

Give me a fish until you teach me how to fish

An integrated development approach proposed in Upper Egypt

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1-Introduction

Regional disparities have been evident in Egypt for several decades between North (Lower Egypt) and its South (Upper Egypt), with striking differences in terms of Human development index, poverty rates, quality of services and economic situation.

The reasons for such regional disparities could be considered historical, however, they become tangible when comparing the investments targeted to the different Egyptian regions, with Upper Egypt being the least one and Cairo region on top of them with a share of 40% of the total investments.

Such disparities led in recent past to despair among significant strata of the Southern community mostly youth, who turned, in several cases, into violence and fanaticism through the 1980s and 1990s.

Accordingly, in recent years there has been a change in the government general policy towards the South of Egypt, with significant investments being diverted for the development of the governorates of the South, not only from the line ministries such as the Ministry of Local Development (MOLD) and the Ministry of Housing (MOH) but also from the International Development agencies such as the UNDP and the World Bank. Currently there are ongoing development projects in the South, the most famous one is the national project for the geographic targeting of poverty conducted by the MOH, in which the 1000 poorest villages are located and are set for development projects.

One of the parallel projects that are now in progress is the “Upper Egypt Integrated Governorates Development Project” a project funded by the World Bank and conducted by the MOLD. The MOLD assigned the project to a local consultancy firm that is involved in urban and regional development and planning projects throughout Egypt¹. With the author being one of the consultancy team, this paper is based on the experience developed while working in the project.

The paper starts by discussing the target region and its poverty profile, while showing the objectives of the project, and the role of the consultancy. The previous approaches of development in the targeted region are then overviewed, while discussing briefly their drawbacks. The paper then explains the general outline of the proposed development approach in which it aims for a poverty alleviation mechanism, before it explains direct intervention in the targeted region.

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¹ The Cairo based firm is the Engineering Consultant Office for Planning and Architecture (ECOPA).

2- Poverty profile of Upper Egypt

The Project target region is composed of the poorest five governorates in Upper Egypt, these are Fayoum, Beniswaif, Menia , Assiut and Suhag. These governorates contain a large number of the 1000 poorest villages in Egypt. In principle poverty is abandoned in this region, where its poverty profile, that is identified through a diverse set of geographical, demographic, social and economic indicators, is discussed by the World Bank (2007) through the “*Egypt Poverty Assessment Update*”, some characteristics of poverty in Egypt are discussed briefly in the following sections, with an emphasis on Upper Egypt, to give a comprehensive picture on the situation there, hence the necessity for development intervention.

- Location

The locational distribution of poverty can be summarized as follows:

- Generally in Egypt, poverty is more concentrated in rural areas, with greater emphasis in the South

Poverty is more severe in rural areas compared to their urban counterparts, fostered by internal migration waves which have increased the share of urban population in Egypt thus shifted the distribution of the poor further from cities to villages. In 2005, 78% of the poor and 80% of the extreme poor² resided in rural areas, whose population constituted 56% of the total population, on the national level. On the regional level, poor were localized in Upper Egypt, which accounted for 66% of the extreme poor in the country. However, it is worth mentioning that not all Upper Egypt is increasingly poor.

-Even within rural Upper Egypt, poverty is localized in specific "pockets",

Successive Population Census revealed that both urban and rural poverty are fairly densely concentrated in very specific areas. Yet, variation in living standards is greater across the Egyptian villages, some of which are characterized by very high poverty rates. Almost one third of all the Egyptian poor are in the poorest villages of Menia , Assiut and Suhag (762 villages altogether).

- Demographics

Poor families are identified to have some of the following characteristics:

- Poverty is skewed towards larger households:

Poor households are mostly large households. In 2005, almost one third of all households with six or more persons were poor, accounting for 74% of all poor individuals in Egypt. Among these households, risk of being poor was much larger in rural areas (38%) than in urban areas (22%). Consequently the percentage increases in rural Upper Egypt.

- Poor households have higher dependency ratios than the non-poor

Given their large size, poor households tend to support a proportionally higher number of dependants. Having a large number of children- who are too young to contribute to household income- escalates the risk of poverty. In 2005, 29% of those who belonged to

² Extreme poverty highlights the inability to provide even basic food , Absolute poverty, entails spending less than needed to cover absolutely minimal food and non-food needs and Near-poverty consists of spending barely enough to meet basic food and slightly more than essential non-food needs.

households with three or more children under 15 were poor, versus 8% for those without young children.

