual and collective human rights) is intrinsically linked to the social production process, with or without the support and participation of government institutions, programs, policies or budgets.

The guiding tools of civilized statecraft are found in international public law that calls for States to respect, defend, promote and fulfill human rights, including the human right to adequate housing. That implies that States and governments bear a duty to enable social production through

policies, programs, institutions, legislation, budgets and a variety of services. States and governments hold the corresponding duty to refrain from actions that impede social production, such as forced eviction, confiscation and repression of housing rights defenders, discrimination, corruption, privatizing public goods and services and other violations. Social production of housing epitomizes people's agency to improve living conditions, but does not absolve the States and governments of their treaty bound obligations to citizens and residents.

The effects of neoliberal policies and economic globalization include the privatization of social goods, the concentration of capital in fewer hands, the withdrawal of States and governments from public service provision, and ever-deepening poverty. This makes social production an increasingly important set of practical strategies in the struggle for social justice both locally and globally.

Habitat International Coalition (HIC) has developed the Social Production of Habitat Project with its sponsor, InWEnt, as a problem-solving initiative to collect and exchange these strategies on the regional and global levels. The present volume, *Anatomies of a Social Movement: Social Production of Habitat in the Middle East/North Africa (Part I)*, is the product of the latest HIC region to join the global SPH Project. It already has provided many surprises.

The Middle East/North Africa is typically the most isolated of the regions, even in civil society networks. The reasons of this relative estrangement are the subject of needed inquiry in other forums. Suffice it to say that none of the reasons are good ones. They tend to create a self-fulfilling prophecy that says this region has few like-minded partners and even less connection with the world's social movements. While stereotypes often contain some kernel of truth, the under-reported social movements and the authoritarian States in this cultural unit known as Middle East/North Africa take on a fresh aspect in the pages of this volume.

In May–June 2004, the Housing and Land Rights Network of HIC convened a regional workshop with members and other agents of social production of habitat through its coordination office in Cairo. Those participants—and a subsequently widening circle of others—have come forward with a diversity of experience that defies generalization. The social production experiences of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine/Israel and Syria compiled here involve sanitation, environmental protection, refugee relief and slum upgrading in their fields of service. They confront the State, or cooperate with the State, depending on local circumstances. In any case, these vignettes of applied people's agency each reveal important lessons about the nature of the State concerned.

Most interesting for our purposes of comparative analysis on a global scale is the common nature of the people. The same needs, claims and struggles that gave flesh and blood to the development of human rights and national liberation over time and in all regions is reflected as a common heritage of humankind. Within a framework of human rights, in

particular the human right to adequate housing, we find a common language, no matter if it is spoken in Arabic, Kurdish, Hebrew, Amazigh, English or Portuguese.

Within this very human phenomenon are the following “anatomies” of a larger body that is social movement. Like the more experienced, celebrated and coordinated social movements in Asia and the Americas, the local instances or social movement are accumulating lessons on how to claim the right to “constant improvement of living conditions,” as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights obliges States to ensure. While these lessons are learnt and these tools are developed locally, the present volume represents an initiative by Habitat International Coalition to consolidate them as a form of accumulated social capital. This capital has the potential to bear tremendous returns for those who learn its value, including those current skeptics.

In a region so plagued with continuing colonization, wars of aggression, conservatism and maldistribution of resources, the essential message arising from the present collection of experiences at social production of habitat in the Middle East/North Africa is a resounding note of hope and encouragement. HIC and its Housing and Land Rights Network acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the participants in the Cairo workshop and other contributors, especially to Dr. Fahima El Shahed and Dr. Mona Hasan Soliman for their valued assistance in editing the extensive drafts of the original testimonies. Most of all, our appreciation goes out to all the resourceful people of the Middle East/North Africa who have given us these rays of hope in the enduring human spirit.

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EGYPT



Transforming Tablita Market

Geographic location: Tablita Market, al-Dharb al-Ahmar Quarter, Fatimid Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Project start date: 2002

Number of workers: Ten permanent, 15 volunteers

Target population: 167 families (102 merchant families, 65 worker families)

Geographic scope: Tablita Market, in the north of al-Dharb al-Ahmar Quarter, adjacent to al-Azhar Mosque and Taqiyya Abu al-Dhahab Monument Complex

Summary

Tablita Market is one of the most important markets for vegetables, fruits and meat in original quarter of Islamic Cairo built by the Fatimids, Egypt's Shi`a rulers (969–1168 AD). It occupies a significant position at the center of the Fatimid Cairo behind

Taqiyya Abu al-Dhahab Complex¹ and al-Azhar Mosque. It dates back to the beginning of the 1900s, and its 106 current units are now rented by local, long-established men and women handlers and simple merchants. Almost 165 workers and merchants derive their livelihood from the market. Renting commercial space is by contract with the Market Department in the Central Cairo District Authority.

The environmental and health conditions of the market have deteriorated considerably as it has no sanitary outlets whatsoever and, as a result of the accumulation of the vegetables and fruit refuse. The Cairo Governorate hence notified the merchants in 2002 that it would remove the market and sell the land on which it was built.

The notification provoked the merchants and the surrounding community to take action to address the problems. Under the leadership of their sheikh, workers, too, showed their willingness to take part in developing a new vision for the continuity of the site as a market center. The Center for Development Services (CDS), a local and regional NGO, supported the merchants by helping to coordinate the process toward identifying the needs and designing alternatives. This involved the merchants, workers and other residents, and finally examining the prospects of integrating the interests of concerned parties into a consolidated plan. CDS sponsored workshops, including specialized ones for merchants and architects, in order to attain the intended result: “developing a participatory design of Tablita Market.” All merchant and worker representatives, whether representing powerful interests or not, took part at all levels. Merchants presented their opinions to the NGO specialists and, as a result, the Cairo governor supported the alternative plan to remain *in situ*, instead of being displaced to another location, and officially approved the people’s development process. At present, the project is still pending, in search of financier backers.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

The Tablita Market for vegetables and fruits lies in the northern part of al-Dharb al-Ahmar historical district, behind al-Azhar Mosque and Taqiyya Abu al-Dhahab. The market, which dates back to the 1940s, supplies the residents of the northern and eastern parts of al-Dharb al-Ahmar, along with residents of the

¹ The Abu al-Dhahab Complex of monuments includes a *wikala*, mosque, fountain (*sabil*), Quranic recitation school (*qutab*) and cistern. The Ministry of Culture, through the Supreme Council for Antiquities, recently restored and developed the monuments as a historic and tourist center.

southern part of al-Gamalia, Khan al-Khalili bazaar district, with necessary food stuffs.

The market and the surrounding area suffer compound environmental problems brought about by the solid waste and the inadequate sewage system. That, in turn, affects the surrounding region, which is considered to be one of the most important historic districts of Fatimid (early Islamic) Cairo. Accordingly, the Cairo Governorate repeatedly notified the merchants that it would evacuate the market in advance of razing it, asserting that the market was the primary cause of the district's environmental degradation.

In 1997, CDS conducted a rapid assessment of the local community's needs, surveying 102 sellers and 65 workers views about the development of the market as an alternative to its demolition and the consequent end of their livelihoods. The government plan surely would lead to greater unemployment and deepen poverty for the affected citizens. These prospects led to the emergence of the initiative to assist the merchants and the affected community to put forward a new design with the participation of all concerned.



Tablita Market interior,
2003 (Source: Center for
Development Services)

Development of Tablita Market emerged as a major initiative in the context of a joint project between CDS and the Agha Khan Trust for Culture for the "Comprehensive Environmental and Urban Improvement of al-Dharb al-Ahmar Community." The larger project involved a division of labor, with the Agha Khan's efforts focused on preserving Islamic monuments and with the CDS contribution designed to address the compound environmental, health, social, and economic problems that have plagued the community for more than a decade.

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

The main problems that the initiative sought to solve are:

- Environmental problems and pollution brought about by the market's unhygienic waste disposal;
- The disorganization of the market, randomly developed without a design, now hosting many peddlars and informal merchants;
- Usage of preliminary construction materials (sack, animal hair and tin), thus defacing the historic region and surrounding monuments (e.g., al-Azhar Mosque);

- Encroachment over one of the most important complexes of monuments of Fatimid Cairo, namely the Abu al-Dhahab Complex;
- Impeding the traffic in one of the most important entrances to al-Dharb al-Ahmar from the side of al-Azhar Street, which is an important entrance to the quarter for both the residents and the tourists, especially after the re-establishment of the original open public space between al-Azhar Mosque and al-Husain Mosque, currently in progress.

Tablita Market's dilapidated roof section, 2003 (Source: Center for Development Services)



Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The initiative aimed at including the merchants, residents and the government authorities in the redesign of Tablita Market, as well involving CDS technical capacity in order to support the merchants in their dealings with the governmental bodies. The initiative called for preserving the market, in order to maintain the social and economic survivability of the community.

Secondary Objectives

The initiative aimed also to transform the culture of thought among the architects toward the prospect of employing the existing social capital of the simple merchants in the different stages of implementation. This was seen as ensuring the sustainability of the effort from the design and planning stage until the assessment and follow-up stage so as to ensure a more positive social outcome.

The Actors

Initiators

Local men and women merchants first took the initiative as an attempt to prevent the destruction removal of the market. The merchants expressed their will to unite and move in an organized way to oppose the government's destructive plan that was wholly alien to their needs and demands.

Participants

Several parties took part in the initiative, including the Cairo governor, chief of the Central Cairo District Authority, men and women merchants of the market, some inhabitants living in the

neighborhood, the Agha Khan Trust for Culture (presenting technical support of the design process with the participation of highly qualified architects uniquely concerned with the historical monuments.), social and economic researchers from CDS who contributed to the coordination and technical support processes, and some volunteers from the community-based Association of Friends of al-Dharb al-Ahmar Quarter.

Legal and Administrative Framework

Merchants, steadfast in their claim to their right to remain in the market, constituted the core of the initiative. Although the merchants rented the market stalls, the authorities also took them seriously into consideration because they had been occupying the units over decades. The merchant paid rents to the Markets Department of the Central Cairo District Authority; however, the Cairo Governorate actually owns the site.

Decision Making

A specialist working team from CDS and the Agha Khan Trust for Culture managed the project, along with volunteers from the local Association of Friends of al-Dharb al-Ahmar.

Tablita merchants meet technicians to develop their designs for the new market. (Source: Center for Development Services)

Merchants took decisions in consultation with CDS, the Cairo Governorate and the Central Cairo District Authority during design and implementation phases.

People's Process in Strategic Planning

Local men and women merchants planned the market's redesign, involving some inhabitants of the neighborhood (local community), governmental representatives of the Markets Department in the Central Cairo District Authority, Agha Khan Trust for Culture and CDS researchers. Some volunteers from the quarter, nominated by Association of Friends of al-Dharb al-Ahmar also participated in the planning.



Determining the Needs of the Target Group

Through CDS-organized workshops, the local merchants and inhabitants identified the needs and priorities, mirroring essential and pressing needs of the merchants and workers at Tablita Market. This took place through:

- Examination of needs and the CDS study carried out in 1997–98;
- A CDS socioeconomic survey for concerned parties in 2000, by means of interviews and meetings with the concerned parties (merchants, workers, neighboring inhabitants, benefactors, governmental bodies supervising the market, etc.).

The needs assessment revealed a previously unsuccessful attempt to develop the market, whereby the merchants expressed their willingness to take part and express their opinion in a new design for the market.



Residents of the Tablita Market area meet technicians to discuss their design proposals. (Source: Center for Development Services)

Resources

Material Resources

While the initiative gathered modest financial resources, it was in dire need of technical and human resources. The resources were represented in the technical support presented by the Agha Khan Trust for Culture in architectural design experts. CDS also provided technical support and assisted in assessing the special needs of the merchants through the market-design workshops with a professional coordinator and highly qualified social researchers and volunteers.

Social Capital

CDS carried out a tentative calculation of local resources and potential social capital. These resources were represented in the strong ties and kinship binding the merchants and their common interests. These ties were reflected in the daily transfer of vegetables in one vehicle from al-`Abur Market where they all share the cost according to the volume of the goods. The merchants agreed on one leader, namely the sheikh of the market and, in case of his illness, his son take over with all workers' allegiance. Local assets are also represented in the fact of Tablita Market's strategic location in the heart of historic Cairo.

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

Several parties ultimately took part in the implementation of the project, including CDS, Agha Khan Trust for Culture, members of

the local community, governmental bodies represented by the Department of Markets, the Cairo Governorate, and the president of the Central Cairo District Authority. Roles were distributed as follows:

- Agha Khan Trust for Culture provided architects to produce the design;
- CDS identified the needs, handled the management of the workshops and provided an external facilitator;
- Volunteers from the project of larger CDS-coordinated al-Dharb al-Ahmar Community Development Project took part in all implementation phases;
- Governmental bodies took part in the workshops through the Department of Markets;
- The Cairo governor and the president of the Central Cairo District Authority offered and sponsored the facilities needed for the workshops.

Initially resistant Cairo Central Authority officials hear the people's alternative proposals. (Source: Center for Development Services)

Overcoming Obstacles

Some impediments hampered the initiative, such as the head of the Markets Department, Central Cairo District Authority objection to participate with the merchants in the design process, and his authoritarian conviction that the Department's specialist engineers solely take on this mission. However, by the time the workshops took place, channeling the merchants' opinions and recommendations, the District Authority began to concede to the merchants' suggestions.



Another obstacle emerged with the head of the Markets Department's intention to increase rents for each unit after the completion of the development process, which would have definitely increased burdens on simple merchants.

Fields of Service

The project serves several areas, including:

- Building potentials: through creation of the initiative spirit, stimulation of individual and collective motives for independence, building institutional potentials for governmental and nongovernmental institutions and associations of local community present in the region);
- Social mobilization: the project has stimulated the public and continues to mobilize the community to take up local initiatives to address urgent needs and stimulates social capital toward positive change;

- Improvement of the habitat conditions: through a program for rehabilitation of residential buildings and the provision of loan program for housing to provide opportunities for the poor to maintain and reform their houses in order to obtain the appropriate habitable houses;
- Urban development, through a program for rehabilitation of the historic urban environment through awareness-raising and clean-up campaigns to ensure a clean and healthy environment; restore local monuments, in order to be used by the community.

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

The initiative accomplished its goals, as it provided the modest merchants with the opportunity to take part in the development of their market. Weaker sectors had the chance to participate in the development. The project attained the intended goals for both merchants and workers at Tablita Market. The social outcome of the initiative is represented in the following:

- The concerned governmental bodies were informed that the merchants are willing to stay and develop the market in a way that suits the conditions of the surrounding area;
- The supervising governmental bodies became convinced that the development and maintenance of the market is possible through the propositions presented by the Markets Department, based on an open discussion with the merchants;
- The Markets Department in the Central Cairo District Authority realized that the merchants can provide reasonable suggestions for the designing process;
- The architects participating in the design process realized that the vision of the simple merchants improved the primary design;
- The project objectives became synonymous with social stability and progress.

Degree of Social Production

The participatory design of Tablita Market initiative constitutes social production of habitat in the following senses:

- The different sectors of merchants participated in the design;
- All other concerned parties also had a role in the design, such as the (nonmerchant) residents of the quarter, consumers benefiting from the market and governmental bodies concerned with supervising the market;

- Architects collaborated with merchants;
- Merchants are bound culturally and historically to the market (e.g., all Tablita merchants annually donate three days of their income to support the ceremonies of *Mawlid al-Husain*, the revered 7th Century imam's birthday), reflect social ties among merchants and local residents that can facilitate the management of the future operations;
- Although merchants rent their stalls, they feel that they are the owners because of the deep and organic connection to the market, and their participation in the decisions of the project confirmed this feeling.

The people's design for the new Tablita Market. (Source: Center for Development Services)

Results and Lessons Learned

Cairo Governorate changed its approach and abandoned the destructive plan to demolish the market, thanks to the merchants' organized and civilized mobilization together with the inhabitants. All parties learned not to underestimate the potential of the simple people and to respect their viewpoints in expressing their problems and posing potential solutions.



Before the participatory design of the market, the legal status of the land was unclear to the local inhabitants. It can be known that, although the merchants paid their rents to the Markets Department of the Central Cairo Authority, the Cairo Governorate actually owns the site.

Potential for Replication

The future of the experience will tell with the implementation of the design, which is one of the most important outcomes. The participatory design process has produced other results represented in the merchants' belief in their own ability to attain goals through their cohesion, their constant participation and dialogue with all sectors of the society, architects, and social researchers.

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

The Tablita Market Project's organizers and participants present their experience at every opportunity, at public events, international conferences, in the mutual visits of concerned parties, and before officials of local authorities (governorate and the district authority).

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Al-Nasiriyya Area Comprehensive Urban-improvement Initiative

Geographic location: al-Nasiriyya, Aswan Governorate, Arab Republic of Egypt

Project start date: Mid-1986

Number of workers: unknown

Target population: All sectors of al-Nasiriyya

Geographic scope: al-Nasiriyya area, Aswan Governorate.

Summary

The choice of al-Nasiriyya to implement a pilot urban-development project was the result of a local community initiative, arising from its urgent desire to remedy the deteriorating condition of the area's public utilities. The project's main objective was to improve the area's infrastructure, strengthen the community's self-confidence and increase social ties. Participants eventually included both central and local governments, civil society and the international community. The project was based on participatory dialogue among all parties. It underwent three main stages: (1) presenting

the issue and defining the partners, (2) the participatory dialogue among all concerned parties and (3) implementation and follow-up. This project was considered at the time (1980s) to be a pioneering experience in applying the concept of partnership before it crystallized into its current form. Al-Nasiriyya Area Comprehensive Development Project forms an example of social production particularly as the inhabitants initiated it, while other parties with funding, specialized capacity and official/legal standing participated in response. The resulting accumulation of social capital at the local level in al-Nasiriyya took the form of a newly-established Community Development Association through which the inhabitants managed and maintained the project. The long-standing results of the community's initiative affirm its success, while the community of al-Nasiriyya continues to grow and develop with the 1987–90 experience at its base.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

Aswan is the capital of the Governorate of Aswan, in southern Egypt. It is one of the most important urban centers in Upper Egypt, in no small measure due to its fame throughout history. The City of Aswan is known also as a commercial center and quiet winter resort that enjoys international fame. Its population reached 224,000, in 1996, and is currently estimated at approximately 245,000.

The social and economic need of the city's population during the first half of the last century led to a wave of urban development on the eastern bank of the Nile. Then Aswan's social, economic and urban characteristics underwent rapid and fundamental transformation since the construction of the Aswan High Dam, as workers poured in from other parts of Egypt. New residential areas grew randomly, exceeding the city's natural borders and resulting in the emergence of numerous unplanned built-up areas.

Al-Nasiriyya is one of those unplanned areas. It is located two kilometers to the east of Aswan's city center. It arose on a rural area of 238 *feddans*² (100 hectares) in 1933–34. Increasing work opportunities in the 1960s, due to the construction of the dam and the establishment of factories and companies, attracted migrating families to al-Nasiriyya, where they built mud, stone and concrete houses over average areas of 27 m², one or two storeys tall. Al-Nasiriyya has become a population center of about 50,000 inhabitants, at a density of 500 persons per hectare. The average

² A feddan is a uniquely Egyptian cadastral unit measuring 4,200m².

family size is 5.4 persons and the average monthly income ranges between LE80 (€11.22) and LE200 (€26.91).

Al-Nasiriyya suffered from deteriorated infrastructure, due to the absence of a sanitary drainage network and a lack of clean water supply, garbage collection facilities, limited paved roads that render it difficult for ambulances and fire fighters to reach the area, inefficient utilities and social services, in addition to the deteriorated condition of houses and the high population density. Al-Nasiriyya is characterized by social stability due to the spirit of cooperation and solidarity that prevails among the inhabitants, which represents the main stock of the area's social capital.

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

The Inhabitants' initiative at al-Nasiriyya sought to improve both material and nonmaterial living conditions, particularly by addressing the following problems:

- Deteriorated living conditions of the inhabitants and the absence of adequate housing;
- High population density (500 persons per hectare);
- The absence of a sanitation network and low supplies of clean water;
- The poor condition of the already-narrow roads, which impeded the passing of emergency vehicles;
- Inadequate garbage collection.

Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The initiative aimed to improve and develop the area's infrastructure, stimulate the community's self-confidence and strengthen social ties. It also sought to establish a local-management scheme to bear the responsibility of managing the sustainability of the initiative's programs.

The initiative aimed also to establish a sanitation network with community participation, in addition to a new, low-cost clean water network to ensure the regular, sustained supply of water to the inhabitants and raise the individual share of clean water from ten liters to 100 liters per day.

The initiative also aimed to establish a garbage collection and disposal system, to achieve a gradual increase in roads, while limiting the demolition of houses in poor condition in order to preserve the current urban composition. Moreover, the initiative

has aimed to build community service centers, improve and expand schools, as well as train and raise the awareness of inhabitants to participate in the initiative's planning and implementation phases.

Secondary Objectives

Since al-Nasiriyya was considered a suitable site to attract 70–80 thousand limited-income inhabitants, the design of the infrastructure and urban social services was based on the following forward-looking objectives:

- Limiting the demolition of existing houses to preserve social cohesion,
- Eliminating the cost involved in relocating families
- Preparing a long-term, gradual plan to introduce community services;
- Considering most of the project's components as voluntary and depending on popular participation, so that community efforts would contribute to reducing the necessity for external support and economize on project cost.

The Actors

Initiators

The issue of unplanned areas was discussed during the preparation of the City of Aswan's plan in 1986. Due to the inhabitant's urgent desire and their initiative to rectify the deteriorating condition of public utilities in the area, al-Nasiriyya residents' outspoken claims to their right to adequate living conditions led to their selection to host a pilot project for urban development. This formula gained needed local legitimacy for the project.

Participants

Consistent with the eventual distribution of roles among central and local government authorities, the local community and international actors, the pilot plans for al-Nasiriyya was prepared with the participation of the General Authority for Urban Planning representing the central Government of Egypt, the Aswan Governorate and Aswan City Council representing local authorities. The civil society representatives (inhabitants) formed the base and the driving force for the improvements, and *Gesellschaft der Technischen Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ), the German overseas development agency, served as the principal donor.

