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Parallel Urban Practice in Egypt

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Ministry Of State For Urban Renewal
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MINISTRY OF HOUSING, UTILITIES
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Parallel Urban Practice in Egypt

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1.Introduction

While government agencies are known to be the main actors in the built environment, providing social housing, infrastructure and services, while also being the sole actors responsible for planning and policy, there are a number of non-governmental actors that have had an impact on the lives of many, especially after the January 2011 Revolution that produced a resurgence in community-based initiatives.

Charitable organisations have rebuilt or repaired housing and extended services such as water and waste-water in many deprived communities. Activist architects and planners have helped communities prepare participatory urban plans for their neighbourhoods. Civil society think tanks have presented policy recommendations and raised awareness on key issues.

And while these contributions represent a drop in the ocean compared to the scale of government-sanctioned work, they have usually taken place where government agencies have not been able to intervene or, represent alternative ideas and practices which partnered with government agencies, but that mainstream practice can learn from. However, most of these non-governmental interventions are undocumented, while a lot more have been out of the lime-light and remain unknown.

In that light, this report has mapped 15 parallel urban practices in Egypt for the occasion of the First Egypt Urban Forum (EUF). This forum builds on the partnership between the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, the Ministry of Urban Renewal and Informal Settlements and UN-Habitat to strengthen the existing institutional landscape at the national level and pave the way to a greater integration of Egypt on the global urban development scene.

These parallel urban practice initiatives and projects have been chosen to represent the five themes of the EUF; Urban Planning and Upgrading, Urban Governance and Legislation, Housing, Urban Service Delivery and Urban Economy (See matrix). The actors behind these practices cover the spectrum of non-governmental actors, from development NGOs, to informal campaigns as well as practitioners working individually or as part of think tanks. Practices were also chosen to represent five main regions in Egypt's; Alexandria, the Delta, Greater Cairo, the Suez Canal & Sinai, and Upper Egypt & the Red Sea.

In all eight out of the 15 initiatives implemented activities or physical interventions, five initiatives worked primarily on policy and legal change, and two worked on proposing urban plans. Given its political and economic weight, six of the initiatives were based in Greater Cairo, while four of the initiatives were in Upper Egypt, two initiatives were each in Alexandria and the Suez Canal & Sinai, and one was in the Delta.

EUF Theme	1. Urban Planning & Upgrading	2. Urban Governance & Legislation	3. Urban Housing	4. Urban Services	5. Urban Economy
Greater Cairo	Maspero Parallel Participatory Plan	Tadamun Urban Solidarity Initiative	'Ebet al-'Assal Home Restorations		
	Just & Sustainable Planning Norms for Habitat III	Mahaliat Local Governance Reform Initiative			Al-Athar Lina Participatory Historical Development
Upper Egypt	Beni Helal Village Community-based Plan		Minya Micro-finance Housing Improvement	Sheitan Village Community Compact Waste Water Plant	Al-Amal Agriculture Development Project
Delta			Mahalla Workers Legal Housing Support		
Alex.		Save Alex Historical Preservation Initiative		Allenby Garden Rejuvenation	
Suez Canal & Sinai				Wadi Gharba Community Dam	Portsaid 'Ala Qadimoh Heritage Promotion Initiative

Key

	Policy
	Planning
	Activity

Matrix showing the tagging of the initiatives by the EUF themes, their geographical reach and the type of activity

1.2 Executive Summary

The themes to which the initiatives have been assigned should not be taken as exclusive to the work they do, but serve merely to emphasise that aspect of the initiative, where other aspects may be involved. While some initiatives profiled represent ideas for best practice in their field, others were chosen to afford geographic representation in an effort to highlight work in different contexts. Overall, the 15 initiatives represented here are examples of how wide the spectrum of actors that are working on improving Egypt's built environment, and the issues they address.

Where Urban Planning & Upgrading has long been the realm of government action, two initiatives worked on submitting their own community-based urban plans to government authorities. The Maspero Parallel Participatory Plan involved a local popular committee, an urban planning initiative and a rights NGO to propose a local area upgrading plan, which later became a formal project adopted by the Ministry of Urban Renewal. The Beni Hilal Village plan involved a community-based NGO working with the local government to plan a new village from scratch. The third initiative in this theme, Just and Sustainable Planning Norms in Habitat III, worked on reforming global planning policies in relation to local planning needs.

For the Urban Governance and Legislation theme, it was natural that all of the initiatives worked on policy reform, though with varying approaches. The Mahaliat initiative worked predominantly on policy reform, though it was based on massive community support through locally-based off-shoots. The Tadamun Cairo Urban Solidarity Initiative operates more as a think tank, releasing policy recommendations, though it also profiles local initiatives in Greater Cairo. Save Alex is predominantly a campaign to preserve Alexandria's architectural and urban heritage, but its work has involved lobbying for legislative reform.

The Housing theme profiled three different approaches to housing provision for the poor and marginalised. The Minya Micro-financing project focused on how small loans were made to extremely poor rural families who could not generally qualify for credit, in order to rebuild dilapidated housing. On the other hand, the 'Ezbet al-'Assal project used donations to rebuild or restore a cluster of dilapidated homes in a poor neighbourhood in Cairo. While it could have been considered as an urban upgrading project, the home-scale details and surgical interventions made it more appropriate to profile as a housing project. The Mahalla Workers initiative profiled how legal support to a group of workers who faced eviction form their homes could be also considered as a form of housing provision.

It is no surprise that the Urban Services theme profiled three initiatives that implemented physical interventions. In Sheitan Village, Fayoum, a compact community-run waste-water plant was built using technology its' promoters believe can solve the massive problem of unsanitary drainage in rural Egypt. While the community-built Wadi Gahrba dam shows how drinking water could be efficiently provided to the remote Bedouin settlements of Sinai. The last initiative on Urban Services profiles the community-led provision of public space through the Allenby Garden rejuvenation project in Alexandria.

Concerning the Urban Economy, again all three initiatives were activity based. The Al-Amal Agriculture Development Project worked to increase the profitability of agricultural land to boost income for extremely poor farmers in Minya, who would otherwise sell the land for the construction of informal housing. The Athar Lina initiative sees that the most sustainable form of heritage conservation is through the development of the local economy. While also focusing on heritage, the Portsaid 'Ala Qadimoh initiative has worked to promote the city of Portsaid to local and foreign tourists as a way to boost its fledgeling economy.

1.3 Methodology

The research investigated the interventions through fieldwork and interviews of both their main contributors, and, in the event of physical interventions, as well as some residents of the communities their work has affected. Interviews followed a number of ethnographic fieldwork methods depending on the subjectivity of interviewee and the type of research. Pre fixed conversations with semi-structured interviews based on some questions but not limited to a prepared list were used with practitioners, officials and some community members where a specific topic was being researched. Oral history methods were used with community members where the research was open to possibilities of other questions, as this method allows the interviewee to speak about him/herself as much as they can where their stories/narratives are the threads for the research. The unorganised interview methodology was used mostly while working with community members while researching a community itself.

2.1 Theme 1: Urban Planning and Upgrading

Initiative/Project:	**Participatory Development of Maspero Triangle, Bulaq District, Cairo[1]**
Actor:	**Maspero Popular committee, Egyptian Center for Civil and Legislative Reform, Madd Group, The Ministry of Urban and Slum Development, Cairo Governorate**
Region:	**Greater Cairo**

Between 1997 and 2013, urban development and slum clearance projects resulted in the demolition of over 41,000 housing units in Egypt.[2] Resettlement affected about 24,000 families where they were paid meagre compensation or rehoused in government housing blocks on the outskirts of cities or in the satellite-like New Cities. On the other hand, 17,000 families were rehoused in apartment blocks built in their districts. Overall, government-led slum development projects preferred resettlement or cash compensation to in-situ upgrading, and the Maspero Triangle in Cairo, classified by the Informal Settlements Development Facility (ISDF) in 2009 as unsafe, was to be developed accordingly. However, in mid-2014, the Maspero Triangle upgrading project became the first participatory in-situ development project to be adopted by the ISDF after a community-based plan was presented to it.[3]

The Maspero Triangle is located in the heart of down town Cairo, where one of its three sides overlooks the Nile Corniche. A large part of the Triangle is a historic residential area, where according to Sayyid Labi, a resident and member of the Maspero Popular Committee, because of the real estate value of the site, in the 1970s and 1980s a number of Gulf companies bought a large number of the houses in the area for the purposes of real estate investment. Labi says that Cairo Governorate also became interested, and In 1997, the Maspero Company was established, with it as shareholder, and began to buy a number of houses as well. Residents were not being evicted by the new landlords in big numbers, until 2008, where according to Labi, the pace of displacement intensified with the issuance of a large number of demolition orders citing structural issues with the homes. This prompted some of the residents to form the Maspero Youth Association to work on resisting the displacement, where in 2010 they contracted a group of planner s and engineers to propose a community-led vision of how they wanted their area developed. This first attempt was presented to the General Organisation for Physical Planning (GOPP),[4] but was never implemented.

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[1]According to a number of interviews in May 2015 with Mr. Sayyid Liby, a member of the Maspero Youth Association, Baher Shawky, a founding partner of the Egyptian Center for Civil and Legislative Reform, and Ahmed Zaazaa, a founding partner of the Madd Group

[2]Yahia Shawkat. Social Justice and The Built Environment | A Map of Egypt. Shadow Ministry of Housing .2013. p 83. http://blog.shadowministryofhousing.org/p/blog-page_2887.html

[3]The ISDF became part of the Ministry of Urban Renewal and Informal Settlements in July 2014

[4]The GOPP is the central planning body in Egypt and is part of the Ministry of Housing
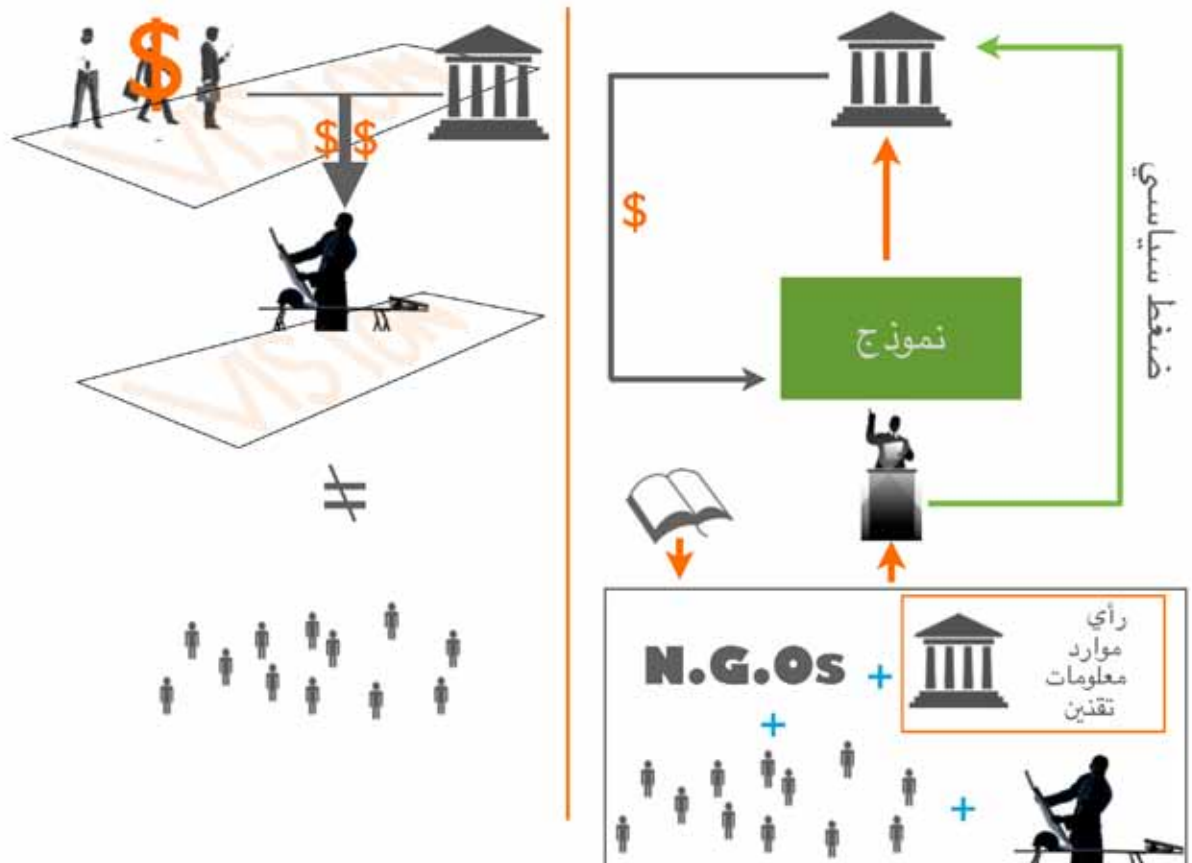
Infograph explaining participatory design © MADD

Popular conference in Maspero © MADD

Rendering of the are after upgrading © MADD

Participatory workshop © MADD

Map showing state of buildings © MADD

Detailed study of buildings © MADD

The association was prompted to act again, when in December 2011, two houses collapsed in Othman Rashdan Lane, killing seven people.[5] The residents decided to stage a protest against the Cairo Governorate, which according to Labi, refuses to issue repair permits for their old and dilapidated houses. The protest succeeded in setting up a meeting with the Cairo Governor, but negotiations did not lead to anything. The Association then called for a public conference in their area to pressure officials and call for development. Following the conference, the Cairo Governorate announced to the press a development project that included 64 residential towers where the residents would be rehoused.[6] This again was not implemented,   while new speculators according to Labi, started to buy more houses, up which the residents decided to protest once again, and organized a march around Bulaq district in March 2013.[7]

The Maspero association took their protest to another level, where according to Baher Shawky, co-founder of the Egyptian Center for Civil and Legislative Reform (ECCLR), they approached him to conduct a social and legal study of the area and present their case to officials. Shawky decided that the report needed an urban design component, and so introduced the Maspero Association to the Madd group who offered to work on a participatory urban development vision with them.