- Household Head Characteristics

The characteristics of household heads reflect how the basic features of poverty are sustained through inter-generational transfer.

- *Poor households are headed by an illiterate person or someone with basic literacy skills:* In 2005, poverty risk was the highest among the household members with illiterate heads (31.4%) or with heads who just had read-and-write skills (21.6%). These two groups constituted 58% and 22%, respectively, of the total poor households. It is worth noting that educational attainment of household members is strongly affected by the education status of the household head. Accordingly, individuals coming from households with illiterate heads have a 57% probability to be illiterate themselves.

- *A higher risk of poverty is concentrated in households with heads employed in agriculture sector:* Higher poverty incidence has been correlated with households agricultural-wage-earning heads, either employed or self-employed. In 2005, the poverty incidence in this group was 22.6% and 31.4% in urban areas and rural areas, respectively, compared to 9% and 23% in households with heads employed in other sectors.

Labor and Income Market

- *The poor have limited access to jobs:* most of the poor are in households where members work, usually in the informal sector, given their limited access to the world of employment. Accordingly, improvements in unemployment rates were reflected in the poor segments. Between 2000-2005, unemployment rates declined among the better-off, however remained high among poor segments. As Upper Egypt, where the majority of the poor resides, witnessed the least decline (from 3.5 to 3.4%); while urban Upper Egypt recorded the biggest decline (from 10.1 to 8.2%).

Housing Conditions and Access to basic services

The housing conditions and the access to basic services are good indicators that reflect the degree of poverty of the communities in Egypt, this is seen as follows:

- *The poor have lower access to health services:* they have limited access to health services - most notably prenatal care - despite their relatively high fertility rate which led to higher child mortality rates. It was reported that 30% of the poor in urban areas and 34% in rural areas did not receive any prenatal care, these percentages increase in the governorates of Upper Egypt.

- *Limited access to public services:* Though at the national level, the majority of poor have connection to electricity, water and sewerage, they lag behind the better off in terms of the delivery of multiple basic services.

For instance, public water system, while almost all the urban population was connected to the public water system, only 86% of the rural population was; sewage system as only 26% of rural areas had access to such system compared to 84% by urban areas; sanitary

garbage disposal which is not sufficiently widespread among the poor as only 66% of the poor use proper means of garbage collection compared to 88 % by the better off.

-Modest housing conditions which reflect their income status:

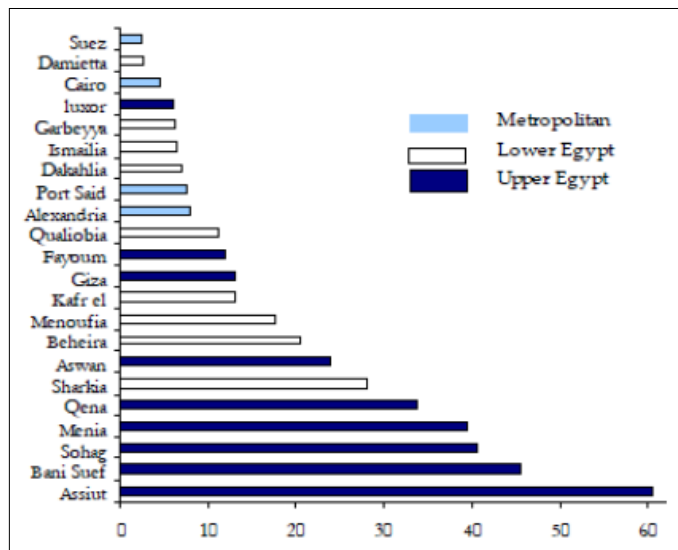
The poor live in modest housing conditions, for instance only 13% of the poor live in rooms in shared apartments, while 2.5% in separate rooms. In addition, the poor, especially the rural poor, were less likely to have a tap inside their houses or a separate kitchen and bathroom. In urban areas, 33% of the poor rented a dwelling, compared to 38% of the better off.

Most of the urban poor and better off lived in houses with cement walls, while in rural areas the poor were less likely (by 7% points, as compared to the better off) to live in such houses.

