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Running: FINAL THESIS REPORT

The American University in Cairo

Graduate School of Education

YOUNG RURAL WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION SUPPORTED  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ON THEIR LIVES: CASES FROM UPPER EGYPT GOVERNORATES

A Thesis Report Submitted to

The Department of Comparative and International Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts in

International and Comparative Education

by

Ola Hosny

(under the supervision of Dr. Nagwa Megahed)

(Read by Dr. Ted Purinton)

2014

### **Abstract**

Over the last years, young rural women's vulnerability to the social and economic conditions became the focus of the literature (El Laithy, na). Current studies show that women's capacities to participate in the development processes of their communities have been jammed with unequal gender, socio-economic and power relations (Kabeer, 2012). Yet, many development programs were designed and implemented to reach deprived women from different socio-economic backgrounds, educate or train them, build their capacities and prepare them to join the labor market and be active members inside their communities (USAID, 2013).

This research study examines young rural women's perspectives in Upper Egypt governorates on the impact of the education supported development projects on their lives, calling for an update of the state of knowledge of the effect of development projects on specific areas such as; women empowerment, gender equity, civil society enhancement and the integration of social stratification in underprivileged communities.

The main findings explored in this study revealed the urgent need of placing the following changes inside the intervened communities; establishing social accountability, building social resilience, effecting scaffolding, resolving ideological debates and integrating projects' social cohesion inside the villages' communities.

The study offers recommendations for educators, policy makers and practitioners who are concerned with education support development projects directed to young rural women in Egypt and other countries with similar contexts.

### **Acknowledgement**

Working on my thesis' report has been my dream from the first day I joined the master program at the AUC. After spending many years working in the development area, specifically with poor women in Upper Egypt governorates, I'll be dedicating this work to the martyrs of poverty. I'm grateful for every poor woman I met in my personal and professional life. You changed my personal vision to my role and inspired me with your thoughts and ideas that shaped this study. I hope I can be of any help to you in the future and wish you all the best in keeping up the courage of changing your lives and moving forward.

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**List of Acronyms**

CARE	Care International in Egypt
CDAs	Community Development Associations
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
ERP	Education Reform Program
EU	European Union
FGDGILO	Girls Improved Learning Outcomes Program
IDI	In-depth Interview
IDRC	International Development Research Center
NFBE	Non-formal Basic Education
NFE	Non-formal Education
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education project
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background information

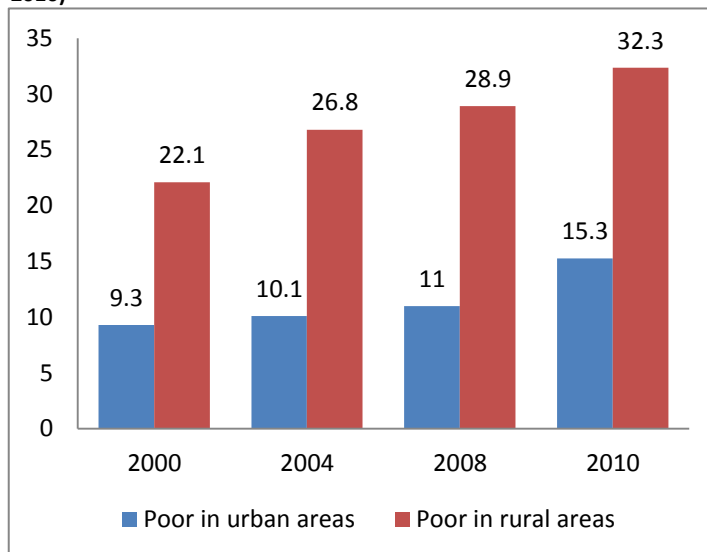
In Egypt, around twenty five percent of the population is under the poverty line (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and

Statistics, 2011), which is defined to be an income of less than \$1.25/day (United Nations, 2009). The poor are mostly located in rural areas in Upper Egypt governorates as shown in figure 1 (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, 2011). They have been always at a critical point;

failure in facing different social, cultural, economic and financial barriers deprive them from accessing the education, employment, and health services in their countries (The Global Monitoring Report team, 2010).

Among the poor, as mentioned in the Population Council's (2010) report, "young people are important catalysts for development and change...investment in this crucial group provides an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate growth and reduce poverty" (p. 1). To help young people in improving their social efficiency and economically contribute to their societies they need to be educated and/or trained to fit certain jobs (Labaree, 1997), and act as active members inside their communities.

Figure 1: Percentages of poor in Egypt, by location and years (2000-2010)



Source: Reprinted from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), 2013, Retrieved from [http://www.capmas.gov.eg/pages\\_ar.aspx?pageid=728](http://www.capmas.gov.eg/pages_ar.aspx?pageid=728). Copyright 2013 by CAPMAS.Public Data

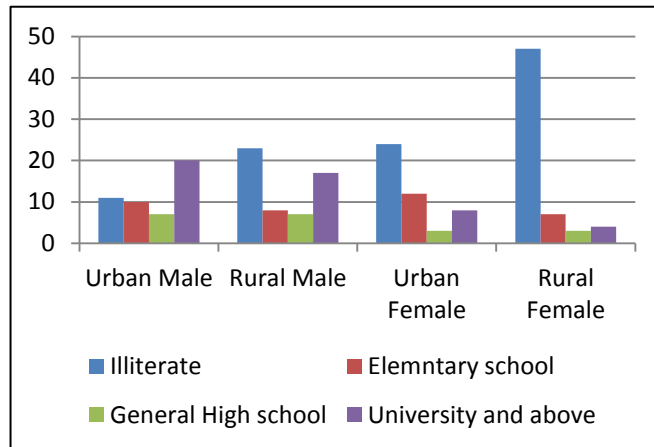
Being everyone's right, education should at least be able to equip young people with literacy, numerical and life skills that help them shape their future (The Global Monitoring Report team, 2010). Unfortunately, public schools in Egypt lack the capacity to make young people's fulfillment possible (Hurn, 1985). Low quality education has been dominating many public schools particularly in low-income areas (Assaad & Barsoum, 2007). Advantaged families are able to overcome the gap of equal opportunities for educational quality; however, the poor remain trapped by the deficiencies of the system and became in most cases socially excluded (Assaad & Barsoum, 2007). Consequently, many of the poor are dispossessed from entering the labor market due to their poverty, low education quality and lack of life skills. Thus, the educational quality gap had to be complemented by interventions that address youth needs, and provide essential services to underprivileged communities (Amen, 2008).

In 1970s (Loveluck, 2012), non-formal education in Egypt was born to fill the formal education gap and fulfill the basic needs of underprivileged communities (Sabri, 2007). In her report, Sabri mentioned that non-formal education (NFE) was mainly focusing on literacy programs. However, NFE's scope was expanded, in response to the poor communities' needs, to cover other areas such as; vocational training, women empowerment, gender equity, life skills, citizenship education, reproductive health, child labor, human rights, street children, HIV/AIDs, youth civic participation, business skills and youth employment. One could say that NFE's mission worked on transferring knowledge and fulfilling any social, financial or cultural gaps for marginalized communities (The Global Monitoring Report team, 2010), through the implementation of different development projects.

Nevertheless, despite the efforts exerted in helping the young poor in rural areas to improve their living conditions, still, not all segments are well served (Sabri, 2007). As

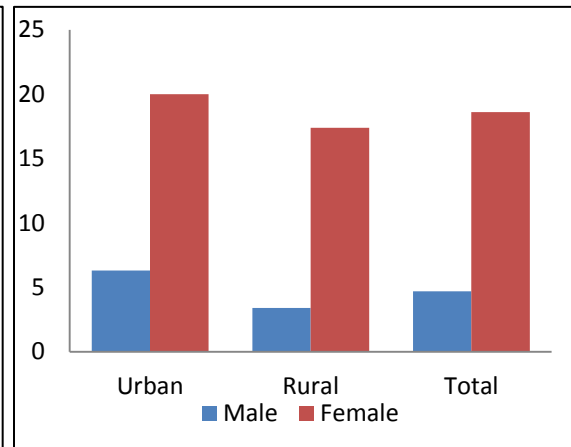
illustrated in the 2006 Egyptian census, there is a remarkable increase in young rural women's illiterate and unemployment rates in comparison to young rural men. Young rural women, as

**Figure 2: Education status aged 15-64 by location and gender (Census 2006)**



Source: EBRD, 2012, p. 44

**Figure 3: Unemployment rates aged 15-64 by location and gender (Census 2006)**



Source: Assaad, 2007, p. 41

shown in figure 2 proved to be the most deprived segment of the education services in Egypt (EBRD, 2012). As for the unemployment rates, as shown in figure 3, young rural women are the second highest deprived segment from entering the labor market force (Assaad, 2007). Other than domestic and field work, these young rural women have virtually no opportunities for mobility, inspiration, or participation in community's activities. Despite the fact that many of them work in farms, they are considered to be part of the informal economy (i.e. economic activities that do not meet the formal arrangements (International Labor Organization, 2012), which is not yet properly covered in Egypt's statistical data. Ultimately, a helpful approach for this deprived segment might be to create a new blend of already-existing developmental strategies, in an attempt to compensate for the defects of certain models and to ameliorate the outcomes of others.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Young rural women's vulnerability to the social and economic conditions became recently the focus of literature concerning development (El Laithy, na). Current studies show that women's capacities to participate in the development processes of their communities have been jammed with unequal gender, socio-economic and power relations (Kabeer, 2012). The Millennium Development Goals have lately integrated new goal concerning women's right to have decent jobs (Kabeer, 2012). Yet, to achieve this goal, it became a must to develop programs that can reach women from different socio-economic backgrounds, specifically those in deprived areas, educate or train them, build their capacities and prepare them for the labor market.

In recent times, several development projects in Egypt have been directing much of their funds and efforts towards achieving the above goal (USAID, 2013). Most end of projects' reports show satisfaction of projects' beneficiaries with the schemes, structures and quality of services provided, indicating that the majority of projects well respond to young rural women's needs or as per se beneficiaries' needs (The Center for Development Services, 2005). Nonetheless, the impression of satisfaction is usually based on projects' impact assessment results, if any, which in most cases are designed, analyzed and expressed by projects' staff (The World Bank Group, 2012). However, the other side of the coin is rarely covered in literature; this is evident by the dearth of data on beneficiaries' perspectives on the effect of development projects and the articulation of their experiences towards such projects. Hence, this research will contribute to fill such gap in literature by addressing the following main question: what are the young rural women's perspectives of the impact of the education supported development projects implemented in Upper Egypt governorates on their lives?

This main question includes the following sub-questions:

1. How do young rural women perceive the education supported development projects? And what are the factors that affect their perceptions?
2. What are the projects' components that make difference to young rural women? And what kind of adaptations raised by young rural women that need to take place to the projects' purposes, policies, actions, activities, decisions or resource allocations?
3. What is the needed contextual framework to implement a successful project? And what are the challenges they determine in the current settings?
4. What role young rural women intend to play to sustain the impact of such projects? And how can they act as role models inside their communities?

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The objective of this study is to critically examine young rural women in Upper Egypt governorates' perspectives on the impact of the education supported development projects on their lives, and update the state of knowledge of the effect of development projects on specific areas such as; women empowerment, gender equity, civil society enhancement and the integration of social stratification in such underprivileged communities. The study is designed to capture young rural women's perspectives within five main themes that were adopted by OECD/DAC and are the most common used assessment criteria among development projects (Chianca, 2008); relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability (Chang, 2006). For more information on the definition of each theme please visit section 2.4.

The findings are meant to conclude effective components, schemes and structures of development projects that would help lift up young rural women's lives, while addressing women's projected needs that would enhance their economic, social and cultural contribution

within their societies. In other wording, the study's findings are meant to deepen the understanding of the project's components that best enhance young rural women's skills and serve their needs, determining essential modifications needed for the current designs and policies. In brief, hopefully, the findings would allow projects' designers to create effective demand-driven interventions in a variety of areas in the future, deploying young rural women's efforts, abilities and time towards the improvement of the Egyptians' quality of lives.

## **2 Literature Review**

The theoretical framework of this study includes four sections; international views, comparative models, overview of existing projects in Upper Egypt governorates, and the limited literature available on young rural women's perspectives on such projects. The first section gives synopsis of international views of the role of and expectation from educational supported projects. The second section elaborates comparative experiences from countries with similar contexts to Egypt, and displays aspects that drive projects to meant or unmeant results. The third section provides an overview of development projects, which were either implemented in Upper Egypt governorates or emphasized on women's empowerment and gender equality, determining their final outcomes. This section is meant to familiarize the readers with the type of services development projects offer in Egypt, and the limitations they are stuck with. The fourth section reviews the limited literature that raises views of young rural women on development projects, giving preliminary idea of beneficiaries' impression on projects' excesses, and shortages.

### **2.1 International views**

#### **2.1.1 Expected outcomes of educational supported programs**

Education is one of the most important sources of economic and social development in any country (Morgan, 2000). The provision of a minimum level of education makes effective input on any country's GDP, thus enhancing the overall climate and achieving any desired improvement. In the past, universal youth literacy became the concern of many countries in an attempt to build qualified candidates in vital sectors e.g. economic, health, agriculture, infrastructure and trading (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012). Although applying universal youth literacy was a hard target to achieve, it was proved by Brazil, China, Indonesia, Iran, and Mexico (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012) to be doable. These countries were successfully able to reach near 100% literacy rates (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012), making crucial



change to their economic and social status worldwide. Thus, it became an accepted fact that improving the education sector is a guaranteed channel for improving other country's sectors.

However, each country's contextual framework along with the available resources and urgency of effecting changes are not the same, in consequence, universal youth literacy had to be advanced to reach targeted improvements of any country (The Youth Led Development Agency, na). As such, there was a global transformation from 'universal youth literacy' to the 'universal youth learning', expanding the targeted aim of just reading and writing to the updated aim of being trained to act and participate (UNESCO-UIS/Brookings Institution, 2013). Ultimately, as argued in the 'Youth in Tanzania Today' report, it became an urgent need to engage every citizen into the building of their country's economy, including both; privileged and underprivileged youth (The Youth Led Development Agency, na).

The international experience proved that the underprivileged youth is usually much eager to attain high educational achievements more than others (Saha, 2011). Consequentially, more than ever before, there is a general tendency for local initiatives, aided programs and government movements to support the underserved youth, providing them with good quality learning, making them visible to the community, involving them in sustaining their countries' economic growth, and most importantly shrinking any possibilities of losing their energy towards efficiently and effectively utilizing countries' resources, while preparing them to be civic actors (EQUIP2, na).

Yet, an important perspective to be deliberated is the rarefied application of components and activities designed for the current education initiatives. This perception indicates immense admonition towards stakeholders' needs, challenges and contextual frameworks. As argued by Schunk (2012), high achievements can only be attained when students determine the importance

of learning, get motivated and make any possible link between their studies and their personal needs. In designing any initiatives, this finding reiterated the urgency of considering students' cultures, which shape much of their expectations of learning, along with the level of interaction and participation required to be achieved (Hammond, Austin, Orcutt and Rosso, 2001). One could summarize this by saying, it is not only about designing activities, however it is about contextualizing these activities to match students' nurturing, parenting, and social and economic conditions, which all contribute to students' learning capacities.

Now-a-days, the dominating learning scheme is student-centered, with special emphasis on individual accountability and ingenuity (The 21st Century Learning Initiative, 1997). The student-centered learning scheme deals with students as pillars from which change can occur (Passarelli & Kolb, 2011). As a matter of fact, applying this scheme in development projects drove their designers to a point where they ought to persist with educational strategies that fit the new era, in an attempt to put their educational reform efforts in the right direction.

To adopt the new learning scheme inside the development projects, designers and implementers revealed their need to walk with students through consequential stages to support them in developing themselves and appraising their beliefs and thoughts (International Institute for Educational Planning, 2006). The core idea of these stages is 'skills' transformation', through which students are inspired to discover new experiences, witness them, think thoroughly of them, and finally update their state of knowledge and action (Passarelli & Kolb, 2011). Through this journey, students' transferable skills help them get engaged from interdisciplinary perspectives, deepen their understandings and allow them make better connections (The 21st Century Learning Initiative, 1997). In fact, transferable skills are assumed to support students to make quality of links and reasons to the knowledge they gain, rather than making no use of the quantity of

knowledge they have (Martin, 1981). Transferable skills also allow students to synthesis knowledge to their colleagues, exchanging experiences and most importantly increasing each other's level of creativity and imagination (The 21st Century Learning Initiative, 1997). With no doubt, provoking students' skills evolves the relation between students' nature and nurture, placing learning as an on-going process. Perceptibly, the success of this transformation cycle depends on many factors, among which is the existence of trained teachers/promoters.

### **2.1.2 Promoters' professional development and sense of power**

Building on the above, the literature proved that providing quality learning depends much on teachers' capacities, or as known in development projects promoters' capacities, contributing to the success of the transformation cycle anticipated (International Institute for Educational Planning, 2006). Lessons from rural projects in India and Mexico show that promoters' understanding of community needs, intention of resolving problems, and ability of engaging everyone in a participatory approach help much in providing a quality learning environment (Fox & Gershman, 2001). Ultimately, as argued by Prendiville (2008), promoters' styles of facilitation have great impact on the quality of outcomes of any project.

The undertaking of facilitation is not an easy process (Prendiville, 2008), specifically when we deal with the nature of human beings, who refer their achievements to their capacities, while referring any failure to outside conditions (Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008). In non-formal education development projects, blames of students' failures are mostly directed towards promoters' lack of capacities (VSO, na). In fact, it must be admitted that regardless promoters' level of education and social position, we cannot assume that they are all well educated people. Indeed, big percentage of promoters lacks many cognitive skills (The Church Educational System, 2001), yet they are still seen as role models. Not just like this, however, it is very

common to find the intervened communities paying special respect to promoters, and never accepting any rebellion against them from their outer face, while charging them the responsibility of any failure from their inner face (Baker, 2000). Subsequently, to resolve this contradictory setting, the international interventions supplemented their projects with promoters' professional development trainings as an essential component, whereas no intervention could start without the completion of such capacity building activities (Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008) to intensify the likelihood of reaching the quality of learning planned for.

Leadership, critical thinking and life skills are on the top priorities for building promoters' professional competencies (European Union, 2011), helping them to understand students' determinations and visions (Goetzman, 2012). As proved in the literature, promoters who act as leaders inside their classes can easily ingrain real changes to their students (Teach for America, 2011), doing the right action, through the right thinking (Freire, 1998). In the global context, educational reforms focused on the improvement of promoters' standards rather than the aims of teaching (Zhou, na). Nevertheless, whereas the impact of such reforms, as shown in China's exemplification, encouraged education's adjustments, and strengthened promoters' abilities to stimulate students' attention (Zhou, na), yet, they had other implications that were urgently needed to be considered.

No one would deny that while giving attention to building promoters' leadership, critical thinking and life skills, it is very important to pay good attention to the sense of power promoters may have. Since education in some opinions is seen as the process of building an end product (Martin, 1981), it was essential for projects' designers to determine promoters' level of power inside class, and make sure that it does not go beyond acceptable borders. In other wording, through development projects students' characters are shaped, values are added and plans are

settled, thus it is very important to make sure that projects build dynamic members rather than obedient objects. As a result, the factor of power became one of the important issues that need to be considered while building promoters' competencies.

Power is divided into seven main types, power of; position, charisma, relationships, information, expertise, punishment and reward (Bal, Campbell, Steed & Meddings, 2008). All seven types are needed inside class; the matter is how they are applied. Bangs & Frost (2012) argued that providing class' healthy conditions foster promoters to use their power in a proper manner. The UNESCO's (1993) report complemented Bangs & Frost's argument by confirming that if promoters' ethical merits are endorsed with needed power, then they will upshot effective leaders who are perceived as role models inside their communities with effective impact. Eventually, classes' atmospheres came up to add to the list of areas that need attention.

### **2.1.3 The learning atmosphere and project's social cohesion**

Turning our attention to projects' atmosphere, it is worth considering Dewey's, the ancient philosopher, thought of seeing education as a social practice (as cited in Hammond, Austin, Orcutt and Rosso, 2001), and its effect on integrating students' capacities into a meaningful output. Notwithstanding to the social, economic, behavioral, physical and mental conditions, the global transformation assured the right of all students to have an inviting room for such practice (Banks, 2004). Labaree (1997) reasoned the failure of making students' social practice of learning possible to projects' political deficiencies. In his article, Labaree meant by the political cause of deficiency the lack of devising clear projects' goals and outcomes, and/or, the deprived methods used in developing such goals. Apparently, development projects became in a long-lasting assessment status, where methods of building productive and proactive learning

environments needed to be invincible, supporting students to excel in different areas rather than suppressing their aptitudes (Herrera & Torres, 2006).

The association between social cohesiveness and building active learning environment is worrisome given the evidence that active learning environment is associated with the existence of universal goals and values (Friedkin, 2004), an issue that is not easy to reach in underprivileged communities where complexities are widely diversified. Schunk (2012) debated that locating long-term goals inside any learning environment, developed by students and schools/projects' staff cooperatively, enhance both groups' self-efficacy, increase their level of commitment to achieve such goals, and to some extent build the learning environment attempted. However, what Prendiville (2008) believed in is that projects' cohesiveness is vulnerable to many conditions. Alteration in factors such as; teaching methodologies, staff's structure, project's component, and others factors may force cohesive group members to change their beliefs, with no guaranteed performances or reactions. Durkheim, being the first sociologist calling for social cohesion, reasoned this transitory actions to defects in shared dispositions i.e. values, commitments and challenges, minimizing groups' opportunities, increasing disparities and weakening social bonds that have already been established among groups' members (Berger-Schmitt, 2000). What we can conclude from the above is that; social cohesion is a major cause for mounting stakeholders' inputs towards desired outputs in an efficient and effective manner.

## **2.2 Comparative models**

Upon illustrating the international views and their inner determinants, it is worth turning our attention to diversified global experiences of development projects that have been implemented in developing countries with similarities to the Egyptian context. The researcher meant to illustrate projects with diversified goals, to prove her assumption that success factors of

any project is not related to the projects' focus e.g. literacy, entrepreneur, employability; however, it is related to the projects' structure, scheme, components and contextualization.

