

## GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### CEOSS - Egypt

Project: Improving Livelihoods of Urban and Rural Poor Women Dependent on Informal economy in Egypt.

Good Practice - Empowering women to organise themselves in elected committees and empowering them to practice democracy and to participate in decision-making and claim their economic and social rights.

#### 1. Brief summary

The action design applies many approaches and recommendations mentioned in the call for proposal. In detail: a careful selection of target groups among the broader informal economy (i.e., action focuses on women with minimal or no education, both in urban and rural poor communities in Egypt as well as women with disabilities as a specific sub-group, as they represent one of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in Egypt).

An initial survey was targeted to 30 communities in the area: this action assured that accurate information are available about current conditions, skills, and needs of the target groups, as well as the gaps and opportunities that might exist in the communities (public and private companies, industries were surveyed to detect which skills they lack in employees, as well as the potential of partnering with small businesses, producers, service providers, entrepreneurs among target groups). Further activities (training, linkages, capacity building, etc.) were tailored to specific needs and conditions in the target communities. Action also includes components of the empowerment of the target groups through the establishment of local committees and associations aimed at representing the interests of target groups in the long term.

#### 2. Key Areas of Good Practice

- Advocacy Methods (1.2)
- Knowledge of rights, laws and regulations (2.3)
- Support to improve Occupational Safety and Health among informal economy workers (2.3)
- Community-based social protection (4.4)

#### 3. Context - Brief description of:

##### Where was the good practice implemented?

These were applied in 30 rural and urban communities in 5 governorates ( Qalubya, Cairo, Giza, Bani Sueif, Minia) through electing 30 committees representing women in the informal economy and designing and implementing plans for building the capacities of these committees to empower them to claim for their rights.

##### Why was the good practice developed?

The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services adopted the Rights Development

**Model:** a methodology that seeks to enable women working in the informal economy to claim and access their rights; it ensures their participation in all phases of the project such as identifying opportunities, relationships, planning and designing inputs relevant to local initiatives of the project. This methodology is based on the following principles:

- Organizing women in informal economy in elected committees representing them.
- Empowering elected committees representing women working in the informal economy to identify and access their rights.
- Integration of women working in informal economy into services available in both the governmental and private sectors.
- Adopting advocacy campaigns and mobilizing the community towards the issues of women working in the informal economy.

Using this methodology, women working in informal economy have accessed some of economic and social rights. As of February 2018:

1. 818 women got official cards such as National IDs, birth certificates, which helps them benefit from the services provided by the State.
2. 4,165 women have access to health services through health convoys carried out in partnership with governmental health institutions
3. \ 368 women empowered to join the official sector and to be covered under the umbrella of social insurance.

#### **Who is involved? Who are the people who benefited from the good practice?**

The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services staff / members of the boards of partner CBOs / women working in the informal economy participating in the election process, have all helped in the implementation of this good practice.

Women working in the informal economy benefited from this model. This was through organizing themselves in groups (elected committees), thus enhancing their access to the available services in the governmental institutions and the private sector, which improve their quality of life.

#### **When was the activity implemented?**

This model has been implemented over several consecutive times:

- During the period of January to March 2017, 48 meetings were held in the 30 target communities. The total number of participants reached 2942 women. The meeting aimed to prepare the community for carrying out a democratic election process.
- During the period of April to May 2017, 30 capacity-building plans for the elected committees were prepared and have started to be implemented through capacity building activities.
- As of June 2017, and to date, the elected committees participate effectively in claiming the economic and social rights of women working in the informal economy, and they have benefited of these rights and services.

#### **4. Level and type of innovation of the good practice**

This model is innovative because it depends on building the capacity of women to claim themselves their economic and social rights. The beneficiaries of this model are not only women targeted by the project, but also the experiences gained will be transferred to other

groups of women in the informal economy, thus helping to maximize the benefit of implementing a rights-based development strategy through the formation of the elected committees.

#### **5. Description: processes and steps involved**

To implement this model, several activities were carried out:

1. Implementation of 48 meetings in the 30 working communities. The total number of participants was 2942 members of these communities. During these meetings, the following actions were carried out:

- Announce the start of project implementation and explain the idea of the project
- Clarify that the project is in a project funded by the European Union
- Explain the idea of elections and the steps to implement the elections and criteria of the nominated candidates
- Open the door to candidates for those who wish to participate in the elections of the committees
- The processing of electoral cards and electoral funds
- Provide an opportunity for all candidates to clarify their electoral program
- Start the voting process and then count the votes to all participants
- Declaration of the result of the winners of the highest votes to be representatives of citizens in the elected committees of the project

2 - Holding 30 meetings to prepare and design plans for capacity building program in accordance with the model of the Coptic Evangelical Organization to enable the committees to carry out the roles expected from them and start the implementation of this plan through the provision of training and technical support

3 - Identify the economic and social rights of women working in the informal economy and the implementation of meetings with civil rights officials from the governmental sector and the private sector to provide the services available for women working in the informal economy.

#### **6. Resources and skills needed to carry out the good practice**

- Human resources represented in the existence of the staff of the Coptic Evangelical Organization / members of CBOs / members of the elected committees representing the target groups.
- Resources related to skills are: the ability of cadres to communicate and negotiate and generate social dialogue
- The presence of consultants specialized in the issues of women working in the informal economy will help identify the governmental institutions and private sector institutions and build mechanisms for communication between them and between the CBOs and committees of the project partners.

#### **7. Sustainability of the Good Practice**

The core of the implementation of the rights-based development strategy is continuity. The implementation of this strategy aims at empowering the target groups through:



1- Organizing themselves / 2- Identifying the economic and social rights / 3- How to fight for these rights. Reaching the stage of enabling them to continue to claim their rights

#### Lesson Learned

##### **1. Challenge that was faced**

The difficulty at the beginning was to convince women of the idea and to participate actively in the electoral process as well as to organize themselves in elected committees.

##### **2. How it was addressed**

Implementing meetings with groups of targeted women and presenting them with some successful models from previous projects implemented by CEOSS.