Ahmed Zaazaa, an architect and co-founder of Madd explains that a detailed participatory upgrading plan was reached after a year and a half of work. Their work took the lessons learned from an array of local and international participatory urban upgrading projects, and combined it with the urban, economic and social dimensions in Maspero, to produce a plan in copperation with the Maspero Youth Association and the residents. Zaazaa says that the project's team rented an apartment in the area to facilitate daily communication with the residents. The team also organized a number of workshops with both the residents, as well as with experts and consultants.

In June 2014, ECCLR and Madd jointly presented their report to the Maspero Youth Association, outlining several development options that guaranteed the right of the residents to stay in the area. Shawky recounts that a month later, in July 2014, he was invited by Dr. Laila Iskandar, Minister of State for Urban Renewal and Informal Settlements, for a meeting the ministry was hosting for representatives from civil society organizations working on urban development. Shawky used to the opportunity to present the community-based development proposal, which the ministry promised to consider if it was turned in to a more detailed development plan.

And so, the Maspero Youth Association, ECCLR and MADD worked together to transform the initial proposal into a final development plan, where according to Zaazaa, work focused on rezoning the area so that the up-scale developments that the investors want to pursue, do not negatively impact the zone where residents

[5]Those Affected by the Collapse of Real Estate Reject Alternative Housing and Cling to Bulaq, Al-Shorouk, 06-12-2011 http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=06122011&id=de245525-7e5a-4bf5-b3f5-e866f52368b7
[6]64 Towers inside Maspero Triangle to Reinstate 3,166 Families, Egypt News, 27-01-2012 http://www.masress.com/egynews/157203
[7]Residents of Ramlet Bulaq Block "Maspero" Road, in Protest against Calls for Their Displacement, Al-Ahali, 26-03-2013 http://www.masress.com/alahaly/26972

would be rehoused, while work also focused on the rehousing solutions so that they would not be alien to the community's life-style post development.

Details of the various options of rehousing or compensation were also developed with the ministry, where residents could opt for a new residential unit in Maspero, a government housing unit elsewhere, or cash. Zaazaa adds that the new units come in different sizes and will be offered to the residents for rent, or on lease-to-own contracts depending on the family's income and their tenure status.

Sayyid Labi recounts that after Dr. Laila Iskandar adopted the project and attended a public conference in the area, a series of meetings between the ministry and the residents culminated in December of 2014, with a charter that outlined the main principles of the development, and which was signed by the Cabinet, the ministry, the investors and 1300 of the residents. This charter has now been turned into a terms of reference for an international competition to develop the area.

However, some concerns remain. Labi explains how he is worried about how the project will be executed, and if the promises made wil be adhered to.."Fear of government intervention is in our nature, because we have seen before how are neighbours were evicted", says Labi, "therefore there is no trust or sense of security except after we see the project implemented." Members of the design team share some of these concerns, as Zaazaa notes how they were more in charge of the project before it became an official one, where now it is too complicated for the residents to understand all the processes. Zaazaa would also like to see representatives of the residents on the technical committee that will judge the urban development competition bids.

The Maspero participatory development project is still an exception among projects sanctioned by government agencies, where the residents' points of view have been seriously considered. Its success in the initial planning phase is something to be commended, but the project is far from over. As a considerable step towards participatory in-situ upgrading has been made by the Ministry of Urban Renewal and Informal Settlements, the Maspero project's participatory methods need to be institutionalised to ensure the sustainability of these measures, and their proper replication. While the novel use of a replanning decree in the case of slum upgrading, an extremely complicated process, has to be closely monitored, and only replicated if it proves that it can work.

| Initiative/Project:	Planning and Implementation of the Development of the Model Village of Beni Hilal for Livestock Production in Aswan
Actor:	Hilali Heritage Society for Community Development, Aswan Governorate Urban Development Department
Region:	Upper Egypt

While many communities resist resettlement, there are others that are willing to migrate to other places, but which have not been approached to do so. The community of Beni Hilal, which has lived in the area of Khur 'Awwadah in Aswan since the 1960s, is one such community. The poet, 'Abdul-Rahman al-Abnudy has promoted the Hilali's poetry and literature, but it is little known that the Hilali community is still very much attached to nature despite decades of urbanization. In Khur 'Awwada, Hilalis still keep horses at home and run the horse carriages in Aswan, while they also raise cattle and produce dairy products.

The Hilalis are also no stranger to migration. About 50 years ago, they were resttled to Khur 'Awwada by a government project that displaced them from the then center of Aswan city, since horse and cattle rearing was not seen as an acceptable activity in urban areas. Muhammed Muhalil, director of the Hilali Heritage Society for Community Development, remebers how the government-built houses had yards for cattle and areas designated for production.[8] The desert they moved to thrived in a matter of decades, but over time and with a lack of urban planning, densities increased. Muhalil says that the yards were built and floors were added to the single-storey houses to accommodate the growing families.Rooms were shared with cattle and the waste water network started collapsing, raising groundwater levels and threatening the houses. The city of Aswan also sprawled and surrounded Khur 'Awada, leaving no space for them to expand, except into the adjacent valleys, which the Informal Setllements Development Facility has deemed as an usafe area.

The Beni Hilal community did not give in to this situation, and in 2008, they started considering options to develop the area. Mehalil says that even though the heritage society was founded to document and preserve their heritage, they could not work on that while their living conditions deteriorated. "How can we care about heritage while we can not have the bare minimum of adeqaute housing?" asks Muhallil.

The Society's members and the residents discussed the area's problems and they reached a solution that eliminates the social and urban problems and reinforces the community's economic resistance. To migrate once again. Mulail says that they agreed that a new village would be built outside the city limits, leaving enough space for future expansion, and the homes would be designed according to their needs.

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[8]According to a number interviews with Muhammad Muhallil in May 2015
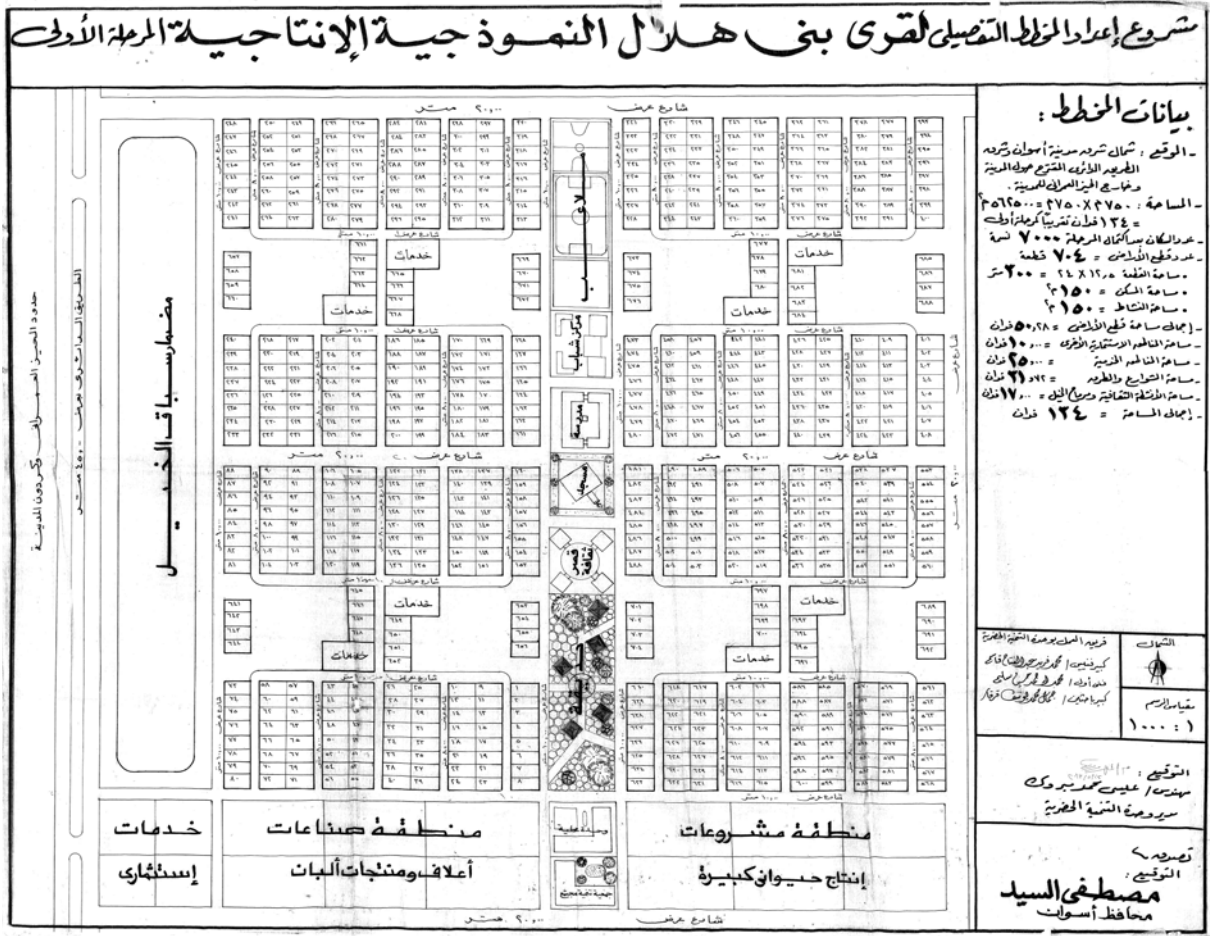
Detailed urban plan of the Beni Hilal Village © Beni Hilal Association

The first step towards this collective dream was taken in early 2013, when the Society proposed the idea of the "Beni Hilal Model Village" to then Aswan governor, Major General Mustafa al-Sayyid. Muhalil adds that they presented it as a solution to the city of Aswan, not just to their area. The new village was planned to incorporate all the Hilali communities scattered around Aswan and who also still rear cattle, which according to Muhalil, would rid the city of activities that many residents complained about, and prevent informal encrouchment by the Hilalil community in the dangerous valleys.

The Governor agreed and referred it to the local council and the Department of Urban Development (DUD) for further study. The Society was able to acquire the initial approvals, where the DUD designated an area outside the Aswan city limits for the new village. Mehalil adds that they contracted a planner to work under the superviosn of the DUD, who surveyed the plot and produced a plan for the model village over 174 acre. The village would have 700 houses designed each with a large yard, as well as a number of production facilities, such as a dairy factory, along with other social services, including a school, a local council unit and shopping outlets.

But soon the official planning process stopped, as the Aswan Land Management Department overturned the DUD's designation two months later because according to Muhalil, it found out that it was so-called private state land which the Aswan Governorate has no jurisdiction over. The decision came as a shock to the members of the Hilali Heritage Society, who had already spent money on the village plan on the assumption that the land is part of the Aswan Governorate and that the designation was effective.

Political upheveal during the second half of 2013 delayed the project, and the Society renewed its efforts at the end of that year by approaching the new governor, starting a new process of official approvals. However, this time, the Land Management Directorate referred the Society to the General Authority for Reconstruction Projects and Agricultural Development (GARPAD), who had jurisdiction over the land to be assigned to them.

For the first time since they started working towards the new village, the members of the Hilali Heritage Society found themselves in Cairo presenting a request, signed by the Aswan Governor and attached to the plan developed by the DUD, to GARPAD. It took several months until GARPAD's requirements of land surveys and aerial mapping were fulfilled, and in mid-2014, the designation was approved, and the Society was asked for EGP 174,000 (USD 22,900) to buy the land, or EGP 1,000 (USD 132) per acre.

Despite getting close to achieving their goal of assigning the land for the new village, the Society became worried as they started feeling the burden of responsibility for such a large project that they were taking on on behalf of 700 families. For Muhalil, doing all the footwork and investing his personal time and effort was one thing, but collecting such a large sum of money without being sure if another beureacratic obstacle would delay, or stop the project was an entirely different matter. After all, none of the officials ever inquired about the village's source of water, or mentioned anything about how electricity would be provided. Will the Governor permit extending these essential services to begin with? Or are

these services going to be distributed over many state institutions whom they will have to pursue themselves?