The overall distribution of poverty on the Egyptian governorates is illustrated in the following figures, which used among many indicators the head count index to show the rate of poor people. It is obvious that poverty tends to be more concentrated in Upper Egypt. There is a particular concentration of poor in rural Upper Egypt, which accounts for 66 % of the extreme poor in the country, 51 % of its absolute poor, and for 31 % of the near poor, far exceeding its population share (25 %) (UNDP, 2008). However, according to this study not all Upper Egypt is increasingly poor, as a matter of fact, poverty rates declined in some governorates of Upper Egypt, e.g. Fayoum and Giza.

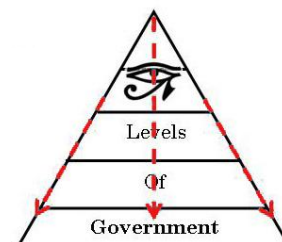
Governorate	Poverty head count index
Fayoum	12%
Menia	39,4%
Assiut	60,6%
Suhag	40,7%
Bani Swaif	45,4%

Poverty rates in Egypt (right).
The case in Upper Egypt (above)



3- The former Development approach

Until recent, most development plans, in Egypt as a whole, were made in a central manner, where the central government represented by its line ministries carried out most of the plan formulation in a top-down approach. The plans might or might not respond to the basic needs and demands of the people, since the concept of public participation was not applied at large. Moreover, the funds for implementation were allocated by the central government through the former Ministry of



The national government used to act in a central hierarchical way

Planning and in many cases they were insufficient to fully implement the plans, thus not fulfilling all objectives.

Despite the involvement of the private sector in several development projects, the lack of its involvement in the plan making phase hinders its direct support in the implementation, the same situation is evident in the funds coming from International donor organizations e.g. USAID, where these funds are channeled to specific projects meeting the criteria conditioned by these organizations and not in line with regional programs or plans, (Serag, 2008).

There are/were integrated development projects funded by international organizations, however, the continuity of these projects after the termination of the development grant was always questionable, in most cases the projects failed to continue. This is because of some of the following reasons³:

- Once the consultancy services for the project end, there are no local capacities to carry on with the development activities defined by the project.
- In many cases the government withdraws its funding from the areas targeted by international development projects, at the same time there is no solid coordination to reinvest in the project area once the development grant ends, accordingly the continuation of the project halts.
- Even if the government decided to continue with the project after the end of the international grant, the local capacities are not up-to the level to carry on with the operation and management of the project, ending up with a non desirable outcome that is not related to the initial project objectives.

As such the ongoing project by the MOLD which is funded and monitored by the World Bank attempts to make a development and investment plan then implement it within the study region. The project seeks continuity, therefore among the main driving elements of its procedure are:

- To promote for decentralization and local decision making, thus enabling the different localities to establish their own funding mechanisms and develop their local fundraising actions. Much important as to allow them to decide and implement the projects of their choice, without referring to the central government for acknowledging their intended actions.
- Participatory planning process, in which all the relevant stakeholders are invited for the planning process, thus ensuring their involvement and ownership of the project, two elements which were usually missing in similar projects.
- Capacity building of local cadres to ensure their capability of operating and managing the project, enabling them to take over once the role of the consultant and the Ministry of Local Development ends.

As such, a proper development approach should be set to accommodate the above aspects and the accepted outcome of the project⁴.

³ This is based on the discussions with the Ministry of Local Development representatives through several workshops between August 2008 and January 2009.

⁴ These elements were discussed in a workshop organized by the MOLD and the consultancy firm.

4- Working for Development: Setting a proper approach

Recently, a change in the development approach in Egypt occurred with a tangible shift towards decentralization with a reliance on the concepts of public participation and bottom-up development. This started to take place, when the decision makers realized that the central and top-down decisions and planning have many shortcomings and were distanced from meeting the demands and needs of the local population in any district or government. On the other hand, they realized that if decentralization is applied properly while monitoring its performance by local bodies, it shall be the proper system to utilize own and local assets in such a way to meet with the needs and demands of the local population resulting in a better outcome.

At the same time, applying decentralization allows the integration with the national human and comprehensive development schemes and leading such schemes to achieve the needs and visions of local population, since it allows the population of the different localities to participate in formulating the development plans, and reshaping the fiscal relation between the central government, governorates, districts and localities (ECOPA, 2008).

