

### Inside this issue:

Good Agricultural Practices Increase Farmers' Income	2
Territorial Analysis for Better Knowledge of Community Needs	2
Labor Market Assessment Towards Sustainable Jobs	2
Priority Project Interventions	3
VSLAs for Women	3
HAYAT Project Activities April-June 2014	3
About HAYAT and the UN in Egypt	4

## Capacity Building for Farmers in Minya Governorate

In a quick but sustainable effort to reach predominantly agriculture-oriented local communities in Minya, HAYAT has undertaken several interventions with regards to implementing training packages targeting over 300 farmers located in five mother villages of El-Edwa District, Minya Governorate.

Simple packing and packaging techniques were introduced to 79 farmers to allow them increasing the value of their production and decrease losses for more than 30%. Another group of farmers learnt how to produce sundried tomatoes using low cost technologies and locally available material allowing them to almost quadruple their revenues.

In the villages of Safaniyya, Bani Amer and Atf Haidar, 96 small farmers were introduced to the production of grapes, a

highly profitable crop that has significant potential for export. Another 92 potato farmers received tailored training on best practices of potato production, including how to propagate, fertilize, irrigate and manage pest and diseases. Similar extension training was delivered to 50 freshly graduated young agronomists as a means to equip them with the needed knowledge to better serve their communities.

In addition to that, around 175 farmers benefited from basic agribusiness training events to enable them adding value to their raw materials by following simple manufacturing techniques. HAYAT has also facilitated the participation of 13 lead farmers from Minya at the Sahara Agricultural Fair in order to link them with service providers and to allow a better transfer of knowledge.



*Edwa farmers applying simple tomato sun-drying techniques*

## Sheikh Omar Overcoming Nematodes

When Sheikh Omar, a farmer from Minya, complained about low rates of fruit formation, HAYAT agronomists dug underground to find a fungi infection as a result of nematodes. With the proper application of pesticides, he

was able to save his crop and secure his income for the season. Happy about the success of the intervention, he insisted on being photographed with his now prospering tomatoes.



*Sheikh Omar proud of his tomato crop*

### Special Points of Interest:

- ⇒ HAYAT is successfully mobilized within the local communities and enjoys the endorsement of central and local governments.
- ⇒ The implementation of the agricultural training component is well-advanced. Farmers have expressed their need for good and more extension services.
- ⇒ 8 priority project interventions are currently being implemented on local community level.

## Good Agricultural Practices Increase Farmers' Income

The introduction of good agricultural practices by HAYAT has resulted in an average increase in revenues of 37%. Production costs have decreased by 35% resulting in a doubling of profits for tomato producers.

The project has assisted farmers in assessing their inputs in terms of soil and water. Knowing that an extensive overuse of sulfuric fertilizers has affected the nutrition of the plants and soil fertility negatively, the

project recommended the use of compost fertilizers as opposed to chemical nitrogen types. HAYAT agronomists emphasized the importance of using compost fertilizers rather than manure in order to reduce the risks of pest and diseases. A reduction of fertilization costs by around 10% only, combined with adjusted quantities and application methods, has contributed to a significantly increasing production and quality.

With regards to pesticide

application, simple awareness raising on application methods and readjusting nozzle size and pressure have both allowed for halving the cost of pest management.

Contrary to common farmer understanding, saving 30% of irrigation water has led to a higher crop production and reduced incidence of diseases. This is a particularly interesting finding given the challenge of water scarcity in Egypt.



***Proper agricultural extension is a key to increasing farmers' productivity and profits.***

## Territorial Analysis for Better Knowledge of Community Needs



***Participatory management is an essential tool for empowering local communities.***

The Territorial Analysis (TA) was launched to ensure a continuous participation of target groups (farmers, youth, women etc.) in the implementation of the program, strengthening thus the ownership of HAYAT through local stakeholders and empowering local communities to realize development visions

with their respective local government institutions in collaboration with the local private sector. The study resulted in mapping local institutions such as NGOs, youth centres and the local governance system, while profiling the socio-economic aspects of Minya governorate and the project target groups. The TA

fieldwork was utilised to introduce the concept of the Local Community Development Forum (HS Forum) and sensitise local communities towards its formation. Moreover, youth researchers of the Ministry of Local Development were mobilised and trained to carry out the study in the field.