The first model presents the “Training and Mentoring Program for Women-Led Business”, an intervention project that aimed to assist women in transforming and expanding their individual businesses into combined mid-sized initiatives, increasing their economic opportunities (Fennes Africa Solidar, 2007). This project worked on three dimensions; preparing, enabling and linking women to possible opportunities. The project was implemented in Liberia, DRC, Rwanda, Senegal, Mozambique and South Africa (Fennes Africa Solidar, 2007). Although this project only served twenty four rural women in six countries, it had noticeable impact on empowering women on the micro and macro levels, guiding them to not only national opportunities, but regional as well. From the researcher's point of view, the strength of this project is that it speculated on individual's impact of change rather than unit's impact. From each country, only four women were prepared to re-enter the labor market from an advanced door. Acting as agents of change, the beneficiaries were meant to be role models in their communities, and encouraged to use the snow-ball methodology to transfer knowledge to new incumbents. From an institutionalization perspective, the project intensively connected project's beneficiaries to local governments and private sectors, using the mentoring component to develop their scale-up plan after being well-trained on assessing the market, undertaking feasibility studies and piloting their projects. The project endorsed beneficiaries' large scale networking, building for them conducive environment for exchanging information, raising comments, and taking advantage of each other's experiences. Another valuable aspect of this project is the unconditional structure of its mentorship program. Many activities were delivered on-line with no cost or time waste, a structure that helped beneficiaries to easily connect with their mentors

even after the project's termination and build a worth-trusty relation. Finally, the project provided a capital component that supported well-driven plans to turn into reality, an issue that increased the project's credibility. As far as the researcher is concerned, this project illustrated what is meant by holistic approach. Despite the fact that it served limited number of beneficiaries, its components complemented each other, and left no room for beneficiaries but reaching the maximum beneficial settings for their projects. Beside the access to international market and the technical trainings provided, the project also supplemented the beneficiaries with the capital and the mentoring components. Granted, the project provided beneficiaries with baseline and endline services, unlike other projects which only provided baseline services.

The second model is the "KALAH-CIDSS" project that was implemented in Philippines. This model illustrated the benefit of having intertwining projects that builds on each other's strengths. KALAH-CIDSS consolidated positive effects of two demand-driven projects for poverty-alleviation reaching a formula of guaranteed success. First, the CIDSS project that aimed to influence macro-economic trends in underprivileged communities. CIDSS was acknowledged for its success in selecting needed villages for intervention and needed targeted groups; however, it did not succeed neither in its outreach plan nor its management plan. The second is the KDP project, which aimed to provide funds for needy people in underserved communities. KDP was recognized by its effective management style that emphasized on stakeholders' analysis and community activities and participation, helping much in their outreach plan(Asian Development Bank, 2012). The KALAH-CIDSS project assembled the proven strategies of success in both projects and started its own initiative in supporting local communities to design and implement new community-driven intervention projects. Through the effective documentation of lessons learned from CIDSS and KDP, KALAH-CIDSS was able to engage every member in its



intervened villages e.g. community members, community leaders, local associations and local governments, gaining their support, loyalty and desire of change. One could say, this project built stakeholders' capacities and implanted the techniques of planning and management strategies into the communities, leaving the intervened areas with the maximum possibilities of sustaining their projects, along with high level of trust and cooperation between its members (Asian Development Bank, 2012). In the researchers opinion, this model mostly fitted developing countries as Philippines, where financial resources are limited, yet, efforts are scattered and the common practice is to reinvent the wheel, without considering other efforts' attainments and lessons learned.

The third model is the "Youth Opportunities Program" that was implemented in over forty villages in Uganda. It was a participatory development program addressed to male and female underserved youth for the provision of unconditional cash transfer. The program was managed by government district bodies, and mostly aimed to support groups of youth to get trained and be ready to start their enterprises (Blathman, Fiala & Martinez, 2011). In other wording, the program worked on making use of cohesive groups who have certain project ideas, allow them the opportunity of deciding on the suitable type of training needed to be qualified for applying these ideas, and for each group to develop a compiled proposal explaining clear stages of reaching expected outcomes and needed resources for that. Once the group has an approved proposal, a fund is transferred through a shared bank account to group's members to pay for their training fees, material cost, and transportation. After then, groups are expected to be ready to start their own business (Blathman, Fiala & Martinez, 2011), a phase that is not included within the framework of the program. To the researcher, this was an entrepreneurial program that meant to build beneficiaries personal and professional skills relying only on the scaffolding

methodology with no technical supervision, but administrative supervision along with an outsourced training. Although it's a new philosophical approach, the involvement of the program staff was only limited to revising and approving proposals at the beginning, and revising and approving settlements of funds at the end, other than that; beneficiaries were the ones of control of everything. Admittedly, the idea seemed new to the common practice of any entrepreneurship program, where vocational training curriculums are delivered followed by the provision of seed money to cover the initial start-up phase of certain types of businesses. It looked from the literature that the program had wide spectrum of projects' ideas, inviting youth to an innovative platform of thoughts, opinions, desires and plans. What the researcher believed in is that this platform may guide future projects' implementers to extract desirable projects' ideas and further help intervened communities to accomplish their needs. Nevertheless, the researcher also believed that the program had several deficiencies; lack of quality training, lack of capital needed to start business, lack of beneficiaries' capacities and lack of inclusion of illiterate underserved youth. First, the trainings selected by beneficiaries were not following by any means quality control standards, thus, a great percentage of trainings were not efficient enough. Second, graduates of the program were stuck, same as non-graduates, with the funding sources, finding no support from the program staff to fulfill this need. Third, beneficiaries did not have sufficient critical thinking skills neither decision-making skill, in addition to low self-efficacy, all contributed to the fear of making steady movements towards achieving their goals. Finally, since approving funds required the development of written proposals, only the higher quintile of the poor were invited to get enrolled, excluding the most deprived quintile.

Fourthly, the researcher focused on the "Micro-credit service project" for targeted rural women in Iran aiming at eradicating poverty. The study labeled rural women as the 'silent

culture', justifying prejudices on women's mental and power skills by the socio-economic, gender and educational discriminations (Sadighi, 2011). Through micro-credit services provided in this project, women were able to reach "virtuous spiral" as labeled in the economy, enhancing their families' financial status (Sadighi, 2011). There are two important findings from this study. First, the study proved that any change in underprivileged communities starts from the poor's end with a bottom-up theory of change. Second, the study built a correlation link between credit programs that is associated with educational component from one side and women's empowerment from the other side, illustrating such programs' positive effect on lifting up rural communities as a whole. The study also highlighted the importance of engaging local societies in projects' activities and its effect on institutionalization (Sadighi, 2011). The project conditioned the success of local societies' involvement by the high consideration of, "reciprocal communications principles and apply opinion of local society" (Sadighi, 2011, p. 5). This project evidenced that supporting rural women economically enable them to break the educational, social, cultural, structural, political, organizational, family and economical barriers they face, and be objectively represented in the economic sector. In addition, rural women's economic successions qualify them to reach special social and economic positions inside their communities, giving hope for those who miss the courage of change (Sadighi, 2011). Ultimately, Sadighi (2011) argued that, "when in practice women feel that they can be involved in planning, policy making and deciding or solving problems in the society certainly they'll feel more solidarity and become more interested in social, economic, and cultural development programs" (p. 5).

In general, the literature showed that women's economic contributions to their societies depend much on their families' needs, and how they adopt their roles to meet these needs. Skills

or knowledge provided in any development project must relate to women's household economic production. If done, then it is very much likely that women will acquire these skills and show high level of economic contribution to their societies.

### **2.3 Overview of development programs in Upper Egypt governorates**

As previously mentioned, searching the literature of the education supported programs implemented in Upper Egypt's governorates is an endless process in terms of projects' designs, structures, implementation and evaluation. Among the projects implemented, there are also differences in the main goals, beneficiaries' age bracket, beneficiaries' target groups, projects' intervention areas and projects' components. This section will start by presenting three USAID's projects; the Education Reform Program (ERP), the Girls Improved Learning Outcomes Program (GILO), and the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education project (STEM). Then, a focus will be made on UNICEF Girls' Education Initiative in Egypt (GEI), and wrapping up by the Population Council's project 'Ishraq'. The rationale behind this selection is to focus on projects that are either implemented in Upper Egypt governorates or projects that include women empowerment, gender equality or capacity building skills among their objectives. Emphasize was also given to mixing between projects that are implemented by bilateral and multilateral organizations. From a critical perspective, the researcher will demonstrate each project's goal, objectives, structures, outputs and outcomes to the limit of the data available in the literature; this will then be followed by the researcher's opinion on each project's core strengths and shortages. As a general fact, projects' level of critique varies depending on the available information in the literature. Finally, to increase the readers' knowledge, a listing of other relevant projects implemented by the United Nation's (UN) agencies in Egypt will be presented, without any details. In addition, it is worth mentioning that there are other organizations who had enormous roles in serving rural young women in Upper Egypt, however their work is not covered in this

report (e.g., Save the Children, CARE, PLAN, Making Cents, Pathfinders, Nahdet Mahrousa...etc.).

The first consideration is the integrated “Education Reform Program” (ERP) designed to increase the quality of the educational outcomes through creating standards based performance, developing professionalism, and strengthening community participation (USAID, 2009). ERP worked with a budget of around \$80 million for five years and ended in 2009 with some aspects that continued till 2011 (USAID, 2009). It was implemented in seven governorates on the Nile River: Alexandria, Cairo, Fayoum, BeniSuef, Qena, Minia, and Aswan. Among its several pillars were Professional Development, School Based Reform and Community Participation. Within these three pillars, ERP relied on improving students’ learning outcomes, focusing on four main themes; building teachers’ capacities, increasing schools’ autonomy, establishing effective schools’ systems and encouraging communities’ participation (USAID Egypt-Education Report Program: School Based Reform). Working parallel on these themes, the program was able to rehabilitate its schools’ environment and train teachers to act as facilitators and supporters rather than lecturers and instructors, using the active learning theory to enhance students’ skills. In total, the project impacted 308 schools, trained 9,761 teachers among which over 60% are women, established 245 boards of trustees, constructed 264 new classrooms and finally disbursed 149,000 girls' scholarships (Educational Quality Improvement Program, 2008). From the researchers’ point of view, ERP’s core strength was in having teachers’ self-assessment component. In this component teachers were trained to develop and set their own goals, assess their performance, and make necessary modifications to their plans (USAID Egypt-Education Report Program: School Based Reform). As mentioned in the literature, this component helped much in increasing teachers’ critical thinking skills, deepening their understandings of materials

taught and supporting students in enhancing their skills as well. It also helped in building cohesiveness in schools' cultures, raising joint interests between schools' stakeholders. More importantly, the program linked schools to community members, including them as members of boards of trustees, and engaging them in jointly taking decisions, and cooperatively developing strategic and action plans (USAID Egypt-Education Report Program: School Based Reform). This issue supported the institutionalization efforts of the program's outcomes, transferring the project management knowledge, and socializing the soil of the community to be positive recipients of future initiatives. The program as well had a precious role in building the capacity of governmental bodies i.e. the National Center for Education Evaluation and Examinations on the governorate level, strengthening the monitoring and evaluation process and enhancing the possibility of replicating such model on the governorate level (Educational Quality Improvement Program, 2008). Whereas the program achieved enormous success on ground, from the researcher's opinion, it had a major shortage in its published documentation. Despite its large scale, very little documentation is available in the literature, focusing mostly on electronic summaries and fact sheets. Accumulating on this, the researcher would have been eager to find financial analysis of the program's budget, measuring its level of efficiency. In summary, from the limited literature available, the researcher can extract proofs of relevance, effectiveness, and impact, yet, the level of efficiency and sustainability cannot be proved.

The second consideration is the "Girls Improved Learning Outcomes Program" (GILO) that focused on promoting equal accessibility for girls schooling in the primary and preparatory basic education schools. Although GILO served both genders, yet it considered girls as the primary targeted group (USAID Egypt, 2012). It also worked on community mobilization and equipping schools with technology. The program was implemented in four poor governorates of

Upper Egypt; Fayoum, Beni Suef, Minia, and Qena. School staff members i.e. teachers, administrators and board of trustees were all considered as targeted beneficiaries who are in need to build their capacities (USAID Egypt, 2012). GILO gave special attention to the improvement of pedagogies and technologies used inside schools (Thompson, na). In GILO, which was known on the field level by the Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP), teachers were trained on new teaching methodology to enhance students' skills in phonics, vocabulary and reading comprehension (USAID Egypt, 2012). To the knowledge of the researcher, GILO was able to apply the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) for the first time in any development project (USAID Egypt, 2012). In general, GILO was able to train over 14,000 schools' staff, over 2,000 classrooms were equipped with computers and in some cases internet, a statistical increase in girls' enrollment was proven, and over 99% of intervened schools were able to revisit their goals and plans after completing the assessment cycle they were trained on (USAID Egypt, 2012). From the researcher's perspective, an outstanding result of this project is the high level of cooperation that took place between the project's staff and the ministry of education, riding the later to be convinced of applying such model as a national program in public schools. In addition, the researcher believes that GILO had successfully been able to achieve three important outputs; the establishment of Community Education Teams (CETs), which was planned to ensure the sustainability of the projects' achievements after it ends. Second, it introduced new teaching pedagogies that helped teachers easily transfer knowledge to underprivileged communities. Finally, GILO's project design helped establishing harmony in schools' cultures through training diversified schools' staff, narrowing gaps in their understandings of learning and uniting their goals. Nevertheless, as far as the researcher is concerned, results of GILO's impact assessment highlighted two daring

critiques. First, there was distinctive decrease in the number of intervention and control schools participated in the baseline and end-line assessments. As mentioned in the USAID Egypt's (na) report, drop-out of schools and leakage of EGRA exam were the main two reasons for not involving some schools in the comparison assessment. This status makes public understanding that not all intervened schools were able to maintain the program, may be due to either lack of management skills, lack of ingraining EGRA's importance into schools' communities, or lack of monitoring the implementation. Second, as mentioned earlier one of the positive results of GILO is having the ministry of education applying EGRA as a national program (USAID Egypt, na), nonetheless, there are very weak proof in the literature that such model was successfully replicated further (Nielsen, 2013). One could summarize this issue by saying that GILO was able to effect positive impact in the intervened villages and this as well proves that the project was badly needed, but again, there is no proof for sustainability, neither there is any proof of efficiency.

As for the third consideration, it focuses on the "Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education project" (STEM). This project's primary purpose was to, "meet the needs of the gifted and talented students and to meet the demands of the future workforce and continue research and development that is central to the economic growth of the country. The goal is to establish twenty-seven STEM schools over the course of five years. This would mean one STEM school in each governorate" (Rissmann-Joyce & El Nagdi, 2013, p.42). In other wording, STEM meant to, "serve as centers of excellence, contribute to workforce development, and allow enrollment to a range of gifted students regardless of their gender, social, or economic background" (USAID, 2012, p.3). STEM worked on scaling up the model through building the ministry of education's capacity to be able to replicate it all over the schools. STEM is a \$25



million, four years program. STEM design is built on a comprehensive proposal; starting from developing curriculum, to building school cultures, setting policies and procedures, developing professionalism, and ending by training teachers and administrators (Morrison, 2012).STEM project was implemented in over fourteen other countries beside Egypt. As seen, this project used the borrowing theory. Results from other countries that showed successful means were replicated in Egypt after being contextualized. STEM serves both genders from the youth population (Rissmann-Joyce & El Nagdi, 2013). From the researcher's opinion, STEM has a unique design in meeting the sustainability criteria through building the capacity of ministry's staff, which is an important key to success. Yet, since it is still in its implementation phase it is hard to critically analyze its expected outcomes.

Fourthly, the researcher would focus on "The Girls' Education Initiative in Egypt" (GEI). GEI's main objective was to build 1047 girl-friendly schools to enroll 31,410 girls in the age group of 6 to 13 (NCCM, 2008). Main goals were; to decrease the gender gap in primary education, and improve quality education and realize equality of treatment in basic primary education. GEI was implemented inside villages and hamlets of the governorates of Sohag, Assuit, Menia, Bani Sueif, Fayoum, Giza and Beheira (Sultana, 2008). An eligibility criterion for joining the project was for girls not enrolled in the formal education system. Looking into GEI's plan, the researcher can see two main strengths; first, the relevance of this project was evidence-based, undertaking desk research, stakeholders' and SWOT analysis, including interviews and field visits (Sultana, 2008), leading project's staff to familiarizing themselves with issues surrounding the project's planning and implementation. Secondly, more than eleven partners were involved in the planning and implementation of this project (Sultana, 2008), with main two players; the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) and the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF), a mixture between governmental and international experiences. Having more than eleven partners allowed the GEI planning team to make use of each one's experiences, authorities and networks, which the researcher believes was a success factor to the project. Nevertheless, the partnership edge had its shortages. As mentioned in Sultana's (2008) report, it was a very sensitive process that required lot of coordination and politics, an issue that drained project's staff efforts and put them in an unrest atmosphere. An additional shortage was the project's managerial structure. GEI had three committees that contributed to its management; the GEI National Task Force, the UN Task Force, and the GEI Secretariat. Although the project documents stated each committee's role, yet, overlapping and redundancy of efforts seemed very clear. In summary, no one can deny the efforts exerted to document the experience and lessons learned from this project, showing positive results on the areas of relevance, effectiveness and impact. Yet, it must be admitted that efficiency and sustainability are always the two uncertain areas to be proved.

Turning our fifth focus to the Population Council's project out-of-school girls 'Ishraq', we would find that it targeted 1,500 girls aged 13-15 with a total budget of around US\$5 million (Brady, Assaad, Ibrahim, Salem, Salem & Zibani, 2007). It was implemented in rural areas of five governorates in Upper Egypt, on two phases; pilot (Minia and Beni Suef) and scale-up (Fayoum, Sohag and Qena). It offered a comprehensive package of four main projects' components; literacy, life skills, sports and financial education. On ground, it reached around 3,500 girls, in addition to around one 1,700 boys in 54 villages (Brady, Assaad, Ibrahim, Salem, Salem & Zibani, 2007). Ishraq's main goal was to secure safe spaces for girls to meet and learn – a goal that they successfully achieved through legalizing the use of 'Youth Centers' for three hours a day solely for girls. They considered the girls as their first target group, and boys, parents

and community and religious leaders as their second target group. By reviewing the literature, the researcher discovered that around 70% of Ishraq participants were able to complete the project and get enrolled in the mainstream education. Ishraq succeeded in affecting girls' self-efficacy, built their leadership skills, and raised girls' abilities to economically contribute to their societies. Not only this, however, Ishraq succeeded in changing the norms and thoughts of girls' guardians, bringing them to "act in a more gender equitable manner" (Brady, Assaad, Ibrahim, Salem, Salem & Zibani, 2007). What the researcher believes in is that Ishraq had outstanding documentation evidence, including summaries, fact sheets, focused chapters and detailed reports, publishing them in both languages; English and Arabic. As expected by the researcher, this documentation could serve as a reference guide to any new projects, giving insightful directions on areas like planning, partnering, institutionalizing, building capacities and monitoring and evaluating. Of no doubt this documentation is of no proof of project's 100% success, however, it is of proof of success in the area of documentation. Indeed, from the researcher's review, the project's literature shows that Ishraq had a serious problem in its drop-out rates, indicating low-returns on the quality of education. And to be fair, the early marriage, the social norms and other contextual factors contributed to the increase of beneficiaries' drop-out rates. Although the project's staff adopted their plans to minimize this phenomenon, from the researcher's perspective, more actions should have been taken on the village level to; involve parents and initiate community activities, healing the problem from its grassroots. Moreover, the researcher detected a necessary need of adding a new component to Ishraq focusing on counseling or mentoring girls who joined the mainstream education. It is clear that enrolling high percentage of project's beneficiaries into the mainstream education is a success, nevertheless, sustaining this success had to be taken into consideration. In the final analysis, Ishraq did a great job in effecting

positive impact to its limited targeted group, but same as other programs, there is no evidence of efficiency or sustainability.

Other valuable projects worth mentioning implemented in governorates of Upper Egypt are the “Parallel School Program” implemented by UNESCO in Assuit and Minia; the “Early Childhood Development”, the “Community Based Education” and the “School Improvement projects” implemented by UNICEF in Assuit, Sohag and Minia. These are in addition to UNICEF’s project “Mushwary” that was implemented in over ten governorates in Upper Egypt. Then we have the “Combating Exploitative Child Labor in Egypt” implemented by WFP. And finally, the pro-poor horticulture and value chains in Upper Egypt “SALASEL”, a UN joint project (United Nations Egypt, 2012).

In addition to the above, due to the researcher’s work experience, it was noticed that currently there are several entrepreneurship on-going projects that are taking place in governorates of Upper Egypt. They are working mainly on providing vocational training to young rural women to enhance their capacities for opening their own projects or finding jobs. Because they are still being implemented, no official documentation about them are yet published. However, from the work experience of the researcher, it seems that the following organizations have projects with the same focus; Nahdet Mahrousa, PLAN, Making Cents, UNDP and the American University in Cairo.

#### **2.4 Limited availability of young rural women’s perspectives**

Perspectives displayed in this section follow the five criteria used in this research. Definitions of the five criteria as mentioned in Chianca’s (2008) report are, “Relevance: the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient...Efficiency: measures the outputs—qualitative and quantitative—in relation to the

inputs...Effectiveness: A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives...Impact: The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended...Sustainability: is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn” (p. 43).

Definitions for these areas in this research, as per the researcher's work experience and in her own words are;

- Relevance is the extent to which projects respond to community needs and the extent to which these needs were professionally measured prior to implementation (e.g. stakeholders' analysis, SWOT analysis, community assessment questionnaire..etc.).
- Efficiency is the extent to which projects' resources were well allocated and used.
- Effectiveness is the extent to which projects were able to integrate any targeted members of underprivileged communities into social, political and economic spheres and link them to the country's available services.
- Impact is the extent to which intervened communities were changed and the level of new actions introduced to these communities.
- Sustainability is the extent to which projects' beneficiaries and communities were able to carry out and expand projects' achievements after its termination.

Relevancy of any development project depends on its ability to address communities' problems that negatively influences citizens' economic, social, cultural and political outputs. Since the poor young rural women are the focus of this study, by reviewing the literature the researcher believes that this segment suffers mostly from social exclusion, early marriage, and

other forms of communities' abandonment to women's roles. An example of social exclusion was expressed in the World Bank's (2012) report through a quote made by a rural female, "Females don't work in Upper Egypt. They will make fun of her brothers and say, Can't you support your sister?" (p. 36). The quote shows how communities envision girls' work. It also indicates that this vision is an inherited norm inside these communities, and it can hardly be changed. Such problem was identified through conducting community assessment questionnaire, and based on the results of this research; design of project's activities addressed such identified issue. The early marriage problem is also a barrier faced by many young rural women. A quote made by Ishraq participant in Brady et al.'s (2007) report says, "I would have been married without this class. We all would have. There are still parents who want us to get married" (p. 25). Although the quote demonstrates that the early marriage problem was indirectly addressed in Ishraq project, it still illustrates that the problem was not fully resolved. This case justifies why at times several projects have the same goal, and in other cases, projects' plans are modified to address specific issue that shows urgency, or scaled up to reach additional number of beneficiaries or cover new intervention areas. Abandonment of women's participation is also one of the vast barriers poor young rural women face in Upper Egypt governorates.