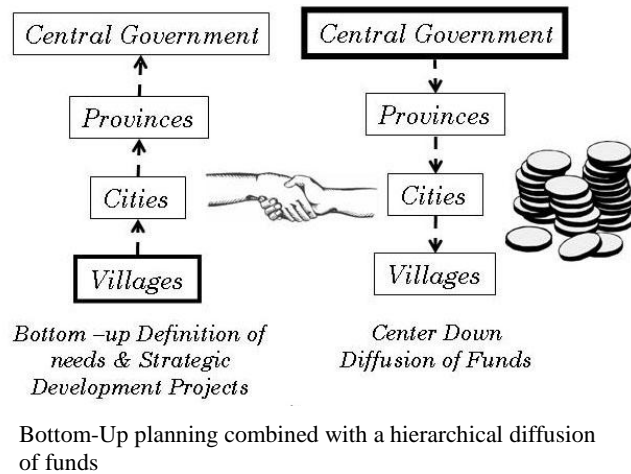
However, it is important to note that the complete devolution of power to the lower tiers of the government on different levels, i.e. local units, districts and governorates with proper authority, is still in progress, slowly but surly, at the same time, there is a well established hierarchical system used to conduct development in a top-down approach.

Therefore, it is important to suggest a process for development done in a bottom-up approach, yet, still maintained by the existing hierarchical system, until the shift to decentralization is fully achieved and activated.

Development in a Decentralized Approach through a Hierarchical System

This could be done by combining two direction of flows in one process, meaning that the determination of basic needs, demands and development objectives would flow in a bottom –up direction i.e. localities, districts, governorates and then the central government; while the diffusion of funds, follow-up and monitoring is done in a top-down direction i.e. central government, governorates, districts and then localities.

The methodology of this approach is identified by ECOPA (2008) and Serag (2008) as follows.



Bottom-Up: Setting the Plans

Working in a bottom up approach would be the main approach in outlining the plans for the governorates in question, in the sense that the needs, demands and the projects of priorities are to be put forward, by means of *public participation*, starting from the level of villages and up to localities, then districts through all the administrative levels until the level of the governorate.

Consequently, the prioritizing of projects is to be made according to the urgencies expressed by the public, instead of receiving ready made plans from the center. As such, local authorities can finally propose their own agendas knowing that they will be considered and fulfilled. The next step is the cooperation of the different administrations in the governorates with spatial planners, socio-economic consultants and finance consultants to formulate the plans for the governorate and districts.

This part of the process should involve all relevant stakeholders and actors from the civil society and the local authorities i.e. on the locality, district and governorate levels. To guarantee the success of the process, it is considered a necessity that the central government grants some powers and competencies of decision making to the lower tiers, enabling them to engage with other actor groups in discussions and negotiations about the possible development policies; eventually achieving subsidiarity.

To facilitate such cooperation between the different actors, the concept of the "Local Action Groups" (LAGs) could be introduced.

Local Action Groups (LAGs)

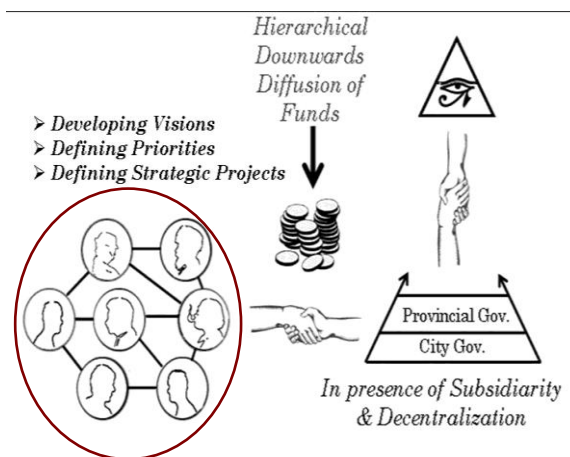
The LAG is a local Partnership, which comprises representation from the local authorities, civil society groups and business association representatives aiming for cooperation in line with public-private partnership concept.

The purpose of LAGs can be summarized as follows:

- planning what to do;
- delivering their actions;
- finding out if they have been successful;
- Developing these successful activities and integrating them into their main services to make them more responsive to the real needs of local people.