On recognising that the designation of the land was but one step in a process that would be too demanding for them to handle, the members of Hilali Heritage Society started to pursue different government agenceis with the hope to integrate their dream project in one of those agencies' ongoing projects. They discovered a project that the Ministry of Urban Renewal and Informal Settlements (MURIS) was about to start in Khur 'Awwadah to protect the area from floods. As the project also involved the demolition of a number of houses, they approached MURIS to integrate both projects. They also approached the Ministry of Local Development, with referral from MURIS, to pursue colaboration on that ministry's Model village Project.

The Hilali Heritage Society chose to be the pioneers of a unique experiment to realise a dream. Many lessons were learned from this expedition in the wilderness of government bureacracy. For one thing, the expedition showed that civil society lacks the abilities and the skills to handle a comprehensive plan to build even a small community outside the framework of an official project adopted by a government agency. This though comes as no surprise, since if it were possible for civil society organisations to access formal planning intruments, and be able to plan a formal settlement from scratch and have formal utilities extended to it, Egypt would not be facing the current challenge of informal urbanisation.

What this expedition actually reveals is the underpreparation of governmnet agencies to process the social-production of habitat, as the agencies were designed to execute orders from above, rather than requests from below. The personal was also another present dimension, where some officials offered their help and approvals because of who they were, even if it was not their reponsibility to do so, while others refursed to support the project even though they were key to realising it. Here lies a lost opportunity, though one that can be saved with a simple process of administrative reform that can capture the efforts and investments of community-driven initiatives, accelerating formal urban development and curbing inefficient informal development.

Initiative/Project:	**Supporting Just and Sustainable Urban Planning Norms in HABITAT III**
Actor:	**Habitat International Coalition, Housing and Land Rights Network**
Region:	**National and International**

The third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, also known as Habitat III, will be held in October 2016.[9] This series of conferences, held every 20 years, are used to set the long-term global urban agenda. This agenda is shaped by all the UN member states, as well as local and international civil society, experts and academics, to respond to contemporary urban challenges. The impact of this policy is far-reaching. It affects the work of the UN institutions, as well as the international financial institutions such as the World Bank, and, of course, the national policies of the member states.

In Egypt, the Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) has been the only civil society organisation working on submitting recommendations to the conference. But how does urban planning relate to human rights? Joseph Schecla, the organisation's coordinator, believes that the two are interconnected,[10] for HLRN supports urban planning norms that respect human rights and social justice. As part of the Habitat International Coalition, HLRN works through the United Nations system, specifically on the recommendations of the Habitat conferences. For example, over the past twenty years, they focused on three of the recommendations of the 1996 Habitat II Conference; official support for the unofficial initiatives and the social production of housing, community participation, and local government representation of communities. According to Schecla, social production of housing is the dominant pattern of production in developing countries, especially Egypt. Statistics show that between 2000 and 2011, the share of the informal private sector was 47% of total housing production in urban Egypt, as opposed to 42% for the formal private sector, and 11% by the public sector.[11] In rural Egypt social production of homes is even higher, though there are no available statistics about it.

The fact that the informal sector comes on top was not a result of government support. In fact, the informal houses are illegal, where a portion are demolished. Eventually some homes are legalized, but not many. Schecla explains that support for social production of housing is not support for informal housing, but rather support for the righ to access formal urban planning. The provision of a planning mechanism for communities that wish to expand will result in the redirection of billions in persoanl investments from informal housing to formal housing that also reflects people's needs, says Schecla. To him, this will help is the curbing urban sprawl on agricultural land, overloading of infrastructure and the building of inadequate housing. Schecla also adds that social production of housing does not mean the

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[9] To learn more about Habitat III see http://unhabitat.org/habitat-iii/
[10] Interviews with Joseph Schecla, Coordinator of the Housing and Land Rights Network, May 2015
[11] Yahia Shawkat. Social and the Built Environment | A Map of Egypt. Shadow Ministry of Housing. 2013. p 116 http://blog.shadowministryofhousing.org/p/blog-page_2887.html

Social production of habitat and urban encroachment on agricultural land in Egypt © Yahia Shawkat

HIC-HLRN Habitat III Campaign Logo © HIC-HLRN

Social production of habitat and urban encroachment on agricultural land in Egypt © Yahia Shawkat

marginalization of government, but actually requires stronger government with efficient agencies that are able to regulate the built environment.

After twenty years of supporting the Habiatat II recommendations, what is new for Habitat III? Schecla answers that the biggest contemporary challenge for urban planning is in balancing between rural and urban development, because attention to the rural areas has become indispensable to the sustainability of urban areas. In his view, UN-Habitat, along with the policies of urban planning in most countries, have limited their responsibilities to urban areas. In the best cases, this has meant ignoring rural areas, though in the worst cases, urban areas have developed at the expense of rural ones. Schecla beleoves that this has to change, and that the concept of development of human settlements should also include rural settelements.

Additionally, the rural-urban relationship has become a complicated one with national security implications. Urban expansion has become one of the leading factors affecting food security in the world, especially in Egypt where the 50% of Egyptians depend on natural resources. But now we import garlic from China, says Schecla, and here we have to emphasize that urban planning has to be more than planning for cities, because cities are directly linked to villages, especially in Egypt where there there is rural inside of urban and urban inside of rural. HLRN has worked with the FAO on raising awareness about food security and food sovereignty, especially during crises. The most important recommendation that resulted from their work is the preservation of local food production systems, i.e. the preservation of farmland and food production inside or close to cities, especially in the face of urban expansion and the erosion of farmland. Schecla adds that there is now a global trend that encourages urban agriculture. In Kenya, for example, urban agriculture was prohibited, but the 2010 constitutional amendments stipulated the planning for urban agriculture in every province, something Schecla would like to see in Egypt. In preparation for the Habitat III conference, HLRN translated these challenges into a number of demands: balancing urban and rural development, adoption human rights principles and standards in urban development projects, and expanding community participation to the farthest extent possible.[12]

Some may see little significance in linking Egypt to international urban development policies because Egypt's problems are unique and they require local solutions. In fact, part of this view is true. The generalization of national challenges and use of abstract statistics strips out of much of the local detail and nuance. On the other hand, Egypt has become an integral part of global policy. As Habitat III coincides with the enactment of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will decide the policies of eliminating poverty for 15 years to come, and with the impending approval of a new global policy to combat climate change, Habitat III will be a unique opportunity that combines social, climatic and urban interests. Moreover, the urban challenges facing Egypt are shared with a number of countries, and Egypt can learn from their experiences. All this means that civil society in Egypt needs to be more involved with HLRN in shaping the demands of Habitat III and raising awareness on their significance.

[12]Habitat International Coalition.Statement submitted to the Propcom3 for Habitat III. 17-04-2015 http://www.hic-mena.org/news.php?id=pmttYw==#.VXBdAUZ-y1k

2.2 Theme 2: Urban Governance and Legislation

Initiative/Project:	Mahaliat, a popular initiative for the reform of local government
Actor:	Mahaliat Initiative
Region:	National, with local initiatives in the Delta, Greater Cairo, Upper Egypt and the Suez Canal region.

The Mahaliat[1] initiative is one of the few initiatives that focused on addressing the roots of urban problems rather than their symptoms, by being one of the few initiatives which focused on reforming local government. According to Ramy Yasser, one of the initiative's founders, the "mahaliat", or local councils, became perceived by most Egyptians as a corrupt authority, where some still repeat the saying that "local councils are up to their knees with corruption".[2]

But why did a number of young people focus on this forgotten administrative body, and not other government entities which have a more direct impact on the built environment such as the ministries of housing, transport or electricity? According to Yasser, the most important factor that encouraged him to focus on local councils were his visits to a number of cities abroad, where he lived for a while in the United States. He always wondered about the difference between those cities and Egyptian cities when it comes to the efficiency of transportation, the cleanliness of the roads and the general quality of life. The answer always came back: local government.

After meeting with Mostafa Shouman in late 2011, Yasser found out that they shared a common view and decided to establish the Mahaliat initiative with clear objectives to reform local government and dived those objectives in to four components. Based on the logical sequence for the reform process, the first component was amending the legal framework governing the work of local government. This includes constitutional provisions and laws that would enable local councils at the different levels to monitor and evaluate the performance of the executive councils as well as holding them accountable. According to their research on the structure of local government with a number of experts and professors in Egypt, one of the main causes that allowed for the widespread of corruption was the lack of effective oversight over the local executive councils.

The goal of the first component was also to increase the efficiency of the state's executive bodies through a comprehensive, and ambitious, restructuring process by redistributing responsibilities between the central government and the local

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[1]Meetings with Ramy Yasser, one of the founders of Mahaliat--a popular initiative for the reform of local government, May 2015
[2]A saying attributed to Dr. Zakaria Azmy, a former National Democratic Party member of parliament and a former chief of staff. He said it in parliament in 1999.

Street activities © Mahaliat Dokki & Agouza

Infographs on local government and other issues © Mahaliat

councils given the obvious heavy burden on central government. According to Yasser, the initiative succeeded in this objective by shedding light on the importance of the local councils and taking steps in reforming their legal framework. The 2012 constitution was better than the 1971 constitution as far as local governance is concerned, and thier efforts continued in 2013 where representatives from Mahaliat attended a number of hearings before the 50-member constitutional assembly working to redraft the 2012 constitution. According to him, this helped in passing better local administration articles in the 2014 constitution.

The Mahaliat initiative would have been unable to succeed in the first component without the efforts of the second, which focused on raising public awareness on the importance of local councils. This public awareness campaign focused on explaining the different roles of local government, their responsibilities in raising the quality of services provided to citizens, and how residents could be more involved through them in the management of their local community. Yasser elaborates that awareness was key as the initiative's members knew first hand how little people know of local councils and their responsibilities, which local members of parliament have taken over.

Short info-films were the choice of Mahaliat to boost awareness, where they have been broadcast online and on television, while an entire page in a local independent newspaper was allocated to their cause on a weekly basis. This media campaign helped attract a large number of people, leading to the establishment of about 33 local Mahaliat groups in six governorates across Egypt. Yasser remembers fondly how the teams worked on raising awareness about local councils and founding sub-initiatives to work on urban issues and services. As a result the initiative's Facebook page reached 30,000 followers, in addition to about 60,000 followers on Twitter. Yasser however, says that they were expecting more than that.
Mahaliat was hoping to work on a third component involving training 5000 youth on the work of local councils to prepare them to run for local council elections. Though Yasser states that this component was never implemented due to in-house disagreements about it, and it was amended to become part of the awareness campaign rather than capacity building.

The initiative's fourth and last component focused on establishing the "Tahrir Center", a form of think-tank that offered statistics and information to offer decision-making support to members of the local popular councils, as well as help their constituency monitor and evaluate their performance. Although the center was not established, members of the initiative have now gained on the ground experience to evaluate the performance of officials, in addition to skills in requesting services and following up on their implementation. Yasser tells of the successes of some of the local teams in pressuring the local authorities to respond to some of their requests despite the current absence of popular local councils.[3] Examples included providing an outlet for subsidized bread in the Awlad 'Allam area in the neighbourhood of Dokki in Giza, or the installation of a natural gas network in a village in Fuwa, Kafr AL-Sheikh.

After this three-year journey of raising awareness, legislative reform and the provision of some services, where does the Mahaliat initiative see itself? Ramy

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[3]They were dissolved in 2011 afetr the the 1971 Constitution was annuled, and no local elections have taken palce since.

Yasser believes that the umbrella initiative is responsible for documenting the different local experiences, the solutions they reached and the experiences they gained and to make it publicly available to serve the largest possible number of interested citizens and officials. Yasser also thinks that in light of the absence of local popular councils for four years and the continued postponement of local elections for at least another year (after parliamentary elections in late 2015, and after the parliament passes the new Local Development Law), there is a need for shadow popular councils to fill the void. This will help with requesting and following up on the different urban services such as road building, lighting, cleaning, and so on.

Some might see the discontinuation of the umbrella initiative as a failure, but this view disregards the changing context, where the indefinite postponement of local elections and the political turmoil that succeeded June 30th made local councils less of a community priority. The initiative's experiment is still a unique case in its work on the reform of an administrative body, especially from outside. It succeeded in reaching out to officials and influencing legislation through raising the awareness of a wide range of people, from members of the community, to experts in the field, by both tangible action as well as the dissemination of information.

Initiative/Project:	**Cairo Urban Solidarity Initiative (Tadamun)**
Actor:	**The American University, Washington D.C. and Takween Integrated Community Development**
Region:	**National and Greater Cairo**

The Tadamun initiative presents itself on its website as a believer "that all citizens have an equal right to their city, as well as a shared responsibility towards it. Tadamun also believes that solidarity among citizens is the only way to achieve social justice and a decent standard of living, particularly for many who have been ignored for too long."[4] The motive was to maximize the successes of development, as per Kareem Ibrahim, co-founder of Tadamun and executive director of Takween Integrated Community Development.[5] Ibrahim worked for about 15 years on the Darb al-Ahmer development project in Cairo, who saw how the detailed plan which was drafted to conserve the area has not been implemented except for a small part of it. Ibrahim add that only 120 out of 5000 houses have been repaired. For Diane Singerman, co-founder of Tadamun and associate professor at the American University in Washington D.C., during her field work for her PhD dissertation, she lived in an area in Fatimid Cairo and saw the conditions of buildings, the difficulties residents had in improving the built environment and learned more about how urban policies and planning directions had hobbled many of these areas.[6] "While attracting tourists seemed very important in the 1980s and 1990s, many informal housing areas and older parts of the GCR were largely ignored as public investment went elsewhere and residents living in those areas were stigmatized by others" says Singerman. And so it was clear to him that urban plans and development projects have a limited influence due to structural problems in urban management, and that the mechanisms in place do not influence policy.

