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alyamahdi@aucegypt.edu

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**The American University in Cairo**

**School of Global Affairs and Public Policy**

**NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY OF SERVING DISPLACED COMMUNITIES:  
A STUDY OF YEMENI COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN EGYPT**

**A Thesis Submitted to the**

**Public Policy and Administration Department**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Public Administration**

**By**

**Alya Mohammed Al-Mahdi**

**Fall 2023**

## **Dedication**

My mother has always been my most incredible support system. Her presence in my life has given me the strength and stability to pursue my dreams. She has been my rock and my inspiration, and I am grateful for her unwavering love and guidance.

&

My Yemeni community in Egypt, despite the challenges and hardships they have faced since the war, they continue to strive and live with resilience and determination. I am proud to be a part of this community and honored to dedicate my thesis to them.

## Acknowledgments

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I am expressing my sincere gratitude to the remarkable professors Dr. Ghada Barsum, Dr. Daila Wahdan, and Dr. Rana Hendi. Their dedication to fostering knowledge and growth during my master's journey has inspired me constantly. From my academic pursuits to this moment of pride as I present my thesis, their unwavering support has played a pivotal role in my educational path.

This academic journey has been transformative in more ways than one. The experiences gained throughout this endeavor have transcended the realm of academia, offering life lessons that have enriched my personal growth. Through their dedication and mentorship, these professors have contributed to my academic growth and instilled in me the aspiration to make a meaningful impact as a future educator.

As I reflect on the knowledge imparted by these distinguished educators, I am motivated by the possibility of following in their footsteps and one day contributing to the academic community as a professor. With deep gratitude, I carry forward the lessons learned and the guidance received, embracing the mission of nurturing future generations of scholars.

I am also thankful to the participants who generously shared their time and experiences, making this research possible. Their willingness to contribute has enriched the depth and relevance of this study. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to the institutions, organizations, and resources that provided valuable information and resources to support my research.

I am indebted to my family and friends for their continuous encouragement and understanding during this project. Their unwavering belief in me has been a constant source of motivation.

Once again, my heartfelt appreciation goes to these remarkable individuals who have shaped my journey. Their belief in my potential and commitment to my growth has left an indelible mark on my academic and personal trajectory.

***Alya Mohammed Al-Mahdi***

## **Abstract**

Forced displacement is a global crisis that poses significant challenges for nations like Egypt, which has historically hosted refugees since the 1950s. Despite international NGO support, escalating displaced individuals have overwhelmed existing capacities. Refugee Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) have emerged as a natural response from the communities themselves to bridge the gap between the state and NGOs and the refugee community. However, CBOs in Egypt face challenges that impact their operation and continuity. Through qualitative research, this study aims to explore the experience of the Yemeni CBOs working with the displaced communities. Through in-depth interviews with seven people from six CBOs conducted through field visits and online calls, this research uncovers the dynamics of Yemeni CBOs within Egypt's humanitarian community. It also explores their role in providing awareness, support, and the necessary assistance and bridging the gap between the state, NGOs, and the displaced community. The findings reveal that Yemeni Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) emerged in response to the influx of Yemeni refugees to Egypt in 2015, driven by the challenges faced by the Yemeni community. These organizations play a crucial role in raising awareness, facilitating integration, and providing support, especially during the pandemic when access to traditional relief agencies was limited. However, despite their essential functions, Yemeni CBOs encounter significant challenges, including the complexities of legal registration, which lead to financial constraints, administrative and operational challenges, and tensions with both the host and displaced communities while showcasing their adaptability and resilience strategies. These insights concluded with actionable recommendations aimed at key stakeholders, including the Egyptian government, UNHCR, other NGOs providing services, and the Yemeni

CBOs and community. The study calls for tailored policies that recognize the crucial role of CBOs, fostering collaboration and providing avenues for capacity-building. It emphasizes the potential of cross-collaboration and underscores the importance of community-driven initiatives. By shedding light on these findings and offering specific recommendations, this study contributes to the broader discourse on effective community-driven strategies and interventions that ensure the recent participatory approach called by the UNHCR.

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## **List of Acronyms**

CAPMAS - Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics

CARE - Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere

CBA - Community-Based Approach

CBO - Community-Based Organization

CCB - Community Capacity Building

COVID-19- Coronavirus Disease 2019

CRS - Catholic Relief Services

CSO - Civil Society Organization

EFRR - Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights

ERC - Egyptian Red Crescent

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

GoE - Government of Egypt

ICDL -International Computer Driving License

ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross

IDP - Internally Displaced People

INGOs - International Non-Governmental Organizations

IO - International Organization

IOM - International Organization for Migration

MSF - Médecins Sans Frontières

MFA- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MoU- Memorandum of understanding

MoSS- Ministry of Social Solidarity

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

NCCM - National Council on Childhood and Motherhood

NCPD - National Council on Population and Development

OAU - Organization for African Unity

POs - Partner Organizations

PSTIC - Psycho-social services and Training Institute in Cairo

RCO - Refugee Community Organization

RLO - Refugee-Led Organization

RSD - Refugee Status Determination

StARS - Saint Andrew Refugee Services

TDH - Terre des Hommes

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

WFP - World Food Programme

WHO - World Health Organization

# **Chapter One: Background and Context of the Study**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The phenomenon of forced displacement has become an increasingly significant global challenge, affecting millions worldwide. The UNHCR estimates that by 2023, 117.2 million people will be forcibly displaced, and in 2022, estimated there are 35.3 million refugees worldwide. As a result, many countries, including Egypt, have been hosting migrants and refugees for years. Since the 50s, Egypt has accommodated refugees and asylum seekers fleeing wars, conflicts, and persecution in their home countries. Compared to other African and world governments, Egypt is unique in not forcing asylum seekers and refugees to live in special camps (Huser, 2014). On 07 August 2022, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) disclosed that the total number of international migrants in Egypt was 9,012,582 migrants, constituting approximately 8.6% of the 105 million current population in Egypt (CAPMAS, 2023). Considering the current civil war in Sudan, this number has likely increased since then. The number of refugees in Egypt has significantly strained the already-overburdened public infrastructure, mainly designed to serve the country's citizens. Moreover, Refugees' day-to-day lives have been affected by substantial political and economic changes after President Sisi assumed the presidency in 2013. In addition to the prejudice shown in xenophobic outbursts against various refugee communities (Grabska, 2006), their access to jobs, livelihood opportunities, education, and healthcare is constrained. Therefore, Refugees in Egypt are in a precarious position, with few opportunities for integration due to the country's climate.

In the realm of human mobility, it's crucial to differentiate between various categories. According to the UNHCR, migrants are individuals who move voluntarily, driven by various

motives such as economic opportunities or family reunions, with aspirations ranging from temporary residence to long-term settlement. Refugees are people who flee their home countries due to war, violence, conflict, or persecution, seeking safety in another nation. Asylum seekers are refugees whose sanctuary requests are pending processing. Displaced people encompass those forced from their homes by factors like conflicts or natural disasters, with some remaining within their own countries (internally displaced persons) and others crossing borders (refugees, and asylum-seekers). It's important to note that the Yemeni community, which is the focus of this study, comprises a diverse mix of these categories. Consequently, throughout this research, these terms may be used interchangeably to reflect the multifaceted nature of the Yemeni community's migratory experiences and legal statuses. Understanding these distinctions is vital for addressing the diverse needs of people on the move while upholding humanitarian principles and human rights.

The Yemeni population in Egypt has witnessed significant growth since the outbreak of the civil war in Yemen in 2015. The growth of the Yemeni population created a greater demand for support, services, and integration initiatives for Yemeni individuals and families in Egypt. In response to these challenges and integration dilemmas, international non-governmental Organizations have been providing services and assistance to refugees in Egypt since the 50s (UNHCR, 2020). However, The presence of refugees has grown more visible over time as their physical existence in the country has expanded. With the increasing number of displaced people in the country from various nationalities, the needs of these migrants and refugees exceed the NGOs' logistical and institutional capacities.

As a result, national and international NGOs have needed help keeping up with the demands of serving and accessing such a large population in expanded locations in the country.

Furthermore, factors such as bureaucratic hurdles, limited resources, and legal restrictions have hindered the ability of NGOs to reach refugees in need effectively. This situation has underscored the need for more concerted efforts to link refugees to the NGOs working with them in Egypt. Thus, Refugee CBOs have emerged as a promising solution to bridge this gap between NGOs and refugees.

Research in Western countries has shown that community-based organizations (CBOs) can serve multiple functions. Apart from providing crucial services and assistance, they can play a vital role in reinstating a sense of community and belonging and creating a secure and empowering environment that can help individuals and communities regain their confidence (Hopkins, 2006). Additionally, CBOs have the potential to serve as centers for local grassroots action and resistance against marginalization, as well as alternative platforms for community support and networking that operate outside the mainstream humanitarian system (Erel, 2016).

In Egypt, Refugees' CBOs have played a significant role in connecting the community with international NGOs and the government of Egypt (GoE). Refugees have initiated these organizations, which understand their communities' unique challenges and needs. CBOs can help refugees access much-needed services and support by building social networks and advocating for their communities. They can also serve as a valuable resource for NGOs, providing insights into the local conditions and helping to create more effective and sustainable solutions. However, despite their potential, CBOs face their own challenges, including limited resources, difficulties in navigating legal systems, and the need to balance competing demands from their community and external stakeholders.

The challenges and opportunities of refugee CBOs are a relatively under-researched topic amounting to only a few studies (Griffiths et al., 2006; Hegazy, 2023; Huser, 2014; Pincock et

al., 2020; Sahin-Mencutek). There are even fewer studies of refugee CBOs' operation, and the difficulties they encounter in areas with a significant number of urban refugees (Huser, 2014; Grabska, 2006). The recognition of the vital role CBOs play in refugee communities has revitalized a wide academic effort to study them, especially in Egypt. This, in turn, has encouraged researchers to study the living realities and difficulties they face in delivering the services that can improve the lives of refugees. Although the role of CBOs is essential, it still needs to be improved due to the structural, legal, and social challenges.

These efforts have resulted in recent studies on Somali (Hegazy, 2023), Eritrean (Huser, 2014), Syrian (Rosenberg, 2016), and Iraqi CBOs (Minnick, 2010), among others. However, there is a shortage of studies on Yemeni CBOs in Egypt that serve mainly the Yemeni refugee community, especially considering their peculiar situation in Egypt as displaced people who are rarely recognized as refugees under the 1951 refugee convention, which applies to every nationality except them. "During the last meeting with the UNHCR and the RSD department staff, we were told that Yemenis in Egypt are unlikely to get RSD, like refugees of other nationalities. They did not stipulate any reason to explain why Yemeni refugees in Egypt are denied resettlement" (Al-Absi, 2022). Highlighting a great injustice to their rights as refugees to receive Refugee Status Determination interviews and be resettled in a third safe country

Through qualitative research methods, including interviews, participant observation, and brief analysis of the laws governing CBOs as mandated and enforced by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the overall objective is to explore the experience of Yemeni CBOs working with the displaced community in Egypt. The aim is to shed light on Yemeni CBOs' roles, challenges, and opportunities they encounter in their work assisting their communities and the strategies they adopt to address these challenges.

### **1.1.1 Research Problem**

Previous studies on CBOs in Egypt have found that most CBOs struggle with securing funding, obtaining licensing, managing and retaining their employees, and internal conflicts (Grabska, 2006; Hegazy, 2023; Huser, 2014; Rosenberg, 2016). These challenges seem to be uniform across CBOs of different nationalities.

This thesis seeks to examine the challenges faced by Yemeni Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) which are run by Yemeni in Egypt and identify any distinctive obstacles they encounter. It aims to contribute to the existing body of research on the challenges of community-led organizations in Egypt, with a particular focus on Yemeni CBOs in Egypt. As a result, it provides valuable information to NGOs, which it can use to better engage and collaborate with Yemeni CBOs in an effort to bring the Community-Based Approach (CBA) approach into reality.

### **1.1.2 Research questions**

The thesis aims to answer one critical question: what are the challenges and opportunities of Yemeni Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in Cairo in regard to serving their Yemeni community and operating in Egypt?

*Research sub-questions:*

- What are the common characteristics and attributes of Yemeni CBOs in Egypt?
- What role do Yemeni CBOs play in the Yemeni community, and how do they contribute to the well-being of Yemeni refugees and migrants in Cairo?
- What are the main challenges Yemeni CBOs encounter in Cairo, and how do they navigate and overcome them?



- What are the existing opportunities and collaborations that Yemeni CBOs can seize better to position themselves as first-responder in the Yemeni community?

The study constitutes a timely and relevant contribution to the discourse on sustainable community-based protection that has been recently promoted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2008), particularly because the traditional model of the giver-receiver to refugees in camps has become obsolete, given the growing number of urban refugees. More importantly, the study sheds light on the crucial role of community-based initiatives, highlighting the need to move away from overemphasizing the role of the state and UNHCR in determining the lives of hypothesis refugees.

Furthermore, it contributes to the growing literature on the intersection of public sector management, refugees' community-based organizations, and refugee studies. The findings of this research inform policy and practice, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian responses and promote the well-being of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Egypt.

### **1.1.3 Thesis Overview**

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction of the research and an overview of Egypt as a host country for many displaced individuals, including migrants and refugees. It also explores Egypt's policies and laws regarding refugees and CBOs and provides information about refugees' challenges in Egypt and the efforts of the UNHCR and other service providers to meet their needs. In addition to a review of the Yemeni community in Egypt in terms of demographic, numbers, and characteristics.

The second chapter delves into the attributes, roles, challenges, and opportunities of CBOs in Egypt as was reported by other researchers. It also seeks to define CBO and the different names that are used to refer to it across different studies. This chapter serves as an

important foundation upon which the Yemeni CBOs' challenges and roles are assessed, compared, and evaluated.

The third chapter includes the conceptual frameworks employed to investigate the internal and external factors that affect CBOs' operations. The idea of CBOs as mediators between refugee communities and other stakeholders highlights the ongoing discussion about acknowledging and engaging with them.

The fourth chapter, research design, goes over the research approach, the CBOs samples included in the study and the reasoning behind selecting them, as well as the approach used to identify eligible target samples. It also explains the interview process and how the interview outcomes were recorded and grouped to ensure quality and present cognate findings.

The fifth Chapter represents the findings of the study collected through in-depth interviews. It is used to form the hypothesis about Yemeni CBOs' challenges and how they relate to challenges faced by other CBOs. The analysis and discussion chapter also provides insight into the role of the Yemeni CBOs and their characteristics, such as establishment year, location, and legal status, providing context to the social, legal, and economic challenges of Yemeni CBOs.

The final chapter, chapter six, concludes the thesis and presents several recommendations to all stakeholders of the Yemeni CBOs, including the Egyptian government, the UNHCR, service providers, Yemeni CBOs, and to the Yemeni community. By doing so, the thesis aims to tackle all aspects of the issue and acknowledge that all stakeholders, including CBO themselves and their own community, are contributing to these challenges and how each party can play a part in mitigating these issues.

## 1.2 Egypt as a host country

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is known for having the largest migration and refugee movements worldwide (IOM, 2016). Egypt has been hosting migrants and refugees from different nationalities throughout the years. Migration flows into Egypt have consisted mainly of mixed populations forced to flee their countries of origin for several reasons, seeking asylum. Political conflicts, religious persecution, protracted instability, national threats and violence, and livelihood insecurity across the Horn of Africa, Sudan, and some of the Middle Eastern countries have been at the root of migration dynamics toward Egypt in the past decades.

The earliest refugee movements, dating back to the first half of the 20th century, primarily consisted of Armenians escaping the 1915 Ottoman massacre, Palestinians fleeing the 1948 war, and Sudanese seeking refuge after the second Sudanese civil war in 1983. Subsequently, the number of refugees arriving in Egypt increased due to conflicts in the Horn of Africa region, resulting in a significant increase in the number of refugees from Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia, with most opting to head toward Cairo. Since 2019, Egypt has seen a significant increase in the flow of migrants from neighboring countries, including Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Ethiopia, Iraq, and Yemen, due to the instability in those nations (IOM, 2022).

As of March 2023, 291,578 refugees and asylum-seekers from 60 countries of origin were registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR Egypt, 50 percent being Syrian nationals, followed by Sudanese, South Sudanese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Yemeni, and Somali nationals (UNHCR, 2023). In her research “Surviving in Cairo as a closed-file refugee: socio-economic and protection challenges,” Abdel Aziz argued that the numbers reported by UNHCR do not precisely reflect the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt (Abdel Aziz, 2017). Egypt's refugee and asylum seekers communities are mainly concentrated in the big

cities. As reported by UNHCR Egypt in February 2013, most of the refugees live in Greater Cairo (226,393), Alexandria (25,006), Damietta (9,594), and some villages along the North Coast.

Although Egypt's government maintains a generally favorable tone when discussing migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (Sisi, 2016) and has often treated them as fully integrated members of Egyptian society, the high population density strains the country's resources, making it difficult for them to access services such as education and healthcare (IOM, 2022). Moreover, IOM estimates that between 1.1 and 1.3 million of Egypt's foreign migrants fall under the category of "vulnerable" or "persons of concern" and hence often need assistance. With deteriorated currency devaluation, Egypt's difficult economic circumstances have significantly exacerbated the vulnerability of refugees and host citizens in recent years (UNHCR, 2023).

A significant challenge for refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt is the lack of legal policies. The country's legal policies for refugees and migrants are often unclear and subject to frequent changes, leaving many individuals in legal limbo. This situation makes it difficult for refugees and migrants to access legal support and services, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The GoE has stated its intention to establish a domestic asylum legislative framework for 2019, and the UNHCR is providing assistance in developing a draft of asylum legislation law (UNHCR, 2023).

Many refugees and asylum seekers are also subject to discrimination and harassment because they are often seen as a burden on society. This negative perception can lead to difficulty finding housing, assuring other necessities, and significant economic challenges. Many of them struggle to find employment, and when they do, they are often paid low wages and work in poor conditions. As a result, many refugees and migrants in Egypt live in poverty and struggle to

maintain living expenses for themselves and their families. Furthermore, refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt are often subjected to arbitrary detention, forced deportation, and violence, making it difficult for them to integrate into society and rebuild their lives. Overall, refugees and migrants in Egypt face a range of challenges that make it difficult for them to access fundamental rights and live a dignified life.

Refugees' access to rights in Egypt, which is technically granted to them through the 1951 Refugee Convention and its subsequent 1967 Protocol, has to be viewed in the context of the local conditions of Egypt. As a host society, Egypt has several problems that prevent it from completely integrating refugees into its society, as stated in many instances in interviews with Egyptian government officials. The UNDP Human Development Index categorizes Egypt as a lower-middle-income country. It was ranked in number 95 out of 184 countries in 2021, scoring below countries such as Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon (UNDP 2021).

Firstly, in terms of access to education, Egypt struggles with overpopulation and high illiteracy rates (EHDR 2004: 26). Ingraham (2005) states that the population is expected to double by 2030 since 37% of the population is under 15 (UNFPA 2002:1). The educational system in Egypt is overburdened as a result of population growth and high birth rates (currently standing at 102 million Egyptian nationals). Furthermore, the UNDP estimated Egypt's illiteracy rate stood at 69 percent in 2002, and adults' illiteracy was estimated at around 44 percent (UNDP 2004:3). The enrollment into primary and secondary education level was approximately 85 percent (EHDR 2004). The Secretary General of the National Council on Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) stressed that the difficulties in providing primary education for refugees must be discerned in view of the main challenges the Egyptian government encounters in providing quality primary education for Egyptian children. She asserts that in light of this

situation, refugees are not discriminated against in regard to their access to education but face the same challenges other Egyptians do (Grabska, 2006).

Secondly, refugees have limited access to work because the government limits foreigners' right to work to protect its domestic labor force (Grabska, 2006). Grabska (2006) continues that it is the result of the high unemployment rate in Egypt, estimated at 20 percent (EHDR 2004), wherein most Egyptians are either unemployed or underemployed, and even those with higher education cannot find any jobs except in the informal sector. Further exacerbating the situation, 500,000-700,000 new employees enter the job market each year.

As a result of the government amendment to refugees' right to work, they are required to obtain a work permit as any other foreigner in the country; that is, they are subject to law No. 137 of 1981. The Under-Secretary for Employment at the Ministry of Manpower, as interviewed by Grabska in her paper titled "Who Asked Them Anyway? Rights, Policies, and Wellbeing of Refugees in Egypt," verified that under Egyptian Labor Law, refugees are considered foreigners. Moreover, The Egyptian government officials she interviewed view refugees as uneducated, illiterate, and unskilled who compete with poor Egyptians for low-paying informal jobs because they are unskilled and lack proper qualifications for formal jobs (2006). This argument explains why the UNHCR and the government of Egypt were not able to agree on lifting the reservation on the right to work for refugees, as both were approaching the issue from different angles. UNHCR stressed refugees' right to work, whereas the government's right to work did not include working in the formal job market, and refugees already work in the informal market. This issue is at the heart of the economic condition in Egypt, where from an estimated 20 million labor force, 13 million work in agriculture or government agencies. About 80 percent of the remaining

population works in the informal sector. Meaning there is a large job market that can be accessed without any legal authorization.

Thirdly, in regard to the right to healthcare, refugees were treated as foreigners until the representatives of the Sudanese Women's Union and the National Council on Population and Development (NCPD) met with the director of the integrated medical care unit at the Ministry of Health and requested for refugees to be included in the national health care services. After persistent lobbying from the National Council on Childhood and Motherhood and the UNHCR, the Minister of Health eventually issued a new regulation in February 2005 allowing foreigners access to public primary and preventive healthcare services. Migrants would pay domestic fees for the services, the same as Egyptians (Grabska, 2006).

In general, refugees are often offered three durable solutions to their displacement once their urgent needs are met, and they are resettlement to a safe third country, local integration to eventually become a naturalized citizen in the host country, or voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity. However, the second durable option of local integration of refugees in the host country is not acknowledged as a viable option in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1954, indicating that the Egyptian government deems refugees' residence as short-term and hence permanently residing in Egypt is not an admissible solution for refugees. An employee from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that granting refugees citizenship is not an option because Egypt already suffers from overpopulation (Grabska, 2006). The central policy of the government is to offer refugees temporary residence permits while they await resettlement or repatriation.

Overall, the challenges faced by migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Egypt are complex and multifaceted. Therefore, the plight of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt has

attracted the attention of various international and national organizations and CBOs. In recent years, several NGOs and CBOs have been established in Egypt to provide support and services to refugees and asylum-seekers. These organizations have developed programs focusing on various issues, including education, vocational training, health care, and legal assistance. Additionally, they have collaborated with international organizations and the GoE to raise awareness about refugees and asylum-seekers and advocate for their rights. The work of these organizations has been instrumental in improving the lives of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt, filling the gap left by the limited resources and services available to them.

### **1.3 Refugee service providers**

The Egyptian government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNHCR in 1954, which explains the responsibilities and functions of UNHCR and the relationships between them. In this document, Egypt assigned UNHCR the responsibility of carrying out the refugee registration, census, RSD, resettlement process, voluntary repatriation, and projects that serve refugees, which are authorized by the Egyptian state. The role of the Egyptian government is limited to issuing travel documents and residence visas and sanctioning the work of implementing and operational NGO partners that serve refugees. Thus, the Egyptian government modified its agreement to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1969 Organization for African Union Convention (OAU), and the 1967 Protocol (UNHCR, 2020). Moreover, a permanent committee for refugees was created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs department for migration refugee affairs and combating human trafficking following a presidential decree (Hetaba et al., 2020; Badawy, 2010). An asylum law has been in the works for years but has not



been enforced yet, which jeopardizes refugees' rights, such as their access to work (Hetaba et al., 2020).

The Egyptian government relinquishing most of its obligations toward refugees and asylum seekers to the UNHCR Highlights a general disinterest of the Egyptian government in engaging with refugees (Al-Sharmani, 2014). Without the national structures to support the refugees, they can only turn to UNHCR, International Organizations (IO), NGOs, or national charities for aid. However, UNHCR does not provide services to refugees directly except in the areas mentioned above. It provides most of its support and assistance to refugee communities through its implementing partners, which it directly funds, namely, Care Egypt, Save the Children, Caritas Egypt, United Lawyers, Terre des Hommes (TDH), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights (EFRR), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Refuge Egypt, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Psycho-social services and Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC). As well as other partner UN organizations such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). These implementing partners provide services to refugees in various areas, including legal aid, gender-based violence, protection, health, livelihood, mental health and psychosocial support, basic needs, and education. Operational partners, which are organizations that do not receive funding from the UNHCR, also play a major role in providing services to refugees, such as Plan International, Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC), Saint Andrew Refugee Services (StARS), and Don Bosco. Therefore, within this structure, the UNHCR is the main organization that determines refugee status at the request and on behalf of the Egyptian government and provides funding to many NGOs, which then provide services on behalf of the UNHCR to refugees. Other parties,

such as UNHCR operational partners, embassies, and international charities and donors, can also fund NGOs.

The repercussions of a mass refugee influx include “strains on economic resources and physical infrastructure, security risks, and threats to government authority”(Jacobsen 1996). The government response includes inaction, positive response, or negative response, which is influenced by the institution responsible for refugees, international relations, the capacity of the host community to accommodate refugees economically and socially, and national security concerns (Jacobsen 1996). UNHCR's main role is to advocate for fair refugee policy to the host country's government. However, when UNHCR is responsible for the execution of RSD, it cannot be a neutral monitor of itself. Furthermore, UNHCR conducting the refugee process drains resources from other important protection work, such as advocating for host countries to become signatories of and implement the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol (Minnick, 2010).

In an attempt to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of UNHCR partner organizations in providing assistance and services to refugee communities, the UNHCR introduced the community-based approach. The community-based approach (CBA) is based on the 2001 “Community Development Policy” and the tenets of the rights-based approach. This policy viewed refugees as active partners by employing their capabilities in the development of their communities and moving away from the predominant traditional giver-receiver humanitarian model. It recognizes that refugee communities can be better protected and served when they are acknowledged as partners in creating strategies for refugees' protection and decision-making processes throughout all stages of the program cycle. This CBA approach

should include all UN agencies and their implementing NGOs. It also states that the goals, duties, and obligations of the UNHCR should be clear and that it must aim to build a foundation of understanding and mutual trust with refugee communities. The UNHCR has an implementation manual for the CBA, which is divided into several steps, namely: identifying and mapping CBOs by UNHCR and its POs, working in Partnership with the Community, maintaining Two-way Channels of Communication with the Community, Capacity Building, and Monitoring and Evaluation. All of these steps are effectively implemented by integrating refugee CBOs into the UNHCR network of service providers (UNHCR, 2008).