Legal and Administrative Framework

The initiative was based on the enforcement of all local laws and consistent with relevant international human rights treaties that Egypt had ratified, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ratified in 1982). This experiment also exemplified the extraterritorial dimensions of State obligations to respect, defend, promote and fulfill adequate housing as a right, with the cross-border cooperation between GTZ and the Government of Egypt in support of the people's process at al-Nasiriyya.

The Aswan governor issued a decree to establish a project unit responsible to the governorate for managing a public budget allocation. The governor appointed the unit's manager and members, chosen from Aswan's government specialists. In order to manage the local cooperation, the parties decided to form an administrative committee, comprised of representatives of the governor, relevant government authorities and departments, GTZ and the local community.

Many of al-Nassiriya's families migrated there in search of work during construction of the Aswan Dam (above).

Decision Making

The project unit bore the project's decision-making and management responsibility. The unit consisted of a project manager and a legal consultant, social workers, accountants, an architect, an infrastructure engineer and technicians, a recommendations and leadership committee to coordinate work (consisting of governorate representatives, the local community, government authorities, GTZ and a work team consisting of international and local experts). The unit prepared detailed plans, managed the project, in addition to gradually merging the project within the local council's structure. To achieve this, GTZ supported the project unit through GTZ and local experts. The unit's tasks included planning, designing and implementing al-Nasiriyya Area Comprehensive Urban-improvement Project; encouraging support and supervising community participation in various activities, coordinating with each of the authorities and departments to ensure that the planned project components are comprehensive, managing the project's capital and resources, supervising construction and related tasks to ensure project completion; participating in preparing long-term policies and programs to improve other medium-income areas in Aswan.



People's Process in Strategic Planning

Planning for this initiative and eventual project was performed in dialogue and consultation with all participating parties represented in the central government, the local government, the local community (inhabitants), as well as GTZ as an eventual donor. Each of the mentioned parties played a role in planning, execution and decision making.

Project components consisted of infrastructure, existing urban services in the area, community self-management, project funding, land development and extension planning for unplanned areas. The timetable suggested for the project was three years, starting in October 1987 and ending in late 1990. Technical delays led to a nine-month extension.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

A group of local and international experts and researchers determined needs and priorities through the following:

- A comprehensive survey conducted on the basis of a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 7,000 inhabitants. The questionnaire covered all aspects of the inhabitants' life;
- Workshops at the project's headquarters, involving all partners to determine the inhabitants' real needs;
- Continuous meetings between the project management and area inhabitants to assess their needs;
- Continuous dialogues and discussions among project experts, social researchers and the inhabitants to clarify project objectives and close the gap between different points of view.

Resources

Material Resources

The resources necessary for the project are restricted to material, technical and human resources. Partners and participants include the central government (represented in the General Authority for Urban Planning), the local government (represented in the Aswan Governorate and Aswan City Council), civil society (represented in the area's inhabitants) and the international fund donor (GTZ). Accordingly, each participant party assumed responsibility for a portion of the project budget.

Of the total LE8.9 million project costs (US\$2,617,647), The inhabitants contributed 37%, LE3.4 million (roughly 1 million 1990

US\$). The Egyptian government side contributed 33%, the German (GTZ) side contributed 30%. These included the central government and donor providing local and international experts, as well as the necessary technical assistance for the project.

Social Capital

The project's local resources depended on the role played by civil society (the inhabitants) that achieved optimal self-organization and participated in the implementation. The area's inhabitants provided human resources in the form of their social capital, which had a positive effect on the project's budget, as well as contributed greatly to the maintenance and follow-up after the project's completion in 1993.

A typical Aswan market scene.

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

The al-Nasiriyya Area Comprehensive Urban-improvement Project was based on participatory dialogue among all parties. For this reason, the project underwent the following three main stages: (1) presenting the issue and defining partners, (2) participatory dialogue among all parties and then (3) implementation and follow-up. Each of the participating parties played a main role in the project's implementation during each of these three stages. The Egyptian central and local governments served legal, administrative and financial aspects; GTZ provided technical and financial support; and civil society organized itself to contribute social capital, labor, problem-solving insight and financial contributions, resulting in the inherent social production that led to revising the budget of which the inhabitants bore the major share.



Overcoming Obstacles

Following were the most significant obstacles facing the initiative:

- The lack of necessary topographic maps, accurate basic data about the population, etc., in addition to the management's bureaucracy and the difficulty of establishing a joint entity with an official capacity within the area of the project (al-Nasiriyya);
- Initial suspicion on the part of some authorities toward unfamiliar requests related to the principle of self-management and inhabitant participation as equal partners;
- Lack of attention to al-Nasiriyya's social systems on the part of the external (government) and donor parties resulted in inhabitants' suspicion about the eventual project's objectives;

- Some difficulties in acquainting inhabitants with self-efforts and efforts related to improving infrastructure.

Some of these obstacles due to a lack of data were overcome through field surveys. Continuous meetings were held with the local community and relevant administrative authorities to explain the project's main objectives. Numerous workshops were held to explain the project's objectives and components and to build a bridge of confidence between the local community and government authorities, in addition to an attempt to facilitate procedures related to land possession, as well as water, power and sanitary drainage extensions. However, the project management was not able to overcome some of the difficulties, such as changing the prices of construction material.

Fields of Service

The project provided services in a number of fields, including the following:

- Research and planning: through conducting a comprehensive survey to determine all needs, problems and aspects of life;
- An expertise exchange program between the local community and international organizations (GTZ);
- Improving housing conditions and house construction through housing rehabilitation;
- Education and training of the local community on efficient participation in the various stage of project implementation;
- Social mobilization, motivating the local community to organize itself and employ the community's social cohesion and spirit of belonging to participate in project planning and implementation;
- Fundraising, by activating the roles of different parties in the funding, insisting on the material contribution of the local community and employing the available social capital to create a feeling of responsibility and ownership and the need to preserve the product and ensure its sustainability;
- Infrastructure and utilities, through establishing a sanitary drainage and clean water network;
- Transport and roads improvement through the gradual expansion in the roads network;
- Basic services, by building and operating a social-services center, and improving and expanding schools.

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

The project succeeded in achieving its objectives despite the presence of some initial obstacles. The project improved the local community's living standards, housing, infrastructure and social services. Moreover, the project also provided training, education and experience through local and international experts and the experience itself, which resulted in the emergence of social organizations in the area that later have become capable of managing the project themselves.

Degree of Social Production

The project is closely linked with the habitat's social production. The project's stages were based on participatory dialogue among all related parties as it started by presenting the issue and defining the objectives, then defined partners and ended with implementation and follow-up. The role of civil society (the local community) in the experiment's success was also clear as their skills and capacity were developed.

Results and Lessons Learned

A number of lessons can be learned from this project, the foremost of which is that there is an inherent capacity within various categories of the population. This capacity may be beneficial and employed to create social production that can contribute to improving poor and unplanned communities. It also showed the importance of the need for the local community's participation when undertaking any experiments due to the positive and pioneering role the community can play in the success of any similar experiment. Expertise exchange gives a new dimension to development based on partnership, participation and dialogue between all parties.

Potential for Replication

All participating parties focused on creating a community management capable of running and sustaining the project. The management was represented in the local Community Development Association. The experience also highlighted group work and the participation of the local community in an atmosphere capable of continuing and improving itself to establish numerous social entities that emphasize the social production of poor segments, women and all segments of society, which, in turn, will strengthen the role of the local community in sustainable development.

In addition to the above, this experiment may be applied to numerous communities and areas experiencing similar circumstances. This is evidenced in the development of a second stage (urban extension of East al-Nasiriyya) that was modeled on the 1987–90 experience and lasted for three more years.

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

Organizers and participants have promoted these experiences through:

- Presenting the experiment in all local and international conferences, as well as workshops and seminars;
- Publishing booklets and bulletins that include a simplified explanation of the experiment;
- Media cooperation in presenting and spreading the experiment;
- Developing the spirit of group work and supporting civil society organizations to play a bigger role.

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Saft al-Laban Residents' Initiative to Solve the Drinking Water Problem

Geographic location: Saft al-Laban District, Giza Governorate, Arab Republic of Egypt

Project start date: May 2003

Number of workers: Six workers and 10 volunteers

Target population: al-Arabi Street residents (about 200 families/1,000 persons)

Geographic scope: al-Arabi Street, Saft al-Laban District.

Summary

The project started with an initiative undertaken by the residents of al-Arabi Street, Saft al-Laban, to change the drinking water network because it was polluted with sanitary drainage water, which caused numerous health problems and threatened with a health and environmental disaster. The local community undertook the initiative through submitting complaints to relevant government authorities and contacting the Egyptian Center for Housing Rights (ECHR) to participate in solving the problem.

In cooperation with representatives of the area residents, ECHR made numerous contacts with the Giza Governorate and relevant government authorities to which the area is affiliated to negotiate a quick solution to this problem. As the governorate was unable to provide the budget to solve the problem, in addition to the citizens' inability to bear the costs of changing the network, an agreement was reached that the residents were to buy the street's secondary pipes, while official authorities were to provide other materials, such as the main pipes and valves that link secondary pipes to the main network. Official authorities also agreed to provide engineers and specialized workers at state cost. The success of this experiment led the governorate and citizens to repeat it in all the area's streets.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

Saft al-Laban is one of the unplanned areas built on agricultural land in the 1980s due to the rise in urban housing and land prices. Citizens resorted to areas just outside city limits, because land prices were cheaper. This particular area is characterized by narrow, unpaved streets. It has a predominantly rural character and consists of various types of residents, including migrants from the countryside and new generations of the precarious middle class who could not find suitable housing in the city. The area thus accommodates a mixture of different cultural patterns. The area's residents' economic and social levels range between the poor and those of medium income. Some of the residents perform handicrafts, some are employees and others are small traders. Two hundred families (1,000 persons) live in al-Arabi Street, Saft al-Laban, in the Giza Governorate, behind Cairo University.

The most significant reason leading to the initiative was that the residents suffered from poor drinking water, polluted by mixing with sanitary drainage. Officials took no measures to solve the long-known problem. The residents did not have the technical expertise or economic ability to resolve it.

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

Following are the main problems the initiative aimed to solve:

- Drinking water was polluted with sanitary drainage that threatened the area with numerous diseases. Officials did not move fast enough to solve the problem, largely because the governorate did not have the needed budget.

- The high risk of a health and environmental disaster represented would be difficult to control and remedy in case the solution was delayed.

Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The initiative's main objective was quickly to rehabilitate the water network in al-Arabi Street, Saft al-Laban, obtain urgent government support for the project, and control the deteriorating health conditions of the residents, as well as address and eliminate the causes of the problem.

Secondary Objectives

The project aimed to test the ability of the citizens to take collective action, organize themselves, contribute to the solution, and possibly contribute to solving similar problems elsewhere. The project also sought to mobilize the State in its obligatory role in preserving the right of various classes of citizens to environmentally suitable housing. There is a need for the State promptly to solve such problems that may cause an environmental and health crisis, even in the absence of a budget for the solution.

The Actors

Initiators

Al-Arabi Street residents undertook the project's initiative through filing complaints to relevant government authorities and appealing to ECHR for help in solving the problem. Women played an effective role in the initiative, as they were the ones who suffered most in providing potable water by going long distances to gain access. This was the main motive that catalyzed the men of the area to address relevant authorities, and prepared them to offer financial and social capital to ensure a prompt solution.

Participants

The area residents participating in the project were represented in the local community, the State was represented by the Giza Governorate and affiliated local administrations, and ECHR as a nongovernmental public-interest organization working at the national level. The initiative consisted of State participation and cooperation through the governorate's prompt response to the residents' demand to repair the water network. However, the lack of budget allocations posed an obstacle. The city council and local

council provided equipment, main pipes and valves, engineers and workers.

Legal and Administrative Framework

ECHR used the legal framework and the elements of the human right to housing and corresponding State obligations in the correspondence with State officials and during negotiations. Although citizens did not possess legal awareness of their rights, they had instinctive knowledge of the rights and, consequently, demanded them.

This popular initiative to pose a solution to a public and environmental problem does not imply the absolution of the State from its covenanted and constitutional obligations. On the contrary, it seeks to devise a practical way to fulfill the human right to adequate housing in all its elements, while applying these State obligations also at the level of local authorities that share the minimum obligations to which the central government is bound.

Decision Making

All parties involved in the project participated in the decision-making process, including the local community, the State represented by the Giza Governorate officials, and the local administrations responsible for the area, and ECHR.

The project was managed by a team consisting of the ECHR legal unit, field researchers and management. A committee of community and ECHR members participated in meetings and negotiations with officials.

People's Process in Strategic Planning

Project planning was performed in consultation and dialogue with concerned parties that include some active community members represented by area residents; the State represented in the Giza Governorate, the city council, the local administrations responsible for the area; and ECHR.

Marginalized sectors played a role in planning and mobilization. Women played an influential role in urging the men to take quick action, as the women were the most affected party in seeking daily solutions to the potable water crisis.

No broad strategic planning was performed due to the lack of time and the need to find a quick solution. When ECHR carried out an analysis of the issue's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, it discovered that hazard actually transformed into an asset, in a sense. The urgency of the situation motivated officials' political unwillingness to act so as to avoid responsibility for a looming epidemic threat to a public health and environmental disaster. Opportunities included the possibility of using ECHR's established relations with Giza Governorate officials, and the possibility of collective citizen action and their readiness to take action to reach a solution. Weaknesses included the time restraint on all actions. A quick move was required to avoid a catastrophe, which resulted in the inability to collect the necessary funds in a short time either through the citizens, or addressing international entities or other institutions to interfere.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

The project addresses an extremely serious environmental and health problem that may cause a disaster represented in the deterioration of the level of public health in the area. A set of activities expressed the community's real needs, including:

- Specialized labs to analyze the potability of water;
- A socioeconomic study was performed to determine the possibility for residents to make financial and social contributions;
- The local community was allowed to participate in the project planning meetings and decision-making process;
- Dialogues and discussions were conducted with the area's residents to motivate them all to participate effectively.

Resources

Material Resources

The requirements for implementing the project were financial, technical and human resources. The project needed financial resources to purchase main and secondary pipes, valves and all other materials necessary to convert al-Arabi Street, Saft al-Laban water network into a working system. Required technical and human resources, involved specialists to monitor and advise on water quality, the repair the problems in the sanitation and drinking water networks at their source.

Upon calculating the various source of finance available, the governorate's budget came up short at the time of greatest need. In light of the urgency and collective interests at stake, the local

community contributed money out of their own pockets in order to subsidize the cost of the new water network.

Social Capital

The social capital available to citizens was calculated as a function of building a common strategy. The social solidarity among the community was an asset that served in the coordination of volunteer labor and collective decision making. This helped in reaching agreement as to how each household would contribute time and material to the neighborhood effort. In addition to the collection of funds, residents also contributed by helping the technicians during drilling and extending the new network's pipes through their own labor.

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

Initially, the citizens submitted complaints to relevant authorities who were unable to take action, due to their inability to provide a budget rapidly to solve the problem. Thus, the residents attempted to solve the problem themselves, but again they lacked sufficient technical or financial resources. The residents held a number of meetings to discuss the possibility of taking action in the light of existing conditions and reached a decision to contact ECHR to discuss the possibility of ECHR contributing to this initiative.

ECHR in turn contacted the governor for quick intervention to avoid a health and environmental disaster. The governor agreed to change the drainage network provided the citizens bear all costs. However, ECHR contacted the governor again to explain that the citizens were unable to bear all of the costs. The governor thus decided that the governorate's credit plan bear the costs. However, when residents and ECHR members went to the city council to agree on the details, they were surprised to find no funds in that year's credit and that they had to wait until the following year. The human and economic cost of such a delay was unconscionable. Thus, a meeting then convened the officials, the area's residents and ECHR to discuss means of implementation. Negotiations led to an agreement that the residents would buy the secondary pipes for the street and the relevant authorities would provide other tools, such as the main pipes and valves linking the secondary pipes with the main network.

The parties reached an agreement that relevant authorities would provide engineers and specialized workers at State cost. ECHR

contributed by covering a portion of the financial responsibility of the area's residents.

The local community played an effective role in the initiative's planning and implementation as follows:

- Citizens selected a group of ten to negotiate on their behalf;
- Three local community members collected the necessary funds from residents and calculated each house's share of the contribution;
- Some citizens with experience were selected to buy the pipes according to the specifications received from the engineers;
- Citizens selected a person to contact and follow-up with ECHR;
- Citizens exchanged supervising workers during implementation, each according to their work schedule and commitments.

It was agreed that the local administration was to be in charge of maintaining the main water network, while the residents were to provide and maintain secondary links to houses to ensure the sustainability of the network's efficiency.

Overcoming Obstacles

The governor's approval significantly facilitated the negotiations, even in the absence of funds. Citizen action throughout the process also constituted an effective element in facilitating the project. Obstacles included bureaucracy on part of the local council. This obstacle was overcome through contacts with higher officials, including the governor and the city council president.

The funding gap was overcome by dividing the costs among the governorate and the citizens. Some houses were closed and other citizens were obliged to pay on behalf of their residents thus doubling the costs borne by each house. Some families refused to pay their share, because they realized the street residents would bear the cost. However, other citizens convinced them of the need to pay, and they eventually contributed in a spirit of social solidarity.

Fields of Service

The project services included the following:

- Infrastructure/utilities, represented in changing the drinking water network;

- Emergency management: The problem was an urgent crisis that called for a type of direct and urgent intervention to avoid a disaster;
- Social mobilization, with residents motivated and organized in their own urgent interest, with residents in other areas also becoming motivated to demand that the same project be implemented;
- Improving housing conditions by ultimately providing a healthy living environment;
- Education and training of the area's residents to carry out productive collective action.

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

The project succeeded in achieving its goals despite initial challenges. It avoided a public-health and environmental disaster. Among the most significant social products of this initiative is the successful cooperation between official authorities and the public toward solving public problems, thus initiating a dialogue between the two parties. The project also succeeded in developing the capacity of citizens to take collective action and negotiate at all levels to solve the problem, as well as developing their capacity to organize themselves during the planning and implementation stage.

The major moral success arising from this project was reflected in the stance that citizens took upon project completion. In order to avoid other residents in the area demanding of the local authority to install needed water networks, local officials asked the al-Arabi Street residents to sign a document attesting that they bore all costs of installing the water and sanitation network. The citizens refused to sign the declaration, thus acknowledging the right of other citizens to have water networks installed and the State's obligation corresponding to that right.

Nonetheless, approximately one year after the project was completed, official authorities replaced drinking water networks in the adjacent area, using the same method the first project was implemented in al-Arabi Street; that is, installing the main pipes linked to the network, while citizens install the secondary pipes.

Degree of Social Production

This project qualifies as social production of habitat in the sense that it involves collective initiative and problem solving, participation in the design, critical budget analysis, defining of

solutions, project implementation and management parallel to the government, the accumulation of social capital in the process and the popular insistence on their human right to adequate housing and the corresponding State obligations. This historically rare occurrence was made possible largely because of citizens' innate comprehension of the human right to adequate housing and the role of ECHR throughout the cooperated between citizens and government authorities.

Results and Lessons Learned

Among the most important lessons learned from these experiences is the possibility to build citizen capacity, either in projects similar to this one, or in other different projects. Moreover, the project showed that citizens are capable and willing to contribute to all project stages starting from expressing real citizen needs, planning and through implementation, control and evaluation. Citizens followed up the project concept with a real desire for collective action and without any for individual gains.

Potential for Replication

The implementation of a small project like al-Arabi Street drinking water project may lead to an expansion of such a rights-implementation project culture to achieve further gains through drinking water treatment in all of Saft al-Laban streets. The initiative was performed under special circumstances as a number of elements were available that helped its success, including the fact that ECHR had previous relations with official government authorities, and the officials' willingness to negotiate and participate in providing solutions. This was met by the citizens' readiness to take collective action during all steps of the project.

The risk involved called for a need for all parties to take quick action. Thus, there is no guarantee that the same elements will be available and combined in similar future cases, although they were repeated with positive results in the same area.

Replicating this project calls for several prerequisites, including:

- Conducting theoretical and field research about the areas that suffer from comparable problems, the volume of funds available and required to implement such projects;
- Building citizen capacity and raising their awareness in advance;
- Previous strategic planning and searching for other entities to participate in funding and implementation;

- Quick response from government authorities.

The replication of al-Arabi Street's experience has been a mixed blessing. Local authorities have pursued the same method in other areas as in al-Arabi Street initiative. They have installed water mains, while requiring citizens install the secondary pipes to their homes. While this formula leads to improved living conditions, it also reflects a new feature the globalized State's retreat from public responsibilities, as with other methods of privatizing public goods and services. In light of the State's obligations under international public law, privatization or otherwise leaving citizens to seek private solutions to public problems indicates the State's retrogression in its obligations to fulfill basic human rights. It also poses a danger at the local level by eroding the credibility of the governing institutions and, ultimately, undermining the authority and capacity of the State itself.

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

Organizers and participants, including ECHR, have promoted these experiences through the following:

- Supporting the local community to benefit from these experiences through workshops where the local community and those in charge of the project participate;
- Presenting and relating the experience in international forums and exchange visits with interested parties;
- Through the media, bulletins and seminars.

Citizens promoted this experience in the area thus encouraging other area residents to take action to implement the same project in other streets in the area.

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Al-Fustat Potters Village Initiative to Upgrade Coptic Cairo

Geographic location: Ardh al-Muthalatha, Kum Ghurab area, behind the complex of inter-religious sites (Mugama' al-Adyan), Fatimid Cairo, Cairo Governorate, Arab Republic of Egypt

Project start date: August 2003

Number of workers: Committee of six volunteers (five men, one woman) from the target sector;

Target population: 150 male pottery workers (20–40 years old); 150 female production assistants (18–45); 150 Kum Ghurab inhabitants (all ages); 30 pottery and ceramics unit owners (35–60); 40 girls and 110 boys working in the units (12–18).