The idea behind Tadamun started crystallizing through talks between Ibrahim and Singerman, where two years later, in April 2012, the Tadamun website was launched. The initiative chose to focus on local neighbourhoods, choosing Cairo because it was the team's home town. "It is our city and we know its problems", says Ibrahim, who does not think there is a conspiracy against development, but that officials do not consider alternatives which are potentially cheaper or more efficient than traditional systems. He puts it down to either the conflict of interest in some for-profit government agencies who by their nature do not prefer low-cost projects, or because the officials are unaware of such alternatives. For this reason, the Tadamun initiative focused on documenting alternative successes, whether it was from non-governmental bodies, or even if a government agency was part of it, as well as working on spreading awareness about the existence of alternatives.

Tadamun started a documentation process which was divided into four components based on the type of alternatives. The first component presented alternative

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[4]The "About Tadamun" page on: http://www.Tadamun.info
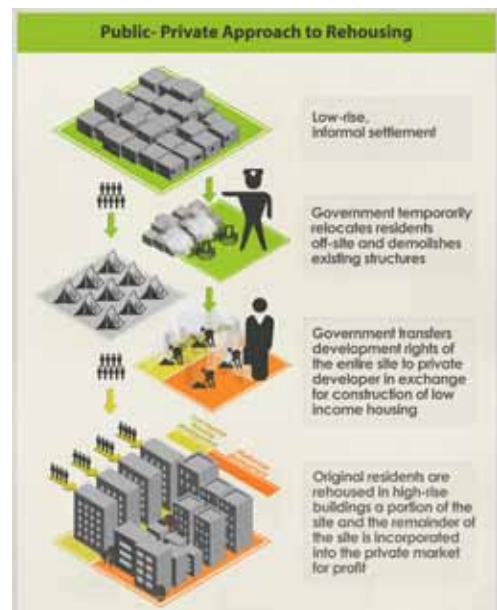[5]Interview with Kareem Ibrahim, May 2015
[6]Personal communication with Diane Singerman, May 2015

The Tadamun website © Tadamun

Infographs that are released on the website © Tadamun

Workshops with local communities © Tadamun

technologies such as cheaper or more appropriate methods, for example of paving roads, as a way of addressing one of the challenges that a community they profiled faced. The second component then focused on the geographical scope and urban context in which the alternative is suitable. Moving on, the third component- which is the most sophisticated- focuses on self effort and how communities coalesced and collected resources to implement certain projects. The fourth and last component focuses on rights and policies, and the relation between them.

The Tadamun project evolved throughout its implementation, where the team discovered an enormous amount of information about the areas where they had been documenting the experiences, through they interviews they were conducting. And so they started a series of articles titled Know your City which helped fill the knowledge gap about some of Cairo's deprived and marginalized communities. The aim of these articles, according to Ibrahim, was to help change the perception of the other residents of Cairo about these areas which the media describe as 'ashwaiyat (random settlements) and hotbeds of crime. For example, Ibrahim says that friends of his that live in the neighborhood of Mohandiseen saw, Mit 'Okba, poorer part of the neighbourhood, as a 'ashwaiya. This prompted Tadamun to write an article on how Mit 'Okba was in fact a village that preceded the building of Mohandiseen by a few decades until urbanisation surrounded it. "We say we are all in the same boat," says Ibrahim, "The class separation of neighbourhoods created many problems which led to the city's decay."

Among the things that became clear after documenting a number of the urban challenges facing different communities was the overlapping of mandates between different government agencies, or the lack of information about their roles. Tadamun followed up on this with a series of articles titled Know your Government, which researched the roles of the different agencies according to legislation and created diagrams to explain how they link together. The articles will also provide a citizen's guide about the services that these agencies provide, such as the issuance of building permits.

However, Tadamun is not only concerned with documenting experiences and raising awareness about them, but also analysing them and providing policy recommendations on the importance of local councils and on becoming acquainted with budgets. This is what lead them to research the impact of national policies and interests on local interests; for example, the disparity between how the relevant ministries view the problems of Establ Antar, a marginalised neighbourhood in Cairo, as opposed to those identified by the residents themselves. According to Ibrahim, Tadamun does not encourage non-governmental work, but rather the reform of government work, because in the end the government has the resources and makes the decisions. Examples of that reform include fair distribution of resources, transparency and good governance.

If Tadamun does not encourage parallel efforts, how does it see itself then? Ibrahim's answer is a think tank that gives advice around issues of the built environment. Singerman believes Tadamun's audience are residents in Cairo and other areas of Egypt who want to solve problems facing their communities and who believe in their right to democratically manage their city. And so, almost three years on, has Tadamun had the impact they wished for? "I think we became less ambitious

the more the team became aware of the magnitude of issues around influencing policy making", replies Ibrahim, "It is a process that takes several years, and does not show results quickly". Singerman agrees. "We produce policy briefs, case studies, and other materials that are accessible in Arabic and English to anyone, but perhaps some of them are a bit too academic and we hope to widen our reach and make our analysis more accessible to diverse audiences in the near future."

However, there is some impact that the team has seen. On the policy level, the Urban Constitution campaign that Tadamun participated in with six other civil society organizations, might have helped in adding a number of articles to the new constitution, in addition to expanding the scope of other constitutional articles. However, the Urban Constitution document was not officially presented to the 50-member constituent assembly.[7] The Know your City articles also contributed to directing development to some areas in need. According to Mohamed De'bes, a resident of Mit Okba and a founding member of its popular committee, Tadamun's article about the area contributed to its listing as one of the French Agency for Development's (AFD) projects.[8] De'bes also uses Tadamun's website to communicate with other initiatives documented by Tadamun due to his interest in improving the work of the popular committee of Mit Okba.

Tadamun produced a vast amount of knowledge during the last three years, but the production is more than the demand of readers, whether they are specialists, officials or the general reader. Specialised knowledge on the built environment in Egypt is new, where it started growing after the Januray 2011 revolution, producing intiatives like Tadamun and others. Thus it might take some time before those interested seek this information in large numbers, as well as make use of it in their daily or professional lives. Something that will definitley happen once public particpation in the built environment is more mainstream, and less parallel.

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[7] To read more about the Urban Constitution go here https://urbanconstitution.wordpress.com/2013/12/16/a-constitutional-approach-to-urban-egypt/
[8] Personal communication, May 2015

Initiative/Project:	**Save Alex**
Actor:	**Save Alex**
Region:	**Alexandria**

In the four months after the January 2011 Revolution, building debris in Alexandria were starting to become noticed. With the disappearance of the police, a number of demolition permits for heritage buildings were issued, and, as a result, some groups started protesting the demolition of these buildings.

Ahmed Hassan Moustafa, a founding member and the director of Save Alex, tells us how the groups were from different backgrounds;[9] some of them had information about the deteriorating urban situation, and some were just generally interested in Alexandria and their city of origin. Within seven months, the groups started working on the cause using different methods. Some were in the universities and colleges discussing plans that could be implemented on the ground; other groups began to monitor and map offences to report to the executive authorities; while others focused their attention on specific locations for which they have memories and places that carry a certain value for them such as the Greek Club.

The different groups decided in 2011 to unify in one group with the goal of helping the community to defend its city and offering new venues for those interested in urban and heritage issues. By March 2012, the groups came together and decided to found one initiative; Save Alex. The initiative describes itself as "an initiative committed to protecting and enhancing the built environment of the city of Alexandria ... [by] increasing public awareness of what is left of Alexandria's rich architectural heritage."[10] According to Moustafa, one of the first cases they took on was the Alexandria Governorate building case. The local government decided to rebuild it after it was burnt during the Friday of Anger on January 28, 2011, under the pretext of "restoring the prestige of the state", and a banner was placed stating that the Armed Forces were responsible for that project. Hassan continues: "From our part, we completely rejected what the government and the state were positing, and our suggestion was to start a community dialogue about the nature of the land and the communities' requests to conceive of how it could be utilized. Should it be turned into a public park, conjoined with the Greco-Roman museum to expand it, or even be left as it is to commemorate the glorious January 25 revolution."

What was suggested was based on Save Alex's conviction that the building of the governorate, with its vast number of employees and visitors in a main street such as Fouad street is not suitable and creates severe congestion. For according to Hassan it is illogical to return it to its previous state to restore the prestige of the state in a moment with a different political significance. A few suggestions were offered including rebuilding it to become a ceremonial building only for the governorate, and that the part which deals with the public be moved elsewhere.

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[9]Interview with Ahmed Hassan Mostafa in May 2015
[10]https://www.facebook.com/savealexeg/info?tab=page_info

Save Alex street protest © Save Alex

Photographs of neglected buildings that Save Alex posts to raise awareness © Save Alex

Digital postcards with information on decaying buildings © Save Alex

But Save Alex wanted a transparent discussion about what will happen to the building in no less than a participatory community dialogue. Hassan says that they wrote a handbill that explains in detail the initiative's vision and distributed it across Alexandria. Save Alex held two demonstrations in front of the building and collected signatures, and spoke with officials from the governorate and the Greaco-Roman club, all of which were successful in stopping the planned project.

In Hassan's opinion, one of the most important cases that the initiative worked on was the case of the Cicurel villa, which was removed from the list of heritage and valuable buildings by a prime minister's decree. The initiative knew of the decision to demolish it, so they organized a demonstration and the case was escalated by reaching out to TV programs, and a well known writer, Ibrahim Abdelmeguid, became interested in the case and wrote about it. This wider interest started to shape a discourse on heritage buildings and their importance, which according to Hassan, resulted in that the prime minister himself issued an order to annul the previous decision to remove the building from the heritage list. However Hassan adds, that the building was never included in the list again, its fate hanging in the balance where a demolition order could be issued at any moment.

And so, Save Alex has been successful in defending some buildings from demolition, but not in other cases where they were torn down. But they continue to organize demonstrations in front of buildings that await demolition such as the Greek club.

Hassan explains that the first stage of the initiative was centered around protest and awareness activities so they can reach out to the people and tell them why this is important. At a later stage the focus was on developing the knowledge of the members through workshops and through communicating with other groups of architects and urban heritage specialists. At the end of this period, Hassan adds that they started thinking of publishing a written document, a working paper to present to an executive official, or used for networking with other entities to increase the pressure on decision makers. So a workshop was organised between the group's members and stakeholders where an investor, a lawyer, a tenant, a landlord and an architect were invited. At this point the group believed the best action to save Alexandria's built heritage was a comprehensive approach, and not just the point of view of architects or other groups.

In early 2014, the demolition of Villa Aghion started. This sparked Save Alex to organize a demonstration in front of the villa and meet with the governor, the head of the local council and the minister of housing.[11] They also published their protestation on social media networks. Despite all this, the building was demolished. This in turn led Save Alex to publish a detailed report about the villa, addressing the circumstances of its demolition. They argued that the Egyptian bureaucracy, the failed management of Egyptian heritage, the administrative, legislative and political systems were the reasons behind the demolition of the villa, not the owner, nor the so-called people's culture or even the head of the local council.

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[11]The Minister of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development is in charge of listing "buildings of heritage value" as per Law 119/2008

Consequently, Save Alex drafted a petition titled "On facing the crisis of urban heritage – the problems and recommended solutions". In the petition, they started by reviewing the Villa Aghion case followed by recommending urgent and future plans to address the urban heritage issue in Egypt, but with a focus on Alexandria. The group also reached out to other independent entities working on urban and heritage issues, and it was signed by 14 different entities. Save Alex then presented the petition in February 2014 to the prime minister, all the relevant ministries, the governor of Alexandria and the local councils. As of May 2015, they have not received any response.

Ahmed Hassan Moustafa and Mohamed Nabil, Save Alex's executive director, confirm that the political turbulence that Egypt after July 3, 2013, reduced the enthusiasm of people for change. According to them, without sweeping policy change, architectural and urban heritage will remain at risk, while a number of volunteers in the initiative were harassed for their activism and are in prison now.

This precarious state of affairs has meant that a number of Save Alex's volunteers have lost interest and decided to focus on their personal lives, distancing themselves from the public sphere and activism. Hassan explains that the members started their activities in the form of street protests in Alexandria because they perceived it as an important tool to place pressure on officials, as well as an important tool for raising awareness about the issue at the street level, which includes new groups different from those in the social media circles. However the group was forced to stop any protest activities for the safety of their members, especially after a law was passed criminalising unsanctioned protest.