Operating in Egypt has its own challenges for organizations working with refugees and asylum-seekers. Egypt's political, economic, and regulatory context presents obstacles that can affect the operations of NGOs and CBOs likewise. The GoE maintains strict control over civil society organizations and imposes restrictions on their activities, particularly those that operate in sensitive areas such as human rights. This regulatory environment can make it difficult for organizations to secure the necessary permits and approvals to operate in Egypt, and their activities are subject to government scrutiny and oversight (Minnick, 2010).

The economic challenges in Egypt also present a significant obstacle for NGOs and CBOs working with refugees and asylum-seekers. The high population density and limited resources of the country place a strain on the availability of services and resources for both refugees and the general population. The economic downturn in recent years (TWB, 2021) has exacerbated this problem, with the country's high poverty and unemployment rates (Grabska, 2006). Hence, NGOs and CBOs must navigate this difficult economic climate to secure funding and resources to support their programs and services. Furthermore, organizations working with

refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt must navigate a complex legal landscape. The legal framework governing the rights and protections of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt is unclear and subject to frequent changes, leaving many individuals in legal limbo. This situation can affect the operations of organizations that provide legal assistance and support, as the regulatory environment can be challenging to navigate.

Despite these challenges, NGOs and CBOs have continued to operate in Egypt, providing essential services and support to refugees and asylum-seekers. They have adapted their programs to address the changing needs of these vulnerable populations, working with local communities and government entities to improve access to essential services such as healthcare and education. Through advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, they have also sought to improve the legal and regulatory environment for refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt. The work of these organizations is crucial in addressing the complex challenges faced by refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt, and their efforts are essential in filling the gaps left by the limited resources and services available to them (UNHCR, 2022).

As of May 2023, the UNHCR has received \$13.2M in total, of which 7 million in earmarked funding from its major donors. Earmarked funding is funding allocated to a specific country without limitations, and it includes funding allocated for an emergency response such as a response to refugee influx to Egypt due to civil war in a country in the MENA or African region (UNHCR, 2023). Thus, most funding goes towards providing services to displaced people due to war crises, such as the Syrian community in 2011 and the Sudanese community in 2023. Since the UNHCR Egypt office receives limited funding and most of it often goes towards

emergency response, many refugee communities end up without much support or funding, which consequently affects the funding their CBOs receive.

## **1.4 Legal Framework Available for (CBOs) in Egypt**

### **1.4.1 Egypt NGOs Law**

The current legislation governing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Egypt is Law No. 149 of 2019, known as the Law on Regulating the Exercise of Civil Work, along with its Executive Regulations outlined in Egyptian Prime Minister Decree No. 104 of 2021. This law replaced Law No. 70 of 2017, commonly referred to as The NGO Law, which received significant criticism for its restrictive nature, and the State has generally been repressive towards CSOs (Mirshak, 2019). Although the 2019 Law came into effect with recognition of the vital role played by CSOs (Al-Ahram, 2021), it has also faced criticism for perpetuating existing restrictions (HRW, 2019). The Ministry responsible for overseeing NGOs is the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). Upon the promulgation of the Executive Regulations on January 11, 2021, the Law mandated that all CSOs align their status with the provisions of the new law within one year from the implementation of the Executive Regulations, which ended on January 11, 2022 (Government of Egypt, 2021, 2.2).

This requirement applies to new organizations and those already registered, necessitating compliance with the new law. The deadline was extended to January 11, 2023, coinciding with the Egyptian President's announcement of 2022 as the Year of Civil Society (MoSS, 2022). The law also established the Central Unit of Civil Society Associations and Work, along with its sub-units, replacing the Central Directorate of Associations and Unions, which is responsible for matters pertaining to civil society (Government of Egypt, 2019, 6.76). These entities monitor all

NGOs and enforce the law and its executive regulations. Non-compliance, such as failure to legalize the organization's status or receiving funds or donations without proper legal approval, carries penalties ranging from a minimum of 100,000 EGP to a maximum of 1,000,000 EGP. Furthermore, the Law grants the competent court the authority to order the dissolution of an organization (Government of Egypt, 2019, 1.2).

The Law does not explicitly address organizations founded and led by refugees, as it does not reference such entities, creating ambiguity regarding the legal framework applicable to CBOs. In its definitions section, Article (1) of the Law categorizes 11 types of entities involved in civil work. While Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) could seemingly fall under the category of "Foreign Non-Governmental Organization," a closer examination of the Executive Regulations reveals that CBOs operating in Greater Cairo do not fit this classification. This is because CBOs lack a "mother" or main organization abroad, which is a requirement for this category.

The "Foreign Non-Governmental Organization" is defined as follows in the Law on Regulating Civil Society Work:

"Any non-profit seeking foreign corporate person the head office of which is located in Egypt or abroad and is permitted to practice one or more of the activities of civil society associations and foundations that are in accordance with the rules stipulated in the hereto attached law and subject to its provisions." (Law on Regulating Civil Society Work, Part I, Article 1)

Another potential category is "Community Associations." Article (6) of the Law states that the Minister of the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) has the authority to grant permission for a "foreign community" to establish a Community Association, subject to the principles of reciprocity and the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). However, the regulations specify that only one association is allowed for each foreign community, focusing solely on the affairs of its members rather than the entire community. Additionally, at least fifty members must apply for association membership, adhering to all the conditions and procedures stipulated in the law and its executive regulations. Consequently, non-Egyptian CBOs are left with only one option for registration, which is through the pathway designated for Egyptian Civil Society Associations.

#### **1.4.2 CBOs under the Egyptian Civil Society Associations Law**

According to Article (2) of the Law, civil society organizations can be established by submitting a notification to the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) using the specified forms and documents outlined in the Law and its Executive Regulations. However, the organization is not legally recognized unless all the required information and documents are fully provided. The notification must accompany various documents, including proof of payment of a 2,000 EGP registration fee, evidence of legal residence for non-Egyptians, and the organization's statute (Government of Egypt, 2021, 1.14). MoSS has a period of 60 working days to raise objections if the organization's objectives or activities are found to violate the constitution, criminal law, or any other applicable law or if the required information or documents are incomplete or insufficient (Government of Egypt, 2019, 1.9).

Article (3) of the Law outlines certain requirements that the organization's written statute must fulfill. These include having a distinctive name that reflects its purpose and does not cause confusion with the name of another organization with a similar scope of work or geographical focus (Government of Egypt, 2019, 1.7). Additionally, the names, nationalities, places of residence, and national identification or passport numbers of the founders (in the case of non-Egyptians) must be provided.

Article (5) of the Law is the only provision that addresses the presence of non-Egyptians on the organization's board of directors or as members. However, it clearly states that the number of non-Egyptians cannot exceed 25% of the total membership or board of directors. Non-Egyptians must also hold a permanent or temporary legal residence in Egypt. Article (16) of the Executive Regulations states that the approval for including non-Egyptians in the organization's membership is granted within 60 days of receiving the request, following a review of the individuals' names and data by the relevant authorities. Furthermore, the membership of non-Egyptians expires when their legal residence permit expires.

Additionally, Article (72) of the law prohibits Egyptian organizations from hiring non-Egyptian experts, permanent or temporary workers, or volunteers without obtaining the Minister's approval. The approval is obtained by submitting a request to the Unit at least 60 days prior to recruiting the non-Egyptian individual. Those recruited are subject to the labor laws governing the recruitment of foreign workers in Egypt (Government of Egypt, 2021, 6.113).

The Law requires organizations, upon approval of their establishment, to work in the fields of social development as defined in their statutes while considering the State's development plans and the community's needs when implementing their activities (Government of Egypt, 2021, 2.27). Moreover, organizations are prohibited from engaging in activities that



would disrupt public order, morals, national unity, or security or performing any activity that requires a license from a government agency without obtaining the necessary approval (Government of Egypt, 2019, 2.15).

According to Article (10) of the Law, once the organization is established, the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) will send a letter to a bank regulated by the Egyptian Central Bank, instructing them to open a bank account in the organization's name. Only bank accounts opened through MoSS can be used to receive funds or carry out transactions related to the organization's work. Furthermore, the organization is not allowed to accept an amount of money exceeding 500 EGP in cash without a bank check or deposit from one of the banks regulated by the Egyptian Central Bank.

Article (41) of the Executive Regulations states that any funds or donations, whether from Egyptian or non-Egyptian individuals or entities, can be received on the condition that they are transferred through the organization's bank accounts and that the Unit is notified within 30 working days of receiving the funds (Government of Egypt, 2021, 2.42). However, the Unit has the right to object to the receipt of funds within 60 working days of receiving the notification. If the Unit does not object within 60 days, the funds are considered approved. This means that the funds cannot be spent until the 60-day period has passed unless the ministry issues an approval or rejection before that. In the case of an objection, the organization must contact the bank to return the money to the donor and provide evidence of the refund within five working days of receiving the Unit's decision (Hegazy, 2023).

## **1.5 Background of The Yemeni Community in Egypt**

Egypt has historically had significant ties with Yemen, resulting in a sizable Yemeni community in Cairo. Yemen and Egypt have a long history of close ties dating back to ancient times when Yemen was part of the Arab peninsula, leading the Red Sea trade route with Egypt. Egypt and Yemen have had strong political relations, especially after the Yemeni revolution of 1962, which was supported by former Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, and these ties were further strengthened during the era of the late President Hosni Mubarak, as Egypt provided significant military and logistical support to Yemen during the Yemeni revolution of 1962 and the subsequent North Yemen Civil War (Orkaby , 2015).

During the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of Yemeni students were sent to Egypt to study at its universities, creating even stronger cultural and educational ties between the two countries. In addition, the approved schooling curriculum in Yemen was Egyptian until the 1980s, and many Yemenis have been taught by Egyptians who previously worked in Yemeni schools (Al-Absi, 2020). The factors mentioned above may provide plausible justifications for the substantial presence of Yemeni nationals in Egypt before the escalation of the Yemeni conflict in 2015 and contribute to their decision to flee to Egypt during the conflict.

Yemen was one of the first Arab countries whose citizens demanded a regime change due to the Arab Spring, following Tunisia and Egypt in 2011 (Juneau, 2014). Since then, the country has had an internal conflict, resulting in the start of the Coalition-led civil war in March 2015. Over seven years of violence have resulted in a devastating economic and humanitarian disaster and displaced millions of Yemenis. Most Yemenis are internally displaced people (IDPs), amounting to 4.5 million IDPs as of March 2022 (UNHCR, 2022). Yemenis who seek safety

abroad most typically move to Arab nations such as Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, and Djibouti, as well as Malaysia.

The Yemeni population in Egypt has witnessed significant growth since the outbreak of the conflict in Yemen in 2015. According to the Yemeni embassy in Cairo, the estimated number of Yemenis residing in Egypt before the conflict was around 70,000 (Al-Absi, 2020). However, this number has remarkably increased, with estimates between 500,000 and 700,000 (Al-Absi, 2020). Additionally, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that Yemenis represent approximately 1 million individuals within Egypt (IOM, 2022), which represent 11% of the migrant population in the country (Hassan, 2022). Furthermore, for aid, legal, and protection purposes, 7,671 Yemeni asylum-seekers have registered with UNHCR Egypt as of January 2023. The growth in the Yemen population, as highlighted, created a greater demand for support, services, and integration initiatives for Yemeni individuals and families in Egypt.

Some individuals indirectly suggested that Arab states are reluctant to acknowledge Yemenis as refugees due to the implications it would have on recognizing Yemen as a war-torn country and potentially implicating the Arab Coalition in their suffering (Al-absi, 2022). While it is challenging to provide concrete evidence for these claims, they appear to reflect a widely held perception. Consequently, Yemenis are not recognized as refugees according to the 1951 Refugee Convention and are therefore not eligible for resettlement in a third safe country. However, Yemenis are allowed to register as asylum seekers, which allows them to apply for a residence permit (UNHCR, 2013).

Yemenis residing in Egypt represent a diverse group of individuals originating from various regions within Yemen, encompassing different social classes and cultural backgrounds. While they can all be considered displaced people, their circumstances in Egypt are influenced

by their socioeconomic backgrounds in Yemen. Al-absi (2022), states that many Yemeni live in Egypt on a tourist visa and are not registered as refugees or asylum seekers because they want to be able to go home. Also that only the poorest Yemenis register with the UNHCR. Consequently, from her findings and my understanding of the Yemeni community, a classification based on their socioeconomic status can be established. Nonetheless, this classification requires further study to verify and quantify the number of each category among the Yemeni community

The first category consists of affluent individuals in Yemen who have chosen to relocate to Egypt. They own properties and maintain a comfortable lifestyle, primarily comprising business people and former government officials. These individuals have the financial means to access private services, including healthcare and education, for themselves and their families. Despite being classified as displaced, their legal status in Egypt is often categorized as tourists and, therefore, are issued a six-month residency visa, the default duration period for all non-citizens. This category could be characterized as tourists or migrants.

The second category comprises individuals from the middle class in Yemen who have migrated to Egypt in search of better work and educational opportunities to ensure their survival. While they can partially support themselves through improved employment prospects and the availability of public services, they face financial challenges in accessing private services and often encounter difficulties in accessing public services. Like the first category, these individuals are also considered displaced and are issued the same tourist residency permit. However, as their financial situation worsens over time, they may eventually fall into the third category, requiring external financial assistance due to the hardships of finding work and the financial restrictions associated with their residency permit.

The third category encompasses individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in Yemen who have sought refuge in Egypt, hoping to find a safer and more stable environment. Struggling to sustain themselves, they register with the UNHCR, anticipating financial aid (Al-Absi, 2020), housing, and other essential services similar to those provided in other countries. However, this group often finds themselves particularly vulnerable (Al-Absi, 2020), unable to access public services, and not receiving the anticipated level of assistance from the UNHCR. These individuals represent the minority among the Yemeni community constituting only 1% (7,671) out of the estimated 700,000 Yemenis residing in Egypt (Al-absi, 2020).

In the view of a significant number of Yemeni individuals, Egypt represents a country of transit, where the majority of individuals arrive without the intention of settling down. Such individuals tend to be under the impression that their journey to Europe can begin shortly after they arrive in Egypt (Al-Absi, 2020), based on various misleading news and information sources, or seek to accumulate financial resources to afford a highly expensive and risky trip to Europe. Contrary to their expectations, however, many of these individuals end up remaining in Egypt for a prolonged period of time, often spanning several years or even decades, before attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea if given the opportunity to do so. Those who did not originally intend to leave Egypt tend to remain in the country, clinging to the hope of returning to Yemen at some point when the war and the conflicts end.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

In the past half-century, the world has experienced an unprecedented rise in economic growth and social progress, resulting in a sevenfold increase in the world economy and greater access to healthcare, clean water, and sanitation (Seipel, 2003). Despite these advancements, social and economic inequalities continue to persist, afflicting individuals in both developed and developing nations with hunger, disease, environmental degradation, and limited political representation (Midgley, 1996b). These issues represent a significant failure of past development paradigms, including centralized state planning and free-market initiatives. In response to these shortcomings, “NGOs often substitute for the state in the provision of basic social services (immunization, health care, basic education, clean water, etc.)” specially in poor countries (Baccaro, 2001)

According to Daubon (2002), participatory development emphasizes the investment in people's abilities to bring about change, ultimately promoting sustainable development. This approach aims to empower individuals to organize and influence change based on their access to financial, social, and natural resources, in addition to the existing knowledge and the political processes (Slocum & Thomas-Slayter, 1995; Chambers, 1995). According to Boglio Martínez (2008), the focus of empowerment efforts is often directed toward groups or communities, which explains the popularity of community-based approaches in participatory development, which has revitalized the conventional community development model as a fundamental aspect of international development efforts.

NGOs have played an instrumental role in advancing the principles of participatory development, particularly in community organizing and economic development (Arrosi et al.,

1994; Chambers, 1995). NGOs have long been involved in development work, providing essential social services such as healthcare, education, and humanitarian aid. However, in the last few decades, a select group of NGOs has expanded their focus to include initiatives that cultivate underserved communities' financial and human resources (Boglio Martínez, 2008). This approach underscores the importance of long-term partnerships with communities, promoting decision-making and leadership at the grassroots level that contributed to the evolution of community support as a distinctive and growing field of community-based practice.

## **2.1 Defining CBOs**

Generally, scholars agree on the main elements constituting a refugee community-based organization. Nonetheless, there is a general disagreement on the term used to refer to them, and many are used interchangeably. In the social work and social science literature, there are several alternative terms to describe CBOs, such as “grassroots,” “bridging,” “facilitator,” “self-reliance promoting,” “support,” and “development NGO” (Boglio Martínez, 2008, Brown & Kalegaonkar, 2002; Fisher, 1998; Lee, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2001; World Bank, 2006).

Refugee community organizations (RCO) are defined as organizations that are formed and managed by refugees who share similar nationality, ethnicity, and culture (Tomlinson & Egan 2002). Mencutek (2000) uses the term RCO to refer to formal and informal Syrian organizations such as forums, community centers, associations, and cultural houses and centers (2021). Along the same lines, Zetter and Pearl define RCO as organizations formed by refugees and asylum seekers in their respective national or ethnic communities that they serve. Refugee-led organizations (RLO) is a term used to refer to formal or informal organizations established by refugees (Easton-Calabria, 2016; Betts et al., 2020).

CBO is another most commonly used term. CBOs are defined as organizations that are directed by members of the same community it serves, wherein the management team is accountable to its community, and the community, in turn, shares the benefits and cost of operating and establishing the organizations (Boglio Martinez, 2008). Boglio Martinez (2008), in his analysis, characterizes Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) as associations based on membership, serving as a vehicle for advancing the specific interests of groups or communities, where members share risks and costs and collectively partake in the potential advantages of social change efforts, and the organization's leadership is responsible to its constituents. In her study, Huser argued that CBOs are typically initiated and guided by individuals who experience a particular challenge, share a mutual interest, and may or may not reside within the exact geographic location where the issue manifests (2014). Despite efforts to define and characterize Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), it is not a straightforward task beyond a certain point. This is mainly due to the fluid nature and diverse forms that CBOs can assume (Lentin & Moreo, 2012), in addition to the different ranges in needs and demands for these CBOs.

Regardless of the term used to refer to refugee organizations, the common theme among them all is that they are organizations established and led by members of the same community it serves and in the case of this study, refugees who serve a specific refugee community. CBOs address the issues refugees face in regard to lack of access to basic needs and resources in urban settings, which compels them to form their own organizations (Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018). Even Though, in retrospect, these organizations have limited avenues to improve the lives of their communities since refugee communities, in general, have difficulties accessing the job market, competing with locals on available jobs and experiencing discrimination. Moreover, the increase in the number of CBOs can be attributed to the limited services the UNHCR and its



implementing and operational partners provide to refugees. As well as services provided by international NGOs. However, it is argued that these CBOs exist even in refugee camps where IO assistance is easily accessible (Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018). CBOs (Pincock et al., 2021). Another researcher attributes it to the same reason mentioned above, in addition to the extended stay of refugees in Egypt and the scarcity of resettlement opportunities for refugees (Grabska, 2006).

The major reason for the spread of CBOs in Egypt, according to Grabska (2006), is that the UNHCR Egypt office adopted a community-based approach to confront refugee issues and through which it has started providing funding for CBOs. A view that Pascucci shares as well, noting that they have arisen because the community-based approach adopted by the UNHCR is a formal recognition of their value and provides ample opportunities for their funding (2017).

This paper employs the term CBOs to accentuate a key trait of organizations that have emerged as leaders in the prevailing participatory development framework and their connection with community activism. By emphasizing this aspect, the terminology aims to elucidate the unique nature of these organizations and their integral involvement in the mobilization efforts at the community level that drive participatory development initiatives. Building on this, the CBOs are defined as an entity established by an individual or group of individuals, starting as an initiative and evolving into a structured organization in the long-term to connect a specific community who share some aspects and provide the needed assistance to the most vulnerable ones of them. The common elements vary between attributes such as nationality, race, gender, language, challenges, concerns, or misery; the targeted community mostly shares one or more of them.

As Piacentini (2012) notes, reducing CBOs to fixed entities overlooks the dynamic internal processes that occur within these organizations. Moreover, the context in which CBOs emerge plays a crucial role in their development and shape. While CBOs can be driven by endogenous desires and interests, it is also essential to acknowledge the potential exogenous influences that may impact their trajectory and outlook (Huser, 2014). Hence, it is necessary to consider various external factors, including the environment where CBOs operate and the relationships that CBOs maintain with different state and non-state actors. These issues will be explored in greater detail below.

## **2.2 Attributes of CBOs in Egypt**

The CBOs in Egypt share some general characteristics, such as that the majority of their offices are situated in rented apartments in residential buildings, and the office furniture and office setup are often simple: just some chairs, desks, whiteboard, computers, and a printer (Huser, 2014).

Another common characteristic is their motivation for the establishment of the community organization, which mainly focuses on advocating, spreading information, educating, and improving the livelihood of their beneficiaries. The Somali community center office in Hadayek Al-Maadi and SAFWAC wanted to create a place where women could meet and exchange news and advice on daily life in Cairo as well as receive language and handicraft classes to improve their livelihood (Huser, 2014; Rosenberg, 2016). As for Eritrean CBOs, their main goal was to improve access to information about NGOs, the registration process, and other resources. Some focus on providing services for vulnerable groups of refugees, such as unaccompanied minors, the elderly, women, and single mothers. Few of these Eritrean CBOs

were created to prepare refugees for their country of resettlement (Hegazy, 2023). Syrian CBOs, on the other hand, established their CBOs in Egypt for various reasons. One was established to create a new social network or family for Syrian refugees because they have been separated from their families since Egypt has no option for family reunions. Others were created to prepare Syrian children to lead the country when the war ends or view CBOs as an opportunity to show the Syrian community by example how democracy works by including democratic principles into the organization, in addition to providing its beneficiaries with skills that can generate income such as handicrafts (Rosenberg, 2016)

Due to the limited funding CBOs receive, they also have relatively small permanent staff and rely on volunteers. The Somali CBOs interviewed in the Huser study had between 5-11 management members, while the rest of the staff were volunteers (2014). A common theme among Syrian and Eritrean refugees as well (Rosenberg, 2016; Hegazy, 2023).

### **2.3 CBOs' Role in Serving Displacement Communities**

CBOs play a vital role in the lives of the communities they serve by providing a wide range of services such as the capacity building of youth, providing necessities such as food, housing, psychological support, and clothes, in addition to education and business grants (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002; Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018; Easton-Calabria, 2016). In their study, Easton-Calabria & Pincock discovered that contrary to common belief, refugees prefer to seek assistance from their networks, such as their community organizations, rather than NGOs and service providers, which subscribe to the benefactor-beneficiaries model of aid common in

humanitarian organizations (2018). In the same vein, Hopkins asserts that CBOs provide a refuge for refugees where they can rebuild their fortitude, feel confident, and assist in building their communities (2006). Below, the important roles that CBOs play in their community are briefly discussed.

### **2.3.1 Integration with the host community**

Refugees, often accused of causing inflation during economic recessions, face harsh realities in Egypt. Brown et al. (2004) reveal that Eritreans and Ethiopians experience discrimination, wage theft, fraud, racism, harassment, and violence when interacting with Egyptians. This mistreatment contributes to their marginalization within the host society. Similar findings have been documented for African refugees (Miranda, 2018) and Eritreans (Siino, 2018; Hegazy, 2023). Grabska (2006) describes this marginalization as both social and legal, stemming from discrimination by the host society. Iraqi refugees in Cairo encounter less racial discrimination than Sudanese but share a common experience of legal marginalization, impacting their access to education and work rights. They are also socially marginalized as they are perceived as an economic and social burden (Minnick, 2010).

Tensions often arise in neighborhoods shared by impoverished Egyptians and refugees due to misconceptions. Eritrean community-based organizations (CBOs) point to Egyptians' reluctance to integrate refugees, driven by the fear of resource competition and the mistaken belief that refugees are wealthy due to aid from international organizations (Hegazy, 2023; Grabska, 2005; Coenders et al., 2005; Zárata et al., 2004). These tensions stem from documented instances of harassment and discrimination faced by refugees, necessitating increased local

awareness and sensitivity to their issues (Grabska, 2006; Hegazy, 2023). Additionally, Grabska underscores the role of the local press in exacerbating these tensions by portraying African refugees as societal burdens and perpetuating negative stereotypes about African migrants (Al Sharmani, 2003; Grabska, 2006). Despite potential policy changes, an Ethiopian refugee interviewed highlights the enduring challenge of altering Egyptians' attitudes towards African refugees, as many refugees continue to feel like outsiders and struggle to integrate fully into the host society (Grabska, 2006).

Grabska's study (2006) on refugees in Egypt reveals their hesitance toward full integration into Egyptian society due to cultural and language differences, compounded by Egypt's challenging economic conditions. High unemployment rates in Egypt indicates the difficulty refugees face in securing jobs, especially those from non-Arabic backgrounds who differ linguistically, socially, and culturally from the host community. While integration is smoother for some, like Sudanese, due to linguistic and cultural similarities, southern Sudanese fear identity loss through integration. A CBO director argues that global integration policies don't align with the host country's realities, as the East African approach might work for Africans with similar backgrounds but not in Egypt's diverse settings (Grabska, 2006; Hegazy, 2023). Many refugees highlight the disrespect they encounter from the host community, emphasizing the need to enforce refugee rights. Mistrust between refugees, UNHCR, and Egyptian organizations exists, exemplified by refugee CBO skepticism about the NCCM's school plans, suspecting political motives or potential exploitation by Egyptian organizations (Grabska, 2006).