In Guenena & Wassef's (1999) report a quote said by a rural female in her desire to socially contribute, participate and engage saying, "I hated my femininity because it deprived me of the pleasure of learning and leading the active life I used to love" (p. 12). Such quote drew the attention of development projects designers to plan specific activities that enhance women's participation. Ultimately, any project's level of relevancy is perfectly measured when it proves that it resolves identified complexities from ground.

During the implementation of development projects, it is crucial to pay special attention to its efficiency. That said, using projects' resources carefully to secure the maximum benefit to its end users. Efficiency does not only mean careful disbursement of projects' funds; it also includes the efficiency of manpower's allocation, coordination between involved parties, and the ability of building reliable data sets and documentation systems that provide projects with needed data. It also has to do with the monitoring and evaluation systems used in such projects and their way of application. Although it seems that this criterion might be difficult for beneficiaries to give feedback on, from the researcher's personal opinion, being the end users and the residence of intervened villages, beneficiaries may act as great source of information on the efficient use of development projects' resources and components. In terms of resources and manpower, beneficiaries can reflect their opinions on the preparation made for classes, stationery provided, transportation allowance, efficiency of teachers' professional preparation, and finally, the level of monitoring provided by project staff. Beneficiaries might also be able to report on the efficiency of projects' databases; claiming whether they were able to keep efficient data on beneficiaries' status or not. Reflections provided by beneficiaries and other stakeholders during the impact assessment might also be an important input measuring the efficiency of projects' documentations.

Another source of measuring projects' efficiency might be the mid and end of projects' evaluation reports. Through these evaluations, usually beneficiaries are interviewed along with members of their families and communities sharing their views on projects' inputs versus outputs. For example, the Girls' Education Initiative in Egypt (GEI) end evaluation report tackled, from beneficiaries' perspectives, the efficient use of its resources through the preparation of new trained skilled generation of promoters who acted as champions of

development (Sultana, 2008). More importantly, it is well established that in some cases, the inefficient use of projects' resources might terminate the whole project in any phase of its implementation. For example, the inefficient use of funds by the Academy for Educational Development's (AED) project drove the USAID, who were the funders, to suspend the project, and terminate the contract funds (Beam, 2011). Unfortunately, the literature lack beneficiaries' quotes on this area, but hopefully this research could add to the literature, providing needed perspectives in its findings section. Ultimately, there is no doubt that projects' efficiencies are one of the major aspects that need special documentation, monitoring and adaptation.

Turning our attention to the effectiveness of development projects drives us to assess projects by their ability to link its beneficiaries to the national services provided in their countries. Mainstream education, health units and the social security system present the main national services beneficiaries are concerned with (Hallman & Roca, 2007). A great measure of projects' effectiveness is to measure the intersection between projects' goals and governmental national strategic plans' goals. For example, in Egypt, the national education strategic plan 2007-2012 had a new vision to move towards an educational paradigm shift. This plan had two issues intersecting with the development area (Ministry of Education, 2007). First, one of the main goals of the plan was to fit the programs funded by donors and civil society into the strategic plan. Second, donors and civil society institutions were to participate in the stakeholders' analysis for the development of the national plan (Ministry of Education, 2007).

First intersection was meant to highlight successful experiences of development projects and try possibly to integrate them into the formal/mainstream education (El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004). This approach was applied in two UNICEF's funded projects; the community schools and the one class schools. By proving success, the Ministry of Education considered the



effective methodologies used in these two projects and decided to transfer their know-how to the mainstream primary schools (El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004). In addition, the mainstreaming of these two projects was funded by both the USAID and CARE. Two levels of cooperation between the Ministry of Education and development projects are shown here; transfer of knowledge and allocation of funds. In the researcher's opinion, this example demonstrates the integration of efforts exerted in both non-formal and formal education towards one goal of improving the quality education in Egypt. Apparently, the effectiveness of these two projects, did not only affect the intervened communities, but, the national schools as well. The second intersection was development projects representatives' involvement in the planning process of the strategic plan. This step allowed projects' experts to be engaged in drawing the national education indicators for the plan (El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004).

As far as the researcher is concerned, this level of involvement had dual benefit. One, it opened room for exchanging experiences and building capacities between the governmental and non-governmental organizations. Two, jointly developing the national plan's indicators, teased the commitment and eager of development projects' staff to support projects' beneficiaries in acquiring required skills and successfully joining the mainstream education. Therefore, cooperation and integration of efforts proved great success of effectiveness. One could summarize this by referring to the ex-minister's speech who said, "donors' projects and programs in the field of education are very beneficial and are much welcomed by the government.....three main priority areas for cooperation, namely: school building, technical education and teachers' training" (as cited in El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004, p. 68). Eventually, the literature shows good level of development projects' participation in the education formal

sector. It also shows that non-formal education may act as a channel that paves the road for development projects' beneficiaries to enter the formal education in the future.

In due course, it is worth mentioning that the new national education strategic plan 2014-2030, issued in February 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2014), included several areas that interestingly of great support to the main aim of non-formal education in Egypt. First, the plan paid special attention to underserved communities, through collaborating with different local institutions, and opening community schools in each village. Second, the vocational training became one of the plan's mandates. Third, teachers' professional development showed to be the core aspect of this plan. Fourth, community participation became one of the plan's goals. And finally, the plan aimed to consider comparative curriculums after contextualizing it to fit the Egyptian community (Ministry of Education, 2014). Although it is too early to decide on the successful association between the formal and non-formal education under this new strategic plan, the researcher would be eager to take this research a step further and measure the effect of any collaboration that may exist in the future.

In addition to the above, projects' impact is considered to be the core measure of success for any project. Through the impact of change, the poor in underprivileged communities develop; having more opportunities to improve their quality of lives. The Population Council's project Ishraq gives a good example of projects' impact. A quote said by a parent of one of Ishraq's beneficiaries, as mentioned in Romany's (2013) article was, "She would come home terrified of the teacher who would slap the students across the face. She was neither able to read nor write, but since she joined Ishraq, I've seen great progress" (p. 62). Mr. Migawer, the parent, as shown in the report was one of the few parents who welcomed the idea of letting his girls learn. His quote very much articulates the impact Ishraq made to girls and their parents. Ishraq was able to

change girls' abilities to read and write. It as well impacted parents' vision on development projects. Another quote from the same project mentioned in Zibani & Brady's (2011) report made by an Ishraq's beneficiary said "Ishraq fulfilled our dreams to be educated and respected by our families and our communities" (p. 3). The effect of change is well drawn in this quote. Through Ishraq beneficiary's opinion, readers can tell the difference in communities' thinking before and after the implementation of the project. The above quotes show the extent to which well-designed development projects can affect poor communities and change norms that are draining their energy and power. No doubt, therefore, beneficiaries benefit from what projects offer in the field of development, proving success of such projects.

Finally, sustainability of development projects reflects the continuity of projects' impact after its end. It must be admitted that sustainability is a controversial issue. No doubt that the literature has some rare quotes and other evidences proving its existence in limited cases. Nevertheless, sustainability has indefinite evidence. The researcher believes that measuring sustainability accurately is near impossible; especially that it is always subject to change from contextual factors. A case in point is a quote made by one of Ishraq's beneficiaries saying, "Who could believe the day would come when we would be able to enter the youth center? We never dared come close because it was for men only. Now we are equal; we have the right to go there" (Brady et al., 2007, p. 19). The quote reflects sustainability of the effects of changes done to the community. From the beneficiaries' language, it seems that the sustainability of the project acted as a breakeven point in beneficiaries' beliefs. Although this quote was extracted from Ishraq end of project report, still no one can guarantee how long this impact can be sustained. However, there are forms of projects' results that give better credit to sustainability. For example, a quote from one male beneficiary of the START program, a microfinance project that was implemented

in one of underserved communities in Cairo said, “This program changed my life. Now that I own my business, and my income level is improved, I can also help other young men in my community by employing them in my business” (Gozour Foundation, 2013, p. 8). The exploration of sustainability here is in implanting on-ground change to community members, driving them to indirectly withstand the impact of the projects. Sustainability in this case has higher possibility of being maintained, since the main motivator is an insider of the intervened community. All in all, the researcher believes that sustainability has very high weight of projects’ success, yet, measuring and maintaining its existence still need further science from experts in this area.

In conclusion, the literature articulates mostly beneficiaries’ positive feedback, with minimal documentation of negative feedbacks. Thus, no one can deny that the literature still lacks information on beneficiaries’ concerns, needs, and barriers. It would be also valuable to know the most influential projects’ components that affect change to young rural women’s lives, and the limitations of development projects’ structures that still need to be improved.

### **3 Research framework**

#### **3.1 Research design**

##### **3.1.1 Projects of the study**

The study drew its sample from three development projects; Population Council's project, CARE's project and Misr El-Kheir's project. However, the evaluation of the overall quality and outcomes of the selected projects is beyond the scope and purpose of this research.

The first project is the "Successful Transition to Work" which was known on the field level by "Neqdar Nesharek" project implemented by the Population Council Cairo Office in Egypt. The project aimed to empower young rural Upper Egyptian women economically through the provision of business skills, life skills and vocational trainings that were planned to support them in either joining an existing business or starting their own business (Population Council, 2013). The project targeted four thousand five hundred young rural women aged 16-29 in thirty villages in Sohag, Qena and Fayoum governorates. The project's activities were meant to promote community acceptance of women's work and engagement in public spheres and community activities. It worked as well on creating new job opportunities for young rural women on the governorate and village levels (Population Council, 2013). The unique about this project that it trained beneficiaries on undertaking feasibility studies, reaching projects' ideas based on actual market surveys, and developing full proposals that can be submitted to actual funding institutions. To sum up, review of the literature showed that around 10% of "Successful Transition to Work" project were able to acquire new jobs and around 15% opened their new business, in addition to building the capacities of 240 promoters, 30 CDAs and 3 NGOs.

The second project was the "Banking on Change" which was known on the field level by "Idkhar" project that has been implemented by CARE in partnership with PLAN and Barclays bank. The project aimed to empower young rural Upper Egyptian women and men economically

by teaching them the savings' techniques, guiding them to build their funds, and accomplish their personal goals. Through implanting the saving skill into the communities, people were able to group in an average of 15-25 members and build their own fund, decide on their shares of savings, set their fund's regulations, manage their funds and sustain their accomplishments. The project worked on increasing beneficiaries' awareness, contributing to their empowerment and supporting their solidarity (Plan, 2014). The unique about this project is that it is a community-driven project that suited members from different gender, age and socio-economic backgrounds. It provided beneficiaries with needed financial education skills that helped them build and manage their funds, in addition to the managerial aspects that helped them maintain their funds with minimal mentoring and tutoring from project staff. Beside this, the project introduced to the intervened communities the idea of the 'revolving loan'. From the savings' funds, each beneficiary had the right to request, if needed, a loan from the fund he/she belongs to and return it back within a limited agreed-upon duration with in most cases no interest, unless otherwise agreed by fund members. To conclude, this project used the village saving and loan associations' methodology which was adopted in 26 African countries (Hendricks, 2011). This methodology evidenced , 'a strong correlation between inclusion in the financial sector and the reduction ofextreme poverty' (Hendricks, 2011, p. 4).

The third project is the "Community Schools" project that is being implemented by Misr El-Kheir Foundation. The project is an expansion of UNICEF's initiative community schools project. The project is built on the idea of introducing active learning in primary and preparatory schools. The project is implemented in Sohag, Assuit, Aswan and Qena governorates. In collaboration with the ministry of education, the project works on providing quality educational opportunities for children who have not been enrolled in primary education or who have dropped

out, in the age group of 6 to 14 years in disadvantaged areas. Age bracket is expanded to 18 years to ensure full inclusion of marginalized girls. The project targets thirteen thousand five hundred girls. It supports as well CDAs on the village level to open and run their owned community schools (Misr El-Kheir, 2013). To summarize, the project's strength relies in working jointly with the Ministry of Education, through a signed Memorandum of Understanding, expanding mutual beneficial relation between the private and public sectors in the areas of; building capacity, promoting quality basic education, embracing the self-learning methodology, and bombing students' creative abilities.

### **3.1.2 Governorates of the study**

Turning our attention to the study's governorates, we would find that the study was conducted in Sohag and Qena Upper Egypt governorates. Due to the researcher's convenience and accessibility and the projects' work plans, only the Population Council's project was made available in both governorates. That said, three projects were involved in the study in Sohag while only one in Qena, giving justifiable reason of encompassing seven villages in Sohag and only three villages in Qena. Another worth noting point, during the field work, Abou Awad village in Sohag was intervened by both the Population Council and CARE's projects, having few number of the sample with dual interventions. Prior to the field work of this study, Sawamaah Sharq and Needah villages were also intervened by both the Population Council's and CARE's project.

Focusing on the nature of the governorates, we would find that Sohag governorate is considered to be one of the poorest governorates in Upper Egypt (World Food Programme, 2013), while Qena is the most conservative (Brady et al., 2007). In addition, according to the 2010 Egypt Human Development Report, both Sohag and Qena are ranked to be at the bottom five governorates of the human development indicators (UNDP, 2010). Not just like this,

however, the poverty map issued by the Egyptian Ministry of Economic Development shows that Sohag and Qena are among the ten governorates comprising the poorest villages in Egypt (UNDP, 2010), indicating that Sohag by itself has an average of one-quarter of the poor in Egypt (UNDP, 2010). Ultimately, as shown in the Human Development Index, both governorates show nearly similar adult literacy rates and education index, ranked as number eighteenth among governorates of Egypt (UNDP, 2010).

As for the districts, their selection were carefully completed to include any specific phenomena of selected governorates in terms of; location, ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds. Starting with Sohag, out of eleven available districts, four were selected to be part of this study including; Akhmim, Dar Al-Salam, Jehinah and Al-Maraghah. Distribution of the villages are as follows; Needah and Al-Sawamaah Sharq villages belong to Akhmim district, which is one of the most important districts in Sohag, characterized by its commercial activities specifically the sugar and textile industries. To some extent, the socioeconomic background in Akhmim is high due to its near location to the center of Sohag, showing a literacy rate of above 29% (Marefa, na). Ezbet Radwan, Nagaa Al-Deer and Awlad Yehia Al-Hager are three villages in Dar El-Salam district. This is considered to be an ethnical district with special religious roots that are extended to Prophet Mohamed (Marefa, na). This district is very far from Sohag center, with isolated services. Dar El-Salam illiteracy rate is around 40%, and is considered to be one of the five poorest districts all over Egypt (Marefa, na). Jehinah village is inside Jehinah district which is an intellectual well known land that delivered many thinkers and writers e.g. Gamal Al-Ghitany. Same as Akhmim district, Jehinah's literacy rate is above 29% (Marefa, na). As for Abou Awad village, it belongs to Al-Maraghah district, which is well known by its production of



rice and wheat, were most women work on their purification. The literacy rate of this district is not available.

For Qena, we have three villages; Awlad Amr, Farshout and Koum Al-Dabaa. Awlad Amr belongs to Qena district, and it is one of the biggest villages of this district. It has common features with Akhmim district in Sohag being near the center. And another common feature as Dar El-Salam in Sohag that it has ethnical roots to Prophet Mohamed. Awlad Amr is known by migration, where most of its male citizens migrate outside the country (Marefa, na). Farshout belongs to Farshout district, and it is one of the oldest villages in Qena and is known by the sugar-cane production (Marefa, na). And finally, Koum Al-Dabaa belongs to Neqadah district, which lies in the middle between Qena and Luxor. It is well known by the textile industry, exporting its production to Sudan. Neqadah hosted the first integrated sanitation project on the national level (Marefa, na).

### **3.1.3 Interviewers of the study**

Due to the big size of the sample of this research, the researcher of this study undertook only the piloting phase by herself, did necessary changes to the research tools and trained five researchers from the same/near communities to collect data under her direct supervision. The main two selection criteria in all interviewers were to be from the same district, and not working in the same project of the study.

In terms of the interviewers' gender, they were 80% females (n= 4) and 20% males (n= 1). The level of education and level of work experience varied between the five interviewers. Two of the five were newly comers to the field of research and had a longer training than the other three, and these two were still secondary school students in Dar El-Salam districts. The other three interviewers were graduates of higher education with an average of 6 years of experience.

## **3.2 Research sample**

### **3.2.1 Sampling Strategy**

A purposive sample was used to select participants in interviews and focus group discussions for the qualitative data of this study, while a snowball strategy was employed to select respondents of close-ended questionnaire for the quantitative data. As mentioned earlier, the qualitative sample was based on heterogeneous nature of targeted groups, including diversified backgrounds based on reflections provided by the projects' staff and availability of members of the targeted groups on the scheduled days of interviews.

As for the quantitative sample, it used the snowball strategy where the first kick-off begun at projects' staff, then the interviewer used the network of the interviewee to reach other targeted groups, reaching their neighbors, friends or relatives. In some cases, the targeted groups were members of the same family.

### **3.2.2 Sample**

The sample is drawn from the three projects as mentioned in section 3.1.1. The sample includes one hundred and one interviewees for the qualitative data and one hundred and fifty six respondents for the quantitative survey. As previously justified, two thirds of the sample was drawn from Sohag governorate and one third from Qena governorate. The qualitative sample is divided into five target groups as follows:

- Thirty one (31) young rural women project's beneficiaries
- Twenty (20) young rural women projects' promoters/facilitators
- Eight (8) community development associations' project staff
- Eleven (11) beneficiaries' mothers

- Thirty one (31) male guardians (10 fathers, 11 community leaders and 10 religious leaders)

As for the quantitative sample, it included the following groups who represented the surrounding community of beneficiaries:

- Thirty seven (37) women over 45 years old
- Thirty seven (37) Men over 45 years old
- Thirty seven (37) Male youth aged 18-29 years old
- Thirty seven (37) Non-projects young rural women aged 18 - 29 years old

### **3.3 Research tools**

Mixed research methods were used in this study, combining both qualitative and quantitative tools for data collection.

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative tools**

The qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. An interview guide encompassing seven main semi-structured open-ended questions was developed and piloted prior to the data collection phase. Using the 'emergent design' the researcher revisited the method, after being piloted, and added sub-questions to the main seven open-ended questions, to ensure that data gathered meet minimum standards.

The interview guide aimed to gauge projects beneficiaries' views and identify their perceptions on the projects of this study in terms of the five main themes used. In addition, it included barriers beneficiaries faced during intervention, and major outcomes they possessed. The interview also allowed beneficiaries to provide their vision on projects' management schemes, influential projects' components and social and economic contributions these projects affected on their lives.

In addition to the primary targeted group, four other targeted groups were interviewed; more detailed description of each group is mentioned in section 3.2.2. Same interview guide was used for the five groups, after tailoring the language to focus on young rural women's perspectives. In summary, all interviews were planned to contribute to the understanding of the research question of this study. As shown in the literature, development projects are influenced by many parties, thus, they had to be all included in the study's sample to build a comprehensive understanding of the research.

Three strategies for establishing rigor have been followed in this study. For credibility issues, member check was undertaken by the end of each interview, summarizing the information shared and allowing interviewees to modify or add anything they see unclear. The multiple target groups interviewed in this study allowed sufficient level of data triangulation, confirming or denying the showed results. For dependability issues, changes that took place to the research design are documented in the methodology section, and practice reflexivity was considered in documenting the researcher's biases throughout the study.

#### *3.3.1.1 In-depth interviews*

The interview guide was drafted prior to the piloting phase to include seven main questions. As expected, an expansion of the guide was needed before starting the data collection phase, adding an average of five sub-questions for each main question. All interviews were recorded and transcribed right after the interviews. Venues of the in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were carefully selected to be convenient to everyone, mostly village's youth center or inside one of the project's classes.

Interviews with the primary targeted group young rural women included projects' beneficiaries between the age ranges of 18-29, thus encompassing both "married" and "unmarried". The purpose of this age range was to collect views of women in different stages of their

transition periods from education to work. The interviews with young rural women are the core of this study. Interview's questions meant to reveal, from young rural women's lenses, the extent to which projects affect their lives and projects' factors that affect their societies.

As for the promoters' interviews, they are considered to be the second primary targeted group. This category of young women is usually graduates of other development projects. So, although the study used the same interview guide after adopting the language to fit their work experience, interviewing promoters enriched the understanding of how projects' beneficiaries, after being graduated, contribute to the society, and which project components made this contribution possible. Promoters' interviews provided intuitive interpretations on barriers of implementing development projects, and available strategies of dealing with them.

Interviews with community development associations' staff was an addition to the findings as well. Being the middle management level of the implementing agencies, examining their views gave astute reflections on distinctive visions of projects' objectives between higher management versus projects' beneficiaries, envisioning the impact of these differences on the success of projects. Community development associations' staff also articulated the role community members and parents play in either facilitating or hindering the achievement of projects' objectives.

As for the in-depth interviews with beneficiaries' mothers, it was found essential to involve mothers among the targeted groups of this study to determine the effect of their social and educational backgrounds on their daughters' education or employment. In addition, mothers' involvement provided oversight knowledge on beneficiaries' inherited views, and the extent to which mothers shape their daughters' thoughts.

#### **3.3.1.2 Focus group discussions**

The focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with fathers, community and religious leaders. Because of the conservative nature of the Upper Egypt governorates, and the fact that this category plays an important role in rural women's lives being their male guardians, these focus group

discussions were planned. Within the mandate of the research question, projects' components that would encourage guardians' acceptance or rejection were determined along with their reflections on the five main themes of this study.

### **3.3.2 Quantitative questionnaire**

Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire of three main sections; personal information, educational background and perceptions on development projects with a total of twenty two closed-ended questions. This quantitative research aimed to provide an account of community members' and non-project young rural women's perceptions on development projects in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. More detailed description of each group is mentioned in section 3.2.1.

In addition, it shed lights on selections made by respondents on alternative contributing factors that affect the success or failure of any development project, effective components, and the effect of these components on achieving projects' targeted objectives. In summary, quantitative data reflected communities' perspectives on development projects, tackling different issues, endorsing the findings of the qualitative research, and indicating the impact of the community on the success of such projects.

## **3.4 Research data collection and cleaning**

As mentioned earlier, data were collected by five interviewers, after being trained on tools, and as per the work plan set for them, and the arrangements agreed upon between the researcher and the focal points of the three projects of this study. More detailed description of interviewers is mentioned in section 3.1.3. The data collection process took an average of one month from interviewers, except for an interviewer who took an average of two months due to the large sample assigned to her.