For now, Save Alex has stepped back from the street, using the time to evaluate their progress, and think of safer, more effective ways to preserve Alexandria's heritage. As the current political climate has curbed even non-political protest, and Egypt being in a legislative vacuum until a parliament is elected, Save Alex will have to think of innovative ways to continue their work, while on the other hand, government organisations with a mandate to preserve built heritage should also reach out to the initiative and support its work.

2.3 Theme 3: Housing

Initiative/Project:	**Housing Improvement Through Micro-finance in Minya** [1]
Actor:	**Better Life Association for Comprehensive Development**
Region:	**Upper Egypt**

Government agencies have long worked to provide subsidised housing for low-income citizens through different housing programs over the decades. These programs have mostly offered standardised blocks of flats, built mostly in new cities, but also on the outskirts of towns and villages, and sold to beneficiaries through mortgage loans. Small exceptions to this formula have been the so-called Desert Hinterland Villages, built for rural communities, or the priority-care al-Awla bel-Re'aya housing, which are very small units offered for rent. There have also been attempts to provide low-interest loans for completing unfinished units or making structural repairs, but which never materialised.

The government programs have left a large segment of the population out of its scope, especially in rural Egypt, for a number of reasons. One of the reasons is that the standardized units do not suit rural needs and customs, where family homes are the norm, and are located near where they work. Another reason is their high prices, which even with subsidies and low interest loans has meant that rural households, which are cash-poor could not meet the minimum income requirements for such loans, or could not prove their incomes because they among the two-thirds of Egyptians who work without formal contracts.[2]

However, there are non-governmental initiatives which managed to find solutions to these problems and have provided housing for many families in Egypt. One of these initiatives has been the Better Life Association's participatory and integrated program for the improvement of housing in Minya. The association's work evolved from basic services to this comprehensive program of enabling adequate housing over the last twenty years since it's founding in 1995, according to Maher Bushra, executive director of Better Life. When it started, Better Life provided traditional educational and literacy services for women, but then moved on to building bathrooms for 6,000 houses, as well as connecting water pipes to about 1,200 households in 30 villages in Minya, according to Bushra, all in coordination with the local government. With the success of this project, the association got involved with the issue tenure security, as they discovered that most of the homes lacked legal papers because they were built illegally on agricultural land. Better Life then began to provide legal support to home-owners to legalise their homes, as well as initiating legal awareness campaigns to inform home-owners of their constitutional and legal rights as they found many homes built under high voltage cables or near to factories.

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[1]Interviews with Maher Bushra and Mina Muqbil, May 2015
[2]For an extended analysis of government housing programs during the last decade, see; Yahia Shawkat. Housing Policy in Egypt between the Continuation of Policies of the Past and the Development of Fair Policies for the Future. The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, 2014 http://eipr.org/report/2014/12/07/2294

Meeting with the community © BLA

Construction work © BLA

Local labour helps build the new homes © BLA

Meeting with the community © BLA

Finally, the association started delivering services such as re-building and restoring homes.[3] "Building a house in Upper Egypt is as celebrated as the marriage of a son or a daughter.", says Bushra. Better Life's participatory policy led to the development of a mechanism for the provision of what they call "suitable loans," which are not grants, but loans that are individually calculated by an engineering expert based on the needs of re-building or improvement on a case-by-case basis. The loan calculation also takes into account the needs and priorities of each family, where loans ranging from EGP 500 to EGP 10,000 (USD 66 to USD 1315) are provided based on the degree of intervention required, and the family's income level.

Better Life's involvement doesn't stop there. Their participatory policy stipulates that loans are spent in the local village's economy to maximise local benefit, according to Bushra. Raw materials are purchased from the village's merchants and labour is provided by locals. If there is a shortage of skilled labour, Better Life creates workshops on the use of local construction techniques and materials, and distributes guidelines, written in a simple language to explain the construction techniques.

"The construction cycle triggers economic ripples that reach a large proportion of the village's residents: plumbers, workers and merchants," according to Bushra. Moreover, Better Life adopts principles of social solidarity to reduce the costs of construction, where it organizes workshops encouraging the carpenter to work on the improvement of the plumber's home, and vice versa.

Even the design of the new homes is executed in a participatory manner; Better Life links architects and civil engineers with the families applying for loans, where individual designs are made with each of the families. Bushra explains that the family lays out its needs, and the architects then translate them into a design that reflects those needs. Some of the families for example own cattle, others have large families, all are taken in to consideration. According to Bushra, "this approach is more efficient than the standardized housing approach" such as that adopted by government's housing projects. During the past years, more than 1,000 homes have been improved, with interventions ranging from full rebuilding, rebuilding of roofs, restoring foundations, or simply painting the interior. Better Life's work also does not end with the improvements, as they distribute guidelines on home maintenance to ensure the sustainability of the improvements.

But the project is not without challenges. Mina Muqbil, Better Life's manager of the housing improvement project, believes that the biggest obstacle facing the project is the government's lack of a vision for housing, as well as it's complex bureaucracy that is often destructive to a project. For example, Bushra mentions how the water company increased the price of its water meters to EGP 1,200 (USD 158), where it ate out a significant portion of the loans poorer families took out for water connections. Bushra also complains of how government bureaucracy prolongs the water installation times to about a month, where he believes its a process that shouldn't take more than two days.

Better Life Association succeeded in directing corporate social responsibility grants

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[3]For more information on Better Life's housing improvement project, see their site http://www.betterlife-egypt.org/index.php/ar/projects/improving-housing-ar

from a number of private sector companies to the provision of adequate housing to more than 2200 families in Minya. A success recognised by the World Habitat Award, which Better Life received in 2010.[4] However, despite the recognition Better Life has received, by both the local residents and international organizations, and despite the effective support it delivers in the areas of housing, drinking water and waste water management, Better Life Association's impact will remain, like that of similar organizations, limited - as long as there is no mechanism or policy that encourages their efforts and builds on them.

[4]See the World Habitat Award website http://www.worldhabitatawards.org/winners-and-finalists/project-details.cfm?lang=00&theProjectID=8AB2DDFA-15C5-F4C0-990809F44E650E73

Initiative/Project:	**Ezbet al-'Assal Upgrade, Shubra, Cairo**
Actor:	**Mona Zakaria Architect Group, SODIC, Cairo Governorate**
	Greater Cairo
Region:	

Residential building collapses in Egypt happen on an almost daily basis. Over 2012-2013, 392 collapses were documented, resulting in the deaths of 192 people and the displacement of more than 800 families.[5] According to the technical inspection authority of the Ministry of Housing, there are 60,000 residential buildings in Egypt that have been condemned, in addition to 225,000 that are in need of immediate repair.[6] This is reflected in egyptbuildingcollapses.org 's statistics that show the most common cause of collapse to be old, dilapidated buildings, meaning a high prevalence in old and historic neighbourhoods.

The Ezbet al-'Assal development project is one of a handful of projects that have worked on the in-situ upgrading of a deteriorated area, eschewing the processes of complete rebuilding or relocation of residents. Dr. Mona Zakaria, the project's architect explains that after the January 2011 Revolution, she became enthusiastic about working on upgrading slums, after a career of working on the restoration of heritage areas. After a series of meetings with government agencies, as well as going on a number of field visits, Zakaria chose to work in Ezbet al-'Assal in Shubra, for which funding was secured after receiving a phone call from the Sodic Real Estate Investment Company, expressing its interest in slum upgrading as part of its corporate social responsibility program.

Zakaria remembers that on her first visit to Ezbet al-'Assal, she did not expect that houses of such style and condition were hidden only a few meters away from Ramses Train Station in the heart of the capital. The deterioration of the houses was so pronounced, where the stairs were merely rubble, and the homes had no bathrooms, simply a hole in the ground. Some homes were no more than shelters of cardboard and tin.

Zakaria resisted official proposals that required complete demolition and re-building as this was not the development she believed in. In her view, projects that involve relocation turn into a process of abstract financial transactions that is completely under the control of the contractor, a process that dilutes the role of the architect and threatens the social networks of the community. Zakaria can not emphasise enough how social solidarity is important to poorer communities. For example, in Ezbet al-'Assal, if a woman needs money for an urgent matter, she cooks a large number of pasta trays and sits in front of her house to sell them all on the same day. The people in the area know and understand what is behind that, and buy her pasta out of a sense of cooperation, without sacrificing her pride and dignity.

And so, in May 2012, a protocol of cooperation was signed between the Cairo Governorate, SODIC, Zakaria, for the upgrade of Ezbet al-'Assal, comprising the

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[5]According to the website http://egyptbuildingcollapses.org/
[6]Construction Inspection Authority: 60 Thousand Buildings are Condemned, Cairo Ranks No. 1, Masrawy, 08/03/2014 http://tinyurl.com/pjs7ub6

A house after restoration © Omnia Khalil

repair and improvement of 15 houses, home to 78 families, as well the rebuilding of only those that could not be repaired. Zakaria began her work by mapping the area and carefully documenting its problems and the deterioration of its buildings, putting together an initial concept for its development, which focused primarily on improving the structural integrity of the houses, though most buildings also required the provision of bathrooms and work on their plumbing. Her assessment also stated the need to improve the local sanitation network.

"In our first day working in the area, and with the demolition of the first house, people played music in the street and started to dance.", according to Zakaria. Her team decided to start working on the most dilapidated houses first, as they posed an imminent threat to their occupants. As Zakaria worked on the improvements, hoping to not have to demolish and then rebuild any of the houses, some crumbled during the work and had to be rebuilt, which complicated the process, since these buildings required demolition permits first, and then new building permits would be issued. A process which proved lengthy. She then decided that the façades of the buildings requiring demolition would be retained, which was another challenge altogether. Her team also ruled out the use of reinforced concrete for several reasons: it costs 40% more than load bearing masonry walls and timber floors; it allows for the addition of floors which could increase the area's density; and its maintenance and protection from water, especially in poor environments, will be expensive and complicated.
According to Zakaria, the original contractors tried to cut corners because they felt that half the effort and quality would be enough for the inhabitants of a slum. A lot of the orginal work they did had to be redone, and they were later replaced with another set of contractors. This is something Zakaria finds symptomatic in slum upgrading projects, where some officials she has worked with have expressed to her that the residents do not deserve all this effort. "When we asked [the officials]: 'Did you consult the residents? ' They dismissively responded, 'Yes, of course.'", according to her.

The Ezbet al-'Assal residents decided to move to the streets in front of their homes until the upgrading work was completed. Some of them rented room or apartments in the same area, others moved in with family, while some lived in tents set up in a vacant plot nearby. The project team decided that the men should work with them and participate in the development and restoration processes, which sparked the ire of women. So the women also participated but that in turn sparked the ire of men. Most of the residents worked on menial tasks, such as removing rubble and debris.

Zakaria recounts how a landlord who owned 22 units in the area complained to the local government that he wants concrete houses and does not want bathrooms installed because they will eat up space in the houses. Zakaria discussed it with him, and explained that she will not concede on bathrooms, because, according to her studies, there are epidemic diseases in all of the houses, such as Hepatitis C, and other liver and eye diseases.

The project had a participatory dimension as well. For example, one of the tenants who lived on the ground floor was suffering from ground water intrusion. When Zakaria visited her to study the house, the tenant expressed how she did not want the spatial improvements, that included the addition of a bathroom and kitchen to affect the number of rooms she had, something Zakaria was able to

accommodate. The tenant's husband recounts how he lived in front of the house for six months to oversee the demolition and reconstruction, while his wife rented two rooms in a nearby house and used to come everyday and sit in front of the house with him. After the work was completed, the tenants accepted an increase in rent because they believed it to be reasonable in light of the work that was done.

However, Zakaria faced some difficult moments with the residents too. There were heated discussions between the project's team and the majority of the families about the sizes of the units. The installation of bathrooms required allocating space from the rooms, but families wanted to preserve the spaces because they were already small. Something that was proved when some of them were not able to move their furniture back in, forcing them to break parts of walls. The provision of alternative housing during the development was a complicated process for the residents, as it was not accounted for in the project's budget. This meant that the poorest families had to crowd relatives' homes for six to nine months. In one case, one woman demanded a new, separate room added to the building she lived in so that she could leave the newly renovated apartment to her son to marry and live with his wife. Some landlords refused to let tenants back in after the upgrading because they wanted to raise the rent, which was in violation of the development contract since no costs were borne by the landlords.

In a country where over 280,000 buildings are in immediate need of rebuilding or extreme structural repairs, lessons must be learned from the complexities of upgrading Ezbet al'Assal, as well as other similar projects. As parallel practice alone will never be able to address the need of hundreds of thousands of families for safer homes, these lessons can prove valuable to a national strategy written to address this need without affecting social networks and local economies.

A house after restoration © Mona Zakaria Architects

'Toilets' before imporvement work © Mona Zakaria Architects

Initiative/Project:	Legal Support for Mahalla Textile Company Pensioners to Maintain Adequate Housing
Actor:	Pensioners Union, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
Region:	Delta

Housing initiatives are usually limited to improving, constructing or financing homes. However, other initiatives have provided legal support for keeping existing homes, where families have been threatened with eviction. According to a 1998 study, 90% of homes in Egypt are not registered, and thus considered informal.[7] And where it was not surprising to find out that 100% of homes in informal areas are unregistered, the surprise was that old government housing was also 100% informal, even though it started out as formal housing.