Nonetheless, refugee community organizations still strive to create harmony between its members and the Egyptian community through education and shared activities with Egyptians,

such as the efforts of some Syrian CBOs who organize coexistence campaigns, especially in areas with few Syrians, to inform Egyptians of the struggles of Syrians and vice-versa or a “Thank you” campaign to thank the Egyptian people for welcoming them by handing out roses in Downtown and Nasr City (Rosenberg, 2016). Additionally, Hegazy reported that some Eritrean CBOs still aimed to help integrate Eritreans in the host community by educating Eritreans about Egyptian society’s cultural norms and customs, organizing a fun event or a cultural day for Eritreans, Syrians, and Egyptians. Another CBO offers courses for both Egyptians and Eritreans alike, taught by Egyptians to encourage social integration and acceptance of Eritreans into Egyptian society (2023).

### **2.3.2 Connecting Refugees with Service Providers**

The UNHCR mentions 34 partner organizations for Egypt (2014 estimate). Elizabeth Ferris (2005) points out that large, international organizations have easier access to funds but are distanced from the beneficiaries; at the same time, smaller organizations have easier access and links with the community. An employee at a partner organization stated that it believes CBOs facilitate refugees and PO’s operations because they speak their language and can assist in 60% of the cases that implementing organizations cannot (Hegazy, 2023). Thus, community-based organizations act as a communication channel between the refugee community, the NGOs, and the UNHCR by referring community members to the appropriate service providers that meet their needs. However, many CBOs have complained of the lack of communication between them and the UNHCR, which hinders their ability to assist their beneficiaries during emergencies. Neither the Somali CBOs nor the Eritrean ones communicated directly with the UNHCR (Hegazy, 2023; Huser, 2014).

Community organizations cooperate with the UNHCR or other NGOs such as CRS, CARE, MSF, and Save the Children through two common mechanisms: hosting the NGO's activities for their community in their premises or referring their beneficiaries to them through established communication channels. Several organizations offer their offices for NGOs to conduct their workshops. For example, UNHCR used the SAFWAC center to perform child protection interviews, and CRS used it to conduct an after-school tutoring class for children at the center for six months (Huser, 2016). They also act as a referral channel between their community and the UNHCR and its partners, such as the Eritrean CBOs, which refer unregistered Eritreans to UNHCR and refer refugees to livelihood programs at NGOs such as Terre des Hommes, Save the Children, and Don Bosco, and connect them with CRS which offers educational grants for school children (Hegazy, 2023) or Somali CBOs which assist Somali access services offered by organizations such as Caritas and UNHCR (Huser, 2014). The same findings were corroborated by Rosenberg's study of Syrian CBOs in Egypt who referred their beneficiaries to various partner organizations (2016)

However, it is common for CBOs to defuse tensions between the UNHCR and refugee communities. In 2011, when Somalis were demonstrating in front of the UNHCR office, Somali community leaders mediated with UNHCR (Huser, 2016). Similar to the Eritrean CBO, which dissuaded a group of Eritreans from organizing a sit-in in front of the UNHCR's office during the Corona pandemic and informed them of the necessity of enforcing the lockdown for public safety. Hence, most CBOs feel they are being used as pacifiers to calm and alleviate tensions produced by the refugee community's frustration toward the UNHCR (Hegazy, 2023).

### **2.3.3 Community-capacity building and awareness-raising**

Community capacity building (CCB) centers on empowering all members of the community, especially the most vulnerable among them, such as the impoverished and underprivileged, to develop capabilities and skills to give them better control of their lives and create inclusive development. This approach creates a cohesive and resilient community better suited to face economic and social difficulties. There are many elements in community capacity building. The most relevant to refugees within the legal limitations of Egypt and that of CBOs are creating social capital, supporting local employment and businesses, and increasing community skills, knowledge, and leadership.

Firstly, in terms of social capital, the programs that CBOs organize and the facilities themselves act as a gathering place for refugees where they can learn and improve their skills, socialize, make friends, and expand their personal network (Huser, 2014; Rosenberg, 2016).

Secondly, CBOs play a small role in providing employment or livelihood to their beneficiaries due to the legal and institutional limitations placed on refugees' rights to work. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol give refugees the right to work; however, the Egyptian state restricts it. The Egyptian Labor Law mandates that for foreigners to obtain work in Egypt, they must have a valid entry visa, residence visa, and work visa (Government of Egypt, 2015). Additionally, businesses can have up to 10% foreign staff, and foreigners should not compete with Egyptians for job opportunities. If they are hired, they must train two Egyptians. Still, the priority of foreign hire is for foreigners born in Egypt or who have permanent residence. The work permit conditions necessitate that the foreigner's skills match the job requirements with a minimum of 3 years of experience. It costs 5,000 the first year and increases by 5,000 every 3



years in the fourth year, the seventh year, and so on, while the renewal fee remains at 1000 for the 3 years between these high increases.

Furthermore, foreigners are banned from working in export, customs clearance, import, or as tourist guides (Government of Egypt, 2019). Refugees who wish to obtain a work permit must find an employer willing to offer work sponsorship and cover its expensive fees (Kagan, 2011). Decree No. 485 of 2010, issued by the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration, states the documents needed, which include a copy of a passport (Government of Egypt, 2010). However, some nationalities are exempt from this requirement. Refugees can start their own business, but after completing a license application that requires the following documents: a business plan, the applicant's valid passport, a representative's ID, giving the Ministry of Investment the power of attorney, and a criminal record check if the application is accepted (Government of Egypt, 2017). Hetaba et al. state that most applications are often denied for security concerns or shortage of capital (2020).

Therefore, most refugees turn to the informal low-skill labor market, which has many pitfalls, including no labor law protection against discrimination, exploitation, or abuse since they work without a contract. Hetaba et al. (2020) posit that most men work as drivers, janitors, and restaurant servers in return for low wages, long working hours, and the threat of sudden termination. Most participants stated employers often pay low wages and withhold their wages, which can be as low as 70 EGP per day. Kagan (2011) claims that Egypt blocked UNHCR efforts to create vocational education and training projects unless it can ensure that these refugees will voluntarily return to their home country. This highlights the impact the Egyptian government interventions can have on the UNHCR and NGOs' attempts to enhance refugee livelihood. Still, the UNHCR and its partner organizations try to improve refugees' livelihood and access to work

through three mechanisms: firstly, through career counseling, capacity building, and their labor rights. Secondly, through business mentorship, business grants to start their own business, and management training, and finally through providing monetary assistance for vulnerable refugees to cover the cost of their essential needs (Hetaba et al., 2020; UNHCR, 2020). The UNHCR also partners with private companies, Caritas, Refuge Egypt, Plan International, Don Bosco, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to provide job placement through skill pairing and exposition (UNHCR, 2018, 2023b). These interventions, according to Sharafeldin (2020), are still not enough because they are restricted by employers' unawareness of refugee problems and financial constraints. In Hegazy's research, an Eritrean CBOs leader noted that the services might not suit the beneficiaries; for example, unaccompanied youth should not be given a micro-grant to start a business because they lack the business acumen at such a young age (Hegazy, 2023).

All these difficulties in accessing the formal job market and the inability of the UNHCR and its partners to create vocational training that actually leads to a job (Grabska, 2006) means that CBOs play a minimal role in improving livelihood. Still, CBOs try to assist in this issue by providing income-generating courses such as crochet, hairstyling, tailoring, handicraft, cooking, and cell phone maintenance and repair (Hegazy, 2023; Huser, 2014). The students of such programs can produce products and sell them to generate some income to sustain their families. Some Syrian CBOs collect the names of businesses that are looking to hire employees and connect them with women wanting to work outside the house (Rosenberg, 2016). Another option explored by several Syrian organizations and Grabska's Sudanese communities was micro-grant projects. This could help fund the purchase of a business venue or enable families to buy products for sale, but the sustainability of such projects can be debated. Although there is some interest in handicraft products, it is not consistent. In contrast, the demand for domestic workers,

such as babysitters and house cleaners, is quite large and often easily accessible for women of different nationalities in Egypt (Ayoub and Khallaf, 2014). However, it exposes refugees to exploitation and abuse, as mentioned above. To address this issue, a Syrian CBO offers seminars with Egyptian lawyers explaining their legal rights as workers. This could be a possible way of accessing sustainable work with an actual demand (Rosenberg, 2016).

Thirdly, CBOs provide programs to improve their beneficiaries' skills and competencies in areas relative to their immediate needs. This includes language courses and computer courses. Thus, most CBOs organize language courses such as Somali language, English Language, and Arabic language (Huser, 2014; Hegazy, 2023). Additionally, some CBOs offer technical courses in areas such as programming, ICDL (International Computer Driving License) and graphic design courses (Hegazy, 2023). The language courses are important because many refugees come from non-Arabic-speaking countries, and learning Arabic helps them better communicate with the host community and navigate the country.

Additionally, computer courses are advantageous in reducing digital illiteracy among refugees who may not have access to computers or the elderly. Moreover, CBOs play an important role by providing educational services to their beneficiaries. Several CBOs have a school associated with them (Rosenberg, 2016; Hegazy, 2023). However, they face funding difficulties managing these schools despite charging their students tuition fees because it isn't enough to cover the costs of stationeries, furnishing, and educational tools, especially considering that some parents cannot pay the full tuition fees. Furthermore, most of these schools can only serve registered refugees as mandated by their funding NGO, and most teachers are volunteers; hence, the CBOs can't satisfy the high demand nor increase the tuition fee.

Moreover, CBOs offer awareness sessions on common social issues their beneficiaries face on girls' education, legal issues, dangers of illegal immigration, Egyptian culture, health care, and child-rearing, organized by its members or other organizations such as AMERA or Doctors without Borders or sessions about Egyptian culture to foster harmony (Huser, 2014; Hegazy, 2023).

### **2.3.4 CBO's Role During COVID**

Covid has impacted communities worldwide, especially refugee communities whether living in isolated camps or urban areas. The Covid arrival has limited refugees' means of making a living since the majority are reliant on informal jobs (El Abed, 2020). Refugees were mobilizing to spread information about COVID-19 and how it spread, distributing food, providing legal aid and online mental health support, and bridging the gap left by NGOs in various services, including health, protection, and education. In addition to advocating for their communities and how COVID and government policies in response to it have negatively affected refugees. In Lebanon, an RLO provided food baskets, monthly rent, medical masks, and sanitizers (Basmeh & Zeitooneh, 2020).

The Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 stressed the necessity of including and assisting local organizations since COVID-19 limited the mobility and access of NGOs to the refugee communities they serve (UN-OCHA, 2020). However, the US\$6.7 billion funds the UN requested were used to fund the same NGOs with limited access, and refugee-led organizations were not included in the COVID-19 response plan, even ones with a good track record. During that period, NGOs had low funding, minimized their field activities and field personnel, or shut down and discontinued their activities altogether, which compelled CBOs to

come together to fill the social protection gap left by these organizations. Betts et al. have found that in some areas, CBOs have provided their communities with resources such as food, dispensed information about precautionary methods to reduce the virus's spread, face masks, and hygiene materials (2020b). To recognize their outstanding role during this period in countering COVID-19, UNHCR has awarded CBOs worldwide the 2020 NGO Innovation Award (UNHCR, 2021d). During the Corona pandemic, Eritrean and Somali CBOs assisted in registering refugees online (Hegazy, 2023; Huser, 2014).

## **2.4 CBOs Challenges**

### **2.4.1 Legal challenges**

According to the legal framework available for non-governmental organizations in Egypt, CBOs face a significant challenge represented by the absence of a specific legal category that recognizes and accommodates the unique characteristics of these organizations. Non-Egyptian CBOs are left with only one option for registration, which is through the pathway designated for Egyptian Civil Society Associations. This legal framework fails to acknowledge CBOs as organizations led by the refugee and migrant communities and understand the organizations' nature of being established and operated by refugees for the sake of their displaced communities' benefit. Hegazy (2023) highlights that CBOs are aware of this limitation in the law, while they do not really recognize the absence of a defined category for their organizations. As a consequence, CBOs encounter obstacles when attempting to comply with the provisions of the Egyptian Community Organizations Law. The legal requirements to register an organization are the major obstacles that stop many CBOs from registering. These requirements are proof of legal residence, passport number, and bank account, and that 75% of the board of directors must be

Egyptian nationals. Hegazy argues that the lack of recognition contributes to the marginalization of CBOs by the Egyptian government, as it disregards their distinct nature and the challenges refugees face in meeting the documentation requirements set by the law. This section will outline the primary barriers that prevent CBOs from successfully registering their entities based on what recent studies reveal.

The first challenge faced by CBOs pertains to the requirement of having 75% of the organization's board of directors composed of non-Egyptian individuals. CBOs face challenges in meeting this requirement, especially when it comes to securing Egyptian representation on their boards. The requirement that 75% of the board must be Egyptians highlights the deficit in integrating most refugee communities and presents two challenges. First is how to identify Egyptians who will agree to be board members, and second, how to guarantee the CBO's rights and protect them from being taken advantage of or deceived. In Hegazy's study on Eritrean CBOs in Egypt, the CBOs directors voiced their concern about the condition that they must appoint 75% Egyptians to their organization's board of trustees for several reasons. Primarily because Eritreans do not have strong social ties with Egyptians, contrary to Syrian and Sudanese refugees who might even have familial relationships with Egyptians, which ultimately aids in licensing their CBOs (2023). Additionally, several participants believe the involvement of non-Eritreans in their organization in any capacity, whether as part of the management team or by being part of a non-Eritrean organization, will impair their goals of being by and for the Eritrean community (Hegazy, 2023).

Secondly, the law states that membership of the 25% non-Egyptian members of the board of directors expires with the expiry of their visa this is an issue because refugees' visas must be renewed every six months, and the law does not explain whether they can renew their

membership every time they renew their residence permit. The visa renewal process is tedious; it takes 2 months to renew and involves several visits to the immigration office, which means that they must apply for visa renewal every 2 or 4 months (Ayoub & Abdel Aziz, 2021; Hetaba et al., 2020), which in itself is unfeasible. The length of the resident visa is an issue that was repeatedly brought up by both CBOs and individuals because of its multifaceted effects. Presenting a valid passport is not always feasible as some refugees do not have a passport, such as the case of Eritreans who fled to Egypt because they are military draft evaders who are regarded as traitors by the Eritrean government (Hegazy, 2023). Still, even if they can apply for an ID at the embassy without any issues, it is still not feasible because the embassy requires documents that these refugees do not have, such as birth certificates and nationality IDs of the applicant and their parents.

Finally, the regulations of the Central Bank of Egypt require foreigners who want to open a bank to provide a valid passport as the only acceptable form of ID. It does not accept the UNHCR card, whether blue or yellow, as a valid ID replacement (Ayoub et al., 2012; Ayoub & Abdel Aziz, 2021). A CBO director posited that because they cannot open a bank account, they cannot license their CBOs nor receive funding from donors in the diaspora, which makes their transnational social networks with Eritreans practically futile since they cannot receive funds from them (Hegazy, 2023). Meanwhile, other CBOs resort to gathering funds through informal channels such as community donations, which can be monetary or in-kind materials such as medicines, food, or clothes.

Registering an organization has many advantages, such as easier access to funds and collaboration with various organizations such as hospitals, the Egyptian Foodbank, and Al Azhar

University, highlighting the great benefit CBOs drive from becoming a legal organization (Huser, 2014; Rosenberg, 2016). Nonetheless, becoming a legal organization has its disadvantages, such as prioritizing the interests of donors at the expense of the beneficiaries, loss of full control of the organization, the propensity to establish projects without any regard to local conditions, and reliance on liberal agendas of external donors (Jad, 2004).

The new amendments to the NGO law include governmental inspections of premises and dissolving NGOs on vague grounds such as “threatening national unity” or “running against public order” (International Center for Non-profit Law, NGO Law Monitor Egypt). The punishment for failing to register an organization is shutting down the organization, one-year imprisonment, and fines above 100,000 EGP. In September 2014, an amendment was made that penalized NGOs that received foreign funding with a life sentence, either jail time or the death penalty, which is seen as undermining national interests. However, many CBOs stated that the Egyptian government never approached them, even though one CBO has been operating from the same office for years. They clarified that this is because the Egyptian authorities choose to ignore them as long as they do not create security issues (Hegazy, 2023). This means the government turns a blind eye to them as long as they do not receive foreign funds, as was the case of the British-Egyptian NGO AMERA, which provided legal aid for refugees, was shut down because it was unregistered and receiving foreign aid. Also, in 2011, 17 American NGOs were raided as part of a repression of foreign funding. Norman confirmed these findings, where he indicated that the Egyptian government willingly turns a blind eye to refugees and allows them to conduct their activities without any interference unless they pose a security threat (2017).



One way to bypass the legal obstacle of registration is by obtaining a legal cover. An organization can obtain legal cover from a registered organization. This way, the larger, registered organization operates as a legal coverage, responsible for a smaller, unregistered one. Many CBOs choose this as the middle ground between remaining unregistered and the financial and administrative burden of becoming fully registered. For example, SET, a Syrian CBO, is under Syria Tomorrow, and Souriat is under the Arab Organization of Human Rights (AOHR), while SAFWAC is under Tadamon (Hegazy, 2023; Rozenburg, 2016). The umbrella organizations provide funds for logistical and administrative assistance, and if they partner with UNHCR, they can also become partners of the UNHCR by association. However, there are disadvantages to agreeing to become part of a registered organization, such as having to pay a percentage of their income or a high amount for the annual renewal fee of the legal cover to the umbrella organization (Hegazy, 2023). The CBOs generate revenues through collaborations with NGOs and renting their rooms for awareness seminars. These practices by parent organizations subject CBOs to exploitation, which is impractical because they already have many financial commitments.

Though most CBOs have many legal limitations, they are allowed to gather and form their own organizations, unlike Iraqis, who are informally prohibited from their right of association granted by Article 15 in the 1951 Refugee Convention. The host country governments fear that the sectarian tensions and terrorism from Iraq will spill over into their countries. Attempts of Iraqis to start organizations, Iraqi-owned businesses, or create informal discussion forums have all been terminated by the government (Minnick, 2010).

### **2.4.2 Financial and funding challenges**

Many studies have tried to zero in on the reasons behind CBOs' low funding opportunities. Grabska (2006) findings in Egypt corroborate the finding that CBOs have difficulty securing funding. Still, she argues it is because these CBOs are not legally licensed, which disqualifies them from receiving funds from donors.

Most CBOs can't qualify as partner organizations because of a shortage in refugees' capacity, creating a causality dilemma (Grabska, 2006). In order to become a partner, the organization must apply through a Call for Expression of Interest process. It's open to all organizations in Egypt, small and large. The organization has to show its capability, cost-effectiveness, and experience in providing services in its chosen field. To ensure funds are well-spent, excellent quality of service, and the organization is well established. A UNHCR employee explained that donors expect total transparency, that is, to receive reports on every facet of the funding and how the money is spent. Most organizations able to fulfill these criteria are bigger, international organizations with extensive experience, while CBOs, in general, are small and inexperienced without the administrative structures that can satisfy donor demands. The community organizations provide the same service as the more prominent NGOs but with different objectives; for example, Tadamon's director said they home-deliver their food aid to their beneficiaries, which provides clear feedback about the conditions and needs of their beneficiaries. At the same time, the UNHCR and their partner organizations provide aid to a considerable amount of people all over Egypt and use their resources effectively and efficiently. The UNHCR officials Rosenberg interviewed all rejected the possibility that a Syrian organization could be an operational partner of the UNHCR, but they spoke highly of the ones they knew of (namely Souriat and Tadamon) (2016). These statements indicate that despite the

important role that NGOs play in their respective refugee community or refugee community at large, they do not have the capability or the organizational power to compete with larger organizations for funds, and the lack of competency of these CBOs negatively affect donor trust further reducing their funding opportunities from their own communities.

However, Griffith et al. (2006) argues the reason CBOs have difficulty securing funding is because they do not have an accurate performance history of funds received and how they were spent, which is a critical condition to secure funds since it establishes accountability to donors. This led to many CBOs seeking funding through informal channels, which made them short-lived as funding and legitimacy were only accessible through NGOs and UNHCR (Griffith et al., 2006; Hegazy, 2023; Huser, 2016). Moreover, Griffith argues that even though NGOs are the main actors in providing funding and capacity building for CBOs, they can also limit the CBOs through their restrictive agenda and limited view of who is considered a refugee. While CBOs that do not fit these NGOs' criteria will have to function on the margin of society (2006). Furthermore, a study by Betts et al. found that international service providers avoid partnering with CBOs because CBOs disapprove of international NGOs and the UN and lack work capacity (2020). Hegazy's research indicates that refugee-led community organizations can secure funding by partnering with UNHCR and its partners. However, partnering with UNHCR and its implementing or operational partners is not an easy task because the UNHCR does not have a clear definition of what a CBO is. There are various views among CBOs and partner organizations on what makes an organization qualify as a CBO. The UNHCR and its implementing partners have yet to have a published list of CBOs in any of their publications, whether licensed or unlicensed, further complicating the issue. Some believe that CBOs become recognized by the agencies if it deals with their whole community and their leaders have a

personal connection with UNHCR, which is how one Eritrean CBO was quickly acknowledged by NGOs. An employee of one of the partner organizations stated that they depend on employees who reside in the refugee community to map CBOs and, therefore do not require a definitive criterion to identify CBOs (2023).

She further states that, NGOs only work with CBOs who meet with cases instead of just exchanging information with the UNHCR. Another criterion that qualifies an organization as CBO, according to the PO, is if it can prove its seriousness about its objective by maintaining its operation for a long period through self-efforts, passes the one-year trust period to assess its ability to execute activities assigned to them, and has a wide coverage area. It also advises CBOs to have a specific organizational structure that includes a director, field director, board of trustees, and coordinators, which is evaluated and modified as needed, in addition to including particular services within its departments' structure, such as legal support, psychological support, finance/funding, and education (Hegazy, 2023). Following this organization model to secure funding is known as 'NGO-ization,' where CBOs follow the same system as NGOs regarding the target group and organization structure, which ultimately excludes non-registered or closed-file individuals. However, it is understandable that CBOs will do so because they have to report who they served to their donors, and the file number is an essential element of that reporting.

Nonetheless, following the NGO model has some positive impact; for example, it compels the leaders of CBOs to implement the no-discrimination and do-no-harm policies, which improves refugees' access to services (Hegazy, 2023). The vague conditions of what steps CBOs must follow or how they should operate to receive funding from NGOs can explain why most CBOs struggle to obtain funding from partner organizations despite operating for a long

time. This is the case of the Somali community center in Maadi, which was struggling with funding despite operating since 2011 through self-funding (Huser, 2014).

Cooperating with UNHCR is mutually beneficial. The refugee community organizations receive updated information, funding, and access to UNHCR staff while contributing with their easy access to the communities and their social network. They also receive other resources such as furnishing, food, computers, and other types of material assistance, as well as short-term funding that can sometimes be extended to 3 years. They could quickly identify and advocate for the most vulnerable people in the area. As for the UNHCR, identifying vulnerable people is critical to their operation and objectives. They also receive reliable feedback on their services and use CBOs' social networks to relay information about new criteria and services (Rosenburg, 2023). Despite the funding and legitimacy partnering with UNHCR and its partners brings, it also presents some difficulties. As Ferris (2005) stated, small NGOs are increasingly required to deliver detailed expense reports to their donors, where inadequate reporting can cause mistrust, resulting in funding reductions. A requirement that was only applicable to more prominent international and local NGOs. This task can be difficult for CBOs run by volunteers and with little funding. Ferris further stresses that the dependency of Western INGOs on foreign aid might make them susceptible to the agendas of the involved government (2005). This, as Kim explained, can make NGOs donor-driven and design their programs to match donor wishes instead of the beneficiaries' needs (Kim, 2005).

In addition, receiving funding from the UNHCR or an NGO means the CBOs will become dependent on one donor, which puts them in a vulnerable position, such as the case of the Souriat Syrian organization that lost UNHCR funding in 2014 and had to let go of all their 22 paid employees after it stopped funding them. This is an issue some CBOs combat by

collaborating with many donors, which guarantees they remain independent. Moreover, most of the CBOs' activities are low-cost, so they are not compelled to agree to funding conditions they do not agree with. Finally, they receive funds and training sessions from the UNHCR or their partner organizations, which are occupied with their own projects and do not intend to influence or control the CBOs' internal affairs (Rosenberg, 2016).

However, the CBOs have funding issues because the UNHCR itself is underfunded. This is due to several reasons. Firstly, securing funding during an emergency state is more manageable than for long-term operations because it is easier to collect money for a new humanitarian crisis all over mass media than for long-term conflicts. Additionally, funds can be reallocated from long-term interventions if it is still necessary to meet the current basic humanitarian needs of a particular nationality. For instance, when Syrians came to Egypt in droves, UNHCR opened an office for their registration in Zamalek and even approached them in cities on the outskirts of Cairo. Secondly, UNHCR donors, as Barnett states, are earmarking their funds. Earmarking means that the donor dictates where and how the assistance will be used, frequently identifying regions, countries, operations, or even projects (Barnett, 2005). These funds could not be allocated to other refugees or the refugee population as a whole, and they must be used for the specified target population. This restricts the autonomy of the humanitarian agency, which has to accept these funding conditions to receive it. Thirdly, the vicious competition between the response organizations on funding during the emergency stage attracts many large international NGOs. During this stage, agile and fast organizations that can mobilize rapidly usually win more significant funding (Ferris, 2005). However, CBOs operate long-term and persist past the emergency phase, where substantial funding is into the development and resilience phase, where funding dwindles into trickles. The May 2023 UNHCR factsheet shows

that the UNHCR Egypt office only received 9% (\$13.2M) of the total amount requested (138.2M) (UNHCR, 2023). Illustrating a huge deficit in the UNHCR budget hindering its ability to support or fund the refugee organizations under it adequately. Still, many refugees believe the UNHCR is not, in fact, underfunded but is rampant with corruption and misuse of funds, which results in the limited services they receive or the funding their organizations receive. This is an accusation most CBOs also receive when they secure any type of funding, which is alleged by some NGO workers and UNHCR employees as well (Rosenburg, 2016).

