

# Newsletter Research, Network and Support Facility

Published by the EC-funded RNSF project based on the EU "Investing in People" Programme



Photo of Fatma Mohamed Aly Amreyah,  
Credit by CEOSS

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#Informal Read, #Informal Talk, #Informal Learn

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#Informal Read, #Informal Talk, #Informal Learn

By RNSF Team

*One hashtag at a time: Coming RNSF books, webinars and e-learning courses.*

As the RNSF project is entering in its final year, it is working hard on delivering its research outputs and disseminating them to the widest audience. Following the [RNSF regional workshop in Lima](#), the second RNSF book on Organizing and mobilizing informal workers is about to be published. [#InformalTalks](#), a series of webinars on the informal economy, was launched this month. The recording and the materials of the first webinar "Defining the informal economy" will be published on the [IESF Group](#) in the coming days and the second webinar on "How to tackle the informal economy" is planned on July 26. You can already [register by clicking here](#).

After summer, RNSF will launch a new initiative: #InformalLearn. Using all the materials produced by the IESF Group, the community of practice of the informal economy, and the RNSF team, a series of e-learning modules will be developed and published on [DevCo Academy](#), the new e-learning platform of DevCo.

For more resources, information and discussions on the informal economy, join the [IESF Group](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)!



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## Special Focus on

### RNSF Upcoming Publications and Training and Dissemination Tools

By RNSF Team

Our project is now approaching its last stage. It is an intensive phase of work dedicated to the preparation of new publications and to identify user-friendly training and dissemination tools to make complex topics more accessible. We have been working on two publications that will be published in September.

The first one presents Good Practices and Lessons Learned from 15 projects funded by the Call for proposals of the Thematic Programme "Investing in People" launched in December 2013 titled "Empowerment for better livelihoods, including skills development and vocational education and training, for marginalised and vulnerable persons and people dependent on the informal economy" ( REF : EuropeAid/135181/C/ACT/Multi).

The second publication addresses the issue of how to organize and support the collective action of informal workers, presenting experiences from Latin America. This publication focuses particularly on the link between working in the Informal Economy and social exclusion. In this framework, strengthening and organizing informal workers can foster better working and living conditions reducing inequality, fostering social dialogue, and giving voice to the invisible and less powerful workers. The publication also illustrates how the ILO Recommendation 204 on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy can be used as a conceptual framework for designing and implementing policies based on an integrated approach (enterprise growth, legal and institutional frameworks, incentives, enforcement).

Not only these two publications are on their way. After three and a half years researching, collecting experiences, and analysing literature on the Informal Economy it is time for disseminating key findings to our audience. We will do it using tools that will allow interaction with users so to get continuous feedback. Our material will be available on [Capacity4Dev](#) and on the training web platform [DEVCO Academy](#).

We have planned five live webinars to present and discuss key contents of our research:

- Defining the Informal Economy (already implemented last June and available [here](#))
- Policies and strategic approaches to tackle the informal economy
- Social Protection for informal workers
- Organizing and mobilizing informal workers
- Good Practices and Lessons Learned on how to tackle the Informal Economy.

We are also in the process of preparing an E-learning course on the Informal Economy. The E-learning course is meant to be a self-instruction training course composed of five learning modules focused on the same five areas addressed by webinars. The E-learning course will be accessible as a whole for trainees and practitioners who are interested in all the topics presented or, alternatively, by selecting one or more learning modules according to specific interests. Each learning module is composed by several video slides (30 per each learning objects) where information is presented in 3 levels:

1. Video slide with key information to be explored quickly
2. Interactive areas of the video slide with information and content available via animation, pop-up text, infographics

More in-depth content available for readers who want to dedicate more time to specific topics (articles, background material).

## We want you!

In the last newsletter we had OXFAM in the spotlight. This time it is CEOSS Who wants to collaborate with us for the next newsletters? Please let us know!



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## Reporting

### *Improving Livelihoods of Urban and Rural Poor Women Dependent on Informal Sector in Egypt*

By The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS)

The Egyptian informal sector is characterized by the variation of economic activities, that include but not exhaustive to trading, agricultural, services, and manufacturing and processing activities. Accordingly, this sector involves variation in the categories engaged in it. At the same time, a non-homogenous sector includes different types of entities and establishments. It is a sector representing around 40% of the Egyptian GDP; and to which 8.2 million of the Egyptian population contributes. CEOSS' EU funded action; "Improving Livelihoods of Urban and Rural Poor Women Dependent on Informal Sector in Egypt" contributes to alleviating the poverty and marginalization problems associated with being engaged in the informal economy through:

- Improving the quality of life for poor women engaged in the informal sector in 30 urban and rural Egyptian communities, through capacity building and empowerment activities.
- Enhancing the ability of Egyptian Civil Society to contribute to poverty and marginalization alleviation for poor women in urban and rural communities through receiving sub-grants.

