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Special Points of Interest:

- ⇒ Human Security (HS) Forums are now established in the five mother villages targeted by HAYAT. HS Forum members represent their local communities/constituents vis-à-vis the project and local public authorities on a regular basis.
- ⇒ Two of our donors, The UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), have visited HAYAT's project sites and are providing periodical backstopping.

The HS Forums: Key Partners for Community Development

True to the project motto of granting a voice to local communities in the planning, execution and monitoring of sustainable development actions, HAYAT has finalized the establishment of the Human Security (HS) Forums in the five selected target villages in El-Edwa and Maghagha districts. A democratically elected interface between the local communities, HAYAT and governmental stakeholders, each village forum is now mandated and being trained to critically assess priority needs and formulate community action plans as well as specific project proposals for potential funding. Composed of 25 elected members, each village forum is divided into 5 sub-committees for youth, women empowerment, environmental development, agriculture and economic development. Depending on the technical nature of development activities, representatives from each committee are approached by HAYAT, local NGOs and the public village councils for joint consultation, knowledge sharing and participatory planning. HS forum members will continue receiving tailored capacity building training and ongoing coaching to enhance their skills and knowledge to effectively perform their designated role as key actors in local community development.



A touch of grassroots democracy: community members electing their representatives for the HS forum in the village of Bani Amer in El-Edwa

Omm Hashim's Micro-Project Idea Takes Shape



Omm Hashim's Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) in Safaniyya, El-Edwa

"As a public servant in El-Edwa I earn around 300 Egyptian Pounds (EGP) a month and this is not enough for me, my husband and our two children", says 26-year old Omm Hashim Abdelwahed from Safaniyya village in El-Edwa. "I heard of HAYAT and the VSLA groups in my village and decided to join one with my neighbors. I did not have anything to loose." One of the first recipients of a micro loan from within her VSLA, Omm Hashim is now producing women's accessories and selling those in her village. "I got 495 EGP as a loan and can now afford paying all school expenses for my children. I will fully repay my loan in three months and then ask for additional credit from my VSLA."

Empowering Rural Women through Village Savings and Loan Associations

In an effort to improve the socio-economic livelihoods of underprivileged rural women in El-Minya, HAYAT has launched the first twenty Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in El-Edwa and Maghagha districts comprising more than 300 beneficiaries. The VSLA model aims at strengthening the traditional informal practice of rotating savings that already exists in local communities.

Today, the collective savings in each group is around 700 EGP in average per month. These savings feed into micro loans that group members can obtain to start micro businesses and repay within 3 months based on an interest rate of 0-10%. The profit generated from the micro businesses will enable the group members to cover their basic needs while creating a sense of ownership and entrepreneurship.

To support these groups in the field and ensure proper oversight and technical assistance, 17 field officers were recruited and trained on the VSLA methodology as well as on managing and leading VSLA orientation meetings. To ensure a proper understanding by the local communities, HAYAT has furthermore provided tailored training and capacity building sessions on the VSLA approach to more than 600 community members and natural leaders.



Rural VSLAs empower women to systematically manage their savings and realize productive income generating activities (such as raising livestock) by internally offering solidarity loans to group members.

Small in Size, Evil in Destruction: HAYAT Combating the Red Palm Weevil



The red palm weevil doing mischief to Edwa's rich palm culture.

Hosting more than 48,000 palms, El-Edwa has great potential to boost its productivity of local dates to target national and international markets. But there is one tiny but evil actor upsetting the plans of Edwa farmers: the "red palm weevil". A major pest excavating up to one meter long holes in the trunks of date palms, it is responsible for destroying 10-15% of Edwa's palm trees (almost 7,500 infected trees). By using simple, affordable and locally manufactured technology, HAYAT has already recovered 150 palm trees since August 2014, out of a total of 3,000 targeted. Workers, agronomists and youth from El-Edwa are being trained on the proper and efficient use of the anti-pest technology while the now clustered date farmers are integrated in comprehensive value chain support programs that aim at improving the pest control, packaging and marketing of their date production.

"Forsa": Bridging the Gap between Employers and Job Seekers in Minya

In its attempt to address the issue of unemployment in Upper Egypt, HAYAT has created an online job and career portal to match job seekers, employers, and service providers in Minya's districts and villages through an online platform under the name "Forsa". Acting as an information hub for all stakeholders, "Forsa" is expected to manage the career path process of job-seekers and connect entrepreneurs with employers and suitable service providers in a user friendly manner.

"Forsa" will provide job seekers with the ability to register, create, update, and upload profiles on the portal using their National ID Card. Users will also be able to browse job vacancies as well as relevant trainings. Employers on the other hand can register a company profile directly online, post any number of job vacancies, and receive an online shortlist of recommended candidates. "Forsa" is also accessible to service providers (training centres, NGOs, etc...) where they can post upcoming events and trainings. Job seekers are automatically notified of recently posted trainings.