The biggest roadblock most CBOs face during operations is paying for rent and utilities without funding from UNHCR or NGOs. Huser mentions that the Somali Organization for Development (SODO) in Ard Al-liwa shut down in 2010 because UNHCR stopped paying for their office's rent (2014). To counter this challenge, CBOs construct some minor generating activities to cover their operational costs or depend on community contributions. The Somali community center in Egypt depends on community contribution (Huser, 2016), while the Eritrean community organizations mentioned by Hegazy charge a small course fee to pay for their operational costs, or rent rooms in their offices for NGOs to conduct their awareness or capacity-building sessions (2023). However, funding through community contribution is unsustainable because it puts a great financial strain on refugees who are barely surviving themselves. Another rare measure to cover operational costs is demonstrated by the Syrian CBO "Hamzat al-Khatib Charity Association," where the founder runs a software company in an engineering office, which he also uses as the organization office and has customers and refugees registering in the same reception. He and a board of directors manage the organization, the majority of whom are also employed in his company. This way, he does not have to pay salaries

for employees, reduces dependency on volunteers, and increases his organization's employee retention (Rosenburg, 2016).

Another method CBOs use to cover their operational cost is by obtaining legal cover from a registered organization. Meanwhile, organizations that are officially registered at MOSS have more comprehensive access to funding because they have a bank account and can receive funding through their transnational social network or collaboration with NGOs.

### **2.4.3 Administrative and operational challenges**

The administrative and operational challenges are closely tied to funding, where it has been observed that when the majority of CBOs members work on a voluntary basis, they can not seem to dedicate adequate time and effort to their organization since most will have to obtain a full-time job to pay for their basic needs or are preoccupied with their studies. This becomes glaringly clear in the case of the Somali community center in Maadi, in which all of its committee members are volunteers. The initiative's classes are inconsistent, and so is the student's attendance, which the lenient nature of its system can explain because all the trainees and teachers work on a voluntary basis without a structured curriculum. On the other hand, SAFWAC is able to create systems that permit practical assessment of its activities, conduct regular activities, and set long-term plans because Tadamon lessens its financial burden by covering its rent and utilities payments every month (Huser, 2014).

High dependency on volunteers results in a high turnover rate of the employees of the organizations. As a result of low funding, most CBOs depend on volunteers, including the management team, who consequently leave the CBO when they secure a full-time job elsewhere, such as in NGOs, when they gain enough experience. Grabska research into CBOs in Egypt



asserts that these organizations have a transitory life period because their members have little to no organizational competence and skills, and their operation capacity relies on few key dedicated members in the CBO; thus, when they leave the organization, the organization falls apart and shuts down (2006). A finding corroborated by Huser's research, which spoke of the 'Somali Refugee Community of Egypt' (SRCOE), the first Somali initiative in Cairo, that shut down in 2010 because some of the initiative's leaders were resettled in other countries or due to internal conflicts (2014). Another researcher stated that refugees and CBO leaders who work at NGOs or UNHCR are more likely to be resettled (Jones, 2015). This means that the CBO workers who have more experience, a wider network, and better training are more likely to depart suddenly, taking with them the skills and operational methods that they have acquired by working at the CBO. Even though some CBOs try to solve this issue by maintaining a database of volunteers and continually training new volunteers, it is still insufficient to fill the experience, skill, and knowledge gap experienced volunteers or leaders left.

The same system that heavily relies on volunteers while keeping few permanent staff was also reported by Hegazy's study on Eritrean CBOs in Egypt. She also reported that some CBOs follow specific strategies to improve employee or volunteer retention given the vulnerable position it puts them in, such as selecting their management team based on their interest and qualifications to ensure they are both passionate and skilled at their job and only paying the employee that links the CBO with the community. Furthermore, they keep a record of permanent and temporary volunteers and train many volunteers to ensure a constant supply of volunteers when some leave because of a job, resettlement, or personal dispute (2023).

Most employees at community organizations in Egypt rely on volunteers (Huser, 2016; Hegazy, 2023; Rosenberg, 2016). An operation system that makes the organizations vulnerable

to outside conditions but still has advantages for the CBO and the volunteers. Volunteering empowers volunteers, reinforces their feeling of control over their lives and their community, and gives them a sense of belonging and community. Additionally, they gain practical experience working with the refugee community that will enable them to apply to work at NGOs, which none of the CBOs view as a deficit, as they often come back to train and transfer their experiences to the CBO, which is advantageous for CBOs and volunteers (Hegazy, 2023).

#### **2.4.4 Internal conflicts**

Sahin-Mencutek (2021) states that the religious, tribal, ethnic, and linguistic divisions within refugee communities weaken CBOs and their ability to work together toward a common goal. Likewise, Grabska noticed that refugee communities distrust CBOs due to occasional incidents further worsened by the existing divisions along ethnic and tribal lines, ultimately undermining CBOs (2006). Furthermore, one of the primary challenges Somali CBOs in Canada face, besides restricted resources and pathways to funding, is tribal friction and internal conflicts. Hopkins further asserts that Somali CBOs, which might outwardly seem cognate but are, in fact, arranged through tribal connections, were unable to meet the community needs adequately and Somalis were advised not to approach them for assistance due to their clear bias. Consequently, she argues that CBOs in communities with severe internal conflicts and low drive for community mobilization are not considered better suited to assist their communities than NGOs (2006).

Additionally, the lack of resources and the limited scope of CBOs in the UK regarding ethnicity and location reduces their capacity for collaboration with one another. This is because ethnic affiliations make them view each other as adversaries instead of allies, so they do not share organizational strategies to ensure continuity, receive recognition, or secure funding. They

are also unprofessional because they only serve their own communities, unlike other organizations (Zetter & Pearl, 2000). In a study of Eritrean CBOs in Egypt, most CBOs leaders interviewed stated they do not discriminate among their beneficiaries based on tribe; however, another participant of the study contradicted this notion by mentioning how she was denied service from an organization because she is from a different tribe. The sentiment was further echoed by an NGO employee who asserted that tribal conflicts are one of the main issues CBOs face (Hegazy, 2023).

Another cause of internal conflicts is personal disputes, which result in the dissolution of the organization, as was the case of the first Somali initiative, ‘The Somali Refugee Community of Egypt’ (SRCOE), which was partly shut down due to internal conflicts (Huser, 2016).

## **2.5 CBOs opportunities and collaboration**

In the same way that more prominent NGOs compete against each other, CBOs compete between them over limited funding and resources provided by UNHCR and NGOs. Competition among CBOs hinders any opportunity for effective collaboration that can be more beneficial to their communities. In a prior investigation led by Hegazy, findings revealed that Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) operated without a formal referral system connecting them. One CBO underscored the significance of fostering greater collaboration among these entities, proposing a shift from competition to cooperation. Additionally, a separate participant underscored the necessity for CBOs to craft inventive and appealing initiatives, given the abundance of rivals, including fellow CBOs (Hegazy, 2023)

However, CBOs that receive capacity-building training from NGOs share information and services. Perhaps because they are financially secure and do not have to view other refugee-led community organizations as their competitors. Furthermore, many individuals interviewed in the focus group in her research mentioned that CBOs could better serve the Eritrean community if they unite as one organization, reducing tribal conflicts and social division that might exclude some sections of the Eritrean community. Another Eritrean CBO suggested that each NGO should provide training in specific areas that complement each other to prevent duplication and benefit CBOs more (Hegazy, 2023).

## **2.6 Research GAP**

Previous studies have addressed the role of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), albeit to a limited extent. However, this research places a heightened emphasis on comprehending the significance of these CBOs. It becomes evident that the challenges they encounter could obstruct their operations, consequently hindering collective efforts.

Moreover, this thesis aims to investigate how these challenges translate within the context of Yemeni community-led organizations in Egypt. It also endeavors to identify any additional unique challenges stemming from their distinctive circumstances. This distinctive focus on Yemeni CBOs fills a notable void in the Yemeni research efforts, as there exist few articles on this topic, and, to date, no comprehensive study has been conducted.

While previous studies have predominantly approached the legal challenges faced by CBOs through the lens of existing legal frameworks, this research adopts a different perspective.

The researcher examines these legal challenges in the context of CBOs' present status and analyzes the strategies they employ to mitigate these legal obstacles.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided an extensive review of existing literature on CBOs in Egypt, encompassing their characteristics, roles, challenges, and prospects. It has also sought to clarify the definition of CBOs, highlighting the synonymous terms used across various studies. This literature review forms the foundation for the forthcoming assessment and comparative evaluation of Yemeni CBOs, providing essential context for understanding their challenges and roles, as further elucidated in the conceptual framework in the subsequent chapter.

## **Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework and Stakeholders Analysis**

This research draws upon the conceptual framework of protection gaps as articulated by Volker Turk and Rebecca Dowd. As shown in chart (1), the primary aim is to identify the gaps in protection within the legislative framework that governs refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. However, the focus of this study is directed toward implementation gaps, which offer a more comprehensive explanation of the protection voids created by state actions. As previously highlighted, implementation gaps signify the incapacity of a country's legal structure to effectively address specific vulnerabilities due to limited resources, capacity constraints, and a lack of political will to offer protection and support to refugees and asylum seekers.

These gaps manifest in several ways, particularly in terms of insufficient access to fundamental rights and essential services for these marginalized communities. Consequently, these service deficiencies necessitate the intervention of the UNHCR and its implementing partners, who step in to provide necessary services to refugees and even replace certain state structures (Dowd & Türk, 2014). Egypt, given its status as a country where the UNHCR acts as a surrogate state and substitutes state structures (Kagan, 2011), quite fits the context for utilizing this conceptualization to identify gaps in the social protection framework for refugees and asylum seekers.

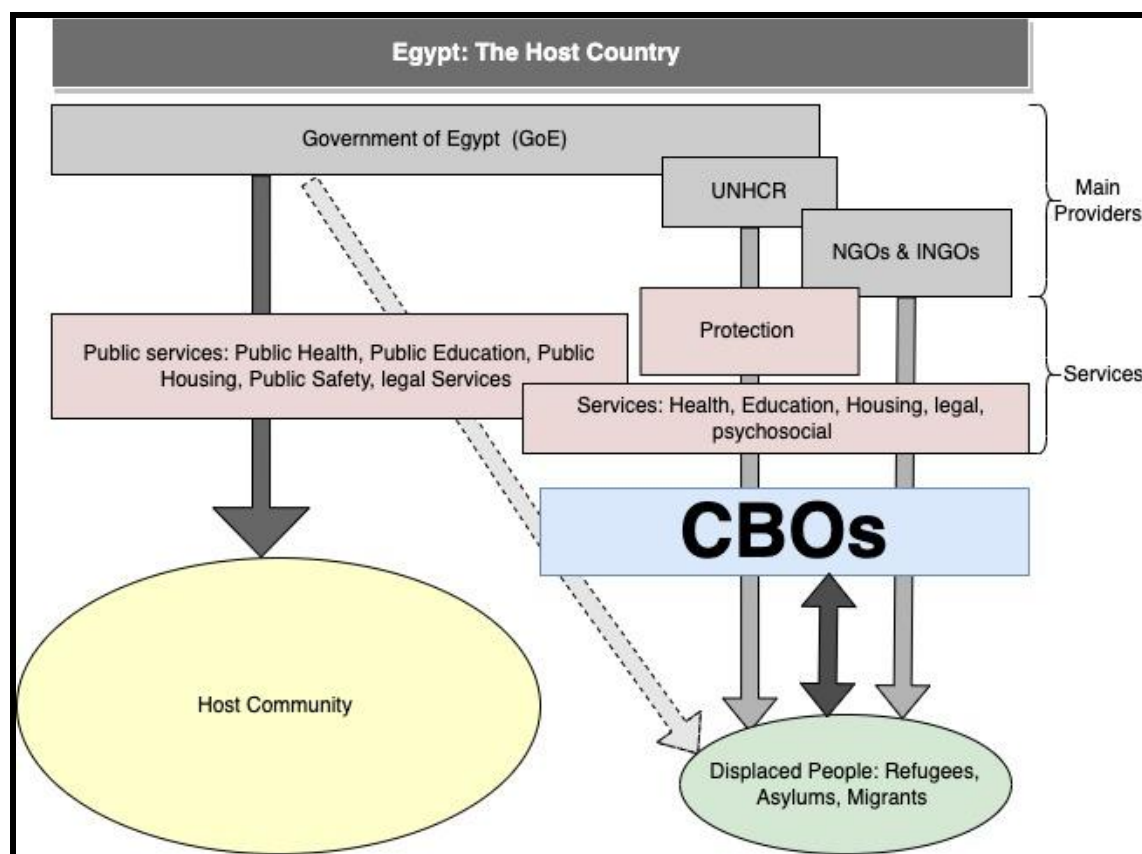


Figure (1): Comprehensive Conceptual Framework: Mapping the Landscape

Source: Author

Despite the efforts of the UNHCR and its partners to assist, a notable challenge exists in accessing and engaging with displaced communities, especially the most vulnerable segment among them. This natural fragmentation prompts the creation of refugee initiatives and organizations led by refugees (RLOs or CBOs), which play a crucial role in bridging the gap between the government, the UNHCR, and its partner organizations in connecting and providing these communities with essential services.

In addition to the challenges within the refugee community, there is a secondary gap within the host country, Egypt. This pertains to the lack of a regulatory framework that facilitates establishing and operating refugee-led organizations. These organizations have the potential to

facilitate the delivery of vital services from the UNHCR and its partners to their respective communities. This role of Egypt as a host country and the UNHCR as a surrogate state underscores the significance of this conceptualization in identifying the protection gaps that persist within the social support network for refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. Furthermore, it is extended to scrutinize the UNHCR and its partner organizations, assessing the gaps left by these entities and the degree to which community-based organizations (CBOs) address and mitigate these gaps.

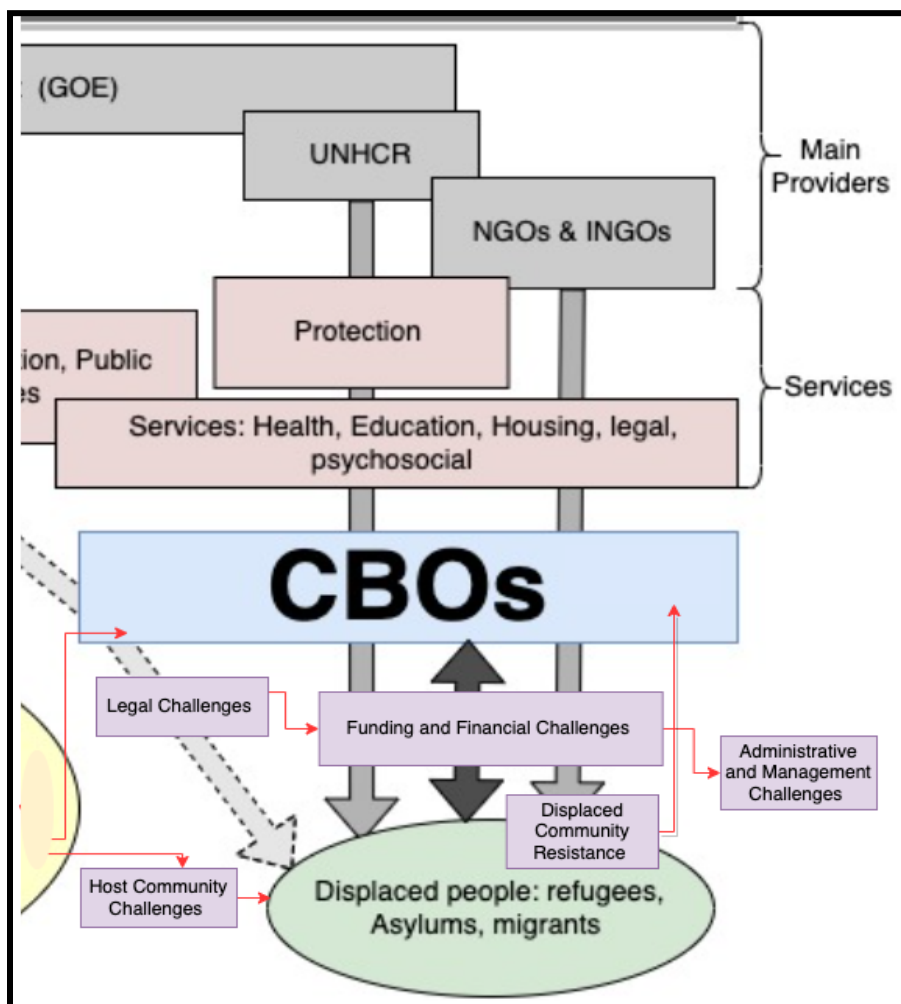


Figure (2): Detailed Scope Conceptual Framework: In-Depth Analysis

Source: Author



Chart (2) provides a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted challenges encountered by CBOs operating in Cairo, Egypt, within the context of serving displaced communities. These challenges are rooted in the dynamic and complex environment in which CBOs function, and they significantly impact the ability of these organizations to fulfill their missions effectively.

**Legal Challenges:** CBOs often grapple with legal complexities related to their registration, licensing, and compliance with Egyptian regulations governing nonprofit organizations. These legal hurdles can impede their operations and limit their capacity to provide essential services to displaced communities.

**Funding and Financial Challenges:** Securing adequate funding is a persistent obstacle for CBOs. Limited financial resources hinder their ability to expand services, hire skilled personnel, and maintain sustainable operations. Financial challenges also encompass issues related to budget allocation, resource allocation, and financial sustainability.

**Administrative and Management Challenges:** Effective organizational management is crucial for CBOs. This category encompasses governance, leadership, decision-making processes, and internal coordination challenges. Administrative and management difficulties can affect an organization's efficiency and ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

**Host Community Challenges:** CBOs face challenges in fostering positive relationships with the host community in Cairo. These may include misunderstandings, cultural differences, and competition for limited resources. Ensuring harmonious coexistence and collaboration between displaced communities and the host population is a complex undertaking.

Displaced Community Resistance: Some displaced communities may exhibit resistance or reluctance to engage with CBOs, often due to distrust, cultural barriers, or competing interests. Overcoming this resistance and building trust is a critical challenge for CBOs aiming to serve these communities effectively.

This chart serves as a visual representation of the intricate web of challenges confronting Cairo-based CBOs. It underscores the need for a nuanced and holistic approach to addressing these challenges, considering the specific dynamics of the environment in which CBOs operate. As we delve into the subsequent chapters, these challenges will be further analyzed, and potential strategies for mitigating them will be explored, contributing to a deeper understanding of the role and impact of CBOs in this context.

This chapter explored the implementation gaps unfulfilled by the state and are filled by the UNHCR and NGOs, and the role CBOs play in bridging the gap between these entities and the refugee community. It also goes into the challenges that CBOs face as a result of the challenging legal and social environment in Egypt. This comprehensive overview enhances the understanding of the research's scope as readers delve further into the study, which contextualizes the challenges and opportunities of CBOs in Egypt, as will be discussed in the following chapter according to previous research and studies into CBOs in Egypt.

## **Chapter Four: Research Design**

### **4.1 Research Approach**

While the practical application of research findings may only sometimes be immediately apparent, it is essential to recognize that each study contributes to the accumulative work of the scientific community, building upon previous knowledge and informing future research endeavors. Moreover, even if a study's impact is not visible in the short term, it can lay a foundation for broader knowledge and understanding that has implications across various issues, policy areas, or study sectors. Applied research, too, builds new knowledge; nevertheless, basic research is essential to expanding knowledge (Djamba & Neuman, 2002). In certain instances, research endeavors begin by using a pre-existing explanation derived from social theory or past research as a basis and subsequently expand upon it to explain an incoming issue, setting, or population, to assess its applicability, identify any limitations, and potentially modifying it to suit the context (Djamba & Neuman, 2002).

Therefore, this research chooses to explore the situation of community-based organizations that serve migrants and refugees in Egypt within the context of Egypt as a host country for a large segment of Yemeni society. The paper is explanatory, interpretive research that depends on previous literature, existing content and reports available by the UNHCR and the international NGOs, and in-depth interviews to discover the existing challenges and the opportunities available to the Yemeni CBOs and the strategies and mechanisms used by these CBOs to mitigate their operation in Egypt to serve their community Egypt. In the context of an explanatory research approach, this study additionally aims to examine the impact of the law for non-governmental organizations of the Ministry of Social Solidarity on the functioning of CBOs

and discover how this law affects the operation of the migrants and refugees community-based organizations by exploring the challenges and opportunities they face within the context of this law.

## 4.2 Research Population

The target population for this study comprises Yemeni CBOs operating in Cairo, Egypt. Given the limited number of Yemeni CBOs in the country, all available CBOs were considered to be included in the final sample. These CBOs represent a distinct group of organizations established by Yemeni individuals or groups to address the needs and challenges faced by the Yemeni community in the context of displacement and migration in Egypt. This decision was made to capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the Yemeni CBO community and to provide a comprehensive understanding of their unique contexts and circumstances.

- **Inclusion Criteria**

To be included in the target sample, CBOs had to meet the following criteria:

1. **Yemeni origin:** The organizations should have been initiated by an individual(s) of Yemeni origin, either Yemeni nationals or individuals of Yemeni descent.
2. **Operation in Cairo:** The CBOs should be actively operating within the geographical boundaries of Cairo, Egypt. This criterion ensures that the study focuses specifically on the experiences and perspectives of Yemeni CBOs in this specific area.

- **Exclusion Criteria**

1. **Lack of a fixed head office:** CBOs that did not have a permanent physical location or head office would be excluded because the study aimed to address to a great extent the

challenges related to licensing and the impact it has on the functioning of CBOs. Having a fixed head office is a legal requirement for establishing and obtaining licensing approval for non-profit associations and organizations in Egypt.

Additionally, it's important to note that the research does not impose any specific time limit for the operation of these organizations. This approach recognizes that Yemeni CBOs are a relatively new concept that has emerged after 2010, coinciding with an increase in the number of Yemenis residing in Egypt and the subsequent growth of CBOs in the country. The absence of a time limit allows for a comprehensive examination of both established and emerging CBOs, providing a more inclusive perspective on their development and impact.

### **4.3 Screening, Mapping, and Selecting the Target Sample**

The researcher employed a systematic approach to screen, map, and select the target population for the study. Initially, the researcher aimed to identify all the Yemeni CBOs operating in different areas of Cairo, Egypt, because the majority of displaced communities, specifically Yemenis, are concentrated in Cairo. The researcher utilized personal communication and leveraged previous contacts to gather information about CBOs operating in the target area. These efforts involved consulting with community leaders and engaging with NGO staff from organizations like PSTIC and StARS to compile a comprehensive list of CBOs actively involved in serving the Yemeni community. After mapping all the Yemeni community-based organizations operating in Cairo, it was found that the total number of CBOs initially identified was *ten*, established in various years starting from the beginning of the war in Yemen in 2015. These *ten* CBOs are famous and popular among the refugees, the migrant community, and

non-governmental actors, which made them targeted to be included in the study. After the mapping stage, the researcher documented all the relevant data about each initiative. In addition to the information gathered through personal relationships and connections, the researcher also collected data from employees working in partner organizations that have significant cooperation with these initiatives, such as PSTIC and StARS. This data collection process involved recording essential details such as the name of the initiative, the name of the current head of the CBO, the name of the founder(s) of the CBO, and their contact information.

During this data collection process, it was found that three CBOs are operating without designated head offices. Meanwhile, the researcher carefully examined the Law in regulating civil society work in Egypt to ensure the inclusion of CBOs meeting legal requirements and regulations to be licensed, it was found that one of the crucial conditions for establishing an authorized entity or obtaining licensing approval is to have a head office. Therefore, the researcher excluded three CBOs that did not have a head office, even though they were actively functioning and engaged in activities similar to other CBOs. Although these excluded CBOs could utilize temporary venues or rely on the support of other Yemeni and non-Yemeni CBOs for space, the researcher recognized the significance of addressing the challenges related to licensing as a major aspect of the study. Consequently, these CBOs were not included in the final sample.

Therefore, after excluding three initiatives due to the lack of a fixed head office, the final sample consisted of *seven* Yemeni CBOs operating in different areas of Cairo. The researcher decided to conduct interviews with all seven initiatives to ensure comprehensive coverage of all aspects of the research and to address a wide range of challenges they faced. The research aimed primarily to focus on the senior management of these CBOs, comprising the founder(s) and directors of the CBOs. This deliberate choice aimed to ensure that individuals with extensive

experience and in-depth knowledge regarding the challenges and opportunities encountered throughout the years of operation were included in the study, in addition to the internal conditions of the CBOs since their establishment and the external factors affecting them during the operation. This choice was made to enrich the study's depth, with careful measures taken to ensure diverse perspectives and minimize potential bias throughout the research process.

Within the data collection process, the researcher also encountered a scenario where the prime founder(s) of some of the CBOs had departed from their respective CBOs within a period ranging from one to six years ago due to administrative or personal reasons. Consequently, the current director of these CBOs either has not been involved in establishing the CBO or was one of the founders themselves. This situation raised the need for further data collection to ensure the accuracy and validity of information regarding these CBOs' true founder(s) and to establish direct communication with them. To address this, the researcher took additional steps to gather more data and establish contact with each CBO's current director and founder(s).

After gathering the information, it became evident that in three CBOs, the presidents were not the original founders. However, there were some interesting variations in their roles and involvement within their respective CBO. In one of the CBOs, the current president had actively participated as a member during the establishment period. In the remaining two initiatives, the current presidents volunteered in the CBOs one to two years after their establishment. These individuals assumed leadership roles after the departure of the founder and former director and were appointed to fill the position. Their experiences as volunteers and subsequent elevation to the role of president offered unique perspectives on the initiatives' development, transitions, and ongoing operations. For these specific three CBOs, the researcher aimed to reach out to both parties to collect comprehensive and reliable information about the initiatives' origins, evolution,

and current operations. This approach enabled a more accurate representation of the CBOs' narratives.

To ensure the quality assurance of the interview process, Google Sheets was utilized and saved in the researcher graduate institute's e-cloud from the outset. A comprehensive sheet was created containing the names of the CBOs, along with verified contacts and information about their founders and current leaders. This sheet served as a guide, outlining the steps to be taken throughout the sampling and the interview process and facilitating effective follow-up on each initiative. By maintaining this organized and documented approach, the researcher established a robust foundation for data collection.