Upon collection, the data was delivered to the researcher by all the five interviewers in the forms of recorded and transcribed interviews along with the informed consents. Data was skimmed and revised upon delivery, and missing data were asked to be collected again.

It is worth mentioning that data of one of the villages was collected twice due to the poor quality and missing information presented by the interviewer, who was substituted by other senior researcher to complete the data collection.

Followed by this, the researcher had to go through a progressive data cleaning process. Data was filed in hard and soft copies by village and governorate. For the hard files, the researcher has two files, one for each governorate. Inside each file, there is a table of content that details the separators' data, including; the research's type (i.e. qualitative or quantitative), the village's name, the interviewer's name, and the study's project that pertain to this village. Inside each separator, there is a summary sheet showing the names of interviewees, and the targeted group they relate to. Following this sheet, the data comes. For the qualitative data, each interviewee's informed consent and transcribed interview are stapled together. Data are organized in a sequential order of beneficiaries, promoters, CDAs' staff, mothers, and then male guardians. For the quantitative data, the same setting is followed after substituting the transcripts by the questionnaires.

For the soft files, the researcher has two folders, one for Sohag and the other for Qena. Inside each folder there are sub-folders with the name of the villages. And inside each village comes the recorded interviewees carrying the names of the interviewees. Some of the interviews were recorded in more than one file.

In summary, data cleaning was an essential progressive process that facilitated for the researcher her duty in summarizing all data in excel sheets, to be prepared for the analysis.

### 3.5 Research data analysis

Using the thematic analysis, data was categorized under five main themes; relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. As mentioned earlier, these themes were adopted by the Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC), and are the most common used assessment criteria among development projects (Chianca, 2008). Detailed description of each criterion is provided in section 2.4 of the literature.

Admittedly, the researcher belongs to the constructivism theory, accepting different realities and complexities. Thus, from an ontology paradigm lens, the researcher designed the qualitative and quantitative research methods to gather data of each of the five themes of this study from different angles, through the diversified targeted groups. Due to the nature of the data collected, the flexibility of the thematic analysis method in allowing wide spectrum of details and interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2006), best suited the analysis process. In addition, categorizing data by themes helped the researcher to go deep into the data, coming up with new additional sub-themes that were not within the researcher's framework during the designing phase. In practice, by comparing the similarities and differences among perceptions provided by targeted groups of this study, data was synthesized under the new captured sub-themes, articulating the key content of each theme in terms of its significance to the research questions.

Another point worth mentioning is that the exact number of interviews analyzed depended on the level of saturation discerned or in another wording, to the point of redundancy.

As for the quantitative data, it was also thematically analyzed using an excel sheet to provide simple indications of communities' perceptions. In the majority of cases, percentages presented in chapter 4 'Findings' encompasses the opinions of the four targeted groups together.



In rare cases, where opinions are dramatically different, opinions of a certain group are presented and in this case, it is made clear by the researcher.

### **3.6 Research limitations**

As in other research, this study had main limitations that ought to be considered. First, the researcher is a former staff member of one of the projects of this study. Thus, to preserve work ethics and keep the same level of accessibility equal in all three projects, the researcher decided to use only publicly accessible documents for the projects under examination.

The second limitation is that the study was only undertaken in two governorates of Upper Egypt, although some of the projects were implemented in other places. But, because of the researcher's limited budget and time, and the projects' approved action and work plans only in these two governorates were selected.

The third limitation is the distribution of the number of projects' beneficiaries in the sample. Due to the age limits of this study (18-29), only four beneficiaries of the Community Schools' project were included in this study from Sohag Governorate. This was then followed by nine beneficiaries from the Idkhar project from Sohag Governorate. And finally, Neqdar Nesharek project presented to the study; nine beneficiaries from Sohag governorate, and another nine beneficiaries from Qena governorate. (see Appendix no. 3: The sample distribution)

## **4 Findings**

Turning our attention to the findings of this study, it is worth reminding the reader that, as mentioned earlier in chapter 3, the qualitative data is the core source of this research and the quantitative data is meant to complement it giving an overview of the contextual setting of the projects. Thus, the qualitative data is listed according to the sub-themes extracted from the analysis. As for the quantitative data, it is embedded under the main five themes of this study.

In displaying the findings, first the researcher started by a brief explanation of the type of the open-ended qualitative question (s) addressed to interviewees under each theme, followed by the complementary numerical percentages of the quantitative data. Second, sub-themes extracted from the qualitative data were displayed including interviewees' quotations from different targeted groups, exhibiting triangulated views. In this section, members of targeted groups are entitled 'interviewee' for the qualitative data, and 'respondent' for the quantitative data. Any number in letters reflects qualitative data and any percentages reflect quantitative data.

It is worth mentioning that because this study focuses on the perceptions of the young rural women, the researcher was keen to extract as many quotes as possible, specifically from beneficiaries, promoters and mothers, as long as they add to the understanding of the topic. It is also worth mentioning that all interviews were conducted in Arabic, so the quotes presented in this research are translated by the researcher to reflect the exact wording in Arabic.

Another issue to be considered is that the findings of the pilot phase were integrated into the findings, whenever they support the meaning.

### **4.1 Perceived Relevance**

Targeted groups were asked about their perceptions of the projects they are enrolled in, and the extent to which these projects respond to community needs, including the most influential

goals that added to them, suggestions they would like to raise to improve the projects, and the most important components they are concerned with in any project (Appendix no. 1: The qualitative guide, questions 1 & 2, pp. 120& 121).

The quantitative data showed that while only 16% (n=25) of the respondents participated in any community assessment surveys, around 93% (n=145) of the whole respondents agreed that the development projects responded to community needs and almost 94.5% (n= 147) believed in development projects.

#### **4.1.1 Prioritized areas for improvement**

The data of the relevance of projects' goals to community needs showed noteworthy differences in perceptions between beneficiaries, promoters and mothers on one side and CDAs' staff and male guardians on the other side. The first cohort of opinions expressed very personal perspectives, pinpointing areas for improvement and analyzing their experiences. As for the second cohort, they saw the goals from a community lens and were more into providing positive input.

Both cohorts agreed that the management style was the most important factor in any project. There were deviations in perceptions between blaming and praising. Yet, young beneficiaries, in specific, were able to draw constructive criticisms of their projects, as follows:

A good example was one Misr El-Kheir's beneficiary who mentioned that, *"It is essential for the school to provide us with specialized teachers for each subject, to properly transfer for us needed knowledge, rather than using unspecialized teachers who mislead us presenting curriculums that we don't understand"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 18 years old, preparatory education, Community Schools/MEK, Ezbet Radwan, Sohag).

At the same time, a unique perception was raised by one of Idkhar's beneficiaries who said, *"For me, I wish if Idkhar had addressed a group of high economic background, because they as well still need support, not only the poor"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, secondary vocational education, 18 years old, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag). By her statement she questioned the definition of the 'poor' in the project and criteria used in measuring it.

A third beneficiary mentioned that, *"We need moral support from our community members. So, I hope the project could have addressed this issue with the community"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 20 years old, vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Yehia Al-Hager, Sohag). Another perception was raised by a beneficiary from the same project mentioning that, *"If the project really wants to serve us, they should include male youth as well in the program, because they deserve to make use of these services, and we need to get married to qualified husbands"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 18 years old, preparatory education, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Nagaa Al-Deer, Sohag).

It was also interesting to check upon the perceptions of the nine beneficiaries who were exposed to dual interventions in two villages at the same time. Four out of nine dual beneficiaries had similar opinion summarized in the following quote, *"Idkhar is an on-going project with no breaks and this structure helped us much in keeping our momentum and desire to continue. On the contrary, Neqdar Nesharek stopped the classes multiple times, and this action was confusing and made me question myself whether it is worth continuing or not? Nevertheless, it was important to continue to make use of the technical training"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 22 years old, BA in social services, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag). Yet, the nine dual beneficiaries agreed that Idkhar and Neqdar Nesharek complemented each other to answer an emergent community need of uplifting women's community participation.

Within the first cohort which consisted of beneficiaries, promoters and mothers; promoters had alike critical perceptions. A representative opinion was as follows, *“The practical training has to be limited to 3 months only for each round so that girls don't get bored and we have the opportunity of undertaking several rounds, extending the project's services to larger number of beneficiaries”*, (IDI, a promoter, 28 years old, diploma in computer, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena). Another need that was determined by thirteen promoters out of twenty was the age range, represented in the following promoters' opinion, *“I think it is necessary to expand the age bracket of Idkhar project to reach women over 35. The age of 15 is young to think of a project and the early 20s is busy with the marriage and children, but over 35 are the segment most in need to improve their children's lives and secure for them additional financial resources”* (IDI, a promoter, 37 years old, BA in law, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag). These thirteen interviewees confirmed that several projects' applicants were refused because of the age bracket, though they were in a desperate need to develop their lives.

According to the interviews, the age range issue was adopted in the second round of CARE's project, opening the age bracket to include every interested women and men in the intervened community. As for the Population Council's project, some individual exceptions were made to the age range. Nevertheless, Misr El-Kheir's project was not able to extend the age due to the governing rules that are stated in their memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education.

Spinning our consideration to the interviewed mothers, it was found that eight out of eleven mothers were also keen to raise areas of improvement during their interviews. Opinions can be represented in the following quote, *“The project would have been more successful if they would have linked the training with a real job opportunity. For example, finding my daughter a*

*job in a computer company”* (IDI, a mother, 40 years old, diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

On the other hand, the second cohort who was comprised of CDA's staff and male guardians expressed different opinions. A good example is one of the female CDA's staff who was optimistic when she expressed her opinion on project's goals, by saying, *“In my opinion, Idkhar was able to hit the following objectives; rationalization of consumption, social cohesion, women empowerment, and extending leadership skills, important elements that were all needed in our poor communities”*, (IDI, a female CDA staff, 40 years old, graduate of Institute of computer and language, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag). While a male CDA's staff expressed the following opinion, *“At the beginning, it was difficult to implant the concept of saving, but because the project gives the ownership to the beneficiaries and builds on them, it was easily absorbed and responded well to communities' needs”*, (IDI, a male CDA executive manager, 50 years old, BA in Arts, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag). Among the eight interviewed CDA's staff, all interviewees were praising their projects.

Same impressions were given by fathers, in which one of them said, *“If religiously accepted, which is something I'm not sure of yet, I would look to Idkhar as a good project that resolves the community's problems from its grassroots, providing acknowledged community support to its members”*, (FGD, a father, 72 years old, primary education, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag). Yet, it must be admitted that the ten interviewed fathers were more optimistic than the twenty one community and religious leaders.

However, the classification made by the researcher at the beginning dividing interviewees between two cohorts (cohort one; beneficiaries, promoters and mothers, and cohort two CDAs'

staff and male guardians) changed in some cases. For example, fourteen members out of sixty two of the first cohort showed pleasant responses to efforts exerted. For instance, one of Neqdar Nehsarek beneficiaries said, *“I completed my secondary education and had to stop because we don't have universities near our village. So, Neqdar Nesharek provided us with vocational skills, substituting our need to complete our higher education”*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 26 years old, secondary education, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena). As for CARE's project, a beneficiary commented by saying, *“We, the girls, have our ideas but the shortage of money was always our obstacle, so now Idkhar resolved our problem through providing us with the technicalities of saving and planning for our projects, without being in debt to anyone or borrowing from outside entities”*, (IDI, a beneficiary, secondary vocational education, 18 years old, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

Also not all of the thirty nine CDA's staff and male guardians of the second cohort provided positive feedback. A good example was a community leader's opinion who said, *“Idkhar is a personal project, not a community project! The community projects work on developing resources e.g. building schools, improving sewage, enabling electricity and establishing new plants. However, this one does not serve any of these needs so I don't think it is an important project, at least for the meantime until we finish the major crucial problems we have in our village”*, (FGD, a community leader, 44 years old, diploma in teaching, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag). Another good example of areas of improvement that can be made to projects' components mentioned that, *“Three important components must be added; first, a 'marketing' component to be able to sell girls' products, second a 'coaching' component to follow-up on girls' projects, and third, a 'value chain' component to link projects together and make use of each project's achievements”*, (FGD comprising; a father, 56 years old, diploma in

teaching, a religious leader, 34 years old, BA in social services, and a community leader, 48 years old, diploma in teaching, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

#### **4.1.2 Pro-poor social capital**

Eighty seven interviewees (86%) out of hundred and one of all targeted groups agreed that communities' social capital were not well used or considered. Representing this perception, a Neqdar Nesharek's beneficiary said, *"I think Neqdar Nesharek could have been more useful if the project's design included a component for the involvement of parents, inviting them to share their experiences, resources and knowledge and be beneficial to their communities"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 24 years old, BA in Science, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

Same opinion was endorsed by male guardians. The following quotes represent this opinion, *"Parents' experiences have to be deployed into any project, supporting their girls during and after the project"*, (FGD comprising; a father, 56 years old, diploma in teaching, a religious leader, 34 years old, BA in social services, and a community leader, 48 years old, diploma in teaching, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena). *"We all agree that the technical support is a basic requirement for any project's success, however, we believe that the efficiency of such technicians would be much higher if they were selected from within the same intervened villages or its neighbors. If done, this technician will be familiar with the contexts of the intervened villages and would better deal with hidden complications in the community that cannot be explained but has to be felt"*, (FGD comprising; a father, 72 years old, primary education, a community leader, 44 years old, diploma in teaching and a religious leader, 53 years old, illiterate, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

Mothers also were directed towards building on what exists, representing this perception a mother said, *"I would think of three main factors; any achievements of previous projects in our*



*village, resources available in our village, and any vocational experience community members have in our village, then I'll build my new project's idea to support these three things", (IDI, a mother, 56 years old, graduate of literacy program, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).*

In brief, the eighty seven interviewees reached the same conclusion of the urgency of using the villages' manpower and resources and the consideration of utilizing existing capitals before importing outside support.

#### **4.1.3 Technical expertise and support**

Seventy interviewees (69%) out of hundred and one reported that experts' technical support is one of the most influential factors they expected to find in each project. Nevertheless, not all expectations were met. An example expressing other's opinions was made by a beneficiary in Neqdar Nesharek who said, *"They told us in Neqdar Nesharek that they will build connections with experts who will help us in opening our new projects, and we are still waiting, and I'm afraid to lose hope", (IDI, a beneficiary, 29 years old, illiterate, Neqdar Nesharek/PC and Idkhar/CARE projects, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag). Another beneficiary said, "The skills we acquired will be useless if we don't get technical assistance and mentoring that help us deploy these skills inside our communities", (IDI, a beneficiary, 27 years old, completed only preparatory education, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).*

Five out of eleven mothers also had the same belief of the effect of technical experts and the extent to which their existence can open new opportunities. As illustrated by a mother from Neqdar Nesharek, she said, *"Yes, we lack knowledge and need experts who can support us to improve our realization of the outside community", (IDI, a mother, 56 years old, graduate of literacy program, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).*

The belief of the important existence of technical expertise and support was also extended to nineteen male guardians out of thirty one. For example, father's quote stated that, *"We believe that our community needs experts who can work on the following; revival of old crafts and its development e.g. nool, marketing projects because products are not easily sold, and strategic and management planning trainings that familiarize people with ways of thinking and implementing projects"*, (FGD comprising; a father, 55 years old, BA in science, a religious leader, 28 years old, BA in arts, and a community leader, 46 years old, BA in social services, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

One could summarize this by saying that technical support during and after projects' implementations were seen as an essential service that is needed for every targeted group interviewed in order to meet community's expectations and sustain them.

#### **4.2 Perceived Efficiency**

As shown in section 2 'Literature', efficiency never had concrete proof among the reviewed projects, displaying fragile justifications of its existence. Yet, in the fieldwork of this research, the interviewees' feedbacks on the inquiries of type of resources needed to achieve projects' goals, financial incentives needed and expected from the projects and level of its availability, classes' preparations and promoters' level of support outside classes, all contributed to measuring efficiency, without directly addressing the theme itself (Appendix no. 1: The qualitative guide, question 3, p. 121).

Data gathered from the hundred and one interviewees evidenced that there is a general tendency to measure efficiency as an aspect of any project's success.

#### 4.2.1 Seed money

With no exceptions, the main aspect that was raised by all targeted groups, all age ranges and gender was the 'seed money'<sup>1</sup>. Ninety three out of hundred and one interviewees assured that the provision of the seed money at the end of the project is extremely essential to enhance beneficiaries' advantageous. Identification of the need of seed money, in some cases, was accompanied by the need of technical support or job coaching, and in other cases, it was mentioned solely with equal importance. Following are some illustrations made by beneficiaries,

*"In FORSA project, I knew from one of my friends that they give L.E. 600 for women to start their SMEs, so I regret that I did not join FORSA"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 22 years old, BA in social services, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag) commenting on the type of financial support that would enhance her benefit from the project.

Another beneficiary said, *"The provision of seed money is essential, or if the project staff do not trust us, they can give us instead sewing machines, to start our projects"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 29 years old, illiterate, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

A third perception said, *"Women by nature struggle to improve themselves, until they lose the desire and hope of improvement because of scarce of funds, so they stop"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 28 years old, holder of diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

The majority of promoters (thirteen out of twenty) also incubated the same vision by saying, *"I don't understand why projects fear giving seed money to beneficiaries! I know it might be hassle in managing it, but it is worth trying and not less important than other components"*

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<sup>1</sup> Seed money was identified by the OECD as funds that are provided to junior entrepreneurs to start innovative, demand-driven projects. The provision of seed money is usually conditional to the satisfaction of specific criteria and areas of interests (Wilson & Silva, 2013) and Hylén, J. (na)

(IDI, a promoter, 21 years old, technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Another promoter spoke out by saying, *“Most of the girls are willing to start their projects, and have clear ideas of what they are going to do, but still the money is the main issue that hinders their plans, and same applies to us as promoters”* (IDI, a promoter, 22 years old, technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

The eleven mothers interviewed were very shy and emotional in expressing their daughters' need of seed money, represented in the following quote, *“Barek Allah feekom if you provide us with needed seed money to help my daughter start her business that would be so kind of you, as we have limited resources with no savings and can hardly cover our household expenses”* (IDI, a mother, 56 years old, graduate of literacy classes, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

The thirty one fathers, community and religious leaders were also sanctioning the same concept, adding some threats by saying, *“It is very important to provide girls with seed money that enable them to open their own businesses within a maximum of 2 months of projects termination, otherwise they will lose what they learned and the social norms will overcome their success of breaking such barriers”* (FGD comprising; a father, a religious leader and two community leaders, average age of 37 years old, two are BA holders and two are diploma holders, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Another FGD mentioned that, *“Girls became pleased with themselves, but we think this is a false feeling because they will discover afterwards that without financial support they did not gain anything”*, (FGD comprising; a father, 55 years old, BA in science, a religious leader, 28

years old, BA in arts, and a community leader, 46 years old, BA in social services, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

As for the eight CDAs' staff, their practice and field experience enabled them to come up with solutions for making seed money available, where one CDA's staff, representing other staff members' perspective said, *"We need to find funding organizations that provide loans or financial supports to beneficiaries to help them turn their dreams into reality"* (IDI, a male CDA executive manager, 50 years old, BA in Arts, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

In summary, seed money was an issue mentioned in all interviews with different weights. Young rural women were the most harmed segment from the scarcity of such a service. Promoters, mothers, CDA's staff and male guardians all endorsed young rural women's urgency of reaching trust worthy sources that provide them with needed capital.

#### **4.2.2 Dual interventions**

Turning our attention to the increased efficiency of joining more than one development project at the same time, it was found that twenty four out of thirty one interviewed beneficiaries endorsed the efficiency of being enrolled in more than one project. The nine dual beneficiaries interviewed in this research emphasized that such intersections increase beneficiaries' opportunities for improvement. A representing opinion of dual interventions said, *"Because I'm a beneficiary of both Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar projects, I expect to gain from both projects; Neqdar will teach me a skill, and Idkhar will help me make needed funds available, so I secured for myself a holistic approach"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 29 years old, illiterate, Neqdar Nesharek/PC and Idkhar/CARE projects, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

Another beneficiary gave a different perspective of benefiting from several projects by saying, *“While I’m a beneficiary in Idkhar and Neqdar, I also work in ‘FORSA’ project as a promoter. In FORSA we had an outreach problem, so I asked Idkhar and Neqdar promoters to help me in grabbing more beneficiaries to FORSA, and they helped me much in selecting potential beneficiaries, and I sensed the benefit of being involved in several initiatives that intersect in the same areas”*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 22 years old, BA in social services, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

Same opinion was endorsed by thirteen out of twenty promoters who confirmed that intersecting projects is actually the key factor of changing communities. An Idkhar promoter explained an example by saying, *“One of Idkhar’s beneficiaries needed to enhance her hobby and start her own sewing project, so she needed both, technical and financial support. At Idkhar, we were able to provide her with the financial support and approved for her loan to buy the sewing machine. As for the technical support, we encouraged her to join Neqdar to complement her knowledge and enhance her technical capabilities of planning and managing the sewing project, and it worked out. So, by practice, it was proved that projects should complement each other to drive beneficiaries to the maximum benefit”*, (IDI, a promoter, 32 years old, diploma of commerce, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

In brief, it was agreed by the majority of interviewees that villages intervened by more than one initiative complementing each other proved greater level of changes and improvements in comparison to others which hosted only one intervention.

#### **4.2.3 Trust and social bonds**

Beneficiaries (twenty one out of thirty one), promoters (fourteen out of twenty) and mothers (nine out of eleven) highlighted the importance of the information shared at the

launching event of any project, and the extent of information's transparency that might or might not yield to the planned trust. In addition, the same interviewees highlighted the influence of their projects on building social bonds between community members that yield also to trust. Examples of this perception included the following:

A representative quote from beneficiaries said, *"Once community members trust the project, they feel guilty about mocking me at the beginning of my enrollment in this project"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 29 years old, diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Abou Awad, Sohag).

From the promoters' perspectives, a representative quote said, *"Girls do not need financial support as much as they need a real work opportunity, to increase the credit of the project and build trust"*, (IDI, a promoter, 21 years old, with technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena) commenting on the type of financial support needed.

Another promoter explained the issue more clearly by saying, *"The resources should have been made clear from the beginning of the project to all beneficiaries and their guardians, so that they have clear vision of what they will be going through and don't built high expectations and at the end get disappointed"*, (IDI, a promoter, 28 years old, diploma in computer, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena), commenting on resources needed to achieve the project's goals.