The above is achieved by applying the following main interventions:

1. Identified the issues and problems of women working in the informal sector through a needs assessment survey for the local communities to identify needs, resources and opportunities. The survey was implemented with 60000 and 9000 private and public institutions in 30 communities.
2. Established 30 Entrepreneurship Development Centers in partner Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to contribute to improving the livelihoods of women working in the informal sector. The centers provide improving the administrative and technical skills of women to enhance their employability in the formal sector. The centers mainly provide the following services:
  - Trainings: providing training programs designed based on the findings of the needs assessment survey to address the women's performance and skills gaps, such as entrepreneurship, communication, project management, marketing and feasibility studies.

- Recruitment and Employment: linking women who successfully completed their trainings to available job opportunities in the formal sector; or to funding institutions in their local communities to start up small projects.
  - Technical Assistance: providing information on accessing funding institutions; legal and financial consultations; etc. to ensure sustainability of women's start-ups.
3. Building the capacities of women working in the informal sector to organize themselves in democratically Elected Committees (ECs) and to empower them to access their rights in basic social services, such as health, education and housing services through their ECs representing them in front of the various entities, applying Rights Based Development and Social Protection.
  4. Building the capacities of partner CBOs in the project and empowering them to actively contribute to finding solutions for the issues and problems of the informal sector and advocating and lobbying in favor of this sector.

### *Overall Project Achievements as of March 2018*

- 951 women successfully passed training programs and had their administrative and technical capacities enhanced.
- 368 women joined the formal sector, whether as self-employed in own small projects or employed in entities.
- 4.165 women had their educational and health conditions improved through their accessing various services in collaboration with the concerned governmental institutions.
- 30 CBOs and 30 ECs had their capacities built, which contributed to the successful implementation of the various project's interventions.



The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services is an Egyptian NGO that seeks to contribute to the transformation of society by nurturing moral and spiritual awareness, enhancing a sense of belonging, promoting respect for diversity, addressing conflict, and advancing social justice for individuals and communities.



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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.





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Fatma Mohamed Aly Amreyah and other CEOSS beneficiaries.  
Credit by CEOSS.

## The story of Fatma Mohamed Aly Amreyah

I live in a very poor village in Qalyoubia governorate; and despite the poor economic conditions of my family I managed to accomplish my high education and I am a holder of a B.A. in Social Service. And as is the case in all Egyptian villages, after accomplishing my education I got married to one of my relatives who is an employee in a private sector company, however with a small salary that is not sufficient to fulfill our needs.

We thought of renting a small piece of land for me to cultivate to help us improve our income. We rented half an acre of land where we cultivated traditional crops like maize, wheat and clover. The productivity of the land was actually very low and hence the revenue was low.

Then we came to know about a CBO in our village that collaborates with CEOSS to provide a bunch of services for farmers, especially

smallholder ones. The services included laser levelling and ploughing; composting for producing organic fertilizers; provision of high productivity onions, wheat and maize varieties seeds; digging artesian wells to access underground water to overcome scarcity in irrigation water; purifying irrigation canals; and contractual cultivation for potatoes crop. All those services were provided through electing a committee that represents the farmers. At that point, I thought why not contact the CBO and try to become a committee member to serve my village and benefit my family and myself.

I discussed the matter with my husband, and we proposed that we try cultivating the high productivity maize seeds, especially that the CBO provides seeds to smallholder farmers at subsidized prices. We decided that in case our experience with the CBO was successful we would then apply for contractual cultivation of potatoes, where we are offered the seeds, a marketing contract is signed before cultivating, and the price of seeds is deducted later from the selling price of the crop, as stated in the marketing contract. Contractual cultivation also includes the provision of free technical assistance by specialized consultants to teach us the correct and sound agricultural practices. My husband agreed, however, he told me that this decision will be at my own risk and responsibility; and I agreed and started with the cultivation of maize. The yield was big, around 30% more than what we used to achieve with the traditional seeds and cultivation *methods*.

We then proceeded with cultivation of red potatoes, through contractual cultivation. We were very successful as we were very meticulous at applying the consultant's instructions. Moreover, after fulfilling the contracted amount we sold the surplus to our village members who had very high demand to this type of potatoes, relatively new to our village. As it was more suitable to make potato chips.