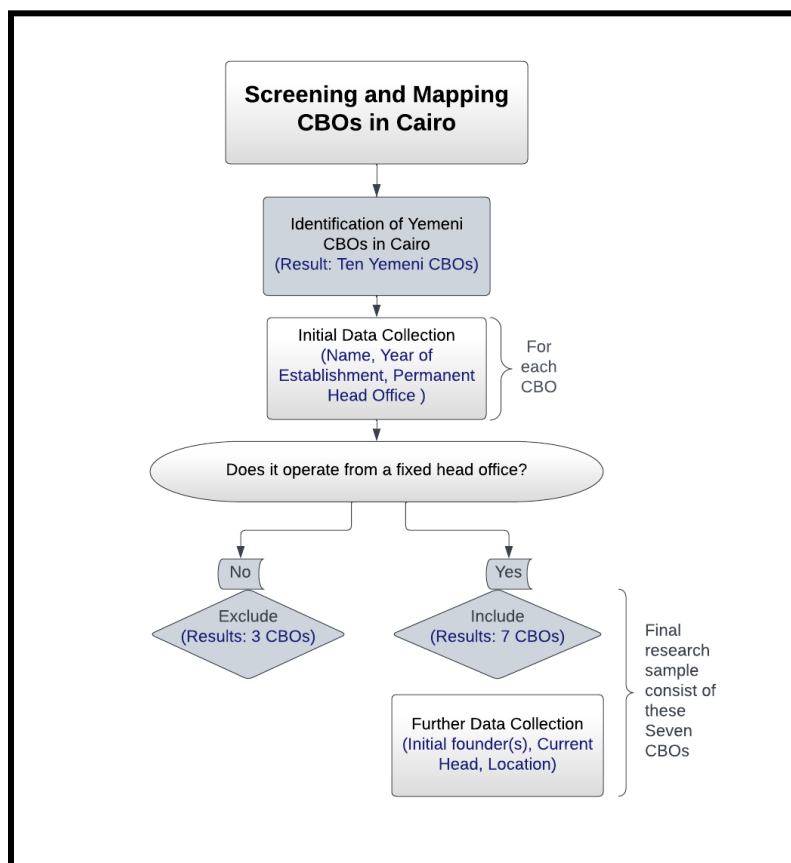


Figure (3): Screening and Mapping CBOs in Cairo

Source: Author



The presented flowchart outlines a structured process for screening, mapping, and selecting CBOs. It involves identifying Yemeni CBOs, collecting essential data, evaluating fixed head offices, conducting further data collection for interviews, and selecting a sample of seven CBOs.

#### **4.4 Research Sampling Techniques**

The initial sample consisted of seven Yemeni CBOs operating in different areas of Cairo. The researcher used the purposive sampling method to select the Yemeni CBOs that are included in the study. These CBOs were selected using purposive sampling techniques, including homogeneous, maximum variation, expert, and critical case sampling.

- 1. Homogeneous sampling** was employed to ensure the selected CBOs shared similar characteristics and experiences relevant to the research topic. These included their geographical focus, mission focus in providing humanitarian and relief support to the Yemeni community, cultural and linguistic ties, resource constraints, and the legal and regulatory context they operated within. This facilitated the identification of common patterns, themes, or challenges within the Yemeni CBO in Cairo.
- 2. Expert sampling** was utilized specifically to choose participants with authority and experience in the CBO. The researcher aimed to gather insights and perspectives from individuals who have played instrumental roles in establishing and leading the CBOs. The founder(s) and/or the director of the CBOs are considered experts due to their extensive experience, knowledge, and leadership roles within their respective organizations. Employing expert sampling and contacting the CBO's founder and director

would ensure that multiple perspectives and a comprehensive understanding of the CBO's context, dynamics, and impact are considered.

3. **Critical case sampling** was applied, designating one CBO as a critical case due to its unique status among the sampled CBOs. This particular CBO holds a license, which would present specific challenges, opportunities, and implications within the Yemeni CBO community in Cairo. The inclusion of this CBO particularly aimed to explore if there are specific challenges, opportunities, and implications associated with obtaining and maintaining a license within the Yemeni CBO community in Cairo to gain more relevant and informative insights related to the field of community-based organizations.

The sample comprises founder(s) and/or cofounder(s), and directors who hold key positions within the organizations, a total of ten participants. The selected CBOs have been assigned numerical codes (CBO 1 to CBO 7) to maintain anonymity, while the participants within each CBO are identified by alphabetical letters (A to G). This coding system enables a detailed examination of the experiences and perspectives of each participant while preserving the confidentiality of their identities. Table (1) provides an overview of the sample composition, highlighting the CBOs and the positions held by the participants.

## **4.5 Interviews Process and Outcomes**

A structured interview approach was adopted to ensure consistency and facilitate in-depth discussions with the participants because the interviews served as a primary data collection method to gain insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by the Yemeni CBOs

operating in Cairo. This section provides an overview of the interview process, including participant selection, contact stage result, acceptance, consent, and the interview outcomes.

As described in the previous section, the initial sample size of seven Yemeni CBOs formed the basis for participant selection. Contact was established with the identified participants, and the researcher explained the research purpose and sought their initial oral consent participation in the study. The researcher aimed to conduct interviews with the entire sample to ensure that the findings represent collective experiences. However, it should be noted that one of the CBOs founders was unreachable as s/he had left the CBO more than 5 years ago. Additionally, a director from another CBO refused to participate in the interview.

Furthermore, one of the founders, who is also the director of a CBO, initially agreed to do the interview. However, the researcher could not reach her/him on the scheduled interview day. Despite attempts to reestablish contact, it became evident that the expected participant did not want to proceed with the interview, possibly due to security concerns (table (2)). While the absence of key individuals may have limited the depth of information obtained for these specific CBOs, the researcher ensured that the overall data collection process remained comprehensive.

Some participants were asked to review the interview questions during the contact stage. The interview questions, developed in alignment with the research objectives, were available in English (Appendix 1) and translated into the participants' language, Arabic (Appendix 2). The researcher provided them with the Arabic version for their reference before the interview. This approach aimed to facilitate effective communication and ensure accurate participant responses.

Before conducting the interviews, participants were provided with a consent form in their preferred language. The form outlined the research purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and data handling procedures. The consent form was initially written in English

(Appendix 3 ) and then translated into the participants' language, Arabic (Appendix 4 ), to ensure clear understanding. The translated consent forms were reviewed at the beginning of each interview, and their informed consent was obtained before proceeding with the interviews. The interview questions and the consent form can be found in the Appendix for reference.

In conclusion, *seven* interviews were conducted with people from *six* CBOs. The interviews were conducted with the enthusiastic participants who provided their consent. These participants included two founders, two directors, and three individuals who served as founders and current directors of their respective CBOs. The interviews delved into various aspects of the Yemeni CBOs and provided a platform for participants to express their thoughts, opinions, and recommendations regarding the operations, effectiveness, and future directions of their respective CBOs. Engaging in in-depth discussions with these key stakeholders gained valuable insights regarding the research topic and information about their roles in addressing the needs of the Yemeni community in Cairo. During the interviews, participants shared their experiences, perspectives, and valuable insights, greatly enriching the understanding of the Yemeni CBOs and their contributions.

Furthermore, the in-depth interviews revealed unanticipated themes that had not been previously examined, offering valuable insights into the unexpected challenges encountered by CBOs, including resistance, a lack of awareness, and skepticism towards the work of CBOs among the migrant and refugee populations. Moreover, the interviews provided a glimpse into internal weaknesses and limitations within the CBOs, shedding light on aspects such as organizational capacity and resource constraints. The emergence of these findings added depth and intricacy to the comprehension of how CBOs operate and their effectiveness in addressing the needs of migrant and refugee communities. Including these new themes enriched the findings

and deepened our understanding of how these CBOs operate, their effectiveness, and their potential future directions.

A total of seven interviews were conducted, including two with co-founders, three with current co-founders who are still directors, and two with directors who were not involved during the establishment stage of the CBOs. Some interviews were conducted online, while others took place in person at the head offices of the CBOs in a field visit. This variation in interview settings provided valuable insights into the logistical aspects and overall conditions of the CBOs, particularly regarding their physical spaces and operational environments. By observing the head offices in person, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the organizational structure, resources, working environment, and dynamics of the CBOs. These firsthand experiences inspired the researcher to explore and discuss these aspects in the analysis, contributing to a more comprehensive portrayal of the CBOs and their operational contexts.

As new insights emerged during the interviews with CBOs), it became apparent that additional perspectives were essential. The researcher made genuine efforts to involve UNHCR staff and reached out to frequently mentioned NGOs. Regrettably, despite multiple attempts, securing their participation posed challenges, resulting in a limitation in the study's scope. While the research aimed to encompass a more diverse range of voices, these obstacles prevented their inclusion. Future research initiatives should prioritize engaging these stakeholders to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the subject.

The interview outcomes were recorded, transcribed, translated, and meticulously analyzed to identify common themes, patterns, and unique insights from the participants' perspectives. These findings significantly contribute to the research and shed light on the multifaceted nature of community-based organizations in the Yemeni community in Cairo. The

insights gained from these interviews have been carefully analyzed and presented in this research analysis and discussion chapter. They offer a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced, opportunities explored, and the overall impact of the Yemeni CBOs operating in Cairo.

## **4.6 Quality Assurance**

This section outlines the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the qualitative research conducted through in-depth interviews with participants. Our focus was on four key aspects: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

- ❖ **Credibility:** To establish credibility, multiple strategies were employed:
  - **Building Rapport and Trust:** Participants were familiar with the researcher's genuine interest in community issues due to prior involvement and rapport-building activities.
  - **Preliminary Discussions:** Initial discussions with select participants during the proposal stage fostered trust and openness.
  - **Triangulation:** Data triangulation involves collecting information from various sources, including interviews, field visits, observations, document analysis, and reports.
  - **Transcription and Translation:** Rigorous transcription and translation processes were employed to ensure an accurate representation of participants' responses.
  
- ❖ **Dependability:** Dependability was ensured through the following:
  - **Consistency:** Adherence to established interview protocols and procedures ensured data collection, transcription, and translation consistency.

- Documentation and File Organization: A systematic file organization method was used to manage interview data and related documents.
  - Transparency: Clear documentation of all research steps maintained transparency throughout the process.
- ❖ Transferability: to enhance transferability:
- Detailed Descriptions: The research context, participant demographics, and direct quotes were included to facilitate readers' assessment of the research's applicability to similar contexts.
  - Theoretical Saturation: Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, ensuring comprehensive insights.
- ❖ Confirmability: Confirmability was addressed by:
- Open-Ended Questions: Open-ended questions allowed participants to provide unbiased and genuine responses, ensuring that their answers were not influenced by preconceived notions.

By applying these quality assurance measures, we aimed to maintain our research findings' credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

## **4.7 Limitations**

While extensive efforts were made to ensure the quality and rigor of the qualitative research to provide valuable insights into the Yemeni community-based organizations (CBOs) operating in Cairo, the methodology's limitation might come from the context of the research

itself. The uncertain context of Egypt's laws and policies would limit the research process and outcomes because community leaders and CBOs leaders may not be able to conduct interviews. They would refuse to participate, which might negatively affect their CBOs due to their research involvement.

Additionally, the study was conducted at a specific point in time and within a specific socio-political context. The challenges and opportunities faced by Yemeni CBOs in Cairo are influenced by changing circumstances and external factors that were fully captured in this research in this area within a specific timeframe. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the context of the specific time period and may require reassessment in light of future developments, such as changes in the law of NGOs or the policies and regulations imposed on the Yemenis in the country.

In addition to that, it is also important to acknowledge other limitations that may have influenced the findings and interpretations of the study. Firstly, the study focused solely on the experiences and perspectives of Yemeni community-based organizations (CBOs) in Cairo, Egypt. While the findings provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by these specific entities, they may not fully represent other nationalities' CBOs or displaced populations in different locations. Therefore, caution should be taken when generalizing the findings to other contexts or populations.

Moreover, the interviews with the CBOs were primarily conducted in Arabic, as it was the preferred language of communication for the participants and the context in which the study took place. Participants have felt more at ease and able to fully express themselves in their native language, potentially impacting the richness and comprehensiveness of the data collected. The researcher made diligent efforts to accurately translate and interpret the interview scripts into



English for analysis. However, it is important to recognize that the use of translation might have resulted in the loss of certain nuances, subtleties, and cultural contexts that are inherent in the Arabic language. Given the cultural and linguistic context of the study, these potential translation limitations could have slightly influenced the findings and the depth of understanding obtained from the participants' responses.

This chapter outlines the data collection and analysis approach involving CBOs. It discusses sample selection, including systematic screening, resulting in the selection of seven CBOs. The interview methodology is detailed, emphasizing structured approaches and preparations. Quality assurance measures are implemented to maintain research integrity. Lastly, potential limitations are acknowledged.

## **Chapter Five: Analysis And Discussion**

In the findings chapter, the researcher delves into the characteristics of Yemeni CBOs, including their establishment history and legal status in Egypt. The chapter also explores the multifaceted roles played by these organizations, from raising community awareness to addressing challenges faced during the pandemic, along with potential mitigation strategies. Lastly, the chapter zooms in on specific challenges encountered by CBOs, encompassing legal, financial, administrative, and community-related issues, and provides insights into mitigation opportunities.

### **5.1 Yemeni CBOs in Egypt**

Yemeni CBOs share several characteristics because they have the same nationality, culture, and identity symmetries. Additionally, they operate in the same environment within one city, Cairo, and the same regulations and policies are imposed on them. By delving into these factors, this research aims to paint a nuanced and holistic portrait of the CBOs in Egypt and shed light on the multifaceted factors that have influenced their existence and impact. Through an exploration of the CBOs' essence, year of establishment, years of operation in Egypt, geographic location, founding members, staff composition, management size, target demographic, and establishment process. This section contributes to a deeper understanding of the CBOs' dynamics and their role in addressing the needs of the communities they serve. The following subsections provide an in-depth analysis of these characteristics, presenting a comprehensive overview of the CBOs and setting the foundation for the subsequent discussions.

### 5.1.1 Nature, Essence, and Characteristics of the Yemeni CBOs

According to the CBOs involved in this study, the journey of the CBOs serving the Yemeni community in Egypt begins as grassroots initiatives led and managed by dedicated Yemeni volunteers. These organizations emerged as a response to the pressing needs and challenges faced by the Yemeni population who fled to Egypt after the eruption of the Yemeni war in 2015. This surge in numbers played a pivotal role in inspiring the establishment of an initiative, “Mobadra,” as it is called in Arabic, by passionate individuals stepping forward to make a difference in their community. The word “مبادرة” (*Mubadara*) in Arabic refers to a non-profit initiative or a proactive action taken by an individual or a group of people who invest their time, skills, and resources voluntarily to address a specific issue or bring about positive change. It embodies the spirit of compassion, empathy, and taking the lead in reforming and making a difference. “Mobadarat,” or initiatives, are driven by a genuine desire to positively impact social well-being without seeking financial gain (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). This section delves into the origins of these initiatives and highlights their evolution from grassroots volunteer-managed initiatives, “*Mobadarat*,” into community-based organizations.

The early stages of these initiatives were characterized by a strong sense of community engagement and self-mobilization (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023; Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023). These initiatives embraced a volunteer-driven approach, relying on the enthusiasm and dedication of Yemeni volunteers. Recognizing the importance of addressing the specific needs of the Yemeni community in Egypt, passionate individuals within the initiatives dedicated their efforts towards various essential objectives (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023).

First, to ensure the safety and well-being of the Yemeni community in Egypt, and second, to address their immediate needs effectively (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). The establishment of the initiative was driven by a strong desire to support the Yemeni community within the Republic of Egypt, considering the challenges arising from differences in traditions, customs, cultures, dialects, and unfamiliarity with Egyptian places and laws (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). Witnessing the issues faced by Yemeni citizens compelled the founders to take action, aiming to safeguard the community members and raise awareness about their rights and responsibilities.

Specifically, all initiatives aim to educate the community about their rights and duties in Egypt as a host country, raise their awareness about the significance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), provide accurate information about services provides such as hospitals and some other governmental agencies, deliver guidance on housing options, facilitate enrollment in suitable schools for children, and extend assistance in the form of food packages, blankets, and financial support to the most vulnerable families. Particularly, these initiatives placed a strong emphasis on raising awareness among newcomers and Yemeni families, striving to disseminate accurate information about organizations and asylum procedures, combat exploitation, and empower the community by educating them about all these subject matters.

As these grassroots initiatives operated on a voluntary basis, relying on the collective efforts of passionate community members to achieve their mission, meetings and discussions were held in public spaces, emphasizing inclusivity and active participation. According to one participant, a gathering of Yemeni community members, including patients, students, and

refugees residing in Egypt, took place in a public park. Co-founder B further elaborated on the process, stating:

“With over 50 attendees, we collectively decided to establish the initiative. Subsequently, we held elections for the administrative body, and selected delegates for each area of the ten areas in Cairo, then we commenced our activities” (personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Another initiative was sparked coincidentally during a meeting among some passionate youth who gathered to discuss refugee issues in a cafe. One of the founders initiated a discussion about establishing a forum for Yemeni refugees in Egypt and other countries (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). These details highlight the grassroots nature of the initiative's formation and the active involvement of community members in shaping its core and direction.

Additionally, many initiatives adopted simple forms of communication and information sharing, utilizing platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook groups. These online channels played a crucial role in raising awareness and connecting the Yemeni community in Egypt. For example, one participant mentioned that the forum started as a WhatsApp group with the primary goal of increasing awareness. The group attracted participants from various nationalities, including Somali, Syrian, and Sudanese (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). Another WhatsApp group called 'Youth of Today' was formed with the aim of providing assistance and disseminating information about NGOs offering services. In these groups, individuals associated with NGOs would share information about their services and contact details for the benefit of other members (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023). These examples demonstrate how the initiatives effectively engaged and mobilized community members using easily accessible and widely used platforms. By increasing awareness and

sharing crucial information about essential services provided by different organizations, they offered assistance to the Yemeni community facing challenges in accessing community resources, service providers, or NGOs.

As these initiatives gained momentum and attention, notable organizations like St. Andrew's Refugee Service (StARS) and Terre Des Hommes (TDH) recognized their potential and offered support. Discussions were initiated with some of the initiatives to develop them into formal CBOs (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023; Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). In addition to that, the recognition they received from the organizations encouraged them to proceed in the development of the initiatives. All CBOs indicated that the development was driven by the desire to expand their reach, enhance their effectiveness, establish a sustainable framework for activities, and seek official recognition and accreditation. As the CBOs aimed to establish themselves as recognized institutions, they undertook the necessary procedures to solidify their status. This included finding suitable locations to serve as their official head offices, as it was recommended to some by StARS, who emphasized the importance of solidifying their legal status and recommended finding suitable locations for their official head offices to be applicable for NGO support. This milestone provided a significant boost to the development of the initiative, facilitating the transition from grassroots initiatives to structured community-based organizations.

The founders and the community members who initiated these CBOs shared a common vision and a deep commitment to helping those in need voluntarily. Therefore, during the phase of establishing head offices, almost all Yemeni CBOs were established through the dedicated efforts and financial contributions of the passionate individuals involved, alongside the support from the community. These committed individuals, including the founders, directors, and

volunteers of the initiatives, took the responsibility of providing full financial funding for creating the office spaces, demonstrating their commitment to the success of the initiatives. As one participant highlighted, “the initiative leader provided the full financial funding for the set up of the head office that cost around 35,000 EGP” (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). Another participant mentioned, "The founders contributed the startup cost of 7,000 EGP, and most of the costs were borne by the co-founder and the director at that time (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). A participant said:

“The cost of establishment is estimated at about 20 thousand pounds in terms of paying the rent for the head office with the commission of the broker who helped us find the head office, the cost of the apartment repairs, without including the costs of permits and legal matters” (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023).

In other cases, the volunteers also played a significant role in securing the necessary resources, as stated by one of the co-founders. They further explained, "We rented an office, and the rent and operating expenses, totaling 5000 EGP, were paid through contributions from the entire team”. Additionally, one of the volunteers generously donated tables and chairs that we used in our office. (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). These examples demonstrate the proactive efforts and highlight the collective commitment and dedication of these individuals.

Furthermore, some furniture and office supplies were prioritized, such as blackboards, chairs, tables, computers, laptops, and screens (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023). Another participant mentioned funds were allocated for office rent, furniture, and utilities, with each individual making financial contributions (Director D,

personal communication, May 19, 2023). Notably, the financial burden extended beyond rent and encompassed ongoing operational costs such as electricity and water, as mentioned by one participant (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). These statements exemplify the significant financial investment made by the founders, directors, and volunteers to cover the expense of the establishment of the head offices of the CBOs.

While the majority of the financial responsibility fell upon the dedicated volunteers, four CBOs received support from organizations like St. Andrew's Refugee Service (StARS) and Terre des Hommes (TDH). A director acknowledged the assistance received, stating that StARS covered the rent for a few months (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023), and TDH provided furniture such as chairs, tables, and cabinets for four CBOs to carry out activities and training for a period up to 6 months. Although this support was not uniformly extended to all CBOs, nor did it cover all expenses, their contributions, combined with the contribution from members of the CBOs, solidified the establishment of these entities and enabled them to start carrying out their activities as official CBOs.

In Summary, As the research progressed, a clear distinction emerged between the concept of an "initiative" and the subsequent formation of community-based organizations (CBOs).The following definition represents a synthesis of the responses gathered from all participants during interviews. An initiative, “Mobadara,” as constructed in this context, can be defined as.

“A grassroots entity driven by the voluntary spirit, operating solely on the voluntary contributions of time, skills, and resources from individuals dedicated to social responsibility towards their community. It is rooted in the values of compassion and empathy and taking the lead in reforming and making positive interventions, the initiative



thrives without the trappings of official or formality aspects such as a designated head office, license, or legal cover.”

A CBO, on the other hand, as it operates in Egypt, signifies a more structured and formalized organization. It has a physical office and legal status, whether by obtaining a license, obtaining the necessary authorization through a licensed organization or association as it will be explained more in the subsequent sections, or obtaining an unauthorized legal cover. The distinction between initiatives and CBOs highlights the evolution of these community-driven efforts from informal grassroots to more established and recognized entities that are better equipped to address the needs of the displaced community in Egypt. In Egypt's specific context, these distinctions hold significant implications, as misinterpretations of these terms may hinder the progress of CBOs seeking official recognition and licensing. When government authorities fail to acknowledge initiatives as CBOs as legitimate organizations, it can impede their ability to operate effectively, underscoring the necessity of clarifying these concepts. Therefore, based on this definition and previous definitions of RLO, RCO, and CBO, it can be deduced that they all refer to the same thing, that is, a formal or an informal organization led by refugees to serve their community or the wider displaced community.

### **5.1.2 Year of Establishment and Location Rationale**

As mentioned in the background, the Yemeni population in Egypt has experienced substantial growth since the start of the Yemen conflict in 2015. The estimated number of Yemenis in Egypt prior to the conflict was around 70,000, but it has significantly increased to an estimated range of 500,000 to 700,000 (Al-Absi, 2020). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that Yemenis now make up approximately 1 million people in Egypt,

constituting 11% of the country's migrant population (IOM, 2022). As of January 2023, 7,671 Yemeni asylum-seekers have registered with UNHCR Egypt, highlighting the growing demand for support, services, and integration initiatives for Yemeni individuals and families in Egypt.

The seven CBOs interviewed for the research were established during various years, namely 2015, 2016, and 2019, coinciding with the influx of Yemeni migrants and refugees as a natural consequence of this demographic shift. When the war broke out in Yemen in 2015 and Yemenis fled to many countries, including Egypt, some exploitation took place (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). Some individuals deluded Yemeni citizens, promising resettlement abroad (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). As a result, some Yemenis sold their homes and lands in Yemen in the hope of coming to Egypt, misled by these fraudsters and their false promises of traveling to Europe (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Many Yemenis were unaware of the concept of asylum and the role of the United Nations High Commissioner. To address this, they saw the significance of providing education on all aspects of asylum, emphasizing that registration is free. All CBOs indicated that their main goal was to empower the community with knowledge, ensuring they understood their rights and viable options (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). Recognizing the importance of registering with the UNHCR, the initiative was formed to educate Yemeni refugees about this vital process (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023).

As it is reported by the UNHCR through the years from 2015 to 2023, the graph below illustrates the correlation between the increasing number of Yemeni asylum seekers and the timing of CBOs' establishment. It is worth noting that the number of registered asylum-seekers does not represent the actual number of Yemenis in Egypt, as mentioned by the IOM, due to

social factors that the researcher would suggest to be explored in further research. Moreover, the graph would elaborate how the low number of registered refugees could also explain the increase in the number of CBOs established in recent years to raise awareness about rights of asylum-seekers and support their registration with the UNHCR.

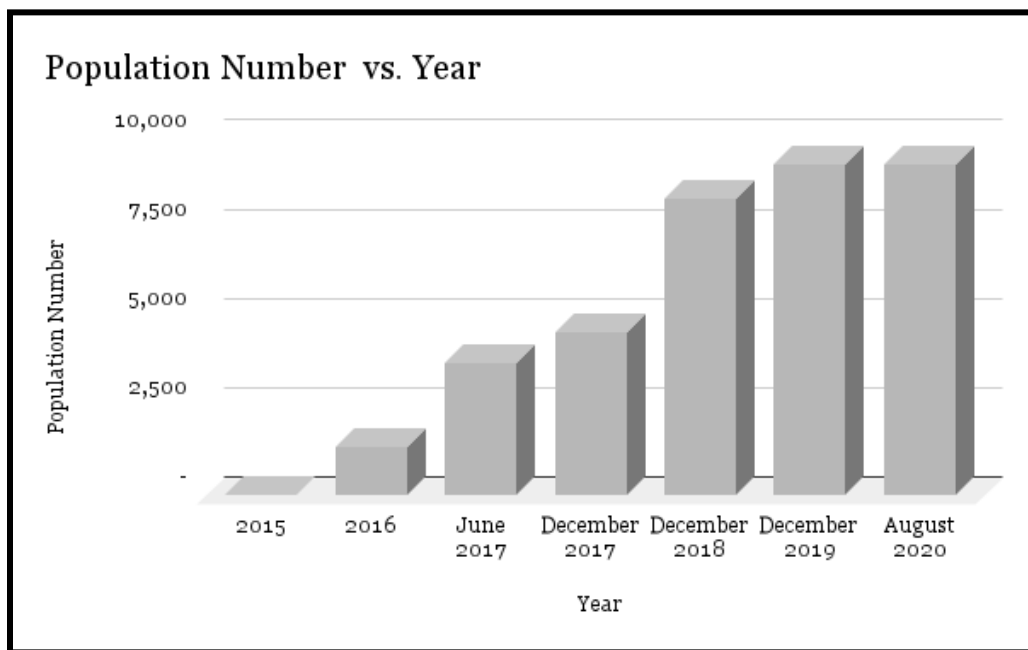


Figure (4): Yemeni Population Growth in Egypt

Source: Author

This graph demonstrates that as the Yemeni population in Egypt grew and the demand for assistance and support increased, CBOs emerged to address the specific needs of this vulnerable group. The intersection between the years of CBOs' establishment and the rising number of asylum seekers suggests a direct response to the growing challenges faced by the Yemeni community in Egypt and highlights the proactive role of CBOs in addressing the needs of the Yemeni population and indicates the relevance and timeliness of the research in understanding the impact of these organizations on the community they serve.