As for the influence of the projects on building social bonds, a representative view highlighted the following, *"We organized informal trips to strengthen our relation with beneficiaries and open room for them to raise whatever concerns they have, and this helped*

*much in encouraging beneficiaries to share their thoughts and exchange their experiences”,* (IDI, a promoter, 30 years old, BA in social services, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

Another promoter said, *“I've been working in the development area for long period, so I already have my database and I have very strong bonds with my network, I support them technically and personally on regular basis e.g. go with them to health units, marriage..etc, and this is how I feel the pleasure”*, (IDI, a promoter, 39 years old, vocational diploma, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

And a third one mentioned that, *“Idkhar project not only helped in expanding the savings and loans' opportunities, but also helped beneficiaries to make extra paybacks. For example, Manal a beneficiary who wanted to accelerate her savings, heard during our class from her colleagues about their need to buy new clothes for the Eid, so she decided to take a loan, buy needed materials and sew by herself the clothes and sell it to her colleagues with a profitable margin, making extra savings and building new friendship with her colleagues”*, (IDI, a promoter, 39 years old, graduate of higher institute of reading, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

As for mothers, a good example of their feelings towards projects' efficiency was a quote that said, *“We meet on weekly basis to exchange experiences and these meetings help us build trust among each other”* (IDI, a mother, 37 years old, vocational diploma, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

All in all, trust was a concern for young rural women from beneficiaries, promoters and mothers. The forty four interviewees of these three targeted groups were concerned about the influence of project's activities on establishing trust on the project's level and on the community level as well.



### 4.3 Perceived Effectiveness

Projects' effectiveness was addressed to reveal perceptions of the added values gained from joining the projects, the dream of becoming a promoter and promoters' effect, the probability of transferring knowledge, expected outcomes from joining projects and the most important factors interviewees would think of if they were asked to design a new project (Appendix no. 1: The qualitative guide, question 4, pp. 121-122).

The quantitative data collected from respondents of community members determined two main expected outcomes from the development projects. First; to generate income with a percentage of 47% (n=73), and the second; to contribute to the well-fair of the society counting the percentage of 44% (n=68). This was then followed by two other expected outcomes; get educated making 33% (n=52), and start business making 29.5% (n=46).

#### 4.3.1 Life skills component

Twenty six out of thirty one beneficiaries and eighteen out of twenty promoters agreed on the great effect of the life skills component on beneficiaries' personalities. A representing quote said, , *"I felt the change the life skills component made to my personality, now I'm capable of understanding people, dealing with them, and discussing any concerns they have on women's work in a way that suits their mentalities"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 28 years old, holder of diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Another representative reaction of the life skills component can be seen in the following quote, *"The life skills component awakened my desire of learning, so despite the fact that the transportation allowances were provided, even if not, I would have also attended because I own the desire of learning"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 28 years old, holder of diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Promoters (eighteen out of twenty) endorsed this belief, in which a representative opinion raised the following, *"I believe that all the project's graduates now have better critical thinking skills. Girls learned how to be patient to deliver clear message, listen and raise comments, a skill that was needed to empower women and engage them into the community"* (IDI, a promoter, 22 years old, with technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

As for mothers, CDAs' staff, and male guardians the majority of them embedded the importance of the life skills component into their answers, highlighting its effect on women's attitude and performance.

As illustrated, quotes presented in this section proved the effective significance of the life skills component on the majority of interviewees, reflecting on their abilities to express their opinions, identifying their shortages and setting their personal plans.

#### **4.3.2 Intergenerational problem**

It was obvious in seventeen out of thirty one beneficiaries' responses that there is an intergenerational problem in Upper Egypt communities, specifically when it comes to norms and beliefs. As an illustration, a beneficiary commented on the important factors to think about when designing a new project by saying, *"We need to have a project that targets old people and work with them on comparing their old norms' effects on the current community needs and how they no longer fit with the current life, and to narrow the gap between the old and young people"* (IDI, a beneficiary, secondary vocational education, 18 years old, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag). The same beneficiary continued her thoughts by saying, *"The old people lack the sense of planning for the future, so they need us, the new generation, to show them the new opportunities in the future"*.

From a different angle, twelve out of thirty one of male guardians thought that older norms and beliefs should be changed. A good representation of this opinion was said by a father, *“Girls are strengthened by people supporting them, so if any project does not promote community dialogue around a project’s expected outcomes and convince people with its benefits, then girls will face difficulties in getting enrolled, especially from their older guardians who are not convinced of the project”* (a FGD comprising of; father, 72 years old, primary education, a community leader, 44 years old, diploma in teaching, and a religious leader, 53 years old, illiterate, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

From interviewees’ perceptions, the intergenerational issue turned to be an aspect that has longitudinal effect on projects’ outcomes, widening the gap between community members.

### **4.3.3 Parental education**

The parental education, from beneficiaries and mothers’ perspectives showed to be a significant determinant of the likelihood of beneficiaries continuing their education. This opinion was raised by eight out of thirty one beneficiaries. Perspectives can be exemplified in the following quote, *“It depends on the parents’ level of education. Illiterate people can hardly think, and thus they are not convinced of projects and they excel to create obstacles for their daughters. However, well educated people endorse development projects and their related activities all through”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 20 years old, holder of diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Quotes said by mothers explored this determinant as well but from different perception. Four out of eleven mothers highlighted this issue. A case in this point is a mother who said, *“We are convinced that the formal education in schools is neither sufficient nor suitable for our girls. However, the non-formal education equipped my daughter with on-ground skills that enabled*

*her to find a job and generate income*”, (IDI, a mother, 40 years old, holds a diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

In summary, the effect of the non-formal education on community members' level of knowledge was emphasized by the twelve interviewees (eight beneficiaries and four mothers), promoting for the role development projects play in supporting community members to reach minimum level of acceptance to the efforts undertaken.

#### **4.3.4 Promoters as role models**

Twenty two out of thirty one beneficiaries praised their promoters and shed light on the role the later played in helping beneficiaries being enrolled in the study's projects.

Demonstration of this opinion can be seen in a beneficiary's perspective of dreaming of being a promoter by saying, *“Definitely, my promoters are my role models! They are successful in many aspects. From the financial aspect, they don't need money from their husbands. From the social aspect, they build great network, as for the cultural aspect, they learn many things and practice it”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 20 years old, technical institute of health, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

Another demonstration can be seen in a beneficiary's perspective showing great desire of being a promoter by saying, *“I dream of being a promoter to help my community members to make savings and achieve their plans. I also dream of changing the old norms of their perception regarding women engagement”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 18 years old, secondary vocational education, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

Similarly, the vast majority of promoters (seventeen out of twenty) confirmed beneficiaries' desire to reach the same social position achieved by promoters, while three out of twenty were too humble to mention themselves as role models. A representation of promoters'

perspectives can be seen in the following quote, *"The girls watched the efforts we, the promoters, exerted and the results achieved, so I believe each girl has the wish now to go through the same experience and be useful to others"* (a promoter, 28 years old, diploma in computer, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena) noting the dreams of girls of being promoters.

Out of the seventeen promoters who saw themselves as role models, four were very proud of their positions, as reflected in the following quotation, *"Most beneficiaries wish to find a job with suitable working conditions, and they wouldn't ever find better opportunity than being a promoter, and be seen by others as a role model"*(IDI, a promoter, 32 years old, diploma of commerce, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

Seven out of eleven mothers also had hope of being role models. Moreover, among the seven mothers, two showed great hope of not only being promoters, but going beyond. An explanation can be seen in a mother's perspective who said, *"My daughter and myself are beneficiaries of several projects, and from these projects we realized that women can be achievers, be exposed to inside and outside opportunities and reach the dream of being a successful role model in our country. The same was done by women who became engineers, doctors, and ministers"*, (IDI, a mother, 50 years old, graduate of literacy classes, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

CDAs' staff also highlighted promoters' effects. The eight CDAs' staff interviewed mentioned promoters positively, confirming that the later are the actual implementers on ground. Opinions expressed were mostly pinpointing the beneficiaries' behavioral and attitude changes affected by their promoters, as shown in the following quote, *"Girls learned from promoters the commitment, respect of others' opinion, and the desire to gain new knowledge, building network*

*and making use of their relationship"* (IDI, a CDA staff, 36 years old, graduate of institute of agriculture, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

As for male guardians, nineteen out of thirty one had the following belief, *"Each person looks forward to being promoted. A student's first dream is usually to be a teacher, and same applies to development projects, were beneficiaries seek every aspect to be a promoter. This dream comes out of their positive perception to their teachers/promoters"* (FGD comprising; a father, 72 years old, primary education, a community leader, 44 years old, diploma in teaching and a religious leader, 53 years old, illiterate, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

The role promoters affected to their beneficiaries was not denied. From both beneficiaries' and promoters' perspectives, promoters proved to be "catalysts of change", a belief that was confirmed by mothers, CDAs' staff and male guardians.

#### **4.3.5 Knowledge transfer**

The effect of projects' beneficiaries on community members through knowledge transfer was illustrated in several interviews. While beneficiaries provided evidences that they are capable of transferring knowledge and promoters agreed with their opinion, male guardians along with CDAs' staff argued that the capability of knowledge transfer relies on the level of beneficiaries' conviction of their knowledge and it is not a general case. 'Gossip', being a common practice in these villages, was mentioned in several interviews as a channel for knowledge transfer. As for mothers, the majority were doubtful about their daughters' capacities.

The majority of beneficiaries (twenty eight out of thirty one) assured their capacities to transfer knowledge. Three successive stories were selected by the researcher to present this finding. First, one beneficiary mentioned, *"In our street one of my neighbors wanted to open a*

*shop, so I discussed with him the project's idea, and guided him to items that would make his project successful*" (IDI, a beneficiary, 26 years old, secondary education, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

Another successful story mentioned that, *"Because I feel the benefit of Idkhar, I tried to convince my friends of the idea and encouraged them to make our own loan box, and now we are all benefiting from it"* (IDI, a beneficiary, secondary vocational education, 18 years old, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

And finally, stories proved the success of knowledge transfer reached younger generations as shown in a beneficiary's quote, *"My neighbors' children are 6 and 8 years, I taught them how to save, and they are making their own savings to buy certain games they dream of"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 23 years old, diploma of commerce, Idkhar/CARE, Al-Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

Whereas twenty eight beneficiaries assured their capabilities of transferring knowledge, it was noteworthy to hear from one of Misr El-Kheir's project the following opinion, *"I don't expect to transfer knowledge to others, because I'm still not yet fully skilled"*(IDI, a beneficiary, 19 years old, preparatory education, Community Schools/Misr El-Kheir, Jehinah, Sohag).

As for CDAs' staff, five out of eight interviewees confirmed beneficiaries' abilities to transfer knowledge if they are well convinced of what they learned. A good exemplification is the following quote, *"It is very common in our communities to transfer information, specifically if women are convinced with what they are saying, and because women by nature love gossip, they compare their status, and feel jealous of each other, so they indirectly motivate each other and embrace each other's interest to increase their knowledge"* (IDI, a male CDA executive

manager, 50 years old, BA in Arts, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

As for the thirty one interviewed male guardians, twenty four were convinced that beneficiaries and promoters could transfer knowledge to other community members, if they well absorbed what they learned or trained on. This opinion can be represented in the following quote, *“If the beneficiary and/or the promoter is convinced with what she learned, she will definitely be able to transfer the knowledge and excel in convincing others”* (a FGD comprising; a father, 55 years old, BA in science, a religious leader, 28 years old, BA in arts, and a community leader, 46 years old, BA in social services, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena). The same FGD supported their belief by a psychological perspective saying, *“Girls by nature are always willing to teach others, a practice that increases their ego and their pride in themselves”*.

As for mothers, five out of eleven were not convinced of their girls' capacities to transfer knowledge. An illustration of this opinion can be seen in a mother's perspective who mentioned that, *“I'm afraid that my daughter would not have sufficient information to transfer, as the project duration was very short period”* (IDI, a mother, age not available, illiterate, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena). On the other hand, seven out of eleven believed in their daughters' capacities. The following quote can represent the convinced opinions, *“My daughter is the eldest, thus I'm happy that she joined Neqdar Nesharek to act as role model to her siblings and motivate them to make use of every opportunity in their lives”* (IDI, a mother, 40 years old, holds a diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

In general, knowledge transfer was seen as a general act inside the community, the quality of knowledge and its frequency was the debatable issue among targeted groups.



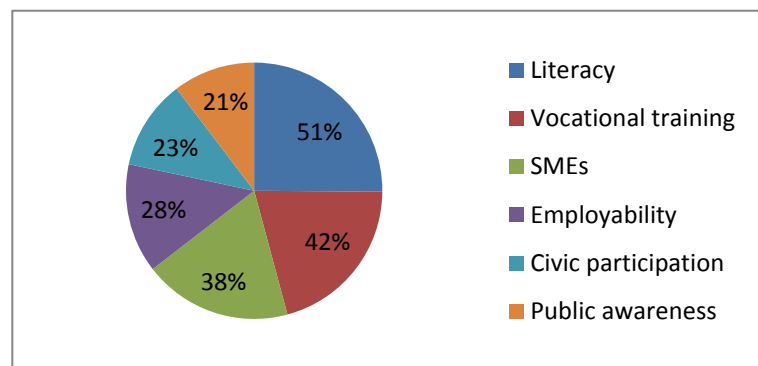
#### 4.4 Perceived Impact

This theme is the longest in terms of questions. In the majority, the focus of questions was on perceptions of success of the projects in terms of communities', family members', husbands' and siblings' beliefs and thoughts. At the same time, interviewees were asked to report on projects' impact in building capacities and the extent to which these capacities can fulfill communities' needs in the future

(Appendix no. 1: The qualitative guide, questions 5 & 6, pp. 122-123).

As for the quantitative data, it exhibited that 98% (n=153) reported the positive impact of development projects on community members. As

**Figure 4: Perceived impact of development projects on the level of improvement of different areas (the quantitative data)**

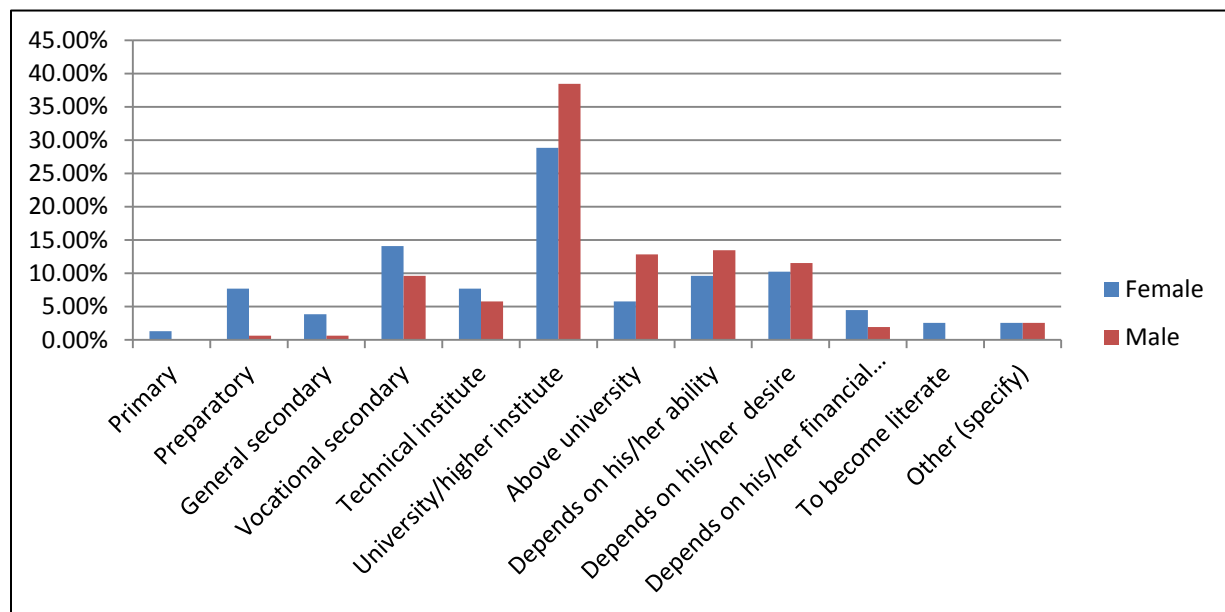


shown in figure 4, respondents ranked the projects' positive impact on specified areas as follows; literacy 51% (n=80), vocational training 42% (n=65), SMEs 38% (n=59), employability 28% (n=44), civic participation 23% (n=36), and public awareness 21% (n=33). Problem solving, marriage and family formation, gender equity, and migration showed a descending percentages starting from 19% to 2% consecutively.

An interesting piece also in the quantitative data showed that around 56% (n=88) still see that there is a difference between the roles women and men can play, this percentage was reached by half male and half female voices.

Another aspect to be considered is the level of education people should attain. Figure 5 illustrates the community acceptance of women education, with minimal differences in most levels of education, except for the university level, where the percentage of males exceeded that of females. Based on what is illustrated on figure 5, 82% of respondents indicated that women should not stay at home and 83% confirmed their approval of women's work. Finally, two main questions showed high percentages of projects' positive impact; around 95% (n=149) confirmed that projects leave positive impact after they terminate, and an average of 91% (n=142) reported that projects equip women with needed skills to open their business or work, while the same percentage was also given to women's capabilities to help their guardians in covering the household expense.

**Figure 5: Perceived impact of development projects on the level of education desired by gender (the quantitative data)**



#### 4.4.1 The impact of results

Although there are exceptions, nearly eighty eight out of hundred and one of the targeted groups reported the significance of sighted results on ground to recognize positive or negative

impact. Comments raised by targeted groups in this section, whether positive or negative, contributed to the understanding of one of the main purposes of this study, which are the essential components needed for any successful project.

Eleven out of thirty one beneficiaries' perspectives indicated that projects' positive impacts are limited to certain population. A good expression of opinion can be found in the following quote, *"Only beneficiaries' parents can sense the difference, but other community members still need to understand the outputs more"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 24 years old, preparatory education, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

The perspective of the projects' impact on most family members was endorsed by another beneficiary's perspective who said, *"Some people mocked my grandmother for allowing me to go out. Nevertheless, because my grandmother is convinced of my achievements, she supported me and tried to explain to our neighbors the benefit of our project"*(IDI, a beneficiary, secondary vocational education, 18 years old, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

And another beneficiary illustrated her husband's conviction with development projects by saying, *"My husband is convinced of women's participation, he always says women are not created to only marry and deliver, but if they are educated they can equally contribute to the welfare of the whole family"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 29 years old, diploma commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Abou Awad, Sohag).

From promoters' perception, eight out of twenty promoters held the beneficiaries responsible for proving positive or negative impact on any project. Illustration of such opinion is shown in the following quote, *"We are living in a closed community; people always wait for the impressions of beneficiaries on the impact of the project. If it is positive, it grabs community's*

*support and attention. If negative, I trust the project will never be able to maintain its activities in a community that reject their help*", (IDI, a promoter, 21 years old, with technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Another promoter's perspective showed that, *"Our community never gets convinced of any project initiatives unless they see results. In NN the project proved to the community that girls can be productive, so I believe not only the girls, but most community members wish to join the project now after they saw the results"*, (IDI, a promoter, 22 years old, with technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Another promoter raised an important issue mentioning that, *"Because the design of Idkhar targets all population, there is no resistance, but support"*, (IDI, a promoter, 39 years old, holder of diploma of vocational training, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

As for mothers, eight out of eleven mentioned in their interviews the positive impact of projects on community members. Among the eight mothers one of them shared the following thought, *"Now men are eager to partner with project's graduates because they are convinced that graduates' partnership would secure success for their projects"*, (IDI, a mother, age is not available, illiterate, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

Several male guardians (eighteen out of thirty one) raised opinions regarding projects' impact on changing community's perceptions of girls' education and work. More importantly, out of the eighteen, nine male guardians transparently shared that their confession of projects' impact came only when they felt that these projects serve their personal needs. An expressive representation of this opinion can be seen in the following quote, *"The religion belief says 'work is worship'. So if our girls and wives contribute to the increase of our families' income through*

*these projects, we wouldn't mind their participation. In addition, when women work, they better realize how hard it is to collect money, and thus they become more careful in their consumptions*" (FGD comprising; a father, 72 years old, primary education, a community leader, 44 years old, diploma in teaching and a religious leader, 53 years old, illiterate, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag).

In brief, projects' activities, outcomes and reputations showed to be the causes of changing the communities and impacting stakeholders' lives.

#### **4.4.2 The impact of marriage**

A factor affecting project impact and rural women development was 'marriage'. As determined from the interviewees' perceptions, marriage will always remain a controversial issue in any project. Although not much, however, six out of thirty one beneficiaries and five out of eleven mothers referred to the impact of marriage on enrollment, each from different perspective.

A representative case in point is a beneficiary who said, *"Because I'm not married, my parents resisted at the beginning my enrollment into the program. However, they agreed after they were rest assured that my neighbors are joining and accompanying me to classes, feeling that this structure would protect me from community's mockery"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 20 years old, holder of diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

On the other hand, a representation of mothers' contradicting beliefs to the above-mentioned beneficiary's opinion can be found in the following quote, *"As long as my daughter is not married, I would encourage her to join as much development projects as possible. Once married, this will be the decision of her husband"*, (IDI, a mother, 40 years old, holds a diploma

of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena) commenting on the changed perceptions on women's engagement.

Ultimately, the level of marriage impact varied among interviewees' feedbacks. Nevertheless, beneficiaries and mothers remained the most concerned targeted groups.

#### **4.4.3 Critical gaps**

In addition to the above, expanded critical gaps in community's perceptions to projects' designs were determined by each target group. A case portraying this point is a beneficiary who confirmed that, *"If the project outcomes are clearly stated and explained to the community members from the beginning, they would have been more motivated and committed to encourage their girls to join the project, so, I would suggest giving more time to the launching phase of any project"*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 20 years old, holder of diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

The majority of promoters (thirteen out of twenty) pinpointed a big concern in the selection criteria of targeted groups, and the importance of addressing the whole society rather than an isolated underprivileged segment. A promoter's perception is a good example, *"Some people try to let you down and direct you to lose hope in changing our life status, that is why it is important for any project to address the whole community members to build a healthy culture"*, (IDI, a promoter, 30 years old, BA in social services, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

As for opinions expressed by male guardians, seventeen out of thirty one were bit sharp and rigid in their opinions. A representation of such opinion signposted that, *"This village has around 10,000 populations; the project serves only 150 girls out of them, so how would we say that the project served our community while it did not even serve 50% of them! To make real*

*change, the project needs to reach more people and provide more services*” (FGD comprising; a father, 56 years old, diploma in teaching, a religious leader, 34 years old, BA in social services, and a community leader, 48 years old, diploma in teaching, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

Out of the seventeen, around five male guardians confirmed their need to see immediate impact of any project. An example of rigidity can be seen in the following Community Leader's perception, *“Girls will not act as calibers ever, as long as they don't generate income”* (FGD comprising; a father, 55 years old, BA in science, a religious leader, 28 years old, BA in arts, and a community leader, 46 years old BA in social services, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

Eventually, perceptions in this section shed light on projects' spectrum of services; to whom it should be extended and how far it should be widespread.

