



United Nations Trust Fund
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Transformational Change through Human Security: Stories of Success in Upper Egypt



Warda's Beauty Salon: A Micro-Entrepreneurial Success Story

Warda Atef, a married 35-year old mother of three from Monsha'at Abdallah in El-Edwa, has become a success in home-based beauty salon services. With her family income consisting of the 500 EGP her husband earns from working at a local grocery shop and the 450 EGP pension for his deceased father, she is no stranger to financial struggle. With her husband suffering from Hepatitis C and her mother-in-law living with the family in the same domicile, Warda faces additional pressure on her family's living situation.



To support her family, Warda started turning her hobby in hairdressing into a small business that generates additional income. In the beginning and due to limited financial resources, her profits remained minor and she could not expand easily. But after hearing of the HAYAT Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), she decided to join a group in her village. Once her savings reached 150 EGP, she applied for micro loan worth 450 EGP to buy a new hair dryer and some creams and accessories. And because she managed to fully repay her first loan, she received a second and bigger loan (900 EGP) to buy and repair a used hairdressing chair for her clients. Today, Warda brings home a steady 500–800 EGP per month from her beauty services, and her husband has been motivated to join a VSLA himself and start his own small business. Warda happily added: "Now I can really claim that I have my own hairdressing salon and I am willing to expand even more in order to support my family."

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Clean and Effective: Organic Compost as an Alternative to Chemical Fertilizers



“My name is Mahmoud El-Sayyed from the village of Ezzbet Shafiq in El-Edwa, Minya Governorate. Together with my father, we cultivate two feddans of agricultural land, one owned by our family and the other we rent to increase our income. I first developed the idea of producing compost after attending a lecture organized by HAYAT and a local NGO in our village on the agricultural, economic and environmental benefits of agricultural waste recycling into organic fertilizers. And since agricultural waste is available en masse around us and the fact that prices of chemical fertilizers are steadily rising, we decided to give it a try and make full use of HAYAT’s technical expertise in this field.

After receiving a number of theoretical training workshops, we started producing our first pile of compost made of alfalfa hay under the technical guidance of HAYAT. We have then used the organic compost to fertilize our soil in preparation for cultivating maize to be converted into silage for animal feeding. We are very happy with the final maize produce achieved with organic compost and managed to save more than 800 Egyptian Pounds of fertilization expenses per feddan.”

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“We succeeded in selling all of our items. This is the first time for us to participate in such a fair”, says Ahmed Ramadan, carpenter from El-Edwa City and one of HAYAT’s exhibitors at Furnex, Egypt’s largest furniture exhibition held in Cairo in February 2016. “I received so many orders from clients that it would keep me busy for the entire year”, he adds.



Ahmed is one of 25 craftsmen from El-Edwa and Maghagha benefitting from HAYAT’s cluster upgrading program which follows a value chain development approach. In cooperation with the *Furniture Technology Center (FTC)*, he and his peers received intensive practical training on product design and quality improvement and participated in exploratory missions to advanced furniture workshops in Damietta. “The training we have received has also helped us improve our designs to better access new markets outside El-Minya Governorate. Our master trainers have taught us the skills and techniques needed to enhance the quality of varnishing and finishing our products”, acknowledges Ahmed Gamal, the owner of a small carpentry business in Maghagha. “Our next challenge will be to increase our productive capacities and recruit and train additional workers to meet a much larger amount of client requests this year”, he concludes.

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Silage for Better Animal Production: Rich in Nutrients and Affordable for Small Farmers

“These cows are my assets”, says Gomaa Mohamed, small-scale farmer from the village of Al-Akliyya in El-Edwa. “We have been suffering for a long time from malnutrition of our cattle. Although we were feeding them regularly, we could rarely reach 6 kilograms of fresh milk per cow a day.” Frustrated with the poor health conditions and milk production levels of his cows



and the rising prices of animal feeds, Gomaa is one of 26 farmers from El-Edwa who have benefitted from HAYAT’s silage production activities since August 2014. Today, his cows produce 25% more milk on a daily basis and he managed to save more than 30% on feed expenses.



“We have demonstrated to farmers how to produce an alternative form of animal feed that is both affordable and high in nutrients”, says Hesham Ismaail, HAYAT Animal Production Consultant. “The anaerobically fermented maize silage we have developed is rich in energy, proteins and vitamins and can be stored over several months. It has a high level of moisture and can be easily digested by the animals. Improving animal feeding practices was one of the first steps we have embarked on in order to upgrade the local animal production value chains for a better income generation of most vulnerable households in El-Minya Governorate”, he adds.

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Innovation, Proactivity and Diligence: The Birth of Youth Entrepreneurs in El-Edwa

“After graduating from my agricultural secondary school in El-Edwa in 2012, I had an offer to join my father as a worker in Libya. The majority of young graduates from El-Edwa either seek employment in another Arab country or they stay here unemployed.” Yassir El-Shikhawi, 23 years old, decided to go his own way. He refused to leave El-Baskalon, his home village in El-Edwa, although the remittances he would have sent from abroad could have secured an additional source of income for his family. His personal success story is closely intertwined with the HAYAT Human Security Project managed by the United Nations in Egypt in the Governorate of Minya. “We can change our local realities if we use our chances and believe in ourselves”, Yassir El-Shikhawi (23), Yassir continues, “I heard about the HAYAT Project El-Edwa offering agricultural extension training to fresh graduates and young agronomists from our district El-Edwa. Our local communities are largely agriculture oriented and most families are involved in agriculture in one way or another. My family owns a few feddan and given my educational background in agriculture, I decided to apply for HAYAT’s training workshops to expand my knowledge.”