Most CBOs interviewed for this research are situated in various areas within Cairo, Egypt. They have strategically positioned their offices in different areas to cater to the diverse refugee and migrant community. These locations include Faisal, 6th of October, Dokki, Ard Al-Liwa in Giza Governorate, and Hadayek El Maadi, which are recognized as popular residential destinations among Yemeni individuals (Al-Absi, 2020). The selection of these locations was driven by specific reasons that aligned with the needs and proximity of the Yemeni community. One participant shared their rationale for selecting that specific area:

“We choose to have the head office in Ard Al-Liwa because this area attracts a significant Yemeni population due to factors such as prevailing financial challenges, limited resources, and health issues, which prompt individuals to seek affordable living options. This area is known for its popularity and comparatively lower cost of living compared to other areas in Cairo”  
(Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023).

By establishing the CBO in this specific location, they aimed to be easily accessible and provide support to the Yemeni community in need. In a similar vein, another participant explained the rationale for relocating the head office from Al-Omrana to Faisal, emphasizing that the decision was based on proximity to the beneficiaries (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). This move was intended to ensure easier access and closer proximity to the target population, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their services.

During the researcher's field visits to some of the CBOs during the interview process, it was observed that the majority of them operated from office spaces located within residential apartments. This may seem unlikely for organizations handling a significant number of beneficiaries, with estimates ranging from 100 to 750 monthly individuals, as mentioned in the

interviews, and employing operational staff as large as 22 individuals in some CBOs. As one participant explained,

“Our office is in an apartment building with many residents. The increase in the number of participants has made it difficult for us to provide enough space for everyone in some activities, especially those that attract a large number of attendees who are mostly refugees or migrants.” (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Furthermore, the field visits allowed the researcher to witness the poor condition of the apartments and dilapidated furniture, reflecting the financial and operational challenges faced by these CBOs. These findings, in addition to their location at residential buildings, raises important questions regarding the operational capacity and resources of the CBOs. These challenges will be further explored and analyzed in the coming sections.

### **5.1.3 Legal Status of the Yemeni CBOs in Egypt**

The existing legal framework shapes the legal status of Yemeni Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in Egypt, particularly Article 2 of the Civil Society law, which places refugee-led organizations, as Hegazy (2023) stated, including Yemeni CBOs, within the category of civil society organizations. This section analyzes the characteristics of the legal status of Yemeni CBOs in Egypt, highlighting the implications and obstacles they face.

The legal landscape presents several challenges for Yemeni Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to register and obtain official nonprofit organization licenses, as confirmed by all participants. These challenges include the absence of a specific legal definition for CBOs and the requirement for foreign citizens to establish initiatives under cover of an

Egyptian association or register with the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). One participant highlighted the legal distinction between the initiatives and the association in Egyptian law, they stated that initiatives cannot be licensed while associations do (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). To be licensed, restrictions are imposed on having a fixed head office location and on the percentage of foreigners allowed on the board (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023; Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023; Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023; Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023).

The participants expressed their fear of conflicts with Egyptians in the future, which discouraged them from seeking Egyptian partners (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). This hesitation is fueled by the perception that Egyptians may not understand how to deal with refugees (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023) and concerns that the Egyptian partner could abruptly take control of the initiative (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). Additionally, CBOs must meet the MoSS requirements, including a non-refundable 20,000 EGP fee, setting up a bank account for funding, and potential taxation. Stringent documentation, such as proof of legal residence and passport numbers, adds further constraints (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023; Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). These challenges align with previous research, including Hegazy's study on Eritrean CBOs in Egypt (2023).

Despite the concerted efforts made by the founders and the heads of Yemeni CBOs, as indicated by participants, six of the seven Yemeni CBOs interviewed in this study are not

registered, compelling them to adopt alternative legal approaches. According to all the interviewed CBOs, the approach they have adopted to operate is commonly called a "legal cover"; several CBOs explained legal cover as seeking recognition and affiliation with established organizations or associations registered and authorized by the MoSS. By obtaining legal cover, the initiative is considered to operate under the affiliation of that organization "Umbrella Organization" (Rosenberg, 2016), allowing it to extend its activities under its name. Two CBO leaders highlighted the importance of renewing the legal cover agreement between the CBO and the authorized organization annually to maintain its ongoing validity. One of the participants mentioned that incomplete procedures from the association side sometimes hindered the CBOs from obtaining approval from the MoSS to legitimize their legal cover document fully.

"Initially, we obtained legal cover from a Syrian institution, which provided a document stating that the CBO operates as part of their organization. However, this organization did not establish a formal contract with us or register the CBO with the MoSS. As a result, we cannot operate officially in terms of interactions with organizations, government institutions, and banks" (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

The legal cover process involves two parts, as explained by the participant. Firstly, they acquire a document from a licensed organization affirming that the CBO is part of their institution. Secondly, they register the CBO's name at the MoSS and receive a specific code that enables the CBO to open a bank account in its name to receive funds and financial support. All interviewed CBOs have the legal cover stamped by the licensed organization only, which does not grant the CBOs a license, as stated by one of the CBO leaders; instead, it serves as a form of

protection. If a government official requests a permit, the CBOs can present the legal cover document deemed sufficient to continue operating (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). Five CBOs have obtained legal cover informally with a registered Sudanese CBO, while only one of the CBOs interviewed has formally been registered under a Syrian organization. They obtained the authorized legal cover from the MoSS to secure funding and ensure the continuity of their CBO (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023).

Therefore, obtaining legal cover that is only stamped from the licensed parent organization safeguards CBOs against potential threats or government inquiries to carry on their activities. However, it does not provide the same level of legitimacy as being officially licensed or authorized under another licensed CBO or organization by the MoSS, which makes it possible for CBOs to proceed with administrative and financial transactions to start new projects.

## **5.2 Yemeni CBOs' Role**

While the primary focus of this paper is to explore the challenges and opportunities encountered by Yemeni Community-Based Organizations in Egypt, it is crucial to delve into their role, which is the driving force behind their establishment. This section aims to examine the critical role played by Yemeni CBOs in Egypt, which includes raising community awareness, enhancing community integration, providing assistance, advocating and connecting refugees with UNHCR and NGOs, and building community capacity. Each of these aspects contributes to the overall well-being of the Yemeni refugees. All Yemeni CBOs in Egypt work closely with other organizations, both within the Yemeni community and with broader networks of NGOs and international NGOs, including the UNHCR. They play an essential role in advocating for the rights of Yemeni refugees and migrants in Egypt and raising awareness of their conditions



among the wider public. Yemeni CBOs in Egypt provide services and support, including assistance with legal documentation, access to healthcare, education, employment, and provision of shelter and basic needs such as food and clothing. They also provide psychosocial support to individuals and families who have experienced trauma and displacement. The information above emphasizes the necessity and significant role of CBOs as first responders within their communities, which has become even more apparent during the pandemic.

By understanding the pivotal role of these CBOs, we gain valuable insights into their efforts in establishing crucial connections with various stakeholders and their response to the challenges posed to the community. Recognizing the significance of CBOs is vital in comprehensively analyzing the experiences and outcomes of Yemeni CBOs in Egypt and identifying the interventions and strategies they employ to address their unique challenges. Through this understanding, we can better understand the challenges faced by CBOs in the subsequent sections and develop effective recommendations and policies to support their endeavors.

### **5.2.1 Raise Community Awareness**

One of the primary objectives of CBOs is to increase community awareness among Yemeni refugees in Egypt. As mentioned earlier, this involves educating them about their rights, obligations, and available services. Through these awareness campaigns, CBOs aim to empower the community by providing them with essential information to navigate their new environment successfully (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). All CBOs in the study confirmed that they offer consultations and legal workshops to address various aspects, such as host country laws, access to education and healthcare, and the importance of UNHCR

registration. As a result of these initiatives, the number of Yemeni refugees registered with UNHCR has significantly increased, demonstrating the impact of these awareness campaigns (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

### **5.2.2 Enhance Integration**

As mentioned in the literature review, Arab refugee communities, including the Yemeni society, face fewer challenges in integrating with the host community due to similarities in language, culture, and religion (Grabska, 2006). Therefore, it has not been mentioned in the participants' responses that Yemeni CBOs specifically design integration programs for their beneficiaries. One co-founder believes that integration programs have a limited impact compared to programs focused on distributing food packages, which are highly valued by the community. Therefore, there is a need for increased interest among Yemenis in integration awareness programs (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).

Some partner NGOs slightly contribute to enhancing integration with the host community. TDH, for example, provides essential training to address the community's needs, mainly focusing on providing programs such as computers and maintenance training for refugees and Egyptian youth together (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). Additionally, TDH offers social integration training programs for CBOs, fostering an exchange of knowledge and ideas (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023).

### **5.2.3 Provide Financial and Moral Support**

CBOs are crucial in providing diverse assistance to refugees, demonstrating their commitment to improving the lives of displaced individuals, especially women and children. Financial assistance, food boxes, blankets, and fans are among the aid provided by almost all

CBOs to help families during different seasons. Furthermore, CBOs actively engage in fundraising activities, such as bazaars, to generate additional revenue to aid families needing financial support or medical treatment (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023; Director D, personal touch, May 19, 2023).

Supporting displaced persons goes beyond material assistance, as CBOs prioritize their overall well-being, especially women and children. They offer various training programs, including health, social, and psychological training, to help individuals cope with the challenges they face in their daily lives (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023; Director D, personal touch, May 19, 2023; Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023; Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). These programs aim to provide security and stability in their new environment (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023).

CBOs are vital in creating a cohesive, cooperative, and interdependent society. As mentioned by one of the participants, these aspects are essential, especially during emergencies such as death or wedding parties, as it promotes social bonds (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). The CBOs' transformative work is evident in the positive changes seen in the lives of beneficiaries, fostering a sense of empowerment and control over their lives (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). The impact of CBOs extends not only to beneficiaries but also to volunteers involved in educational and rehabilitative roles. By addressing the multifaceted needs of the community, CBOs play a significant role in positively supporting vulnerable people and fostering resilience among refugees and migrants in Egypt.

#### **5.2.4 Connecting Refugees with UNHCR and NGOs**

In addition to their support, CBOs play an important role in advocating and connecting refugees with crucial services provided by humanitarian organizations. Through their strong networks and partnerships, CBOs act as intermediaries, helping refugees access these resources. One significant aspect of this role is helping new refugees navigate the process of registration with the UNHCR, which grants them asylum-seeker status and allows them to apply for residency permits, thus safeguarding them from refoulement (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Moreover, CBOs actively assist refugees facing challenges within the UNHCR system. For instance, when a refugee with a UNHCR yellow card faces rejection in their application for the UNHCR blue card, CBOs step in to help file an appeal, striving to secure the blue card for the applicant (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023).

All CBOs also connect beneficiaries with a network of humanitarian organizations, including TDH, StARS, PSTIC, CARE, Caritas, MSF, Refugee Egypt, Egyptian Foundation For Refugees, Egypt ICRC, and IOM. By acting as intermediaries, CBOs transfer refugees to these organizations, making it easier for them to access the support and services they need (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023; Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). The partnership between most of the CBOs and organizations involves regular meetings and collaboration on various projects to address the needs of refugees with organizations such as StARs, TDH, and PSTIC (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

The CBOs also form direct referral pathways between refugees and partner organizations. This allows vulnerable refugees who are in need or need immediate assistance to easily access the services they provide. CARE's collaboration with CBOs has resulted in projects focused on

issues like gender-based violence (GBV) and sewing training for women (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). The involvement of CBOs with Caritas has led to the transfer and referrals of cases for special needs, while MSF's programs have been supported through referrals made by CBOs (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). These are some of the many examples the study participants shared on how they cooperate and refer cases to various NGOs.

CBOs play a pivotal role in connecting refugees with the UNHCR and humanitarian organizations. By facilitating access to essential services and resources, CBOs significantly contribute to improving the lives of Yemeni refugees in Egypt. Their partnerships and collaborations demonstrate the collective effort to support and empower the displaced community.

### **5.2.5 Role during the Pandemic**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges for the community and the CBOs. The role of CBOs in supporting the Yemeni refugees and displaced individuals in Egypt became even more crucial. As the UNHCR and the Ministry of Health faced challenges in reaching the displaced community, CBOs stepped up to fill the gap and ensure the well-being and safety of the vulnerable population. Four CBO leaders highlighted that starting operations during this period increased the demand for their services due to the pandemic shutdown. In response to the pandemic, relief efforts were carried out by the CBOs, where providing direct financial aid or food packages was critical for the community at that time (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023; (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication,

May 29, 2023) Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). Due to the COVID shutdown, the pandemic had a profound impact on Yemeni refugees and displaced individuals, with many losing their jobs, particularly in places like restaurants and cafes. This situation led them to seek help from the CBOs, increasing the CBOs' responsibilities. As a result, the CBOs intensified their efforts to seek support from the UNHCR and various organizations to distribute aid to those in need (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

Moreover, amidst the pandemic, vaccination efforts were crucial to safeguard public health. Five of the CBOs interviewed confirmed that they played an active role in facilitating the vaccination process for the community. The UNHCR served as a communication channel between community leaders and the Ministry of Health. Meetings were organized in hospital halls or hotels, attended by representatives from the Egyptian Ministry of Health, World Health Organization, UNICEF, and other relevant officials. These meetings focused on various aspects of vaccination, such as developing applications to inform beneficiaries about receiving polio or COVID-19 vaccines. In addition, the CBOs assisted in administering vaccines by allowing their offices to be used as vaccination centers. The COVID-19 vaccines were issued from the health office of their area, authorized by the Ministry of Health, the body responsible for conducting the vaccination drive (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). The pandemic showcased the critical role that CBOs play in supporting and improving the well-being of the Yemeni community in Egypt.

### **5.3 Challenges Faced by CBOs and Mitigation Opportunities**

CBOs differ from organizations such as TDH and PSTIC that serve and employ refugees in that CBOs are founded and managed by refugees as well (Grabska, 2006; Hegazy, 2023;

Huser, 2014; Rosenberg, 2016). Thus, CBOs occupy a unique space in the civil society organizations in Egypt. CBOs being the only organizations that are founded and run by refugees, and primarily serves and employs refugees, it faces unique challenges. These challenges as will be discussed below are related to the fact that CBOs are managed by refugees and how this affects the way they are treated by the government, service providers and the host community, how it makes them unwilling to compromise with some of the requirements of licensure (appointing Egyptian nationals to 75% of the management board) and the issues that result from it.

### **5.3.1 Legal challenges**

Previous studies into refugee CBOs in Egypt have shown that most CBOs can't obtain legal licenses because the licensing process is expensive, complicated and includes conditions that CBOs view as against their own interest such as appointing majority Egyptian nationals to its management board. Thus, most CBOs resort to obtaining legal cover instead (Hegazy, 2023; Huser, 2014). Even among the CBOs included in this study only *one* CBO out of the *seven* interviewed has a legal license. As a result, this section will mostly focus on the legal challenges faced by the CBOs which have a legal cover. One significant issue is that the legal cover exposes them to exploitation by some organizations providing the legal cover. Although these institutions may be officially registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the agreement between them and the CBOs is mostly not formally documented by the ministry. Participants highlighted various conditions imposed by these organizations. For instance, some organizations offer a short-term legal cover and demand payment for its renewal once it expires, despite lacking authorization from the MoSS (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29,

2023). The required payment can range from 3,000 to 5,000 Egyptian pounds, or even higher, which is seen as exploitative and consequently rejected by CBOs (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). Several CBO leaders expressed their inability to afford such amounts, as their earnings are primarily allocated to cover operational expenses.

Furthermore, CBOs face the potential exploitation by umbrella organizations or legal cover providers, who may require them to give a percentage of the funds they might receive. This poses additional financial burdens for CBOs, particularly when it comes to funding received to cover the needs of refugees. For instance, the association providing legal cover to the initiative may ask for half of the funding received, which directly affects the resources available to support refugees (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). A CBO Co-founder shared their experience with three organizations providing legal cover for the CBO. Each organization had different requirements and conditions. The first organization demanded a percentage of all activities and training conducted by the CBO, even if a small fee was charged for those services. The second organization imposed administrative fees on funding received, while the third one, which now provides legal cover for them, would deduct a percentage from any funding deposited into their bank account as “a commission fee” (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Another issue arises when the organizations that provide the legal cover expect to benefit from the CBO's activities. For instance, the organization may invite its own beneficiaries to attend events or training sessions organized by the CBO, even though it does not contribute to the associated costs (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Additionally, some of them impose the condition that during meetings with external organizations, it is necessary to mention the umbrella organization's name, potentially creating



further complications (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). These challenges underscore the limitations and risks associated with relying on a legal cover provided by external organizations. Additionally, the lack of legal authorization has implications not only for the CBOs but also for the umbrella organizations providing them with legal cover. Although these umbrella organizations are not officially responsible for any problems faced by the CBOs, they may still be indirectly affected. One CBO co-founder and director expressed their reluctance to raise controversy or fear of encountering problems in the current environment, as it could potentially harm the Sudanese association that provides them with the unauthorized legal cover (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023).

The lack of legal authorization, specifically in terms of registration and official recognition from relevant authorities, has significant consequences for the functioning and growth of CBOs. These organizations face various challenges and limitations due to their unregistered status, which impacts their ability to operate effectively and access resources and support. Firstly, the anxiety as they fear potential security issues and, from a security perspective, the lack of legal cover leaves the CBOs in a constant state of apprehension of the confiscation of their property by the government (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Secondly, the absence of legal authorization has posed operational challenges for the CBOs, particularly in establishing bank accounts for financial transactions and hindering their collaboration with organizations. For instance, a participant shared that an NGO faced difficulties in transferring project funds, ultimately resulting in their decision to discontinue cooperation with the CBO (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). The requirement for authorization or a license is one of the primary obstacles, as some organizations do not provide assistance to CBOs without proper

license (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023). Furthermore, In terms of connection and cooperation chances, the fear of dealing with unregistered CBOs makes it challenging for the CBOs to establish connections and engage with the UNHCR and other partner NGOs (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

“Part of maintaining sustainability is declaring the CBO, as I noticed recently that applying for any form of support requires an authorization number” (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023).

Furthermore, the absence of legal cover restricts the implementation of planned projects, activities and the support organizations can provide to the initiatives (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023). Therefore, it is worth noting that the lack of legal authorization creates significant challenges that hinder their overall development and ability to fully engage with stakeholders and build partnerships.

The CBOs have developed strategies to navigate the challenges of the lack of legal authorization. One participant claimed that the process has become more stringent and shared their concern about additional unknown documents that may be required (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). However, Participants acknowledged their proactive approach in seeking guidance from a lawyer with expertise in establishing associations and institutions (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). They expressed their determination to understand the requirements and procedures set by the MoSS in order to navigate the process of obtaining a license for their CBOs (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Yet, some CBOs have encountered exploitation by lawyers during their registration process. In one case, a lawyer offered to help obtain the necessary license but demanded

substantial fees for each step, accumulating to a total amount far beyond the means of the CBO (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023).

Partner organizations have made efforts to raise awareness among CBOs about the law and the licensing process, as these requirements were initially considered challenging due to limited connections and knowledge of the legal details (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). Five CBOs indicated there had been collaborative efforts between CBOs and organizations like UNHCR, StARS, and TDH to assist in the registration process. A CBO Co-founder & Director said StARS organized an awareness meeting to discuss the legal procedures, although the discussion remained superficial without delving into the intricate details (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Furthermore, a few CBOs have recently made progress in their registration process by understanding the requirements, preparing the required documents, and searching for Egyptians who can serve as board of trustees. As stated by Co-founder & Director E, "We finally found 3 Egyptian people who we trust, and we have started cooperating with TDH, which has provided a lawyer to offer legal advice." (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023).

Although the UNHCR and partner organizations are working towards improving awareness and support for CBOs to be officially registered, the reality is that the stringent conditions and regulations continue to present significant obstacles to the registration process.

### **5.3.2 Funding and Financial Challenges**

The Yemeni Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in Egypt face numerous challenges in terms of funding and financial support as a result of their legal status in the country. As a result, the funding aspect is deeply intertwined with the legal status, as the inability to be

legitimized prevents the CBOs from receiving funds, donations, or financial support (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). This limitation in funding poses continuity challenges for the initiatives (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). Obtaining a license is directly linked to securing funding, as organizations are hesitant to provide financial support without the CBOs having the appropriate permits and a designated bank account (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). This limitation in funding extends to various aspects, as the CBOs struggle to receive logistical or in-kind support from organizations, entities, or parties (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

“The absence of the necessary license prevents us from receiving any funding. NGOs and funders should make an exception for CBOs in terms of funding because they are aware that we cannot obtain a license” (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).

Furthermore, when some organizations accept to provide the CBOs with some funds, the funding received from organizations might be irregular, with some offering continuous support while others provide assistance for a limited period. For example, StARS provides long-term funding that would last sometime to a year, whereas TDH supports initiatives for a maximum of six months (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023). Additionally, certain organizations may suddenly terminate funding without clear reasons or interfere in the internal affairs of the CBOs after providing financial assistance (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023; Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023). The lack of consistent funding and the interference of NGOs creates negative consequences in the operation of CBOs.

CBOs' directors confirmed that in their pursuit of additional funding sources, they often approach embassies, beginning with the Yemeni embassy. However, they encounter a significant hurdle in the form of the embassy's requirement for full control over the CBO in exchange for financial support. A CBO director stated that when some foreign embassies accept to provide them with a fund for a project, they wanted the transaction to happen through the Yemeni Embassy. This condition severely limits the CBO's ability to access funds and hampers their autonomy and potential for obtaining diverse support from other sources (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023).

CBOs face distinct funding challenges related to their Yemeni nationality, including the notable discrimination and limited support they receive compared to CBOs of other nationalities. This discrepancy is evident in the unequal distribution of resources, such as food packages and blankets, where Yemeni CBOs are often excluded in favor of CBOs from Sudanese and South Sudanese communities (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). In an effort to overcome potential biases or oversight towards Yemenis and the Yemeni Dilemma in addition to not acknowledging their refugee status (Background of Yemeni), they strategically refrain from explicitly mentioning their Yemeni identity when presenting funding proposals to sponsors and donors. Instead, they emphasize their role as a community-based initiative serving refugee populations of various nationalities, including women, girls, and children (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). This approach is adopted as a means to increase the chances of gaining support and attention from potential donors who may not be as responsive to Yemeni-led initiatives (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). It also allows them to broaden their appeal and increase their chances of securing financial support for their programs and services.

The limited availability of resources and reliance on donations and charitable assistance further exacerbate the financial challenges faced by CBOs. The limitations faced by CBOs have severe implications on their ability to cover critical operational expenses. Many administrators and volunteers work without any financial compensation, including salaries (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). The inability to secure projects and adequate financing hinders the initiative's ability to cover volunteer expenses as well. Without sufficient funding, volunteers are unable to continue their involvement as they often bear the costs to volunteer. All of the CBOs interviewed attested that operational expenses like rent and utility bills also become challenging to cover on a monthly basis. The shortage of financial support has also impacted their ability to purchase necessary furniture and equipment such as computers, stationery materials, chairs, and tables (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). Additionally, the lack of financial resources prevents them from maintaining their existing furniture, leaving them unable to repair or replace damaged items (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

All the CBOs interviewed expressed that this financial scarcity hampers their ability to provide adequate financial aid and food supplies to the community, further exacerbating the burden they face (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Moreover, the lack of consistent and sufficient funding, combined with the necessity to prioritize operational expenses and maintain a presence in the community, severely restricts the leaders' capacity to think innovatively and develop programs that align with their objectives (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). It is important to note that most CBOs rely on donations from their members, which often prove insufficient to establish long-term stability.

In order to supplement their income, some CBOs rely on nominal fees collected from training courses. However, these fees are often insufficient to cover all operational costs, and additional funding is required from the administrative body to meet financial obligations such as rent, utilities, and basic supplies like toiletries, papers, pens, and tea and coffee for staff (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). However, the inflation of the Egyptian currency and the increasing prices have had a detrimental effect on CBOs, making it increasingly challenging for them to cover basic expenses with their available financial resources (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023).

The financial constraints faced by CBOs have led them to adopt strategies to generate income and cover operational expenses. One approach is to offer courses and training programs that generate revenue was confirmed by all CBOs. As mentioned by a CBO founder who stated the priority of providing services without financial burdens while also offering courses that generate sufficient income (Founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). This reliance on course fees becomes essential for covering costs such as rent, utility bills, and volunteer compensation (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023), as confirmed by all of the interviewed CBOs. Education, particularly English language courses and computer training, is highlighted as a vital form of assistance that ensures the sustainability of CBOs, as they provide a continuous source of income compared to other courses (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).

“There should always be ongoing education and training classes within the CBO to ensure continuity, as we cannot afford to halt our training activities” (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023).

However, they further explained that the nature of their work as CBOs limits the financial returns, as the state restricts commercial activities. Another CBO leader emphasized the stark contrast in pricing, with their English language training course offered at a significantly lower fee compared to commercial centers providing the same courses (personal communication, May 13, 2023). While another CBO leader highlighted the declining financial returns due to inflation and rising prices, noting that the returns earned from courses provided to refugees are no longer sufficient to cover the costs of running the CBOs (personal communication, May 19, 2023). Additionally, the majority of the CBOs confirmed that there had been a decline in the attendance of beneficiaries from the community in their courses. This decrease in attendance is primarily attributed to their inability to afford the course fees and transportation costs (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023; Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023).