Geographic scope: Community residing at the ancient site of al-Fustat, the original human settlement in the area of today's municipal Cairo

Summary

Due to the use of primitive methods, the pottery kilns used in Fatimid Cairo increased the levels of air pollution. A ministerial decree called for the removal of the pottery factories located in the area from Misr al-Qadima (al-Fustat) all the way to Shaq al-Thu'ban hills, far from urban areas. The order threatened to destroy the traditional art of pottery and ceramics, raise unemployment and bring about the extinction of the craft. Thus, the local community, with the help of a local NGO, took the initiative to solve the environmental, economic, social and urban problem.

The community proposed to replace the old kilns with an upgraded, environment-friendly kiln, which the authorities approved and which resulted in the Cairo governor rescinding the decree and allocating 3.5 feddans to build a model pottery and ceramics village with funding from the Cairo Governorate and the Ministry of Tourism. The NGO (Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services—CEOSS) also participated in upgrading 20 kilns and introducing modern technology that limits air pollution. CEOSS also developed 150 of the kiln owners' and workers' houses thus benefiting about 600 families. This is the first example in Africa and the Middle East of constructing a pottery and ceramics village and upgrading its kilns.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

The deterioration in social, economic, environmental and urban conditions in this area led to the people's initiative in order to save various sectors of the society living in the Kum Ghurab and surrounding areas from extreme environmental threats that threatened the inhabitants' health and livelihood, and led to their social disintegration. This area hosts the churches of Misr al-Qadima and the `Amr Ibn al-`As Mosque, as well as borders on the ancient synagogue. About 25,000 people live in the area.

Most of the area's inhabitants work in the production of pottery, crushers and leather tanneries that emit many vapors and smoke and pollute the air with carbon monoxide and other harmful agents. Pottery production unit owners fire their pottery by burning refuse, such as rubber, wood and garbage. This harms the health of the local community and surrounding areas, which is afflicted with a high rate of respiratory diseases, such as asthma, bronchitis and lung cancer.

In an attempt to deal with this environmental disaster, and motivated by the interest to rehabilitate the area as a tourist site, a

ministerial decree ordered the kilns to be moved to Shuq al-Thu`ban, a mountain area far from urbanization, thus jeopardizing the handicraft production and livelihood of the affected population. This decision represented an economic and social disaster for those working in the field. It augured a rise in dropout rates and parents' failure to monitor their children's nutrition due to the deteriorated economic situation and living conditions of the families.

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

Following are the main problems the initiative was undertaken to solve:

- Deteriorated health conditions of the local community and surrounding areas and high rates of respiratory diseases;
- High levels of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide in the air causing major environmental pollution;
- The threat that the pottery production and its artistic and cultural endowment would deteriorate and cease to exist, due to the ministerial decree ordering its removal.

Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The initiative/project aims to improve the living standards of the inhabitants of the area of al-Fustat and relocate the owners of ceramics kilns after developing their vocation through building model, environmentally friendly alternatives, and then measuring the environmental impact through the Environmental Affairs Authority.

Secondary Objectives

The project aims to develop and upgrade the old kilns and introduce modern technology in line with international standards. It also aims to allocate some commercial units to kiln owners inside the ceramics and pottery village in the Misr al-Qadima area, secure ownership of their production units and land provided to kiln owners, renovate the houses in which kiln owners live and build new bathrooms to prevent the spread of disease, because more than one family share houses with one bathroom. In addition, the initiative sought to extend potable water, sewage and electricity networks to pottery production units, train local leaders and the Egypt Creativity and Development Association to organize themselves and seek funding opportunities for necessary development projects for the area.

The Actors

Initiators

The deterioration of the urban and living conditions in the area led the local community to initiate the project in cooperation with the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS), a well-known Egyptian NGO providing community-development services nationwide.

Participants

Parties participating in the initiative of the local community in cooperation with CEOSS and the Egypt Creativity and Development Association include the Cairo Governorate, the Tourism Ministry representing the Government of Egypt, and some funders, such as the Italian Embassy and the local community.

Legal and Administrative Framework

The initiative is grounded in the right to enjoy healthy living conditions and the Egyptian government's ratification of the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which enshrines the human right to adequate housing. However, problems remain in implementing the right. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights observed, in 2000, that forced evictions without alternative housing already were taking place in the potters village.³

The Egyptian government promulgated Environmental Protection Law 4 (1994) to address pollution problems resulting from existing and new establishments. The law includes criteria for air, water and soil pollution. Major efforts are currently exerted to limit Cairo air pollution through monitoring it and obliging establishments to modify their systems in accordance with the Environmental Protection Law.

Decision Making

A committee of beneficiaries was formed to manage the project and make decisions. It had the following characteristics:

- Participation of technical cadres represented by kiln owners;
- Access to government authorities, such as the Ministry of Tourism and the Cairo Governorate;

³ "Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Egypt," E/C.12/1/Add.44, 23 May 2000, para. 22.

- The ability to hold meetings with target groups to explain the project and its objectives;
- Financial and administrative systems in cooperation with CEOSS;
- Capacity to manage, follow up and document various stages of the project with target groups;
- Administrative problem-solving capacity in cooperation with the Egypt Creativity and Development Association;
- Capacity to estimate community needs with the participation of target groups.

People's Process in Strategic Planning

Because the inhabitants remained unemployed for four years, they lacked funds to upgrade their Fatimid Cairo quarter, which strained the relationship between inhabitants and the government. This manifested in the psychological and social condition of unit owners, their families and unit workers. The project was ultimately carried out in cooperation between unit owners and CEOSS by building model, environment-friendly kilns and measuring their environmental impact in cooperation with the Environmental Affairs Authority. The community wanted to preserve the cultural heritage of al-Fustat and realized the need to commence work, especially in the face of the unbearable decrease in revenues, which, in turn, led unit owners to exert pressure on the Cairo Governorate and the Ministry of Tourism to complete construction work in the village. That would permit the unit owners to start their projects and upgrade their kilns. A number of entities were contacted through the Ministry of Tourism to collect the necessary funds for the project.

The model suggested to achieve the initiative's objectives included a number of developments consisting of the following:

- An agreement was reached between kiln owners and CEOSS to develop and upgrade old kilns and introduce modern technology in line with international standards;
- Allocating commercial units ranging between 100 and 150 square meters in the ceramics and pottery village to 30 kiln owners in Misr al-Qadima (Old Cairo) through the Cairo Governorate and the Ministry of Tourism;
- Contracts were signed with the Cairo Governorate allocating land to each kiln owner;
- Houses and rooms where unit owners live were renovated and new bathrooms were built;
- Extending water, main utilities and electricity to all pottery production units;

- Providing training to local leaders and the Egypt Creativity and Development Association to help them find solutions to foreseen problems and train them to find funding opportunities through proposal writing.

The project plans were prepared with the community selecting a group responsible for project implementing in cooperation with CEOSS, which provided training on how to prepare suggestions for a development project like kiln development. The committee also designed all administrative and financial documents necessary to implement the project. Female committee members participated in managing the project, and preparing financial and administrative systems. The committee prepared a list of the units to be upgraded, determined the dangerous tasks to which working children are exposed and prepared suitable training programs. Meetings were held for the community to raise awareness and participate in the project to improve their economic and social conditions.

The initiative's strengths include the choice of technical cadres from within the village to help implement the project, the completion of successful examples, which encouraged the target group to adopt the project, beneficiaries manage the project and the provision of training for the committee in charge of managing the project in order to address expected problems. Moreover, 40% of the total project cost was provided through loans that were recycled to fund other needs. In the end, more than one government authority helped implement the project, such as the Cairo Governorate and the Ministry of Tourism, as well as various donors.

Weaknesses of the initiative included:

- The lack of sufficient funding to complete the project within a short period, which prolonged unemployment;
- The Association's lack of experience;
- The presence of administrative problems; and
- The lack of trust between the Association and unit owners.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

The initiative's needs and priorities were determined through a set of activities:

- The preparation of a list of the units requiring upgrading, based on meetings held with unit owners;
- Meetings held with working children to determine dangerous jobs they performed;

- Meetings were held with various sectors of the community to determine their economic, social and environmental needs.

Resources

Material Resources

The project's material resources consisted of the cost of constructing the village, which amounted to LE6 million (US\$967,741) provided by the Italian Embassy, as well as LE2 million (US\$322,581) provided by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism. The project was also funded through community contributions to implement the project and cover part of the cost of kiln construction through recyclable loans on the basis of implementing 40% of the total project, and then reusing the money to perform other required activities.

Social Capital

The initiative/project is based on resources/social capital represented in the presence of highly skilled technical cadres among unit owners who were capable of explaining the project and its objectives to the beneficiary community. They were able to form committees responsible for the project and prepare their own regulations to manage the project through public participation, in addition to their ability to contact government authorities and exert pressure to gain the right to perform their work without waiting for the completion of construction work. They also were able to form working groups from among the beneficiaries to receive completed plans of the project bearing the technical and environmental specifications. Complementary to these activities was the groups' ability to contact the media and prepare newspaper coverage of the project.

Potters and pottery making belong to the most ancient traditions in the original human settlements in Egypt; however, it is believed that the Cairo potters of Fustat date back to the Fatimids, Egypt's Shi'a rulers (969–1168 AD). Situated behind the historic Hanging Church in the Old Cairo district of al-Fawakhir, popularly known as al-Qulaliya, small pottery and lime workshops have existed since the early 1960s. The deep tradition and sense of community built over the centuries in this section of Cairo constitutes an incalculable form of social capital and distinct culture that the initiative and project also sought to preserve.

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

The local community, representing owners and workers of ceramic and pottery-production units, as well as some Kum Ghurab inhabitants, with CEOSS, Cairo Governorate and some donors (Ministry of Tourism and the Italian Embassy), participated in the project implementation through the following:

- Changing the Cairo governor's decision to eliminate the community and, instead, to allocate the land to build the first ceramics and pottery village over an area of 3.5 feddans with unit areas, ranging between 100 and 150 square meters;
- The Ministry of Tourism provided LE2 million (\$322,580), and the Italian Embassy provided LE6 million;
- CEOSS participated in upgrading 30 pottery kilns in the village;
- Renovation of housing units for pottery unit owners and construction of healthy bathrooms in the units;
- Specialists participated in training local cadres and leaders on writing project proposals/suggestions;
- Preparing financial and administrative systems and building the institutional capacity of the Egypt Creativity and Development Association.

Heirs to an ancient Egyptian tradition, Fustat potters of today's Old Cairo are believed to be operating consistently there since Fatimid times, and most of the small workshops have been standing since the early 1960s.



A number of committees formed within the local community to manage and supervise the various stages of the project, including a committee responsible for contacting government authorities and completing administrative procedures; licenses and land ownership documents; a media

committee responsible for preparing newspaper articles about Bedouin art, its relation to pottery and ceramics and the importance of developing the area to place it on the tourism map; a committee responsible for dealing with the local community, explaining the project, implementing the project and preparing administrative and financial systems; a committee responsible for receiving kilns and ensuring they meet environmental specifications, collect contributions and loan installments; and a committee responsible for defining housing repair and new bathroom construction needs.

Overcoming Obstacles

Financial obstacles represented in limited funds in the hands of unit owners and the lack of sufficient funding from the Ministry of Tourism. These obstacles were overcome when the Ministry of Tourism contacted fund donors to complete construction work in the village and obtain a grant of LE6 million (ca. US\$ 1,719,197) from the Italian Embassy, as well as CEOSS contribution to the kiln upgrading project with a grant of LE6,000 per (\$1,719) developed kiln, in addition to CEOSS participation in developing kiln owners' housing through the provision of LE600 (\$172) per renovated room.

Economic obstacles posed by high unemployment were overcome by upgrading 20 kilns in the pottery and ceramics village, thus creating employment for 100 persons.

The local community's technical incapacity to upgrade the vocation and introduce modern technology was overcome through the design of a model upgraded kiln in cooperation with environmental specialists. The Environmental Affairs Authority (EAA) approved the design.

Administrative obstacles arose from the lack of experience and consequent weak role on the part of the Egypt Creativity and Development Association (ECDA) responsible for the project. Problems arose with government authorities in relation to licenses. These obstacles were overcome through providing training to local leaders and the Association's board of directors, as well as preparing financial systems, building the Association's institutional capacity and forming committees where community members participate to be responsible for the project.

From top: Old pottery kiln in Fustat, Old Cairo; Fustat potter constructing new kiln; New kiln in operation. (Source: CEOSS)

Fields of Service

The project serves the following fields:

- Capacity building: Providing training to local leaders and the ECDA, in order to be able better to organize themselves, as well as developing the ability of the local community to contact government authorities;
- Social mobilization: The social organization of the individuals benefiting from the project and motivating the public to participate;
- Improving housing conditions by renovating houses and rooms and constructing new bathrooms, as well as extending basic utilities to pottery production units;
- Urban environmental improvement, enhancing the health conditions and environmental performance of the area;



- Urban development: Increasing the income of 100 unit owners after upgrading the units.

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

The initiative/project succeeded in achieving its objectives through realization of the following social gains:

- The social organization of the individuals benefiting from the project through collective work;
- Establishment of a civil association (ECDA), the aim of which is to encourage creativity in all areas of art;
- The ability of individuals to gain access to government authorities and legally ask for their rights;
- Signing contracts with the Cairo Governorate in favor of kiln owners to rent allocated areas;
- Studying issues related to air pollution and introducing modern technology to develop the vocation;
- Form a group of project beneficiaries to address executive and public authorities on behalf of the association;
- Close links were established between the area of Misr al-Qadima and ECDA to issue licenses;
- Raising the income of 100 unit owners, in addition to assisting workers, after the kilns were upgraded;
- The upgrading of 150 houses belonging to unit owners and linked with the vocation where 600 families benefited.

Degree of Social Production

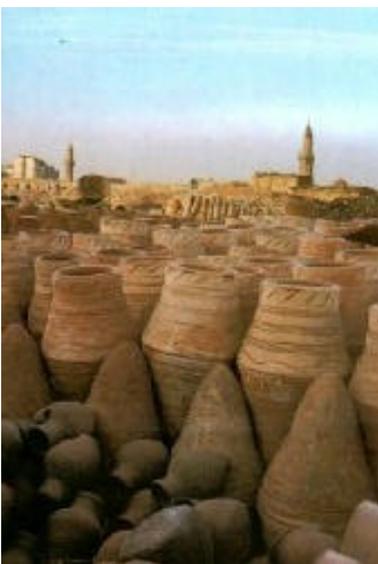
This initiative/project constitutes a form of social production of habitat in so far as the community and direct beneficiaries organized to raise awareness about how to demand rights; the ability of the community to change a ministerial decree in case it contradicts the needs of the local community and State obligations to respect, defend, promote and fulfill the human right to adequate housing; ensure freehold tenure for unit owners; register and develop the institutional capacity of a civil association that aims to develop the area.

Because of this social production project and the people's initiative, Fustat potters continue their craft today.

Results and Lessons Learned

Following are some of the most significant lessons learned from these experiences:

- Realization that a well-organized community and society can challenge ministerial decrees;



- The importance of civil society participation (in certain cases) toward posing solutions to the financial burdens borne by the State;
- Reliance on more than one fund donor to ensure that the project does not stop at any stage;
- The need to select specialized cadres to train the community on successfully managing projects;
- The need for the local community to participate in all the studies related to determining its actual needs.

Potential for Replication

The future and continuation of this experiment is linked with the degree to which a society is organically related to its members and able to plan and cooperate to face any interference or problems. There is a potential to repeat this experiment in other areas in general, and in areas with traditional vocations in particular.

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

Organizers and participants promote these areas of expertise through the following:

- Organize local community support workshops to record and spread the experience;
- Present and relate the experience during international forums and conferences, as well as exchange visits.

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Egyptian Laws, Policies and Administrative Procedures

The Arab Republic of Egypt is a ratifying State party to the two basic human rights treaties, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in 1982. Egypt ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1991, although it was one of the first diplomatic proponents of the Convention though its adoption by the UN General Assembly in December 1965. The year 1991 also saw Egypt ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. All of these human rights treaties enshrine and guarantee to human right to housing for all living in Egypt.

The 1981 Egyptian Constitution contains provisions guaranteeing human rights and liberties. Moreover, its Article 151 also makes clear that Egypt's international treaty obligations are judiciable in local courts, as is local legislation.

In practice, however, it is rare—but not completely unprecedented—to invoke these international instruments where national law is contradictory or silent. More harmonization of law and greater awareness on the part of legal practitioners and public are needed in order to turn human rights theory into effective application. Nonetheless, the fact that the State has ratified the global economic, social and cultural rights instruments poses a tactical advantage for housing rights defenders and victims.

Problematic is the application of various Emergency Laws and decrees over decades, combined with incompatible practices, that presents the sustainable cause of contradictions between human rights norms and local legal remedy. As the present examples attest, legal avenues of relief are not always the preferred strategy of local communities. Therefore, sometimes technical and moral arguments are relatively more effective in posing alternatives to local and national authorities. In the public mind, however, the instinctive claims to the human right to adequate housing, with all of its elements and congruent rights, is ever present, even when not mindful of the relevant treaty law texts.

More than Housing-improvement Loans at al-Sawada Village

Geographic location: al-Sawada village, Governorate of al-Minya, Arab Republic of Egypt

Project start date: October 1998

Number of workers: Field coordinator, accountant, secretary, five volunteer leaders (four men, one woman)

Target population: Most of the population at Sawada village: 435 families (3,000 persons)

Geographic scope: al-Sawada village, Upper Egypt

Summary

The main problem facing al-Sawada village lay in the fact that most village residents live in houses that lack the elements of adequate housing, notably secure tenure, physical security and general hygienic standards to the degree that they are not appropriate for human habitation. The project arose in response to the village popular leaders' initiative to improve the living

conditions of the village people and to make use of their potential capabilities through social participation in the building and repair of their houses.

The project was to provide loans for housing improvement and to assist those in need and others living in harsh housing conditions by offering aid to build new houses (107 houses) and repair old ones (238) and to furnish these houses with the appropriate hygienic and housing conditions.

The project was carried out with the participation of the NGOs represented in the Better Life Association for Comprehensive Development (BLACD), located in the city of al-Minya, the people and the popular leaders, with support from international donor institutions.

The project managed to attain its objectives through house upgrading and providing appropriate housing conditions for those in need. It did not seek only to provide solutions for individuals or promote private ownership, but surpassed microcredit objectives by developing and enhancing social capital through the spirit of collective work. These comprehensive and collective dimensions have made al-Sawada Village Project a model for future experiences.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

Al-Sawada village of 8,000 inhabitants lies on the East of the Nile River, in the Upper Egypt Governorate of al-Minya. The high unemployment and dismal economic conditions at al-Sawada village thrust many inhabitants into poor housing living conditions. Several elements of adequate housing, namely security, safety and human habitability were also lacking.

Sawada village is known for its strong social and family ties and for the dominance of rural and tribal customs and traditions, which enhance the spirit of cooperation among individuals of the society. The average monthly income of families ranges from LE 100 (US\$16.13) to LE 150 (US\$24.19).

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

The initiative and project focused on solving several problems led by supporting the poor who suffer harsh living and housing conditions. It provided housing improvement loans to enable them build new houses or repair their old ones to ensure adequate

health and housing conditions. Loans were extended according to the following conditions:

- Building a house of area ranging from 50–75 m²,
- Provision of clean drinking water and hygienic restrooms,
- Supplying the houses with doors and windows,
- Restoration of old houses,
- Building cement roofs to replace those made of palm branches,
- Separating houses from barns to have hygienic living conditions.

Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The project contributed to solving housing problems by means of cooperation and integration among all sectors of the society, including individuals, authorities working together to provide safe healthy houses for the village residents; improvement of the quality of the house; building the local community's potentials of societal participation.

Secondary Objectives

The project undertook to build 107 new houses and to improving 328 old ones. It also aimed to build the potential of the local volunteer activists and popular leaders to enable them to manage the project locally. To achieve this, the project supplied the benefactors with information to help them maintain their houses and a healthy living environment in a cooperative community spirit.

Roofless al-Sawada houses before upgrading. (Source: BLACD)



The Actors

Initiators

The initiative came as a response for the initiative of the popular leaders at al-Sawada village to improve the housing conditions of the population. It was also the result of BLACD's concern to provide the right to adequate housing by making use of potential capabilities through community participation in building and repair of houses.

Participants

The preparation and implantation of the project involved a distribution of efforts through: nongovernmental organizations (represented by BLACD), local community represented in the population and popular leaders of the village, and international funding institutions.

Legal and Administrative Framework

The Better Life Association is a nonprofit civil institution that was established in May 1995 and recognized by the Ministry of Social Affairs under resolution No. 7 (2003). The local and central authorities operate under the Egyptian Constitution of 1981. Article 151 of the Constitution recognizes the local application of human rights treaty obligations, which includes the State's ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1982.

Decision Making

Management of the project and decision making were carried out through:

- A field coordinator for the project monitored the roles assumed by the local village committee and wrote the contracts for the benefactors. He also conducted meetings for training of benefactors, introducing them to the practical importance of participation and cooperation. He also monitored the implementation of loans in the first and second stages;
- The project accountant handled the distribution of loans, writing of cheques, submitting monthly reports for the authority and preparing the budget.
- Volunteer local leaders of the project announced the project, collected requests of the benefactors and made decisions on their behalf. They collected installments from the benefactors to pay them to the project accountant, as well as followed up the collection of loans from defaulters. They took part with the committee members in preparation of the construction camps and in the mobilization of the volunteers.

People's Process in Strategic Planning

The biggest role in the planning of the project was handled by the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) represented in BLACD, the popular leaders and the village residents. The role of the funding institutions was confined to providing the necessary financial loans for building and repair.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

The real needs of the village people were determined through a questionnaire and through public meetings with the popular

leaders and the people themselves. These needs were defined as follows:

- Provision of loans for 107 families for the demolition and rebuilding of 107 new houses;
- Provisions of loans for 328 families for the sake of repair of 328 houses.