#### **4.4.4 Potential barriers to program participation**

Another worth mentioning issue was the diversification of reasons that hinder women from being educated or working that was expressed by different targeted groups. Starting with the primary target group, thirty one out of thirty one beneficiaries' reflections mentioned the impact of norms and beliefs on their daily lives. Variances of the weight of the impact of these norms can be seen in the following beneficiary's perspective , *“I don't care about people's perceptions and disappointing comments, because most of them have blocked minds and if I follow them I'll never develop”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 29 years old, illiterate, Neqdar Nehsarek/PC and Idkhar/CARE projects, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

Another beneficiary gave detailed explanation by saying, *“My husband is the oldest and richest among his brothers, so he afforded us(i.e. me and my children) a separate house from his family’s house that is why I don’t face difficulties in going to project’s classes. Yet, I know that if I was living with them, it would have been impossible, same as the case of my sister-in-law, who cannot even go out to buy anything”*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 23 years old, diploma of commerce, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

Indeed, the majority of promoters (sixteen out of twenty) were able to point out an important factor for consideration in any project design. One example of the perceptions mentioned was, *“Girls’ male guardians, mothers-in-law and grandmothers are the main reasons behind keeping girls away from education and work, because they want them to concentrate on the domestic work. That is why the time factor of classes is very important for any successful project”* (IDI, a promoter, 22 years old, with technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Where CDAs’ staff are considered as implementers of the projects, the feedback of six out of eight CDAs’ staff in terms of potential barriers stood mid-way between what they should be calling for as implementers and what they are really convinced of as parents. To illustrate this point, a CDA staff mentioned the following, *“Frankly, I fully understand the motives of parents in prioritizing boys’ education over girls. In our community, most families live with limited financial resources, so it makes perfect sense to prioritize the spending and give primacy to boys, as they are the ones who are more mobile and who are expected to find job opportunities easier and can partially in the future share in the household expenses whenever possible”*, (IDI, a male CDA executive manager, 50 years old, BA in Arts, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag) giving justifications on women deprivation from education and work.



Looking into mothers' perceptions, data revealed that the eleven interviewed mothers had very wide range of preservation and destruction of women's education and work. For instance, a mother's quote expressed her negative impression on projects by saying, *"I would not allow my daughter to join any other development project, but Idkhar. Because I need her to continue her higher education, and Idkhar is the only project that does not waste her time"*, (IDI, a mother, 37 years old, technical vocational diploma, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag) commenting on the extent to which she will encourage her daughter to join any further development projects.

Ultimately, the majority of interviewees (eighty three out of hundred and one) assured that if women act respectfully inside their communities (and here comes a question; what does respectful behavior mean?), keeping their communication with males to the minimum, then they are very much expected to gain their husband's and/or family's support, and get engaged into different activities. In specific, twenty seven out of thirty one beneficiaries and nineteen out of twenty promoters confirmed that once young rural women feel that they are socially acceptable, they get motivated to make use of their time, have more energy to exert and give priority to their households' responsibilities. .

#### **4.5 Perceived Sustainability**

Here comes the last theme which grants all its focus on efforts exerted, suggestions and expectations of projects' sustainability. (Appendix no. 1: The qualitative guide, question 7, pp. 123-124). There was a remarkable general tendency for similar beliefs by most respondents on sustaining their projects, each articulating his/her perception from different angle.

As for the quantitative data, it revealed that around 80% (n=125) were interested in working for development projects to serve the community.

#### 4.5.1 Volunteerism

Volunteerism was a common ground aspect that a considerable number of interviewees mentioned directly and indirectly in their feedbacks. As a matter of fact, sixteen out of thirty one beneficiaries, eight out of twenty promoters, three out of eight CDAs' staff, two out of eleven mothers, and twelve out of thirty one male guardians clearly acknowledged volunteerism positive effect on sustaining projects' results. Nevertheless, the applications were differently assessed. A good representation of beneficiaries' perceptions can be seen in the following quote, *“If I was in charge, I would have obliged beneficiaries to volunteer in the CDA for a certain period after graduating from the project to transfer knowledge to other girls and spread the benefit”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 27 years old, completed only preparatory education, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Another representation of beneficiaries' perspectives confirmed that the volunteering efforts already took place prior to project's termination by saying, *“We already started using the youth center in providing life skills classes on volunteering basis, trying to implement a new round of the project parallel to the project's classes”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 26 years old, secondary education, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

Among the sixteen beneficiaries who stated volunteerism as an urgent action to secure sustainability, one unique beneficiary expressed her interest in volunteering, highlighting the lack of mechanism to make her assistance possible by saying, *“If members of my village need my support, I'll not hesitate. But I don't know from where to start!”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 29 years old, illiterate, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

At the same time, eight out of twenty promoters had similar opinions to the sixteen beneficiaries mentioned above. Promoters' perceptions can be exemplified in the following

quote, *"We can increase the volunteering jobs at the CDA to sustain the classes and keep faith in the impact of the project"*, (IDI, a promoter, 26 years old, BA of Social Service, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

Out of the eight promoters, three were keen to mention their taken actions towards volunteerism. A good example is found in the following quote , *"Some people already started their projects, so I try to visit them to know their needs and try to match it with other projects to open for them better sustainable opportunities"* (IDI, a promoter, 39 years old, higher institute of reading, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Needah, Sohag).

As for the CDAs' staff, three out of eight were eager also to praise the volunteerism idea. A representing example is, *"We already hired 10 as volunteers in the CDA, to transfer knowledge to new girls"* (IDI, a male CDA staff, age is not mentioned, BA in literature, Neqdar Nesharek/Population Council, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Two mothers were also keen in their replies to show any support they can offer to development projects. The first mother said, *"We already help our neighbors in the financial management of their project, in addition we try very hard to clean our village to support the government"* (IDI, a mother, 37 years old, vocational education, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

The second mother mentioned that, *"Volunteering is a must, especially for graduates who are trained and can transfer knowledge with no cost as the vocational skills"* (IDI, a mother, 56 years old, graduate of literacy classes, Neqdar Nesharek, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

On the other hand, twelve out of thirty one male guardians were somehow doubtful about the volunteerism mechanism if not linked to an incubating monitoring entity. Demonstration of

this perception can be seen in the following quote, *“We know for sure that the CDA in our village has the managerial capacity for implementing any project, can make the venue available, and has a list of needed volunteers. Nevertheless, all this cannot help without the technical and financial provision of an external entity”* (a FGD comprising; a father, 55 years old, BA in science, a religious leader, 28 years old, BA in arts, and a community leader, 46 years old, BA in social services, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

In due course, young rural women's perceptions along with other targeted groups' perceptions showed that volunteerism is an ingrained norm inside the community. Yet, the application of volunteerism and the way of systemizing it still remain an issue for discussion.

#### **4.5.2 Partnerships**

In addition to the above, two levels of partnerships were raised under the sustainability section with remarkable concerns. Perceptions of female interviewees were split between; disquiets and uncertainties when they talk about financial peer-to-peer partnership, and support and welcoming when they talk about knowledge peer-to-peer partnership. As for perceptions of male interviewees, they were more concerned with the governmental and non-governmental partnerships, urging their necessities.

Starting by beneficiaries' perceptions, a good example representing thirteen out of thirty one beneficiaries' perception would be a beneficiary who said, *“I wouldn't ever think of partnering unless I need to scale up my project and I don't have enough fund. If it does happen, I'll admit that I'm taking very high risk”*, (IDI, a beneficiary, 23 years old, diploma of commerce, Idkhar/CARE, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag). Yet, additional four out of thirty one beneficiaries' partnership perception completely changes when they talk about partnering technically. A representative example is a beneficiary who said, *“Our school organized a*

*competition with prizes, and because my class did not cooperate and each of us wanted to prove seniority, we lost the competition and the prize went to the other class, so we learned the importance of partnering”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 19 years old, preparatory education, Community Schools/MEK, Ezbet Radwan, Sohag).

Beneficiaries' anxiety of partnering was mentioned in thirteen out of twenty promoters' feedbacks. A representing explanation can be seen in the following quote, *“I can see some girls dividing responsibilities and roles between each other, and in my opinion this is a good sign that they can cooperate in the future, yet they don't like to label it as partnership”* (IDI, a promoter, 21 years old, technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek, Awlad Amr, Qena).

On the other hand, out of the thirteen promoters seven paid great attention to essential need of building a mechanism of cooperation between beneficiaries. Demonstration of such opinion can be illustrated in the following quote highlighting the urgency of mounting efforts, *“We still miss teaching girls to work jointly, make collective projects, and be members of value chain production, enabling efforts to be grouped and reflecting actual improvement on ground”*, (IDI, a promoter, 21 years old, with technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

The perception of group work and partnership was actually raised by the thirteen promoters, confirming that it is an essential component that should be taken into consideration in future projects.

The majority of mothers (six out of eleven) were anti-partnership. For example, a representing mother's quote illustrated that, *“No one taught our girls how to safely establish*

*partnership with others, and how to develop fair conditions of partnership. Thus, we don't prefer partnership.”* (IDI, a mother, age not available, illiterate, Neqdar Nesharek, Farshout, Qena)

On the other hand, male interviewees (fourteen out of thirty one male guardians and five out of eight CDAs' staff, taking into consideration that three of CDAs' staff were female) raised obligations and preferences for the governmental and non-governmental partnerships.

A good representation of CDAs staff's perceptions can be seen in the following quote, *“Any local partner assumes that it will sustain a project by its own with the same capacity after termination, are liars! In our communities, we love to have a reference, and we are committed only when we feel that someone is following up on our achievements, especially when they have the international root, so partnership is a must”* (IDI, a male CDA executive manager, 50 years old, BA in Arts, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag) commenting on willingness of community members to sustain the project after its termination.

As for the fourteen male guardians, five were zealous about the distribution of responsibilities among governmental and non-governmental institutions. Perceptions are well illustrated in the following quote, *“The government has to incubate any project after its termination! We want the local governmental units to add these girls to their plans and be responsible for finding them jobs. The General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education has sewing machines that are not used, why don't we make use of them, and from our side, the CDA will volunteer with the place”* (FGD comprising; a father, 56 years old, diploma in teaching, a religious leader, 34 years old, BA in social services, and a community leader, 48 years old, diploma in teaching, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena) raising suggestions for sustaining the project.

In addition, among the fourteen male guardians, three were suspicious about the extraordinary expectations any implementing agency makes at the end of the project under the mandate of partnership and institutionalization. An exemplification of this fear can be seen in the following quote, *“The community is ready to support the sustainability of any project within our limited resources, but we need to know exactly what is expected from us and be involved from the beginning, so that we don't get surprised at the end”* (FGD comprising; a father, a religious leader and two community leaders, average age of 37 years old, two are BA holders and two are diploma holders, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

What can be concluded from the above is that partnerships from the perspectives of the majority of targeted groups are of many suspicious concerns to interviewees, and the concept is not yet well ingrained into the communities.

#### **4.5.3 Strengthened CDAs**

Turning our attention to the status of the Community Development Associations (CDAs), it was weighty to find that despite the efforts completed by most development projects to build CDAs' capacities, yet some root causes of deficiencies still need to be considered. For instance, it was noticed through the beneficiaries' interviews (eighteen out of thirty one) that the CDAs' staff, who are the actual implementers on the village level, had very limited direct relation with beneficiaries. None of the beneficiaries reported the important role CDAs' staff did to them, neither during the launching, nor during implementation. At the same time, the majority of CDAs' staff (six out of eight) confirmed this setting, being convinced that their role is more like administrators rather than implementers.

As for promoters, the same thirteen out of twenty promoters mentioned in section 4.1.1 were motivated to come up with solutions to strengthen the CDA. It is worth mentioning that

promoters' salaries in the three study's projects are paid through the CDAs, so intentions of improving the CDA must be questioned here whether it is out of real desire of public service's improvement or personal's improvement? Representation of promoters' perceptions can be seen in the following quote, *"If the project has a component that generates income to the CDA e.g. sewing plant, that covers at least its running cost this would secure the CDAs' existence and active role they can play inside the communities, and sustain the projects"*, (IDI, a promoter, 21 years old, technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

In addition, three out of eleven mothers believed that projects' end results reflect CDAs' level of capabilities. A good illustration for this was a mother who said, *"Still some parents are not convinced of the project, because their daughters did not find a job. So, I hope the CDA build the network that enable them to find a job opportunity for all graduates"*, (IDI, a mother, 40 years old, holds a diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena) referring to another root cause that hinders CDAs' credit.

As for CDAs' staff, six out of eight staff highlighted that the level of CDAs' arming does not always fulfills the need of sustainability. One example representing this opinion was raised by a CDAs' staff who said, *"Unfortunately, we don't have enough machines to continue the project, however, we will try with what we have to find ways in serving additional girls"*, (IDI, a male CDAs' staff, age is not available, a bachelor holder in literature, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

The remarkable issue here is that no considerable comments were raised by beneficiaries regarding the CDAs' status, not giving much attention to their role.



#### **4.5.4 Dissemination and outreach**

On the contrary, the majority of beneficiaries (twenty four out of thirty one) and promoters (seventeen out of twenty), being the main end users of development projects showed great attention to the type of dissemination activities needed and their effect on sustaining projects' results. Data evidenced that there was very high level of awareness of the twenty four beneficiaries and seventeen promoters of the importance of disseminating results, indicating reasonable level of understanding of communities' needs. Beneficiaries' perceptions can be represented in the following quote, *"If the project's results are well presented to the community leaders at its end, this will increase its sustainability and opportunity of continuing"* (IDI, a beneficiary, 28 years old, diploma of commerce, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

Demonstrations made by promoters can also be illustrated in the following quote, *"If at the end of the project a big event is organized to show the results and discuss it among all community members, the impact will increase and will encourage the leaders and rich people to take the lead of incubating the results and sustaining the project's achievements"* (IDI, a promoter, 22 years old, with technical vocational diploma, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Awlad Amr, Qena).

Ultimately, the twenty four beneficiaries and seventeen promoters were the ones who showed bad need to present evidences of projects' success to community members; in an attempt to implant changes in the thoughts of communities' members and to some extent change the negative impressions members have on women's engagement.

#### **4.5.5 Implanted changes**

Another point to be considered was the changes implanted into the communities and its sustainable implications.

Twenty three out of thirty one beneficiaries raised comments on the link between community needs, projects' results and missing context to support these results, having varied opinions based on the level of education. Among the twenty three, seven beneficiaries were able to determine only the strengths of the projects in terms of sustainability, while the others (sixteen among the twenty three) were able to not only determine projects' strengths but also the weaknesses that need to be enhanced to accomplish the needed level of sustainability.

A representation of the seven beneficiaries who were able to determine only the strengths of projects' sustainability can be seen in the following quote, *"Idkhar is a community-based project, built on ingraining a new idea into the community rather than providing temporarily service. It applied the quote, 'Give a man a fish and he eats for a day, teach a man to fish and he can feed himself for life', so yes, I trust that the impact of such project never ends"* (IDI, a beneficiary, secondary vocational education, 18 years old, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag) commenting on the community's willingness and ability to sustain the project. The same beneficiary showed high critical thinking capabilities and was meticulous in pinpointing two main reasons of sustainability by saying, *"I believe Idkhar will continue, because it has two main strengths; it is of interest to all community members, and it narrowed the social gap between people and helped members to improve their families' resources"*.

A representation of the sixteen beneficiaries who were able to not only highlight the strength of projects' sustainability, but determine projects' weaknesses that hinder the results from being sustained said, *"I feel that the community needs to feel sincere about their commitment towards improving their society. I don't know how can this be done, but it is important to increase the sense of responsibility of everyone to be productive"* (IDI, a female beneficiary, 24 years old, preparatory education, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Koum Al-Dabaa, Qena).

Another representation of the sixteen beneficiaries said, *“As long as Idkhar supports the start-up of SMEs that respond to community needs e.g. soap project, than it will be reinforced by the community”* (IDI, a beneficiary, 22 years old, BA in social services, Idkhar/CARE and Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Sawamaah Sharq, Sohag).

Whereas promoters are the actual players in sustaining any development, sixteen out of twenty promoters agreed upon the following quote, *“The added values of girls are the sustained factor of Neqdar Nesharek as long as they spread it all over the community”* (IDI, a promoter, 30 years old, BA of social services, Neqdar Nesharek/PC, Farshout, Qena).

An additional opinion worth mentioning was of six out of thirty one of the male guardians, commenting on their expectations of the project's status after its termination. The six male guardians pinpointed very important factor of success, that can be represented in the following quote, *“We have to admit that what comes easy goes easy, so if we really want to sustain our project's achievements, we need to trust each other and have confidence in each one's intentions and capabilities, and agree to face whatever difficulties we meet, otherwise, we will be losing any effort done by implementers”* (IDI, a FGD comprising; a father, 72 years old, primary education, a community leader, 44 years old, diploma in teaching and a religious leader, 53 years old, illiterate, Idkhar/CARE, Needah, Sohag)

Ultimately, data evidenced an intertwining relation between impact and sustainability. While the quotes presented here fit the impact theme, nevertheless, they were all extracted from the sustainability question (Appendix no. 1: The qualitative guide, question 7, pp. 123-124).

## **5 Discussions and interpretations**

This chapter offers discussions and interpretations of the research findings connecting them to literature examined earlier (chapter 2) in order to fulfill the purpose of this research (section 1.3). Under this mandate, the researcher will answer the main research question and its sub-questions stated in problem statement (section 1.2), highlighting proposed/identified needs and necessarily requirements of development projects as illustrated by the three study's projects. Then based on this chapter, recommendations will be offered in the concluding chapter.

### **5.1 Relevance**

The first theme is 'relevance'. It is a true fact that relevance is something very personal and can be charged different measurements based on each one's needs and perceptions. Nonetheless, analyzing the three sub-themes presented in the findings chapter of this theme; the prioritized areas for improvement, pro-poor social capital and the technical expertise and support, all three areas determined the lack of the 'social accountability' of the study's projects. In other wording, the findings of this research supported the emergent need of engaging stakeholders at the planning stage of education-supported development projects. This may include; setting the atmosphere that enable stakeholders to have strong say in planning and managing any interventions they are exposed to and making sure that the proposed intervention is drawn upon their needs and deploys all available resources inside their communities (The World Bank Group, 2012).

A good illustration of accomplishing social accountability can be found in both the "Micro-credit service" project that was presented in the fourth comparative model (see section 2.2, p. 20) and the "ERP" project that was presented in the first consideration of development projects (see section 2.3, p. 23). As explained in the coming two paragraphs, while each project used different approach to build social accountability inside their intervened communities, the

literature of these two projects clarified that the early involvement of stakeholders in the designing and implementing phases was the key success factor of affecting desired changes.

Linking this finding to our literature we would find that the “Micro-credit service” project’s structure was designed to use the bottom-up approach through considering women’s need to break the mental and power prejudices applied on women in Iran, providing them room for deciding on the type of support they needed, and helping them to feel the ownership of their project (Sadighi, 2011). The descriptive analysis displayed in section 4.1 came in full agreement with the “Micro-credit service” experience, highlighting the growing prerequisite of allowing beneficiaries to decide on the type of support needed. While none of the young rural women’s perspectives (i.e. beneficiaries, promoters and in some cases mothers) denied the effect of their projects, still the majority of young rural women’s interviewed had issues that remained to be fulfilled. From the quotes, only the ‘age bracket’ issue was addressed in the three projects, whereas many other issues were repeatedly mentioned with no changes e.g. marketing, job counseling and the development of value chain projects in “Neqdar Nesharek”. Admittedly, the “Micro-credit service” project proved that their structure motivated women to make real on-ground use of the project’s services, an aspect that was argued by Schunk (2012) in section 2.1.3, considering this motivation as a kick-off point of creating change inside the communities, and increasing women’s commitment to achieve the desired goals.

More importantly, the significance of building social accountability inside the intervened communities came in agreement also with the “ERP” project’s management scheme. The ERP involvement of community members in the project’s board of trustees had great impact on driving project’s related goals, which contributed by its role in the overall empowerment of the beneficiaries. In addition, building on the skills and resources available inside the community

proved to be the breakeven point of implanting and institutionalizing planned improvements. As represented in the interviewees' feedback, considering stakeholders' opinions during implementation and making use of their expertise was an issue highlighted in both Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar projects. In the final, contextualizing any project's activities to match beneficiaries' nurturing, parenting, and social and economic conditions, was also a point stressed on in the three projects by young rural women who showed great desire of improving their learning capacities, as proved by Hammond, Austin, Orcutt and Rosso (2001) in section 2.1.3.

One could recapitulate this by saying, based on the fieldwork of this research study, a core aspect that is identified to be crucial to accomplish relevancy of any project is the consideration of the perceptions of communities' insiders in setting the learning goals of any project, increasing their commitment to accomplish the intended results, and raising the potential of affecting needed changes (see section 2.1.3 of the literature).

In summary, the analysis of the relevancy section answers the first research sub-question on how young rural women perceive the education supported development projects? And what are the factors that affect their perceptions? Findings revealed that young rural women perceive development projects as a starting point for change. Nevertheless, development projects under this research did not yet fully address young rural women's life-related activities that respond to their direct needs.

A factor affecting young rural women's perceptions are found to be the lack of being convinced to change. This lack of conviction is a result of the scarce links beneficiaries can build between the kind of services offered by the development projects and the kind of beneficiaries' uprising needs, as argued by Schunk (2012) in section 2.1.1.

In addition, findings showed that the secondary beneficiaries of any project are more likely to see the relevance of these projects to their needs more than the primary beneficiaries. To the researcher, this finding was opposite to her expectations. Nonetheless, the quotes extracted under this theme showed that CDAs' staff, male guardians and in some cases mothers were more likely to admit the 'relevancy' of the project they are related to, more than the beneficiaries themselves. The findings of this research clarified the deviation in projects' level of relevancy admitted by different stakeholders by the level of expectations each has drawn prior to implementation. Apparently, the culture and the social needs play pivotal role in shaping these expectations (see section 2.1.1. in p. 8).