Moreover, as part of their efforts to decrease maintenance expenses associated with repairing or replacing furniture, CBOs has implemented a measure that requires trainees to sign an agreement to use the facilities, equipment and furniture responsibly. This agreement emphasizes the importance of following the rules and regulations of the head office, particularly in terms of preserving property and maintaining a respectful environment. By doing so, the CBOs aim to reduce the likelihood of damages to furniture and other resources, ensuring cost-effectiveness in the long-run (Co-founder & Director B, personal communication, May 22, 2023, Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023, Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023)

A CBO leader emphasized that obtaining a permit is perceived as a crucial step towards securing sufficient funding and ensuring the long-term sustainability of their work (Co-founder



& Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023). Therefore, despite their diligent efforts to navigate financial challenges, the continuity of CBOs and their financial stability cannot be guaranteed unless they are backed by legal licensing. The legal status of the CBOs plays a pivotal role in their ability to access funding, establish partnerships, and effectively address the needs of the community. Thus, obtaining the necessary legal authorization becomes a crucial factor in their quest for financial stability and ongoing operations.

### **5.3.3 Administrative and Management Challenges**

Based on the information provided by the participating Community-Based Organizations in the study and considering the legal and financial challenges discussed earlier. As well as the organization's initial lack of experience, which hindered the development of a strong internal structure as explained by a participant of a CBO, it becomes apparent that CBOs need more administrative and operational challenges. Of particular concern are the difficulties associated with volunteer and employee management. Additionally, the need for more material supplies and operational assets adds a layer of strain to the CBOs' ability to carry out their activities effectively. In this section, we will delve into these challenges and explore their implications for the overall functioning and effect of the CBOs.

#### **5.3.3.1 Services and Program Design**

The effective development and implementation of services and programs by community-based organizations (CBOs) play a vital role in meeting the needs of the communities they serve. These communities require additional financial and operational resources to support their capacity-building efforts in the host country, which can be achieved by providing development courses, training programs, and livelihood initiatives. However, the need

for more operational facilities, primarily driven by funding and financial challenges, presents significant hurdles in achieving these objectives. In this section, we will explore the insights shared by study participants, shedding light on the impact of resource scarcity and financial constraints on the design, delivery, and effectiveness of programs and services offered by CBOs.

While transitioning from an initiative to a CBO, organizations faced challenges in upgrading their services and effectively designing programs to uplift the living standards of the Yemeni community and empower its members. Initially, their focus was primarily on educating refugees through platforms like WhatsApp and online channels, along with providing relief services. A CBO participant specifically highlighted the initial limitations they faced, where their activities were primarily centered around distributing food baskets due to the lack of essential resources like chairs, tables, and furniture (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). Thus, the CBOs have been criticized by beneficiaries due to their lack of services (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). The absence of adequate facilities constrained the range of their activities and hindered the expansion of services beyond immediate relief efforts.

The analysis and discussion reveal that CBOs have made concerted efforts to shift their focus from relief and financial aid toward community development and self-empowerment. Two CBOs shared their respective approaches to understanding the community's needs, involving mechanisms such as questionnaires, field trips, evaluations, and direct engagement with beneficiaries through WhatsApp groups. While the UNHCR and partner organizations rely on the CBOs for this information about their respective refugee community, the CBOs need more adequate financial support. This participatory approach empowers refugees to suggest programs based on their specific needs, such as photography courses, make-up classes, and formal writing workshops (Founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). Additionally, if

beneficiaries express a need for a particular service, the CBO strives to provide it, ensuring responsiveness to community demands (Founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023; Founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). The majority of CBOs have made efforts to assess and understand the needs of their communities through different approaches that vary in their simplicity and execution.

Two CBOs argue that the UNHCR and partner organizations still have a misguided perception of refugees. They stated that the focus of the UNHCR and partner organizations has been limited to providing financial and food assistance rather than prioritizing community empowerment and sustainable development (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). However, according to the Vulnerability Assessment of Refugees in Egypt, more than half (51%) of extremely poor refugees live in female-headed households (UNHCR, 2019), which clarifies the reason that the UNHCR and its partners heavily focus on providing financial and food assistance. Nonetheless, it is equally important to recognize that capacity-building activities are essential for all members of the community, including youth and adults. These initiatives can provide valuable skills and knowledge that foster self-reliance and independence, enabling refugees to contribute positively to their communities and move towards sustainable livelihoods.

Without the proper legal structure in place, the CBOs face financial shortages, as discussed in the previous section on financial challenges. This shortage has had significant effects on the CBOs. It has limited their capacity as an organization due to insufficient resources, such as a shortage of chairs and desks for employees, forcing them sometimes to divide working days among departments (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). This, in turn, indirectly impacts the outcome of the needs assessment and the delivery of programs and

services by the CBOs. A CBO founder stated that if the CBOs obtained the necessary support and training for effective integration programs, there would be a concrete difference in the community (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). Moreover, the financial constraints faced by CBOs have resulted in operational limitations. This includes shortages in essential supplies and resources needed to implement new programs and services. A participant highlighted the pressing question that arises during discussions between the director and officials: "Do we have sufficient funding within the CBO to proceed with the activity, or should it be postponed?" (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

In essence, the legal barriers the CBOs face directly contribute to their financial hardships, yet the consequential challenges they face go beyond that. They also involve hardships in developing strategies, creating an integrated work plan, and designing projects that cater to the needs of the refugee community while ensuring sustainability (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). However, one of the participants highlighted certain areas for improvement in developing projects and programs within the CBO itself. They mentioned that programs are intended to address community needs through careful assessment and evaluation before and after implementation, yet these standards need to be consistently followed. It is essential for the evaluation and needs assessment findings to influence the projects directly, but this reflection is only sometimes observed. This discrepancy could be attributed to the need for more awareness, causing deficiencies in presenting and accurately addressing the community's real needs or as a result of insufficient financial resources (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).

Specific challenges linked to the financial limitations have been identified by participants, hindering the CBOs from providing certain programs and activities. The community

has a strong demand for specialized vocational training, such as medical and engineering training, which the CBOs are unable to offer due to insufficient funding and limited financial resources (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). Additionally, there is an urgent need for ICDL computer courses among refugees, but the lack of available computers prevents the CBOs from providing this training (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). Moreover, limitations exist in organizing children's activities due to the requirement of specialized staff, as well as resources like toys and designated spaces. Consequently, the CBOs frequently seek assistance from other organizations to organize and implement such activities (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). One of the CBO directors highlighted the significant challenge of securing an appropriate space and machinery for conducting handicraft activities (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023).

Additionally, Director G emphasized the inability to organize bazaars and gatherings to showcase the products made by refugees who have acquired skills through the CBO, such as Yemeni Bakhoor, sewing, and crochet (personal communication, May 17, 2023). These limitations in space and resources hinder the CBOs' advancement and limit their ability to provide livelihood training and support for adults and youth. Despite the CBOs' strong focus on community development, particularly among women and youth, they face various obstacles that impede their efforts (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).

“ We attempted to move beyond the realm of relief by conducting surveys, engaging in fieldwork, and conducting assessments collectively. Our goal was to understand the community's needs without relying on relief and financial aid. This way, we could comprehend the

requirements and programs that the community seeks for its self-improvement. Our focus was on empowering them, especially since the majority are women and young individuals in their early years who are capable yet disadvantaged. We made an effort, but there were numerous obstacles.” (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).

When it comes to addressing the challenges related to needs assessments and program designs, the majority of CBOs still need to provide concrete strategies for navigating these issues. While some participants shared ideas and actions they had taken, these were not seen as definitive solutions that would lead to immediate change. A director emphasized the importance of livelihood and empowerment programs, stating, "We decided to look for support because we did not come to distribute food aid only, but also to train refugees and develop their capabilities" (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). Another director expressed the view that addressing the fundamental need requires providing a source of income that promotes self-reliance and reduces dependency on aid (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the problem of relying solely on assistance when aid was disrupted, a concern shared by all CBOs. One participant mentioned that philanthropists and aid providers should consider the long-term sustainability and the possibility of refugees returning to their home countries, where aid dependency without acquiring skills or certifications may not be beneficial (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). Acknowledging the importance of these programs, they emphasized the need for a mindset shift.

One director suggested that sharing the challenges with the community could lead to a better understanding of the CBO's shortcomings and garner support, even if done internally.

They believe that addressing the problems and challenges of the initiative should involve the community's help (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023).

In addition to the aforementioned strategies, almost all CBOs rely on their connections and collaboration with other partner NGOs and CBOs to overcome financial limitations that limit their programs. By leveraging these relationships, they can implement programs and activities that would otherwise be challenging due to the lack of financial support. This collaborative approach allows them to pool resources, share expertise, and access additional facilities and program funding opportunities (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Regarding their administrative strategies to ensure continual improvement, CBOs have adopted various administrative strategies to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. For instance, one CBO implemented a weekly meeting between the volunteers and the head of the initiative, with the submission of a weekly report. Additionally, they conduct regular evaluations of the CBO's performance throughout the week. Furthermore, a monthly meeting is held to assess the overall performance and accomplishments of the CBO, with the submission of detailed monthly reports (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023).

These efforts demonstrate the ongoing search for viable solutions to cover operating expenses and improve services, highlighting the resilience and determination of CBOs in addressing the challenges they face.

#### **5.3.3.2 Volunteers and Employees Management**

Based on the information provided by the participating CBOs, it becomes apparent that the initial establishment of the CBOs and their ongoing operations heavily rely on volunteers. Almost in all CBOs included in the study, the majority of workers are volunteers (an average of

70%) or employees under seasonal volunteer-contract arrangements that are sustained from the seasonal projects from the partner NGOs or the courses and sessions they provide. Volunteers play a crucial role in various aspects of the CBOs' activities, from organizing events and programs to providing assistance and support to their fellow community members. Limited funds lead to heavy reliance on unpaid volunteers, who often leave to work for (INGOs) after gaining experience (Hegazy, 2023). This consequently significantly impacts the operation of the CBO due to the high turnover rates creating disruptions and gaps in the organization's activities.

Volunteer turnover presents a significant challenge for the CBOs, and several factors contribute to this issue. One key reason is the organization's inability to provide financial compensation to volunteers, leading to a lack of commitment among them. As one co-founder mentioned, volunteers are not bound by a contract and do not receive any form of payment, which sometimes affects their dedication to the work (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

“The lack of consistent commitment from volunteers is due to them not receiving financial compensation or not being bound by a formal contract” (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023).

Moreover, the deteriorating economic situation in Egypt adds to the difficulties volunteers face. With soaring prices and no salaries, many volunteers find it challenging to sustain their involvement with the organization (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). A CBO director emphasized that some volunteers face financial



constraints and cannot afford transportation costs, further contributing to their inability to continue working with the CBO (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023).

In response to these financial constraints, volunteers often seek full-time employment to support their living expenses. Some volunteers leave the CBO to pursue opportunities with other organizations that offer rewarding salaries and benefits (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Unlike the CBO, where volunteers are not provided with any form of compensation, not even transportation or food allowances, NGO organizations attract volunteers to work more. (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). Additionally, scheduling meetings with volunteers poses a challenge, as many of them are students or have other work commitments (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Director G also highlighted the difficulty in finding volunteers who are financially stable and able to demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility towards refugees for a long period (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). Moreover, some volunteers joined the initiative with the expectation that it would eventually lead to high-income job opportunities. However, when their aspirations are not met, they choose to leave the initiative, contributing further to the challenge of maintaining a consistent and committed volunteer base within the CBO (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Furthermore, the conditions of Yemenis in Egypt introduce an additional layer of complexity to the volunteer turnover issue. As a transit country, many individuals join the CBO temporarily and subsequently leave due to travel plans, particularly to foreign or European countries (Contextual information). This transient nature of their involvement further contributes to CBO challenges. As one CBO leader stated, most volunteers, whether founders or part of the management team, leave the organization because they traveled abroad, could not reconcile their

volunteer job with their educational commitment or have secured a paying job. This resulted in a rapid decrease in the number of administrative officers throughout the years since the CBO establishment (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

In addition to these external factors, there have been instances of internal challenges among the volunteers. Some individuals seek to assert their superiority over others, creating conflicts and arguments within the CBOs. One of the CBO leaders resolved this issue by terminating both individuals involved to ensure a friendly working environment (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). On the other hand, sometimes the directors themselves show irresponsibility in managing their tasks efficiently. So, when they are occupied, they delegate all tasks to the volunteers. This a lack of commitment from the leaders of the CBO sometimes has a significant negative effect, weakening the overall effectiveness of the volunteers and compelling them to leave the CBO. Co-founder & Director E expressed this concern, stating, "The former director of the initiative was busy, and all the tasks were on the volunteers' shoulders. That was great negligence on his part" (Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023).

The sudden departure of volunteers creates a considerable gap within the CBO and poses a significant administrative challenge. Participants from one of the CBOs emphasized the difficulty of managing the exit of employees and the entry of new employees who are unfamiliar with the organization's operations (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). The CBO heavily relies on internal or external volunteer training provided by NGOs such as TDH and their abrupt departure disrupts the continuity of operations (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). This constant turnover not only affects the capacity of the CBO but also hampers its ability to maintain partnerships and communication with external

organizations. As one director explained, the departure of employees resulted in the loss of contact and services provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), impacting the CBO's ability to continue providing training, aid, and support to their beneficiaries (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

The high turnover of volunteers and employees in CBOs poses significant challenges to operational continuity, but some CBOs implemented strategies to address this issue and ensure stability. While these strategies may be limited to specific CBOs and vary among them, they can be adopted by other organizations facing similar issues.

The first strategy adopted by CBOs to tackle the challenge of high volunteer turnover is the implementation of transparency and open communication practices. CBOs make a concerted effort to keep volunteers informed about all the activities, decisions, and developments happening within the initiative (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023; (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). This approach ensures that volunteers feel included and valued, creating a sense of belonging and ownership toward the organization's goals and objectives (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). By being transparent, CBOs aim to foster trust and mutual respect, which in turn contributes to increased volunteer satisfaction and higher volunteer retention.

Another effective strategy involves offering fee waivers to volunteers. This includes waiving training fees for internal training sessions and offering certificates when needed, reducing the financial burden on volunteers (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). Furthermore, whenever the CBOs receive funding, they allocate a portion to provide

financial assistance to volunteers and nominate them for external training opportunities (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023).

Efforts have also been made to minimize volunteer expenses by reducing tasks or allowing them to work from home, thereby eliminating transportation costs (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). Moreover, to ensure the continuity of work and knowledge transfer, a written handover has been implemented. A CBO Director stated that:

“employees and volunteers must document their expertise, responsibilities, and daily tasks, including email correspondence and contact information. This ensures that the work can continue smoothly.” (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

The CBOs have also recognized the importance of networking and collaboration. So, they recommend volunteers to other NGOs after gaining valuable experience working with the CBOs. Additionally, when needed, the CBOs provide recommendation letters to support volunteers in their future endeavors (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023).

By implementing the mentioned strategies, the CBOs aim to mitigate the challenges posed by volunteer and employee turnover. These strategies ensure the stability, continuity, and effectiveness of their operations, despite the limited resources available to them. Ultimately, volunteer and employee retention are mostly achieved by providing adequate monetary compensation and benefits that guarantee them an honest life; however, with the available resources, it would be difficult for CBOs to achieve this goal.

#### **5.3.4 Host Community Challenges**

The host community presents various obstacles that affect CBOs' operations and interactions within the refugee community. These challenges range from inconveniencing the host community to issues of security, discrimination, and accusations directed toward refugees.

One recurring challenge faced by CBOs is that the host community, usually neighbors, files noise complaint reports against CBOs to the state authorities during the implementation of some activities, such as the distribution of food baskets or medical caravans. The state's restrictions on large gatherings pose challenges for the CBOs, particularly during food basket distributions, where a significant number of people often show up. This raises concerns about potential interference from national security agencies, especially considering their lack of legal authorization (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Since CBOs head offices are located in residential buildings, the large gathering of refugees in front of their premises can lead to complaints from neighbors, who may report it to the police or local district administration (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

“One of the neighbors might report this gathering to the police, or they could notify the local administration of the area where our headquarters is located. Similar incidents have occurred before” (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Furthermore, some CBOs have encountered instances of harassment from neighbors and building owners due to noise disruptions caused by children attending the initiatives' nurseries. In response to these conflicts, they have been compelled to relocate their head offices to different areas in order to foster a more harmonious and productive working environment close to their

community (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). Moreover, CBOs constantly strive to prevent clashes with the Egyptian community as it could jeopardize the operation of their head offices (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). CBOs also employ mitigation strategies such as dividing the beneficiaries into smaller groups over specific time slots to minimize inconvenience and potential problems (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023).

Security concerns and instances of theft further add to the challenges faced by the CBOs. Incidents of property theft from Yemeni and Sudanese CBOs have occurred, prompting the CBOs to take precautions such as changing locks to ensure the security of their premises (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Co-founder & Director E, personal communication, May 20, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). However, when reporting thefts to the police, the CBOs have been met with indifference or dismissal, potentially because they are foreigners (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). Despite facing challenges with some state authorities, the CBOs have observed that the Egyptian authorities tend to turn a blind eye to their activities as long as their focus remains on assisting and rebuilding their communities (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023; Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023, Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).

The challenges extend to conflict with some Egyptian individuals who demand to be included in the CBOs' activities and sports activities targeting the Yemeni community. This perspective is often driven by a misconception that the CBOs are profit-oriented, disregarding

their charitable nature and the goal of helping refugees (Co-founder & Director C, personal communication, May 13, 2023). Such attitudes can further strain relationships and hinder the CBOs' progress.

These host community challenges underscore the complex social dynamics and prejudices that the CBOs encounter, necessitating the development of strategies to address misconceptions, foster positive relationships, and create a safe and inclusive environment for their initiatives to thrive.

### **5.3.5 Displaced Community Resistance**

Effective community engagement is essential for the success of Community-Based Organizations in providing support to refugees and immigrants. However, these organizations encounter various challenges while interacting with the communities they serve. Most CBOs leaders stated that these challenges arise from a lack of awareness, misconceptions, and cultural barriers, which can hinder the CBOs' ability to provide optimal support and services (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023; Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). Previously, Yemeni immigrants viewed being a refugee as a stigma and were reluctant to register as refugees. However, when they learned about the advantages of being a refugee, more displaced people started registering. The lack of awareness about asylum, with some community members unaware of the UNHCR's services and the benefits they could gain from it also caused their resistance to register at the UNHCR (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023). The Yemeni society had a

minimal presence in the social environment of the refugees, but the CBOs encouraged them to secure their rights as refugees (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

“Yemenis used to perceive seeking asylum as a disgrace, and they would refuse to register at the UNHCR because they do not want to be stigmatized being refugees” (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023).

In addition to the challenges related to awareness, another significant issue arises after refugees register with the UNHCR. There is a misconception among some registered persons that being registered with the UNHCR entitles them to receive continuous financial and food assistance without making any effort to improve their living conditions. This belief fosters dependency and unrealistic expectations on CBOs who can not meet them due to financial constraints. A co-founder stated that the community is mainly interested in financial assistance programs and food packages compared to other programs that often have long-term impacts on their life. They expressed that, initially, when they launched the CBO, their primary intention was not to provide relief services. However, upon assessing the community's needs, we discovered that relief aid was in high demand (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). This perception has led to the erroneous belief that Yemeni refugees are primarily seeking financial benefits, highlighting a need for more awareness among some community members (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). It is crucial to address this misconception and raise awareness that relief aid is intended for emergency situations rather than a continuous source of support (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023).



As a result of the community's main interest in financial aid programs, there needs to be more awareness concerning the benefits of the services offered by community-based organizations, particularly in terms of health and psychological support. This lack of education can pose significant barriers for community members, hindering their access to essential services and support that could otherwise enhance their overall well-being (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). Another concern is the need for more understanding of the importance of the courses and training sessions provided by CBOs. Instead of valuing the educational opportunities, some individuals solely focus on seeking financial aid and expect CBOs to cover their transportation and refreshment costs during training sessions (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023; Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023; Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). Moreover, some beneficiaries express interest in training but fail to commit fully, paying only a fraction of the course fees and ultimately not completing the training (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). This practice denies more deserving individuals the chance to benefit from the courses, impeding the overall progress of the community.

To address these challenges, CBOs diligently attempt to enlighten the beneficiaries about the broader advantages of active participation. They emphasize how the presence of beneficiaries at the CBO can attract donors to fund programs and create income-generating opportunities for them (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). However, a pressing challenge arises as some beneficiaries are accustomed to receiving free training from other organizations, such as CARE, for all programs, including English language, computer, sewing, embroidery, and more. Consequently, when beneficiaries are informed about the nominal fees attached to CBO training

courses, they criticize CBOs, believing that funding from other sources should cover the expenses of the courses (Co-founder & Director F, personal communication, May 29, 2023).

The CBOs have encountered significant challenges in the form of harsh attacks and numerous accusations from the community it serves. One concerning aspect of this opposition is the accusations of fraud directed toward the organization. Some members of the Yemeni beneficiary community in Egypt have accused the CBO of misappropriating large financial funding intended for their benefit. These accusations stem from a misunderstanding, as there is a perception among a segment of the Yemeni society that initiatives and CBOs in Egypt operate similarly to NGOs in Yemen, receiving substantial financial aid to be distributed to the beneficiaries in US dollars (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). Furthermore, some individuals within the community have accused the CBO of stealing beneficiaries' financial aid obtained from various organizations (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). Additionally, they express reluctance to provide essential identification documents, like passports, fearing that the CBO might exploit their information for financial gain (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

The challenges faced by the CBO extend to interactions with refugee patients as well. Some patients have verbally attacked the CBOs when specific services or needs such as medical treatments, cannot be provided (Co-founder G, personal communication, May 16, 2023). To address this issue, the CBO endeavors to guide these patients and refer them to appropriate service providers (Director G, personal communication, May 17, 2023). However, the CBOs invest in educating their volunteers on how to handle these situations and on the significance of community work and encourage them to believe in the goals of the CBOs. A Co-founder stated

that through initiatives like the "Community Mobilization" training course, the CBO sought to build understanding and create a harmonious environment for both the CBO staff and the community it serves (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

Additionally, the CBO faces challenges when it comes to raising funds from the Yemeni community itself. CBOs directors indicated that, unlike some other communities, there is a notable unwillingness among Yemeni businessmen to support the CBOs financially. This lack of support becomes evident when comparing the CBO's fundraising efforts to those of Eritrean CBOs, where they secured funding from an Eritrean immigrant in America to create a computer lab (Director D, personal communication, May 19, 2023). The reluctance of Yemeni businessmen to contribute poses a significant obstacle to the CBO's sustainability and growth.

According to one of the Co-founders, some Yemenis in Egypt have adopted certain characteristics from the host society due to their extended stay, changing their behaviors and attitudes. Unfortunately, the CBOs have faced challenges as some Yemenis attempt to defraud the system by registering under multiple names to receive aid and relief more than once (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023). This fraudulent practice has affected the allocation of resources, making it difficult for the CBO to identify genuine beneficiaries.

In dealing with this complex situation, the Community-Based Organization faces a daunting challenge. Egypt is home to over one million Yemenis, yet only nine thousand of them are registered with the UNHCR. This leaves a staggering number of Yemenis needing refugee protection and the responsibility for assisting them falls upon the Yemeni embassy. Amidst the ongoing war in Yemen, a major demographic shift has occurred, leading to a significant number

of Yemenis in Egypt choosing not to return to their home country. In light of these circumstances, one of the co-founders of the CBO has candidly expressed dissatisfaction with the Yemeni embassy's lack of support and assistance to the community. According to a Co-founder, the embassy's lack of engagement has raised questions about their mechanisms of work and the specific services they provide or fail to offer to the Yemeni population in Egypt. Thus CBOs seek how they can collaborate to provide much-needed support and aid to the Yemeni community in Egypt (Co-founder B, personal communication, May 22, 2023).

This chapter analyzes the challenges and dynamics of the Yemeni Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) operating in Egypt. Through in-depth interviews and rigorous analysis, this chapter sheds light on the multifaceted aspects that shape the essence and operations of these organizations. Moreover, the chapter delves into the challenges posed by the complex legal framework, limited funding, administrative intricacies, and the dynamics of host communities and displaced communities. As we move forward to the final chapter, the "Conclusion and Recommendations," the culmination of these findings will serve as the bedrock upon which practical recommendations and actionable insights will be built. This closing chapter will provide an integrative perspective on the broader implications of the research, and offer guidance to enhance the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of Yemeni CBOs in Egypt, while also acknowledging the challenges that persist within the realm of global migration and community-based interventions.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion And Recommendations**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

This thesis aimed to identify the main challenges Yemeni Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) face in the Greater Cairo area, which hinders them from fulfilling their desired goals, and investigate how they overcome these challenges. It also aims to identify the opportunities present in the current environment and the actions Yemeni CBOs can take to better serve the refugee community.

However, to better understand these challenges and opportunities, it was vital to explore other aspects of the Yemeni CBOs. By presenting an outline of the common characteristics of Yemeni CBOs, such as year and motive of establishment, location, and legal status, the thesis explored the common attributes among Yemeni CBOs and how they might contribute to the everyday challenges they face. Also, by examining the role that Yemeni CBOs play in the lives of Yemeni asylum seekers and migrants, the thesis aims to investigate their efforts in addressing the issues faced by the Yemeni community.

The findings showed that Yemeni CBOs emerged as a response to the increasing number of Yemenis who fled to Egypt in 2015 after the eruption of war in Yemen. Therefore, all CBOs included in the study were established in 2015 and subsequent years. Also, due to the high influx of Yemenis, many have fallen victim to exploitation and fraud, which was a driving force behind the establishment of many Yemeni CBOs. Another reason was to educate the Yemeni community about the benefits of registering with UNHCR and help them overcome the social stigma attached to being an asylum-seeker or a refugee. Thus, the Yemeni CBOs establishment was a

direct response to the increasing challenges that the Yemeni community faced and their desire to address the Yemeni community's needs which were left unmet by the UNHCR and its partners.