Resources

Material Resources

The project was in need of financial, technical and human resources. Partners and participants were determined as follows: NGOs represented by BLACD, popular leaders, village inhabitants and international funding institutions. Accordingly, a project budget was prepared and the international funders approved the finance plan in the form of a loan administered through BLACD. In turn, BLACD managed the technical aspects as well and the human resources, while also exerting efforts to mobilize popular participation in the building and repair of the houses. The total loans distributed among al-Sawada village people exceeded LE897,000 (\$149,500). The biggest loan stood at LE4,000 and the smallest LE600, with the average of LE2,500. After the repayment of the first loan, another loan was presented as the second stage, in order to complete the utilities of the house.

Social Capital

The implementation of the project revealed the potential social capital and the enormous human resources employed and invested in the project. Most of the village people did not only build their own houses, but they also took part in the building and restoration of their neighbors' houses, which crystallized the concept of collective work and community participation. Ultimately, 38% of the village residents directly benefited from the project.

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

The State assumed no role in the implementation of the project. The role of the international funding institution amounted to providing the loan. Civil society, through the efforts of BLACD, shouldered the burden of management, planning and implementation of the project with the participation of the local leaders and village residents. BLACD built and developed the potential of the local leaders needed for the management of the



project through a number of training courses on the following subjects:

- How to present a project within the community;
- Training on criteria of selection of beneficiaries;
- Training on technicalities of the project such as examination of loan applications, monitoring the implementation of the loans, means of collection and following-up with defaulters;
- Training in the use of environmental resources and specifications of a “healthy house”;
- The human right to adequate housing and secure tenure;
- Collective work and community participation.

Neighbors join forces as upgrading begins. (Source: BLACD)

By providing the training courses for the beneficiaries in their homes before they received the loans, BLACD managed to develop the potential of the villagers by addressing the importance of participation and cooperation, the use and preservation of environmental resources, the care and management of building materials, and the importance of paying the installments on the due dates.

Overcoming Obstacles

The project faced several impediments during implementation that the concerned parties managed to overcome. These problems included:

- Some families’ requesting loans were in no need of any repair or rebuilding. This was overcome by means of awareness campaigns that the administration of the project carried out to clarify the loan beneficiary criteria;
- People’s lack of commitment to pay the installments on the due dates, as most people depend on seasonal income from tourism, which sector was undergoing a recession;
- Some benefactors did not abide by the technical specifications of construction, for example, by increasing the number of stories, reducing the thickness of the walls. This was overcome through meetings and awareness campaigns for the beneficiaries during the implementation process.

However, other impediments could not be overcome, such as:

- The high price of building materials and workers’ depressed wages;
- Weak funding,

- The project money was available for a single round of loans only.

Fields of Service

The project served a number of fields, including:

- Exchange of expertise between BLACD, the village people and the popular leaders at the village;
- Capacity building through developing the potential of the popular leaders and the people in community participation in different stages of the project, and developing the popular leaders' capacity to manage the project and finding successful means for collection;
- Social mobilization of the village residents to organize themselves, join their neighbors in the building and restoration processes of their houses;
- Improving the housing conditions by providing loans for families to demolish and rebuild 107 new houses, and 328 families to repair their old houses;
- Urban development through improvement of the living and housing standards and making the people qualified to make use of the local capital so as to contribute in the future urban development process of the rural society;
- Education and training of the people to make use of the natural resources in the environment, on collective work and community participation, and training activists and popular leaders to manage the project locally. This was done by supplying the beneficiaries with information that helped them maintain clean houses;
- Funding by providing loans that ranged from LE600 to 4,000 per unit, in the first stage;
- Infrastructure/utilities: providing another loan in the second stage to complete the utilities of the house;
- Water and sanitation was improved through the provision of clean drinking water and hygienic restrooms.

Social production of new homes in al-Sawada with microcredit resources. (Source: BLACD)

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

The project managed to achieve its objectives represented in the building of 107 new houses and the repair and restoration of 328 houses, in spite of the impediments that had emerged at the beginning. The project succeeded in furnishing the village people with adequate, healthy houses and improved their living conditions. The biggest social benefits were represented in the following:



- Social awareness built by efforts of BLACD,
- Building the capacity of the village people and involving the popular leaders' roles (existing social capital),
- Training the people to make use of the natural environment responsibly,
- Developing the people's awareness of their human right to adequate housing,
- Enhancing protection of the right to secure tenure,
- Realizing the importance of collective work and community participation in building the society so as to eliminate spirit of individuality and isolation.

Degree of Social Production

The project represents social production of habitat to a great extent; the experience of the housing improvement loans at al-Sawada village and the role played by the popular leaders and village people made the project a success and demonstrated the constructive role that the civil society can play in sustainable development and in improving living conditions. It is worth mentioning that the State did not contribute with any sort of financial or technical support and that the whole burden was shouldered by the civil society organizations and the village people. The inhabitants of al-Sawada village proved the benefits that arise from any project that depends on the social production of the community individuals, who depend on themselves collectively to develop and make use of the local capital to contribute in the development process.

Results and Lessons Learned

The chief lessons learnt from al-Sawada Village Project are:

- The importance of cooperation and participation between individuals of the community and the creation of the volunteerism,
- The importance of establishing a training methodology for workers and local leaders during the planning stage of any project,
- The importance of making use of, and enhancing social capital in the development process,
- Determination of the benefactors' needs as essential,
- The benefit of the awareness courses for the community.

Potential for Replication

The project managed to create a state of psychological tranquility, peace and security for the families benefiting from the project.

Hence, some surrounding villages have asked for a similar project. BLACD accordingly seeks to apply the experience in another five villages in al-Minya Governorate. In addition, the experience can be transferred and applied in several communities and regions that live similar circumstances. BLACD seeks to attain greater success for the project by means of increasing the value of the loans in the future.

At home after upgrading in al-Sawada. (Source: BLACD)

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

The participants and BLACD have promoted the experience of al-Sawada through presentations in international forums and conferences and in exchange visits of concerned parties. This has included also presenting the experience through various mass-media outlets.

BLACD has documented the experience through video tapes to record the different stages of the project: during the demolishing and rebuilding of the houses, and the repair of the old houses with the participation of the village people.



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IRAQ



Housing for the Displaced of Makhmur

Geographic location: Makhmur District, east of Mosul, Ninoy Governorate, Republic of Iraq

Project start date: 10 November 2003

Number of workers: unknown

Target population: 100 families out of the 500 internally displaced as a result of ethnic conflict

Geographic scope: Settlement in Mosul of displaced persons arriving from Makhmur District

Summary

After the fall of the former regime in Iraq, Kurdish militias forced the families living in the City of Makhmur to leave their houses and lands. Ethnic considerations motivated the evictions as a response to the previous “arabization” campaigns of the old regime, particularly in the 1980s, that implanted ethnic Arab Iraqis in the Kurdish areas as a means to dilute their Kurdish demographic character. The Makhmur residents are Arabs, but have maintained residence in the area more than 40 years. The evicted citizens

have lodged complaints in civil courts, but none of these have not resulted in any decisions until the time of this writing.

Urged by a sense of responsibility to protect the human right to adequate housing and lands, a local organization devised ways to provide aid to the newly displaced families by mobilizing a wide network. That organization, the Human Rights and Migration Bureau, mobilized members and technical staff to conduct a series of meetings and interviews with the displaced families to determine their conditions. They selected 100 affected families for assistance, giving priority to those with the greatest need. After strategically examining their strengths and weaknesses, the organization decided to take the unprecedented step of providing emergency relief through a project with the following initial steps:

1. Determining participants in the initiative;
2. Selecting the alternative locations for housing;
3. Networking with concerned civil society organizations in Iraq;
4. Providing specialized personnel (technical, medical, social workers);
5. Recruiting volunteers.

Implementing the project involved provision of emergency shelter, food, water and economic assistance. It also found interim solutions for remaining families, within the bounds of available resources.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

Following the demise of Saddam Husain's Ba'athist regime in Iraq, old scores were being settled. Among the social conflicts waiting to happen was the consequence of the previous regime's attempts to weaken Kurdish demographic dominance in their traditional areas by implanting ethnic Arabs in Kurdish homes and lands. The Kurdish militias arising in the north of the country implemented the claims to restore their former properties. This meant the expulsion of those perceived to benefit from the foregoing "arabization" campaigns.

In one example, Kurdish militias forced the Arab residents of Makhmur and the surrounding villages to leave their homes and lands, claiming that the region belongs to Kurds and that the former regime had transformed the region into an Arab-dominated one.

However, the Makhmur-area inhabitants were long-standing residents (for over 40 years). Because the name of their residential area was called the Adnan Khair Allah Complex, named after a former Ba'athist defense minister, the Kurdish militias presumed them to be loyalists of the former regime.

While the known number of displaced families from Makhmur is some 500, only 100 are the subject of the present initiative. Most of the remaining 400 families sought refuge with other family in other regions far from Mosul, or found shelter in the deserted government structures—especially military barracks—that the US forces bombed in 2003.

This case is not unique, but reflects a phenomenon of interethnic backlash across northern Iraq after the US-led invasion in 2003. Other communities in the Mosul area and Kurdistan region generally also have been affected, such as Sumail, Talafa, Fa'ida and Masluba. Accurate numbers of displaced persons in those areas are unknown and the subject of further investigation.

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

As a result of displacement from their homeland, nearly 500 families were left homeless and without the barest means of subsistence, lacking housing, water, food and medical facilities. This necessitated the provision of aid to these families in the form of houses and appropriate means of survival. Many had lost their agricultural lands and crops (mostly barley and wheat) as well, which meant a loss of livelihood and future income.

Arabs from the al-Shummar tribe show an "official" eviction notice received from a Kurdish militia that plans to repossess their homes. (Source: Eric Stover)



Objectives

The Human Rights and Migration Bureau sought primarily to activate the civil organization in order to protect and provide aid to those oppressively displaced for reason of race or religion. The initiative developed into a plan to provide houses, water and food for 100 of the most-needy displaced families.

The effort served as an interim solution for the homeless. However, the provision of emergency relief and the consolidation of a wide network of local individuals and organizations enabled longer-term solutions to be found.

The Actors

Initiators

The Human Rights and Migration Bureau, a civil society organization affiliated to the National Front for the Tribes of Iraq, initiated the project.

Participants

In association with the National Front for the Tribes of Iraq, the Human Rights and Migration Bureau enlisted the participation of the National Front's bureaus. These included the National Front's medical services and public relations offices. Through the National Front, Sheikh Hasan Zaidan al-Khalaf, chief of the al-Luhaib tribe, offered the gratis use of 5,000m² of empty lands belonging to him in the Haj `Ali region, located 30 kms south of Mosul.



Local contractors who provide tenting for special occasions, such as weddings and funerals, joined in solidarity and offered the use of their tents without cost or compensation of any kind.

Leaders of the local tribes also mobilized their legendary hospitality to provide large quantities of food for inflowing refugees. Local humanitarian organization also provided medicines and medical supplies for the victims.

Internally displaced baby rests in her donated shelter. (Source: Human Rights Watch)

Legal and Administrative Framework

Chief among the general objectives endorsed by the Human Rights and Migration Bureau is the improvement of housing conditions, protection of refugees and internal migrants and the resettled. Therefore, and in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognition of the human right to adequate housing, the organization took the initiative to protect the migrants and internal refugees. Previous and current domestic laws did not provide protection in such cases, and the organization felt compelled to take up their moral responsibility as member of civil society.

The State of Iraq is also party to the principal international human rights treaties guaranteeing the right to adequate housing. For instance, Iraq ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1976; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1970; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1986; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1994. During the most-recent review of Iraq's implementation of ICESCR, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights found that the human right to adequate housing was violated in several sectors across the country. The Committee expressed concern about reports of "discrimination in the enjoyment of this right, especially in relation

to forced evictions of members of certain minorities (Kurds, Turkomans and Shi'a Muslims) and the situation of 'squatters' in urban areas."⁴

While the perpetrators of the evictions at Makhmur were not State actors, but Kurdish militias, this background is significant as it assumed that revenge for previous such treaty violations and population transfer by the former regime motivated the displacement and dispossession in this case.

It is also significant that the United States-led coalition forces assumed the obligation to respect, defend, promote and fulfill the human rights of Iraqis during this period by virtue of their occupation of the treaty-bound State. Addition, despite The Hague Regulations, Article 43 prohibitions against an occupying Power altering the legal system in an occupied territory, the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq has issued effective military orders relevant to this situation. The CPA Order No. 6 "Eviction of Persons Illegally Occupying Public Buildings" asserts control over all public property and all property formerly owned by the Ba`th Party within Iraq." The authorized "the Commander of Coalition Forces or his designee to evict "any individuals or groups determined to be in illegal occupation of such property." While this order has been widely enforced, leading to considerable resistance against the occupying forces,⁵ it severely has foreclosed options for displaced, homeless and impoverished Iraqis to have access to emergency shelter. Moreover, it renders vulnerable those taking refuge in abandoned facilities of the former regime, like many Makhmur victims.

Iraqi civilians scuffle with British troops in Basra during their eviction from a public building, 29 March 2004. (Source: Nabil al-Jurani, Associated Press)



Decision Making

The Human Rights and Migration Bureau took all decisions in connection with this initiative. The Bureau also supervised the management of the initiative, being the originator of the idea and the executing agency.

People's Process in Strategic Planning

⁴ Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Iraq," E/C.12/1/Add.17, 12 December 1997, para. 20.

⁵ P. Mitchel Prothero, "Baghdad squatters face eviction by Army," United Press international (18 March 2004); *Agence France-Presse*, "Eviction order sparks protest from returning refugees in southern Iraq (February 2004); Sewell Chan, "Army takes responsibility for Iraqi journalists' deaths," *The Washington Post* (30 March 2004).

The Bureau organized a series of interviews with the participating offices of the National Front, in order to define separately the responsibility of each. It was agreed that all offices are to report to the Human Rights and Migration Bureau, considering it the initiator and the party responsible for the implementation.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

Based on the initial case study, the Bureau identified the needs of the targeted 100 families as follows:

- Assistance in preparing and providing simple housing (e.g., tents);
- Specialized medical care,
- Transportation services;
- Food, drinking water and everything basic to human life.

The proportion of need varied among the 100 families, according to circumstances.

Resources

Material Resources

The Human Rights and Migration Bureau relied solely upon self-financing and contributions from the local community. The project received no financing from any authority or external source.

As mentioned above, participants in this initiative

Social Capital

The Bureau's potential social capital crystallized in the form of donations of time, money and materials from members and some tribes taking part in the National Front for the Tribes of Iraq.

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

Essentially, four main parties shared responsibilities in building homes for the displaced of Makhmur. These included:

- The local community: volunteers from the local community contributed in kind by providing means of transportation;
- National Front for the Tribes of Iraq: the role of the medical services and public relations offices of the National Front was directed by the Human Rights and Migration Bureau;
- Civil society institutions: contributing expertise as needed in the various stages of operation;
- Human Rights and Migration Bureau: as coordinator and general manager of all project activities.

Overcoming Obstacles

In order to transport people and materials, the project needed large trucks. In order to address this lack of essential means of transportation, the organizers relied on volunteer citizens to make this contribution in kind.

The material needs of the project included adequate money, to distribute as relief to the displaced families, as well as tents and land as a location for temporary housing compound. Resorting to other civil society organizations to contribute through their expertise and appealing to the heads of tribes for assistance overcame these impediments.

Fields of Service

The project housed 100 displaced families and provided them with appropriate replacement houses.

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

The project succeeded by 40% in providing the intended 100 family houses. The noncooperation of some other human rights organizations hampered efforts to accomplish the project objectives efficiently. Some 60 targeted families (60%) did not benefit as planned. However, the organizers were able to advise and assist them to gain access to interim shelter in a nearby military barracks, recently abandoned under US bombardment.

With regard to the objective of providing medical assistance to the displaced families, the project succeeded by 75%. This measure of success was due to the cooperation of volunteers from medical staff of the National Front.

The provision of food aid succeeded by 90%, thanks to the cooperation of tribal organizations and the citizens of towns and villages who donated food stuffs. As for drinking water, on an emergency basis, tanker transport companies volunteered to provide the needed amounts of water. Heads of tribes also donated mineral water for beneficiary families. Eventually, the displaced community was able to draw water from wells in the Haj `Ali area and from the nearby Tigris River.

Degree of Social Production

Based on the right of everyone to adequate housing, the project's link to the social production had a primary role in providing houses for benefiting families



Displaced family sheltering in a deserted army barracks near Mosul, where refugees risk further eviction under CPA Order No. 6. (Source: IOCC)

Results and Lessons Learned

The historic and continuing isolation of Iraqi civil society from the outside world proved to be an impediment to project implementation. Exposure to other international organizations is essential to enhancing local expertise and access to material support.

Potential for Replication

There is a possibility for implementing the present initiative elsewhere in the future if material, abstract and logistic potentials are available. That prospect depends upon maintaining contacts with international organizations to make use of their wide experience. This could be accomplished by the Bureau of Human Rights and Migration personnel participating in international conferences and workshops, in order to develop capacity and technical expertise.

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

Organizers and participants in this case have promoted their experiences through advertising in the newspapers, generally spreading the culture of housing and land rights, circulating pamphlets and newsletters, seasonal symposia held to illustrate the objectives of the organization to protect housing and land rights and, particularly, to defend the rights of the oppressively displaced for whatever reason.

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JORDAN



Ecotourism with a Social Base: The Dhana Valley Nature Preserve

Geographic location: Dhana and al-Qadisiyya villages, al-Tufaila Governorate, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Project start date: Late 1994

Number of workers: Five permanent, 12 volunteers

Target population: Communities of Dhana and al-Qadisiyya (currently 500 individuals; 10,000 persons targeted)

Geographic scope: Dhana Valley region

Summary

The project of the Sons of Dhana and al-Qadisiyya Cooperative Association arose from a local initiative to organize the community and unite its efforts in order to defend its rights, cultural and natural heritage, and develop the region in a sustainable way that preserves the community's distinctive qualities, curbs unequal

competition with external parties that seek profits without regard to the social requisites of economic development.

The project sought to rely upon its organizational nucleus to encourage education and training of the youth, so as to relate to the local and international communities, pursue job opportunities to check poverty and pave the way for self-determination toward the fulfillment of needs. This experience also has opened the way to new mechanisms for solving local concerns and problems and to finding a place for the community in the framework of the studies and designs that external bodies carry out to ascertain Dhana and al-Qadisiyya's present and future.

The project has educated the community and made it aware of its rights, duties, opportunities and challenges imposed by the community's geography and demography, as well as its conditions and relations with other governmental and nongovernmental institutions. The project depended on the activities that generated permanent income, in order to contribute to stability and sustainable development of the project through of collective investments.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

The Dhana Valley was first inhabited 3,000 years ago, but the present built-up area dates back less than 500 years and is distinguished by the components of local stone, mud, wood, cane and thatch. The village is a vestige of the dominant style of building in most Jordanian villages until the end of the nineteenth century.

In 1989, the Royal Association for the Protection of Nature took the very first steps toward the foundation of a Dhana Protectorate, despite the local inhabitants' apprehensions. All association members and employees were from the capital, Amman, about 200 kms north of the village. Moreover, the Association used manipulative and dishonest means to persuade the local notables, village inhabitants and the general public as to the project's significance and its putative service to the local community.

In 1993, the establishment of the protectorate was officially declared. This, in turn, led to the centralized control of the region surrounding the village and, thus, curtailed the social and economic activities of the people, who relied mainly on livestock breeding, agriculture and firewood gathering to meet their primary needs.

The people were marginalized by their low education levels, lack of practical expertise and legal culture, and scant knowledge of relevant legislation. The local inhabitants' had no influence over decision makers, particularly in light of the authoritative nature of the Royal Association for the Protection of Nature (directed by Jordan's most prominent figures), with its experience, financial and media advantages. That enabled the Royal Association for the Protection of Nature to prepare, plan and market its program without regard to the interests and needs of the local community, who seemed incapable of defending their rights, or even realizing what was going on around them.

The establishment of Dhana Nature Preserve and the accompanying media storm and tourism publicity urged some well-off public figures, investors and the Royal Association for the Protection of Nature itself to buy village lands at very low prices, taking advantage of the crushing poverty of the people there. This, in turn, incited the local community to join forces in the face of such lopsided competition and seize the initiative to solve the problem and protect their rights.



Aerial view of Dhana village and Dhana Valley. (Source: ASDQ)

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

The initiative sought to address a variety of developmental issues. The main problems that the initiative aimed to solve were:

- The local community's weakness to defend its rights and face the challenges posed by the greed of the Royal Association for the Protection of Nature and private-sector investors;
- The spread of poverty and unemployment that turned the region into a target for the Royal Association for the Protection of Nature as well as investors.

Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The initiative and eventual project was meant to empower the local community of Dhana and al-Qadisiyya to defend and maintain their social, economic, cultural and customary rights in a way that addressed their various livelihood needs, on one hand, with the efforts of environmental preservation, on the other. That called for a formula that preserved the region while combating urban poverty and unemployment, and improved living conditions of the local people.

The initiative/project also aimed at carrying out a comprehensive development process for the Dhana and al-Qadisiyya region, building both financial and social capital for the people of the region as well as for the State.

The Dhana Hotel welcomes visitors at the village center. (Source: ASDQ)

Secondary Objectives

The initiative/project aimed as well to attain some ancillary objectives, including: to encourage and assist children to attend school; encourage and assist the youth to continue their studies through university; to provide vocational training to the youth, in order to qualify them for employment in the market; and to assist youth by employing them in the association activities.

The initiative also aimed to preserve natural and cultural heritage of the region, to make use of those resources to maintain their sustainability, as well as develop environmental tourism to empower the society. Other objectives included motivating collective action in the local community to enable it to face the unequal competition with foreign investments, developing the association's potential and empowering it to continue its role and prepare for the present and future challenges. In order to achieve these objectives, the local community banded together to transform their village into a center for ecotourism.

The Actors

Initiators

Ever since the beginning of the project, at the end of 1994, and until 2001, it depended on the total support of the local community in the initial studies, planning, implementation, follow up, assessment and development stages. Different sectors of the community, especially the youth, assumed a primary role. Women assumed a moderate role due to the traditions, customs and, particularly, their consequently weaker education level.