While this does not necessarily mean that 90% of Egyptians face the threat of eviction, what it means is that legal disputes over ownership represents a considerable proportion of ongoing litigation before the Egyptian courts, making it a prime component of the so-called housing crisis. The case of the Mahalla Textile worker's housing is a clear example of the complexity of such issues and of the difficulty in reaching a just settlement for all parties, where workers have spent more than four decades working for the Mahalla Textile Company; how could they be evicted at the age of 60 without the provision of alternative housing after all this period?

Muhammad Wadi, head of the Mahalla Pensioners' Union, says that a retired worker who lived in the workers' housing used to await the eviction order upon his retirement, because this used to qualify him for social housing elsewhere in the city.[8] The Mahalla Textile Company's residence is not wholly owned by the company, as is the norm with other company housing that is only offered to employees of that company as long they are employed by it. Wadi explains that the Mahalla Textile workers' housing is in-fact a shared ownership scheme between the company and the employees, as it was funded by the workers' profit shares, of which 10% were annually diverted to a housing fund. The fund also supported the local council built housing that retired workers qualified for with the eviction order. "This means that the workers are not tenants, but shareholders" says Wadi.

The workers' housing, or Mosta'maret al-Mahlla as it is locally referred to, is a unique place in the city of Mahalla. It has pitched roof single storey houses, while scattered between them are a number of five floor apartment blocks. The has a low density and is interspersed with gardens and the streets are shaded with trees. A stark contrast to the crowded city just outside its walls. According to Wadi the housing has a complicated history. The original settlement originally meant at emergency shelter to house communities that could be displaced as a result of World War II, but was never used. Then with the establishment of the textile company, Gharbiyah governorate assigned the houses to the company's workers.

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[7]Hernando de Soto. Dead Capital and the Poor in Egypt. Egyptian Center for Economic Studies. 1998 http://www.eces.org.eg/Publication.aspx?Id=184
[8]Interview with Mohamed Wadi, May 2015

Mohamed Wadi, head of the pension union, and in the background, the workers' housing in Mahalla © EIPR

One of the older houses in the settlement © EIPR

A workers' meeting © EIPR

One of the older houses in the settlement © EIPR

Pensioners' Union HQ © EIPR

Commemorative plaque on one of the housing blocks © EIPR

The Mahllah Textile company later bought the houses in the 1960s, but not the land, from the local governmnet, with money from the workers' housing fund, and in 1977, as part of an expansion plan, the apartment blocks were built, again, using the worker's housing fund.

The crisis started around the end of the 1990s after amending law 203/1991, which deleted the article stipulating that a percentage of the workers' profit shares would go to the housing fund, leading to its depletion with a few years. This has meant that about 750 retired workers and their families, who have now received evictions orders, can not received alternative housing because non has been built. Wadi explains that even though the Mahalla company knows full well that there is no alternative houisng, and that the workers are share-holders of their current residence, the company continued to file eviction orders. According to Samuel Tharwat, a lawyer with the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights'a and who represents 33 of the families challenging eviction rulings, the courts continue to uphold these orders even though evidence has been given that there is no alternatove housing. Moreover, cases of squatting have been brought against the workers by the Mahalla company, where courts have ruled that exorbitant ground rents are owed by the families to the company.

But why then is the company so keen on evicting the workers, even though they are shareholders. Wadi explains that once any of the single storey homes are vacated, the Mahalla company demolishes them, rather than assigning the unit to a new worker, as a 5448 unit housing project has been agreed between the company and Gharbiyah governorate to replace the workers' housing. Property prices in the city of Mahalla have been booming, and both the company and the local government seek to capitalise on that.

Wadi insits that the workers have a right to their homes, and that they should be allowed to legally own them as has happened in similar cases such as the Shebin Textile Company. And if the company and the governorate want to go through with their plan, then the workers must have a share and be rehoused in the new development. Indeed Wadi presented such a request before the Januray 2011 Revolution to Gharbiyyah's then governor, Major General Abdul Hamid Shennawy, who agreed to it.[9] However he was replaced after the Revolution and the promise went with him. According to Wadi, this is but one example of decisions that the government takes but does not enforce, the last of which was in April 2014 when the current Prime Minister, Ibrahim Mahlab, agreed to the implementation of the first phase of the project with a designated share for the pensioned workers, but nothing has been implemented since.

The Pension's Union was able though to have the Mahalla company agree to stop filing new eviction orders until negotiations with the union on how workers were going to be compensated were over. Additionally, the newly written Constitution guarantees the right to adequate housing, where one of the obligations of this right is the provision of alternative housing in cases of eviction. Despite all this Tharwat says that the courts did not accept the appeals filed against the old

[9]Surprise: Workers houses in al-Mahalla al-Kubra .. are state owned, Al-Ahram, 23-11-2009 http://www.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2009/11/23/MHFZ1.HTM

eviction orders, nor against the ground rents. He then moved to file for legalising the residents' status as renters until the provision of alternative housing.

The Mahalla workers' houising case represents only a sample of the ongoing conflicts and disputes around tenure security in Egypt, which is it self a main contributor to the housing crisis. The work of the pensioners union, as well as human rights organisations in the filed of housing provison, should be considered as important as the work of charities and development NGOs who repair or build housing. The fact is that civil society institutions will have to continue to fill the vacuum and support hundreds of thousands of famlies until the issues of tenure security are part of the government's housing policy.

2.4 Theme 4: Urban Service Delivery

Initiative/Project:	**Community-based Waste-water Treatment Station, Abdul-Qawiy Shietan Village, Sinnuris, Fayyum**[1]
Actor:	**Together Association for Development and Environment, Mubarak Association for Community Development, Japanese Embassy in Cairo**
Region:	**Upper Egypt**

One of the biggest urban problems in Egypt concerns lack of proper sanitation, leading to environmental and health problems, as well as threatening the structural safety of homes. According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), 53% of Egyptian house-holds did not have proper sanitation, the majority of which used unsealed septic tanks or informal networks that dumped untreated sewage into streams and canals, while a small proportion had no connections of any kind.[2] Governorates in Upper Egypt suffered the most, where 85 to 90% of the residents of Qena, Assiut, Minya, Beni Suef and Sohag were deprived of proper sanitation.

The problem of waste-water management in Egypt has two dimensions. The first is the high costs of the systems, where according to recent estimates by the Minister of Housing, Egypt needs EGP 100 billion (USD 13.2 Bn) to be able to serve all the deprived households.[3] The second is the construction of the networks, especially in dense villages where one or more houses would need to be demolished to build pumping station, and the narrow streets and precarious mud-brick houses are risked with the excavation work needed to place the pipes.

There seems to be a solution though, that costs much less than traditional centralised systems, and does not require their scale of construction work. Compact decentralised waste-water treatment stations can serve a village or two and can be built in months. These stations can even be managed by the community under the supervision of the water and waste-water companies, and the technology has already been tested, as a number of these stations have been built and operated over the last few years.

"Community oversight of the project is the most effective way to ensure the implementation and maintenance of waste-water treatment facilities", says Sameh Seif, chairman of the Together Association for Development and Environment. Together has built two compact stations using community participation through

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[1]Interviews with Sameh Seif, Chairman of the Together Foundation for Development and Environment, and Haj Sayyid al-Sharqawy, Chairman of the Mubarak Association for Community Development, May 2015

[2]Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, The Distribution of the Number of Families and Individuals in Relation to Connection to the Waste-water Network, 2006

[3]"Madbuly" from Fayyum: Sewage Problems in Egypt Need 100 billion Pounds, Al-Ahram, 10/01/2015 http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/582841.aspx

Compact waste-water station, Abdel Qawy Sheitan Village, Fayoum © Yahia Shawkat

Excavation work © Together Association

Waste-water after treatment © Yahia Shawkat

local NGOs, transferring management of the stations to them after implementation. Seif explains that the local NGO helps coordinate the excavation work with the residents so that no one suffers from the closure of roads and no home is negatively impacted. It also helps in negotiating with the residents when there is a need for the demolition of a house to build a pumping station or the donation of plot of land to build the waste-water treatment stations. Without these lcoal NGOs, Seif says, things get complicated and sometimes postponed indefinitely.

For this purpose, Together partnered with the Mubarak Association for Community Development for their project in Fayoum. According Hag Sayyid al-Sharqawy, the NGOs chairman, they did not need to demolish any of the houses because the pumping station was small, and it fit near a canal, while one of the village's residents donated a 500 square meters plot for the station.

Construction costs were relatively low when calculated on a per household basis. "A little more than digging a basic septic tank", according to Seif. The project cost EGP 870,000 (USD 144,5000) serving 250 houses, which works out to EGP 3,500 (USD 460) per household. This means that even if the project was not funded by the Japanese Embassy in Cairo, and supported by the Together Association, the villagers could have funded a significant portion of the cost, especially if it were paid in instalments over a number of years. Haj Sayyid would like the neighbouring Rahil village connected to the station, as it has a capacity to serve 750 house-holds. The Rahil residents are willing to pay part of the cost, which is about 400,000 Pounds, but they need the government to fund the rest.

Seif estimates that if this technology is replicated on a national scale, the cost of connecting deprived families could drop from EGP 100 billion (USD 13.2 Bn) to around EGP 40 Bn (USD 5.3 Bn) and perhaps less. Moreover, if the residents were to bear some of the cost, like what the Rahil residents and others offered according to Seif, the public budget needed would be even less.

So, if funding is not the major obstacle, what is the major challenge facing the construction of compact waste-water stations? "Bureaucracy" says Seif. Each station requires the approval of nine government agencies, the most difficult of which is the Ministry of Agriculture which has to approve of the rezoning of the agricultural plots on which the station is to be built, and which requires no less than the personal approval of the Minister himself. Every time we work on a station, we start from scratch, because government agencies are not used to dealing with community-based requests for the building of treatment stations, adds Seif.

The Together Association prepares early for the operation and maintenance of the station. During implementation, Together organizes training sessions for the local NGO members on its operation. This NGO is also prepped to collect the monthly subscriptions and follow-up with the technicians on the station's maintenance. It sounds like a simple process: "All we need is to entrust the community and all the government needs to do is monitor the operation," according to Seif. However, despite the success of Together's station in Beni Suef, the Fayoum station has some difficulties. Haj Sayyid complains that no monthly fees, of about EGP 10 (USD 1.3) per household, have been received since the station was operational a few months ago. This threatens the sustainability of the station under community

management, and might result in transferring supervision to the state-run Holding Company for Water and Waste-water, which would increase the fees.

It seems that the problem with the collection is a result of the residents' feeling that the NGO is not an official agency that they are obliged to pay fees to. According to Haj Abdu, a resident of the Sheitan village: "The new network is a thousand times better than what we had before, and we did not refuse to make the payments." But he does not want to pay until he sees that everyone will do the same, and not just himself.

While there are clear advantages of compact decentralised waste-water stations, particularly its low-cost and speed of implementation, there are also challenges such as official approvals, and the sustainable operation of the station and the collection of fees. Where the technology has proven effective, the community management model may not be very efficient, not necessarily in collecting the fees, which is a problem that even government agencies face, but rather in the financial efficiency of the project. The Fayoum station still need an addition EGP 30,000 (USD 3950) to connect it to the electricity grid, something the project budget could not accommodate even though the station can handle three times the house-holds it was designed for.

This emphasizes the importance of an integrated planning system, one that maximizes the advantages of the decentralized stations and eliminates their drawbacks. For example, the same grant awarded to the Fayoum station could have supported both the Sheitan and Rahil villages if government agencies had supported the planning process, supported a portion of the costs from the public budget, as well as facilitated cost sharing by the village residents. Much that is between millions of deprived house-holds and access to proper sanitation is minor administrative reform that institutionalises the operation and monitoring of these compact community stations.

Initiative/Project:	Gharbah Valley Community Dam, Sheikh 'Awwad Village, St. Catherine, South Sinai[4]
Actor:	The Residents of Sheikh Aawad, St. Catherine Protectorate
Region:	Suez Canal and Sinai

Small Bedouin settlements scatter the valleys of Sinai. One such settlement is the Sheikh ''Awwad village, located 10 kilometers from the city of St. Catherine and 8 kilometers from the nearest paved road. The word "village" is purely an administrative, as it shares little with its rural cousins, for grid electricity is very recent, while the "village" relies on wells for drinking water, which are re-filled by seasonal floods. In the eyes of the Gebeleya tribe, their settlement represents the rapid stages of urbanisation they went through during the last decades. Starting with the "hair" houses, wooden structures covered in wool, through stone and mud-mortar houses roofed with timber, then finally cement block houses also roofed in timber.