## Labor Market Assessment Towards Sustainable Jobs

HAYAT –in cooperation with local governmental entities in Minya- has conducted a comprehensive Labor Market Assessment (LMA) in Minya to have a clear understanding of local employment dynamics. The LMA concluded that the Job Information, Counselling and Referral Services (ICRS) office is a much needed tool in Minya to bridge the mismatch between local job demand and supply.

However, the success of the ICRS depends on several factors including the necessity of launching awareness campaigns to counter the negative stigma associated with agriculture and agricultural workers. Another major factor to be considered is the scarcity of job opportunities in Minya. Thus, the initial focus of the ICRS office should be dedicated to providing information and counselling to help existing enterprises and startups in achieving their full growth potential. The LMA also pointed out that a physical presence of the office in all the Minya districts would be needed as workers are mostly unwilling to travel to seek unguaranteed job opportunities.

*“One can only measure himself upon his achievements. But how is he to achieve anything spending his time on a coffee shop without a job?”*

*Words of a Young Unemployed Male from Edwa District, Minya*

## Priority Projects: Involvement of Local Communities in the Design and Execution of Development Interventions



*A decayed rooftop in the Baskaloun Village (El-Edwa, Minya) in need for restoration*

In order to allow for a quick start up and buy in by the host communities, the project designed rapid interventions aiming at creating a high rapport within the targeted communities and deliver tangible results within a quick time. These priority project initiatives aim at involving the community to design and implement urgent initiatives benefitting vulnerable community members in line with the project scope and envisaged activities.

The projects presented by local NGOs tackling various human security issues were revised and evaluated by a committee of community members and technical government officials before being approved by the project management committee. So far 8 contracts have been awarded with a maximum of 100,000 EGP per project.

Projects currently being implemented vary from installing water connections to needy households in the village of Salakos to establishing safe water drainage outlets for residents of El-Sawi village. In Akliyya and Baskaloun, two small villages in El-Edwa district, local NGOs are building safe rooftops for decayed house units in an effort to renovate the houses of poorest families. Another project is working on the restoration and maintenance of seats and boards in local schools using environmentally and health friendly methods and material.

## Village Savings and Loan Associations for Women

HAYAT has started the implementation of the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). The model aims at strengthening the traditional informal practice of rotating savings that already exist in local communities. In an attempt to target the poorest and marginalized women in Minya, the model aspires to enable them to access financial services (savings, insurance and credit services) to cover their needs in an easy, profitable and sustainable manner. By the end of the implementation phase, there will be an increase in assets controlled by women, improved financial literacy of women, enhanced social capital of those women targeted and an increase in the number of women-led income-generating activities. The local NGOs selected to implement the VSLA model underwent a capacity assessment. Indicators measured included good governance, awareness on gender and women empowerment issues, and knowledge management capacities.



*Rural women have great potential to run their own small businesses successfully*

## Stay Tuned: HAYAT Project Activities (April-June 2014)



*The selection of local leaders to represent their communities in the HS Forum is a key priority for HAYAT until the end of June 2014*

The implementation of the priority projects lies at the heart of HAYAT's work plan for the time between April and June 2014. Local NGOs awarded project contracts are expected to have their interventions finalized by the end of June 2014 at the latest. This component will be terminated by the organization of a community event in Edwa District in which all NGOs present the achievements of their projects and impacts on the local communities.

In parallel to the implementation of the priority projects, HAYAT will carry on program activities related to the establishment of the Human Security/Local Development Forum (HS Forum) as a development interface between the local government and local communities. The project has already established objective criteria for the selection of HS forum members in a way that guarantees an equal representation of all community segments and is currently formulating the operational procedures of the HS Forum.

HAYAT will also proceed with its agri-training component to reach out to more farmers in Minya, as well as advance on the entrepreneurship training for youth to secure better local employment opportunities. Additionally, a baseline assessment will be conducted to further identify most urgent community needs.