Later, we also came to know about a new collaboration between our CBO and CEOSS that targets mainly women engaged in agriculture related activities. I went to ask about the new project and knew that elections will take place the following week; and that whoever wants to apply can submit an application in the CBO. I filled an application and I succeeded in the elections and became an agricultural elected committee member together with two other women. I worked on convincing the women in my village to participate in the project and implement income generation



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activities, and set myself as a successful example to them as I purchased a milk-sorting device that is generating income to my family.

I helped 50 women to engage in income generating activities, such as poultry, goats and rabbits breeding and selling; selling vegetables; and milk processing and selling milk products.

I also taught women how to implement composts and shared with them the skills I learnt from the consultant; and taught them how far it can reduce production costs through replacing expensive chemical fertilizers with cheap organic ones prepared from agricultural and animal wastes.

My family is now living in much better conditions, I am able to provide my children with good quality education and to pay for the lessons they need. We are even able to do some renovations in our house. My children's health is better, and we are able to pay our debts. All those benefits are due to engaging in-group work and in the trainings and awareness seminars provided by the CBO that gave me communication, negotiation and lobbying skills. I am an active, well-known village member now, and women in my village come to seek my advice in various matter.

effect in the majority of countries concerning the legal framework of foreign national workers.

Concerning the group of trafficked persons, the concept of IE overtake the concept of shadow economy since these persons are usually involved in illegal activities run by those responsible of human trafficking.

According to that, different good practices was developed within the framework of IE to tackle migrants, refugees and trafficked persons' issues. The following paragraphs present 14 good practices to be taken into consideration while implementing projects including IE and migrants issues.

Strengthening IE with attention to migrants, refugees and trafficked persons

1. Implement good practices that are well established in all programming and which should also be used in livelihoods programming with refugees dependent on the IE such as:
  - Implement regular consultation and interaction with refugees and local communities in program design to foster ownership and sustainability of the project and facilitate a social dialogue between refugees and local communities.
  - Through advocacy activities, promote the productive and creative potential of refugees, their skills and talents.
2. Include in a contextual assessment in refugee camps prior to design of development actions the following information:
  - How are camps used?
  - What was done before in this context?
  - What will/will not work based on past experience?
  - What kinds of economic capacity building activities are already in place (or were tried before);
  - How both the refugees and the local host population view new or proposed livelihoods programs with refugees who are dependent on the IE;
  - Whether the wider market context is appropriate and conducive to the promotion of refugee livelihoods;
  - Whether the host government policy context is appropriate and conducive to the promotion of refugee livelihoods.
3. When implementing projects with migrant workers, include a range of rights-based support mechanisms, both at home and overseas, with economic empowerment efforts in the sending communities.
4. Engage in advocacy to mobilise key stakeholders prior to

## 11 Good Practices you should know on

### *Migrants and refugees in IE*

By RNSF Team



RNSF recommendations extracted from Volume 4.2 – Recommendations Based on Analysis of a Range of Development Agencies on Support to People Dependent on the Informal Economy.

This volume of research findings is the latest work of the RNSF and is based on the analysis of 202 projects and documents financed and implemented by agencies other than the EC.

Migrants, refugees and trafficked persons belong to this group of vulnerable persons more likely oriented to join the IE sector to ensure their livelihoods. This is mainly due to their instable and/or irregular situation toward a set of administrative and legal rules in



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- engaging them to work on high-level labour migration goals.
5. After a disaster, engage in anti-trafficking awareness raising and support provision of livelihood opportunities to reduce the push factors for trafficking in persons.
  6. Provide support to both the host community and the internally displaced persons (IDP) or refugee population at the same time on informal economy activities as relevant in contexts where large IDP populations create an economic burden on the Host Community that might result in conflict.
  7. Ensure that labour migration programmes/projects always include a careful analysis of the socio-cultural, political and economic context in both sending and receiving countries.
  8. When analysing livelihoods support options with refugees dependent on IE settings, determine the most appropriate option for camp settings by considering a range of aspects:
    - Cash for work (CFW) or cash transfers are more effective and easier to implement than other common livelihoods activities such as vocational training
    - If the goal is to promote small business enterprise, a mentoring program or partnership creation might be more useful than a training.
    - Exploring alternatives as part of a broader contextual assessment should occur before designing the program, that takes place prior to the design of refugee livelihoods programs.
  9. Carry out more analysis on disaster impact related to employment/people dependent on the IE.
  10. Analyse the employment situation in the host country, especially the informal economy, as it holds more employment prospects for refugees.
  11. In planning support for refugees, develop a plan to move from one level of support to another as people's capacities and needs evolve through time.



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<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/iesf>

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