Most of the Yemeni CBOs started as initiatives involved in disseminating information through online platforms like WhatsApp before establishing an office and often located in a residential building which presents its own challenges, as was discussed in the host community challenges in Chapter 5. Moreover, most of the Yemeni CBOs in the study are not officially registered as civil society organizations but instead have legal cover.

The role of the Yemeni CBOs includes raising community awareness, improving integration, providing support to the community, and connecting refugees to UNHCR and various NGOs. All of these roles were further emphasized during the pandemic when the UNHCR and its partners had little to no access to reach migrants and displaced people during the lockdown. The Yemeni CBOs provide relief services such as financial assistance, food baskets, blankets, and fans in addition to providing health services, psychosocial programs, English language courses, computer training, awareness campaigns, and functioning as referral pathways to the UNHCR and other NGOs.

One of the main aims of this thesis is to identify the challenges Yemeni CBOs face, excluding licensing challenges. The literature review of previous research has proven that almost all CBOs of all nationalities struggle to become licensed in Egypt due to its strict stipulations regarding organization's license. Therefore, the thesis focuses on the challenges Yemeni CBOs face as legal cover holders. An organization can obtain legal cover from a registered organization. Thus, the licensed organization operates as a legal coverage, taking the responsibility for the unlicensed CBO. Many CBOs choose this option as the middle ground

between remaining unregistered and the financial and administrative burden of becoming fully registered. However, legal cover comes with its own challenges as well. It exposes Yemeni CBOs to financial exploitation by the registered organization. Additionally, most registered organizations which provide legal cover to Yemeni CBOs fail to follow through with the process and have the legal document officially authorized by the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

Consequently, most Yemeni CBOs fail to secure funding or logistical support from local and INGOs. The lack of financing further results in deficiency in the design and implementation of programs and services delivered and heavy reliance on volunteers who have a high turnover due to multiple factors, as discussed in Chapter 5. While operating, the Yemeni CBOs often clash with the host community and the Yemeni community itself due to misconceptions or accusations, among other reasons.

It's important to note that because Yemenis are not recognized as refugees in the Middle East, they can not obtain official refugee status in Egypt. Therefore, they are only recognized as asylum-seekers. This has far-reaching implications for Yemenis, not just regarding depriving them of the option of resettlement but also affecting the funding Yemeni CBOs receive. They are often overlooked in favor of other majority-recognized refugee groups like Sudanese and South Sudanese CBOs. To overcome this issue, Yemeni CBOs stress their role as organizations that serve the refugee community regardless of nationality. They offer services to all nationalities and include other races in their management team to emphasize this point. However, as asylum-seekers, Yemenis can apply for a residence permit and receive assistance from the UNHCR and NGOs (UNHCR, 2023).

This thesis contributes to an ever-growing body of work on global policy regarding the importance of community-based organizations (United Nations, 2018; UNHCR, 2008). as well as academic research focusing on the same area, such as Sahin-Mencutek (2021) and Easton-Calabria & Pincock (2018) among others. It also contributes to the research on CBOs in Egypt by exploring the unique situation of Yemenis in Egypt, the issues that Yemeni CBOs face as a result, and how they navigate these challenges. It also explains the discrepancy between the total number of Yemenis in Egypt (1 million) and the low number of Yemenis registered with the UNHCR (7,671), unlike other refugees coming from war-stricken countries, exploring the social, political, and economic factors that cause this unexpected phenomenon. The thesis also examines Egypt as a host country in all relevant aspects, including its historical relationship with Yemen, the role the Egyptian government, UNHCR, and other NGOs play in providing services to refugees, and the law that governs CBOs. This background overview helps shed light on the existing challenges in the local environment where Yemeni CBOs operate, hence resolving them calls for policy changes rather than internal restructuring.

The thesis uses a combination of qualitative, explanatory, and inductive approaches. The research reviews the existing literature on CBOs in Egypt and reports available by the UNHCR and international NGOs. Then data about Yemeni CBOs in the Greater Cairo area is gathered through in-depth interviews delving into their characteristics, challenges, cooperation efforts, and mitigation strategies. The findings from these interviews are then used to formulate a hypothesis about the causes of the obstacles Yemeni CBOs face and the opportunities that they can seize to improve their operation and services, in addition to identifying patterns, common themes and creating a conceptual framework of the factors that influence Yemeni CBOs operation in Egypt.



This study included *six* Yemeni CBOs led by Yemenis, operated in the Greater Cairo area, and had a permanent office. They were selected through a screening, mapping, and selection process. To ensure the quality of the information collected and the applicability of the conclusion drawn from it, the researcher adhered to the principles of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Despite time constraints and limited access, this study successfully delved into the relationship between UNHCR and Yemeni CBOs from the perspective of the Yemeni CBOs themselves. While interviews with partner organizations would have been beneficial, the study still offers valuable insights into the dynamics of this relationship. Additionally, while Egypt's legal uncertainties posed some challenges, the study's exploration of the challenges and opportunities faced by Yemeni CBOs in the context of local and external forces provides a valuable perspective. Moreover, The study focused solely on the experiences and perspectives of Yemeni community-based organizations in Cairo, Egypt. While some of these experiences can be common among all CBOs in Egypt, caution should be taken when generalizing the findings to other nationalities or refugee organizations in other countries.

Future research could consider incorporating quantitative approaches to complement the qualitative findings of this study and further improve the understanding of the challenges and opportunities of Yemeni CBOs. In addition to interviewing all relevant parties that influence the Yemeni CBOs operation. It is recommended to include Government officials, UNHCR, NGOs, refugees receiving services from these CBOs, and Egyptians residing near the CBOs. This will provide a holistic view of the interacting perceptions and misconceptions that have led to the

challenges CBOs face and thus offer a viable solution to them on how to approach all of these stakeholders to gain their trust and mitigate conflicts.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

### **6.2.1 Policy Recommendations to the MoSS**

It is recommended that the government have particular policies for the organizations led by refugees:

- First, the state should accept UNHCR cards as a replacement for passports, whether when applying to MoSS or opening a bank account.
- Second, Reducing this percentage to 25% will ensure that refugee-led organizations remain focused on refugees while allowing Egyptians to participate conservatively.
- Third, the government should also reduce the registration fees and allow refunds in case of rejection of the application.
- The government should also cooperate and partner with CBOs, which aim to provide assistance, protection, and capacity-building services, since with the appropriate funding and support, these organizations can expand to serve refugees and Egyptians in their areas.

### **6.2.2 Recommendation to the UNHCR**

- UNHCR should prioritize effective communication and collaboration strategies between UNHCR, partner organizations, CBOs, and the displaced Community. This will foster better integration of CBOs into the service structure and improve overall effectiveness.

- UNHCR should Invest in targeted capacity-building programs for community leaders within CBOs. Focus on enhancing their organizational skills, knowledge, and experience such as cooperative techniques, gathering data and analyzing it according to the demographic breakdown of the community, and proper documentation practices to enable them to transform these informal entities into well-structured organizations capable of handling larger projects effectively and acting as front-liners in their communities.
- UNHCR should trust CBOs and increase funding for CBOs but tie it to accountability measures. CBO leaders should demonstrate their capability to manage projects and account for funds effectively. Building trust in the management and transparency of CBOs will facilitate greater support from UNHCR and its partners.

### **6.2.3 Recommendations to Service Providers**

- It is recommended that partner organizations and NGOs offer specialized training programs that complement each other. This collaborative approach will prevent duplication, optimize resource allocation, and provide more comprehensive support to CBOs, ultimately benefiting the refugee community.
- Service providers should actively work on building trust with CBOs that demonstrate their capability to serve their communities effectively. Rather than discontinue partnerships due to legal authorization challenges, service providers can offer supervision and support to CBOs to ensure compliance with legal requirements, thereby maintaining access to the displaced community and avoiding any inconvenience regarding expenses and logistics issues.

#### 6.2.4 Recommendations to Yemeni CBOs

- CBOs Should create an accountability system for money and resources received and spent because it fosters trust and reduces instances of embezzlement that might occur in CBOs (Rozenburg, 2016). These measures will eventually improve the efficiency, integrity, accountability, and capabilities of the CBOs so they can secure funds.
- CBOs should emphasize creating adequate organizational structures that facilitate program organization, monitoring, and evaluation (Hegazy, 2023; Rosenberg, 2016). This organizational structure should include a director, field director, board of trustees, and coordinators, in addition to providing specific services such as legal support, psychological support, finance/funding, and education (Hegazy, 2023).
- It is recommended that a comprehensive volunteer management system be implemented to effectively organize and sustain the volunteers' work within the organization. This system should include streamlined onboarding processes, clear role descriptions, and a well-structured training procedure during the early stages of a volunteer's involvement. This training should encompass the organization's mission, values, and specific tasks, ensuring that volunteers are well-equipped to contribute effectively. The system should incorporate a robust handover mechanism for a seamless transition of responsibilities from one volunteer to another and clear documentation of tasks, procedures, and ongoing projects, coupled with open communication channels to ensure that vital institutional knowledge is retained and transferred even as volunteers change.

### **6.2.5 Recommendations to the Yemeni Community**

It is recommended that the Yemen displaced community:

- Educate themselves and their peers about the importance of registering as asylum-seekers. This crucial step facilitates access to vital services provided by the UNHCR and other service providers.
- Promote a shift in mindset away from dependency towards self-sufficiency. Emphasize the value of relief aid for emergencies and empower individuals to take charge of their circumstances by fostering skills development and ownership of their well-being. Active participation in education, skills training, health, and psychosocial workshops not only benefits personal well-being but also attracts funding to support the entire community.
- Establish a foundation of trust with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) through open and constructive communication. Encourage dialogue to address misunderstandings and concerns instead of resorting to accusations, fostering cooperation and collaboration. Seek clarity on fund allocation and utilization to ensure transparency and appreciate the efforts of CBOs. Collaboration with CBOs to enhance program outcomes and overall community success should uphold values of integrity and honesty.
- Encourage peaceful advocacy within the Yemeni community to raise awareness of their challenges and promote understanding within the host society. Create a sense of unity among community members, emphasizing information sharing and collaboration to uplift those in need, including Yemeni businessmen.

### **6.2.6 Call for cross-collaboration**

All involved parties need to engage in collaborative efforts that complement each other to ensure appropriate protection for individuals, as stated in the UNHCR mandates. For UNHCR, ‘protection’ “covers all activities that aim to achieve full respect for the individual's rights by the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee, statelessness, and international humanitarian law. It requires creating an environment conducive to preventing or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse and restoring human dignity through reparation, restitution, and rehabilitation”.

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# Appendix 1

## Interview Guide

### ❖ **Questions for the CBOs leaders**

#### - **Participant information:**

- Name:
- Age:
- Gender:
- Education level:
- Position held at the CBO:
- Years of experience working in the CBO:
- Years of experience in general:

#### - **CBO information:**

- CBO Name:
- Years of operation in Egypt:
- Field focus:
- Location:
- The number of staff members (voluntary/ paid):

#### - **Interview Questions:**

##### ● ***Standards Introduction Questions:***

1. When was the CBO established, (establishment date)?
2. Where was the CBO established, ( the city in Egypt)?
3. Who were the founding member/s of the CBO? Additionally, who originated the initiative for its establishment?
4. What was the size of the CBO management members, and What was the size of the operating team at the outset?
5. Why was the CBO established, what was the motive for you to establish the CBO?
6. What were the primary objectives for the establishment of the CBO?
7. What was the target demographic that the CBO was designed to serve when it was initially founded?
8. Regarding the establishment cost, who provided the resources for establishing the CBO (individual/s, entity), and what expenses were incurred during this establishment process?

##### ● ***Establishment Process:***

1. What administrative procedures did you undertake to set up your CBO, and

- What challenges did you face in this process?
- 2. What legal requirements did you have to meet to register your CBO, and
- How did you navigate these requirements?

If he/she starts to talk about the present situation, the PI should lead the conversation to talk about the past or investigate who is a better person who knows more about the process in the history of the CBO.

- ***Services Provided (CURRENTLY) by the CBO:***

1. Who was responsible for deciding on the programs and services offered by the CBO, and how were these decisions made?
2. What were the reasons behind the specific programs and services that were chosen, and how were they developed to meet the needs of the community?
3. Were there any limitations or restrictions on the types of services the CBO could provide, and if so, what were they?
4. How did you secure funding and resources for your CBO?
5. What is the role of the CBO in building society?
6. What strategies do you use to sustain your organization over time?
7. In terms of service demand and delivery, what are some of the key differences between the services offered in the **past** and those offered **currently**?
8. When conducting CBO work, what facilities and resources are available to the CBO, and what are some of the primary challenges you face?
9. When conducting CBO work, who are the main actors you cooperate with? What is the type of cooperation? How often does it happen?
  - Are there collaborations between you and the Yemeni embassy?
  - Are there collaborations between you and the UNHCR?
  - Are there collaborations between you and NGOs?
  - Are there collaborations between you and any official body in the country?

- ***CBOs Challenges:***

You mentioned that your CBO had faced several challenges regarding different aspects, such as:

- Administrative
- Operational ( staff, resources, .....)
- Legal
- Financial, programs funding, and budgeting
- Any further challenges mentioned

1- How do you resolve/mitigate these issues?

2- What are the other challenges? How did you resolve/mitigate these issues?

- ***Context Intervening Variables:***

1. What changes have occurred over time **internally** (in the entity), and to what extent do these variables affect the CBO?
2. What variables have occurred over time **externally** (in the demographics of Yemeni society), and to what extent do these variables affect the CBO?
3. What variables have occurred over time **externally** (in Egypt as a host country), and to what extent do these variables affect the community organization?
4. To what extent does the current economic situation in Egypt affect the work of the CBO?
5. To what extent are the changes in the legal framework (NGOs Law 149/2019)?
6. To what extent does the political situation in Yemen affect the operation of the CBO?
7. To what extent do the political/diplomatic relations between Yemen and Egypt affect the operation of the NGO?

- ***Closing Questions:***

1. Are there any additional issues or questions that you would like to raise?
2. If you are in a capacity as a manager or person in a position of authority, what would be the most important decision for you to make now?
3. What do you think about the future, and how would you like to see changes that would enable you to overcome some of the challenges faced?

## Appendix 2

### دليل المقابلة

#### ❖ أسئلة قادة المنظمات المجتمعية

##### ● معلومات المشارك:

- اسم:
- العمر:
- الجنس:
- مستوى التعليم:
- المنصب في المبادرة المجتمعية:
- سنوات الخبرة في المبادرة المجتمعية:
- سنوات الخبرة بشكل عام:

##### ● - معلومات المنظمة المجتمعية:

- اسم المبادرة المجتمعية:
- سنوات العمل في مصر:
- التركيز الميداني:
- الموقع:
- عدد الموظفين (رسمي او متطوع):
- أسئلة المقابلة:

##### ● أسئلة تستهدف جميع المنظمات:

1. متى تم تأسيس المبادرة المجتمعية (تاريخ التأسيس)؟
2. أين تأسست المبادرة المجتمعية (المدينة في مصر)؟
3. من هم الأعضاء المؤسسون للمبادرة؟ بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، من الذي أطلق المبادرة لتأسيسها؟
4. ما هو حجم أعضاء إدارة المبادرة المجتمعية، وما هو حجم فريق التشغيل في البداية؟
5. لماذا تم إنشاء المبادرة المجتمعية، وما هو الدافع الذي دفعك لتأسيسه؟
6. ما هي الأهداف الأساسية لتأسيس المبادرة المجتمعية؟
7. ما هي الفئة الديموغرافية المستهدفة التي إنشأت المبادرة المجتمعية من أجل خدمتها عندما تم تأسيسها في البداية؟
8. فيما يتعلق بتكلفة المنشأة ، من الذي قدم الموارد لإنشاء المبادرة المجتمعية (فرد / كيان) ، وما هي المصاريف التي تم تكبدها أثناء عملية التأسيس هذه؟

##### ● عملية التأسيس:

1. ما هي الإجراءات الإدارية التي اتخذتها لإنشاء المبادرة المجتمعية الخاص بك، و - ما هي التحديات التي واجهتها في بخصوص الإجراءات؟
2. ما هي الإجراءات القانونية التي اتخذتها لتسجيل البنك المبادرة المجتمعية، و - وكيف تمت تلبية هذه الإجراءات ؟

إذا بدأ هو / هي التحدث عن الوضع الحالي ، يجب أن يقود الباحث الرئيسي المحادثة للتحدث عن تاريخ المنظمة المجتمعية او معرفة الشخص الأفضل الذي يعرف المزيد عن تاريخ نشأة المنظمة المجتمعية.

● الخدمات المقدمة (حاليًا) من قبل المبادرة المجتمعية:

1. من مسؤولاً عن اتخاذ القرار بشأن البرامج والخدمات التي تقدمها المبادرة المجتمعية، وكيف تم اتخاذ هذه القرارات؟
2. ما هي أسباب البرامج والخدمات المحددة التي تم اختيارها؟ كيف تم تطويرها لتلبية احتياجات المجتمع؟
3. هل كانت هناك أي قيود على أنواع الخدمات التي يمكن أن تقدمها المبادرة المجتمعية، وإذا كان الأمر كذلك، فما هي؟
4. كيف قمت بتأمين التمويل والموارد لمبادراتك المجتمعية؟
5. ماهو دور المبادرة في بناء مجتمع؟
6. ما هي الاستراتيجيات التي تستخدمها للحفاظ على المبادرة بمرور الوقت؟
7. فيما يتعلق بطلب الخدمة وتقديمها، ما هي بعض الاختلافات الرئيسية بين الخدمات المقدمة في الماضي وتلك المقدمة حاليًا؟
8. عند قيامكم بعملكم، ما هي التسهيلات والموارد المتاحة للمبادرة المجتمعية، وما هي بعض التحديات الأساسية التي يواجهونها؟
9. عند قيامكم بعملكم، من هم الشركاء الرئيسيون الذين تتعاون معهم؟ مانوع التعاون؟ وماهو معدل حدوثه؟ وهل تتوقع توقف عمل المبادرات في حال توقف دعم المنظمات لهم
- هل هناك تعاونات بينكم وبين السفارة اليمنية؟
- هل هناك تعاونات بينكم وبين UNHCR؟
- هل هناك تعاونات بينكم وبين منظمات المجتمع المدني؟
- هل هناك تعاونات بينكم وبين أي جهة رسمية في الدولة؟

● تحديات منظمات المجتمع المحلي:

لقد ذكرت أن المبادرة المجتمعية قد واجهت العديد من التحديات فيما يتعلق بجوانب مختلفة، مثل:

- الجانب الإداري
- التحديات التشغيلية (الموظفين، الموارد،
- الجانب قانوني
- التمويل
- أي تحديات أخرى مذكورة

- 1- كيف يمكنك حل / تخفيف هذه المشكلات؟
- 2- ما هي التحديات الأخرى؟ كيف قمت بحل / تخفيف هذه المشكلات؟

● متغيرات داخل السياق:

1. ما هي التغيرات الداخلية التي حدثت مع الوقت (في الكيان)، وإلى أي مدى تؤثر هذه المتغيرات على المبادرة المجتمعية؟
2. ما هي المتغيرات الخارجية التي حدثت مع الوقت (في التركيبة السكانية للمجتمع اليمني)، وإلى أي مدى تؤثر هذه المتغيرات على المبادرة المجتمعية؟
3. ما هي المتغيرات الخارجية التي حدثت مع الوقت (في مصر كدولة مضيقة)، وإلى أي مدى تؤثر هذه المتغيرات على المبادرة المجتمعية؟
4. إلى أي مدى يؤثر الوضع الاقتصادي الحالي في مصر على عمل المبادرة المجتمعية؟
5. إلى أي مدى تؤثر التغييرات في الإطار القانوني (قانون المنظمات غير الحكومية 149/2019)؟
6. إلى أي مدى يؤثر الوضع السياسي في اليمن على عمل المبادرة المجتمعية؟

7. إلى أي مدى تؤثر العلاقات السياسية / الدبلوماسية بين اليمن ومصر على عمل المبادرة المجتمعية؟

● أسئلة ختامية:

1. هل هناك أي قضايا أو أسئلة إضافية تعتقد أنه كان يجب علي طرحها؟
2. إذا كنت في منصب مدير أو شخص في موقع سلطة ، فما هو القرار الأكثر أهمية بالنسبة لك الآن؟
3. ما رأيك في المستقبل ، وكيف ترغب في رؤية التغييرات التي ستتمكنك من التغلب على بعض التحديات التي تواجهها؟

## Appendix 3



### **Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study**

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**Project Title:** Navigating Complexity of Serving Displaced Communities: A Study Of Yemeni Community-Based Organizations In Egypt

**Principal Investigator:** *Alya Mohammed Al-mahdi*

*MPA graduate student candidate*

**Email:** *alyamahdi@aucegypt.edu*

**Phone Number:** *+20-1027320994*

You are being asked to participate in a research study:

*Navigating Complexity: An Analysis Of The Challenges And Opportunities Of Yemeni Community-Based Organizations' Operation In Egypt*

The purpose of the research is to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities Yemeni CBOs encounter operating in Egypt. The findings may be presented to the MPA program faculty as part of completing the researcher master's requirements. After three years of completion, the paper will be available for interested readers and other scholars in the University's academic fountain. It might also be used to develop an article for one of the Research Centers that are concerned with Yemeni affairs. The expected duration of your participation is one to two hours.

The researcher will take steps to protect your privacy and keep your personal information confidential. There will not be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research. However, the potential benefits of this study include:

- 1- Participating can give the participants the space and help them to reflect on their own experiences, challenges, and opportunities they faced working in and/or with CBOs in Egypt.
- 2- Participating can contribute to the body of knowledge in their field of interest working for refugees' good, which can have practical applications and improve CBOs' overall experience.

3- Participating can increase the participants' connections with others with similar interests and goals, leading to potential networking opportunities.

The information you provide for purposes of this research is strictly confidential, and none of your personal information will be shared in the research paper. Only relevant information related to the research topic will be discussed and quoted in the paper. Any data collected in this study, such as your name or any other identifying information, will be anonymized, and your name will not be included in any reports, publications or presentations resulting from this study.

If you have any questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the Principal Investigator (researcher) of this study, Alya Al-mahdi, at +201027320994. Additionally, if you experience any injury or harm related to participating in this study, please contact the researcher immediately.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

### استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث : تحليل لتحديات وفرص عمل المنظمات المجتمعية اليمنية في مصر

الباحث الرئيسي: علياء محمد المهدي  
طالبة دراسات عليا - ماجستير في الإدارة العامة  
بريد إلكتروني: [alyamahdi@aucegypt.edu](mailto:alyamahdi@aucegypt.edu)  
رقم الهاتف: ٠٠٢٠١٠٢٧٣٢٠٩٩٤

انت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية عن التحديات والفرص والدور في دعم المجتمعات النازحة، دراسة حالة للمنظمات المجتمعية اليمنية في مصر

#### هدف الدراسة:

الغرض من البحث هو تقديم رؤى حول التحديات والفرص التي تواجه المنظمات المجتمعية اليمنية العاملة في مصر.

#### نتائج البحث:

سوف تقدم النتائج إلى أعضاء هيئة التدريس في قسم الإدارة العامة كجزء من إكمال متطلبات الماجستير للباحث. ستكون الورقة متاحة بعد ثلاث سنوات من الانتهاء للقراء المهتمين والباحثين الآخرين في مركز الأبحاث التابع للجامعة الأمريكية. كما قد يتم استخدام هذه المعلومات لتطوير مقال لأحد المراكز البحثية المعنية بالشؤون اليمنية

#### المدة المتوقعة:

المدة المتوقعة لمشاركتك من ساعتين إلى ثلاث ساعات

#### إجراءات الدراسة:

سيتخذ الباحث خطوات لحماية خصوصيتك والحفاظ على سرية معلوماتك الشخصية. لن تكون هناك مخاطر أو مضايقات معينة مرتبطة بهذا البحث. ومع ذلك ، فإن الفوائد المحتملة لهذه الدراسة تشمل:

1- يمكن أن تمنح المشاركة المشاركين المساحة لمشاركة خبراتهم الخاصة والتحديات والفرص التي واجهوها في العمل في و / أو مع منظمات المجتمع المحلي في مصر.

- 2- يمكن أن تساهم المشاركة في تحسين المعرفة المتاحة بخصوص عمل المنظمات المجتمعية المهتمة بالعمل لصالح اللاجئين ، والتي يمكن أن يكون لها تطبيقات عملية وتحسين تجربة المنظمات المجتمعية ككل.
- 3- يمكن أن تؤدي المشاركة إلى زيادة اتصالات المشاركين مع الآخرين الذين قد يكون لديهم اهتمامات وأهداف متشابهة ، مما يؤدي إلى زيادة فرص التواصل المحتملة.

#### السرية واحترام الخصوصية:

المعلومات التي تقدمها لأغراض هذا البحث سرية للغاية ، حيث لن يتم مشاركة أي من معلوماتك الشخصية في ورقة البحث. سيتم فقط مناقشة المعلومات ذات الصلة المتعلقة بموضوع البحث وأخذ بعض الإقتباسات في الورقة. سيتم إخفاء هويتك والبيانات المتعلقة بها والتي سيتم جمعها في هذه الدراسة مثل اسمك أو أي معلومات تعريفية أخرى ، ولن يتم تضمين اسمك في أي تقارير أو منشورات أو عروض تقديمية ناتجة عن هذه الدراسة.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول البحث أو حقوقك كمشارك ، يرجى الاتصال بالباحث الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة ، علياء المهدي ، على (٠٠٢٠١٠٢٧٣٢٠٩٩٤). بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، إذا واجهت أي إصابة أو أذى متعلق بمشاركتك في هذه الدراسة ، فيرجى الاتصال بالباحث على الفور.

ان المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ما هي الا عمل تطوعي. حيث أن الامتناع عن المشاركة لا يتضمن أى عقوبات أو فقدان أى مزايا تحقق لك. ويمكنك أيضا التوقف عن المشاركة في أى وقت من دون عقوبة أو فقدان لهذه المزايا.

الامضاء: .....

اسم المشارك : .....

التاريخ : ...../...../.....