In that sense the LAGs formulate their own development agenda and aims, through involving all related stakeholders. They however do not have the legal powers to hold money. They eventually get their funding from the upper tiers of the government or the funding organizations.

The LAGS also have members from the local authorities in addition to other actors and stakeholders, they are informal but they do have members who belong to the local level of the government, which therefore would be the link with the government in terms of legal aspects, and bureaucratic matters.



The role of the LAGs in the development process combined with the Hierarchical system of the government in diffusing necessary funds.

LAGs are considered a mean to achieve development through the inclusion of all possible related and affected actors. These settings are found in some projects funded or related to the EU or other international agencies⁵.

LAGs are responsible for giving the impulses and track innovative ideas and executors, and it also coordinates all the projects and processes shaping its own rural development.

Therefore, through such LAGs, visions, frameworks and key strategic projects could be identified and formulated, then introduced to the related ministries (ministry of local development and the ministry of economic development) to get revised within the main national policy and approved, after fulfilling the needed modifications if needed.

It is important to mention that in recent projects, stakeholders were invited to participate in the planning process, where they were known as the development partners through the slogan of public participation. However, their presence was fluctuating, in the sense that the persons who would attend a meeting seldom show up in the following meeting, with a totally different group participating for the first and last time. This made the participatory process pointless, as there was no consistency with the members participating in it.

The reasons for that are similar to the ones discussed earlier, mainly that most participants lack the ownership feeling of the project, in addition to the low degree of creditability in the government led development projects that is generated because of the successive unachieved promises in previous projects. As such, the consultants stresses on the importance of finding a mechanism to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the participatory planning process by ensuring the presence of the local action groups in the local administration law. It is also conditioned that each category of the LAGs should include a representative in the Local Popular Council to ensure a legal connection with governmental bodies and to ensure a continuous participation of the LAG members in the successive participatory planning meetings (ECOPA, 2009).

Hierarchical/ Top-Down: Funding the Projects

The second part, of the development process, i.e. funding the projects, takes place in a hierarchical way. The way the funding is diffused to implement the projects suggested in the plans moves through the existing hierarchical settings of the system:

The Central Government gives the funding to the relevant ministries which diffuse it downwards to the executive bodies of the governorates, that in turn diffuse the fund down to the local district authorities that would invest them in implementing the projects set in the plans according to the set priorities⁶.

It is important to stress that encouraging and organizing the devolution of fiscal powers from the central government to the governorates and local authorities is done in parallel with the above mechanism. In fact raising own local funds and allocating investments by local authorities should be encouraged so as to contribute in implementing the development plans. Such concepts are advocated by the ideas of decentralization, to ensure the allocation of investments in projects meeting local demands and generating

⁵ An example for this would be the Leader+ program funded by the EU and set to support the sustainable development of rural areas; through this project a rural area would be capable of directing its development based on its own choice www.leadervlaanderen.be, February 2009.

⁶ The flow of the funding diffusion explained illustrated here, is roughly simplified

local income, while giving localities the power to monitor and penalize any violations in the local fiscal sector.

Role of the Government

Development cooperation between the related stakeholders from the civil society and the different levels of government including local authorities is needed. Each government level should have its competencies and powers to negotiate with the LAGs and bring them together, to stimulate development by introducing incentives and the capacity of decision making, which extends from simply granting permits to being an active partner in the development.

At the same time the central government gives support in the form of funding, technical assistance and monitoring.

Accordingly, the role of the central government instead of being the main source for decision making would change to:

- Stimulate the lower tiers of the government to formulate development policies and strategies in an endogenous way rather than imposing them
- Shifting to a more monitoring role and assuring that local development plans falls within the national development policies so as to ensure the integration of local, regional and national initiatives of development,
- While at the same time supporting local and provincial governments through funding, experience and knowledge.

5- Poverty Alleviation Mechanism

The approach explained above is adequate as a general intervention; however, it is important to take direct actions to alleviate the reasons for poverty and its features from the families living in the chosen governorates and districts. Therefore, a tailored program is proposed to assist these families in facing poverty.