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April 2014

Issue 1

## About HAYAT

The overall goal of the 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 Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations. 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).



*Farmers, economically marginalized women and unemployed youth are the main direct beneficiaries of the program.*

## The United Nations in Egypt

*“All people in Egypt enjoy improved quality of life”*

Vision of the UN in Egypt



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*Hajja Zainab from Luxor was supported by the UN to raise her animals profitably.*

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.

### Inside this issue:

Support to Rural Village Saving Associations	2
Combating the Red Palm Weevil for Better Local Palm Production	2
Linking Local Job Seekers and Employers Through "Forsa"	2
Expansion of Local Community Development Projects	3
Promotion of Protected Agriculture Through Greenhouse Demonstrations	3
HAYAT's Work Plan (September—December 2014)	3
About HAYAT and the UN in Egypt	4

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



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**Local entrepreneurship programs enjoy special dedication from the different UN agencies operating in Egypt**

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## Monthly Bulletin

February 2015

⇒ On 9 and 10 February 2015, the Local Administration Reform Unit (LARU) and HAYAT presented promising local economic development models with potential for replication on national level to the Minister of Local Development, General Adel Labib. The meeting mainly revolved around the possibility to scale up HAYAT's rural value chain upgrading activities for improved levels of income generation and job creation. Special attention was given to specific policies and actions needed to expand innovative and low-cost greenhouse models as a means to ameliorate the economic security and the productivity/profitability of small farmers.

⇒ Based on the decision of the Governor of El-Minya to establish an agro-industrial park under the technical supervision of HAYAT, project and governorate agronomists have cooperated in assessing the soil and water conditions of the 150 feddan allocated by the Governorate in the District of Matay. This was done after determining the coordinates of the land donated by the Governorate using the Global Positioning System (GPS) software.



**General Adel Labib,  
Minister of Local Development**



**General Salah Zeyada,  
Governor of El-Minya**

## Monthly Bulletin

February 2015

⇒ In February 2015, HAYAT's Information, Counseling and Referral System (ICRS) has facilitated the employment of 24 young men and women from El-Edwa. Trained by HAYAT to improve their job-related skills, the contracted beneficiaries are now placed as security officers at the Mall of Arabia, one of Greater Cairo's largest shopping malls, and as technicians at Asfour Crystal, Egypt's leading crystal producer. Employment contracts concluded are based on a monthly salary starting from 1300 EGP, health and social insurance and the provision of decent accommodation for families.



*Young job seekers from El-Edwa during one of HAYAT's career counseling workshops*

⇒ In an effort to improve the quality of local animal production in El-Edwa and Maghagha, HAYAT has organized a practice-oriented training workshop on artificial insemination of cattle from 15 to 19 February 2015. Implemented in collaboration with the Animal Production Research Institute (APRI) at the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR), the program was targeted at building the capacities of local veterinarians in treating and preventing animal reproductive diseases and developing new cattle breeds for better dairy and meat production.



*Artificial insemination is applied to improve local breeds of cattle for better meat and dairy production*





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وزارة التنمية المحلية  
وحدة تطوير الإدارة المحلية

# Project Newsletter

August 2015

Issue 4

## Inside this issue:

Processing of Palm Fronds in Maghagha	2
Reviving Upper Egypt's Khayameya Heritage	2
Benefits of Organic Fertilization in Agriculture	3
Launch of HAYAT Youth Entrepreneurship Programs	3
About HAYAT	4
The United Nations in Egypt	4

## Special Points of Interest:

- ⇒ In order to update interested audiences about HAYAT's project activities and events on a regular basis, we have created our own page on Facebook accessible through: [f/HayatUpperEgypt](https://www.facebook.com/HayatUpperEgypt).
- ⇒ The HAYAT Mid-Term Evaluation was carried out recently in August 2015. Our External Evaluators have assessed successes and challenges faced and are now formulating their recommendations for more efficient, effective and sustainable outcomes to be reached. Once finalized, the full Mid-Term Evaluation Report will be made available on our HAYAT website.

## 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.



*Warda serving one of her clients in her home-based hairdressing salon*

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."