Participants

The project was directed to serve all categories of the society, thanks to the strong social coherence of the people and to their realization that the concept of comprehensive development cannot be attained if any sector of the society or its needs were overlooked. The project started with interviewing the young people of the region, in order to explore their conditions, needs, potentials, opportunities and impediments. Solutions were proposed, and the project reflected the priorities of the beneficiaries and their reaction to the prior marginalization of the people in the Royal Association for the Protection of Nature's planning of the Dhana Nature Preserve. They also sought to confront private investors' intended acquisition of local resources without sufficiently contributing to local development. A Jordanian governmental institution, UNDP and Care International eventually joined the local popular committees in supporting and operating the people's project.

Legal and Administrative Framework

The local community agreed to form a cooperative association, the Cooperative Association for the Sons of Dhana and al-Qadisiyya (ASDQ), established at the end of 1994. The Jordanian Cooperative Association, which is a separate governmental institution, played a prominent role in legitimizing the status of the ASDQ. It relied upon the application and implementation of all international laws, instruments and treaties related to human rights, in particular, the human right to adequate housing, the human right to a safe and healthy environment and the sustainable preservation of natural resources.

In 2001, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights concluded that Jordan should ensure "that resettlement procedures and programmes include registration, facilitate comprehensive family rehabilitation, and ensure access to basic services." The Committee also recommended that "the State party take due regard of the Committee's General Comments 7 and 4, concerning forced evictions, and the right to housing."⁶

Decision Making

All segments of the community were represented in project decision making, including the youth (males and females), the

⁶ "Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant," E/C.12/1/Add.46 (1 September 2000), para. 37.

elderly and all marginalized categories. The administrative authority elected by the local community of Dhana took the formal decisions. The project was managed and implemented by a working staff represented in the administrative authority of the project.

People's Process in Strategic Planning

In the first stage, all processes of the initiative—planning, funding and implementation—took place on a local (popular) level. In the second stage, various parties participated in the planning, funding and implementation of some programs that needed external financial or technical assistance, especially those aspects implying investment (governmental and nongovernmental organizations, international funding agencies, private sector, international bodies and local initiatives).

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

Through a number of surveys of the local community, needs and priorities were determined; activities were represented in the following:

- Meetings between the region's youth and the different popular sectors to explore the socioeconomic conditions and status of the region;
- Meetings between the region's youth and the different popular sectors for consultation, determination of needs, potentials, opportunities and impediments of the project;
- A workshop for youth, in order to determine propositions and solution plans for the project.

Resources

Material Resources

The project's financial, technical and human resources, at the outset, depended totally on the village inhabitants' provision. However, due to the seriousness of the project coupled with the enthusiasm of the village's inhabitants, some donor international organizations supported the initiative with financial aid as follows: *Renovated Dhana village homes now serve as ecotourism guesthouses, (Source: ASDQ)*

- In the first stage (1994–2001), funding was entirely local, mainly collected through modest monthly contributions from the village people. Funding thereafter took the form of borrowing—with accumulated collateral—to fund investment projects, in addition to the projects of the ASDQ that



contributed by way of operating the project activities (the tourist bus and the hotel);

- In the second stage, from 2001 to the present, the UNDP contributed to funding the rehabilitation of the hotel, developing the association and training of the employees and volunteers. Arvel Travel Agency, a French company, also contributed capital to support the association activities in 2004.

The ASDQ seeks to benefit from the productivity-enhancement projects that the Jordanian government undertakes, in order to finance the implementation of development projects that focus on poverty and unemployment eradication, and to enhance the local communities' participation in national development. An agreement was signed with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to fund the "Dana Viewpoint Project," which will provide new job opportunities to the locals, introduce the ecotourism concept and the importance of nature conservation for the future generations.

Social Capital

The Dhana Valley Project is a project characterized as both drawing from, and contributing to local social capital from beginning to end. Consequently, it serves as a model for upholding the community's human rights. This project and social movement has been stimulated, from the outset, by the village inhabitants' instinctive sense of peril posed by outside interests transforming their village into a nature protectorate with the protection of any governmental body or international organization. The courage and effectiveness of the local movement was a motivator of international interest to provide technical and financial support.

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

The Dhana Valley Project involved all sorts of partnerships and participation between governmental and nongovernmental organizations, international funding institutions, the private sector, international implementation agencies and local inhabitants. However, the positive role assumed by the local community has been the key to its success and sustainability. Groups of local volunteer youth worked as field researchers to survey the socioeconomic and development conditions and characteristics of the region, as well as map out the potential capacities, needs, opportunities and impediments. These surveys accompanied a

local appeal for unity of efforts. The village inhabitants took part in the restoration of old houses, as well as the restoration and building of the irrigation channels toward developing the orchards.

Various work committees arose from among the village inhabitants according to their abilities and needs. Young people voluntarily assisted on an individual and collective basis in planning, implementing and supervising the creation of a new social culture through the various development activities. The personal contacts of the concerned national and international groups and individuals helped facilitate and support the local civil society activities. This demonstrated the local community's pioneering role in planning and implementing the project.

Overcoming Obstacles

Several impediments that hampered the initiative were eventually overcome, including:

- Poverty and unemployment was alleviated to a high degree by direct employment, efficiency enhancement, training and qualifying local people; however, the need to redouble those efforts remains, because of the harsh economic conditions of the region, partly deriving from its location, remote from job opportunities;
- The weak authority of the community *vis-à-vis* the governmental departments was nonetheless overcome by the local community representatives presenting the needs and aspirations of the society and defend its rights before government;
- Low awareness of the rights and litigation procedures became training opportunities for programs carried out by the association to enhance the level of community awareness about human rights and means available for claiming and defending rights with legal authority;
- Typically fragmented individual efforts eventually gave way to collective action through the association's promotion of united efforts toward the attainment of the objectives and aspirations of the community;
- The low education levels were the subject of efforts to support poor students from Dhana Valley, encouraging them and their parents to complete their education and make the community aware of the role that education plays in improving living conditions;
- The difficulty of transportation to and from the village was overcome when the ASDQ acquired a small bus, especially to serve the students' transportation needs;
- A lack of openness on the part of the community was overcome by transforming the village into a natural

protectorate that can bring in tourism with the aim of transforming the village into a community with functional access to the outside world;

- The Royal Association for the Protection of Nature's deliberate marginalization of the village inhabitants was overcome by clarifying to the governmental and the funding authorities the practical significance of the local community's role in developing the region; the inhabitants, thus, were able to exert pressure on the Royal Association to correct its previous behavior and help the community instead of competing with it.

Other obstacles remain unresolved, such as:

- The local community's inability to market investment activities professionally, in order to obtain the capital needed to fund further development programs;
- Local staff's weak relations with the funding bodies;
- Inordinate reliance on temporary volunteers, which negatively influences the chances of developing and institutionalizing the local experience, and limits the efficiency of the volunteers' participation in the training programs that seek to transfer and develop local expertise.

Fields of Service

The project delivers services in a number of fields, including:

- Research and planning through surveys, interviews and meetings to determine needs and demands, as well as the daily life problems to address;
- Capacity building: accomplished by training local staff, organizing the community, making it aware of its legal rights and activating individual and collective initiatives toward advancing the interests of the community;
- Improvement of housing conditions by constructing new houses and restoring old houses in a participatory way;
- Social development in the built environment, confronting poverty and unemployment, and raising the education level;
- Rural development by way of support for rehabilitating agricultural lands, livestock breeding, maintaining and restoring water channels, and enhancing agricultural and veterinary awareness;
- Education and training: encouraging and assisting youth to continue their studies and to enroll in universities, and training them how to pursue job opportunities;
- Social mobilization through marketing the cooperative work in the local community, in order to face the competition foreign investors pose;

- Funding by small savings schemes to collect monthly contributions from local citizens, and then apply them as collateral for local borrowing for investment;
- Improvement of infrastructure and facilities by villagers participating in the restoration and building of irrigation channels in the orchards.

As an ecotourism center, Dhana offers local hospitality, Bedouin style. (Source: ASDQ)

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

Despite impediments and the weak capacity of the local community, the project attained its most important targets, namely: the organization of the community to join forces and pool resources to create collective, strategically organized work. This has enhanced the unity of the society and its ability to realize its rights and potential, as well as motivate the community to work for further self-development. Moreover, the project helped establish collective investment projects yielding collective benefit.

Degree of Social Production

The Dhana Valley experience represents a practical model for the concept of the social production of habitat, crystallizing the community's initiative to know its own needs and problems, and to apply local potential (social capital) to solve problems in a cooperative fashion. The actual and potential value of the project has attracted the cooperation and support of other parties near and far. The project and its continuation have increased local efficiency at harnessing potential and applying expertise of others to build local social capital and achieve sustainable social and economic development.



Results and Lessons Learned

Chief among the lessons learnt from these experiences are:

- How to identify and maximize the potential of the community, despite their financial and other weaknesses, transforming them through positive social action;
- The significant role of youth in building social awareness;
- The importance of social solidarity, especially among the poor and deprived, in order to defend themselves and solve some of their problems.

The Dhana Valley initiative also emphasized other aspects, such as:

- The importance of awareness of human rights, law, local and international monitoring systems that can compensate for local weaknesses and empower the local community to confront the community's competitors with external partners;
- Identifying and knowing one's own potential, needs, weaknesses and strengths are essential to planning strategically toward success of any initiative/project. This experience also has proved that, even if the community were fewer in quantity and weaker in quality, it still would possess potentials and capacities that just need to be mobilized.

Potential for Replication

Ten years after the project start, and despite all obstacles that hampered it, it managed to resist external attempts at control and realized self-determined development. Having assessed the experience, the factors of success lay in were the organization and institutionalization of collective work, relying on the local determination of needs and directing the benefits to the community. These keys to success constitute a positive indicator of the components of sustainable development delivered through the project and its potential continuity and replication in other locations.

A local Dhana resident of the reptilian kind. (Source: ASDQ)

How the Parties Promoted Their Experience

An important part of this project's sustainability lies in its promotion as an ecotourism center with local management authority. The initiative's social production process itself and organic outcomes also add to its appeal. Promotion to date has engaged international service and donor institutions in the production stages. More recently, promotion has involved also tour companies and travel agents to bring the Dhana Valley experience to the wider public, and vice versa. Organizers and participants have the potential of marketing their experiences further through:

- Participation in the forum of local initiatives;
- Participation in any meetings or conferences related to any of the objectives of the project, including ecotourism conventions;
- Hosting visitors to the region, including citizens, national or international organizations;
- Cooperation with bodies interested in exchange of ideas and experiences.



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LEBANON



Social Development in the Palestinian Camps

Geographic location: Beirut, Lebanese Republic

Project start date: Beginning of 1976

Number of workers: 145

Target population: Orphaned children evacuated from the Tal al-Za`atar and Jisr al-Basha refugee camps (1976), and Sabra and Shatila camps (1984)

Geographic scope: West Beirut, Lebanon

Summary

The initiative addressed the conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the consequent social and economic problems, particularly of children orphaned by civil war and military occupation. The project arose in 1976 as a means to solve a pressing problem of caring for the children evacuated from camps of Tal al-Za`atar and Jisr al-Basha, who lost their parents and who belong to different nationalities and faith-based communities. It developed afterwards into a comprehensive social, cultural and

health project aiming at contributing in the development of the marginalized Palestinian community in Lebanon not only to help them maintain their lives, but also to know their rights as refugees on both the international and local levels. The purpose of all project services has been to enable the children to follow up the events and changes influencing their status.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

The main motive that led to the establishment of the National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT) was the civil war in Lebanon and the consequent massacres and dislocation of inhabitants. The 1976 siege on Tal al-Za`atar Camp and consequent massacre left almost 4,000 camp defenders and other civilians killed, in addition to the injured, the handicapped and the orphaned children. The International Committee of the Red Cross transferred those children, who numbered nearly 200, to West Beirut, where they were placed in a house especially prepared for them by the General Union of Palestinian Women and a group of Lebanese and Palestinian specialists in the educational and social fields. Ever since then, the shelter came to be known as the “Home of the Steadfast Children.”

Street scene from Tal al-Za`atar from 1975, before the civil war. (Source Benno Karkabé)

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

The initiative sought mainly to overcome the problems resulting from the children’s loss of their parents and families as a result of the siege of the camp and the massacre carried out by some militias and the Israeli army, respectively in 1976, and 1982. Chief among these problems was the deterioration of the financial and living conditions of the children.

Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The initiative aimed at developing the marginalized Palestinian community in Lebanon by tending to the orphaned children and to reintegrate them in their local community, especially through schooling and providing them with dignified existence.

The initiative aimed as well to confront the consequences of the Sabra and Shatila Massacre by helping to maintain the cohesion and continuity of the Palestinian family. This was made possible by developing a new mechanism to identify foster parents for the parentless children and to help them improve their financial conditions as a prelude to overall social care of the family. The



families were devastated and dispersed by way of various tragedies, including murder, kidnapping and house demolition.

Secondary Objectives

The initiative/project sought to contribute toward developing the marginalized Palestinian community in Lebanon not only to resume a normal life, but also to make them conscious of their full rights as refugees, but also to and provide the essential and immediate educational, health and social services for the camp residents and, simultaneously, to provide for the special needs of the children.

The Actors

Initiators

The initiative started in 1976, when the National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT) was founded to shoulder the responsibility of this initiative. The main target was to sponsor the children who survived the massacres in camps of Tal al-Za`atar and Jisr al-Basha.

Participants

The NISCVT role was soon enhanced to develop and sponsor the marginalized Palestinian society in Lebanon in cooperation with the local civil society and the foreign institutions, individuals and groups in solidarity with the Palestinian people. This took place in the absence of any Lebanese State or Palestinian Authority role.

Legal and Administrative Framework

Having transferred the children to West Beirut, the new legal entity set up to carry out the work was the “House of the Steadfast Children,” which is the popular name for the association licensed by the Lebanese Ministry of Interior under decree number 135/ad and formally known as the “National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training—NISCVT.” The initiative focused on the implementation of all the international treaties and resolutions adopted by the United Nations pertaining to human rights, children’s rights, nondiscrimination and the rights of refugees to enjoy adequate health and dignified living standard.

The Lebanese State has ratified the two basic human rights treaties, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in 1976. Its ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination came already in

1971. Lebanon then ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1997). Lebanon has not ratified the Convention on Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Relevant to the beneficiaries of this popular initiative is the Lebanese Ministry of Labor Decision No. 621/1 (1995) against Palestinians from practicing over 70 categories of work, severely restricting their opportunities to gain a livelihood in Lebanon. In 1998, the UN Committee monitoring implementation of the Convention on Racism urged the Lebanese government to take all appropriate measures, including those of a legal nature, to fully guarantee access to work and equitable conditions of employment to all foreign workers, including Palestinians.⁷ The Committee reiterated its observations of official State discrimination against Palestinians' right to work, as well as housing, health care, social services and access to legal remedy.⁸

Decision Making

This project is of a special nature, as it was formed during the civil war and the Israeli army incursions into the refugee camps. Project decisions always were arrived at in consultation between NISCVT and the camp residents, which parties were sharing common material, social and psychological conditions.

During the first (alternative house) stage, 1976–82, children were divided to small groups, each consisting of eight children, who were left under the care of a surrogate mother who cared for them as one integrated family.

During the second stage (Family Happiness Project), 1983 till now, the number of children increased as did the challenges and dangers facing the families and all workers of the institution. Therefore, there has been an urgency to organize the management of the project within constrained financial and human capacity. A headquarters was allocated beside the camp, and work was distributed as follows:

- Administrative work: maintaining account, records, correspondence with international institutions and contacts with surrogate families, preparing children's and families' files, in addition to follow-up of financial affairs with banks

⁷ "Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Lebanon," CERD/C/304/Add.49, 30 March 1998, para. 24.

⁸ "Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Lebanon," CERD/C/64/3, 12 March 2004, para. 12.

and insuring that monthly stipend reached the families regularly;

- Social work: selecting and training social workers from the camps to provide a measure of security, build trust, respond to the families' needs, and create job opportunities for a special category of the camp residents. Those specialists identified the benefiting families and monitored the children's upbringing.

"Steadfast children" of Tal al-Za`tar receiving motherly advice and guidance. (Source: Benno Karkabé)



Families were distributed into groups, each of which consists of about thirty families, and each specialist cares about a group of families. This distribution was meant to facilitate the identification of the real needs of the residents by means of a detailed report presented by the social specialists, including all the information needed about the family (income level, etc). Accordingly the real conditions of the family were examined and the children to be cared for were identified. Each child then received an application, including all habitual, social, health and education information about her/himself and the foster family. Two pictures of the child were enclosed with each application, which the NISCVT then sent from to a partner association abroad to arrange the sponsor. The employee also maintained contact between the child and the sponsor through correspondence and reports, clarifying any new developments in the family conditions.

People's Process in Strategic Planning

Planning for the project came as a response for the accumulated deprivations of war. During the first stage, the main objective was to rescue 200 children and provide an alternative home for them. Before stabilizing them, those children were transferred to Syria for their safety. During the second stage, the role of the association turned to sponsoring the Palestinian refugees' families and to improve the economic condition of the foster families as a prelude to social care of the family. Planning, in most cases, has taken place to guarantee the children's sustenance and provide the minimum level of adequacy in refugee camp living conditions. This naturally takes place in consultation between the sponsoring institution and the camp residents.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

The project addressed the target group's urgent need, which left no time or need for elaborate surveys. The circumstances required

rather quick assessments and rapid responses to relieve violations of the most basic international human rights of adequate housing, clothing, food, health, and social and educational services. However, in the second stage (Family Happiness Project), NISCVT thoroughly identified the needs of the inhabitants in a detailed report presented regularly by the social workers.

Resources

Material Resources

The project was in need of financial, technical and human resources. At the beginning, the project was totally dependent on NISCVT, which turned to some private benefactors and nongovernmental associations abroad for assistance.

Social Capital

The cornerstone of the project has been the social work that has taken place in the total absence of any governmental contribution, either from the Palestinian authority or the host country. Participants in the project, both NISCVT staff and the communities, worked under inhuman conditions and risking their own lives amid bombing and bullets. They worked in a small room that was secured in the middle of the devastation of the Shatila Camp. There was a pressing need to help the inflicted families who were returning to their totally or partially destroyed houses. The civil society organizations and the inflicted people themselves assisted thereafter in facing the consequent traumas and the struggle for survival throughout a human catastrophe that negated all human rights.

Housekeeping became a subject of project-sponsored skill building and income generation. (Source: NISCVT)



Implementation

Partners in Implementation

The local community and NGOs assumed full responsibility for the project's implementation, which was rather an attempt for personal and social survival. The implementation was in three stages:

- The initial (alternative house) stage of the project, NISCVT divided the orphaned children into small groups of eight and placed them in surrogate family homes, whose mother cared for all of them. Children attended the UNRWA schools in the daytime and practiced recreational activities such as drawing, sports, dancing, singing, etc. to provide expressive cultural outlets and help alleviate their suffering;

- The second stage (Family Happiness Project) initiated a new mechanism to search for child sponsors in order to boost their financial condition as a prelude for social care for the family as a whole, most families having been devastated by the war and the destruction of life and property;
- The third stage (gradual security and tranquility) coincided with the different factions in Lebanon reaching agreement to end the civil war as a prelude to national reconciliation and a new era of construction. With the silencing of guns of war, personal security became a secondary problem, replaced by emerging social and economic rehabilitation priorities.

Overcoming Obstacles

Initial impediments mainly arose from the security situation, threatening the safety of all. With each round of violence emerged new factors that required new responses in an ever-changing context.

The Israeli incursions into Beirut, in 1982, introduced the main turning point.⁹ The method of operation drastically changed from the alternative house policy to the system of foster care, while keeping the child in his natural environment.

The continuous displacement of families' during the War of the Camps (1986–88) posed another difficulty in tracing the families moving from the north to the south, especially amid the frequent communication outages. As for communicating with families, the main obstacle was in reaching the family to obtain vital information. In the light of the prevailing fear and mistrust in the aftermath of the massacres, it was essential to rely on social workers from the camps, where the inhabitants know and trust each other.

Project beneficiaries of vocational training in auto mechanics, a profession not foreclosed to Palestinians in Lebanon. (Source: NISCVT)



Disruptive conduct on the part of children and adolescents represented another impediment that was overcome by means of sports and art activities along with psychotherapy, when needed.

Financial resources were another obstacle, especially affecting the NISCVT employees' wages. This led to a cautious policy toward any new project, such that no new project could be started prior to securing necessary funding. Employees' wages were also critical to project objectives, as they contributed to alleviating economic

⁹ By 1982, Israeli incursions into Lebanon were not new. Israel occupied part of South Lebanon since 1978, and bombed Beirut's al-Fakahani District in 1981. However, 1982 was the first instance of Israeli forces' outright occupation of the Lebanese capital. That development transformed all aspects of life in the country.

problems of project beneficiaries, who happened also to be employees. Job creation for almost 145 permanent and part-time employees was crucial issue, whereas almost 75% of them were women. Expanding the scope of work gradually helped avoid any setbacks.

Fields of Service

The project operated in a variety of complementary fields, providing the following services:

- Protection of life: provision of foster families and alternative homes for children who lost their parents;
- Exchange of expertise between refugees and concerned local and international organizations;
- Improving housing conditions through the provision of substitute houses to care for homeless children;
- Education and training for the children by ensuring their access to school and upbringing in a healthy social environment;
- Social mobilization of refugees to know and claim their legitimate rights;
- Fund raising in cooperation with NGOs abroad and some private benefactors.

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

The project managed to save the lives of refugees, including the children surviving the devastation in Tal al-Za`atar, Jisr al-Basha, Sabra and Shatila Camps. This is not considered only as social benefit, but also as an article of heroism on the part of people living under bombardment and siege.

With the end of the Lebanese Civil War, social and economic problems emerged as priorities. In the field of social work, NISCVT social/cultural centers increased to ten in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Social production of education, in cooperation with NGOs, also crystallized in the provision of preschool education, a level that UNRWA does not provide.

As for health services, specialized programs were set for treatment and health awareness. Women assumed important roles in projects such as producing environmental-friendly foodstuffs, traditional embroidery, etc. These also involved the social production of culture by people who did not surrender to population transfer and war, nor to its consequent devastation.