Poverty, illiteracy/low educational attainment and poor health as well as family disintegration are features of the ultra poor. At the same time family poverty requires interventions at many levels to effectively impact all family members. Very poor families need more than a simple income subsidy. They need the sustained support of social services so as to be able to access these services effectively, as well as adequate minimum housing conditions so as to ensure the basic human right of adequate shelter. Families also need supportive mediation to deal with non-responsive personnel in the functional services.

The main aim of the suggested mechanism is to target the poor families in the chosen districts and governorates in order to direct public resources towards them to achieve real poverty alleviation. It is to be considered that some previous programs targeting the poor, yet delivered to the population at large, have very often failed to reach their target population. Targeting therefore needs to be specific and resources must consciously be earmarked to the target population. Precise targeting can promote cost-effectiveness and would allow the government to reduce poverty more effectively at a lower cost.

The proposed mechanism does not only aim to subsidize the income of the poor families but mainly aims to give them basic skills enabling them to be connected with programs

already made available through state and non-state bodies offering credit, employment, or other income generating opportunities.

Such opportunities could be established by investing in projects based on local and endogenous assets at different levels of human settlements e.g. villages, districts and/or governorates. The locational choice of these projects among the districts of each governorate shall be based on the prevailing local assets and resources.

The setting of such projects shall be done through an overall scheme of integration between the different districts based on giving specific functional characteristics to each one that would complement with those of the others. One form of integration could be the exchange of labor, raw material, experience and knowledge in support of the different projects, thus enlarging the job market.

Setting Basic Criteria for Poverty Alleviation

A similar case of poverty alleviation took place in Chile, in which poverty reduction projects targeted some physical and non physical aspects classifying them into five main categories, these are housing, education, health, income and formalization and registration. Each of these categories was given a bundle of projects to treat its deficiencies in the targeted communities according to their necessity (UNDP, 2005). The norms for the adequacy of these aspects as basic needs for the families/communities are briefly explained as follows:

1-Housing: Each family should have housing, clean water, sanitation, adequate system of energy, adequate solid waste disposal, can count on at least two livable rooms. Each family member should have a bed/bedding, and the family should not be threatened by eviction, and the house should be sealed and ventilated.

2- Education: Provision of adequate educational institutions should be done. Young children should join a pre-school program, children under 15 years should attend an educational establishment, children in pre-school, basic, or middle school should have the resources they need to progress (books, pencils, shoes, clothes), children over 12 should be able to read and write. Moreover, children with disabilities are incorporated in an educational program, and illiterate persons should join adult educational programs.

3- Health: Sufficient health care facilities i.e. hospitals, clinics and health units should be constructed to meet the basic service requirement and ensure service coverage over the targeted population. Having done that, each family should be registered at primary Health Unit, pregnant women should receive ante-natal care, children under six should be vaccinated, and should have health care, women over 35 should have health examinations/tests, elderly should receive the needed medical care, members with chronic diseases should have medical supervision and medications, while members who have disability that can be rehabilitated participate in a rehabilitation programs, and finally all family members should be informed about health and self care.

4- Income: Securing sufficient income per household is essential to promote a family away from the status of extreme poverty, as such family members should have access to income to cover their nutritional needs (food basket), and at the same time members entitled to pensions/benefits should receive them. But in order to have access to income,

unemployed family members should get training, and at least one family member should have steady work and should be covered by some form of insurance. It should be taken into consideration that women's work should be recognized and compensated; and that no child under 15 abandons studies to work.

5- Formalization and registration: give access to poor people to get involved in different formal or non formal upgrading programs and service provision. This could be reached by registering families in the civil registry, issuing ID cards up to date, placing papers of ancestors in order, registering of disabled family members, putting in order titles/deeds of ownership and incorporating businesses.

The Chile case has inspired the consultants of the project to incorporate the poverty alleviation criteria in the project, with proper modification to suit the Egyptian context. By all means the use of the poverty alleviation approach in the governorates and districts of the project will be subject to the contextual settings in each one, taking into account the existing assets and resources . Accordingly this mechanism is employed within a two tracked development approach to be implemented in the study area, which is explained in the following sections.