## Natural Resources for Income Generation: Processing of Palm Fronds in Maghagha



*Mahmoud providing practical coaching on frond production to women from his village*

”My name is Mahmoud Ahmed Khamees and I live with my wife and my three children in the village of Dahrout in Maghagha, Minya Governorate, where I am working in the Dahrout Elementary School as a supervisor for the school’s journalistic activities. A few years ago and in order to improve my family’s monthly income, I started learning how to make cages and other market utensils out of palm fronds. Today, my daughter Zeinab and I have our small business and are selling our hand-made frond products to bread, poultry, vegetable and fruit traders in and around our village.

To expand our business and provide a valuable service to our community, we cooperated with HAYAT and trained 24 women until now from Maghagha on how to produce frond cages needed for local merchants. This has allowed us to meet a growing number of business orders, but what is more important, it helped us generating more income for the trained women and their families. Our big aspiration is to impart the skill of frond production to as many small producers as possible and to form a cluster of frond producers that receives recognition beyond our village and governorate.”

## Skilled Craftswomen: Reviving the Handmade Khayameya Heritage in Upper Egypt



In an effort to revitalize the Khayameya heritage in Upper Egypt, HAYAT has trained more than 60 women (out of 100 targeted) from El-Edwa and Maghagha on the handmade production of these colorful and typically Egyptian fabrics. Craftswomen have received practical coaching on drafting the designs, scissoring the fabrics and sewing the patterns. Through its partnership with a Khayameya workshop from El-Minya, HAYAT is supporting the marketing of the finished products in touristic outlets (Hurghada, Sharm El-Sheikh, Cairo) in return for fair payment to the producers.



## 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.”



*Mahmoud and his father, Hajj Fouad, during the fertilization of their land with self-produced organic compost*

## Launch of Youth Entrepreneurship Programs: Join Us and Present Your Project Ideas!

In cooperation with Nile University (NU) and Misr El Kheir Foundation (MEK), HAYAT has launched two youth entrepreneurship programs in El-Edwa and Maghagha. MEK is currently assessing local value chains with potential for upgrading through local entrepreneurs, and is planning to organize a number of study tours for promising entrepreneurs from Minya Governorate. This aims at stimulating future entrepreneurs to present their ideas and increase their knowledge of similar youth entrepreneurship initiatives done elsewhere in Egypt. Both NU and MEK will then provide technical and managerial trainings and practical coaching to youth start-ups and existing entrepreneurs and facilitate their access to markets with products/services that both meet quality standards and benefit local communities.

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***HAYAT is improving the livelihoods of rural communities by upgrading local productive value chains.***

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***Empowering and integrating local communities in decision making is a cornerstone of the UN development approach.***

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### Inside this issue:

Productive Assets for Income Generation: Kick-Starting Women Micro Businesses	2
Hepatitis C Awareness Campaign - "Prevention is Better Than Cure"	2
Introducing New Cattle Breeds in El-Edwa: A Breakthrough in Local Animal Production?	3
About HAYAT	4
The United Nations in Egypt	4

### Special Points of Interest:

- ⇒ HAYAT's first Steering Committee (SC) meeting of 2016 was carried out on 10 February at the Local Administration Reform Unit, Ministry of Local Development. SC members discussed the progress made in project activities since May 2015 and presented the work plan for 2016.
- ⇒ The HAYAT project will be replicated in Sohag Governorate. With funding from the Government of Switzerland, the new project is expected to be officially launched by March 2016.

### "Made in Edwa" at Furnex 2016, Egypt's Largest Furniture Fair

"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.



**El-Edwa and Maghagha carpenters at the HAYAT booth, Furnex Egypt, 4-7 February 2016**

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.

## Productive Assets for Income Generation: Kick-Starting Women Micro Businesses



**Sanaa happily presenting her new Sasso chicklets.**

“My family now has, for the first time in years, an additional source of sustainable income”, admits Sanaa Abdallah (38 years, proud mother of four) from the village of Safaniyya in El-Edwa. “Last week I managed to sell 10 of the chickens I have raised over the past two months and earned around 500 Egyptian Pounds, a good supplement to my husband’s meager income. And we are now more often consuming animal protein at home which is good for my children’s growth”, she explains.