The tribe chose to settle in the confluence of three main valleys; Naqb al-Hawa, linking with the city of St. Catherine, the Talkh Valley which drains the mountains of Tarbush, Abu-Rajum and Abbas Pasha, and the Gharbah Valley which drains the mountains of Khuzaymah, Ajer and al-Banat. For decades, these valleys were the source of life for the Sheikh 'Awwad residents, according to the head of the village, Sheikh Jamil Attia. They dug wells to store flood water for them and their animals, and herded sheep on the grass and the plants that appeared after each flood. With the population growth, the increase in their need for seasonal agriculture and the stability of the water supply, Attia says they began to construct so-called dry dams. Small dams were built from igneous rocks in the valleys which were held together with mud. However, water was not properly stored because major floods covered silted it them up, or washed them away.

Community support programs started after the St. Catherine Protectorate was established in the late nineties. They initially focused on tourism and environmental management training for the local tribes, where a participatory program helped build the Karm Ecolodge near the village of Sheikh 'Awwad, and the residents, including Attia, were trained on running and managing it.

With the success of this participatory experience, confidence was built between the residents and protectorate. Attia, representing his village, decided to propose dream; the building of a large dam to serve their village. "We had the local experience and the labour to build the dam, and the protectorate had the financial means to buy the construction materials and provide some specialised labour," Attia explains. Indeed, after three months of negotiations between the residents and Brigadier Atef Darwish, the Director of the protectorate at the time, a plan was agreed. Labour would be provided by the residents of Sheikh 'Awwad 1, Sheikh 'Awwad 2 villages along with help al-Tarfah village, even though the dam would not benefit it. The protectorate would provide a budget of EGP 18,000 (USD 2400) to fund the purchase of cement and steel bars, as well as pay symbolic wages to the workers.

[4]Interview with Sheikh Jamil Attia, head of Sheikh 'Awwad village, May 2015

Wadi Gharba Dam after floods in January 2010 © Yahia Shawkat

Wadi Gharba Dam, empty © Yahia Shawkat

Wadi Gharba Dam after floods in January 2010 © Yahia Shawkat

Sheikh Gamil Attia with his children © Yahia Shawkat

Awlad 'Awad village © Yahia Shawkat

The next step was choosing the location of the dam. Here, the residents' local knowledge of the area was respected. They chose a narrow place in the Gharbah valley because it was the best location to both hold a large amount of water and serve the largest number of residents. Attia describes that a stone dam reinforced with steel was built, spanning 26 meters in length, 2.2 meters in width, and 5.5 meters in height, part of which was a natural stone waterfall. All in it took 26 days to build.

But it took some time before they could reap its benefits. Attia recounts that they waited a year after another until the fifth year when it started raining, and indeed, the water filled the dam and the wells behind it. "The dam changed our lives and we felt secure knowing that water is always there and abundant, thank God" says Attia. According to him, every rainy year provides us with two years worth of water". Before the construction of the dam there was only enough water for drinking and herding sheep, and drought sometimes forced the residents to move in the summer to other places that had water, returning to the valley in the winter. Agriculture was only seasonal. In a year when the flood is strong, there can be agricultural activity for a maximum of one season, says Attia, and nothing if the year passed without floods. "The dam gave us stability and the opportunity to cultivate crops until we became self-sufficient in figs, olives and vegetables", adds Attia. Some families could even sell their surplus, and boost their earnings.

Despite the success of the Gharba Valley Community Dam, a number of other communities in St. Catherine Protectorate are still without access to a continuous source of water. According to official statistics, 20% of the South Sinai households are not connected to a drinking water network.[5] In other parts of the valleys around Sheikh 'Awwad, some pickup trucks still carry water to communities. Attia explained that the owners of the trucks fill their tanks with water from their wells and transport it to families that need it charging them only the cost of fuel.

The Gharbah dam was able to convince Major General Mustafa Afifi, South Sinai Governor at the time, with the effectiveness of dams as a source of drinking water and for local agriculture, after he had refused to consider it as a solution, according to Attia. However the participatory building of a community dam was only repeated once over the last decade and a half since the Gharba Dam was built, where a smaller dam was built to serve the same community, as the program that the South Sinai Governor initiated after the success of the Gharba Dam was not participatory. Attia finds these non-participatory dams to be less efficient and more expensive than their Gharbah dam, citing the new Eslaf Valley Dam, west of Sheikh 'Awwad, which the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources built in 2013 at a cost of EGP 4 Mil. (USD 526,000), but which does not serve many residents.

The Gharbah Valley Community Dam, as well as the other participatory projects which the St. Catherine Protectorate initiated, are but exceptional examples, realised only because there was a community willing to participate for public interest and individuals in a government agency interested in integrated development. However, this exception shows that the opportunity to make drinking water available in a sustainable way for the thousands of deprived households in South Sinai is within reach.

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[5]Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, The Distribution of Families and Their Members According to Type of Water Source .2006

Wadi Gharba Dam after floods in January 2010 © Yahia Shawkat

Initiative/Project:	Development of the Allenby Garden, Kafr Abdu, Eastern District, Alexandria[6]
Actor:	Kafr Abdu Residents Association for Development
Region:	Alexandria

While there are a number of major public parks in Egypt such as the Giza Zoo, Montazah in Alexandria and the Botanical Garden Island in Aswan, local parks that residents can access on foot without the need to use transportation and without any entrance fees or subscriptions are limited.[7] This shortage of public space can be linked to the mismanagement of this social resource, where most of the Nile's banks in the cities of the Delta and the valley have been allocated to private clubs, accessible only to members or turned into restaurants. Similarly, sea-side cities have come to lack free, public beaches. This has left squares and traffic islands as the leading venue of public space, and only then in the formally planned neighbourhoods of Egyptian cities, as informal neighbourhoods are too densely built.

These public squares can be divided into two types. The neglected ones are either overgrown with shrubs, or are deserted garbage dumps. The maintained ones have manicured lawns, healthy trees and colourful flowers. They may also have with benches, lighting and paths for pedestrians. This section details how the Allenby Garden in Kafr Abdu, in the Shark District in Alexandria was recently turned from a neglected space to a well-maintained garden used by the neighbourhood.

Kafr Abdu is an area of many contradictions. Its name is misleading, as the 'Kafr' designation, means hamlet in Arabic. Though with most of its buildings being small palaces, such as the British Consulate, which used to be the headquarters of the British High Commissioner, as well as historic villas inhabited by the Alexandrian upper-middle class families, it is far from being a hamlet. The name though could be traced to Kafr Ahmed Abdu in Suez, the scene of Egyptian resistance against British occupying troops in the 1940s and 50s.[8] After the 1952 Revolution, and the exit of the British, Egyptian authorities renamed the Marshal Allenby Street in Alexandira, Kafr Abdou in commemoration of the resistance operations. On the other hand, the park located in the middle of Kafr Abdu preserved the name of the British High Commissioner Edmond Hillary Allenby, who held the title between 1919 and 1925, though in the localized form of "Al-Lenby."

It took another revolution, that of January 2011, to bring the neighbourhood's attention to the neglected Allenby Garden. Nevine Shawky, deputy chairman of the Kafr Abdu Residents Association for Development, says that "Before we set up the association, we went to the Governor requesting permission to work on the Allenby Garden and he approved and was very cooperative". "He even visited the

[6]Interview with Nevine Shawky, Vice-President of the Kafr Abdu Residents Association for Development, May 2015
[7]For more on the challenges of public space in Egypt, see: Right to Public Space in the Egyptian Constitution, Tadamun, 26-03-2014
http://www.tadamun.info/2014/03/26/the-right-to-public-space-in-the-egyptian-constitution-a-2/#.VXGFvVJT5sU
[8]Resistance at all costs, Al-Ahram Weekly, 24-30 January, 2002 http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/570/sc4.htm

Children playing in the Allenby Garden after improvements were made © Omnia Khalil

Allenby Garden before improvement © Kafr Abdu Association

Allenby Garden after improvement © Kafr Abdu Association

park," adds Shawky. With written approval from the Alexandria Governor, the group decided to set up the Kafr Abdou Residents Association for Development so that they can manage the park in a legal and sustainable way, and avoid letting it fall into neglect once again.

The association immediately proceeded to rent an office for their headquarters, form a board of directors, register with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, and initiate a social media page.[9] According to Shawky, one of the Association's objectives was proving that the community of Kafr Abdu is capable of managing an important urban resource. When they discovered that the garden has some heritage value, with a unique design that dates back to the 1950s, they decided on preserving the garden's design and tasked an agricultural engineer to follow the existing patterns, but with new flowerbeds and trees, and organised for a group of art students to paint the trees with drawings. Full-time security guards were appointed and tasked with making sure visitors respected the designated activities, as the garden was divided into different zones so that all age groups are served, according to Shawky.

With the success of the garden's management initiative and the increase in the number of the Association's members, the Kafr Abdu Residents Association started working on cleaning the streets around the park, including 8 major streets in addition to about 30 smaller ones. Shawky explains that when one household joins the association and pays the monthly subscription, the association cleans the street where they live.

But the burden of managing public space has taken its toll on the association. Nevine Shawky lists a number of obstacles, such as the disinterest or the refusal of some residents to pay the subscription fees, which means funds are stretched. Shawky also complains of how some of the visitors misuse of the garden and do not respect the rules. "You find visitors playing football in areas where it is forbidden". Having said that, the association believes that the park should be public and open to all, but they are still looking for ways to prevent its abuse.

The initiative by the Kafr Abdu Residents Association for Development highlighted a model where a civil society organisation managed public space resources to provide an urban service that most neighbourhoods in Egypt do not have. But the experiment also posits a number of questions. The first is about the role of NGOs and the authority they have in managing public space. The Kafr Abdu Association is trying hard to keep the park open and free of charge for all, not just for Kafr Abdu residents. But will this be sustainable and survive the class difference between the area and its surrounding neighbourhoods, especially with complaints of misuse of the garden. There are no clear norms on the extent of the authority and responsibility an NGO has in limiting public access to parks whose management is delegated to it. There are cases where NGOs have fenced in the public gardens delegated to them, and control access they see fit.

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[9]Kafr Abdu Association for Development Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%83%D9%81%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/1507970739473467?sk=info&tab=page_info

The other question is related to financing maintenance and operation activities. Residents of Kafr Abdu finance the garden and street cleaning twice. The first time is through the garbage collection tarrif added to the electricity bill as well as local taxes, which go to the councils who are supposed to be the ones in charge of street cleaning and garbage collection. This makes payment to an NGO in charge of street cleaning a double bill. The experience has shown that some people will refuse to pay for lack of interest or because they believe they already pay the local government for the service.

To make public space available for all without discrimination, and to provide good street cleaning and garbage collection services, as well as avoid class influence on the process, government agencies need to prepare a clear framework for the management of public space. This framework should work to guarantee residents' rights, prevent double billing, and support local efforts to look after and manage these spaces.

2.5 Theme 5: Urban Economy

Initiative/Project:	**Port Said 'Ala Qadimuh, Marketing Port Said as a Historical City**
Actor:	**Port Said 'Ala Qadimuh**
Region:	**Suez Canal and Sinai**

In the imagination of most its visitors, Port Said is a commercial city. For Port Said used to be a duty free zone making it attractive for hundreds of thousands of annual visitors seeking imported canned fruit, soap, and clothes from global brands. That was until in 2002, the duty free status was abolished,[1] and the visiting crowds disappeared overnight, leaving Port Said in economic recession.

There were several local initiatives to return the duty free status where shop owners demonstrated and merchants applied political pressure. In contrast, Port Said 'Ala Qadimuh (or Port Said as it was) tackled the economic challenge differently. It's founders decided to aim for the broader goal of returning Port Said to its old historical and cultural status.[2] Muhammed Hasan, co-founder of the initiative, is an architecture student and is interested in the heritage of Port Said. He started by collecting the residents' and visitors' mental images of the city through their stories. Hasan found that most of the residents' images of Port Said were very negative, while on the other hand, the visitors had romantic and nostalgic views of it. It turned out that as Port Said's residents witnessed both the prosperity and the recession, this left them in a state of frustration and despair. However, for the visitors, Port Said was associated with shopping, but with the end of its duty free status, they did not have reason to visit and so, were left with mental images of Port Said as a thriving city.

This was not surprising to Hasan because he also witnessed the bitter transformation of his city. According to him, the cancellation of Port Said's status was also coupled with other practices and decisions that contributed to the slow death of the city, as if there was a systematic plan to eliminate it altogether. For example, tourists who come on cruise ships to Port Said are no longer allowed to stay in the city. They have the option of staying on their cruise ships, or to take prearranged trips to visit Khan el-Khalili and spend the night in Cairo. This deprived the Port Said's local economy of another major source of income. Later on, the bloody events of the Port Said stadium in 2013 took what is left of the city's domestic tourism. Hasan says; "the massacre of 74 football supporters ignited hatred towards the people of Port Said until it became like the outcast student amongst his colleagues".