One more issue to add, although the magnitude of using outside experts exists, yet, the findings of this research reveal that people may still consider an insider with little information as an expert, as long as he/she can add to their knowledge, even if it is a minor addition, and provide on-going mentoring to community members. From young rural women's perceptions, two privileges are seen for an insider. First, he/she is an existing body inside the village, which means that his/her handiness and readiness are higher than any outsider. Second, deploying an existing caliber inside the intervened village gives the ownership of the project to community members. In addition, using existing caliber means investing in improving community members' capacities and increasing the probability of transferring the capacities the insider has to younger generations.

The preference showed by all targeted groups of an inside expert even if he/she is with less experience partially contributed to the answer of third research sub-question; what is the needed contextual framework to implement a successful project? And what are the challenges they determine in the current settings? As indicated from the field work of this study, strengthening

the civil society and integrating social stratification into the underprivileged communities are associated with extending services to the wider possible spectrum of stakeholders, contributing to the deployment of any possible opportunities existing inside these communities.

## **5.2 Efficiency**

The second theme is 'efficiency'. The findings of the field work of this study indicated that the provision of holistic approach was the main prove of accomplishing efficiency. This finding did not fully intersect with the researcher's assumption at the literature section of this study, using the financial analysis lens to measure projects' efficiency. In fact, between the need of seed money, the need of having intertwining projects, or the need of building trust and social bonds, all three sub-themes focused on projects' outcomes. Women's perceptions under this theme called development projects for the provision of an inclusive package of services that may ensure for them a smooth transition from discriminated situations to privileged situations. Eventually, quotes extracted shed light on the importance of having 'social resilience' inside their intervened communities.

Social resilience is defined to be, "the capacity of individuals or groups to secure favorable outcomes under new circumstances and, if need be, by new means" (UNDP, 2014, p. 16). Social resilience is about building individuals' competencies to be able to act tolerantly to reach the identified desired results. To be resilient is to have the capacity of coping, collaborating and connecting. Ultimately, from the researcher's point of view, building social resilience inside the intervened communities is about building stakeholders' capacities to be able to seek any possible interdisciplinary aspect among different projects or initiatives, building social bonds and benefiting from the contribution of every community member to achieve desired change.



A good illustration of accomplishing social resilience can be found in three models presented in the literature of this study; the “Training and Mentoring Program for Women-Led Business” first comparative model (see section 2.2, p. 17), the “KALAHICIDSS” second comparative model (see section 2.2, p. 18), and the “Ishraq”, fifth consideration of development projects (see section 2.3 in page 28). The following three paragraphs link the findings of this research with these projects’ experiences in drawing sequential activities that drive beneficiaries from an entry to an exist point, accomplishing clear milestones.

First the “Training and Mentoring Program for Women-Led Business” project, which used a comprehensive threefold approach; preparing, enabling and linking, showing high level of social resilience inside intervened communities. The project first helped women in gaining the know-how of undertaking feasibility studies and assessing the market. This was then followed by supporting women in developing their scale-up plans for their current small business. The “Training and Mentoring Program for Women-Led Business” project then offered its beneficiaries capital to start their scaled-up business. And finally, the project connected women to national and regional markets, and more importantly possible governmental partnerships (Fennes Africa Solidar, 2007). The complemented structure of the “Training and Mentoring Program for Women-Led Business” project in building the competencies of its beneficiaries and enabling them to achieve their targets was very unique in comparison to the findings of the three projects of this study. Women’s perceptions of this study indicated that while ‘Neqdar Nesharek’ provided vocational training it lacked the seed money. On the other hand, young rural women interviewed publicized that ‘Idkhar’ provided seed money with only financial and management education, but lacked the entrepreneurial education. And finally, the very weak contribution shown in the analysis of the Community Schools’ beneficiaries indicated lack of motivation and

interest in expressing their opinions, which proves lack of curriculum life relation. All in all, the three projects showed that they were able to offer one kind of service, while neglecting other important complementary services that would have driven beneficiaries to desired improvements.

Second the “KALAHICIDSS” project, which worked on supporting local communities to design and implement new community-driven intervention projects. KALAHICIDSS project demonstrates social resilience from different perspectives than the “Training and Mentoring Program for Women-Led Business” project. First, KALAHICIDSS worked on integrating two projects that proved success in certain areas, and intertwined them to secure favorable outcomes for its beneficiaries. In contrast, Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar projects managerial boards missed this consideration. While the perspectives of the nine dual beneficiaries of both Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar projects revealed that their enrollment in both projects helped them much in securing for themselves a complete package of services that helped them to hit their targets (see section 4.2.2.), and projects were already working in common villages, the issue of integration was not managerially taken into account. And secondly, KALAHICIDSS gave heavy weight to stakeholders’ analysis, which in turn helped beneficiaries to meet most of their needs through services offered in this project. On the contrary, very few interviewees reported their involvement in a community or stakeholder analysis in both Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar projects. Nonetheless, the level of stakeholders’ fulfillment in terms of type of service offered, showed higher rates in Idkhar than Neqdar Nesharek, with no evidence whether this high level of satisfaction for Idkhar is based on a solid community assessment that was completed, or refers to a generic need of money in underprivileged communities. From the researcher’s point of view, this issue can be further examined by checking on Idkhar beneficiaries’ accomplishments made

by their savings. What the researcher believes in is that KALAH-CIDSS' project represents a real illustration of the definition of 'demand-driven projects', which is a proof by itself of the existence of high level of social resilience.

Third the "Ishraq" project which worked on providing a second chance for out-of-school girls. Ishraq had a different vision than the above two projects in building the competencies of its beneficiaries. Through serving young age range (13-15 years old) of rural women, Ishraq offered a comprehensive package of four main projects' components; literacy, life skills, sports and financial education. Using intersecting complementary diversified components enhanced Ishraq's beneficiaries with multiple levels of skills that enabled them to be socially and psychologically empowered. While as displayed in the literature, efficiency and sustainability were not evident in this project. Yet, analyzing efficiency from the perspective of the ability of applying a holistic approach, makes from Ishraq a successor of efficiency, as represented in young rural women's perspectives of the findings of this study. Comparing the structure of Ishraq to Idkhar, we would find that Idkhar's provision of competencies were only limited to administrative and financial aspects, with no technical components. As for Neqdar Nesharek, it worked on the opposite side of Idkhar, directing all the trainings towards the technical area, without paying attention to the logistics of deploying these technical competencies. Another aspect of Ishraq was building trust and social bonds. The literature proved that Ishraq exerted remarkable efforts in disseminating its findings, increasing the credibility of the implementing agency and helping build trust among community members. Despite the fact that Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar ended during the same year of this study, there were no evidence that either of the two projects spent effort on disseminating their achievements on the village level, a need that was identified in several interviewees' perspectives.

In the final analysis, the analysis of this section answers sub-question number two of this research; what are projects' components that make difference to young rural women? And what kind of adaptation needed by young rural women to the projects' purposes, policies, actions, activities, decisions or resource allocations? Young rural women's perceptions shed bold line on the importance of providing complementary components under any area of focus of each project, drawing clear milestones of improvement to beneficiaries and supporting them through till the end of the tunnel.

As for the kind of adaptations needed for current projects' purposes, policies, actions, activities, decisions or resource allocations, the focus of young rural women's perceptions poured in one bowl; the quick need of identifying and introducing any communities' opportunities from different lenses in an intersectional structure. Each lens should be addressing certain project's strength that when grouped together present a meaningful life-related opportunity for beneficiaries, making diverged opportunities meet together at a converged point that articulates specific outcomes.

At the same time, the findings of this theme partially contributed to answer the research sub-question number three; what is the needed contextual framework to implement a successful project? And what are the challenges they determine in the current settings? Young rural women's perspectives revealed that to implement a successful project, the contextual framework need to be inviting. That said, women highlighted the essentiality of considering other projects' achievements prior of deciding on a certain new project idea. Not just other projects' achievements, but other contextual considerations as well e.g. marketing possibilities, capital responsibilities...etc, before raising changing the beneficiaries' hope without paving the road for them to move forward. Eventually, the main challenge young rural women determined in the

current settings of the study's projects was the lack of coping, collaborating and communicating, which are the characters of social resilience.

### **5.3 Effectiveness**

The third theme is 'effectiveness'. As described in section 2.4 in page 30, effectiveness is, "a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives" (Chianca, 2008, p. 43). From the analysis, it was proved that the main arching objective of any development project is to build the capacity of the intervened communities, working with different groups and focusing on different areas of competence, to effect what is named in the literature by 'scaffolding'.

Scaffolding according to Qu et al. (1991) is to, "teach people how to teach" (as cited in Zhou, na, p. 8). The researcher here uses the word 'teach' in terms of beneficiaries' abilities to guide the community to greater competence across different domains, through; building trust, identifying gaps, probing into conceptions and transferring needed knowledge (Noddings, 1995). Heartedly, the finding under this theme yield to the reality that every person has an effect on the other, or scaffolds others, what differs is how this effect is shaped, directed and applied.

The findings of this study showed that effectiveness and sustainability were the higher in identifying new sub-themes, which indicates young rural women's high level of concern to these two themes. The effect of life skills component, intergenerational problem, parental education, role modeling and knowledge transfer conquered young rural women's apprehension. In due course, from the perceptions represented, the five sub-themes articulated different causes of attaining and/or missing the attainment of projects' goals, all of which are highly affected by scaffolding.

Both the “Youth Opportunities Program” (see section 2.2 in page 19) and the “GILO” project, (see section 2.3 in page 24) illustrated many aspects of the sub-themes discussed above. The main core aspect between these two projects and the findings is the causes and effects of projects’ structures on the attainment of each project’s objectives.

Despite the fact that the “Youth Opportunities Program” was not considered to be holistic, still it illustrated a very important factor of ‘scaffolding’. This project articulated the strength of the level of support that can be created between people, if only; they trusted each other and sensed the need of gaining each other’s added values. The “Youth Opportunities Program” was considered as a participatory development project because it opened the room for its beneficiaries to choose and help each other to select a project idea and draw the path of reaching it. The program did not provide any type of training or technical support. Yet, the program’s role was only limited to assessing the ideas and funding it if approved. That said, the planning phase was completed by beneficiaries, and they held its responsibility. In other wording, beneficiaries of the “Youth Opportunities Program” had nobody to blame but themselves if they failed in achieving their projects’ goals, and had no option of improving themselves other than exchanging experiences and scaffolding each other. Ultimately, the “Youth Opportunities Program” substituted the preparation phase of beneficiaries, and charged scaffolding the whole responsibility of qualifying beneficiaries to start their own projects.

While the structure of the “Youth Opportunities Program” was closer to Idkhar project’s structure, which relied on strengthening its beneficiaries with light administrative and financial education, and left the remaining needed skills to be acquainted through scaffolding, Neqdar Nesharek did the opposite and paid special attention to the life skills component. Comparing the perceptions of the Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar project, no major differences were found in

interviewee's perceptions of their capacities. From the findings of this study, the Neqdar Nesharek young rural women's perceptions showed high level of critical thinking, highly praised the effect of the life skills component on their characters, labeling themselves as a ready soil for achievement if the capital is provided. On the other hand, Idkhar's beneficiaries did not blame the project for not providing them with life skills training, which means they did not miss it; however, the blames were all focused on the vocational training.

From the above comparison the findings of this research reveals that beneficiaries can hardly detect their shortages and/or characters' deficiencies unless they are enrolled in a heavy detailed training, before than it is hard for them to discover that they are missing important aspects of change. This argument can be defended by section 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of the literature, where projects' implementers reached an evidenced-need of using the experiential learning method to support the development of self-motivated beneficiaries rather than obedient objects, through a trust-worthy mutual learning relation.

Turning our attention to the GILO project, the literature showed that it is a project that worked on enhancing schools' cultures through the involvement of all stakeholders (i.e. teachers, administrators, principals, and students) in developing its goals, while paying attention to build productive schools' cultures. In the researchers' opinion, GILO is one of the strongest projects that demonstrate the intersection of three sub-themes here; intergenerational problem, promoters as role models and knowledge transfer. As a matter of fact, the findings of this research came in agreement with GILO's program structure, which paid attention to the effect of the three elements mentioned in building harmony among the school culture. The majority of both Neqdar Nesharek's and Idkhar's young rural women agreed that the conflicting norms between old and young, literate and illiterate had impact on their social and academic achievements. In addition,

the gap of perceptions between young rural women from one side and CDAs' staff, male guardians from the other side regarding interviewees' abilities to transfer knowledge, indicate as well difference in perceptions of definitions of skills transfer. This difference proves on another note that norms, beliefs and thoughts of community members in intervened communities were not compatible among targeted groups of the projects of this study. The findings of this research also proved that lack of schools' goals hinders students' ability to improve their capacities and according hinders any possibilities of scaffolding or knowledge transfer, an issue that was illustrated in a unique case of the Community Schools' interviewee, who admitted her inability to transfer knowledge, referring clearly her status to the lack of quality education that includes the development of agreed upon goals and beliefs as discussed in the literature (see section 2.1). One could summarize this theme by saying that vulnerability can be reinforced by existing in a dynamic learning atmosphere and admitting the need of accelerating knowledge and exchanging experiences.

The thematic analysis of this section contributes to the answering of the research sub-questions number two; what are projects' components that make difference to young rural women? And what kind of adaptation needed by young rural women to the projects' purposes, policies, actions, activities, decisions or resource allocations? And question three, what is the needed contextual framework to implement a successful project? And what are the challenges they determine in the current settings? As illustrated from the Neqdar Nesharek women's perspectives, one of the important components for any project is the life skills component. Through this component, beneficiaries were easily able to identify their strengths and weaknesses, enhance their communication skills, develop their critical thinking skills, and become capable of facing different barriers. The kind of adaptation suggested by young rural



women in the three projects was adding more activities on narrowing the beliefs gaps, and increasing the acceptance of others' decisions and opinions. As for question three, harmony among community members was a contextual issue that found to be a cause of lot of challenges. Thus, as discussed in earlier themes, including wider spectrum of population in the project's mandate is expected by interviewees to narrow the social norms and open for beneficiaries new opportunities for positive engagement inside the community.

#### **5.4 Impact**

The fourth theme is 'impact'. The findings of this study exhibited great impact of the norms and beliefs of the intervened communities on the extent of any projects' success, same as the effectiveness section showed. In addition, the sub-themes extracted intersected with much of the relevancy, efficiency and effectiveness' analysis. Voices of young rural women drew the researcher's attention to the vicious cycle existing between the impact of projects' successions and the impact of inherited beliefs, unclear of which affects the other first. The majority of the interviewees agreed that development projects should be a cause for changing these inherited barriers. Nevertheless, more than half of young rural women's perceptions indicated a kind of 'Ideological debate' inside the intervened communities, where projects impact beneficiaries, but unfortunately leave them in dry atmosphere where they cannot flourish.

Ideological debate is defined by Skinner (1999) as a debate on, "definitions and uses of concepts" (as cited in Haapanen, 2011, p. 102). As argued by Yue & Changsong (2013), changing ideologies in the long run encompass two waves. On one side it increases youth's interest in globalization and multi-cultures and on the other side it gives better opportunities to change youth's understandings to achieve their personal goals in more suitable channels (Yue & Changsong, 2013). The Human Development Report indicated that on ground, ideological debate in most cases leads to

depression which is initially attributed to, “the vast difference in services and opportunities for youth in rural and urban areas” (UNDP, 2010, pp. 185-186).

Based on the above, it was intimidating to find that while the majority of young rural women's perceptions in the field work of this study showed that development projects participate in developing beneficiaries' ideology; yet, the same perceptions confirmed that projects of the study didn't address the wide spectrum of different social and economic concepts that are originally inherited into the intervened communities. In brief, marriage, norms and beliefs, lack of financial resources, and further areas (see section 4.4.) were determined as aspects that hinder young rural women's new intentions of being active members inside their societies.

A pessimistic view was the prevailing outlook of the greatest number of young rural women; beneficiaries, promoters and young mothers. Few young rural women interviewed had an optimistic vision. As illustrated in the represented opinions, a common cause of this view was identified by young rural women to be projects' prime focus on their objectives, neglecting the 'unintended outcomes' that might take place during and after implementation. In other words, the ideological debate created in intervention villages divulges deficiency in the strategic planning and management of these projects, an issue that indicates low quality of monitoring and evaluation systems used.

Findings of this theme can be best compared to the “Youth Opportunities Program” (see section 2.2 in page 19) and the “Ishraq” project (see section 2.3 in page 28). Full illustration of the two projects is presented in the following two paragraphs.

First, as discussed earlier the “Youth Opportunities Program” is an unconditional cash transfer program that offered groups of youth from both genders with funding opportunity to cover their preparation phase (e.g. training, transportation and material costs) for starting their

projects without the provision of any type of technical support. As set in the project's objectives, youth groups were asked to come up with creative ideas for their projects, develop a plan to be prepared for implementing their projects, and apply for needed funding to complete their necessary preparation steps. The project had nothing to do with the initial capital for starting-up developed proposals. In Blathman, Fiala & Martinez (2011) report, the structure of this project was defined to be, "at best a risky development strategy" (p. 2), which pull beneficiaries to a certain level of hope, while carrying high risk of suddenly dropping beneficiaries hopes down, since no considerations are taken to keep their momentum.

The case of the "Youth Opportunities Program" comes in alliance with the perceptions demonstrated in the field work of this study. Young rural women's perceptions of both Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar projects demonstrated that the ideological changes introduced to their characters were not meeting their hopes, and accordingly they were felt to some extent let down. Young rural women's perceptions referred this depression to lack of considerations in the project's design that were never even addressed as a negative result of the monitoring and evaluation tools used. In the "Youth Opportunities Program", Blathman, Fiala & Martinez (2011) mentioned that their beneficiaries' disappointment turned them to be aggressive because of "stress, adversity and frustrated ambitions, each of which may be accentuated by poverty, inequality, and economic marginalization" (p. 2), a result that the researcher may anticipate to reach if the study's projects remain working with static plans.

Another illustration of the consequences of ideological debate can be shown in the "Ishraq" project. While this project offered its beneficiaries with diversified complementary components to enhance their competencies, the project showed very high drop-out rates during implementation. From the literature, Ishraq provided no evidences that any special efforts were

exerted or special activities were designed to consider the consequential drawbacks of integrating their graduates into the mainstream education, a new setting that did not always offered suitable conditions for every beneficiary. The same case was repeated in Neqdar Nesharek project, in which young rural women's perceptions reveal that despite their vocational empowerment, neighbors, mother-in-laws, male guardians and in some cases husbands tied their desire to economically contribute to their communities. Same perceptions were displayed by Idkhar's young rural women.

An important finding of the field works of this research exposed the reality that a young rural woman's ideological debate can be treated through matching the new beneficiary's ideology with the interests of her surrounding community. As discussed in section 5.2, the secondary targeted groups of any project might sometimes feel the importance and relevance of the project more than the primary targeted group. In Neqdar Nesharek project, male guardians of a focus group discussion revealed their complete acceptance to young rural women's participation, as long as their participation has direct positive impact on male guardians' lives (i.e. financially contributing to their household expense). That said, if new young rural women's intersect with the needs and demands of their households, the existence of an ideological debate becomes nearly zero.

Another finding worth mentioning is that ideological debates are not necessarily limited to community members only, but it can be initiated from the inner implementers of the projects. A CDA interviewee in Idkhar's project mentioned his clear bias to male's education over female's education, justifying his opinion by the urgent need of communities to invest in males who by norms are more expected to return rewards to his family. The CDAs' staff considered the time factor and economic factors as clarifications to his opinion.

In conclusion, the findings make public understanding of the urgent need of integrating some sort of 'moral education' component into the projects' activities. Replicating China's experience in integrating a new strategic theme into their national plan (2010-2020) for medium and long term education reform and development to, "step up education about citizenship and establish socialist concepts of democracy, the rule of law, freedom, equality, equity and justice for the students, and turn them into qualified socialist citizens" (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 10).

Again, the thematic analysis of this theme contributed to question number two; what are projects' components that make a difference to young rural women? And what kind of adaptation needed by young rural women to the projects' purposes, policies, actions, activities, decisions or resource allocations? Findings of this section proved that a solid monitoring and evaluation system for each project is a must to secure a minimum level of project's success. Static strategic and management plans should be substituted by flexible action plans that reflect the on-going needs of accomplishing projects' indicators.

In addition, this section answers question three; what is the needed contextual framework to implement a successful project? And what are the challenges they determine in the current settings? Same finding of every theme, inclusion of all community members and engaging them with project's beneficiaries, and male guardians in joint projects' activities help the project leaves higher positive impact in the intervened community. In addition, full inclusion of community members participate in combating any type of violence and endorsing civic harmony and peace building inside the intervened communities.

### 5.5 Sustainability

Building on the above, it has to be admitted that analyzing this theme was the most difficult to analyze. Regardless of the fact that five important sub-themes were detected in the findings of this theme, they showed to be adding to what has previously been discussed. As a matter of fact, the core discovery of this section relies on the extent and level of existence of 'social cohesion' inside intervened communities.

As mentioned by Friedkin (2004), "a cohesive group is one in which there is a uniformly high positive level of individual membership attitudes and behaviors" (p. 414). Social cohesion is built on sustaining individuals' membership within a community, building long-lasting descent relation (Fearon, 1999) that provides a person the sense of responsibility towards a group (Kennedy & Nilson, 2008).

It was evident from the findings of the five sub-themes; volunteerism, partnerships, strengthened CDAs, dissemination and outreach, and implanted changes that social cohesion exists on the field level, yet the membership of this cohesion is subject to more than one aspect. That said, social cohesion's membership in some cases alters due to the gender aspect (e.g. partnerships' perspectives, see section 4.5.2), while in other cases the work status dominates (e.g. strengthened CDAs, see section 4.5.3.), and in fewer cases the intergenerational aspect dominates (e.g. volunteerism mechanism, see section 4.5.1). Yet, the willingness of cooperation between targeted groups exists.

Thus, it is controversial whether the existing social cohesion in the intervened communities is related to the metaphors of 'nation' which is the project's community, or of 'state' which is the village's community? This controversial issue drove the researcher to question herself about the extent to which these projects help beneficiaries to culturally assimilate, unfolding inquiries on the expected level of sustainability of any project.

In addition, given the fact that the analyzes of relevance called for social accountability, efficiency called for social resilience, effectiveness called for securing scaffolding, and impact called for resolving any ideological debates inside intervened communities indicates higher possibility of the existence of social cohesion on the nation level (i.e. project's communities) rather than the state level (i.e. villages' communities). As represented in the findings section, attaining common grounds of beliefs and agreed upon goals on the projects' level is easier than attaining the same grounds on the village's level, whereas, in most cases beneficiaries and promoters had the same beliefs.