Degree of Social Production

This comprehensive social production project came as a natural outcome of cooperation between several informal-sector parties, including those seeking services, parties seeking funding and those institutions and individuals cooperating with the needy community. There involved local civil institutions and foreign associations, groups in solidarity with the Palestinian people and some individuals, all converging in model for partnership and sharing moral responsibility.

Results and Lessons Learned

The initiative provided a variety of opportunities, chiefly:

- Contributing to assist the main victims of war, namely women and children, and to emphasize the unity of the family;
- Allowing children to learn in a social environment conducive to their intellectual and physical growth;
- Vocational training for male and female youth before they join the labor market together with fostering their sense of dignity, self-confidence and encouragement;
- Allowing women their role in all of the production processes;
- Devoting due care to the marginalized sectors inside the community, especially those sectors suffering psychological or nervous trauma;
- Turning cultural/social centers into platforms for organized expression of opinion;
- Provision of opportunities to cooperate more with local and foreign associations that share common interests and objectives.

Chief among the tactical lessons learnt from this initiative were the importance of:

- Flexibility in changing means and mechanisms of work in accordance with new environmental circumstances, and to include new objectives;
- Gradual, patient work from the modest to the more ambitious, ensuring aspirations are reasonably attainable;
- Considering the opinion of targeted sectors, within reason, as a crucial factor in turning any project to a success;
- Not to start any programs that are not deliberately or thoroughly examined (or funded);
- Avoiding the duplication of efforts with other organizations that eventually could turn out to unproductive;
- Consultation and expertise exchange with funding partners;
- Seeking self-funding of some programs, however humble.

Potential for Replication

NISCVT sought to develop work so as to attain self-funding of its services. Several impediments intervened; mainly the instability in the region and the consequent comprehensive economic stagnancy that jeopardized any production projects not thoroughly examined.

Palestinian refugees enjoy no clear or common vision of resolving their problems. The available frameworks of peace agreements and negotiations all had turned to failure. The special Palestinian status in Lebanon curbs project beneficiaries' ability to work or own possessions, and deprives the Palestinians' civil rights in Lebanon.



Cooperation with Lebanese and foreign institutions continues, and those pressure groups continuously stir up the case of the Palestinians' rights in Lebanon and internationally (e.g., their right to return to historic Palestine, restitution and compensation.) The vision of future work focuses on development of current projects as one unit of interlacing strands, starting with the early childhood and ending with the adults qualified and productive. Education and training, in this respect, is the backbone of the envisioned development, while material living conditions remain important but temporal.

The "steadfast children" of Tal al-Za`tar, 1976. (Source: Benno Karkabé)

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

Organizers and participants promote their experiences through international exchanges and solidarity links with other NGOs and social movements around the region and world. When possible, they present their experience before international forums, UN bodies, and in local workshops.

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Bashku Unplanned Area Rehabilitation Initiative

Geographic location: Bashku informal neighborhood,
Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco

Project start date: 1990s

Number of workers: Unknown

Target population: Women, men, children, elderly, all of the
area's inhabitants; about 9,000 persons

Geographic scope: Bashku informal neighborhood

Summary

This initiative was based on improving and rehabilitating the unplanned Bashku quarter in the Kingdom of Morocco. The area is located in the City of Casablanca, Morocco's largest and most commercial center. The area, extending over nine hectares, consists of 1,700 housing buildings inhabited by about 9,000 persons. The area's inhabitants suffer from apparent deterioration of their social and economic living conditions.

This initiative was undertaken in the 1990s as a quick reaction to government decisions to remove the area and transfer all its inhabitants to other areas in accordance with the policy of the Morocco's new government. The decisions were met with public resistance and complete rejection.

Bird's eye view of Bashku, 1997. (Source: N. Lahbil)



The initiative was undertaken by the area's inhabitants, with the participation of the area's parliament members and Lyonnaise des Eaux de Casablanca (LYDEC), a private company providing utility services. The initiative sought to upgrade the houses in order to improve the inhabitants' living conditions; provide a means for garbage collection and disposal, thus, to improve the level of environmental and public health; ensure access to potable water; provide basic utilities, including electricity for housing units and for lighting open spaces; and develop and rehabilitate public spaces, in order to enable the inhabitants to use these areas for public activities.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

In the 1990s government decrees were issued to remove the Bashku area in Casablanca and resettle its inhabitants in other areas in line with the new government's general policy. However, these decisions met with strong resistance from the inhabitants.

With time and the urban growth of Casablanca, the Bashku area was surrounded by new developments with high social and economic standards. Many public and commercial services emerged as a result. These developments highlighted the area's growing importance and the need to rehabilitate the area, improve living standards and resolve the social, economic, urban and environmental problems from which the area suffered.

The area is divided into four different neighborhoods, or roads (*dharb*, pl. *dhurub*), namely Dharb Jara'a, Dharb al-Fasy, Dharb Dawy and Dharb al-Buyut. The only one constructed on private land is Dharb al-Fasy. The oldest unplanned area in Casablanca, Bashku consists of 1,700 housing buildings, accommodating about 9,000 persons over an area of nine hectares. Inhabitants suffer from obvious deterioration of social and economic conditions.

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

The Bashku Unplanned Area Rehabilitation Initiative sought to resolve a combination of related problems *in situ*, including the following:

- Degraded housing structures to the degree at which the houses no longer fulfill basic human needs;
- Accumulated waste and the absence of suitable garbage collection and disposal, resulting in the deterioration of the environmental and health condition of the inhabitants in the home and public spaces;
- Polluted drinking water and its resulting negative effect on public health;
- Insufficient electricity for lighting homes and open spaces.



Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The initiative aimed to rehabilitate the Bashku Quarter in Casablanca, in order to improve the living standards of the area's inhabitants as an alternative to the government's plan to demolish and depopulate the area, and resettle the inhabitants to various other locations.

Typical street scene in Bashku before the Project, (Source: N. Lahbil)

Secondary Objectives

In addition to the above general objective, the initiative sought also to achieve a variety of specific material and social objectives, including the following:

- Upgrade the houses in order to improve the inhabitants' physical living conditions;
- Provide suitable garbage collection and disposal;
- Develop and rehabilitate public spaces and provide basic facilities such that it would allow inhabitants to perform public activities;
- Extend necessary electricity to light all housing units and open spaces;
- Purify drinking water to be suitable for human consumption.

The Actors

Initiators

The deteriorating urban living conditions in the area and the Government of Morocco's decision to raze the slum led the local inhabitants, in cooperation with elected parliamentarians representing the area, to undertake a people's initiative to pose alternative solutions to the problems.

Participants

The alliance of inhabitants and parliamentarians launched two initiatives through legal and formal channels with the central government to petition for the extension of necessary electricity to Bashku. However, the obstacles in the way of achieving the objective led a private organization, LYDEC, to join the initiative. LYDEC provided technical and financial support to introduce electricity. This was contrary to the wishes of the relevant government authorities, who tried to block the initiative as a means of pressuring the inhabitants to evacuate the area. Not only did the inhabitants not quit their neighborhoods, but they also undertook an initiative to upgrade their houses and develop the open spaces through their own efforts.

Casablanca: Bashku shantytown.



The area's inhabitants, parliament representatives and LYDEC then cooperated to construct a facility to purify and distribute water in Bashku. They also cooperated periodically to dispose of garbage.

Legal and Administrative Framework

The initiative is rooted in the human right to adequate housing, which the State of Morocco has recognized as the right of all living in its territory by way of its ratification of all the relevant international treaties, including the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in 1979), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1971), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1993), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1993), and the International Convention on the Rights of Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families (2003). This right is not restricted to the housing structure alone, but extends to address human needs to a safe and healthy surrounding environment and public services, such as solid waste disposal system, a sewage system and clean drinking water. The initiative was also based on achieving the Moroccan people's public interest and spreading social justice in general.

Decision Making

The area's inhabitants solely took and implemented decisions related to improving housing buildings and open spaces, in addition to managing the project. LYDEC managed the provision

of electricity to the area, and took the main related technical decisions in cooperation with the area's representatives.

Project management and decision making related to constructing the water-purification and distribution facility, as well as establishing a system for regular garbage collection, was distributed among three parties: the area's inhabitants, the area's parliament representatives and LYDEC.

People's Process in Strategic Planning

This project was planned in a consultative fashion and restricted to three parties represented in the area's inhabitants, the area's parliament representatives and LYDEC. No government institutions participated in the planning, because they were expected to continue obstructing the initiative.

As a part of the strategic-planning process, the determination of strengths and weaknesses focused on defining the problems from which the area suffers, and preparing a vision of opportunities for legitimate and informal solutions to the problem.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

This initiative's needs and priorities were determined by consultation among all parties involved in the initiative: the Bashku inhabitants, the area's parliament members and LYDEC.

Resources

Material Resources

The necessary resources to implement the project were financial, technical and human. The financial resources required to fund the project came from the following contributors:

- LYDEC provided the necessary financial support to extend electricity informally to the area as a challenge to the government, which had placed obstacles in the way of two earlier initiatives undertaken in cooperation with the inhabitants and their parliament representatives to push the government and relevant authorities to provide the area legally with electricity;
- As an active contribution to gain community support in the upcoming elections, the area's parliament members provided the necessary financial support to construct a building to house the water-purification and distribution facility, and a

garbage disposal system, supported also by contributions from the local community and LYDEC;

- The area's inhabitants solely provided the financial investment, each family according to its ability, to upgrade housing and develop open spaces.

Social Capital

LYDEC provided manpower as technical support for the electricity grid installation in the form of specialized electrical workers supervised by LYDEC, inside and outside the houses, to avoid accidents to citizens, etc. The local community and parliament representatives recruited the help of specialized technicians to construct a building to purify and distribute water in the area.

Otherwise, the local community performed most of the physical work, with the sanitation workers hired by the area's parliament members to clean and rid the area of the garbage. Each of the local community members personally improved their own houses. However, those who had the financial ability hired workers to help. The local community contributed to developing open spaces in cooperation with technical workers hired from outside the area to help complete this task.



Implementation

Partners in Implementation

Applying the local residents' vision of better living conditions and environment in their existing homes followed a division of labor across the main three parties involved in the implementation:

- LYDEC was responsible for informally installing the electricity services to Bashku, contributing the necessary tools and electric circuits to extend electricity to the houses. Each of the inhabitants, in turn, was in charge of extending electricity throughout their housing units. LYDEC provided the necessary technicians to work under its supervision inside and outside the houses to avoid accidents;
- The area's parliament representatives hired workers from outside the area for cleaning and garbage disposal. The inhabitants helped the workers as a sort of social contribution, commitment toward the group and to build community spirit;
- The area's parliament members also bore the responsibility of constructing a building for the water purification and distribution as a device to gain the local community's confidence and support during the elections;

- At the same time, the inhabitants realized the importance of improving their houses and developing the open public spaces to ensure an end to the government's eviction and removal orders. Due to the need to speed up completion and avoid further obstacles that might arise in the case of a delay, the inhabitants abandoned their search for a benefactor and gathered the necessary financial and social capital to develop the public spaces. Each household took responsibility for improving their houses according to their abilities. The community spirit and social solidarity served as an asset in accelerating the project's completion. Largely due to modest financial means, the majority of the inhabitants performed the work themselves, rather than hire technical workers.

In general, the inhabitants accepted the beneficial contributions of LYDEC and the parliament members, even if they knew the latter's contribution was motivated by the pursuit of legitimizing publicity in advance of the elections, while the government's willful failure to help became notorious.

Professional technician installing the electrical connections as a private-sector contribution to the project. (Source: LYDEC)



Overcoming Obstacles

The Kingdom of Morocco's public policy of dealing with low-income informal areas was to raze and relocate them. Removal decisions against the area typically accompanied the failure of government authorities to extend public services. This behavior posed the most significant obstacles to social production and upgrading efforts, as in the Bashku Unplanned Area Rehabilitation Initiative. The partners in the initiative overcame these obstacles by improving the area's housing, environmental and urban conditions as a measure to stop and invalidate the removal decisions. The people's collective action annulled the governmental decision makers' bigoted assumptions about informal inhabitants accepting and generating a standard of living inferior to the rest of society. While the project partners overcame these institutionalized obstacles by illegally extending electricity to the area, that fact alone demonstrated the official's violation of citizens' rights and their duty to provide public services without discrimination. The social construction of a building to purify and distribute water, the autonomous garbage removal efforts, and the community's modest efforts at upgrading their housing and public spaces delivered a clear moral message to other opponents in economically advantaged areas that rely on public subsidies for such benefits.

Fields of Service

The project provided services in a number of fields, including the following:

- Capacity building: creating a spirit of self-reliance and collective work;
- Social mobilization by building a common cause to address the community's urgent needs;
- Improving housing conditions, by raising the environmental and health standards;
- Urban development: through clean-up campaigns, as well as developing and rehabilitating public spaces to be used for social and public activities;
- Funding raising: All parties provided the necessary financial and/or technical support, according to the abilities of each;
- Infrastructure and utilities: by providing electricity to illuminate the area inside and outside the housing units, the provision of a building to purify and distribute water, and garbage disposal services.

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

The initiative/project succeeded in achieving its objectives despite the challenges faced initially and throughout. The project's returns for the inhabitants of the Bashku are represented in their improved environmental and living conditions.

Following are the social benefits from the initiative:

- The inhabitants claimed and realized their economic, social and cultural rights to living in the area they belong to, and confronted the government's removal orders, completely refusing to move and sacrifice their long-established social cohesion and social capital, so clearly manifest in this experience;
- The area's inhabitants were able unofficially to organize themselves and mount an initiative that gathered them in a cohesive task to solve their problems and build their capacity to face future problems;
- Avoiding health problems that would have resulted had the previous insalubrious situation continued;
- The area's cleanliness created optimism and social unity among the inhabitants;
- The initiative saved government authorities large sums of public money and efforts it would have otherwise expended, had it carried out its covenanted obligations to the Moroccan citizenry without discrimination;

- Provision of healthy potable water for the first time ever in Bashku, as well as resolving the accumulated garbage problem;
- The ability autonomously to provide the area with the necessary electricity for lighting, a modern life necessity, despite the relevant government authorities' resistance.

In general terms, the inhabitants and their partners essentially liberated Bashku inhabitants from the State's discrimination against impoverished citizens by devising successful alternatives to years of naively waiting for government intervention to implement solemn obligations to all its citizens.



Degree of Social Production

This Bashku Unplanned Area Rehabilitation initiative and subsequent project contribute to the region's experience at social production of habitat through a citizens' initiative, defining the problems and participating in implementing effective solutions through popular consultation, strategic planning, implementation and providing as much financial and technical support as possible. It also constitutes a form of social production, because the citizens realized how to benefit strategically from the contributions of LYDEC and the area's parliament representatives, although they completely acknowledged that participating parliamentarians' motives were entirely self-serving. They accepted contributions to achieve the inhabitants' public interest, which led to tangible elements of social production.

Results and Lessons Learned

The following are some of the most significant lessons learned from this experience:

- The community participated in a collective manner when there was an urgent, common need, particularly when the need was none other than survival;
- The community participated in a collective effort when help was available for official or unofficial organization;
- When a team spirit, social unity and a feeling of belonging to the place prevail, the community highly interacts to solve its own problems. Each individual provided all possible contributions within their means to resolve the community's problems affecting all.

A newly adequate living space in Bashku.

Potential for Replication

The future sustainability of this experiment depends on the community's unity in planning and working together to face any internal or external interference that may revive similar problems. Other unplanned areas in Morocco successfully extended illegal electricity to their areas and worked toward improving their areas' living conditions. This demonstrates that some of this experiment's aspects were successfully performed and can be repeated in the future in other areas provided the area's inhabitants enjoy a spirit of unity and belonging to the place.

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

- Organizers and participants have promoted these experiences by presenting them before parliament sessions through the area's parliament members. The objective of this promotional effort was to ensure the right of the inhabitants of unplanned areas to remain where they are and to improve their living standards with the needed support;
- presenting and transferring the experience in international forums and conferences, as well as exchange visits with interested parties.

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PALESTINE/ISRAEL



“Unrecognized” Villages of the Naqab

Geographic location: Naqab/Negev region, historical Palestine, presently forming a southern region in the State of Israel

Project start date: 1997

Number of workers: Six employees, 100s of volunteers

Target population: 76,000 Palestinian Bedouins indigenous to the Naqab/Negev Region, living in the “unrecognized villages” as the most vulnerable Israeli citizens

Geographic scope: Historical villages that lack State “recognition”

Summary

The Arab Bedouins have been living as an integral part of the Palestinian people for centuries. In the southern region of Palestine, historically known as al-Naqab (more-recently called *ha Negev*, in Hebrew), they traditionally lived in small clusters on collectively held, semiarid lands. These settlements became villages well before the 1948 conquest of Palestine by Israeli

forces. Although much of their territory was split between the Arab and Jewish States recommended in General Assembly resolution 181 (1947), they found themselves and their lands completely devoured by a self-proclaimed State of Israel. Zionist “national institutions” and successive Israeli governments forcibly removed them onto continuously shrinking plots of land, giving their national resources instead to Jewish settlers, who enjoy material privileges under Israeli law as “Jewish nationals,” at the expense of Palestine’s indigenous people. Traditionally dependent on their lands and flocks for their livelihood, this dispossession plunged the Bedouin into progressive indigence. The official denial of their rightful existence invented a new planning category of “unrecognized villages,” perpetually ineligible for secure tenure and public services.

While other areas of Palestine were the primary focus of intensive Jewish settlement, the Naqab (and other remote areas) became an increasing target of Israeli State confiscation since the 1980s, when a series of legal and administrative pretexts accelerated house demolitions, land confiscation and forced removal of the Bedouins into planned “concentrations” (*rekuzim*, in official Hebrew).

The community of 45 “unrecognized villages” has banded together to defend themselves against further dispossession, demolition and forced removal through social mobilization, alternative planning, legal defense, petitioning for recognition and services, as well as reconstruction. This program has arisen from the consolidation of local social capital in the form of the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages of the Naqab.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

The 45 villages represented in the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages of the Naqab (RCUVN) have a total population of about 76,000 inhabitants. The villages range in size from 500 to almost 5,000 residents. The population forms a part of the indigenous Palestinian people who today comprises approximately one million, or 19% of the total citizens of Israel.

This group of village residents in the Naqab region are deprived of municipal services and representation, which are the domain of State agencies and “national institutions” managed by and for “Jewish nationals” exclusively.

The period of the Israeli military administration (1948–66) over indigenous Palestinian citizens marked a period that saw the

Bedouin transferred from most of the Naqab and resettled against their will in the northern part of the region, which is referred to by the Palestinian Bedouin as the *siyaq* (fenced-in) area. This territory comprises just 2% of the Naqab, which itself constitutes over 60% of the pre-1967 Israeli-controlled land area. From the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Government of Israel and its State-affiliated “national institutions”¹⁰ planned seven townships to “concentrate” the Bedouin without consulting them. Those who have refused to live as internal refugees in these seven “concentrations” (or *rekuzim*), as Israeli planners call them, currently live in what are referred to as the unrecognized villages.

The State of Israel still uses the denial of basic municipal services, such as water, electricity, access roads, health and education as a device to coerce indigenous communities to evacuate their historical villages to State-planned “concentrations” (*rekuzim*). In fact, in the spheres of planning, land use, access to resources, institutional practices and laws specifically constrict the Negev Bedouins’ daily life through a comprehensive policy of segregation from the Jewish settlements, on one side, and transfer into concentration townships on the other. These practices aim to render the Palestinian Bedouin community in Israel internal refugees in their own homeland, while planners, decision makers and “national institutions” carry out a five-decade continuum of demographic manipulation throughout areas of historic Palestine under Israel's effective control since its establishment in 1948. The “unrecognized” village of Za`rura. (Source: RCUVN)



The historical Naqab villages, which the Israeli government refers to as “scattered settlements” or “populations,” existed long before the establishment of the State of Israel and the Planning and Construction law (1965), which is the legal instrument classifying them as illegal entities. Thus, all buildings there are illegal and subject to official destruction. Residents of the “unrecognized” villages are the only population in Israel not classified in the governmental Central Bureau of Statistics socioeconomic scale. The community suffers from high unemployment and illiteracy, with the poorest health and welfare indicators in the country.¹¹

¹⁰ Most generally known as the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency and Jewish National Fund, but comprising also many affiliates that, like the WZO/JA and JNF, carry out various colonizing functions of the State of Israel while operating as tax-exempt charities around the world.

¹¹ A survey published in January 2003 by Ben-Gurion University in Beer Sheva observed that 71% of the Bedouin citizens in the south suffer from hunger. In particular, among those supported by social services, 87% of children are in danger of hunger, 85% sought food assistance from other family members, and 75% of families sought other forms of charity in order to buy food. See: HRA Weekly Review of the Arab Press, Issue No. 105.

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

Today, approximately 130,000 Palestinian Bedouin live in the Naqab (including the 76,000 in the 45 villages that the RCUVN represents). They represent approximately 12% of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. The segregationist Israeli governmental policies toward the Bedouin community in the 45 unrecognized villages have been ongoing for decades. Like all other Palestinian citizens of Israel, the Bedouin of the Negev have experienced systematic land confiscation and house demolition since 1948.

At present, of the nearly 13 million dunams (13 billion square meters) of the Naqab, as in historic Palestine, the combined Bedouin population holds only 240,000 dunams, of which 180,000 dunams are held by the residents of the unrecognized villages. In other words, the residents of the villages occupy on 1.3% of the land in the Naqab, even though they constitute 14.2% of the region's citizens. Further, this 1.3% is zoned for exclusive Jewish use, as industrial areas, settler colonies or other purposes. By 2020, the 76,000 residents of the unrecognized villages are predicted to number at least 200,000 citizens. According to Israeli law, a community of this size requires an area of 1,153,143 dunams (i.e., if they held "Jewish nationality").

The present initiative faces a problem that is institutional in nature, rather than the consequence of a single policy or local practice. Within the legal context of institutionalized discrimination, the State agencies, such as the Interior Ministry, the "national," regional and local planning councils and mechanisms, the Israel Lands Authority and the "national institutions" coordinate to ensure the dispossession of the indigenous people of the country, in particular the Naqab Bedouin.