6- Two tracked development approach

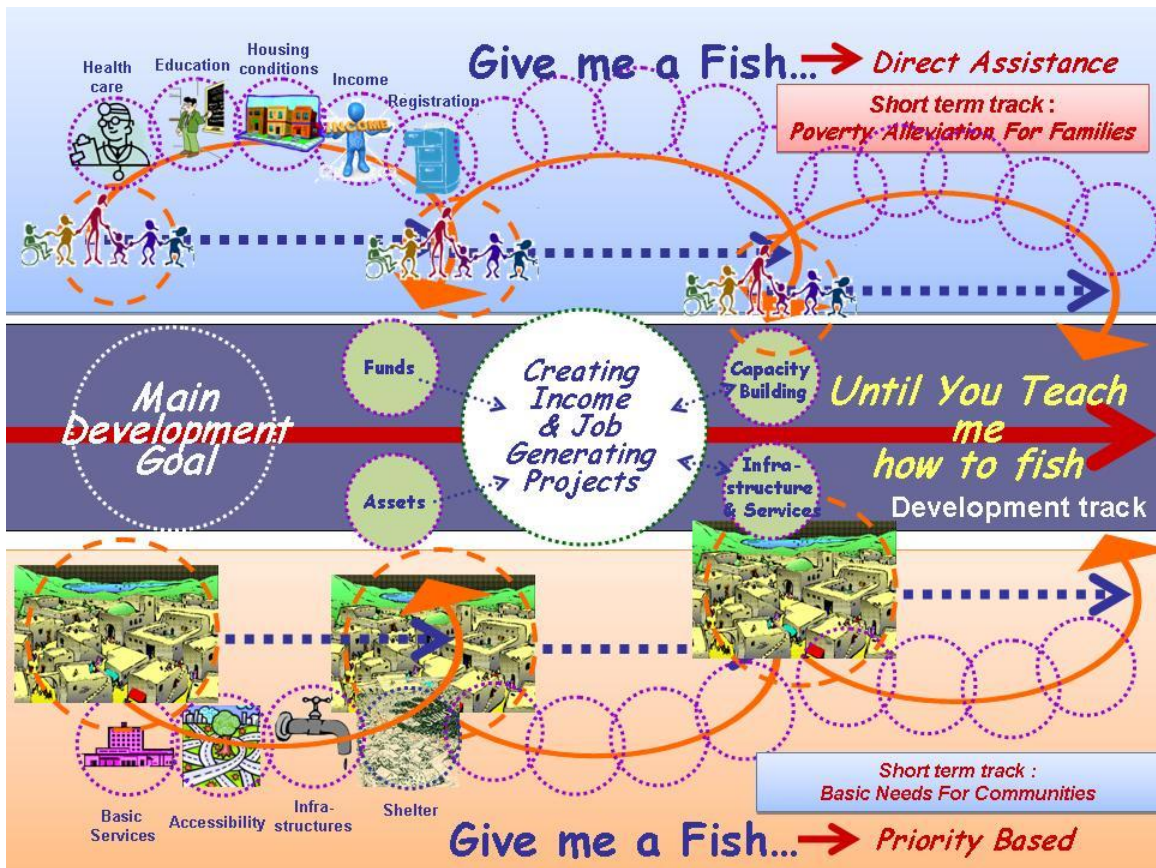
It is noticed from previous development interventions targeting the study area, that attention was directed to either large investments in infrastructure and service projects or direct aid programs through which poor families are given livestock supplies, but seldom of these programs focused on enhancing the working capacities of the people themselves to improve their chances for a better life.

Accordingly, The approach set by the consultants to achieve development and alleviate poverty in the targeted area stems from a famous Chinese proverb, but with some modifications: “Don't give me a fish, teach me how to fish” or in other words “Give me a fish and I eat for a day, teach me how to fish and I eat for a lifetime”, however, until teaching how to fish , how will the families survive? As such the consultants' approach combined the necessity for capacity building but also the importance for giving direct aid families until they are qualified to earn good income, therefore the consultants' slogan is:

“Give me a fish until you teach me how to fish”.

As such, the project works on two parallel tracks, a long term track and a short term track, both tracks start progressing together but at a certain point in time one of them is terminated, starting a new cycle (ECOPA, 2009).

a- Long term track (Capacity Building and Income Generating Projects): in this track, the attention is given on building the capacities of the local population within the work force, to qualify them for proper employment within the different economic sectors related to the governorates and districts in question. Meanwhile it is important to create sufficient demand in the job market by establishing income generating projects that provide many job vacancies according to the assets existing in each governorate and district. Hence, this long term track fulfills the “*teach me how to fish*” part.