By the end of December 2015, more than 330 of the poorest families in El-Edwa and Maghagha have received productive assets for breeding (Muscovy ducks, Sasso chicklets and cattle). To achieve good and quick results, each poultry raising family also received a water dispenser, a feed tray and 150 kg of concentrated high protein feeds. All birds were vaccinated to prevent the spreading of viral diseases such as H5N1 (avian influenza), Newcastle Disease or Gumboro Disease. As a prerequisite for participating in the asset transfer program, all beneficiaries had to attend a series of practical training workshops on good feeding, animal raising principles and proper vaccination and paid 20% of the total costs ensuring personal ownership of the assets. “I did not have enough cash to pay the 20% contribution, so I decided to take a zero-percent micro loan from my savings group. I have already repaid 75% of the loan amount to my VSLA group”, Sanaa highlights.

## “Prevention is Better Than Cure” - Launching HAYAT’s Hepatitis C Awareness Campaign

Egypt has the largest epidemic of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) in the world. With more than 11 million Egyptians infected, the prevalence of HCV in Egypt amounts to almost 15% of the population. New drugs subsidized by the government offer hope to millions of HCV patients. However, the lack of public awareness on disease transmission and effective prevention often pose an additional challenge to successfully eradicate HCV. In partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Governorate of Minya, the World Health Organization and AGYAL Foundation, HAYAT has launched its HCV community awareness campaign aiming to reach out to every household in the selected target areas in El-Edwa and Maghagha. Central attention is given to local healthcare providers (physicians, dentists, nurses, lab assistants, etc.) and youth volunteers receiving intensive coaching on universal hygiene precautions, HCV infection control and prevention in order to transfer the acquired knowledge to the local communities in a number of awareness raising events thereafter.



**At the forefront of HAYAT’s awareness campaign - local healthcare providers coached on effective HCV infection control and prevention.**

## Introducing New Cattle Breeds in El-Edwa: A Breakthrough in Local Animal Production?

“My new baby calve is now 3 months old”, says Hajj Rushdie Barakat (64 years), small animal breeder from the village of Salagos in El-Edwa and one of the first farmers to artificially inseminate his cow in his village. “And if you compare its size and body with our local calves of the same age, you will easily discover that its physical appearance is much more robust. We are very optimistic to witness a significant improvement in our beef and daily milk production once our new breeds have matured.”

Hajj Rushdie is one of 48 farmers from El-Edwa benefitting from HAYAT’s breed improvement program so far. Until now, around 250 cows were born through artificial insemination and cross-breeding between local and high milk/meat producing cow breeds (mainly Holstein, Friesian and Brown cattle). Whereas purely local cow breeds can produce 5 to maximum 8 kilograms of milk per day, the new generation of mixed breeds is expected to produce between 30-40% more milk once it has reached the age of production in about 1,5 to 2 years from today (provided that good feeding practices are applied). If these genetically selected cows of the first generation continue to be cross-bred with stronger international breeds over the coming years, small-holder cows raised under Upper Egypt’s hot climatic conditions may produce 15-18 kilograms of milk per day.



***“The new breeds in our village are often marked by their white or colored spots”, explains Hajj Rushdie, while his 7-year old grandson proudly presents the first mixed calve in their barn.***

The breed improvement program is part of HAYAT’s animal production component which also includes the promotion of good feeding practices and capacity building for local veterinarians. In cooperation with *Eid Ala Eid Foundation* and the *Animal Reproduction Research Institute*, HAYAT has launched several study tours and practical demonstrations to convince farmers on the long-term genetic and economic benefits of breed improvement. Village-based veterinarians were trained on proper artificial insemination techniques and are now linked to approved providers of high quality semen. A self-sustaining and private sector based model was developed through which veterinarians offer their cattle insemination services to interested farmers in return to a fair price that is accepted by both parties and that covers the cost of buying, transporting and preserving the semen.



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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 (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 the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



**HAYAT's economic development activities are complemented by social and educational initiatives targeting youth and children.**

## The United Nations in Egypt

**“All people in Egypt enjoy an improved quality of life”**

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