What the researcher is trying to argue here is that, it is an acceptable fact to find each development project trying to build a healthier learning environment compared to what has already existed in the intervened communities prior to the implementation of the project. Yet, the findings of this research substantiated the lack of integrating projects' communities into the villages' communities. For instance, the volunteerism sub-theme was agreed upon by beneficiaries, promoters, CDAs' staff and mothers, while male guardians incubated different perspective (see section 4.5.1), illustrating an example of perspectives of project's members versus perspectives of community's members. To be sure, this area needs further research to determine whether these projects strengthen a new nation that is born with the project, or they work on strengthening the whole state and/or village?

More importantly, the level of culture assimilation is also questioned here. As argued by Ashraf & Galor (2007), culture assimilation is about, "standardizing sociocultural traits (e.g., norms, beliefs, ethics and codes of conduct) in society" (p. 2). Again, this refers us to the social accountability and resilience needs. In this section we are talking about not only developing long-term well-structured projects' goals, but as well cultural goals that would enhance

cohesiveness inside the villages' societies, not the projects' communities. Eventually, engaging members of underserved communities in developing well-structured projects' goals, as proved by Schunk (2012) turned to be a reason for enhancing members' desires to sustaining projects' attainments. Stimulating community members to increase their commitment was an issue that was also endorsed by Hammond, Austin, Orcutt and Rosso (2001) in section 2.1.1.

In brief, the findings of this research revealed that social cohesion and its main determinant the culture assimilation need to reach minimum level of existence inside intervened villages in order secure sustainability and make best use of all available intakes, while strengthening the outtakes.

In the final analysis, sustainability findings answer the research sub-question number four; what role young rural women intend to play to sustain the impact of such projects? And how can they act as role models inside their communities? Young rural women's perceptions in both Neqdar Nesharek and Idkhar proved beneficiaries and promoters' strong intention of sustaining their improved living conditions, and supporting others. An exemplification of these intentions was; volunteering the delivery of extra classes, suggesting ways of maintaining the existence of CDAs and disseminating results to grab the support of more leaders to the projects. Nevertheless, data proved that individual efforts that are scattered with no governing system can hardly achieve the desired level of sustainability. Thus, preparing young rural women to act as role models inside their communities should be treated as a top priority action plan for all further projects.



## 6 Conclusion

The idea of this research came out as a result of the researcher's fourteen years working experience in the area of development, working in both funding and research and implementing agencies. During her working years, the researcher was probed by these questions; how do the projects' beneficiaries perceive the impact and effect of development projects? And is there a gap between beneficiaries' perceptions and projects staff's perceptions as illustrated in projects' published reports?

The literature proved that over the past years young rural women's capacities to participate in the development processes of their communities have been faced with hurdles of unequal gender, socio-economic and power relations. In response to the urgent need of empowering young rural women and fostering their rights to live and participate, many development projects were designed and implemented to educate or train young rural women, build their capacities and prepare them to join the labor market and be active members inside their communities.

Nevertheless, while most projects tend to conduct impact assessments, community assessments and/or stakeholders' analysis, there is still dearth of data on literature about the perceptions of development projects' end users on the impact of such projects. Thus, the researcher's working experience with the poor young rural women in Upper Egypt governorates has inspired her with the idea of this research; "Young rural women's perspectives of the impact of educational supported development projects on their lives; Cases from Upper Egypt".

Despite the area of interest of any development project (e.g. literacy, health, entrepreneurial...etc), its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability are the aspects that drive any project to success. More importantly, the extent of contextualizing projects' designs is the key for opening room for affecting real changes on ground.

As such, this study was designed to critically examine the perspectives of young rural women in Upper Egypt governorates on the impact of the education supported development projects on their lives, and update the state of knowledge on the effect of development projects of specific areas such as; women empowerment, gender equity, civil society enhancement and the integration of social stratification in such underprivileged communities.

The main research question of this study was; what are the young rural women's perspectives on the impact of the education supported development projects implemented in Upper Egypt governorates on their lives? This main question included the following four sub-questions: 1. How do young rural women perceive the education supported development projects? And what are the factors that affect their perceptions? 2. What are projects' components that make a difference to young rural women? And what kind of adaptations required by young rural women to the projects' purposes, policies, actions, activities, decisions or resource allocations? 3. What is the needed contextual framework to implement a successful project? And what are the challenges they determine in the current settings? 4. What are the roles young rural women intend to play to sustain the impact of such projects? And how can they act as role models inside their communities?

Mixed research methods were used in this study, combining both qualitative and quantitative tools for data collection. Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with seven open-ended questions. Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire which encompassed twenty two closed ended questions.

The study drew its sample from three development projects; Population Council's project (Neqdar Nesharek), CARE's project (Idkhar) and Misr El-Kheir's project (Community Schools).

It must be noted that the evaluation of the overall quality and outcomes of the selected projects are beyond the scope and purpose of this research.

A purposive sample was used to select interviewees of the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for the qualitative data, while a snowball strategy was employed to select respondents of the quantitative data. The sample included hundred and one interviewees for the qualitative data and one hundred and fifty six respondents for the quantitative survey.

Main findings of this research study revealed the urgent need of placing the following changes inside the intervened communities; establishing social accountability, building social resilience, effecting scaffolding, resolving ideological debates and integrating projects' social cohesion inside the intervened communities.

The findings of this research enriched the literature with new development project components, if implemented would serve young rural women's necessities. The study also determined essential modifications required for the current development projects' designs and policies, and addressed women's projected needs that would enhance their economic, social and cultural contribution inside their societies. Essentially, this research has introduced to the literature ways of preparing and deploying community members to adapt to the new intervened changes.

In brief, the study revealed the emergent need of applying the 'change management' which call for deploying the projects' tools to support community members with smooth transition of, "adoption and realization of change" (Creasey, 2007, p. 3). In other words, this study proved that priority for improving the outcomes of any project should be given to changing the 'community members and stakeholders' first through stimulating and supporting their desire

and ability of effecting change, followed by the change of the 'activities and tools' of the project itself to best suits community members' needs (Creasey, 2007) & (McCarthy & Eastman, 2010).

## **7 Recommendations and lessons learned**

This section offers recommendations and lessons learned for educators, policy makers and practitioners who are concerned with education support development projects directed to young rural women in Egypt and other countries with similar contexts. Recommendations and lessons learned hereunder are divided into three sections; theory, policy and practice.

### **7.1 Theory recommendations and lessons learned**

Establishing an atmosphere of social accountability, social resilience and social cohesion inside the intervened communities turned out to be a must for the success of any project. Affecting the scaffolding role inside intervened communities secure applied supportive environment. More importantly, to support beneficiaries to integrate smoothly into the community, resolving any ideological debates for projects' beneficiaries should be an obligation for each project.

### **7.2 Policy recommendations and lessons learned**

Setting strategic and management plan for the development projects should be based on prioritized areas determined through community or stakeholder's analysis. In addition, developing constructive cooperation policy between institutions working in the same area is a must, considering possibilities of collaboration to set open hub for development and drive projects' beneficiaries to the maximum benefit. More importantly, the research role should be maximized to ensure the existence of young rural women's policies that are demand-driven with key aspects that are relevant to young rural women's lives. In brief, developing new strategies that inspire young rural women to share their innovations suggested reforms with the

governmental and non-governmental institutions could be a new channel to develop a joint venture strategy that directs all efforts into one direction.

### **7.3 Practice recommendations and lessons learned**

Strengthening the development projects' managerial capacity with young rural women's involvement and inviting them in projects' policy formulation process will help greatly in developing demand-driven projects. Accepting new cultural intakes resulting from globalization and encouraging young rural women to integrate valuable intakes into the community would help introduce new norms and beliefs into the community and pave the way for affecting changes. Developing attractive moral education curricula that strengthen young rural women's perceptions to their roles and embedding wider spectrum of values that match the new thinking directions and promoting young rural women's critical thinking would be an asset to any project.

In addition, re-directing the programs' budgets towards the inclusion of all community members, rather than specifying one segment e.g. women, would help significantly in creating supportive atmosphere for any project and shorten the accomplishment of outcomes. Organizing awareness campaigns for the non-profit organizations, corporate sectors and governmental bodies to develop mutual programs that intersect with the interests of all sectors and raise possible collaborations would definitely increase possibilities of the provision of holistic programs. Promoting young rural women's mingling among projects would broaden their knowledge and enhance their skills. Finally, documenting the activities, challenges and changes of any project's planning and implementation phases in a concise friendly user document, and making it available for other institutions working in the same field would better serve the development market, opening room for each organization to start from where others ended.

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### **Appendix no. 1: The qualitative guide**

The semi-structured qualitative interview guide will include the following:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I assist Ms. Ola Hosny in her research entitled “Young rural women’s perspectives on the impact of education supported development projects on their lives: Cases from Upper Egypt governorates”.

You are being asked to participate in this research study. The purpose of the research is to examine the young rural women’ perspectives on the impact of the education supported development projects on their lives, with a focus on five main characteristics of development projects: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Findings of the study should support development projects to better serve underprivileged communities in Upper Egypt governorates in the areas of women empowerment, entrepreneurship and equity and access to education and others.

The findings may be published, presented, or both.

The expected duration of your participation is around 90 minutes.

As a qualitative research, data will be collected through conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with women aged 18-29 years old, promoters, community development associations (CDAs) project staff, parents and community/religious leaders in each village. Data will then be analyzed and recommendations will be raised.

I need you honest, neutral, and I promise you not to let anybody know about anything you are going to say, as it is kept confidential.

Do you agree that we sit together for a while? Is everything clear, or do you need to ask me anything before we start?

If agree, please sign this “Informed Consent” so we can start.

1. What are the goals of the project you are currently enrolled in?
  - a. Do you believe they stand on grounded need?
  - b. Which goal, in your opinion, is the most needed by you?

- c. If you have the chance of adding additional goals, what would those be?
  - d. How and in which area have the goals of the project you are enrolled in strengthened you?
2. In your opinion, does the design of the project respond to your community's needs?  
Please give examples.
  - a. Have you ever been asked about your opinion in the design of the project?
  - b. What changes would you suggest to the design in terms of duration, location, project' components, management style?
  - c. Which factor of the project do you believe is the most beneficial to you? e.g. duration, location, project' components, management style
3. What type of resources i.e. technical support, or tangible tools needed for achieving the project planned goals? Were they made available for you?
  - a. Do you believe the venues of the project's classes are suitable?
  - b. What kind of tools e.g. machines, savings, stationairy...etc have you needed in this project? Were they made available to you?
  - c. Does your family take any incentives for letting you participating in this project? e.g. transportation, food, participation incentives, If yes, do you believe it helped?
  - d. Did you ever need the support of your teacher outside the class? If yes, why? Did she meet your expectations?
  - e. What kind of incentives do you think would help you achieve your maximum benefit from this project?
4. What are the added values for you from joining this project? And which components affected the change of your values?
  - a. What are the main things you have learned from your teachers?

- b. Would you dream of being a project staff or a teacher in a development project? If yes, what has inspired this dream? If no, what kept you from making this dream?
  - c. Would you like to share what you learned in this project with people who were not part of the project? If yes, what type of information would you share? If no, why not?
  - d. What are your outcome expectations from this project? What is the percentage you have achieved till now?
  - e. Do you find any difficulties in dealing with your society? If yes, what kind of difficulties? How you deal with it?
  - f. If you plan to do your own project, what would be the important things you have to think of?
5. Do you think that the project will succeed in changing parents' and community leader's thought on the importance of girls' education and work? Please give examples
- a. Are you facing any difficulties with your parents to join the class?
  - b. On your way to the class, do you face any harassment or any kind of other obstacles?
  - c. Do you think your parents would let you join other projects in the future?
  - d. Have you ever been able to convince any of your friends/neighbors to join the program?
  - e. Do you think your family/friends/neighbors have changed their perception to you after joining the program? In what sense?
  - f. Would you like your siblings to join the program? Why?
  - g. In the future, if you like to work, what would be your parents' reaction?

- h. What would prevent any girl from getting educated or employed?
  - i. Who convinced you to join the project?
6. Communities are always in need for skilled calibers that can help improve their lives' opportunities; To what extent do you believe that the program will succeed in presenting skilled calibers to your community?
- a. How would you make use of what you learned in this project?
  - b. Do you believe you can better represent your community now?
  - c. If you are asked now to suggest new areas of improvement for your community, what would they be?
  - d. If you plan to be employed, do you think this project will help you get better job opportunities? If yes, how?
  - e. Would you like to open your own business? If yes, in which area?
  - f. If you decided to open your own business, would you think of engaging your project's peers? If yes, why?
7. After the termination of the project, do you think your community members will be willing and interested to fund and manage the project by themselves to make use of what you and your peers achieved in this project?
- a. Would you think of trying to keep the project classes on-going? If yes, how would you do that?
  - b. Would you think of partnering with your peers to make any changes to your community? If yes, how?
  - c. How would you think of the status of this project after the funding ends?

- d. Would you exert any kind of effort to build on what you learned? What kind of support would you need from your community? Do you think they will support you?

**Appendix no. 2: The quantitative questionnaire**

<b>Personal Information:</b>	
Name:	
Age:	
Gender:	
Village:	
Governorate:	
Tel. number:	
Name of interviewer:	
<b>Educational background</b>	
1. Are you currently attending or have ever attended school/literacy classes?	Yes (-----), No (-----)
2. If yes, what did you attend and how long did you attend it?	School (-----), Literacy classes (-----) Duration (-----)
3. Can you read and write?	Yes (-----), No (-----) Reading Yes (-----), No (-----) Writing
4. What is the highest education degree you acquired?	Primary----- ---1 Preparatory----- ---2 General secondary----- ----3 Vocational secondary----- ----4 Technical institute----- ----5 University/higher institute----- ----6 Above university----- ----7 Other (specify )----- ----8 Does not know----- ----9
<b>Perceptions on development projects</b>	
5. Have any of your relatives been enrolled in any development project?	Yes (-----), No (-----)
6. Do you think development projects respond to the community needs?	Yes (-----), No (-----)
7. Have you ever been a participant in any community assessment survey?	Yes (-----), No (-----)
8. Do you believe in development projects?	Yes (-----), No (-----)
9. If yes, what is your expected outcome from development projects: Note: interviewee may check more than one option	Generate income----- --20 Get educated----- --21 Start my own business----- ---22 Exposure----- ---23

	Contribute to well-being of the society---24 Learn specific skill----- ----25 Waste time----- ---26 Other (specify )----- ----8
10. Do you believe development projects positively affect your communities?	Yes (----), No (----)
11. If yes, in what areas?	Literacy----- --10 SMEs----- ---11 Vocational training----- ---12 Public Awareness----- ---13 Civic participation----- ---14 Employability----- ---15 Migration----- ---16 Problem Solving----- ---17 Marriage and family formation----- ---18 Gender equity----- ---19 Other (specify )----- ----8
12. In your opinion, is there a difference between the roles boys can play and the roles girls can play inside the community?	Yes (----), No (----)
13. In your opinion, what is the minimum level of education girls should attain?	Primary----- ----1 Preparatory----- ----2 General secondary----- ----3 Vocational secondary----- ----4 Technical institute----- ----5 University/higher institute----- ----6 Above university----- ----7 Depends on his/her ability-----



	--30 Depends on his/her desire----- --31 Depends on his/her financial means--- --32 To become literate----- --33 Other (specify )----- ----8 Does not know----- ----9
14. In your opinion, what is the minimum level of education boys should attain?	Primary----- ----1 Preparatory----- ----2 General secondary----- ----3 Vocational secondary----- ----4 Technical institute----- ----5 University/higher institute----- ----6 Above university----- ----7 Depends on his/her ability----- --30 Depends on his/her desire----- --31 Depends on his/her financial means--- --32 To become literate----- --33 Other (specify )----- ----8 Does not know----- ----9
15. Do you believe girls should stay at home?	Yes (----), No (----)
16. Do you believe girls should work?	Yes (----), No (----)
17. Which is more suitable to girls, should they open their own business, or be employed?	Open their own business----- ---40 Be employed----- ---41 Others (specify )----- ----8
18. Would you allow your daughter/sister/wife to work?	Yes (----), No (----)
19. Do you think girls graduated from development projects are better equipped with needed skills to work or open their own business?	Yes (----), No (----)
20. Do you think girls can help their guardians' in covering	Yes (----), No (----)

family expenses?	
21. Do you think after any project ends, it leaves certain impact inside the communities?	Yes (-----), No (-----)
22. Do you believe this impact is positive or negative?	Positive (-----), Negative (-----)
23. If you have the opportunity of working for a development project, would you accept?	Yes (-----), No (-----)

## Appendix no. 3: Distribution of sample

NOTES:  *NN= Neqdar Nesharek **CS= Community Schools		Distribution by project only				Distribution by project and village										Total Sample								
		Sohag			Qena	Sohag (7 villages)											Qena (3 villages)							
		Idkhar	NN*	CS**	NN	Total sample	Idkhar			*NN			**CS		NN									
						Needah	Sawamaa	h Shara	Abou	Awad	Abou	Awad	Yehia Al-	Nagaa Al-	Deer	Ezbet	Radwan	Jehinah	Awlad	Amr	Farshout	Koum Al-	Dabaa	
<b>Qualitative survey</b>																								
IDI	Young rural women project's beneficiaries (currently enrolled in the study's projects)	9	9	4	9	31	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	31						
	Young rural women projects' promoters/facilitators	6	6	2	6	20	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	20						
	Community development associations' project staff	3	2	0	3	8	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	8						
	Beneficiaries' mothers	3	3	2	3	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11						
FGD	Fathers	3	3	1	3	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	10						
	Community leaders	3	3	2	3	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11						
	Religious leaders	3	3	1	3	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	10						
<b>Quantitative survey</b>																								
Quest.	Non-projects young rural women aged 18 - 29 years old	1	1				4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	37						
	Male youth aged 18 - 29 years old	1	1				4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	37						
	Women over 45 years old	2	2	4	9	37	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	37						
	Men over 45 years old	1	1				4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	37						
		2	2	4	9	37	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	37						

## IRB Approval

CASE #2013-2014-016



To: Ola Hosny  
Cc: Dena Riad  
From: Atta Gebril, Chair of the IRB  
Date: Oct 24, 2013  
Re: Approval of study

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This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled "Rural women's perspectives of the impact of education supported development projects on their lives: Case studies of Qena and Sohag Upper Egypt governorates," and determined that it required consultation with the IRB under the "expedited" heading. As you are aware, the members of the IRB suggested certain revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. The revised proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor, Dr. Amr Salama. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Atta Gebril".

Dr. Atta Gebril  
IRB chair, The American University in Cairo  
2046 HUSS Building  
T: 02-26151919  
Email: [agebril@aucegypt.edu](mailto:agebril@aucegypt.edu)

A logo consisting of a yellow square on the left and a dark blue rectangle on the right.

Institutional Review Board  
The American University in Cairo  
AUC Avenue, P.O. Box 74  
New Cairo 11835, Egypt.  
tel 20.2.2615.1000  
fax 20.2.27957565  
Email: [aucirb@aucegypt.edu](mailto:aucirb@aucegypt.edu)

## CAPMAS Approval

جمهورية مصر العربية



الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء

قرار رئيس الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء  
بالتفويض

رقم (١٤٢٥) لسنة ٢٠١٣

في شأن قيام الباحثة / علا حسين حسني محمد حسني - المسجلة لدرجة الماجستير - بكلية الدراسات العليا في التربية والتعليم - الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - بإجراء دراسة ميدانية بعنوان (رؤية السيدات الريفيات عن مدي فاعلية المشروعات التنموية الخاصة علي حياتهن - حالات دراسية من محافظات صعيد مصر).

رئيس الجهاز

- بعد الإطلاع على القرار الجمهوري رقم (٢٩١٥) لسنة ١٩٦٤ بشأن إنشاء وتنظيم الجهاز.
- وعلى قرار رئيس الجهاز رقم (٢٣١) لسنة ١٩٦٨ في شأن إجراء الإحصاءات والتعدادات والاستفتاءات والاستقصاءات.
- وعلى قرار رئيس الجهاز رقم (١٣١٤) لسنة ٢٠٠٧ بشأن التفويض في بعض الاختصاصات.
- وبعد الإطلاع على مذكرة العرض على رئيس الجهاز وموافقة سيادته علي ما ورد بها.
- وعلى كتاب الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - الوارد للجهاز في ٢١/١١/٢٠١٣.

قــــــــــــرر

- مادة ١: تقوم الباحثة/ علا حسين حسني محمد حسني - المسجلة لدرجة الماجستير - بكلية الدراسات العليا في التربية والتعليم - الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - بإجراء الدراسة الميدانية المشار اليها عالية.
- مادة ٢: تجري الدراسة علي عينة حجمها (٤٢) اثنان واربعون مفردة من السيدات الريفيات موزعة بقري محافظات (سوهاج - قنا - الفيوم - اسيوط) كالاتي :
- ٢٤ سيدة من المستفيدات من المشروعات التنموية الخاصة بالتعلم.
  - ١٢ سيدة من الرائدات الريفيات العاملات بالمشروعات التنموية الخاصة بالتعلم.
  - ٦ سيدات من اهالي المستفيدات من المشروعات التنموية الخاصة بالتعلم.
- مادة ٣: تجمع البيانات اللازمة لهذه الدراسة طبقا للاستمارة المعدة لهذا الغرض والمعتمدة من الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء وعدد صفحاتها (صفحة واحدة).
- مادة ٤: يراعى موافقة مفردات العينة - مع مراعاة سرية البيانات الفردية طبقا لاحكام القانون وعدم استخدام البيانات التي يتم جمعها لأغراض أخرى غير أغراض هذه الدراسة.
- مادة ٥: يجري العمل الميداني خلال ثمانية اشهر من تاريخ صدور هذا القرار.
- مادة ٦: يوافي الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء بنسخة من النتائج النهائية لهذه الدراسة.
- مادة ٧: يقوم بجمع البيانات اللازمة لهذه الدراسة باحثين مصريين فقط.
- مادة ٨: تلتزم الباحثة/ علا حسين حسني محمد حسني - بإبلاغ مديريات الأمن بالمحافظات الموضحة عاليه بصورة من هذا القرار وقبل البدء في التنفيذ من قفاها بيانات القانمين بالدراسة ( الاسم - الرقم القومي - تاريخ بدء وانتهاء تنفيذ الدراسة بكل محافظة).
- مادة ٨: ينفذ هذا القرار من تاريخ صدوره.

صدر في: ٢٠١٣ / ١١ / ٢٥

٧١٥٥  
٢٠١٣  
أحمد عطية محمد  
مدير عام الإدارة العامة للأمن