Israeli authorities demolished this al-Sarra village home in 1998. (Source: RCUVN)

The establishment of Jewish settlements inside Israel's 1948–49 Armistice Line (Green Line) is coordinated principally by a parastatal Zionist "national"—and, in Israeli parlance, thus, ethnically exclusive—institution: the Jewish Agency (JA), rather than the Israeli government. The JA recruits Jews from their home countries and provides housing and infrastructure for their settlement inside Israel. The WZO works similarly, but especially to colonize the occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. As an exception, the WZO has recently joined in colonizing the Naqab, inside the State of Israel.

The Jewish National Fund (JNF) manages land held for the Jewish people "in perpetuity." The State has confiscated lands around Palestinian Arab communities in the Galilee and the Negev, often transferring it to the JNF

Israel Land Administration (ILA): Public land in Israel is administered by ILA, which unlike the Jewish Agency and the JNF is a government body and has a legal obligation not to discriminate against citizens. However, the ILA is heavily influenced by the parastatal Jewish National Fund, which constitutionally operates in the interests of Jews only.

Added to this constant, the Office of the Prime Minister under the tenure of PM Ariel Sharon has launched a new Development Plan for the Naqab. This plan allocates budgetary and institutional resources to accelerate the dispossession and transfer of the Negev Bedouin. In January 2003, the Ministerial Committee for Non-Jewish Affairs authorized Sharon's Six-Year Plan and, on 9 April 2003, NIS 1.1 billion (US\$262 million) was allocated for it. Finally, the Governmental Budget Amendment for 2003 allocating an additional NIS 55 million to empower and further authorize Police Units and the Green Patrol to carry out arbitrary demolition of Arab Bedouin homes. All budget items suggest transferring the population into seven planned concentrations and destruction of their home villages during 2003–08, without a single budget item allotted for construction. Rather, the main items of the Sharon Plan for the "unrecognized villages" involve the following:

"Redeeming" the Land

The official ideological notion of "land redemption" (transferring land to Jewish ownership) is a linear process of continual acquisition that lies at the core of Israeli land policy. Clause 1 of the Israel Land Foundation Law, which forbids the transfer of ownership to non-Jews, is phrased as follows: "The possession of Israel's lands, the lands of the State, the Development Authority, or of the Jewish National Fund shall not be transferred whether by sale or any other way." Similarly, the JNF is charter bound to operationalizing the principle that the land remain under Jewish ownership and "shall not be sold in perpetuity."

- Establishing a special police station and forces to implement the Plan;

- Empowering the Green Patrol by allocating more funding and personnel for land confiscation, and registration of the land as (Jewish-only) State Land;
- Instructing the Justice Ministry, Israel Lands Authority and the Bedouin Authority to collaborate to identify land ownership by appealing to the courts and claiming village land as State property. (According to the leading precedent, in 1984 the court ruled that the Bedouin in the Negev have no claims to land ownership.).
- Affirming that any money or land compensation will be according to the Israeli law, governmental decisions, and the Lands Authority;
- The Jewish Regional Council of Ramat Hovav and Bani Shimoun will grant individual farms (to “Jewish nationals” only), including areas not within their municipal jurisdiction, where the unrecognized villages are located;
- The Israeli Government will implement its 4 August 2002 decision to implement the Planning and Building Law, which deems all houses in these historical villages illegal (although they predate the State of Israel and the Planning Law);
- Allocating NIS 325 million (US\$77,381,000) for land compensation through the Lands Authority (on condition that Palestinian Bedouin owners evacuate to a concentration township);
- Local Municipalities will be established for the recognized villages with residents registered according to those recognized villages and concentrations, such as Meriet concentration township.

Despite the resulting deprivation, the State does not consider the Bedouin and their condition as a matter of humanitarian priority. In fact, the Israeli government has over 13 official plans to expand or build new Jewish localities in the Naqab (including individual farms to Jewish citizens only), while completely dismissing the “unrecognized villages” and their development needs. This lopsided development policy contradicts official criteria for recognition and service provision.

According to the definition of Tama 35 (Regional Plan), a settlement is defined as: “A jurisdiction area of a municipality or a local council and an area within the jurisdiction of a regional council on the date of approving this plan, according to a valid project outline, intended for residence in a scope of at least 50 housing units.” Even the smallest of the 45 villages satisfies this minimum requirement, leaving recognition to ideological and unwritten ethnic criteria. The result of the institutional and bureaucratic obstacles to the community’s development in their own villages, the State of Israel pursues an official campaign to

criminalize the Bedouin as such. Governmental practice since the 1970s has been officially to identify persons from the unrecognized villages only by their tribal name, omitting any registration of that citizen to his/her place of residence. The Ministry of Justice proposed an amendment to the Law on Public Land "Eviction of Trespassers Amendment 2002," defining residents of the unrecognized villages as "trespassers."

Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

The village leadership and members of the new generation of the "unrecognized" villages developed a program to address the following challenges:

1. The nonrecognition of the 45 villages,
2. Lack of municipal services to the community,
3. Lack of local representatives to the community,
4. The need for protection from government destruction of homes, uprooting land confiscation and population transfer,
5. The Israeli national development plan and regional plans that ignore the existence of the villages.

Secondary Objectives

In the period since Ariel Sharon assumed the prime ministership, the RCUVN also has had to face intensified assaults under Sharon's Development Plan for the Negev. The power imbalance has called for careful planning in order to maximize advantages and compensate for victimized community's relative political and other weaknesses. Therefore, the building of community solidarity is an additional, but no less essential objective.

The Actors

Initiators

Before the establishment of the RCUVN, the Umm Batin village Local Committee organization and activities served as a model for others. For example, in 1996, Umm Batin residence successfully resisted the government's demolition of houses there. In that event, three people were injured, including a child. When the Umm Batin Local Committee (traditional leaders) and community professionals came together, the RCUVN was formed. Those initiators also took responsibility for developing the eventual (alternative) "Plan for the Development of Municipal Authority for the Arab Bedouin of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev."

The children and kindergarten of “unrecognized” village `Arab al-Na`im, in Galilee, the northern region of the State of Israel. (Source: Peter Fryer, Association of Forty Archives)



Local inhabitants of the “unrecognized” villages joined the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages (RCUVN) as a representative community-based organization.

Participants

The citizens represented by RCUVN sought to rely on community solidarity and the help of some outside supporters to initiate actions to defend themselves against the onslaught of the State against their lands and livelihoods.

Local and international solidarity is vital to RCUVN's program, and RCUVN works with many individuals and organizations in related fields. These include membership in the Higher Follow-up Committee (the representative body for Palestinian heads of municipalities and Local Councils in Israel) and collaboration with local human rights groups in Israel, such as the Arab Association for Human Rights (Nazareth). Today, the RCUVN has a contingent of 32 members, as well as coalition partners from among Israeli Members of Knesset opposing Sharon's Development Plan. RCUVN has developed practical solidarity also with international networks, such as the Habitat International Coalition's Housing and Land Rights Network.

Funding, however modest, has come from partners locally and internationally, including some individual donors.

Legal and Administrative Framework

Israel is a ratifying State party to all of the major international human rights treaties, including its 1991 ratification of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, guaranteeing the human right to adequate housing for all residing in areas of its jurisdiction and effective control (Article 11), and its 1979 ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, whose article 5 explicitly calls for the State party to desist from discrimination in housing.

Nonetheless, Israeli domestic law establishes a two-tiered civil status, whereby those recognized as having “Jewish nationality”—whether they live in Israel or hold other citizenships—possess a right to benefit from the land, property and national resources of the country; others, including citizens of Israel without this superior “Jewish nationality” status do not hold this right. The State

agencies and “national institutions,” such as the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency, Jewish National Fund and its affiliates, implement this distinction in the development policy and programs through exclusive distribution of benefits and public services.

RCUVN members demonstrate with camels in front of Israeli government offices, claiming their rights to social services and education. (Source: RCUVN)



Israeli Land laws serve only Israel's Jewish citizens, and recognize only “Jewish land.” Land laws do not recognize the lands of Bedouin citizens. For decades, and through a variety of mechanisms, land has been transferred from the Bedouin to the Jewish public. As a result, the Bedouin community (25% of the Negev's population) today owns only 2% of the total land in the Negev. Prior to 1948, they owned 98% of this land. Land and housing became a serious problem for the Bedouins of the “unrecognized villages” where they now live on 1.3% of the total Naqab land, which is also officially earmarked for confiscation and transfer to “Jewish nationals,” wherever they may be.

Decision Making

A Structure of Participation and Decision Making

The RCUVN is comprised of the people's representatives, usually with the head of each village local committee serving as their member on the Regional Council. The Guiding Committee for Strategic Planning of the Arabs in the Naqab selected the heads of the Local Committees of the villages to serve on the RCUVN. The members of the Council meet each other and their local constituents regularly and often.

The Local Committee is the representative body for the local community in the “unrecognized villages.” Each village chooses its Local Committee representatives according to population increments: up to 500 people, 5–7 members; from 501 to 1,000, 7–11 members; above 1,001, 9–15 members. The representatives of 22 villages are members of the Regional Council.

The RCUVN General Assembly consists of 28 elected heads of village Local Committees. The General Assembly meets once each month.

The Executive Board consists of seven members, including the head of each subcommittee, the president, treasurer and vice president. The Executive Board meets every week and reports directly to the General Assembly.

The Regional Council members directly elect the president and vice president. The treasurer is appointed from among the Regional Council members.

Specialized decisions are deliberated in a set of subcommittees that reflect the areas of social development priorities:

- *Education Committee*: responsible for the development of education in the unrecognized villages;
- *Youth, Culture & Sport*: deals with activities for youth in culture and sports;
- *Community Organization Committee*: deals with new members of local committees. The goal of this committee is to represent all 45 villages;
- *Oversight Committee*: supervises all financial matters; members are elected from among the Local Committees;
- *Economic Development Committee*: deals with enhancing the economy of the “unrecognized villages.”



RCUVN members and physical planners map out their alternative future. (Source: RCUVN)

All Subcommittees are elected from among the Regional Council members and make recommendations to the Board and General Assembly. Ultimate decision making is the responsibility of the General Assembly (head of local committees); whereas the day-to-day decision are taken by the Board.

People’s Process in Strategic Planning

The group of citizens, formed as the Council and with few initial resources, built on existing social capital within the community to undertake wide consultations toward a strategic plan based on three main programmatic activities requiring full participation:

1. Participatory alternative planning,
2. Mass mobilization in defense against demolition,
3. Legal defense,
4. Community reconstruction of demolished homes.

Planning took place in stages. In addition to the principle activities outlined in the strategic plan, RCUVN has been engaged in a full range of actions, including the building of a wide base of solidarity and confronting institutionalized discrimination in general.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

In the case of RCUVN, the organization and the social movement that it represents is the target group. Thus, the determination of needs is an organic process. However, this also requires technical assistance from time to time to provide specificity to the articulation of needs. Such has been the case in developing the alternative “Plan for the Development of Municipal Authority for the Arab Bedouin of the Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab.” On such occasions, the Council benefits also from the service of specialist advisors to elaborate the community’s expressed needs.

Resources

Material Resources

Since RCUVN is a new organization, established in 1996, its first two years were dedicated to organizing the community. The strategic planning and monitoring was carried out on a voluntary basis. In subsequent years, the RCUVN program was carried out with different employees working to sustain and develop different projects and activities. The Council accomplished this with only modest financial support from some supportive individuals and contributions in kind. In recent years, the Council has received support from individuals as well as charitable foundations; however, it is in need of both human and financial resources, especially in light of intensified State efforts to remove and dispossess the community.

Social Capital

Volunteers provide a pool of human resources that is difficult to calculate. Until recently all work that was done was done on a voluntary basis and, therefore, represents an invaluable asset.

Building social capital outside the community is vital, too, whereas networking is an asset in case of planning, legal defense, advocacy, education, health and human right training, among many other fields. Today the RCUVN forms part of a coalition of 32 local and international NGOs collaborating to resist Sharon’s Development Plan.

Social capital in the form of local and international solidarity networks is vital to RCUVN’s program, and RCUVN works with many organizations in different fields. These include membership in the Higher Follow-up Committee, collaboration with local and international networks and human rights groups (as mentioned under “Participants” above).

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

The parties engaged in actual implementation are, primarily, the inhabitants of the 45 member villages. Depending on circumstances, some villages are effected and active more than others, but all function as partners in RCUVN program implementation.

The RCUVN's alternative Development Plan was developed by a professional in the physical planning, including some planners who participated with the governmental 2020 plan. However, different local committees participated in planning workshops to be able to develop their village zoning map.

Women of the community also participated in the development process of four zoning maps. Since its establishment in 1997, the RCUVN had prepared "Negev Arabs 2020" with a detailed map of the 45 unrecognized villages. This plan was submitted to all relevant planning authorities for purposes of providing an acceptable alternative to Negev National Plan "Tama 4/14" (Planning for Metropolitan Beer Sheva Area in 2020), which plots the removal of the "unrecognized villages" populations to permanent concentrations. The master plan set the municipal boundaries of the Regional Council, in order to provide a basis for the legal demand that the State recognize the Council and hold municipal elections in the villages.

One important personal initiative assisted in developing the RCUVN and its program. Dr. Amer al-Huzayal, Rahat Municipality planner, succeeded to draw the only map in Israel that shows the 45 "unrecognized villages" in the Naqab with their historical names. This contribution was used in legal objections to the government's regional plan. Later, he was involved in creating the Guiding Committee for Strategic Planning for the Arabs in the Naqab, which also has served on the RCUVN. **Born in al-Tir (Naqab), 5-year-old Zuhair watched Israeli forces destroy his family house. They also sent helicopters to spray defoliating chemicals on his parents' land. Zuhair wants to be a lawyer, so that he might be able to talk the language of the authorities. (Source: RCUVN/Together publicity carried in the Hebrew press)**



Overcoming Obstacles

The entire RCUVN program is an exercise in overcoming structural obstacles to the survival of the Bedouin Palestinian citizens of Israel. The Council has met the obstacle of nonrecognition through the presentation of an alternative physical

plan for the region. Members have cooperated in physically defending homes against Israeli bulldozers by calling on the wider community to participate in demonstrations. The obstacle posed by the State's denial of basic services has led to formal petitions and demonstrations calling for improved educational and health services, for example. The Council has helped the community overcome its historic isolation not only by placing them on the map, as it were, for the first time since they were absorbed into the State of Israel. The initiative also has helped transform the community from its former passivity to one claiming its individual and collective rights in the face of institutionalized discrimination against them. This has been most manifest in their resistance to forced removal and house demolitions, and in the defiant collective reconstruction of homes demolished by State forces.

Fields of Service

Alternative planning has been both a vital strategy and a field of service to the community. The RCUVN submitted its alternative "Plan for the Development of Municipal Authority for the Arab Bedouin of the Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab." to the Interior Ministry Committee on 29 November 1999, and again on July 2000 (HC 1991/00: case still pending). The petition proposed municipal boundaries for three villages recently recognized (Umm Batin, Bi'r Hadaj and Qasir al-Sir). Each is at a different stage of governmental planning, and the Plan's municipal plan poses an alternative demarcation. The petitioners demanded that plans for the Naqab region be based on planning equally for both Arab and Jewish communities, and recognition of the existing villages. Based on that principle, the RCUVN and the local village committees also have submitted formal objections to the relevant planning committee against several destructive governmental plans. The RCUVN also relates variously with government officials and politicians, as well as lobbies the Knesset (Israeli parliament). During the PM Ehud Barak administration, at that time, house demolition policy was frozen, as was the implementation of Tama 4/24.

The Ministerial Committee for Bedouin Affairs announced its acceptance of the RCUVN's vision that nonrecognition of the villages does not absolve the government from the obligation to provide services for citizens and, in August 2000, adopted the *Comprehensive Program for the Solution of the Problem Facing the Bedouins*, recommending recognition of 17 villages and installation of full municipal services for all the villages as a first step. The period of Ariel Sharon's administration has coincided with the recognition of five Naqab villages, all at different levels of planning.

The use of mass mobilization has emerged as a tactic having three main expressions:

- The reconstruction of houses that the State forces destroyed. This is despite the certainty that the authorities will not allow the defiant reconstructions to stand, and will surely return to redemolish the Bedouin homes;
- Mounting public demonstrations against governmental discriminatory plans and punitive policies, including rapid response to gather community members to defend a house under threat of demolition;
- Regular and frequent communication and reciprocal support activity in order to form and strengthen solidarity within the community, which is geographically widespread and, thereby, mutually isolated. For example, Local Committees in each Palestinian Land Day (March 30) carry out projects that assist the community in their daily life and give more visibility to the RCUVN and its Local Committee member. The women form the essential backbone of this social capital-development strategy, particularly as they are the segment of the community maintaining the home throughout the day and, therefore, in a position to be vigilant in case of community emergency.

The advocacy component of the program was seen as essential and important. RCUVN advocacy is divided into three sectors, under which the Council identified congruent activities:

1. Governmental:

- Preparing and presenting an alternative municipal plan to the government toward recognition of the unrecognized villages in the Negev;
- Monitoring different national, regional and local municipal plans which have any relation to the unrecognized villages;
- Presenting and allocating the yearly budget of the Regional Council to the Interior Ministry
- Policy analysis;
- Drafting and creating a master plan¹² and border plans for the villages.

2. Cooperation with political parties, parliament members and ministers:

- Preparation of fact sheets and draft legislation or amendments for distribution,

¹² This followed the successful implementation of a pilot project for the village of Umm Batin.

- Coordination of Knesset members influencing relevant legislation.¹³

3. Raising public awareness and put the unrecognized villages on the political agenda through:

- The Regional Council plays an active role in introducing human rights organizations and international representatives to the Bedouin community in the Negev;
- The Regional Council plays an active role in briefing the local (Jewish and Palestinian) citizens;
- Cooperation with regional Arab and international media on issues concerning Bedouins in the unrecognized villages.

Since its inception, the RCUVN social movement has engaged in an array of complementary activities. While some of these activities are described in greater detail above, a comprehensive list RCUVN the fields of service under its program would include the following:

Advocacy	Monitoring and evaluation
Alternative planning	Networking
Capacity building	Physical planning
Construction	Refugees/IDP resettlement
Emergency response/relief	Research
Environmental protection	Social mobilization
Infrastructure and utilities	Statistical analysis
International forums	Strategic planning
Law and legal defense	Transportation and roads
Lobbying/influence decision	Water and sanitation
Media and promotion	

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

In January 2001, the RCUVN and the chair of the Ministerial Committee for Arab Affairs agreed to:

1. Recognize the villages and provide services by the immediate establishment of service centers as a first step,
2. Establish an administrative regional council that would provide services to the unrecognized villages,
3. Stop the expansion of Omer (Jewish settlement) on the land of Umm Batin, al-Mikamin and Awajan villages,
4. Stop the expansion of Beer Sheva on the land of Awajan village,

¹³ The RCUVN succeeded to organize MKs coalition to protests Sharon's 6-years plan, which seeks to transfer the population of 45 villages into seven townships.

5. Terminate the Bedouin development authority,
6. Implement a long-dishonored agreement with the Abu Sulb family on their land, and
7. Terminate the policy of house demolition.

These accomplishments, in theory, are grounded in the principle and RCUVN's claim that the State is obliged to develop services for the 76,000 indigenous citizens, regardless of the eventual solution of the land dispute. With this empowering message, the RCUVN has met its challenges (outlined above) by concentrating on three subjects of capacity building:

- Utilizing all available planning, legal, advocacy and media tools to stop the governmental measures that call for uprooting the community and confiscating their lands, or destruction of their houses;
- Mobilizing all available planning, legal, advocacy and media tools to start receiving municipal services;
- Gaining knowledge about public life and local governance;
- Concentrating on affecting the Israeli National Plan.

The project succeeded when the Regional Planning Committee recognized five villages that are in process of planning, and those citizens are theoretically protected under the law from further uprooting measures. RCUVN efforts could be attributed as a cause for suspending the destruction and dispossession planned by governments. Until today, however, the project has failed to meet its objectives in some senses. It has become clear that mass house demolition, crop destruction, land confiscation and transfer are constants of the State program against the indigenous Palestinians, whether citizens or not, and that these tools can be implemented at any time.

The International attention also should be given during peace government, the zoning over these villages were done after the Israeli National Plan 2020 which was planned after the Oslo agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Some villages also were uprooted and their land was confiscated during the peace process with Egypt, in order to accommodate retreating Israeli settlers from the Sinai Peninsula. Any given peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority will automatically mean land confiscation and forced eviction for this disadvantage community in the Naqab, whether by providing the Palestinian Authority with needed land to connect the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or by building new Jewish colonies for returning settlers from the occupied Palestinian territory.

Degree of Social Production

Social production of habitat involves both a process and its outcomes. The Council has guided a galvanizing process to unify and mobilize a traditionally vulnerable and isolated community. That has been transformational in the sense of developing the social capital essential to other material and nonmaterial achievements. While this process builds on foregoing mobilization efforts, RCUVN has served as both a binding and bonding institution: binding the community together under its own primordial identity, but also bonding members previously separated from each other by geography and tribal particularity.

The material outcomes are evident in the production of the alternative “Plan for the Development of Municipal Authority for the Arab Bedouin of the Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab,” recognition of the rights of Bedouin citizens to municipal services (as in the chair of the Ministerial Committee for Arab Affairs agreement above), as well as their right to land, as recognized in international legal bodies.¹⁴

Social production of habitat, in this case, takes on both a negative and positive dimension. The resistance to destruction forms the “negative” initiative of preventing a destructive action. The positive material production is found in the actual reconstruction of family homes that the Israeli forces have destroyed.

The improved capacities that result from these programmatic and collective actions enhance the community’s and RCUVN’s social capital, which is foreseen to aid the Council in:

- Protecting the population against uprooting, home demolitions and land confiscation;
- Influencing and encouraging the Israeli government formally to recognize the 45 unrecognized villages on their historical lands;
- Establishing elected municipal representation of those currently denied the right to elect their local representatives, and who thus do not enjoy the fruits of participatory democracy;
- Analyzing governmental budgets for local councils to facilitate and increase the provision of necessary municipal services;
- Providing a unified “address” for Israeli authorities, thus, developing a shared vision toward the existing challenges;
- Providing alternative information and documents to officials and the general public; and

¹⁴ Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Israel, E/C.12/1/Add.27, 4 December 1998, para. 42.