"Forsa" allows young job seekers from Minya to browse local vacancies online and access training and skill enhancement services regularly.

Priority Community Development Projects: Successfully Concluding Round 1



Workers laying pipes for the drainage canal newly constructed by HAYAT in El-Sawy Village, Edwa

Widowed and nourishing five children on her own, 35-year old Amaal Abdel Wahab is just one of more than 500 beneficiaries benefitting from HAYAT's neighborhood upgrading interventions. "Our house was totally decayed and our rooftops were degenerated. We did not feel safe anymore, but now I can better plan for my family", says Amaal.

The house rehabilitation project in Portobat, Amaal's home village in Maghagha, is complementing 7 other priority community development projects that were funded by HAYAT within the framework of the Human Security Fund. Aiming at building a quick and positive rapport for HAYAT within the communities, these priority projects were selected by the local communities themselves and were executed by local NGOs based in the targeted villages. Today and as the first round of priority projects comes to an end, more than 15,000 school-children in El-Edwa are benefitting from 756 newly repaired desks and 285 white-boards. Another 1,500 residents from the village of El-Sawy have now access to clean drainage facilities, 30 deprived families from Salagos village have fresh water connected to their households, and all in all more than 1,500 man-days of paid labor were created for 229 local workers who have enhanced their technical skills through their involvement in the projects.

HAYAT, is now preparing for the second round of HS Fund community projects by engaging key community actors and the HS Forum members. Future projects are foreseen to be mainly dedicated to production-oriented and sustainable job creation activities.

The Promotion of Protected Agriculture through Greenhouse Demonstrations

Allowing for higher productivity on small-sized lands and in order to overcome the challenge of land fragmentation, HAYAT has constructed the first two greenhouses in the history of El-Edwa. Meant as exemplary models for small farmers, HAYAT is promoting protected agriculture by demonstrating the benefits of greenhouse cultivation in expanding the production season, thereby resulting in a more controllable input intensity (water and pesticides), higher productivity and better product market prices. The two greenhouses installed in the village of Atf Haidar and in proximity to the Edwa Administration Unit have already attracted hundreds of curious farmers dropping by every day. Several local farmers, convinced of its economic advantages, have already started replicating the model with their own savings and with technical support from HAYAT's agriculture team.



Cucumber cultivated inside one of HAYAT's greenhouse demonstration models in El-Edwa

Keep in Touch: HAYAT's Work Plan (September-December 2014)

The fourth and last quarter of the year 2014 will witness an intensive agenda of HAYAT field activities across all project components. The "Get Ahead", "My Co-op" and "Entrepreneurial Skills for Agribusiness" training packages will be launched on a wide scale in Edwa with the aim to promote enterprise development among women, strengthen managerial skills among agricultural cooperatives and promote entrepreneurship in the local community such as local farmers and the private sector. Moreover, HAYAT will expand its network of VSLAs in Edwa and Maghagha while continuing to provide regular support and follow up services to existing VSLAs.

The HAYAT agriculture team will continue providing capacity building to date-palm farmers in fighting the red palm weevil and will focus on improving the value chain of local dates, especially with regards to proper packing, packaging and marketing techniques. We will also continue to carry forward our pioneer local greenhouse experience and to advertise the technology and its many benefits to the rural public in Edwa's villages. With regards to the animal production component, HAYAT will provide tailored veterinary services to local farmers and support the production of non-traditional feeds (primarily silage) by organizing study tours and developing successful pilot demonstrations for smallholder farmers from Edwa. Last but not least, HAYAT will work on launching the second round of community development projects (HS Fund projects) in close cooperation with the established HS Forums.

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About HAYAT

The overall goal of the “Human Security through Inclusive Socio-Economic Development in Upper Egypt” (HAYAT) Program is to improve the livelihood of vulnerable households, youth, women and children in target communities in Minya through inclusive, pro-poor socio-economic development.

More specifically, HAYAT aims at strengthening the economic development in target communities through the creation of more, better and sustainable local employment opportunities, as well as enhancing the community structures through the development of local social safety nets, youth centers and community awareness raising.

HAYAT has kicked off in June 2013 and is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security Fund (UNTFHS), the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Government of Japan. The program is jointly implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



Rural communities in El-Edwa and Maghagha are the main beneficiaries of HAYAT



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The United Nations in Egypt is committed to ensure a high quality of life for all women, men, boys and girls living in Egypt (regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status) by developing national capacity and building strong partnerships with the Government, civil society, the private sector, academia, think tanks, media and other national/international stakeholders.

The United Nations in Egypt advocates for change and provides evidence-based policy and direct support that promotes human rights, justice, equity and prosperity within a sustainable environment.