General project concept, Long and short tracks combined.

It is important to draw a general outline for the process that carries out this track, accordingly the *intervention process* would:

- Identify the existing assets in the governorate/district that could be invested in the development process leading to the poverty alleviation in the given entity. This could be done by three things: 1) field surveys that capture the spatial locations of potential assets in the governorate/district by mapping these elements. 2) Through local documentation and statistics done by the local authorities, defining the development potentialities in each entity, and also showing the local development plans set by the local authorities. 3) Through public participation, that takes into consideration the bottom-up development approaches; it is possible through conducting a series of structured interviews over a selected population sample, to identify non-physical and human assets, as well as local capacities and experiences that could be invested and involved in the development process.
- Formulate the local development plans geared towards introducing income generating projects in the governorates/districts and supporting them by necessary services and infrastructure networks. This is done mainly through public participation by inviting the related stakeholders in the communities in question and forming the Local Action Groups (LAGs). In addition to this intervention, setting the development oriented and income generating projects in their spatial locations is of extreme importance in this step.

- Secure sufficient funding to implement the drawn development plans, through raising own funds, getting support from the central government and obtaining funds from possible private sector investors.
- Capacity building of local population within the work force is of extreme importance since it prepares them to get involved in the foreseen projects, this is done through a well structured training program to be tailored for the settings of each governorate and district in the coming phases of this pilot project.

b- Short term track (Immediate Direct Support): But while running the previous track and until the capacity building for local population has been done and the income generating projects are in place, immediate support on behalf of the poor families should be made. Poor families should be subject to immediate aid allowing them to meet their basic needs; this aid is temporary until the aims of the above track are fulfilled. Introducing services meeting the basic needs should be done among this track so as to assist in improving the living conditions of the poor families. As such, this track corresponds to the “*Give me a fish*” part.

The process of giving this direct aid is a micro-financed process and could be carried out as follows:

- Establishing a local unit founded by the LAG and the local authorities to regulate the direct aid to the poor families; this unit would have all legal competencies and capacities for decision making to direct the poverty alleviation funds, yet to ensure the quality of work done by the unit it should be monitored by the Ministry of Local Development.
- Based on the norms of poverty alleviation explained in the phase one report (Housing, Education, Health, Income and Registration) an application form is designed targeting the poor families within the entities in question. This form identifies the features of poverty related to each family based on the mentioned norms; as such it helps in defining the sectors of poverty alleviation expenditure of each family.
- Once the application form is studied by the local unit, a monthly allowance is assigned to the poor family, but on condition that part of this allowance is spent in tackling the most deteriorated aspect in relation to the poverty alleviation norms. For examples, a family might have housing norms highly deteriorated in relation to the other poverty aspects; accordingly a portion of the allowance is targeted to enhance this aspect. Of course the main amount of this allowance should be invested first in meeting basic needs in general, but a special attention should be given to the most deteriorated aspects.
- Giving this allowance would be done with only one guarantee: the local unit should perform periodic investigation to ensure that this allowance assists in alleviating the signs of poverty.
- At the same time, members of these families would be enlisted in the capacity building programs that would assist them in finding adequate jobs. Once this training is done and they are enlisted in jobs the allowance should then stop.

7- Conclusion: Not Starting from Scratch

This project will be conducted while bearing in mind the ongoing development and poverty alleviation policies and programs. It is important to stress on the fact that there are several bodies, both governmental and non governmental conducting similar projects of development in Upper Egypt. This project takes into account these attempts, and does not start from scratch, thus it builds on the previous and ongoing development programs such as: Poverty eradication programs, Unemployment combat programs, Population growth limiting program, Illiteracy eradication programs, Environmental sanitation programs and Health safety programs.

With the tracks of the ongoing project explained earlier, the approach of conducting each track will relay on looking for ongoing projects covering the main entry points explained in the project outline, and use them to realize the project objectives. In case there are no such projects, a proposal for a special program tackling such aspect is given.

The project is still ongoing; the consultants are planning while assuming that the government will fully support the shift towards decentralization and public participation. There are tensions between the ongoing system, however, it is important to wait for a while to see a tangible change in the poverty alleviation mechanism.

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