But economic decline did not erase the history of Port Said, yet. According to Hasan, the unique architecture of Port Said still dominates it, despite the invasion of newer styles. Here, Muhammad Hasan decided to tackle the issues of the tangible and intangible heritage through awareness-raising campaigns designed

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[1]As per Law 5/2002
[2]See the Port Said 'Ala Qadimuh Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/PSademo

One of the tours that Port Said 'Ala Qadimoh organise © Port Said 'Ala Qadimoh

New waste bins being installed © Port Said 'Ala Qadimoh

Digital postcards of Port Saidi words © Port Said 'Ala Qadimoh

to mobilise the largest number of residents to work on the integrated development of the city, including the urban, the touristic and, thus, the economic. The seeds of the initiative to market Port Said as a historical city were planted when one of the city's sports clubs was transformed into a storytelling platform, by Hasan and his colleagues, which he used to tell stories of the important buildings in the city to small, local audiences. This platform quickly turned into a forum that brought together about thirty youth, aged between 13 and 23, who became the founding members of the Port Said 'Ala Qadimuh initiative.

From here, the group began to study the historical buildings and structures of Port Said, reading up, meeting with historians and interviewing old residents. The group succeeded in building a strong database of information about most of the valuable buildings, and after the success of the first phase of the initiative, the group decided to expand its interaction with the public. They set their launch date for April 25th, 2014, which coincided with Port Said's 155th anniversary. However, the security agencies refused to allow them to plan any events on that day because it was also the Sinai Liberation Day, and so the group decided to start of the events on the 18th and to end on the 25th of April. Hasan says they planned to organize concerts with young but known artists and a carnival featuring artistic, cultural and, more importantly, awareness events. But they didn't have any money, so, they did away with the carnival idea, had each member contribute a small amount of money, and organized historic tours for the residents instead, an activity they thought would help their cause much more than the carnival.

They put up some posters in Port Said University inviting people to the tours, and were surprised when 120 attendees showed up for the first tour. With the success of these tours, the team developed the tours plans with some of the many shops they pass by, convincing them to distribute discount cards for the tour goers, as well as including a lunch break in one of the restaurants on their trail. The 'Ala Qadimuh group also organized a street gallery of photographs on one of the school's walls, featuring stories and historical photographs of known buildings in Port Said. The street gallery attracted about 2,000 visitors, and two days later, they organized another gallery in the al-Nuras Resort for another audience, capitalising on a commercial exhibit that was taking place there.

Encouraged by the positive response of Port Saidis, the team developed their idea to be more effective and more sustainable. Hasan recounts how they made a wooden boxes featuring books about Port Said, and put them in the club, then in a number of popular cafes, and then in luxury cafes. Up until their successful launch, they had worked organically, and so decided it would be better to set up a structure that included a media coordinator responsible for social media and publicising of their events. They also formed a public relations team, a research team, and a finance team, contributed symbolic amounts of money to cover their activities. Finally, they appointed a project manager, to manage their growing number of initiatives. All this paid off, where their Facebook page reached more than 13,000 fans who contribute to sharing information about important buildings in Port Said. This in turn helped them network and exchange experiences with similar groups abroad.

From here, the initiative became interested in other aspects of heritage, for they became concerned with how the historical buildings were in need of intervention

because many of them were dilapidated. According to Hasan, this prompted them to start a project that advocates the reuse of historical buildings. On example was the Italian House, a Modernist building which used to house a movie theatre and a library. The group is working on finding ways to reuse the building as a cultural center that includes a theatre and art galleries, so that it becomes a meeting point for Port Said residents as well as a tourist attraction. Hasan also mentions how the initiative's also tackled the issue of cleanliness, with the organisation of the Clean Port Said project which was able to convince local companies to finance the placement of waste bins on the main streets of the city.

The 'Ala Qadimuh initiative is in many ways a unique one. Their awareness-raising activities have on the one hand focused on preserving the city's heritage, while on the other, worked to attract tourism and stimulate the economy. It will be some time before one can measure the initiative's effect on the city's economy, but the success it achieved in attracting a large number of the city's residents and visitors raises hopes that it might achieve its larger goals in the coming years.

Initiative/Project:	Al-Amal Agricultural Developemnt, Minya[3]
Actor:	**The Coptic Evangelical Institute for Social Services (CEOSS)**
Region:	**Upper Egypt**

Urbanisation has been increasing at the expense of the agricultural land, where profit margins for farmers cannot compete with the real estate value these lands hold. With small farmers with land holdings of 5 acres or less, representing 52% of farmers in Egypt,[4] urbanisation represents one of the biggest challenge to the agricultural sector n Egypt, and with it, food security for Egyptians.

In this context, the al-Amal Project for Agricultural Development represents a model for agricultural projects that are centred on the rural-urban relationship. Basem Sayyid, the project's manager at the Coptic Evangelical Institute for Social Services (CEOSS), says that agricultural and environmental services provided by them developed over the years, from the simple acts of distributing planting seedlings, solar heaters and domestic ovens, to a comprehensive agricultural and environmental development framework. According to Sayyid, their first such program focused on the management of agricultural waste, while the second focused on capacity building for the farmers. From the outset, the Amal project was directed at the poorest farmers, those that had the smallest land holdings, and thus made the least profits, as well as fishermen.

The waste management program had dual economic and environmental aims. For example, farmers are used to burning rice straw, and banana crop waste is simply thrown on the sides of roads because they have no use for them. Sayyid explains how the program got environmentalists and agricultural consultants to train the farmers on how to reuse their waste. One of the ideas was chopping the banana crop waste and mixing it with animal waste and straw, to become an organic fertilizer which the farmer can either use, instead of buying chemical fertilizers, or sell and earn a profit.

For the reuse of animal water, CEOSS provided a waste analysis service to help identify the best type of fertilizer for each farming context, maximizing agricultural production and raising the farmers' awareness of the health risks that result from leaving animal waste without treatment.

Sayyid says that the capacity building theme tried to change the farmers' traditions in dealing with the land, by adopting new technologies, where farmers were trained on modern equipment that was provided by the program. CEOSS also provided capacity building on economic and financial issues to help reduce costs and maximise profits. This included independent economic planning, and crop choices based on the nature of the land and the demand in the market. Sayyid explains how the plan included opening access for new markets for the farmers,

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[3]Interview with Basem Sayyid, May 2015
[4]Farmers who own five acres or less. The Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, The General Agricultural Census, 1981-1982

by directly networking them with food companies and big restaurants, to avoid middlemen, who would eat from their profits. Some were also able to access the lucrative export market. "Who could have imagined that the private sector will deal directly with the farmers without the big brokers?" wonders Sayyid.

Although the project is predominantly the work of a civil society organisation, it does not work in isolation from the relevant government agencies. Sayyid tells us that they work on networking between the farmers and governmental agencies, focusing especially on the issue of the lack of trust between them. "Each party presents its problems, and we try to produce a working document that defines the duties and responsibilities of each side", adds Sayyid.

But what happens when the funding is spent and the program is over? Many projects ends and their impact ends with it. Sayyid explains that CEOSS works on post-program plans from the start, where they identify a local NGO as well as help the farmers elect a representative committee, where agricultural land management programmes would have all three working together at first. After the capacity-building phase and the start of the project, CEOSS gradually withdraws, transferring responsibilities to the NGO and the farmers' committee. "Therefore, the farmer is transformed from a passive recipient to an active actor," according to Sayyid.

CEOSS managed to work directly with more than 12,000 farmers in the Delta and Upper Egypt, and three of the farmers' committees were successfully transformed into formal agricultural cooperatives, ensuring their sustainability. CEOSS also participated in the drafting of the 2014 constitution, where it presented recommendations related to agriculture, the handicapped, and economic development. This dual approach, of on the ground work and policy change has given the civil society organisation a strong footing in fighting for food security and the poor, against the erosion of agricultural land beneath informal urban sprawl. One can not ignore however, the importance of a comprehensive state-level framework that integrates both agricultural policy with urban policy to help secure the economic future of villages and their farmers.

Farmers proud of their higher production © CEOSS

One of the community-managed fields © CEOSS

Initiative/Project: Athar Lina, Khalifa, Cairo[5]

Actor: Megawra, Built Environment Collective, The Ministry of State for Antiquities

Region: Greater Cairo

Censuses in historic neighbourhoods in Cairo have documented significant depopulation over the last few decades. For example, the Maspero area close to down town Cairo has witnessed a decline in population from 51,000 people in 1956 to 18,000 people in 2006.[6] This is of course the opposite to other Cairo districts, whose population numbers have been booming. So what is behind this outward migration? The main forces seem to be urban decay, where many buildings in these historic urban cores have fallen into disrepair, while infrastructure has either not been extended, or is failing. But dramatic change to their economic bases, whether through passive forces of time, or active forces related to the large-scale relocation of economic activity such as factories or markets, could also be a factor.

In these circumstances came the Athar Lina (or Our Monument) initiative that has worked on the comprehensive development of the Khalifa/al-Ashraf Street in the Khalifa neighbourhood in Cairo. Their comprehensive development approach has aimed not just to preserve, but to sustain the communities and their crafts and culture with the premise that urban heritage is a resource rather than a burden.[7] According to Dr. May al-Ibrashy, chairwoman of the Built Environment Collective and coordinator of the Athar Lina initiative, "Only when heritage represents a benefit to the community, and when decisions are participatory, will they support and even work on its preservation."

Athar Lina started working on the Khalifa Street in 2012, where the project was divided into three main components, each with it own economic goal. The first one was the traditional one, and was concerned with the restoration of the monuments in the street, which included six main complexes where a number of them needed repairs. This provided employment opportunities to residents who work in construction and crafts. The second component focused on community and tourism development, through the establishment of a service center that provides many of the services that the area was deprived of. For example, the center included a medical clinic, a night school for children and organized training workshops and galleries for the local crafts. The third component was based on the Built Enviornment Collective setting up their headquarters in Khalifa Street, which would mean they could sustain the cultural and touristic activities even after the project ends, such as the "Spend your Day in the Khalifa Area" tours which they help organise.

The initiative managed to avoid one of the most difficult challenges facing community participation, by being an extension of work done their before.

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[5]Interviews with Dr. Mai al-Ibrashi, May 2015
[6]The Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics, Population Census, 1956 and 2006, fas in: Maspero Participatory Parallel Project, Madd et al., 2014
[7]For more details, see the Athar Lina website at http://www.atharlina.com

Summer camp for children © Athar Lina

Heritage tours © Athar Lina

Restoration work © Athar Lina

Khalifa St. map showing listed buildings © Athar Lina

According to al-Ibrashy, the residents did not feel it was imposed on them as herself, and other team members had been working there for some time on restoration projects. Participation came to them, as al-Ibrashi recounts that when the renovation of the service center started, a number of residents donated their labour, others donated building materials, while helped in removing the debris. When the cultural activities started, one of the residents managed the center while another worked on social networking and the promotion of events. Many of the residents engaged as volunteer teachers, while the Athar Lina is experimenting with finding a sustainable way to have local paid teachers for the education programme in the center.

A number of organisations, as well as residents have supported the Atahr Lina initiative. These included the Built Environment Collective, Megawra, the residents of Khalifa Street, the Ministry of Antiquities and the Cairo Governorate represented by the Khalifa district, in addition to a number of foreign institutions interested in heritage. According to al-Ibrashi, the project did not encounter problems with the government agencies involved because the heritage and monument-related initiatives are of a practical nature. For example, the Ministry of Antiquities provided institutional support and human resources, and the Cairo Governorate supported the project with the information it needed. However, it was difficult to convince the Governorate with the importance of the participatory nature of the project, and that community participation is not an obstacle but a resource. In the early days of the project, the different organisations were not all on the same page, which meant the Atahr Lina team had to invest some time in convincing government representatives with the importance of community participation, and streamline their goals. The project also faced problems with funding, which has limited its objectives and aspirations. Al-Ibrashi complains that the Ministry of Social Solidarity blocked some of the funding the Collective needed to complete the project.

With the development of Khalifa Street and the improvement of its services, are there fears of gentrification, especially if property values rise? Al-Ibrashi explains that for this reason, the initiative chose to work on small-scale projects and over a long period of time to avoid rapid changes to the area, as well give the chance to change any of their work if it appears that it may have a negative impact on the community. Al-Ibrashy adds that the area has always had local religious tourism due to the important mosques and mausoleums it has, and so they are merely developing the touristic activities rather than bringing in a totally new activity.

Nearly three years after the start of Athar Lina in the Khalifa Street, government agencies have become interested in the area. The Ministry of Antiquities has put it as a priority, after it was neglected by it. The Ministry of Housing started constructing a new mosque complex in the area, which the initiative was able to convince the ministry to add a floor for much needed local servcies. Al-Ibrashi believes that government's interest in the area will help develop its infrastructure, which is the most important component to its economic development, and which is out of their scope.

The Athar Lina initiative succeeded in coordinating with a number of government agencies in upgrading a small part of historical Cairo. It especially succeeded in applying a community participation model, while helping stimulate the local

economy through innovative methods, such as encouraging responsible tourism and the development of relevant crafts, in addition to its restoration efforts. The initiative's continuous coordination with the relevant agencies, including the Ministry of Antiquities and the Cairo Governorate, has meant that officials working for these agencies have seen first hand these innovative interventions can work. Maybe this can trickle to other projects these very agencies are implementing in other historic parts of Cairo, and change their "open museum" policy of relocating workshops and markets, which have severely impacted local economies before, and not helped as much in preserving urban heritage.