- Developing coalitions and solidarity groups.

Results and Lessons Learned

The fact that the RCUVN was not affiliated with any party gave the opportunity to different parties to join in the different activities. This involvement gave a wider recognition to this harsh situation and more difficult atmosphere for the government to implement its destructive plans.

The RCUVN realized the strength of its diversity and complementary organizational structure. For their part, the traditional tribe sheikhs worked together, joined by the professionals and, later, by the RCUVN employees and, eventually, civil society.

However, these efforts also met with a form of backlash from government hardliners, as well as from national institutions. The World Zionist Organization, normally concentrating on colonization of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and deferring to its sister institution inside the Green Line, recently has engaged in the management of confiscated Bedouin assets inside Israel and the colonization of the Naqab. In summary, that has seen an increase in house destruction and land poisoning, and by the government's legal campaign to criminalize the community.

Potential for Replication

The challenges faced and the strategies applied in the case of the “unrecognized villages” of the Naqab are classic features of any land-based people's struggle against colonization and dispossession. In that sense, the experience is eminently transferable. Nonetheless, Israel's policy in the Naqab and the forms of discrimination against the indigenous people of Palestine has some unique features. These arise from the two-tiered civil status under Israeli law, the absence of an “Israeli nationality,” while “Jewish nationality” is a status recognized in local law by “national” institutions as conferring superior rights and privileges on those holding that status, no matter where in the world those individuals may live and/or hold citizenship.



This international dimension of the problem is unique, as is the contradiction of those Zionist “national” institutions (e.g., WZO/JA, JNF, etc.) operating as Israeli State organs while, at once, also registered and functioning as tax-exempt charities in some 50

countries around the world. These unique features working to the further dispossession of the indigenous Palestinian people may suggest this particular social production experience to be irreplaceable. However, the same characteristics form an arguable basis also for extending the social mobilization and solidarity extraterritorially to where the international recruitment and financing for population transfer and colonization goes so far unchallenged.

How the Parties Promoted their Experience

The Council has worked most diligently at the local level to promote their case and to form alliances with the concerned public. RCUVN and its supporters exploit opportunities to share their experience with other communities inside Israel facing similar forms of dispossession. RCUVN representatives also have presented the case and the Council's experience in regional and international forums; however, promoting the RCUVN experience as a success story remains a prospect at some future point at which the community perceives that success in the form of relief from discrimination and dispossession, and the feeling of equanimity that comes from living in a democracy with equal rights and citizenship.

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SYRIA



Rehabilitating al- Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal

Geographic location: al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal Refugee Camps, Halab Governorate, Arab Republic of Syria

Project start date: Preparations: 1998–2001; implementation started: 2002

Number of workers: 16 employees, two volunteers

Target population: Palestinian refugee community in camps:
housing: currently 28 families (1,300 persons), of targeted 1,300 families (6,000 persons);
infrastructure: 1,019 families (4,461 persons) in `Ayn al-Tal;
social and economic improvement 3,852 families (17,286 persons) in al-Nairab, 1,019 families (4,461 persons) in `Ayn al-Tal

Geographic scope: al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal Camps

Summary

A solution was needed to the inhuman conditions that the Palestinian refugees have endured at al-Nairab Camp over the past 56 years, even if the restitution of their rights to return, restitution, rehabilitation and compensation remains a distant prospect. The refugees have been claiming their human rights to adequate housing throughout their decades in exile. In 1998, representatives of Syria's Public Authority for Palestinian Refugees and the UN Refugee Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) consulted with al-Nairab community representatives to identify local needs. The Syrian authorities and UNRWA had coincided to make the rehabilitation of al-Nairab camp a high priority. The project started to be implemented after serious objection on the part of the refugees' community, which considered it as one means for settlement (a term symbolic of the renunciation of their full rights, which the State of Israel is obligated to fulfill).

The project aims at rehabilitation of al-Nairab camp in Halab Governorate and at improving the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees in both al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal Camps. In its first stage, it was to build 300 housing units in `Ayn al-Tal camp to house 300 families, comprising 1,500 refugees who moved voluntarily from al-Nairab Camp to lessen the population density there. In al-Nairab Camp, the project sought to provide an additional 1,000 housing units.

Moreover, it sought to improve the infrastructure, including the sanitation network, the drinking water network, transportation and the public utilities. This is coupled with improving the infrastructure of `Ayn al-Tal Camp and attaining sustainable development of the socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian refugees through participation of all sectors of the society. The project was designed to enhance the marginalized social groups through training and participation.

In its second stage, the project improved the living conditions of 1,000 families, which numbered 7,500 Palestinian refugees still living in the barracks, and improved the socioeconomic levels of the residents and the region. The financial cost of the project is estimated at \$25 million.

Social, Economic and Urban Conditions before the Initiative

Fifty-six years after the establishment of al-Nairab Camp as a consequence of the establishment of the State of Israel, 6,000 Palestinian refugees still live in Allied military barracks built during

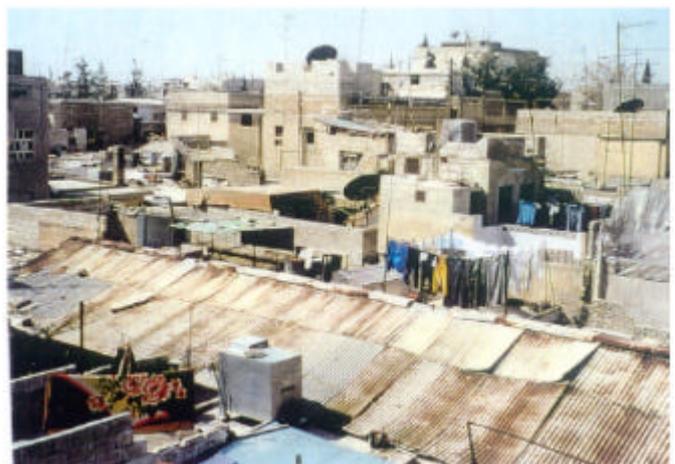
the Second World War. They live under intolerable conditions that fail to meet the inhabitants' social, economic or cultural needs and rights. Problems arise especially from the high population density; the absence of the appropriate housing conditions, including inhabitation in both winter and summer, leaky zinc roofing and inadequate drainage and sanitation. UNRWA considers 10 % of al-Nairab families as hardship cases, enduring extremely harsh economic, social and material conditions.

Al-Nairab Camp, like the rest of Palestinian society, is a young population. The working-age population stands at 18,439 (60%), but this largely potential labor force lacks sufficient education remains limited to handicrafts trades in the City of Halab.

Main Problems the Initiative Aimed to Address

The main problems that the project seeks to resolve are the following: *Nairab Camp homes before rehabilitation. (Source: UNRWA)*

- The squalid housing and living conditions;
- High population density at 89/ 1000 m²;
- Deterioration of drinking water and sanitation networks below any human standard;
- Poor public facilities and transportation routes.



Primary and Secondary Objectives

Primary Objectives

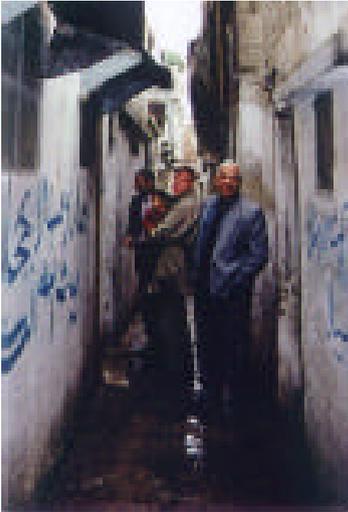
The project aims to rehabilitate al-Nairab Camp in the Governorate of Halab and improve Palestinian refugee living conditions in al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal camps. The target Palestinian refugee community is estimated at 22,000 residents in both camps. The project conducts vocational training at UNRWA centers, provides credit and creates job opportunities.

During the first stage, the project aims at building 300 housing units in the camp of `Ayn al-Tal, in order to house 300 families, including 1500 refugees, who would move voluntarily from al-Nairab to `Ayn al-Tal to alleviate the population density in al-Nairab Camp.

The project also improves the local infrastructure, including the sanitation, drinking water and transportation networks. The

initiative aims to enhance the marginalized groups in the society by offering opportunities for training and participation.

During the second stage, the project seeks to improve the living conditions of about 1,000 families, including 7,500 Palestinian refugees still living in the barracks, and to improve residents' the socioeconomic levels.



Secondary Objectives

The project intends to foster participation of the Palestinian refugees in the planning and implementation of local developments, to develop their ability at decision making and, especially, to boost the public participation of female refugees and marginalized groups in the project.

The rehabilitation sought to alleviate the severe density in Nairab Camp. (Source: UNRWA)

The Actors

Initiators

The deteriorating material, economic, social and cultural conditions of the Palestinian refugees at al-Nairab Camp pressed the local community to take this initiative with UNRWA.

Participants

The official Syrian authority for Palestinian refugees made several initiatives to facilitate and support the project before the donor countries, and offering to coordinate the government and civil bodies and local community leaders. The Syrian government offered to contribute to infrastructure improvements and to provide a secondary school.

Through the project, al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal Camp refugees articulated their needs assessments before the UNRWA and international funders.

Legal and Administrative Framework

The initiative was born and executed within the framework of all laws, acts and international treaties obligations of the host State and the international community relevant to the human right to

adequate housing and standards of “equality in dignity and rights.” The project rested upon that international human rights legal framework and by applying the principal of equality of rights for both the Palestinian refugees and the Syrian citizens a life of dignity and adequate living conditions.

Decision Making

The decision-making process takes place with the participation of all project parties. The project is managed by a tripartite working team of specialist facilitators from UNRWA, the Syrian government and al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal local committees. The UNRWA seeks to establish a special local department from the local community for day-to-day project decision making.

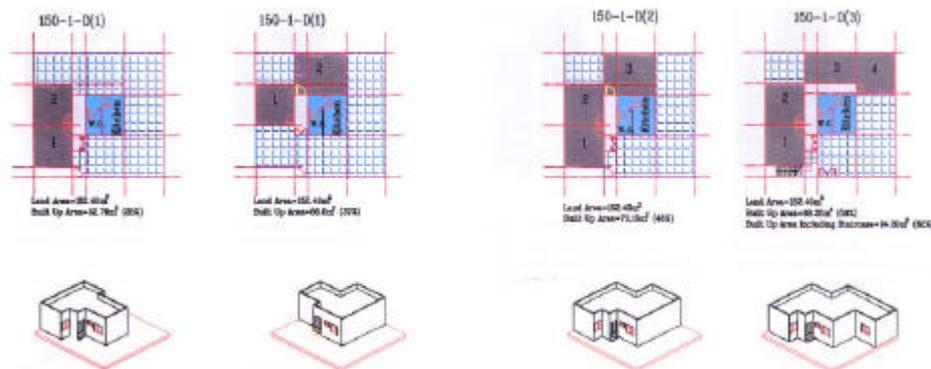
People’s Process in Strategic Planning

The project was planned in consultation with the concerned parties including the donor countries, the UNRWA, the Syrian government and local community representatives. Marginalized sectors also assumed a role in the planning, implementation and decision making and this was marked by wide participation from women, the elderly and handicapped persons.

The project began with a series of studies, social surveys and discussions with the different parties (especially the local community, its leaders, experts working in the field, whose help was asked for in the beginning of the planning stages) in order to identify needs in both camps, determine the appropriate means of implementation, identify the project’s strengths, weaknesses (resources), opportunities and threats.

New homes for `Ayn al-Tal have a simple design, offset from the road and other structures. (Source: UNRWA)

Although the community chose not to promote the experience as it might be understood as a “resettlement” program, the project actually raised the refugee-rights awareness, while also improving the destitute refugees’ living and housing conditions, without sacrificing any other rights



After consultations and contacts with the different international authorities, the Swiss government sponsored the comprehensive

survey carried out by specialist experts, the UNRWA, the Syrian government and local community representatives. UNRWA sponsored some symposia to introduce the local community to the nature and objectives of the project and all participants shared in the formulation of its objectives and implementation steps.

Determining the Needs of the Target Group

Needs and priorities were identified through a complementary set of activities:

- A comprehensive survey of 1,300 families to identify problems, using a questionnaire;
- A workshop to find ways to alleviate population density in al-Nairab Camp;
- Consulting and involving the local community through camp and UNRWA representatives;
- Dialogues and discussions with the inhabitants of the old barracks in al-Nairab Camp;
- Interviews with experts and concerned inhabitants to develop the different stages of the work plan;
- Forming workshops with refugees, in order to discuss mechanisms of improving the social and economic conditions;
- Forming workshops for assessing the lessons learnt from the implementation of the project in its early stages.

Resources

Material Resources

Resources needed for the implantation of the project were financial, technical and human. The donor countries, including the host country, provided financial and some technical support, while UNRWA provided the technical and administrative support for the project.

Financial resources were also needed to implement the project. The first stage required US\$11,494 million; the Syrian government provided \$4,961. The second stage of the project required \$13,059 million. Also having financial implications was the need for a diverse technical team of specialists in the fields targeted by the project.

Social Capital

The comprehensive social survey of the barracks provided vital information about the available financial and social capital *in situ*. Multisectoral local committees contributed to the project success

at each stage, and serve as a model for similar projects elsewhere.

Implementation

Partners in Implementation

The Syrian authority's positive and cooperative role helped greatly to convince the refugees of the need to participate in the project. The refugees assumed positive roles by carrying out some stages of building and finishing housing units in `Ayn al-Tal camp. Meetings and consultations held between the local community and its representatives made them move in an organized way through the representative local committees.

UNRWA bore the burden of raising funds from the United States, Canada, and Switzerland to implement the first stage of the project. The Syrian Public Authority for Palestinian Refugees provided the necessary land for the project. Moreover, the Syrian authorities provided essential services, such as establishing sanitation and drinking water networks in al-Nairab Camp, improving telephone and electricity networks, and building other public utilities. In `Ayn al-Tal Camp, the Syrian government built a secondary school in addition to some public utilities. UNRWA, for its part, presented the technical expertise needed for project implementation.

Overcoming Obstacles

Guaranteeing the necessary funding for the project was one of the main initial challenges. Ultimately, UNRWA secured funding commitments from the governments of Canada, Switzerland and the United States.

The community position was ambivalent toward the project in the sense that they called for improved living conditions, but opposed any permanent solution that would replace their right of return, restitution, rehabilitation and compensation as refugees. The particular international funding partners contributed to suspicions that the project could be interpreted by some as an effort to erase the community's refugee rights. The Syrian government party was crucial in convincing the refugees that the project has nothing to do with "settlement," and that it only seeks to improve interim living conditions without conditions or ulterior motives. These challenges were overcome through a series of meetings and interviews with the Syrian government, the local community and the donor countries.

Fields of Service

The project was complex and multifaceted. It provided several types of services to the benefit of the community:

- Research and planning through a comprehensive questionnaire covering all needs, demands and living aspects and problems;
- A program for exchange of expertise among refugees, governmental and international organizations;
- Capacity building through development of refugees' skills at negotiation and participation in the decision making, planning and implementation processes;
- Upgrading and construction of housing by rehabilitating houses in al-Nairab Camp and the building of new houses in `Ayn al-Tal Camp;
- Education and training residents to implement some stages of building and painting of houses in `Ayn al-Tal Camp;
- Social mobilization that encouraged camp residents to participate in the project planning and implementation;
- Funding raising, involving all parties in a necessary consultative process in order to clarify motives and ensure transparency and participation;
- Infrastructure and utilities development through the establishment of sanitation and drinking water networks, and improvement of telephone and electric utilities in al-Nairab Camp.

Evaluating the Social Product

Extent of Success in Achieving Objectives/Social Gains

Despite the many challenges, the project managed to improve living conditions and build capacities of refugees in both al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal Camps through the effective participation of refugees, transfer of skills and exchange of expertise. Therefore, the effort led to positive material and social outcomes.

Children play outdoors in their new `Ayn al-Tal neighborhood. (Source: UNRWA)

Degree of Social Production

The project relates to the social production of habitat in two aspects. First, for decades, the refugee population had been claiming their rights not only as refugees, but also as human beings with inherent needs for, and rights to adequate housing in the interim. The kind and scale of upgrading in this project could not happen without the positive role of the host government. At a moment of favorable conditions and common



will, UNRWA and the Syrian host government seized the opportunity to launch the project. In another aspect, the project served only community interests and refugees as beneficiaries. However, the social production aspect lies in the local community's wide participation and various contributions of financial and social capital, without which the project could not have succeeded. Community members cooperated in planning and executive solutions to common problems at all social, economic and cultural levels.

Results and Lessons Learned

Chief among the lessons learnt from the experience is the importance of coordinating and combining efforts and ensuring the participation of all sectors of the local community in identifying the needs, planning and implementation. This has spread a new development culture that takes into consideration the available potentials of the social groups. Experiences in different fields should be exchanged as a means of developing social capital.

Potential for Replication

The project has developed mechanisms of collective work, consultation and sustainable-development planning and human resources development. Moreover, it has built experience at fostering and managing the participation of marginalized groups in the decision making at all stages of planning and implementation.

This project, the first of its kind, enhanced field experience in executing infrastructure projects, housing and sustainable development in different fields. It bears the potential of replication in other UNRWA-serviced camps. A notable possibility is Jenin Camp (West Bank), which is still in need of reconstruction after Israeli forces destroyed much of it during their incursions of March–April 2002.

Street scene in new `Ayn al-Tal. (Source: UNRWA)



How the Parties Promoted their Experience

The community chose not to promote the experience in a public way, as it might be understood as a “resettlement” program. However, the official parties, donors and UNRWA cautiously promote this experience as a model for future upgrading. Organizers and participants have so far presented al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal rehabilitation experiences through:

- supporting the local community to disseminate the experiences locally through workshops involving all parties;
- through presenting the project in international forums and visits to al-Nairab and `Ayn al-Tal by concerned parties;
- in cooperation with mass media services, newsletters, symposia and the UNRWA website (<http://unrwa.un.org.sy/>).

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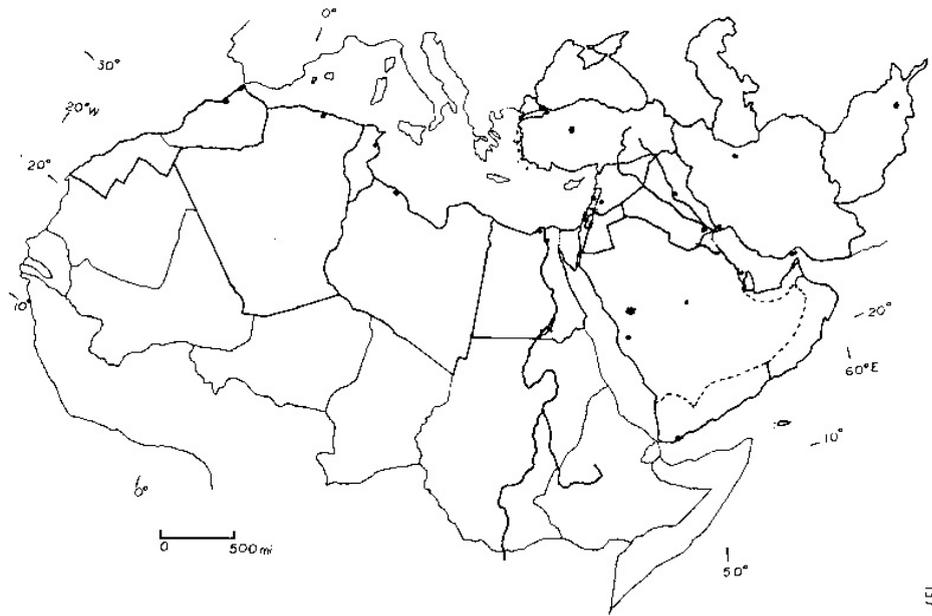
Website: <http://unrwa.un.org.sy/>

Conclusion

From Iraq to Morocco, housing rights defenders charge that policy favors the privileged, despite the vast deficit in low-cost housing for the needy and glut of more-costly alternatives for the wealthy. For decades, forced eviction and destruction of impoverished, informal areas have been the first option for planning authorities. This is a common experience throughout the developing and overpopulated world. Upgrading *in situ* is an emerging alternative, but not universally, and not all evictions and slum “removals” come with the compensation guaranteed in local law. That practice in Israel, if not uniquely, indicates an official will to erase an unwanted indigenous people, demonstrating how just institutionalized and intransigent the discrimination can be. Both local and externally driven conflict and political violence affect social production of habitat in the region, making the experience even more poignant. In that context, the Palestinians epitomize the people’s insistence on the right to remain.

Generalities may convey part of a picture, while normative law can clarify some contradictions. Despite the inevitable shortcomings and actual rights violations of urban governance, the experiences reviewed here demonstrate what is practically possible to improve living conditions in the real world. They can only contribute to closing the gap between actual practice and behavior choices, on the one hand,

and the civilized standards of justice that human rights law was devised to uphold.



HIC-HLRN Middle East/North Africa Program

Building upon HIC's long experience at advocating indigenous housing and land rights in Palestine, since 2000, HIC-HLRN has addressed special needs of its civil society members and affiliates across the Middle-East/North Africa region by promoting rights-based solutions for local and regional housing struggles.

The MENA Program promotes the development of economic, social and cultural rights culture in the region and builds capacity through training; providing appropriate methodologies for housing rights monitoring and legal defense; access to international forums, including the UN human rights system; and contributing to the region's discourse on ESC-rights and globalization; and regional and inter-regional exchanges of expertise. HLRN seeks to help create the context for MENA communities and housing rights defenders to develop practical skills, to work cooperatively and develop solidarity regionally and with social movements elsewhere. HIC-MENA's website also provides a self-service database and archive with unique Arabic-language resources on housing and economic/social/cultural rights. For more information on the MENA program and HIC-HLRN membership, go to: www.hic-mena.org.